

Roma in Global Popular Culture since 1945:
Discourses of Othering in Comics, Animated Films, and Games.

by

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I, Johannes Valentin Korff, confirm that the work presented in my thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

Abstract

In this thesis, I am exploring various discourses on Romani representation in global popular culture since 1945. While the portrayal of Roma in European entertainment literature prior to 1945 has been researched in some detail, other media, regions, and historical periods have received much less attention, leading to potential blind spots, which obscure other traditions of the Romani stigma. These blind spots are considered in the context of global popular culture. For this purpose, I examine American, Francophone, and Japanese comics, animated films, and games since 1945. It becomes evident that the Romani stigma is neither uniform across the globe, nor that it is across different types of media. Rather, comics, animated films, and games each use distinct conventions to represent the Romani stigma, and these conventions are heavily influenced by the cultural context in which these media products originate, even if they engage with a global audience: The portrayal of fortune-telling Romani characters, while prevalent across all media, diverges significantly between video games and literature. Video games are obsessed with intertwining these characters with historical fantasies, especially in medieval scenarios in worlds beyond ours, a setting less common in literature with Romani characters. In addition, this motif is not merely reproduced but is also updated to reflect social and media changes, thereby acquiring new meanings over time. I conclude that someone who prefers video games to literature or Japanese to Franco-Belgian comics may more often encounter contrasting perspectives regarding Romani representation than someone who prefers the other. Different cultures of entertainment each offer different ideas of motifs. Accordingly, the analysis of these variants provides a basis to correctly assess the evolutions of the Romani stigma, which are often overlooked by scholars and reduced to its reproduction.

Impact Statement

The study aligns with the Foucauldian idea that media products, by influencing how audiences perceive and behave towards Roma, have the potential to both mirror and shape societal attitudes and behaviours.

This thesis aims to benefit academia and society on three levels: first by shedding light on the blind spots of the “Gypsy” phantasma. Variations in the “Gypsy” concept used by different media and in diverse cultural contexts mean that people are exposed to different narratives and attributions to varying degrees. While the portrayal of Roma in European entertainment literature prior to 1945 has been researched in some detail, other media, regions, and historical periods have received much less attention, leading to potential blind spots, which obscure other traditions of the “Gypsy” stigma. Second, the study explores counterstrategies, for combatting antigypsyism. The case studies conducted herein will reveal both the challenges and opportunities in connection with Romani representation in comics, animated films, and games. They serve as a resource for artists and media producers who are genuinely interested in producing works that engage with Romani history and contemporary topics of social justice, with the intention of deconstructing the stigma. This thesis offers new thoughts for those seeking to reflect upon and refine their creative processes. Lastly, this research considers memory cultures of Romani history in popular visual media, something that has hitherto been largely overlooked. The representation of people often encompasses an interpretation of their past. Romani history, particularly the national socialist genocide, has been recurrently featured in comics, animated films, and games since 1945. Despite their large audiences, especially in contemporary times, these media have been often ignored by antigypsyism researchers. The study illuminates how popular artists have interpreted, constructed, and been inspired by this history. Furthermore, it recognizes the role of Romani artists and activists in shaping discourse. Prominent cultural products that represent Romani history can be seen as indicators of societal awareness and efforts towards recognizing social issues. Moreover, media possess the potential to raise awareness of the history of institutional racism.

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1

Inventing the “Gypsy”

Introduction



The frequently used word “Gypsy” and related terms have their origins in a misconception dating back to 15th-century Europe, when it was believed that Roma were Egyptian pilgrims. Other terms like the German “Zigeuner”, the French “Tsigane”, or the Hungarian “Cigányok” are not linked to this myth of Egyptian heritage but may have a connection to the Greek word “Athinganoi”, originally referring to an obscure Manichaean sect in Asia Minor. The Byzantines had already used this term to label Roma.¹ Nevertheless, the myth of an Egyptian pilgrimage was not limited to the British Isles and the Iberian Peninsula (where it is known in Spanish as “Gitano”) but is also found in other parts of Europe.² Among academics and activists who are focussed on combating antigypsyism, the term “Gypsy” is often used, often written in quotation marks, when referring to the Romani stigma. While some individuals and organizations use this word and related terms to refer to themselves, the first World Romani Congress rejected it in 1971. During this congress, delegates from 23 Romani organizations representing ten countries, including Czechoslovakia, Finland, Norway, France, the United Kingdom, the Federal Republic of Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Spain, and Yugoslavia, voted in favour of the term “Roma”.³ Because of the diverse and multifaceted nature of individual identities, there usually exist varying and often conflicting agendas within activism. In this work I will adhere to the convention of capitalizing the “G” in “Gypsy” to emphasize its ethnic connotation, whereas the use of quotation marks reminds the reader that “Gypsy” does not refer to people who identify

¹ See George C Soulis, “The Gypsies in the Byzantine Empire and the Balkans in the late Middle Ages,” *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 15 (1961): 145–147.

² See Klaus-Michael Bogdal, *Europa erfindet die Zigeuner: Eine Geschichte von Faszination und Verachtung* (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2011), 23–43.

³ See Bernhard C Schär, “Nicht mehr Zigeuner, sondern Roma!': Emanzipation, Forschung und Strategien der Repräsentation einer 'Roma-Nation',” *Historische Anthropologie* 16, no. 2 (2008): 216.

themselves as gypsies/Gypsies; instead, it reflects a fictional category projected onto various social groups.

This study seeks to illuminate the origins and transformations of the concept of “Gypsy” in global history. It examines “othering” in popular culture, taking into account its social, economic, and technological underpinnings. Departing from the idea that media professionals contribute to shaping power structures, this work endeavours to analyse the evolving meanings of the “Gypsy” concept and their origins in global media, specifically in comics, animated films, and digital and non-digital games. Most often, the label “Gypsies” is used for Roma, who are frequently subjected to the collective ascription of negative attributes, such as being ‘criminal’, ‘poor’, ‘lazy’, and ‘uneducated’. Only through a comprehensive understanding of the historical origins of this stigma and its historical development can we gain insight into its composition and its impact on contemporary societies.

This thesis is guided by a two-pronged research hypothesis, namely that the “Gypsy” stigma is neither uniform across the globe, nor that it is across different types of media. Rather, comics, animated films, and games each use distinct conventions to represent the “Gypsy” stigma, and these conventions are heavily influenced by the cultural context in which these media products originate, even if they engage with a global audience. For example, the portrayal of fortune-telling “Gypsy” characters, while prevalent across all media, diverges significantly between video games and literature. Video games are obsessed with intertwining these characters with historical fantasies, especially in medieval scenarios in worlds beyond ours, a setting less common in literature with “Gypsy” characters. In addition, this motif is not merely reproduced but is also updated to reflect social and media changes, thereby acquiring new meanings over time.⁴ A further example can be found in Japanese comics and animated films (‘manga’ and ‘anime’) that have been resonating with Western audiences for decades. Despite Japan’s very small Romani population, Japanese popular culture has incorporated exotic “Gypsy” characters, interpreted according to local narrative and aesthetic conventions. Compared to Western media, the visualization of “Gypsy” characters in

⁴ See Johannes Valentin Korff, “‘Zigeuner’-Motivik im digitalen Spiel: Zur Alteritätskonstruktion in Geschichte und Geschichtskultur des Videospiele,” Master Thesis, Ruprecht-Karls-Universität Heidelberg, 2020.

Japanese works is less ethnocentric. Additionally, Japanese comics and animated films often fuse the “Gypsy” motif with other related motifs, resulting in unique adaptations.⁵ Therefore, someone who prefers video games to literature or Japanese to Franco-Belgian comics (‘bandes dessinées’) will more often encounter contrasting perspectives regarding the concept of “Gypsy” than someone who prefers the other. Different cultures of entertainment each offer different ideas of motifs. In short, I argue that the “Gypsy” notion varies between different media and markets, in the context of distinct discourse evolutions. To date, research on antigypsyism has not addressed the variations in these media and local discourses, which has hindered further investigations into the stigma and its evolution over time.

Beyond ideological motives or simple naivety, commercial interests might have played a role in the use of racist stereotypes in entertainment media. Some of these media are funded by NGOs that aim to combat antigypsyism or support Romani voices. These NGOs often had an educational or activist agenda. However, in most cases, funding comes from larger companies – such as publishers and production studios – whose main goal is commercial success. In the past, antigypsyist stereotypes not only served as entertaining spectacle but also as a safer commercial choice because they align with audience expectations. Representing Roma through familiar stereotypes could have been seen as less risky than presenting them as “ordinary” individuals, as it did fit into widely accepted ideas of authenticity and storytelling conventions. Even in highly fantastical or surreal narratives, world-building relies on a sense of cultural coherence, often expressed through established tropes and symbols. Additionally, mainstream entertainment tends to favour simple over complex imagery. Stereotypes express reductive symbols that make stories easier to understand for a broad audience.

⁵ See Johannes Valentin Korff, “Imagining the ‘Gypsy’ and the Jew in Japanese Animation: The Case of Aikawa Shō and Mizushima Seiji,” in *Counterstrategies to the Antigypsy Gaze*, ed. Radmila Mladenova (Heidelberg: Heidelberg University Publishing, 2024), 415–433; see Johannes Valentin Korff, “Manga – Anime – Videospiel: Erscheinungsformen der ‘Zigeuner’-Motivik im ostasiatischen Videospiel und Anime-Stil,” in *Visuelle Dimensionen des Antiziganismus*, ed. Frank Reuter, Daniela Gress, and Radmila Mladenova (Heidelberg: Heidelberg University Publishing, 2021), 261–291.

However, media not only mirror societies but also shape them. According to scholars like Wilhelm Solms, the “Gypsy” motif found in various media plays a significant role in shaping real-world attitudes and behaviours: “That the people would look away from the [national socialist] deportation of German Sinti and Roma [...] was also contributed by the poets via their Gypsy images”⁶. This position is shared by the Alliance against Antigypsyism (AaA), a league of 70 international Romani organizations, asserting in their 2017 working definition of antigypsyism: The “stigma ‘gypsy’ or other related terms”⁷ associates with “a homogenizing and essentializing perception and description”.⁸ Both the AaA and scholars like Markus End claim that this stigma has tangible effects on society.⁹ Accordingly, everyone would participate in a discourse that not only reflects but also shapes our reality and power structures. This viewpoint aligns with the Foucauldian idea that discourses are not merely “groups of signs”,¹⁰ but should be seen “as practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak”¹¹, assuming that reality is created via the signs (images, language) discourses are composed of. Consequently, media products, by influencing how audiences perceive and behave towards Roma, have the potential to both mirror and shape societal attitudes and behaviours.

My positionality in this thesis, as a researcher not from this group but with a history and interest of actively combatting antigypsyism, is represented by these ideas and I will explain here why. I assume that the attribution of characteristics such as ‘criminal’, ‘poor’, ‘lazy’, ‘uneducated’, and ‘nomadic’ negatively affect people who are stigmatized as “Gypsies”. There is a problematic potential of even apparently harmless attributes like a ‘nomadic lifestyle’. A case in point can be

⁶ Ger.: “Dass die Bevölkerung bei der Deportation der deutschen Sinti und Roma wegsah, [...] dazu haben auch die Dichter durch ihre Zigeunerbilder beigetragen.” Wilhelm Solms, *Zigeunerbilder: Ein dunkles Kapitel der deutschen Literaturgeschichte; Von der frühen Neuzeit bis zur Romantik* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2008), 9.

⁷ “Antigypsyism: A Reference Paper,” ed. Alliance against Antigypsyism, in *Zentralrat Deutscher Sinti und Roma*, last modified June 2017, <https://zentralrat.sintiundroma.de/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/antigypsyism-reference-paper-16.06.2017.pdf>.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ See *ibid.* and the definition of antigypsyism in Markus End, “Antiziganismus: Zur Verteidigung eines wissenschaftlichen Begriffs in kritischer Absicht,” in *Antiziganistische Zustände 2: Kritische Positionen gegen gewaltvolle Verhältnisse*, ed. Markus End et al (Münster: Unrat, 2013), 47.

¹⁰ Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge: And the Discourse on Language* (New York: Pantheon, 1982), 54.

¹¹ Ibid.

found, for example, in European newspaper reports on Roma refugees in the 1990s. During this period, many Roma fled Romania because of a wave of antigypsyist pogroms and disadvantage in the job market. Towards foreign media, the Romanian government downplayed these causes and promoted its own narrative, according to which the exodus of Roma from Romania would have been driven by an inherent Wanderlust and a desire for adventure, signaling a positive subtext. Officials exploited the philogypsyist idea of Wanderlust to cover up underlying antigypsyism. This serves as an example of how seemingly not-hostile forms of “othering” in discourse can still be problematic.¹² Moreover, the collective attribution of a nomadic lifestyle has hampered research into the impacts of institutional racism and the lack of equal education opportunities faced by many Romani individuals.¹³ These cases do not prove that “othering” leads per se to antigypsyist discrimination, but “othering” can at least be instrumentalized to obstruct the recognition of this issue. Consequently, any form of the “Gypsy” stigma can be seen in the context of problems in the actual world.

We observe that examining different discourses between media and cultural contexts could make a significant contribution to overcoming social issues. Departing from this observation, this thesis aims to benefit academia and society on three levels: first by shedding light on the blind spots of the “Gypsy” phantasma.¹⁴ Variations in the “Gypsy” concept used by different media and in diverse cultural contexts mean that people are exposed to different narratives and attributions to varying degrees. While the portrayal of Roma in European entertainment literature prior to 1945 has been researched in some detail, other media, regions, and historical periods have received much less attention, leading to potential blind spots, which obscure other traditions of the “Gypsy” stigma. Second, the study explores counterstrategies to combat antigypsyism. The case studies conducted herein will reveal both the challenges and opportunities in connection with Romani representation in comics, animated films, and games. The findings will not prescribe how media producers should depict people in their products. Rather,

¹² See Johannes Valentin Korff, “‘Armutszuwanderung’: The Flight of Romanian Roma and the German Press since the 1990s” [under review for the *Critical Romani Studies* journal].

¹³ See Solvor M Lauritzen, “Nomadism in Research on Roma education,” *Critical Romani Studies* 1, no. 2 (2018), 58–75.

¹⁴ Phantasma/Phantasm: a figment of imagination, imagined but not real.

they serve as a resource for artists and media producers who are genuinely interested in producing works that engage with Romani history and contemporary topics of social justice, with the intention of deconstructing the stigma. This thesis offers new thoughts for those seeking to reflect upon and refine their creative processes. Lastly, this research considers memory cultures of Romani history in popular visual media, something that has hitherto been largely overlooked. The representation of people often encompasses an interpretation of their past. Romani history, particularly the national socialist genocide, has been recurrently featured in comics, animated films, and games since 1945. Despite their large audiences, especially in contemporary times, these media have been often ignored by antigypsyism researchers. The study illuminates how popular artists have interpreted, constructed, and been inspired by this history. Furthermore, it recognizes the role of Romani artists and activists in shaping discourse. Prominent cultural products that represent Romani history can be seen as indicators of societal awareness and efforts towards recognizing social issues. Moreover, media possess the potential to raise awareness of the history of institutional racism.

My decision for the selection of contemporary (post-1945) comics, animated films, and both digital and non-digital games as a basis for this research, and with the aim of realizing the benefits mentioned above, is motivated by two reasons: On the one hand, these media have a wide and diverse audience, having particularly reached younger viewers and readers in the past. This demographic has represented the future creators of popular culture. By analysing these media, we can gain insights into the evolving exposure of younger generations towards the “Gypsy” stigma. On the other hand, comics, animated films, and games share membership with illustrated and animated popular culture. Comics and animated films frequently adapt each other’s narratives, in America, Europe and Asia alike. Particularly Japanese popular culture serves as an example of an industry where comics, animated films, and games were and are commonly produced by single multi-media companies, demonstrating the strong interconnection between these media. Still, these media have cultivated their specific narrative traditions.

In the context of global history, the choice of these media suggests a geographical focus, specifically, on the United States of America, the Francophone countries, and Japan. These regions excel due to the widespread impact of their media

products and their appeal to a worldwide audience, transcending their national origins. This cannot be said for Italian, German, or Hispanic media. Hispanic media, in particular, would be worth exploring given how often “Gypsy” characters are associated with Spain and Spanish national identity. However, compared to American, Francophone and Japanese media, Hispanic media had little global influence outside the Spanish-speaking world and are also less accessible. On the other hand, the significance of the American, Francophone, and Japanese cultural contexts in shaping global popular culture provides us with good access to source materials. Archives, databases, and digitisations undertaken by companies and fandoms facilitate this access. Furthermore, this cross-cultural examination of the “Gypsy” concept permits a nuanced exploration of its manifestations as the “domestic”, the “European” and the “Western exotic” in the European, American, and East Asian contexts: The “Gypsy” motif is inherently associated with Europe, given that this continent is internationally perceived as the main site of Romani life. As a result, media professionals, whether situated within or beyond Europe, often contextualize the “Gypsy” motif within a broader narrative about Europe – underscoring the “Gypsy” concept as a matter of European Studies.

Departing from these sources and regions, I analyse the impact of 11 influential artists and media companies through a series of interconnected case studies, featuring works by Walt Disney, TEZUKA Osamu, Georges Prosper Remi (“Hergé”), Stan Lee, Nintendo, Sunrise Inc., and Ubisoft Entertainment, among others. As a basis for my investigation, I created a systematic index cataloguing occurrences of the “Gypsy” motif in comics, animated films, and games. This index was compiled through a three-steps approach. First, exploration of high-impact productions: I systematically engaged with the works of the most influential artists and companies, irrespective of prior expectations regarding their relevance to the study. The majority of the examined artifacts were discovered through this method. Second, database research: Databases proved valuable for identifying relevant comics and animated films. I discovered a substantial number of American comics through the *Grand Comics Database* and *Comic Book +*.¹⁵ Additionally, the *Disney Wiki*, the *Pixar Wiki*, and the *Big Cartoon Database* as well as the

¹⁵ See *Grand Comics Database*, accessed 2 May 2023, <https://www.comics.org/>; see *Comic Book +*, accessed 2 May 2023, <https://comicbookplus.com/>.

Bedetheque (for *bandes dessinées*) were relevant tools.¹⁶ Lastly, abstraction from existing case studies: Some Franco-Belgian comics could be abstracted from existing case studies found in papers in the anthologies *Les Tsiganes et les Gens du voyage dans la bande dessinée* (2016) by Francis Groux and *Selbst- und Fremdbilder von Roma in Comic und Graphic Novel* (2021) by Marina Ortrud M Hertrampf and Kirsten von Hagen.¹⁷ In conclusion, the inventory of my thesis comprises 357 entries, predominantly from the financially strongest publishers such as La Lombard, Marvel Comics, and Shogakukan as well as production companies like The Walt Disney Company, and Nintendo. A sample of works from these entries will be used for the case studies, all originating from the personalities and companies mentioned above. Beyond its role in the study itself, this comprehensive index serves as a foundational resource for further research into “Gypsy” imagination in media.

The case studies deliberately do not involve audience research but focus on discourse analysis, as my approach is qualitative rather than quantitative, centring on media creators and their works, not their audience. The methodology employed is semiotic analysis, aimed to study the composition of the “Gypsy” motif and its implications. This analysis includes character examination to identify clusters of attributes associated with the motif.

For this purpose, I will complement my main discourse analytical approach with an array of further analytical tools, tailored for each medium. For comics, I will for example draw on cartoon analysis, where appropriate, to look at more complex visual compositions and the tone they convey. Details of a ‘splash’, for example, a large illustration on the first page of a comic, might be explored to examine characters, setting and tone of the work. This approach recognizes cartoons primarily as devices for communicating ideas, not limited to caricature that is defined as either “distortion of the features of a person with the aim to ridicule”¹⁸ or

¹⁶ See “Home,” in *The Disney Wiki: 100 Years of Wonder*, accessed 2 May 2023, https://disney.fandom.com/wiki/The_Disney_Wiki; see *Bedetheque*, accessed 2 May 2023, <https://www.bedetheque.com/>.

¹⁷ See Francis Groux, ed., *Les Tsiganes et les Gens du voyage dans la bande dessinée* (Paris: FNASAT, 2016); see Marina Ortrud M Hertrampf, and Kirsten von Hagen, eds., *Selbst- und Fremdbilder von Roma in Comic und Graphic Novel* (Munich: AVM, 2021).

¹⁸ Ernst Kris, and Ernst Gombrich, “The principles of caricature,” *British Journal of Medical Psychology* 17 (1938): 320.

“graphic journalism” (Ger.: “graphischer Journalismus”¹⁹), according to art historian Ernst Gombrich. In the 20th century, comics evolved beyond humour and satire, and their use of cartoon stereotypes extended to diverse contexts of creating types, a point I will illustrate in this thesis. Therefore, analytical approaches will be chosen based on context and the epistemological interest, with some individual images and panels receiving detailed discussion, while multiple pages may be summarized for clarity. In this way, sequential art will be treated as a form of narrative text, as an object of narratology,²⁰ rather than as caricature. Similarly, animated films will be examined with a focus on individual scenes and their role in the overall work, employing film analysis.²¹ But the study of games poses special challenges, because ludology assesses game mechanics predominantly from a functional standpoint, relegating narrative elements to a secondary role.²² To do justice to the complexity of games and their various genres, I will combine a ludologist with a narratologist approach, as common in contemporary game studies. This allows for an adequate understanding of games and the significant role of narrative elements in their composition.

Employing these analytical tools, I will draw both narrative and discourse comparisons to interpret the observed attribute clusters and how they align or deviate from traditions of representation – ultimately aiming to showcase the multi-discursivity of the “Gypsy” concept. These comparisons involve two key aspects, a

¹⁹ Ernst Gombrich, “Das Arsenal der Karikaturisten: Ein Vortrag, gehalten an der Duke University, North Carolina, am 22. März 1962,” in *Meditationen über ein Steckenpferd: Von den Wurzeln und Grenzen der Kunst*, translated by Lisbeth Gombrich (Vienna: Europaverlag, 1973): 232.

²⁰ On the Narrativity of text and image in comics, see Gunther Kress, and Theo van Leeuwen, *Multimodal Discourse: The Modes and Media of Contemporary Communication* (London: A&C Black 3Pl, 2001).

²¹ We may consider the use of film analysis in antigypsyism research, according to Radmila Mladenova, *The “White” Mask and the “Gypsy” Mask in Film* (Heidelberg: Heidelberg University Publishing, 2022). In my thesis, I do also problematize this elaboration. One of this central hypothesis, the visual construction of the “Gypsy” motif in contrast to Whiteness via elements such as lighting and costume appear as incorrect in many prominent cases of media representation, as will become evident.

²² See Henry Jenkins, “Gamedesign as Narrative Architecture,” in Tabbi, Joseph (ed.): *Electronic Book Review*, edited by Joseph Tabbi, 10 July 2004, <https://electronicbookreview.com/essay/game-design-as-narrative-architecture/>; see Gonzalo Frasca, “Simulation versus Narrative: Introduction to Ludology,” in *The Video Game Reader*, edited by Mark J P Wolf, and Bernard Perron (London: Routledge, 2003): 221–236; see Stewart Woods, “Loading the Dice: The Challenge of Serious Videogames,” *Game Studies* 4, no. 1 (2004), accessed 2 March 2023, <http://www.gamestudies.org/0401/woods/>; see Janet Murray, “From Game Story to Cyber-Drama,” in *Electronic Book Review*, edited by Joseph Tabbi, 1 May 2004, <https://electronicbookreview.com/essay/from-game-story-to-cyberdrama/>.

side-by-side comparison of the material with literary and theatrical works predating 1945 on the one hand, and contrasting the elaborated discourses to highlight similarities and disparities between American, Francophone, and Japanese comics, as well as between comics, animated films, and games, on the other. To achieve this, I will utilize an intercultural, comparative literature methodology, centring on examining “conceptions or theories or systems of literature”²³, encompassing various genres. This methodology allows us to elaborate not only on varying concepts but also on the impact of distinct genres on the “Gypsy” motif within specific cultural and media contexts. For example, in American comics, the “Gypsy” motif is prominently featured in the superhero genre, whereas in Francophone comics, it tends to manifest itself predominantly in humorous adventure stories. In Japanese comics, specifically in *shōjo manga* (comics for girls), it is frequently intertwined with the romantic genre.

While I am aware of the risk inherent in this comparative approach, of generalizing about the unique aspects of each national and media discourse on “Gypsies”, my research does not aim to encompass the entirety of each national discourse but focuses on prominent works that represent dominant aspects of these discourses only. Each work is of course “a node or intersection in an overdetermined network of associations, influences, constraints, and connections, often connections leaping far over chronological or geographical contiguity”²⁴. As a result, readers will not encounter such generalization in my thesis. Still, they will encounter the observation that discursive similarities between, for example, American, Francophone, and Japanese comics often do not arise from mutual influence but rather from what Adrian Marino describes as parallel polygenesis: That means, similarities between different discourses rooted in “[i]dentical or very similar historical causes, but independent”²⁵. In other words, although these media have a global reach and influenced each other, similarities between the “Gypsy” concepts in these different contexts cannot be primarily ascribed to the globalization

²³ Earl Miner, *Comparative Poetics: An Intercultural Essay on Theories of Literature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 4.

²⁴ J Hillis Miller, “English Romanticism, American Romanticism: What’s the Difference?,” in *Transatlantic Literary Studies: A Reader*, edited by Susan Manning, and Andrew Taylor (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press Books, 2007), 95.

²⁵ Fre: “Causes historiques identiques ou très semblables, mais indépendantes”. Adrian Marino, *Comparatisme et théorie de la littérature* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1988), 225.

of, for example, comics. Rather, *longue durée* factors such as tropes from 19th-century literature and opera, as well as the impact of the post-1945 Roma civil rights movement on media portrayals, play a much more significant role in driving discursive similarities between national and media discourses on the “Gypsy” concept.

While the role of media traditions has been well-researched, the multiple media discourses have attracted considerably less scholarly attention. For the former, literary scholars, such as Deborah Nord (on Britain, 2007), Lou Charnon-Deutsch (on Spain, 2004), as well as Claudia Breger and Willhelm Solms (on Germany, 1998 and 2008) have examined the “Gypsy” concept in literary sources from specific geographic areas up to the 19th century. And a significant turning point came with the works of Klaus-Michael Bogdal (2011) and Hans Richard Brittnacher (2012), which offered comprehensive, transnational perspectives, highlighting a universal tradition of the “Gypsy” stigma across Europe. Their approach employs discourse analysis to outline what seems to be a definitive tradition of the “Gypsy” concept, rather than emphasizing its ongoing evolution and multi-discursivity. This focus on the similarities between “Gypsy” concepts helps them to make their research object tangible and well-defined, aiming for the delineation of tradition that, according to Derrida, is important to avoid “concentrating on alleged differences which would in fact be mainly linear and chronological breaks”²⁶. While this claim served to establish the basics for further examining the “Gypsy” concept, we must recognize that the concept showcases not merely tradition but also remains dynamic and subject to ongoing discourse. My aim in this thesis is to redirect our attention towards the differences after all, as this approach allows us to define the variants of this research object in regard of its different discourses. This epistemological interest can be described with a common, yet I consider helpful, assumption Matei Candea has observed in the context of anthropology: “If you perceive the status quo to be articulated around similarity or generality, focus on difference; if you find anthropologists obsessed with alterity, rediscover shared problems.”²⁷

²⁶ Jacques Derrida, “White Mythology: Metaphor in the Text of Philosophy,” in *New Literary History* 6, no. 1 (1974): 30.

²⁷ Matei Candea, *Comparison in Anthropology: The Impossible Method* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 215.

However, the aforementioned contributions from the field of literary studies, particularly by Bogdal and Brittnacher, will play a significant role for comparing my findings on discourses with previous traditions of representation that are rooted in literature and theatre. Additionally, I will also draw upon relevant case studies related to the media examined in this thesis. In regard of comics, I consider the earlier-mentioned anthologies *Les Tsiganes et les Gens du voyage dans la bande dessinée* (2016) by Francis Groux and *Selbst- und Fremdbilder von Roma in Comic und Graphic Novel* (2021) by Marina Ortrud M Hertrampf and Kirsten von Hagen as important points of reference. But we may keep in mind that these works focus exclusively on the “Gypsy” stigma in Francophone comics, with Hertrampf’s and von Hagen’s anthology even duplicating the case studies presented in Groux’s work without introducing additional sources. Furthermore, these case studies need to be approached with caution due to their links to the not unproblematic field of tsiganology (“Gypsy Studies”).²⁸ In addition to these, I also use the case studies by Brigitte Mihok (2010), Dirk Suckow (2017), and Peter Bell (2017), specifically in the context of Francophone comics and Disney films. A comprehensive, quantitative, and chronological work on comics and animated films does not seem to exist yet. When it comes to video games, my Master’s thesis from 2020 and my publications are the only existing elaborations.²⁹ Non-digital games do not seem to have been worked on yet.

Finally, while the “Gypsy” stigma is distinct, it allows for both comparisons and contrasts to other stigmata, which will be recurrently picked up in this thesis. Three dimensions of comparison and contrast stand out: First, the religious dimension. Wilhelm Solms highlights parallels between antigypsyism and antisemitism in the Middle Ages and the early modern period, particularly in how Christian societies demonized both “Gypsies” and Jews. This was reflected in beliefs about supernatural powers and vindictiveness, often linked to the devil and the cardinal sin of *Ira* (Eng.: anger). This shared legacy can be felt until today. While rumours of blood libel (the idea of Jews allegedly murdering people to

²⁸ Tsiganology or “Gypsy Studies” is a field of research that is historically associated to ethnology and considered by antigypsyism researchers as the “Gypsy” stigma’s academic manifestation.

²⁹ See Korff, “‘Zigeuner’-Motivik”; see Korff, “Manga – Anime – Videospiel”.

sacrifice for their god) has largely disappeared in secular and Christian-majority societies in Europe and the Americas, it remains widespread in parts of the Islamic world. Meanwhile, stereotypes of “Gypsies” as fortune-tellers, curse-makers, or vengeful figures are still common worldwide. In most cases, the ideas have shifted from religious stigmatization to mere sensationalism. Second, another key factor is Orientalism, particularly the ‘othering’ notion of motifs imagined as being Oriental. In the German historical context, the literary scholar Iulia-Karin Patrut articulates that “a shared clip of the semantisation of both groups [Jews and ‘Gypsies’] within the German self-identification is particularly the Orientalism discourse”³⁰. Lou Charon-Deutsch explores the “Gypsy” motif’s visual dimension. She highlights how the imagery associated with female “Gypsies”, such as jewellery, reflects Orientalist stereotypes.³¹ My own research has also analysed how contemporary historical narratives connect stereotypes of “Gypsies”, Muslims, and Turks.³² Lastly, a broader factor is colonial imagination, which overlaps with, but is not identical to Orientalism. One significant theme here is the motif of the “noble savage”. Literary scholar Deborah Nord argues that from the 1830s onward, “Gypsy” characters often became closely linked to this motif.³³ However, Hans Richard Brittnacher points out the differences between “Gypsies” and the “noble savage” based on their contrasting links to civilization, morals, and violence.³⁴ The perspectives of Nord and Brittnacher ultimately reveal the multifaceted nature of “Gypsy” portrayals – while some versions align with notions of Jews, colonial subjects, Muslims or heathens, others do not.

The thesis’ structure follows a geographical and media-oriented framework, comprising four parts and six chapters, each organized chronologically. In the first chapter, I examine the origins of the “Gypsy” concept’s attributes such as criminality, poverty, nomadism, and erotic threat prior 1945. Moving on to part two, encompassing chapters two to four, I analyse the distinctions between national

³⁰ Ger.: “Eine gemeinsame Klammer der Semantisierung beider Gruppen innerhalb des ‘deutschen’ Selbstentwurfs bildet vor allem der Orientalism-Diskurs”. Patrut, *Phantasma Zigeuner*, 21.

³¹ See Charon-deutsch, *The Spanish Gypsy*.

³² See Korff, *Manga – Anime – Videospiel*, 261-291.

³³ See Nord, *British Imagination*, 71-73.

³⁴ See Brittnacher, *Leben auf der Grenze*, 35.

discourses, with specific interest devoted to how they diverge from previous traditions of representation. To maintain a focus for comparison, I restrict my analysis to a single medium: comics. Here, I investigate the works of influential comic book artists and conduct comparisons. Chapter two is dedicated to exploring the themes related to antigypsyist pogroms and genocide as portrayed in the European fantasies found in American superhero and crime comics. Chapter three elaborates on ethnic and socio-critical humour, alongside realistic and non-humorous social critique, as distinctive aspects of *bandes dessinées*. Chapter four explores the fairy tale-like imagery of historical Europe in *shōjo* manga, Japanese comics aimed at girls, with a focus on the recurrent presence of “Gypsy” characters in these scenarios. In part three, encompassing chapters five and six, I analyse differences between media discourses and again examine how they diverge from previous traditions of portrayal. Building upon the insights from the investigation of comics, I expand my analysis to include animated films and games that were extraordinarily popular from the 1970s to the 21st century. Chapter five is dedicated to the interplay of history and fantasy within the “Gypsy” motif in both digital and non-digital role-playing games. In chapter six, I turn my attention to animated films and elaborate on the evolving conventions of representation in this medium. The thesis concludes with the final part, encapsulating the overarching findings and providing a comprehensive outlook on their implications.

Before we look at the differences in discourse between varying media and markets, *Chapter One: A Brief Illustrated History of “Gypsy” Notion Before 1945* offers an overview of international and cross-media similarities. This chapter also serves as an introduction to the forms of storytelling in early comics, particularly in American works. By doing so, it provides a first glimpse into the narrative potential that was already present in the medium prior to 1945.

Chapter One

A Brief Illustrated History of “Gypsy” Notion Before 1945



The beginnings of antigypsyism are commonly linked to the late Middle Ages in Latin Europe. Around the end of the 14th century, Roma from Southeastern Europe began migrating to Latin Europe, likely as a result of the Ottoman wars. Initially, Roma were allowed passage through Western Europe, but from early on they were described as criminals and Ottoman spies by figures like the chronologist Andreas von Regensburg (in 1424). These portrayals also intertwined with antisemitic stereotypes of the time, marginalizing Roma. They were typically barred from settling in cities. However, the systematic discrimination against Roma did not start immediately. In the Holy Roman Empire, a significant turning point came with the Reichstag in Lindau and Freiburg between 1496 and 1498, which outlawed Roma and enforced their expulsion wherever they settled. This decree was reiterated in 1548 at the Reichstag in Augsburg. Roma were expelled from various European countries, such as France in 1539 and England in 1563, often under the threat of being severely punished, including killed. Many Roma sought their fortune as mercenaries. During the Thirty Years' War, their presence among mercenary ranks fuelled antigypsyist sentiment. Many people blamed “Gypsies” for the atrocities in war, associating them with violence and unethical behaviour. In the 18th century, as standing armies supplemented mercenaries, persecution of Roma intensified.³⁵ With the rise of ethnology in the 18th century and the racialization of the term “Gypsy”, Roma faced increasing ethnic discrimination, including having their children abducted and being subjected to forced labour. The end of Romani slavery in Romania in the mid-19th century caused many more people migrating to Western Europe, leading to renewed

³⁵ For an overview see Ulrich Opfermann, *Seyd kein Ziegeuner, sondern kayserlicher Cornet: Sinti im 17. Und 18. Jahrhundert; Eine Untersuchung anhand archivalischer Quellen* (Berlin: Metropol, 2007); and see Leo Lucassen, *Zigeuner: Die Geschichte eines polizeilichen Ordnungsbegriffes in Deutschland; 1700-1945* (Köln: Böhlau, 1996), 35-116.

hostility. Discriminatory practices intensified as the 20th century approached. In Imperial Germany, we find several key examples: The “Gypsy Central” (Ger.: “Zigeuner-Zentrale”) has been established in 1899 where Roma were systematically registered. This was followed by the “Gypsy Book” (Ger.: “Zigeuner-Buch”), which was distributed to police for the purpose of racial profiling. Later, a 1906 edict (“Anweisung zur Bekämpfung des Zigeunerunwesens”) banned Roma from traveling in groups. During World War One, Roma unfit for military service were often forced into labour.³⁶ Obviously, antigypsyism did not start with fascism, but it intensified antigypsyist policies. In Nazi Germany, Roma were barred from jobs, and starting in 1935, many were interned in forced camps under terrible conditions. This not only happened under fascist regimes; in France, before Germany occupied the north of the country, the government bizarrely accused Roma of being German spies – and likewise demobilized them in forced camps, denying any escape. Forced camps were precursors to Roma being deported to Nazi death camps, where up to half a million Sinti and Roma were systematically murdered. They also suffered, for example, forced sterilization, human experiments, and forced labour. After World War Two, the Romani genocide was only slowly recognized. Survivors were typically not acknowledged as victims. However, the Roma civil rights movement gained momentum and institutionalized after 1945, particularly in Europe and the Americas. The Federal Republic of Germany officially recognized the Romani genocide in 1982. After the Cold War, ethnic violence surged, leading to pogroms and a refugee crisis involving Roma from Eastern and Southeastern Europe. Today, many Roma continue to face widespread discrimination, and violence worldwide.³⁷

In this chapter, I elaborate on three successive stages of an international and cross-media discourse on the “Gypsy” notion before 1945, particularly focusing on visual print media. By examining these stages, we gain a basic understanding of the historical development of “Gypsy” representations. First, I demonstrate the visual construction and racialization of the “Gypsy” stigma since the 18th century. Second, I examine the exoticisation and eroticisation of this stigma, which became prominent during the 19th century. Lastly, I address the emancipation of

³⁶ For an overview see Lucassen, *Zigeuner*, 77-198; and see Karola Fings, *Sinti und Roma: Geschichte einer Minderheit* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 2016), 34-61.

³⁷ For an overview see Lucassen, *Zigeuner*, 199-213; Fings, *Sinti und Roma*, 62-119.

comics from narratives of children's literature since the 20th century. Among the media types I study, comics have the longest history in the visual culture of Latin Europe, with "Gypsy" characters dating back to the Late Middle Ages.³⁸ Although sequential printed art, the foundation of comics, has existed for centuries, it did not gain popularity until the 20th century. Notably, figures like the Swiss illustrator Rodolphe Töpffer (1799–1846), who was the potential "inventor" of comics, and the well-known German artist Wilhelm Busch (1832–1908) did not integrate "Gypsy" characters into their image stories. But these characters were already prominent in non-sequential picture books for children as early as the 18th century.³⁹ In contrast, modern comics evolved from 19th-century newspaper cartoons designed to entertain adults. Therefore, this chapter draws examples from illustrated magazines and books created for adult audiences, where the interplay of text and imagery serves as an integral narrative device.

First Stage: Visual Construction of the Stigma and Racialisation since the 18th Century

The following example demonstrates the "Gypsy" stigma's visual construction across different media in history. While "Gypsy" depictions in visual media date back to the Middle Ages,⁴⁰ one early caricature in an illustrated book can be found in a work of the British caricaturist George Moutard Woodward (1765–1809). This caricature is present in his 1796 book titled *Eccentric Excursions*.⁴¹ This work can be described as a pseudo-ethnologist satire, focusing on the inhabitants of England and South Wales. The late 18th century saw a gain in significance of illustrated magazines and books, largely due to production becoming increasingly

³⁸ Bogdal refers to an image from the German *Spiezer Chronik* by Diebold Schillings des Älteren, created in the 15th century. See Klaus-Michael Bogdal, *Europa erfindet die Zigeuner: Eine Geschichte von Faszination und Verachtung* (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2011), 20–24.

³⁹ See Sebastian Schmideler, "'Die Zigeuner halten viel auf ein freies ungebundenes Leben': 'Zigeuner'-Darstellungen in der Kinder- und Jugendliteratur des 19. Jahrhunderts zwischen Exotismus, Stereotypisierung und Wissensvermittlung," in *"Denn sie rauben sehr geschwind jedes böse Gassenkind": "Zigeuner"-Bilder in Kinder- und Jugendmedien*, edited by Petra Josting, Caroline Roeder, Frank Reuter, and Ute Wolters (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2017), 174–200.

⁴⁰ See Bogdal, *Europa erfindet die Zigeuner*, 20–24.

⁴¹ George M Woodward, *Eccentric excursions or, literary & pictorial sketches of countenance, character & country, in different parts of England & South Wales: Embellished with upwards of one hundred characteristic & illustrative prints* (London: Allen & Co., 1796).

affordable.⁴² Nevertheless, these works remained mostly inaccessible to the economically disadvantaged parts of the population, given their still relatively high price. Furthermore, literary rates in Britain were low at the time, with only half of the population being able to read.⁴³ As a result, Woodward's work was likely intended for reception by the middle class and wealthier segments of society.

In one chapter of the book, Woodward portrays the people of Buckinghamshire, featuring an image of an old, poorly dressed, and hunched character viewed from a side perspective (figs. 1).⁴⁴ In the accompanying text, Woodward explains:

*"The roads about this county, are crowded in the summer with those well known tribe of mendicants called Gypsies; their features are in general so remarkably prominent and characteristic, that I could not forbear selecting one of the principal of a hedge group, as a subject for the pencil."*⁴⁵



Fig. 1 (left): "The Gypsy" by Woodward, *Eccentric Excursions*, 86.



Fig. 2 (right): "An Agreeable Companion in a Post Chaise" by Woodward, *Eccentric Excursions*, 99.

⁴² Patricia Anderson, *The Printed Image and the Transformation of Popular Culture, 1790–1860* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 10.

⁴³ Simon Eliot, "From Few and Expensive to Many and Cheap: The British Book Market 1800–1890," in *A Companion to the History of the Book*, edited by Simon Eliot, and Jonathan Rose (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007), 293.

⁴⁴ Woodward, *Eccentric excursions*, 85–86.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

Let us elaborate on how Woodward composed the character depicted in the image, highlighting the distinct “features” he considered “prominent and characteristic”. First, not all the illustrated characters on these pages are presented from a side perspective (fig. 2). This perspective reveals that the old and poorly dressed “Gypsy” is also hunched, creating a repulsive impression for the reader of the time. Moreover, this perspective accentuates a recurring characteristic gesture that we find in various visual media in the 18th century, including paintings, illustrations, and copper engravings. This gesture invariably alludes to palm reading (as depicted in figs. 3 and 4), where the palmist extends an open hand, presumably requesting the hand of a potential customer. The wagging index finger signifies the explanation of one’s fortune or the act of palm reading itself, where the palmist typically traces the creases of the customer’s palm with their finger. Woodward’s use of the visual cliché in his caricature suggests that the interpretation of this gesture was probably familiar to his readers, possibly from other contexts in visual media. Apparently, the reader, likely from the educated bourgeoisie, could decipher the concept of fortune telling solely from the image, without the need for explicit explanation. The example not only highlights a tradition of interpretation across media but also underscores its persistence over time.

Woodward’s portrayal of the stigma is tied to his implication of “Gypsies” as an inherently poor *ethnic group*, as he refers to them as a “*tribe* of mendicants”.⁴⁶ This portrayal’s connection to ethnicity results in the racialization of poverty and means of making a living (fortune telling), which become linked to an inherent cultural identity rather than being recognized as outcomes of social and economic circumstances.

⁴⁶ Nathan Bailey’s *An universal etymological English dictionary*, in its edition from 1800, knows the following definition of “tribe”: “a company of people dwelling together in the same ward of liberty, a race or family”. The ethnic connotation did exist. See Nathan Bailey, “TRIBE,” in *An Universal Etymological English Dictionary* (London: Thomas Cox, 1800), 851. The dictionary does differentiate between the coeval definition of “tribe” and the Latin root word “tribus”. The book contains different articles for both terms. Only the English word “tribe”, as used around 1800, is attributed with a distinct ethnic connotation.



Fig. 3: David Teniers, *Fait dire la bonne aventure a sa femme*, 1750, print, 345 x 466 mm (London, The British Museum). In the centre, an old fortune teller reads the palm of a young woman.



Fig. 4: Francesco Bartolozzi, and Joshua Reynolds, *The Fortune Teller*, 1782, print, 400 x 475 mm (Overasselt: Pictura Antiqua Prints).

Because of this potential of racialization, the emergence of ethnology was crucial to the further characterization of the stigma. From the 15th century up to the present day, the word “Gypsy” (and related terms) had two distinct meanings in Europe, used by both authorities and artists. These meanings, articulated by the Dutch historian Leo Lucassen, significantly shaped the narratives surrounding this term. On the one hand, we have the ethnographic definition, which was prominent during the Late Medieval era and experienced a revival towards the end of the 18th century. According to this definition, “Gypsy” is exclusively an exonym for Roma. On the other hand, there is the sociographic definition, which was more prevalent in the early modern era. During this period, the word “Gypsy” (and related terms) was mainly associated with poor vagabonds and individuals involved in organized crime.⁴⁷ Throughout history, these two meanings coexisted, but by the end of the 18th century, the ethnographic definition had come to dominate, largely due to the rise of ethnology. This development led to the emergence of tsiganology (“Gypsy Studies”). The most significant promoter of this field was the German ethnologist Heinrich M G Grellmann, known for his work *Historischer Versuch über die Zigeuner* (1787, Eng.: *Historical Essay on the Gypsies*),⁴⁸ which was translated into several European languages and gained international recognition.⁴⁹ Grellmann and other ethnologists supported the idea of a “Gypsy” race, associating it with attributes like poverty and criminality, among other traits commonly linked to vagabonds, mendicants and criminals. Simultaneously, as tsiganology emerged, so did the concept of philogypsyism. This phenomenon described the idealized portrayal of “Gypsies” as the “other”. Fantasizing about “Gypsies” as primitives proximate to nature, writers often transformed the “Gypsy from social outcast into noble savage”⁵⁰. However, more frequently, they depicted them merely as the “indigenous savages”⁵¹ of Europe. This portrayal was steeped in

⁴⁷ See Leo Lucassen, *Zigeuner: Die Geschichte eines polizeilichen Ordnungsbegriffs in Deutschland, 1700–1945* (Cologne: Böhlau, 1996), 40–93.

⁴⁸ Heinrich M G Grellmann, *Historischer Versuch über die Zigeuner: Betreffend die Lebensart und Verfassung, Sitten und Schicksale dieses Volks seit seiner Erscheinung in Europa und dessen Ursprung*, 2nd ed. (Göttingen: Johann Christian Dieterich, 1787).

⁴⁹ See Deborah E Nord, *Gypsies & the British Imagination, 1807–1930* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 7, 21.

⁵⁰ George K Behlmer, “The Gypsy Problem in Victorian England,” *Victorian Studies* 28, no. 2 (1985): 237.

⁵¹ Ger.: “einheimischen Wilden”. Hans R Brittnacher, *Leben auf der Grenze: Klischee und Faszination des Zigeunerbildes in Literatur und Kunst* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2012), 29; also see Nord, *British Imagination*, 29–32.

exotic and erotic desires, reminiscent to colonial imagination.⁵² The emerging narratives about “Gypsies”, “Zigeuner”, “Tsiganes” etc. were rapidly exchanged throughout the Western world, mixed up into an overarching collective of motifs that represented a supposed culture of “Gypsies”.⁵³ This process paved the way for one of the most influential “Gypsy” motifs since the 19th century: the beautiful “Gypsy” femme fatale.

Second Stage: Exoticisation & Eroticisation since the 19th Century

The exoticization and eroticization of the stigma resulted in one of the most influential “Gypsy” motifs in history: the seductive Spanish “Gypsy” girl. This motif has deep historical roots, reaching to as early as 1613 in Miguel de Cervantes’ novella *La Gitanilla*. In this story, the character *Preciosa*, initially perceived as a “Gypsy” girl, is ultimately revealed to be from an aristocratic family, having been stolen by “Gypsies”. Nevertheless, her mesmerizing dancing, captivating her audience, became associated with the image of subtle eroticism and musicality of “Gypsy” girls. The flamenco dance, heavily influenced by the Roma of Spain, became intertwined with this image. Still, the idea of threatening eroticism of the female “Gypsy” was not popularized until Prosper Mérimée’s novella *Carmen* (1845), later adapted into an opera in 1875. This tragic love story is about a man who falls in love with the young and beautiful “Gypsy” girl, *Carmen*. The story ultimately concludes in tragedy, with the death of both characters: He kills her out of jealousy and is then being hanged. According to Brittnacher, this work by Mérimée played a pivotal role in establishing the connection between lust and death in “Gypsy” narratives, a theme that continues to appear in works of the 21st century.⁵⁴ This motif has been criticized for its misogynistic undertones, as it demonizes femininity.⁵⁵ Charnon-Deutsch dedicated a few pages of her work to examining the representation of femininity through young “Gypsy” women in Spanish periodicals at the end of the 19th century. She emphasizes the image of

⁵² For an overview, see Lou Charnon-Deutsch, *The Spanish Gypsy: The History of a European Obsession* (State College, PA: Penn State University Press, 2004).

⁵³ For an overview, see Bogdal, *Europa erfindet die Zigeuner*.

⁵⁴ Brittnacher, *Leben auf der Grenze*, 238–239.

⁵⁵ Lou Charnon-Deutsch, *Hold that Pose: Visual Culture in the Late-Nineteenth-Century Spanish Periodical* (State College, PA: Penn State University Press, 2008), 10.

the beautiful “Gypsy” femme fatale as an expression of misogyny by bourgeois men, who were both the creators and audience of these narratives.⁵⁶ But already in the 19th century some individuals deciphered this image as such, particularly in the context of the rising labour and women’s rights movement.

Demonstrating this awareness of the motif during the 19th century, we can turn our attention to *Der Wahre Jacob*, a German social-democratic illustrated satire magazine. As the most widely circulated periodical among the working class in Imperial Germany, it exhibited a strong commitment to the causes of workers’ and women’s rights. One of its authors was Clara Müller-Jahnke (1860–1905), an influential socialist and feminist writer in Imperial Germany. In the issue from 2 March 1897, an article titled *Die Zigeunerin* (Eng.: *The Gypsy Woman*) is featured, containing both text and illustrations. This article presents a fictional story about the owner of a stocking factory, Mr *Schneider*.⁵⁷ Most of his employees are women and the narrator implies that he sexually harasses some of them.⁵⁸ The identities of the author and the illustrator of the article are anonymous, but the story bears a striking resemblance to a biographical episode of Müller-Jahnke’s life. There exists a possibility that she might have been the author or at least a source of inspiration for the story. During her youth, Müller-Jahnke briefly worked as an accountant in a factory, an experience marked by her own encounter with sexual harassment by her boss. Subsequently, she left the factory, started to work as a teacher, and ultimately pursued a career as a writer.⁵⁹

The first setting of the article is a masked ball. Mr *Schneider* takes part in the festivity, choosing to attire himself as a pasha, notably without wearing a mask. During this event, he encounters a tall, slender woman who is disguised and masked as a “Gypsy”, with her specific attributes remaining unmentioned. Mr *Schneider* is sexually attracted to her, prompting him to seize the opportunity and

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ “Die Zigeunerin,” *Der Wahre Jacob*, no. 277 (1897): 2395–2396.

⁵⁸ The statement in the text, in German: “Schneider, welcher in seiner Fabrik viele Mädchen beschäftigte, [versuchte] öfter hübschen Arbeiterinnen ‘menschlich näher zu treten’” (Eng.: “Schneider, who employed many girls in his factory, often [tried] to get closer to the good looking female workers”). Ibid., 2395.

⁵⁹ See Julius Hart, “Vorwort,” in *Clara Müller-Jahnke: Gedichte* (Berlin: Buchhandlung Vorwärts, 1910), 10.

asking her to reveal his fortune. This request draws upon the longstanding topos of “Gypsy” fortune telling. After dropping a few cryptic hints, she explains to him: “You love to see your factory as a harem, although the inmates do not at all agree with that”⁶⁰, and continues, “Thus, the revolution of the harem – that means a strike of the working women”⁶¹. Schneider, taken by surprise, asks her who will instigate the strike. She responds: “Well, Rosel. You see, I know and investigate everything. You promised Rosel wonderful things, silk dresses, bracelets, and so on if she – well if she would like your noble, thoughtful bald head. Rosel, however, does not want anything from you. She thinks if you just paid her and her colleagues appropriate salaries, your money would be spent better. Therefore, she will soon do a palace revolution to you, or – if you prefer to hear that, a strike”⁶².

Shortly thereafter, she departs, leaving Mr *Schneider* in the dark regarding the true identity of the disguised woman. The following day, he orders *Rosel* to his office and confronts her, revealing her as the “Gypsy” masquerader, who had sneaked into the masked ball. In the end, she forces him to raise the workers’ wages.

The text deals with the topics of wage justice for women and the problem of sexual harassment in the workplace. The leitmotif of all articles in this periodical issue is carnival, making a masked ball the first setting for the story *Die Zigeunerin*. Thus, what truly stands out in this specific article is its distinct theme as indicated by its title: the choice of *Rosel*’s disguise as a “Gypsy” woman. This disguise not only captures Mr *Schneider*’s attention but also becomes a means for her to get in touch with him. *Rosel* uses the motif of “Gypsy” fortune telling to convey her message, which carries a threat. This threat matches her miming of the “Gypsy” femme fatale, yet in this context, it is employed to address issues of social

⁶⁰ Ger.: “Du liebst es, Deine Fabrik als einen Harem anzusehen, obgleich die Insassen gar nicht damit einverstanden sind”. “Die Zigeunerin,” 2396.

⁶¹ Ger.: “Also die Haremsrevolution – das bedeutet einen Arbeiterinnenstreik”. Ibid.

⁶² Ger.: “Nun ja, Rosel. Du siehst, ich weiß und erforsche Alles. Du hast der Rosel wunderbare Dinge versprochen, seidene Kleider, Armbänder und so weiter, wenn sie – nun, wenn sie Deine edle Denkerlatze schön finden würde. Die Rosel aber will gar nichts von Dir haben, sie meint, wenn Du ihr und ihren Kolleginnen leidlich anstehende Löhne zahltest, wäre Dein Geld besser angewandt. Deshalb macht sie Dir nächstens eine Palastrevolution, oder – wenn Du das lieber hörst, einen Streik.” Ibid.

injustice. To gain a full understanding of the narrative, we must also look at the two images that accompany the text.



Fig. 5: First image of “Die Zigeunerin”, 2396.

In the first image (figs. 5), we encounter two young and almost naked women, with only the pubic area covered by a piece of fabric. Adorned with bracelets, necklaces, and earrings common to Oriental imagination, these accessories conform to the typical representation of the “Gypsy” *femme fatale*. The women flee from a demonic creature reminiscent of Pan or, in a Christian context, Baphomet. It has a human torso, horns on the head, and the lower body of a goat. Moreover, this creature resembles a middle-aged, overweight man, deviating from conventional beauty standards of the past and the present, thus signifying its unsightliness. This portrayal employs weight as a symbol of gluttony and unsightliness, traits historically linked in Europe with notions of evil. The chase of the sexualized women by this demonized figure can be regarded as a metaphor for the factory owner’s rampant lust, a cardinal sin in Christian moral values. This metaphor associates with the sexual harassment of the female workers described in the text. The image potentially bears some irony, as the sexualized women might also serve as a lure to attract male readership.



Fig. 6: Second image of “Die Zigeunerin”. Ibid.

The second image (figs. 6) presents a rather realistic illustration. It shows the scene where the worker *Rose* engages in a conversation with the factory owner in his office, forcing him to raise the salaries of his (mostly female) workers. She stands in the foreground, depicted frontally in a superb pose. One of her hands is resting on the factory owner’s desk, the other on her hip, only her face being turned slightly to the side with a calm gaze. This portrayal suggests a sense of dignified serenity, in contrast to the factory owner, who is sitting in the background with a surprised expression on his face. The image conveys *Rose*’s superiority over the factory owner, underscoring her triumph in the conflict. Adding depth to the narrative, we observe a detail on the wall behind them: a hanging picture bearing the inscription “Liebe deinen nächsten wie dich selbst” (Eng.: “You shall love your neighbour as yourself”). This phrase, even today, remains one of the most renowned quotes from the Bible and the Tanakh, a call for benevolence and compassion. The religious symbolism in both images serves to underscore the story as an example of justice in line with Christian moral values in German

society. Thus, it reinforces the cause for workers' and women's rights as advocated in the text.

The significance of the "Gypsy" motif in this article is evident in two key aspects: the interplay between the images and their association with the written text. When we examine the interplay between the images, a striking similarity emerges between the factory owner's appearance in the second picture and the Baphomet-like creature from the first image. They share notable characteristics, including a bold head, facial features, a thick neck, and a moustache styled in the same manner. Consequently, the previously metaphorical demonic creature transforms into a directly identifiable character, the factory owner. This transformation does not apply to *Rose/*, as neither of the two women from the first image resembles her. Therefore, she is not identified with their revealing and potentially undignified appearance, as the "Gypsy" women persist in their role as abstract symbols, existing solely as objects of desire for the factory owner. In regard of the images' association with the written text, let us recall a statement made by *Rose/* in the text, where she mentions the factory owner promising her "wonderful things" like jewellery, specifically "bracelets". This may be regarded as the man's attempt to decorate his object of desire to align her with his ideal of beauty. This ideal is embodied in both the revealing yet decorated "Gypsy" women from the first image and the disguised *Rose/* in the text. Charnon-Deutsch has previously emphasized jewellery as the central element in the visualization of the Spanish "Gypsy", highlighting its main function as an appreciation of women for the male gaze.⁶³

The "Gypsy" motif is exposed: Its original misogynistic undertone becomes a symbol of female empowerment. While the motif persisted, it was interpreted variously throughout history.

So far, we have traced the milestones in the international and cross-media discourse on the "Gypsy" motif before 1945. We saw how characteristics, such as poverty, criminality, a nomadic lifestyle, and the femme fatale, have collectively shaped the contemporary "Gypsy" motif. These foundational characteristics

⁶³ See Charnon-Deutsch, *Hold That Pose*, 10–33.

provide the backdrop for the subsequent developments that we observe in the following chapters. In the final section of this chapter, I introduce the emancipation of comics from traditional narratives of children's literature, primarily focusing on American works. Through these examples, we prevent misinterpreting "Gypsy" stories in the medium as mere continuations of children's literature. This analysis highlights the unique features of storytelling in modern comics and demonstrate the first discourse evolution of the "Gypsy" concept in American comics that can be observed already before 1945.

Third Stage: Comics' Emancipation from Children's Literature since the 20th Century

A significant premise for the discourse evolutions in comics after 1945 was the medium's emancipation from children's literature. Although comics had their origins in newspaper cartoons, which were mainly entertainment for adults, they frequently featured underage protagonists and drew upon themes common to children's books. This assertion is supported by a case study conducted by semantic scholar Martin Frenzel, who provides an early example of a Franco-Belgian comic featuring a "Gypsy" character: *Bécassine* by Maurice Languereau, and Joseph Pinchon. This series, about a naïve maid from the countryside of Brittany, is the most iconic comic series in French pre- and interwar history⁶⁴. In the first comic album from 1913, the maid *Bécassine* encounters a "Gypsy" camp and a man named *père Chevaudebois*.⁶⁵ She asks him to kidnap her, but he rejects her plea. He calls over multiple children from the camp, who line up, each with different looks and hair colours – clearly not his own. He says, "I really don't have to steal anymore. It's hard enough to feed those!"⁶⁶. It is a comedic scene that makes fun of "Gypsy" child theft, a motif that had been present in various media since its introduction by Miguel de Cervantes' novella *La Gitanilla* (1613).

⁶⁴ See Laurence Grove, *Comics in French: The European Bande Dessinée in Context* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2010), 118; also see the mention in Martin Frenzel, "Zwischen Hergés Klarer Linie, Emmanuel Guiberts Reisen zu den Roma und der Porajmos-Erzählung Batchalo: Das Bild der Sinti und Roma im frankobelgischen Comic," in *Selbst- und Fremdbilder von Roma in Comic und Graphic Novel: Vom Holocaust bis zur Gegenwart*, edited by Marina Ortrud M Hertrampf and Kirsten von Hagen (Munich: AVM, 2021), 85–86.

⁶⁵ See Languereau, Maurice (writer), and Joseph Pinchon (artist), *Bécassine* (Paris: Gautier-Languereau, 1913).

⁶⁶ Fre.: "J'ai vraiment pas besoin d'en voler d'autres. C'est déjà assez difficile de nourrir ceux-là!". Ibid., 60.

This motif had also found its way into children's literature, where it was used as a thrilling element and a deterrent to misbehaving children – the “Gypsies” would come and take away naughty children.⁶⁷ In contrast, early popular American comics like *Yellow Kid* or the *Katzenjammer Kids* frequently depict coeval street culture, young tramps, and sometimes an old woman in rags, but they do not explicitly reference “Gypsy” motifs. Instead, these strips occasionally show ridiculed, stereotyped black characters and, in some cases, even outright anti-black violence.⁶⁸ Only with the development of American comics into an export phenomenon did “Gypsy” characters become relevant content. Child theft also emerged as a prevalent theme in this context. An example is *Mickey and the Ransom Plot* (1930) by Floyd Gottfredson, one of the first Disney comic strips, published in multiple newspapers via the King Features Syndicate. In this story, “Gypsies” kidnap *Mickey*'s girlfriend, *Minnie Mouse*, and demand a ransom for her release.⁶⁹ While *Mickey* and *Minnie*, anthropomorphic mice, are never explicitly stated as underage, the action toward these innocent-looking characters potentially invokes the cliché of child theft by “Gypsies”. This undertone of child theft extended beyond comics to animations by Disney, as seen in the animated film *Pinocchio* from 1940. It is loosely based on a children's book by the Italian writer Carlo Collodi from 1881/1883, originally a tragic story about a boy who is an anthropomorphic wooden puppet. As a result of his bad behaviour and lies, the story ends with his execution.⁷⁰ The script of the 1940 animation is quite different because here the wooden puppet *Pinocchio* tries to fulfil the wish of his creator *Gepetto* to become a real human boy. During the adventure, he encounters a character called *Stromboli* who is based on the “Gypsy” *Mangiafuoco* from the children's book. In contrast to the original character, *Stromboli* is antagonized. Moreover, he is shown with dark skin, exaggerated thick lips, and in Oriental dress (fig. 7). He buys *Pinocchio* from thugs for his private theatre, imprisoning him between shows to prevent his escape.⁷¹

⁶⁷ On the “Gypsy” motif in children's literature, see, for example, Schmideler, “Freies ungebundenes Leben”, 185.

⁶⁸ For example, see Richard F Outcault (writer, artist), “The Yellow Kid's Great Fight,” *New York Journal*, 20 December 1896, 8.

⁶⁹ See Floyd Gottfredson (writer, artist), “Race to Death Valley,” in *Race to Death Valley*, edited by David Gerstein (College Park, MD: Fantagraphics, 2011), 169–201.

⁷⁰ See Carlo Collodi, *Le avventure di Pinocchio: Storia di un burattino* (Florence: Felice Paggi, 1883).

⁷¹ See Ted Sears et al, writers, *Pinocchio* (Burbank: The Walt Disney Company, 1940).

Stromboli embodies multiple “Gypsy” motifs, most obviously in his appearance and associations with showmanship and criminality. Furthermore, the subtext of his actions alludes to child theft, as *Pinocchio* closely resembles a young boy.



Fig. 7: Screenshot from Walt Disney's *Pinocchio* (1940). It shows the character *Stromboli*.

Since the 1930s, parallel to these stories, more and more comics indicated a change in discourse. Unlike the previously shown works by Languereau, Pinchon and Disney, these comics feature adult protagonists and present stories with greater depth and complexity. Many of these comics were issued as independent comic books rather than appearing in newspapers. Ironically, as the medium emancipated itself from children's literature, children became the primary target audience. The adult protagonists in these comics are not stolen by “Gypsies”. Instead, they are role models for the young readers, conveying the simple message that good always triumphs over evil, and bravery in the face of an enemy is idealized and admired. While “Gypsies” fulfil a variety of functions in

literary history, not just as demonized antagonists but also as objects of philogypsyism, this is rarely the case in popular American Golden Age comics.⁷² This could be attributed to the dominant genres in American comic magazines, which were superhero, action, and crime stories. For example, DC (known as “Detective Comics”) was among the most well-known publishers. During the Second World War, a total of four issues by DC features “Gypsy” characters, including *Superman* and *Batman* comics. In all these stories, “Gypsies” are murderers or tricksters. The *Superman* comic *Rinaldo’s Revenge* (1940) deals with a murder case in a “Gypsy” camp.⁷³ In DC’s *Doctor Fate: The Two Fates* in *More Fun Comics* #83 (1942), two former “Gypsy” showmen appear as antagonists who sell amateur tapestries to people for a large sum, claiming that

⁷² 20 Issues of the following popular magazines from the 1930s and 40s have been considered (Publisher before the arrow – for more information, see the annotated index):

- DC → G B Armbruster (writer), and Gloria Kamen (inker), “Rinaldo’s Revenge,” *Superman*, no. 7 (1940); Gardner Fox (writer), and Howard Sherman (artist), “Doctor Fate: The Two Fates,” *More Fun Comics*, no. 83 (1942); Don C Cameron (writer), and Jerry Robinson (artist), “Batman and Robin: Destiny’s Auction!,” *Detective Comics*, no. 79 (1943); Alfred Bester (writer), and Stan Kaye (artist), “Genius Jones: The Saving Scot and the Gypsy Gyp!,” *Adventure Comics*, no. 92 (1944).
- Marvel → Ed Winiarski (writer, artist), and Don Rico (inker), “Gypo and Bobby,” *U. S. A. Comics*, no. 5 (1942).
- Archie → Joe Blair (writer), and Ed Smalle (artist), “Gypsy Johnson,” *Blue Ribbon Comics*, no. 4–8 (1940–41).
- Fawcett Publications → “Dr. Voodoo: The Gypsy Brigands,” *Whiz Comics*, no. 34 (1942); “Mark Swift and the Time Retarder: Napoleon and the Gypsies,” *Slam-Bang Comics*, no. 7 (1940).
- Eastern Colors → Julian Ollendorff (writer, artist), “Olly of the Movies,” *Famous Funnies*, no. 99 (1942).
- Fiction House → Edwin Loughlin (writer), and Eisner and Iger Studio (artist), “Spencer Steel: The Perfect Crime,” *Jumbo Comics*, no. 10 (1939); T E Bowen (writer), and Bob Lubbers (artist), “Captain Wings,” *Wings Comics*, no. 28 (1942).
- Dell Publishing → Roy Crane (writer, artist), “Captain Easy,” *The Funnies*, no. 6 (1937); Gaylord Du Bois (writer), and H R McBride (artist), “Uncle Wiggily: Helping the Homeless,” *Animal Comics*, no. 13 (1945); “True Spy Stories: Gypsy Fortune Teller,” *Popular Comics*, no. 67 (1941).
- Centaur Publications → Tarpé Mills (writer, artist), “Cat-Man: The Return of the Cat Man,” *Amazing Man Comics*, no. 8 (1939); Claire S Moe (writer, artist), “The Circus and Sue: Jon the Gypsy Cuts a Rope,” *Funny Pages*, no. 42 (1940).
- Fox Feature Syndicate → Frank Little (writer, artist), “Red Kamphor: It’s the Gypsy in Them!,” in *All Great Comics*, edited by Victor Fox (New York: Fox Feature Syndicate, 1944).
- Quality Comics → Art Pinajian (writer, artist), “Madam Fatal: The Gypsy Murder,” *Crack Comics*, no. 13 (1941).
- Great Comics Publications → Larson Wells (writer), “The Great Zarro: Origin of the Great Zarro,” *Great Comics*, no. 1 (1941).
- Whitman Publishing → Frank Thomas (writer, artist), “The Owl,” *Crackajack Funnies*, no. 43 (1942).
- Holyoke Publishing → Charles Nicholas (penciler), and Sol Brodsky (inker), “Little Leaders: Gypsies,” *Cat-Man Comics*, no. 13 (1942).

⁷³ See Armbruster, “Rinaldo’s Revenge”.

these tapestries reveal their fate.⁷⁴ One *Batman* comic, *Batman and Robin. Destiny's Auction!* in *Detective Comics #79* (1943), features a criminal “Gypsy” fortune teller.⁷⁵ And in DC’s *Genius Jones. The Saving Scot and the Gypsy Gyp!* in *Adventure Comics #92* (1944), the antagonist is once again a criminal “Gypsy”.⁷⁶

As a major contribution to the discourse on “Gypsy” notion in comics, the use of adult protagonists and an increasing complexity of storytelling allowed the medium to explore new subjects and narratives. This exploration included the portrayal of “Gypsies” within the power dynamics of colonial imagination. An example of this can be found in the comic *Dr. Voodoo: The Gypsy Brigands*, which was published in 1942 in *Whiz Comics #34* by Fawcett publications.⁷⁷ The protagonist, *Dr. Voodoo*, is a time traveller searching for an artefact known as the *Golden Flask*, which is located in the High Middle Ages. During his journey into the past, he encounters a group of crusaders, and together, they pursue the search, eventually finding the artefact. However, before returning to his own time, *Dr. Voodoo* is required to travel to England in the company of the crusaders. Along their journey, they come across a “Gypsy” camp, where one of the knights issues a warning to *Dr. Voodoo*, characterizing the “Gypsies” as “the worst cutthroats and robbers in christendom!”⁷⁸. Despite this caution, *Dr. Voodoo* proceeds through the camp. But his daring is met with consequences, as one of the “Gypsies” skilfully snatches the *Golden Flask* from his pocket using a long whip. Shortly thereafter, the group is attacked by the “Gypsies”, who initially gain the upper hand due to the crusader’s heavier equipment. In one panel, a “Gypsy” forcefully pushes a crusader to the ground and levels a dagger at him (figs. 8). Ultimately, *Dr. Voodoo* intervenes and manages to turn the situation in their favour, leading to the defeat of the “Gypsies”.

⁷⁴ See Fox, and Sherman, “Doctor Fate”.

⁷⁵ See Cameron, and Robinson, “Batman and Robin”.

⁷⁶ See Bester, and Kaye, “Genius Jones”.

⁷⁷ See “Dr. Voodoo,” 50–55.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 50. The story disregards the fact that Roma as well as the term “Gypsy” didn’t appear in Latin Europe prior the 14th and 15th centuries.



Fig. 8: A “Gypsy” attacks a knight. “Dr. Voodoo”, 53.

Beyond the overt allusions to King Arthur’s quest, this comic follows storytelling patterns typical to adventure literature about colonial expeditions in Africa. In this story, the expedition takes the form of a time traveller and a group of knights searching for an artefact. The journey into “unexplored” lands is projected onto a journey back into the premodern history of Europe, immersing the audience into an alternative reality. As the story unfolds, the group has a perilous encounter with “savages”, represented by the “Gypsies”. This colonial narrative resembles an earlier time-travel-themed comic by Fawcett, titled *Mark Swift and the Time Retarder: Napoleon and the Gypsies* in *Slam-Bang Comics* #7 (1940).⁷⁹ Here, the protagonists travel back to the Napoleonic Era, where they are confronted by a group of “Gypsies” who demand not only the technology of time travel but also that the protagonists join their ranks. When the protagonists decline, the barbaric chief of the “Gypsies” decides to burn them alive (figs. 9).

⁷⁹ “Napoleon and the Gypsies,” 42–48.



Fig. 9: The “Gypsy” chief decides to burn the heroes alive. “Napoleon and the Gypsies,” 46.

The medium’s novel appropriation of mature and complex subjects and narratives also contributed to the rise of social critique in the discourse on “Gypsy” notion. Initially though, this critique did not revolve around an anti-racist agenda but, rather, the exploitation of the stigma to address other concerns. One example from the Second World War is the comic *Captain Wings* by T E Bowen and Bob Lubbers in *Wings Comics* #28 (1942).⁸⁰ *Captain Wings* is a pilot of the US Airforce in the Pacific, fighting the Japanese forces. One day, a beautiful “Gypsy” woman visits the base, aiming to uplift the spirits of the soldiers by performing a song for their entertainment. Thereafter, she offers to read their fortunes, with the aid of a skull. The first one she tells: “You’ll never see America again!”. The second, named *Lloyd*, is assured: “You have nothing to fear”, which leaves him sceptical as he is the next to go on a mission. For the third, she foresees: “After the war you will return to America!”. Lastly, the “Gypsy” woman delivers a grim prophecy to *Captain Wings*, revealing him that “Death will court you every day of your life!”. Shortly thereafter, Japanese bombers attack the base, resulting in the death of the first soldier whose fortune was read, thus fulfilling her prophecy. Later, *Captain Wings* finds out about the next mission, which his comrade *Lloyd* must take up – a suicidal attempt to eliminate a Japanese destroyer with a single plane and a torpedo. Realizing the danger, *Captain Wings* explains to the reader: “Lloyd doesn’t realize his is a suicidal job!”.⁸¹ *Captain Wings* takes matters into his own

⁸⁰ See Bowen, and Lubbers, “Captain Wings,” 1–10.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 5.

hands and knocks *Lloyd* out to ensure his survival. He undertakes the mission in *Lloyd's* place, emphasizing that "this is a job for Captain Wings!"⁸² In a series of nearly fatal encounters and lucky coincidences, *Captain Wings* manages to sink the Japanese destroyer. However, due to the damage sustained to his plane during the mission, he is forced to steal a Japanese fighter. When his comrades encounter him in this enemy aircraft, they fail to recognize him. *Captain Wings* is subsequently attacked by American planes, and gets a critically hit, leading to a crash landing, which he barely survives. Eventually, he returns to the base and is celebrated for his accomplishment in sinking the Japanese destroyer. The "Gypsy" woman is mocked by the soldiers for her allegedly incorrect prophecy, but her skull tells her that she was right. *Captain Wings*, keeping the events secret, remarks: "That skull shouldn't talk so loudly!"

In this story, *Captain Wings* completes an absurdly difficult mission of eliminating a Japanese destroyer all by himself and he even survives. The subsequent attack by his comrades underlines that not only is the enemy a formidable force, but also the U. S. Airforce is a strong faction in the war. Nevertheless, this comic is no typical wartime propaganda; it conveys an anti-war subtext: Throughout the story, the great threat of death is present. One of *Captain Wings'* comrades is killed in a Japanese bomber attack and only the almost überhuman pilot abilities of *Captain Wings* let him succeed in what he acknowledges as a suicidal mission. The story rejects the use of soldiers as "cannon fodder" while expressing that this is part of warfare. A key figure in this narrative is the "Gypsy" woman, who assumes the role of a revealer. She reveals the threat of war and is coded as a positive character who contributes to the war effort by motivating the soldiers. At the same time, she conveys the unpredictability of death in war. In the last panel, *Captain Wings* implies that the skull's prophecies should remain concealed from his comrades, as he apparently wishes to spare them from the disturbing truths contained in the prophecies. This story offers its reader, probably a young boy, a glimpse into the omnipresence of death in the Pacific theatre during the war. It provides a nuanced perspective on the grim realities of combat that transcends traditional war propaganda.

⁸² Ibid.

The emergence of new subjects and narratives in comics, coupled with an increasing inclination toward social critique, laid the groundwork for comics to address the Romani genocide and contemporary racism after the Second World War. Prior to this era, such confrontations were absent. All the comics featured on these pages were published during the same period when Sinti and Roma, people labelled as “Gypsies”, endured persecution in Nazi Germany. Approximately 500.000 Sinti and Roma were murdered in the national socialist genocide, based on racial ideology. The awareness of these events among Americans during that time is questionable. The end of the Second World War and the end of the genocide did not mark the end of antigypsyism in politics and society. It was not until 1982 that the Federal Republic of Germany officially recognized the genocide, a milestone achieved through the dedicated efforts of the Romani civil rights movement. This historical development was accompanied as well as contrasted by discourses on the fictional construct of the “Gypsy” – global popular culture did not stay the same after 1945.

2

Comics & National Discourses

The “Gypsy” motif is not entirely globalized. It is constantly in the making – with different results around the world. In Part Two of this thesis, I argue that the “Gypsy” motif in comics after 1945 is embedded in national discourses. Public debates and national markets, for example, contribute to these discourses. Supply and demand determine the market which differs from country to country: While superhero and crime comics are popular in the United States, travel and adventure stories dominate in the French-speaking world. And in Japan, shōjo and shōnen manga (comics for girls or boys), for instance, have developed their own aesthetic and narrative conventions. I will look at comics in these three different contexts: the American, the Franco-Belgian, and the Japanese context. The elaboration involves case studies from seven influential comic artists that will be examined in detail: Stan Lee, David Michelinie, Hergé (Georges Prosper Remi), René Goscinny, and Albert Uderzo as well as TEZUKA Osamu and TAKEMIYA Keiko. I consider their *œuvres*, including six comprehensive case studies: For the USA these are *The Fantastic Origin of Doctor Doom!* (1964) by Lee and Jack Kirby as well as *The Avengers #181–187* (1979) by Michelinie. In the Franco-Belgian section, I focus on *Les Bijoux de la Castafiore* (1960/61) by Hergé and *Astérix en Hispanie* (1967) by Uderzo and Goscinny. The case studies on manga will be *Mignon* (1957) by Tezuka and *Kaze to Ki no Uta* (1976–1984) by Takemiya. For each of these case studies, I will first summarise the plot. Depending on the respective epistemological interest, a study of narrative and/or characters will then follow, in which the works are compared with existing narrative patterns from historical literature and arts. Cartoon analysis is a tool I use to consider more complex visual compositions and the tone they convey. For example, elaboration on a splash – a large illustration on the comic’s first page – can be used to examine characters, setting and tone. Throughout the case studies, individual images and panels are dealt with, while multiple pages are summarized for convenience. In this way, sequential art is treated as narrative text, as an object of narratology.⁸³ Character analysis too will be an important tool.

⁸³ On the Narrativity of text and image in comics, see Gunther Kress, and Theo van Leeuwen, *Multimodal Discourse: The Modes and Media of Contemporary Communication* (London: A&C Black 3PI, 2001).

Chapter Two

American Comics – Genocide & Fantasy



1. American Fantasies: Once Upon a Time in Europe...

From early on, European works were significant influences on American discourse on “Gypsy” notion. The most impactful works in the motif’s genealogy came from Spain, France, Britain, and Germany.⁸⁴ And West-European settlers as well as their descendants also dominated the discourses in American popular culture for centuries. Prominent 19th-century writers from the United States implemented the “Gypsy” motif: for example, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807–82) in his play *The Spanish Student* (1843). This piece about a student in Spain who falls for a “Gypsy” girl is inspired by Miguel de Cervantes’ novella *La Gitanilla* (1613).⁸⁵ Or Emily Dickinson (1830–86): She compares herself with a “Gypsy” in her poems *Tho’ My Destiny be Fustian* (1861) and *He touched me, so I live to know* (1862).⁸⁶ In the latter, she uses this comparison in the first verse:

⁸⁴ See the elaborations by Brittnacher and Bogdal: See Hans R Brittnacher, *Leben auf der Grenze: Klischee und Faszination des Zigeunerbildes in Literatur und Kunst* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2012); see Klaus-Michael Bogdal, *Europa erfindet die Zigeuner: Eine Geschichte von Faszination und Verachtung* (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2011); see “Chapter One” in this thesis, 16–37.

⁸⁵ See Henry W Longfellow, *The Spanish Student: A Play in Three Acts* (Cambridge, MA: John Owen, 1843).

⁸⁶ See Emily Dickinson, *Poems: As She Preserved Them*, edited by Crisianne Miller (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016), 117–119, 184–186.

*“And now, I’m different from before,
 As if breathed superior air –
 Or brushed a Royal Gown –
 My feet, too, that had wandered so –
 My Gypsy face – transfigured now –
 To tendered Renown –”*⁸⁷

We see a comparison of the lyrical “I” with a poor “Gypsy”: Her wandering feet (like those of a nomad) and her “Gypsy face” appear as symbols of hardship and trouble she endured. The fascination for this motif reached beyond the boundaries of Europe.

The other way around, American works were not significant influences on European discourse on “Gypsy” notion, as suggested by Brittnacher’s and Bogdal’s elaboration on the stigma in literary history.⁸⁸ While the United States did have a large Romani population,⁸⁹ Dickinson and Longfellow are rare cases of prominent American writers in the 19th century who used the “Gypsy” motif in their works. Longfellow located the “Gypsy” in Europe, specifically Spain, and Dickinson used the motif as a symbol. Likewise, the most popular case of this motif in American world literature, written much later, was not embedding these characters in a domestic setting: the novel *For Whom the Bell tolls* (1940) by Ernest Hemingway.⁹⁰ It is about an American teacher who fights in the Spanish civil war on the side of the Republicans. Here, he meets a “Gypsy” as one of his comrades. Once again, “Gypsies” were not imagined as Americans.

This European connotation and domination of the “Gypsy” stigma does not necessarily imply an American interest in the actual situation of the Europeans who were labelled with this term. For example, Hemingway’s novel *For Whom the Bell tolls* was published during the Second World War and explicitly deals with

⁸⁷ Ibid., 184.

⁸⁸ See Brittnacher, *Leben auf der Grenze*; see Bogdal, *Europa erfindet die Zigeuner*.

⁸⁹ Currently, there are only comprehensive tsiganologist works that consider Romani American history. They may be read with critical intent. See particularly Anne Sutherland, *The Hidden Americans* (London: Tavistock, 1975).

⁹⁰ See Ernest Hemingway, *For Whom the Bell Tolls* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1940).

the fight against a fascist regime. But the situation of the victims of fascism is not considered. In the novel, the teacher's comrade merely functions as amusement for the reader, is mocked for his stupidity and cowardice. We have seen this ignorance before in another medium: American Golden Age comics. Apparently, there was a disinterest not only in products of popular culture but also in so-called world literature, as the case of Hemingway suggests. The national socialist genocide against half a million Sinti and Roma was widely ignored by these media producers. Fantastic "Gypsies" continued to represent criminals and murderers in the stories, but soon new tendencies would be relevant in the works of prominent comic artists from the United States.

In the following pages, I elaborate on these new tendencies that can be observed in the representation of antigypsyist violence. The elaboration is dedicated especially to products by Marvel but also by other publishers like DC, as these cooperations were and are among the most successful American comic publishers. Their products have been mostly superhero, crime, and adventure stories. I focus on the works by Stan Lee, and David Michelinie. My hypothesis is that American comics of the Cold-War period developed the peculiarity of frequently embedding powerful "Gypsy" characters in fantasies of European genocide and pogrom. These fantasies involved the creation of a new motif: the "Gypsy" super-human that is characterized by super-human powers used to avenge personal suffering. And this new motif must be viewed in the context of the previous national socialist genocide as well as the civil rights movement, as I will show. First, old and new interpretations of the "Gypsy" motif in American comics will be discussed. That means examining the traditional motif of "Gypsies" vindictiveness in the context of a new post-war discourse on racist violence. I demonstrate how the interplay between the motif and the new discourse was used by Stan Lee in his fantasies of Romani genocide and pogrom. It will become evident that his fantasies influence the portrayal of antigypsyist violence in American comics to this day. In this elaboration, I will consider two examples in detail: *The Fantastic Origin of Doctor Doom!* by Lee and Jack Kirby which was published in *Fantastic Four Annual #2* (1964), as well as David Michelinie's *The Avengers #181–187* (1979).

2. Revengeful Victims: Fantasy of Genocide

1945 was not a caesura in the medial awareness of the Romani genocide. Instead, representations of brutality, including antigypsyist violence, were increasingly glorified in the post-war era: Poor sales led to the cancellation of most superhero titles in the late 1940s and publishers had to find new ways to attract readers' attention.⁹¹ In Marvel's *Captain America* #58 (1946), the hero must stop a diabolic "Gypsy" woodcarver who kills people if they do not buy his work.⁹² In DC's *Wonder Woman* #29 (1948), the heroine saves some girls who have witnessed a murder among "Gypsies" and are threatened with being thrown to the circus tigers.⁹³ In other stories, beautiful "Gypsy" women incite men to murder someone.⁹⁴ The characters are one-dimensional representatives of evil or doom. Of course, discourse was diverse, and some "Gypsy" characters had been not purely evil creatures. Sometimes, they were ambiguous fortune tellers whose foreseeing or even mere presence benefitted a story's mystical tone and narrative.⁹⁵ There were cases of more innovative storytelling too: DC's *The Gypsies of Space!* by Edmond Hamilton, Curt Swan, published in *Action Comics* #148 (1950), is a science-fiction story. Here, "Gypsies" travel through the universe from planet to planet. After being accused of a crime they did not commit, they are expelled from Venus.⁹⁶ Nevertheless, social criticism was rare in American post-war comics, according to historian Bradford Wright: "Superheroes after World War II had far less to say about their world than ever before"⁹⁷.

⁹¹ See Bradford W Wright, *Comic Book Nation: The Transformation of Youth Culture in America* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2003), 57–75.

⁹² See Bill Finger (writer), Al Avison (penciler), and Frank Borth (inker), "Crime on Cue," *Captain America*, no. 58 (1946).

⁹³ See William Marston (writer), and Harry Peter (artist), "Tale of the Tigers," *Wonder Woman*, no. 29 (1948).

⁹⁴ For example, see Bill Everett (writer, artist), "Sorry... Mr. Hopkins!," *Mystic*, no. 8 (1952); see Jack Keller (writer, artist), "Surprise!," *Adventures into Weird Worlds*, no. 16 (1953).

⁹⁵ For example, see Don C Cameron (writer), Paul Cooper (penciler), and Ray Burnley (inker), "Batman with Robin the Boy Wonder: Steeplejack's Showdown!," *Detective Comics*, no. 117 (1946); see Vern Henkel (writer, artist), "Curse of the Gypsy!," *All-True Crime Cases Comics*, no. 35 (1949); see Bob Oksner (artist), [Cover], *A Date with Judy*, no. 27 (1952).

⁹⁶ See Edmond Hamilton (writer), Curt Swan (penciler), John Fischetti (inker), "Tommy Tomorrow: The Gypsies of Space!," *Action Comics*, no. 148 (1950). The reader may consider that the narrative of wrongly accused and expelled "Gypsies" alone is not a new idea. It is a plot element in the novel *Guy Mannering* (1815) by Walter Scott, for instance. Also see Günter Oesterle, "'Zigeunerbilder' als Maske des Romantischen," in *'Zigeunerbilder' in der deutschsprachigen Literatur*, edited by Wilhelm Solms, and Daniel Strauß (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag C. Winter, 1995); see Bogdal, *Europa erfindet die Zigeuner*, 177–190.

⁹⁷ Wright, *Comic Book Nation*, 59.

The first major shift in American discourse on racism emerged in the early 1950s: Simultaneously with the increasing media presence of the civil rights movement, crimes by members of the Ku Klux Klan received more attention. Disbanded in 1871 and again in 1944, the white supremacist organization was re-established in 1946. It did not take long before members started to continue the predecessor's tradition of hate crimes. There were numerous bomb attacks on Black neighbourhoods, especially in the South. In the years 1951/52 alone 40 Black families were bombed across the United States, and many were injured or killed.⁹⁸ The American public did not stay uninformed about these and other acts of racist terror. In 1953, the Pulitzer Prize was awarded to the newspapers *Whiteville News Reporter* and *Tabor City Tribune* for "their successful campaign against the Ku Klux Klan"⁹⁹.

Comics, too, reflected this new discourse. Before dealing with the representation of the Romani genocide in these comics, I will first address unique features in critical depictions of antigypsyist violence. For this purpose, I depart from a comparison of two comics from the 1950s that were scripted by Stan Lee. He later became America's most influential comic writer, as the inventor of Marvel's pantheon of characters, including *Spider-Man*, *Iron Man*, and *Black Panther* to name a few. Lee previously edited comics that demonized "Gypsy" characters, such as the before-referred *Captain America #58*, *Mystic #8*, and *Adventures into Weird Worlds #16*. In the 1950s, comics edited or scripted by him became notably more benevolent towards discriminated groups. The two following comics are not specifically dedicated to the Romani genocide but are inspired by real-life racist terror. It will become evident that Lee imagined racist violence differently in these two cases, depending on the victim group shown. The first one portrays someone who is implied to be Hispanic, the second one "Gypsy" characters.

⁹⁸ See John Egerton, *Speak Now Against the Day: The Generation Before the Civil Rights Movement in the South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994), 562–563.

⁹⁹ "1953 Pulitzer Prizes," in *The Pulitzer Prizes*, accessed 9 May 2023, <https://www.pulitzer.org/prize-winners-by-year/1953>.



Fig. 10 (left) and figs. 11 (right): The *Men in Black* attack the house of Gonzales. Lee, and Romita, "Men in Black".

In 1953, Marvel's *Men in Black* by author Lee and illustrator John Romita was published in *Menace* #3.¹⁰⁰ It is a story about a group of men who dress in black sheets and go to chase and kill people they think are foreign. Throughout the comic, the narrator identifies the reader with the protagonist of the story, the leader of the *Men in Black*: "The next night, all eight of you have black sheets on... and you head for your first victim... Gonzales!" (figs. 10). *Gonzales* appears in his first panel as an ordinary man, living with his wife in a house in the suburbs (figs. 11). His looks and statements do not hint to a specific cultural background or stereotypes. The *Men in Black* try to kill him, but just when they have beaten their victim senseless, the police arrive. The group can escape. Back home the protagonist, having almost killed a man, cannot live with his guilt but likewise cannot admit his regrets. He suffers from the hallucination of being unable to remove his hood. When he tries to do so, another one is beneath. Eventually, he dies from his attempt to strip his own face off, with his bare hands. We see, the identification figure develops extreme self-hatred and existentially fails, overwhelmed by his own cruel deeds. Combined with the narrator's identification of the character with the reader, the message is clear: Do not become like him! The narrative and visual language have distinct parallels to current events. The

¹⁰⁰ See Stan Lee (writer), and John Romita (artist), "Men in Black," *Menace*, no. 3 (1953).

Men in Black take on a similar role to the men in white sheets, the members of the Ku Klux Klan, and their xenophobic acts of violence in the real world. Lee would copy and reuse this story.



Fig. 12: The “Gypsy” chieftain on his wagon curses the perpetrators. Lee, and Sinnot, “I am the Man Without a Face!”

Years later, in 1959, Marvel published the comic *I am the Man Without a Face!* by Lee and illustrator Joe Sinnot in *Strange Tales* #71.¹⁰¹ The story has a strong resemblance to *Men in Black*. A few men dress in black sheets, going out to chase people they consider foreigners, and the identification figure is once again their leader. This time, their hate is not directed at a man named *Gonzales* but at a group of “Gypsies” whom they want to expel from the edges of their neighbourhood. The nomads have just arrived. The xenophobic group attacks the camp and here comes the first major difference to *Men in Black*: The police do not come, and the men successfully expel the “Gypsies”. However, on his wagon the chieftain, with earrings and dressed in a kerchief, casts a spell over their leader (figs. 12). Soon, the cursed one realizes that he is unable to remove his

¹⁰¹ See Stan Lee (writer), and Joe Sinnot (artist), “I Am the Man Without a Face!,” *Strange Tales*, no. 71 (1959).

hood – finding another hood beneath – for the rest of his life. In contrast to *Men in Black*, his inability to unmask is not a hallucination but reality. In the last panel he states: “Sittin’ here day after day thinkin’ has made me realize how wrong I was – what a bigot I’ve been! If I ever get free of these hoods, I swear I’ll never be intolerant of anyone again!”. The leader of the criminal group eventually regrets his decision, after a terrible curse has made him think about his deeds. The chieftain’s curse is not a form of protection, as the “Gypsies” are expelled anyway. He merely takes revenge.

While the pedagogical agenda of Lee’s two comics is the same, there is one major difference: We can view *Men in Black* as a realistic portrayal of racist crime, while in *I am the Man Without a Face* the same scenario has been turned into a mysterious fantasy. The supposedly Hispanic *Gonzales* appears as an ordinary man amid society, while Lee imagines the “Gypsies” as exotic nomads who curse the perpetrators – because the authorities do not intervene. The attribute of the “Gypsies” vindictiveness makes the difference to the story of *Men in Black*. And *I am the Man Without a Face!* presents a recurring plot in Marvel’s comics of the 1950s and 60s. For example, *Don’t Ever Gyp a Gypsy!* by Al Luster, published in *Mystery Tales* #14 (1953) is about a criminal who buys a magic potion from an old “Gypsy”. It shall make him immortal, but he cheats on her, paying only half the price, and so the woman curses him, leading to a side-effect of the potion. He becomes immortal but transforms into a skeleton – his flesh rotten off from his body.¹⁰² Another example is *My Friend is... Not Quite Human!* by Steve Ditko, published in *Tales to Astonish* #13 (1960). It deals with a woodcarver in France during the year 1799 who develops romantic feelings for his work – the statue of a woman. The piece was commissioned by French consul Napoleon Bonaparte himself. The woodcarver does not want to deliver it to his client, despite being threatened with death. Thus, he has the idea of becoming like his piece – a wooden statue –, selling himself to the client and living together with his loved wooden woman forever. He goes to a “Gypsy” witch and buys a potion from her that shall fulfil his wish, but he does not pay her. Therefore, she curses his statue of the woman. While he drinks the potion and transforms into wood, she, the

¹⁰² See Al Luster (writer, artist), “Don’t Ever Gyp a Gypsy!,” *Mystery Tales*, no. 14 (1953).

wooden statue, becomes a real human and leaves him.¹⁰³ There are several other similar comics by Marvel, many of which were scripted by Lee.¹⁰⁴ Most often, a man does injustice towards “Gypsies” and gets punished by them. *I am the Man Without a Face* was one of Lee’s first works to feature “Gypsy” characters. Within four years, from 1959 to 1963, he scripted a total of 15 comics with “Gypsy” characters,¹⁰⁵ and in half the comics, these characters become victims and seek revenge. *I am the Man Without a Face* distinguishes from all his other works, as it connects the revenge by “Gypsies” with racist violence that is inspired by crimes in the real world.

The reader might refrain from judging the portrayal of revenge as either “positive” or “negative”, given that one may understand it as a means of self-empowering justice; however, the coupling of the retribution with supernatural actions (the curse) constitutes non-normative behaviour. It attributes the avenger with

¹⁰³ See Steve Ditko (writer, artist), “My Friend is... Not Quite Human!,” *Tales to Astonish*, no.13 (1960).

¹⁰⁴ See George Woodbridge (writer, artist), “Doomsday!,” in: *Strange Stories of Suspense*, no. 15 (1957); see Richard Doxsee (writer, artist), “The Uncanny Keys,” *World of Fantasy*, no. 15 (1958); see Stan Lee (writer), Larry Lieber (writer), and Paul Reinman (writer, artist), “The Metal Monster,” *Journey into Mystery*, no. 57 (1960); see Stan Lee (writer), Steve Ditko (artist), “For Whom the Drum Beats!,” *Tales to Astonish*, no. 22 (1961); see Stan Lee (writer), Larry Lieber (writer), and Don Heck (artist), “The Gypsy’s Revenge!,” *Tales to Astonish*, no. 25 (1961); see Stan Lee (writer), and Steve Ditko (artist), “I Must Find Korumbu!,” *Journey into Mystery*, no. 64 (1961); see Stan Lee (writer), Larry Lieber (writer), and Paul Reinman (artist), “The Hands of Hogarr,” *Tales of Suspense*, no. 16 (1961); see Stan Lee (writer), and Steve Ditko (artist), “The Painting,” *Journey into Mystery*, no. 71 (1961); see Stan Lee (writer), and Steve Ditko (artist), “The Little Gypsy Tea Room,” *Amazing Adult Fantasy*, no. 13 (1962). A summary of these comics is provided in the annotated index of this thesis. Based on this narrative structure but with a quite different ending, the comic *The Gypsies’ Secret* by Angelo Torres, published in *Spellbound* #33 (1957) is a special case. Here, a quack tries to sell faked medicine to a group of “Gypsies”. He is busted and they beat him up. However, an old “Gypsy” sorcerer heals him and saves his life. Thus, the story does not use the motif of “Gypsy law”. Rather it reproduces the Christian parable of the Good Samaritan, inserting the “Gypsy” healer into the role of the Samaritan. See Angelo Torres, “The Gypsies’ Secret,” *Spellbound*, no. 33 (1957).

¹⁰⁵ See Stan Lee (writer), Larry Lieber (writer), and John Buscema (artist), “I was the Man Who Lived Twice!,” *Strange Worlds*, no. 3 (1959); see Lee, and Sinnot, “Without a Face”; See Lee, Lieber, and Reinman, “The Metal Monster”; see Stan Lee (writer), Larry Lieber (writer), and Don Heck (artist), “Beware the Hands of Hundu,” *Strange Tales*, no. 74 (1960); see Stan Lee (writer), Larry Lieber (writer), and Paul Reinman (artist), “The Man Who Fell!,” *Strange Tales*, no. 85 (1961); see Lee, and Ditko, “For Whom the Drum”; see Lee, Lieber, and Heck, “The Gypsy’s Revenge!”; see Lee, and Ditko, “I Must Find Korumbu!”; see Lee, Stan (writer) et al, “The Magic of Mordool,” *Journey into Mystery*, no. 75 (1961); see Lee, Lieber, and Reinman, “The Hands of Hogarr”; see Lee, and Ditko, “The Painting”; see Lee, and Ditko, “Little Gypsy Tea Room”; see Stan Lee (writer), Larry Lieber (writer), and Paul Reinman (artist), “The Enchanted Paint,” *Tales of Suspense*, no. 25 (1962); see Stan Lee (writer) et al, “Won’t You Step Into My Parlor...???” *Journey into Mystery*, no. 80 (1962); see Stan Lee (writer), Larry Lieber (writer, penciler), and Sol Brodsky (inker), “The Sorcerer’s Spell,” *Tales of Suspense*, no. 41 (1963).

mysterious and strange abilities that exclude them from the rest of society, further manifesting the characters' exotic design. Despite the obviously benevolent intentions, the scenario resembles the motif of supernatural vindictiveness, which is common to antigypsyist portrayals – and to antisemitic stereotypes alike. The resemblance stems from a history of demonization in Christian societies, where Jews and people who were labelled “Gypsies” have been imagined in a bond with the devil who would lend them his powers.¹⁰⁶ Vindictiveness is represented by *Ira*, anger, one of the seven deadly sins. Lee reproduced a centuries-old antigypsyist narrative.

Lee's numerous depictions of supernatural, vindictive “Gypsies” coincided with depictions of the Romani genocide by prominent comic artists and publishers. This will be demonstrated using the following two examples. Both will be first summarised and then commented on jointly.



Fig. 13: “Gypsies” flee from the firing squad. Whitney, “The Gypsies”.

¹⁰⁶ See Wilhelm Solms, *Zigeunerbilder: Ein dunkles Kapitel der deutschen Literaturgeschichte: Von der frühen Neuzeit bis zur Romantik* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2008), 41–50. On the comparison of Jews and “Gypsies” in literary history, see Iulia-Karin Patrut, *Phantasma Nation: ‘Zigeuner’ und Juden als Grenzfiguren des ‘Deutschen’* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2014); see Brittnacher, *Leben auf der Grenze*, 72–79.

The first example is *The Gypsies!* by Ogden Whitney, later a member of the Will Eisner Award Hall of Fame. The comic was published in *Adventures into the Unknown* #74 by the American Comics Group in 1956.¹⁰⁷ In a flashback, a member of the Wehrmacht named Ludwig Brenner comes to a family in their remote farmhouse in Germany. He enters the house and gets a cup of coffee at their table while having an uncomfortable conversation with the family members about their loyalty to the Führer. Unexpectedly, Brenner notices that the family hides “Gypsies” under the farmhouse’s floor, and so a squad is ordered to kill them. The “Gypsies” can escape (figs. 13), but they do not get far and are all shot. Brenner is amused because one of his victims has cursed him before being murdered. Ten years pass. He has still not been held accountable for his crimes. While lying in bed, Brenner thinks: “The allied war crimes tribunal never learned of my action... I was small fry! I have nothing to fear...”. But one day, when he goes on the hunt, he suffers from what appears to be a hallucination: The “Gypsies”, whom he once killed, pursue him. Later he is found dead in the woods.¹⁰⁸

The second example is DC’s *Gypsy Shade* by Arnold Drake and Jess Jodloman, published in *House of Mysteries* #261 (1978). It deals with a fictional lawsuit in the 1970s. An elderly German woman stands in court, being accused to have traded with Nazi Gold¹⁰⁹ during the 40s. She was the wife of a Lagerkommandant, a death camp commander. In a flashback, we see that she came to the camp regularly, buying from camp officials the victims’ jewellery and belongings. Another main character in this story is an unnamed “Gypsy”. He is an inmate and visualized as an inked man, with large colourful tattoos of a butterfly, a rabbit, and a clown – marking the fantastic attribute of showmanship. In the camp, he additionally receives a tattoo of his prisoner number on his arm – like all prisoners

¹⁰⁷ See Ogden Whitney (writer, artist), “The Gypsies!,” *Adventures into the Unknown*, no. 74 (1956).

¹⁰⁸ The flashback in the comic has strong similarities to the opening scene in Quentin Tarantino’s film *Inglorious Basterds* (2009). In both, comic and film, a German (para)military member enters a remote farmhouse, has a drink and finds out that members of a persecuted minority (“Gypsies” or Jews) are hiding under the floor. He then calls a firing squad, the victims try to escape and (all or most of them) get shot. Moreover, vigilantism becomes a central theme in both stories. That does not necessarily mean that Tarantino knew the comic. Rather, the resemblance demonstrates how tropes work in discourse – often difficult to trace back.

¹⁰⁹ Nazi Gold = Gold and valuables stolen by Nazis from victims of national socialist persecution. This was a systematic practice.

of the concentration camps did. With his fantastic tattoos (the rabbit etc.) he cheers up the other prisoners of the camp: “He brought moments of joy into that hell camp!” states one of the inmates. The inked man is a sympathizer. But one day he disappears. It is not described how, but we can easily assume that he was the next to be killed in this systematic murder machinery. The flashback then ends. Back in court, the Nazi Gold trader is acquitted due to lack of proof for crimes. The connection between this lawsuit and the flashback is made clear when the woman arrives home. The shade of the lamp by her bed is made of the “Gypsy’s” skin and his (unspecified) gold. To the woman’s surprise the tattoos – the butterfly, the rabbit, and the clown – start to cast large shadows on the walls of her room. They come alive and kill her. When her body is found, the man’s inked camp number from his arm is now also tattooed on her arm. The comic’s story might have been loosely inspired by the trial against Ilse Koch from 1951, who was accused of having made lampshades from the skin of concentration camp prisoners.¹¹⁰ She was acquitted of this accusation but sentenced to a life in prison due to incitement to murder.

On the one hand, these comics were quite progressive in the context of memory culture. In both works, people labelled as “Gypsies” are illustrated as victims of national socialist persecution. Drake’s and Jodloman’s *Gypsy Shade* even shows them as prisoners in Nazi death camps. Here, they are befallen by the same procedure of industrialised killing as Jews and other groups. This depiction was rare and remarkable, since the Romani genocide was first recognized later, in 1982, by the government of the Federal Republic of Germany. In both comics, the victims take revenge beyond their death, many years after the Nazis’ rule. Vigilantism is presented as the result of a failing judiciary. The plot reminds us of the actual insufficiency of the allied and German courts to convict Nazi perpetrators after the war.¹¹¹ In both comics, this real-life issue is being taken

¹¹⁰ See Andreas Eichmüller, *Keine Generalamnestie: Die Strafverfolgung von NS-Verbrechern in der frühen Bundesrepublik* (Oldenbourg: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2012), 238. The trial was also reported in the United States. For example, see “Ilse Koch is Given Life Term,” *The Gettysburg Times*, 15 January 1951, 2.

¹¹¹ For example, see Andreas Eichmüller, „Die Strafverfolgung von NS-Verbrechern durch westdeutsche Justizbehörden seit 1945: Eine Zahlenbilanz,“ *Vierteljahreshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 56, no. 4 (2008): 621–640.

care of by a supernatural justice – resulting in a shocking and likewise “happy end”.

On the other hand, they missed an opportunity for education on the Romani persecution – not only because there was virtually no revenge by Romani victims after the war. We should also consider that the creators of these comics stuck to an exotic motif that we already saw in the case of Stan Lee: The perpetrators, who are once again the protagonists of the story, are punished by the victims with their supernatural powers. This ending matches the horror genre the magazines *Adventure into the Unknown* and *House of Mysteries* stand for. In this genre, national socialism has been an engaging theme, in an exploitive manner, according to historian Markus Streb: “The [horror] comics use Nazi crimes as a reference that guarantees authenticity, because of its historicity and at the same time they offer an interpretation that mystifies the Holocaust and places it in the phantasmagorical sphere.”¹¹² Potentially trivializing historical events, horror comics use different supernatural motifs, such as vampires and other mystical creatures. “Gypsy” characters, even as victims of genocide, can appear similar. Their common attribution of supernatural vindictiveness is attractive in storytelling. This trait associates with the motif of “Gypsy law”, according to the findings of Brittnacher: “Striking in the literary fantasies of Gypsy law is its archaic character: It is the *ius talionis* in its most unforgiving form, a dark justice full of brutality.”¹¹³ In other words, “Gypsy law” elevates the ancient law of retaliation (*ius talionis*) to a “Gypsy” motif. Its archaic connotation bears premodern exoticism. In *The Gypsies!* the perpetrator is pursued and killed just like the people he murdered. In *Gypsy Shade*, the Nazi Gold trader is killed and inked with a prisoner number like the inmates of the death camps. In the two comics, the motif of “Gypsy Law” is reproduced in the new scenario of national socialist persecution – a thrilling fantasy of genocide is created.

¹¹² Markus Streb, “Early Representations of Concentration Camps in Golden Age Comic Books: Graphic Narratives, American Society, and the Holocaust,” in *Beyond MAUS: The Legacy of Holocaust Comics*, edited Ole Frahm, Hans-Joachim Hahn, and Markus Streb (Vienna: New Academic Press, 2021), 113.

¹¹³ Ger.: “Auffallend an den literarischen Phantasien vom Zigeunerrecht ist seine Archaik: Es handelt sich um das *ius talionis* in seiner unversöhnlichsten Form, eine finstere Gerichtsbarkeit voller Brutalität.” Brittnacher, *Leben auf der Grenze*, 183.

Based on this fantasy, Stan Lee created a new character design in the 1960s, together with Jack Kirby. It would have a major impact on how antigypsyist violence was portrayed in American comics. As we have seen before, since 1959 also Lee frequently used the display of racist violence and combined it with the motif of “Gypsies” supernatural vintictiveness. In 1964, he presented a new character design which again refers to this motif but reconsiders it in a fictional scenario that focuses on the character development in a hostile world. And for the first time, Lee imagined a “Gypsy” character as the story’s protagonist. Here, I will consider the origin story of America’s most popular supervillain from comic history: *Doctor Doom*.

3. Unforgiving World: Stan Lee, Jack Kirby & the Birth of the “Gypsy” Super-Human

In the following pages, I argue that Stan Lee and Jack Kirby created a stigmatizing but also unconventional character design that was based on the before-shown motif of “Gypsies” supernatural vindictiveness. This design was, first, remarkably complex and humanized – unlike the previously shown representations of “Gypsies” in American comics. Second, it was an early case of America’s most popular comic artists to subtly introduce Romani pogrom and genocide into superhero comics. It is disputed which of the two came up with this character design that was first embodied by the supervillain *Doctor Doom*.¹¹⁴ After summarizing *Doom*’s initial appearances and origin story, I will undertake a brief narrative analysis, succeeded by a character analysis of *Doctor Doom*. After this case study, it will be shown that Lee’s and Kirby’s *Doctor Doom* was a pioneering and lasting character design in the discourse on “Gypsy” notion in American comics. This will be done primarily by considering a case by David Michelinie, Mark Gruenwald and Steven Grant.

Doctor Doom first appeared in Lee’s and Kirby’s *Fantastic Four*, a superhero comic series with four protagonists who each have fantastic skills. Throughout the series, they fight diverse supervillains – villains who have likewise supernatural abilities. In *Fantastic Four #4* (1962), they face a new enemy: *Doctor Doom*. He is completely covered by a metal suit and wears a green cape, living in a medieval castle. According to one of the *Fantastic Four*, this villain is an occultist and mad scientist whose real name is *Victor von Doom*.¹¹⁵ This attribution, in combination with his German name, evokes the stereotype of Nazi villains from the Golden Age comics. It is never explained why *Victor von Doom* and his kin have a title of nobility (“von”), but we can assume that his name was

¹¹⁴ See Abraham Riesman, *True Believer: The Rise and Fall of Stan Lee* (New York: Crown Publishing Group, 2021), 107.

¹¹⁵ One of the *Fantastic Four* knows *Doctor Doom* from college: “Years ago, in my college days, there was a student named Victor von Doom, who was fascinated by sorcery and black magic! He was a brilliant science student, but he was only interested in forbidden experiments! One night, the evil genius went too far, as he brought forth powers which even he could not control! He managed to escape with his life, although his face was badly disfigured! And then...” he was expelled from college. The hero continues: “and so he left! When last heard of, he was prowling the wastelands of Tibet, still seeking forbidden secrets of black magic and sorcery!” Stan Lee (writer), Jack Kirby (penciler), and Joe Sinnott (inker), “Meet... Doctor Doom!,” *Fantastic Four*, no. 4 (1962).

chosen before his origin story as a poor “Gypsy” was designed, which was revealed two years later. Here, *Doctor Doom* would not be the antagonist but protagonist of the story.



Fig. 14: The splash page of the story by Lee, Kirby, and Stone, “Fantastic Origin,” 1.

The issue’s first page is the splash of a story titled *The Fantastic Origin of Doctor Doom!* (figs. 14).¹¹⁶ The image shows *Doctor Doom* frontally sitting on a throne. In the dark background on the left, objects with premodern symbolism like a vase, a blazon, and elements of stone can be seen. On the right, an old man with a lamp stands frontally in a brightly lit archway of stone. *Doom* asks: “Who dares to enter the chamber of Doctor Doom?”¹¹⁷. The old man answers: “It is I... Boris! The time has come, master!”¹¹⁸. In a dark room, *Doctor Doom* sits on his throne

¹¹⁶ See Stan Lee (writer), Jack Kirby (penciler), and Chic Stone (inker), “The Fantastic Origin of Doctor Doom!,” *Fantastic Four Annual*, no. 2 (1964).

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 1.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

in a medieval stone castle, his throne and his servant signalling power. The splash sets the tone of a Dracula-esque gothic fiction. In the next panels, they leave the castle on a stormy night, and hold somewhere on a hill. *Doom* says: “***This***¹¹⁹ is the place! It was ***here*** that it all began!”¹²⁰. In the next panel, the narrator explains: “A Gypsy tribe had once camped on the very spot where Doctor Doom now stands! And, the man in the iron mask has good reason to remember that day... for he had been one of them!”¹²¹. From there on, the story is dedicated to a flashback that deals with *Doctor Doom’s* past.

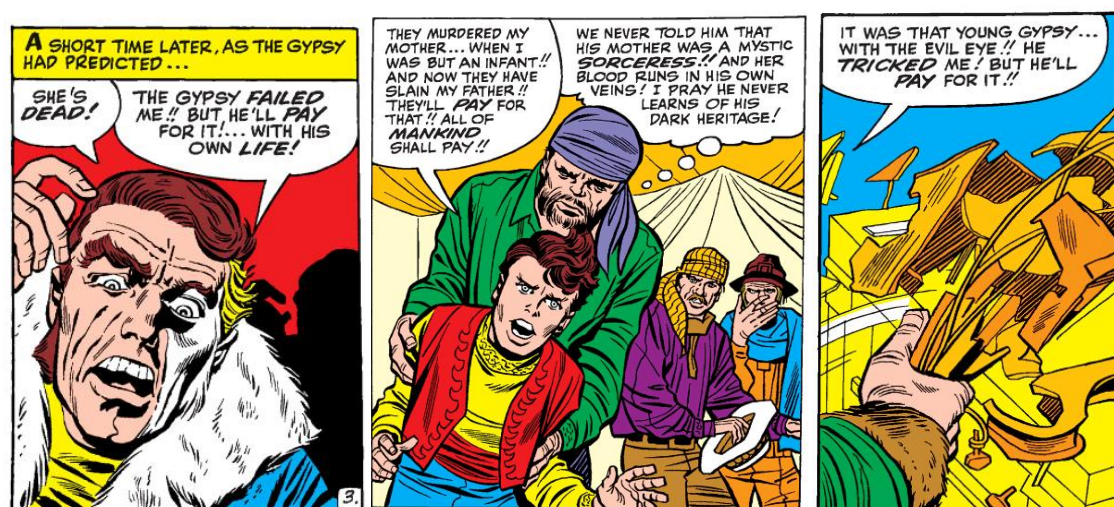


Fig. 15 (left): The baron vows vengeance. Ibid., 3.

Fig. 16 (centre): *Victor* vows vengeance. Ibid., 5.

Fig. 17 (right): One of the baron’s subjects vows vengeance. Ibid., 6.

In the fictional country *Latveria*, located “in the Bavarian Alps”¹²², the boy *Victor von Doom* grows up in a colourful wagon camp. He experiences that his father *Werner von Doom* is seized by a baron whose wife is critically sick. *Werner* is a renowned healer, and the baron threatens him: If he cannot save his wife, he will be killed. *Werner* is unsuccessful and the baron vows revenge: “The Gypsy ***failed*** me!! But he’ll ***pay*** for it!... With his own ***life***!”¹²³ (figs. 15). *Victor’s* father tries to escape, together with his son. Soon after, the baron’s soldiers attack and destroy the unarmed camp. Meanwhile, father and child do not get far, due to a

¹¹⁹ Parts of dialogues are often lettered bold and italic in American comics (for example, see the figures 1, 2 and 3). This will be emulated here, to reproduce the emphasis by the creators.

¹²⁰ Lee, Kirby, and Stone, “Fantastic Origin”, 2.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Ibid., 3.

snowstorm, and *Werner* freezes to death while protecting his son with the warmth of his body. *Boris* from the former camp finds them and rescues *Victor*. The child, emotionally devastated after the death of his father, vows vengeance and reveals that his mother too was previously killed by the baron: “They murdered my mother... when I was but an infant!! And now they have slain my father!! They’ll **pay** for that!! All of **mankind** shall pay!!”¹²⁴ (figs. 16). *Victor* finds a chest that was owned by his mother. Inside are (unspecified) mystical objects and he realises that they may help him to learn black magic – to avenge his parents. Simultaneously, he studies the sciences, and it becomes evident that he is a genius with enormous retentiveness and power of deduction. The story then jumps many years into the future. After the death of *Werner von Doom*, the baron lost interest in chasing the “Gypsies”, but *Victor*, already a young man, provokes him and his subjects. He cheats on aristocrats to earn money which he uses for his tribe. One of his victims announces: “It was that young Gypsy... with the evil eye!! He **tricked** me! But he’ll **pay** for it!!”¹²⁵ (figs. 17). Once more, the baron seeks revenge and chases the tribe, but this time *Victor* protects his fellows with the aid of magic and technological support. The narrator explains: “As time went by, the elusive young Gypsy became a legend! He kept none of his wealth, but gave it to the poor”¹²⁶. Eventually, a dean from a prestigious American university comes to *Latveria* to win *Victor* as a student, offering him a scholarship. To reach his goal of revenge, he accepts, but he is soon kicked out of the university because of a dangerous experiment that would have disfigured his face. He then goes to Tibet, improves in black magic instead, and creates a metal suit that covers his face and whole body. From now on, he is known as *Doctor Doom*. Years pass in which he starts a revolution in *Latveria* and becomes the ruler of the land. As he walks the streets of his country, one citizen thinks: “Ours has been a prosperous land since he has ruled us!”¹²⁷.

On the one hand, *The Fantastic Origin of Doctor Doom!* tells the old story of a “Gypsy” who is ill-treated and takes revenge, with all the clichés: The colourful camp evokes exotic premodernity and *Victor’s* mother is a sorceress with a chest

¹²⁴ Ibid., 5.

¹²⁵ Ibid., 6.

¹²⁶ Ibid., 7.

¹²⁷ Ibid., 12.

full of magical objects. As in popular romantic novels such as Achim von Arnim's *Isabella von Ägypten* (1812) and Walter Scott's *Guy Mannering* (1815), the violent and unjust evicting of a "Gypsy" camp by arbitrary authorities is described.

On the other hand, there is a post-war context that evokes the themes of historical pogrom and genocide in Europe. The comic can be seen as part of a mid-1960s trend by Lee and Kirby to create super-humans from marginalized groups. According to literary scholar Cheryl Alexander Malcolm, Lee was "introducing the Holocaust, for the first time, in 1964"¹²⁸. Malcolm does not consider *Doctor Doom*, but another example: Lee's comic *Uncanny X-Men #4*. Here, the supernaturally enabled mutant *Scarlet Witch* makes her debut, including her first origin story which is revealed in a flashback. It is shown that the people of her village once accused her of sorcery and "the evil eye". Thus, they chased her, and she had to flee. "With its setting 'in the heart of Europe,' the scene evokes in turn medieval purges, pogroms and the final solution"¹²⁹, claims Malcolm. The evocation of the final solution, the Holocaust, is not as obvious in this scene as the witch-hunt during the early modern period.¹³⁰ Still, pogrom and the persecution of groups in Europe were a theme in Lee's comics at this time, as Malcom shows. Two years later, another one of Lee's and Kirby's character designs emphasised racist legacy, and the empowerment of marginalised groups: In 1966, they introduced *Black Panther*, Marvel's first African superhero.¹³¹ He would have been Lee's and Kirby's "response to the civil rights movement that was gaining traction in the United States of America in the 1960s"¹³², according to comic scholars Ian Horton and Maggie Gray. Similarly, while not explicitly dealing with genocide but rather pogrom, *The Fantastic Origin of Doctor Doom!* can be interpreted in the context of Romani genocide due to its historicizing connotations. As mentioned previously,

¹²⁸ Cheryl Alexander Malcolm, "Witness, Trauma, and Remembrance: Holocaust Representation and X-Men Comics," in *Jewish Graphic Novel: Critical Approaches*, ed. Samantha Baskind, and Ranen Omer-Sherman (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2008), 147.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Cf. Forrest Johnson, "Reanimating Witchcraft: Creating A Feminist Embodied Experience in Marvel's Scarlet Witch," in *The Superhero Multiverse*, ed. Farnell Piatti (London: Routledge, 2022), 107–126.

¹³¹ See Jack Kirby (writer, penciler), Stan Lee (writer), Joe Sinnott (inker), "The Black Panther!," *Fantastic Four*, no. 52 (1966).

¹³² Ian Horton, and Maggie Gray, *Seeing Comics Through Art History: Alternative Approaches to the Form* (Cham: Springer, 2022), 235.

the story takes place in a country “in the Bavarian Alps”¹³³ where the citizens have German names. In this German fantasy, someone of an ethnic group is searched to be taken away and killed. Soldiers come and destroy the homes of his group in an act of collective punishment. We find the theme of a pogrom in Europe, perhaps even vaguely of national socialist persecution.

With *Doctor Doom*, Lee and Kirby did not only provide a platform for the theme of Romani pogrom in the superhero genre. They also contributed a remarkably complex and humanizing anti-hero who was quite unconventional. *Scarlet Witch* was fully in line with the motif of a witch and *Black Panther* has been often criticized for being tokenized with the purpose of representing all black people.¹³⁴ Meanwhile, *Doctor Doom* deviates from some conventions of the “Gypsy” motif. While *Doom* too has the trait of supernatural vindictiveness, it is not implied as innate to his group but socialised through the effects of a hostile environment. *Victor*, the baron, and the aristocratic subjects are all part of the same spiral of revenge. Repetitively, characters proclaim that someone “will pay for” something, emphasizing this spiral. The law of retaliation becomes universal and is not more specifically attributed to a group of people, like “Gypsy” characters. The universalised law of retaliation easily conveys *Doom*’s development from suppressed victim to revolutionary and ruler. In the motif’s genealogy, “Gypsies” are only known as instigators of revolution, not as revolutionaries themselves. Brittnacher claims:

¹³³ This aspect is inconsistent. In the same issue, *Latveria* is also described as a “remote Balkan kingdom”. Since Bavaria is obviously not part of the Balkans, this contradicts the former placing in the “Bavarian alps”. The description suggests an inspiration drawn from the former German speaking parts of Transylvania, in Romania. At least, this would match the according trope (see the “Gypsies” in Bram Stoker’s *Dracula*). Later issues relocated *Latveria* as a country at the northern border of Serbia. Still, a distinct cultural connection of *Latveria* to the German speaking world stayed definitive in the Marvel universe.

¹³⁴ For example, see Matthew Facciani, Peter Warren, and Jennifer Vendemia, “A Content-Analysis of Race, Gender, and Class in American Comic Books,” *Race, Gender & Class* 22, no. 3–4 (2015), 218. In their investigation on the representation of different identities in American comics, they conclude that Black characters would be frequently tokenized. Also see Adilifu Nama, *Super Black: American Pop Culture and Black Superheroes* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2011), 51.

*“In literature and music, Gypsies intervene with prophecies and child-theft in the succession regulation of European dynasties and, thus, allow the usual constructions [...] of the, eventually by coincidence, identified heir, who grows up under external care, chasing away the usurpers from the throne and establishing a just rule.”*¹³⁵

He names Karl May's *Scepter und Hammer* (1879/80) as an example where “Gypsies” instigate a revolution. The old order is continued afterwards but with a new absolutist (non-“Gypsy”) ruler who ensures justice and prosperity in the country.¹³⁶ The story of *The Fantastic Origin of Doctor Doom!* is similar to this narrative. A monarch is overthrown by “Gypsies” and there is a continuation of authoritarian rule after the revolution. Like in May's novel, a new age of prosperity might be reached in the country, according to the thoughts of one citizen of *Latveria* at the end of the story: “Ours has been a prosperous land since he has ruled us!”. We cannot compare *Latveria* before and after the revolution, but based on these individuals' statements, philosopher Andrew Terjesen argues that *Doom* would stand for what is called *noblesse oblige*: He would live up to the responsibility he, as the country's ruler, is bearing.¹³⁷ However, *Victor* not only instigates a revolution like the “Gypsies” in May's novel. He takes power himself. In this constellation, a space under “Gypsy” rule appears that Bogdal calls the “Zigeunerreich” (En.: “Gypsy Empire”) from literary history, defined as follows: “On the one hand, we find the always as mysterious and scary designed world of crime. [...] On the other hand, we see a continuation of the idyllising [sic] depictions by archaization of laws and rules”¹³⁸. Both, the “world of crime” and the “archaization of laws and rules” connote with social periphery and the primitive, standing for the metropolitan underworld and tribal life. But ruling a

¹³⁵ Ger.: “Mit Prophezeiungen und Kinderdiebstahl mischen sich Zigeuner in Literatur und Musik in die Erbfolgeregelung europäischer Fürstenhäuser und erlauben damit jene [...] geläufigen Konstruktionen des unter fremder Obhut aufgewachsenen und schließlich zufällig identifizierten Thronfolgers, der die Usurpatoren wieder vom Thron verjagt und eine gerechte Herrschaft etabliert”. Brittnacher, *Leben auf der Grenze*, 270.

¹³⁶ See *ibid.*, 274.

¹³⁷ See Andrew Terjesen, “Why Doctor Doom is better than the Authority,” in *Supervillains and Philosophy: Sometimes, Evil is its Own Reward*, ed. Ben Dyer (Chicago: Open Court, 2009), 82.

¹³⁸ Ger.: “Wir finden einmal die immer geheimnisvoller und schauriger ausgestaltete Verbrecherwelt. [...] Und ebenso sehen wir eine Fortsetzung der idyllisierenden Darstellungen durch Archaisierung der Gesetze und Regeln”. Bogdal, *Europa erfindet die Zigeuner*, 116.

country is something different from being the leader of a gang or the chieftain of a tribe. The traditional motif of the “Zigeunerreich” does not apply to *Doctor Doom*: The threat by this mad scientist does not result from the absence of civilisation but from the excesses of civilisation. He does not rule at the periphery of society but over society itself. And this was made possible by his intellectual superiority which contrasts with the motif of the illiterate “Gypsy”.

These deviations from conventional “Gypsy” motifs reveal *Doctor Doom*’s hybrid design. We cannot reduce this character to a “Gypsy” identity, after all. He is a mad scientist, conducting dangerous experiments. Given the comic’s tone of gothic fiction, *Doom* also resembles the motif of *Dracula*: He lives in a dark medieval castle, rules over “Gypsy” subjects, and his face and skin are never lit by the sun. He is like Robin Hood, as he kept “none of his wealth, but gave it to the poor”¹³⁹. And he is a super-human who fights with supernatural powers in a bizarre outfit. This hybrid character design is stabilised by the one trait all these motifs have in common: the creation of otherness. He contrasts with heroes like the *Fantastic Four* and *Spider-Man* who live in midst of society. Struggling with mundane issues like paying taxes or relationship problems, these superheroes are “grounded in postwar society”¹⁴⁰, as literary scholar Christopher Pizzino concludes. Meanwhile, *Doctor Doom* is the dictator of a country and at the same time a member of a marginalised group. In this stable hybrid character design, different motifs can fertilize each other. While conventions of the “Gypsy” motif only partially apply, this aspect of *Doom*’s identity is emphasised. The backbone of his motivation for revenge, for his urge as a supervillain, is the sorrow he endured due to him being a “Gypsy”.

Obviously, using stigma in an unconventional way is not the same as deconstructing it. *Doom*’s powers are heavily based on exotic and fantastic, ethnic stereotypes, unlike the powers of many other super-humans: *Peter Parker* became *Spider-Man* after being bitten by a spider and *Tony Stark* became *Iron Man* after building a high-tech suit. Meanwhile, *Victor von Doom* became *Doctor Doom* after improving on the black magic of his “Gypsy” heritage. Still, *Doctor*

¹³⁹ Lee, Kirby, and Stone, “Fantastic Origin,” 7.

¹⁴⁰ Christopher Pizzino, “When Realism Met Romance: The Negative Zone of Marvel’s Silver Age,” in *The Cambridge History of the Graphic Novel*, ed. Jan Baetens, Hugo Frey, and Stephen E Tabachnick (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 119.

Doom pioneered a remarkable change in the discourse on “Gypsy” notion in American comics, as will be shown.

The Fantastic Origin of Doctor Doom! represents the character design of *Doom* for the decades to come. He continued to be portrayed as the ruler of *Latveria*, with “Gypsy” subjects who obey him. Ed Brubaker retold *Doom*’s origin story with only minor changes in his series *Fantastic Four: Books of Doom* (2006).¹⁴¹ Moreover, the character reached high popularity and became an antagonist in diverse franchises of the Marvel universe. We find him in series like *X-Men*, *The Amazing Spider-Man*, *Captain America*, *Deadpool*, *Black Panther*, and *Daredevil*.¹⁴² David Michelinie and others reflected and reinterpreted the new motif that this super-villain embodies.

¹⁴¹ *Books of Doom* begins before *Victor*’s mother dies. In contrast to *The Fantastic Origin of Doctor Doom!*, the baron persecutes the “Gypsies” permanently and without a visible reason. As a result, *Victor*’s mother summons a demon who shall kill the baron’s soldiers. She cannot control this power and becomes obsessed by the creature which then arbitrarily kills soldiers and villagers, including children. Thus, the villagers too are after the “Gypsies” and lynch her. See Ed Brubaker (writer) et al, *Books of Doom*, 6 issues (New York: Marvel Comics, 2006). The story once more reproduces the idea of “Gypsies” having a deal with the devil. As Brittnacher states on this literary trope, “their special susceptibility for the supernatural does let Gypsies obviously become predestined victims of demonic powers”. Ger.: “Ihre besondere Empfänglichkeit für das Übernatürliche macht Zigeuner freilich auch zu prädestinierten Opfern dämonischer Kräfte”. Brittnacher, *Leben auf der Grenze*, 229.

¹⁴² For example, see Jonathan Maberry (writer), and Will Conrad (artist), “Power Part 3,” *Black Panther*, no. 9 (2009); see Ed Brubaker (writer), Bryan Hitch (penciler), and Butch Guice (inker), *Captain America: Reborn*, 6 issues (New York: Marvel Comics, 2009/10); see Fabian Nicieza (writer), Dan Slott (writer), and Kieron Dwyer (artist), “Squirrel Girl,” *Deadpool / GLI: Summer Fun Spectacular*, no. 1 (2007); see J Michael Straczynski, John Romita Jr., and Scott Hanna, “Spider-Man: Doomed Affairs,” *The Amazing Spider-Man*, no. 50 (2002); see Evan Dorkin (writer), and Kevin Maguire (artist), “Stars & Stripes Forever,” *Captain America*, no. 50 (2002); see Scott Lobdell (writer), Mark Waid (writer), Andy Kubert (penciler), and Art Thibert (inker), “The Beginning of the End: Twilight of the Gods,” *X-Men*, no. 56 (1996); and see Mark Gruenwald (writer), Kieron Dwyer (penciler), and Danny Bulanadi (inker), “Submission,” *Captain America*, no. 365 (1989); see Mark Gruenwald (writer), John Byrne (penciler), and José Marzán Jr (inker), “Red Skull: Resurrection,” *Captain America*, no. 350 (1989); see Ann Nocenti (writer), John Romita Jr (penciler), and Al Williamson (inker), “False Man,” *Daredevil*, no. 275 (1989); see Stan Lee (writer), Gene Colan (penciler), and John Tartaglione (inker). “Don’t Look Now, But It’s--Dr. Doom!,” *Daredevil*, no. 37 (1968); see Stan Lee (writer), Gene Colan (penciler), and Frank Giacoia (inker), “The Living Prison!” *Daredevil*, no. 38 (1968).

4. Becoming Vulnerable: David Michelinie & the Revised “Gypsy” Super-Human

I show that Lee’s and Kirby’s “Gypsy” super-human pioneered a new trend among Marvel’s and other publishers’ artists in the decades to come. One popular case was scripted by David Michelinie, together with Mark Gruenwald and Steven Grant, drawing on Lee’s and Kirby’s design and attributing it with vulnerability. Previously, I briefly mentioned the character *Scarlet Witch*, a supervillain who debuted in 1964, the same year as *Doctor Doom*’s origin story. *Scarlet Witch* has been once brutally expelled by the people of her village – because she was considered a witch. Later, she switched sides and became a superhero. *Scarlet Witch*’s background story was first elaborated in more detail in *Nuklo. The Invader That Time Forgot!* by Roy Thomas and Rich Buckler in *Giant Size Avengers #1* (1974). The story reveals that she and her brother *Quicksilver* would be the descendants of Jewish Holocaust survivors.¹⁴³ However, David Michelinie (later scripting issues of *Spider-Man*, *Iron Man*, and others), together with Mark Gruenwald (later editor-in-chief at Marvel) and Steven Grant (later scripting *The Punisher*) revised this origin story in 1978. As a result, the two heroes would receive a “Gypsy” background. Michelinie conveyed the revision in a major arc in Marvel’s magazine *The Avengers*. This magazine deals with a group of superheroes called *Avengers* who cooperate in their fight against evil in our times. First, I will summarize this arc, *The Avengers #181–187*, and demonstrate narrative similarities to *The Fantastic Origin of Doctor Doom!* Thereafter, I focus on their differences in a comparison between *Doctor Doom* and the new character *Django Maximoff*. It will become evident that the background story of the latter is portrayed in a much more sensitive way, while still heavily relying on the “Gypsy” stigma. In contrast to *Doom*, *Maximoff* is not the protagonist, as the origin story focusses on *Quicksilver* and *Scarlet Witch*. The latter was one of the most prominent *Avengers*, alongside *Captain America*, *Iron man*, and *Thor*.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴³ See Roy Thomas (writer), Rich Buckler (penciler), and Dan Adkins (inker), “The Avengers: Nuklo--the Invader That Time Forgot!!,” *Giant-Size Avengers*, no. 1 (1974).

¹⁴⁴ According to journalist John Keegan among the dozens of superheroes and -heroines from *The Avengers*, *Scarlet Witch* is number 6 when it comes to frequency of appearances in the *The Avengers* franchise from 1963 to 2015. She most often appeared in issues from 1964 to 1970, 1976 to 1981, 1984/85 and 1989 to 2005. Over five decades, *Scarlet Witch* appeared overall 276 times, compared to 322 times for Thor (no. 4) and 379 times for Ironman (no. 2).

In *The Avengers* #181, a mysterious old man imprisons the *Avengers* *Scarlet Witch* and *Quicksilver* with the aid of his magic powers.¹⁴⁵ He is a woodcarver with magical abilities and seems to be a supervillain who transforms the two heroes' souls into dolls. The man believes that they would be his children. In *The Avengers* #182, the mysterious man finally introduces himself and asserts a revised origin story of *Scarlet Witch* and *Quicksilver*: "...remember? Could it have been that long ago that I, **Django Maximoff**, was shaman to a tribe of nomadic **Gypsies** in Central Europe..."¹⁴⁶. In a flashback, we see a colourful "Gypsy" camp. *Scarlet Witch* and *Quicksilver* are there, as children. She repairs a wagon with her magic while he runs through the camp. *Maximoff* explains: "But perhaps...perhaps it is the bad times that make you forget, the times when prejudice against Gypsies made employment impossible and I was forced to steal to keep us from starvation. Regrettably, my stealth was less than perfect, and anger flared like the torches of the attacking villagers."¹⁴⁷

See John Keegan, "How the 'Avengers' Line-up Has Changed Over the Years," *The Wall Street Journal*, 04.05.2015, <http://graphics.wsj.com/avengers-team/>.

¹⁴⁵ See David Michelinie (writer), Gene Day (artist), and John Byrne (penciler), "On the Matter of Heroes!," *The Avengers*, no. 181 (1978). Previously, the mysterious man was introduced by editor-in-chief Jim Shooter, in the last three panels of *The Avengers* #166. See Jim Shooter (writer), John Byrne (penciler), and Pablo Marcos (inker), "Day of the Godslayer!," *The Avengers*, no. 166 (1977). Here, the story abruptly jumps to a harbour at the Soviet city of Vladivostok where the man, dressed in a cloak, is looking at two portraits of *Scarlet Witch* and *Quicksilver*. It is explained by the narrator that these would be his "children". The tension surrounding this mystery of the alleged father from Russia is long built up. He briefly reappears in *The Avengers* #173 when he leaves the ship in the United States. See David Michelinie (writer) et al, "Threshold of Oblivion!," *The Avengers*, no. 173 (1978). It was not before *The Avengers* #181 that his ark kicks off and stays the central theme until *The Avengers* #187. The long build-up of tension and the long running ark of seven issues underlines the dramaturgical weighting of *Scarlet Witch's* and *Quicksilver's* revised origin story in the series.

¹⁴⁶ See David Michelinie (writer), Klaus Janson (artist), and John Byrne (penciler), "Honor Thy Father," *The Avengers*, no. 182 (1979).

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.



Fig. 18: The pogrom in the "Gypsy" camp. Michelinie, Janson, and Byrne, "Honor Thy Father".

In the accompanying panels, a pogrom against the "Gypsy" camp is shown, with burning wagons, and people in them (figs. 18). *Scarlet Witch* and *Quicksilver* try to escape and have to jump into a river. *Maximoff* says: "I knew that you were **not** dead, that you merely **hid** from me as punishment for the tragedy I had brought upon our tribe!"¹⁴⁸ and adds: "I cannot allow you to **run away** again!"¹⁴⁹. *Scarlet Witch* corrects him: "But we've run away from no one!"¹⁵⁰. He does not listen to her. Eventually, the other *Avengers* find his place, and in a battle against the old man – who reveals himself as an illusionist – *Scarlet Witch* and *Quicksilver* can be liberated. The old man is emotionally devastated. Instead of handing him over to the police, the two heroes decide to follow the trail of his story, because they cannot remember their childhood and hope to find answers. Together with him, they journey to Central Europe. This story arc was continued by Michelinie,

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

together with Gruenwald and Grant, in *The Avengers* #185.¹⁵¹ In the evening they arrive in a land called *East Transia*, with a magical mountain that is named *Wundagore*. The country of *East Transia* is inhabited by German-speaking people with German names and dress, full of Fachwerkhaus architecture. Located in the “Balkans” but also in “Central Europe”, the country is a hybrid fantasy between German and Balkan imagery: Like *Doctor Doom’s Latveria*, *East Transia* is clearly a fictional deviation from the similar named Romanian region of East Transylvania which was historically inhabited by many Germans. In *East Transia*, the heroes and Mr *Maximoff* enter a guesthouse. During the night, *Quicksilver* remembers his past in the “Gypsy” camp. Meanwhile, *Scarlet Witch* follows another mysterious man who says he knows her past, taking her to *Wundagore*. The next day, *Quicksilver* learns of her disappearance and sets out to find his sister. In *The Avengers* #186, *Quicksilver* encounters by coincidence the midwife *Bova* who once assisted him and his sister in being born.¹⁵² *Bova* tells him that their mother died during the birth, and that they were then given to a “Gypsy” couple named *Maximoff*. Just like *Django Maximoff*, *Bova* explains *Quicksilver’s* loss of memory with trauma: “Perhaps it is the trauma of loss, my dear, caused by your belief that your foster parents had died!”¹⁵³. Meanwhile, *Scarlet Witch* is used by the mysterious man as a vessel for a demonic creature. *Quicksilver*, after leaving *Bova’s* place, journeys together with *Django Maximoff* to *Wundagore* to find his sister. When they are in the magical mountain’s woods the branches of the trees attack them, as the forest is under the control of possessed *Scarlet Witch*. During the final battle against the kidnapper and the demonic creature that possesses *Scarlet Witch* in *The Avengers* #187, old *Django Maximoff* sacrifices himself to save his daughter.¹⁵⁴

While *Maximoff* partially represents a recurrent motif in Marvel’s comics – a “Gypsy” woodcarver and puppet master who happens to be a villain –,¹⁵⁵ his

¹⁵¹ See David Michelinie (writer) et al, “The Yesterday Quest!,” *The Avengers*, no. 185 (1979).

¹⁵² See David Michelinie (writer) et al, “Nights of Wundagore!,” *The Avengers*, no. 186 (1979).

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ See David Michelinie (writer) et al, “The Call of the Mountain Thing!,” *The Avengers*, no. 187 (1979).

¹⁵⁵ For example, see Finger, Avison, and Borth, “Crime on Cue”; see Ditko, “My Friend is...”. *Maximoff’s* first appearance as mysterious man does not indicate him to be a “Gypsy” though. This identity is revealed in *The Avengers* #182. His earlier statement in *The Avengers* #181 that “any place is home—” can be either read as reference to the attribute of “Gypsy” nomadism or to his past as a refugee. It will not be considered in more detail.

background story has many similarities to *Doctor Doom*. *Doom's* and *Maximoff's* story each reveal the origins of super-human characters who grew up in a colourful "Gypsy" camp, evoking an exotic fantasy. An antigypsyist pogrom in a fictional German-speaking country in Europe (*Latveria/East Transia*) as well as the loss of kin (mother/children) are central themes. Like *Doom*, *Maximoff* is (initially) a supervillain, ridden by the experience of loss in the context of a pogrom.

However, we also find two essential differences when it comes to the depiction of cause and consequences of the pogrom. First, there is a new theme of systemic racism (here: unemployment as a result of discrimination) in *The Avengers* that was not explicitly dealt with in the origin story of *Doctor Doom*. At the same time, *Maximoff's* background story reproduces an exotic fantasy and the stereotype of criminal "Gypsies", including the interpretation of antigypsyist pogroms as the result of provocation by unlawful behaviour.¹⁵⁶ Second, the character design of *Maximoff* is not deduced from revenge but from an ongoing trauma and vulnerability. He journeys from the Soviet Union to the United States to imprison his long-lost children *Quicksilver* and *Scarlet Witch*. As we have seen, *Maximoff* believes to have been responsible for the pogrom that parted them. His conclusions are paradoxical: First, *Maximoff* implies *Scarlet Witch's* and *Quicksilver's* inability to remember this event as the result of their trauma, leading to amnesia. He says: "perhaps it is the **bad** times that make you forget"¹⁵⁷. Despite his consideration of amnesia, he then assumes that they punish him for his alleged responsibility for the pogrom by hiding from him. Given his radical actions and statements, he has the trait of being mentally unstable – contextualised by the experience of a pogrom. Whether or not Michelinie accurately and appropriately portrayed the consequences of trauma is not discussed here. Instead, the consequences of this character design for the narrative will be considered.

Caused by *Maximoff's* trait of mental instability and the theme of trauma, conventions of the "Gypsy" motif only partially apply. To demonstrate this, I will exemplify the scene of *Quicksilver* and *Django Maximoff* in the woods, in *The*

¹⁵⁶ For more information on this interpretation, see Johannes Valentin Korff, "Armutszuwanderung': The Flight of Romanian Roma and the German Press since the 1990s" [under review for the *Critical Romani Studies* journal].

¹⁵⁷ Michelinie, Janson, and Byrne, "Honor Thy Father".

Avengers #186.¹⁵⁸ As *Quicksilver* and *Maximoff* enter the woods, *Maximoff* explains his personal connection to it: “It’s such a nice forest? Why, it was here that I fled from the nasty villagers who burned our camp long ago.”¹⁵⁹ When the branches of the trees attack *Quicksilver*, he defends himself and *Maximoff* tries to stop him: “No! Y-you musn’t harm the wood! It’s special! And it was so friendly before... I don’t understand”¹⁶⁰. According to Klaus-Michael Bogdal, “Gypsies” have been frequently imagined as “forest people” (Ger.: “Waldmenschen”¹⁶¹) in historical literature: “Since the systematic persecutions from the 16th century to the 19th century, Gypsies are considered as the “forest people” of Europe who share the inaccessible and hardly comprehensible space with robbers or marginalized and pauperized like charcoal burners or ‘witches’”¹⁶².

The forest scene in *Maximoff*’s arc too describes a forest as the living space of a “Gypsy”, but this connection between forest and person is not innate. Instead, the forest reveals as *Maximoff*’s former space of refuge and safety after the pogrom. We see an emotional investment in this space, resulting in its anthropomorphism, as he attempts to stop *Quicksilver* from “harm[ing]” the “friendly” wood. The loss of emotional property evokes the tragedy of the scene, connoting with expulsion (like during the pogrom) and the previous loss of his kin. It underlines his emotional fragility even many years after the pogrom, a fragility that is of the same nature as *Doctor Doom*’s supernatural vindictiveness: It is socialized, forced upon him. The trope of the “forest people” gets reattributed from a symbol of innate social periphery to a symbol of the psychological scars of racist violence. *Maximoff* does not urge revenge like *Doom* but his pacification, resulting in a comparably even more humanized character. This recognition of trauma is unconventional, according to Bogdal,

¹⁵⁸ See Michelinie et al, “Nights of Wundagore!”.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ Bogdal, *Europa erfindet die Zigeuner*, 133.

¹⁶² Ger.: “Zigeuner gelten seit den systematischen Verfolgungen im 16. Jahrhundert bis ins 19. Jahrhundert hinein als die ‘Waldmenschen’ Europas, die sich den unzugänglichen und unübersichtlichen Raum mit Räubern oder Marginalisierten und Pauperisierten wie Köhlern oder ‘Hexen’ teilen” Ibid.

*“the inner resistance against recognizing the crimes towards the European Romani peoples as a history of sorrow by individuals with wishes, feelings and ambitions in life persisted into the 1980s. Essential for the position towards them is what has manifested as an attitude over centuries. They are ‘not humans like us’, no fellow being to show empathy to, because they embody what the civilized European does not want to be.”*¹⁶³

The birth and revision of the motif of the “Gypsy” super-human did coincide with the depiction of “Gypsy” protagonists and antagonists in American comics in the following years. *The Avengers* arc from #181 to #187 was followed by a wave of “Gypsy” super-humans. Gerry Conway was obviously influenced by this arc when he created DC’s *Justice League of America Annual* #2 (1984).¹⁶⁴ In *The Avengers* #181, the superhero team is reorganized, reduced to a smaller group of members who are supposed to be the new elite. This reboot of a superhero team also happens in *Justice League of America Annual* #2. As with the introduction of the “Gypsy” motif through the origin story of *Scarlet Witch* and *Quicksilver*, a superheroine with the name *Gypsy* is introduced. She becomes a member of the *Justice League of America*, matching the motifs her name indicates: a femme fatale and thief in a colourful and ragged dress. Many more super-humans were created or revised as “Gypsies” during this time, such as *Gypsy Moth* (1979, Marvel),¹⁶⁵ *Meggan* (1983, Marvel),¹⁶⁶ and *Scorpio Rose* (1983, Eclipse).¹⁶⁷ Even X-Men nemesis *Magneto* received a “Gypsy” background in 1993, as a survivor of the national socialist genocide.¹⁶⁸ Again, the themes of pogrom and genocide accompanied the motif of the “Gypsy” super-human. *Magneto’s*

¹⁶³ Ger.: “Der innere Widerstand dagegen, die Verbrechen an den europäischen Romvölkern als eine Leidensgeschichte von Individuen mit Wünschen, Empfindungen und Lebensplänen zur Kenntnis zu nehmen, hält bis in die achtziger Jahre an. Maßgeblich für die Haltung ihnen gegenüber bleibt, was sich in Jahrhunderten als Einstellung verfestigt hat. Sie sind ‘nicht Menschen wie wir’, kein Gegenüber, dem man Empathie entgegenbringen kann, weil sie das verkörpern, was der zivilisierte Europäer nicht sein möchte.“ Ibid., 405.

¹⁶⁴ See Gerry Conway (writer), Chuck Patton (penciler), and Dave Hunt (inker), “The End of the Justice League!,” *Justice League of America Annual*, no. 2 (1984).

¹⁶⁵ See Mark Gruenwald (writer), Carmine Infantino (penciler), and Al Gordon (inker), “Things That Go Flit in the Night,” *Spider-Woman*, no. 10 (1979).

¹⁶⁶ See Alan Moore (writer), and Alan Davis (artist), “Captain Britain: The Candlelight Dialogues,” *The Mighty World of Marvel*, no. 7 (1983).

¹⁶⁷ See Steve Englehart (writer), Rogers Marshall (penciler), and Tom Palmer (inker), *Scorpio Rose*, 2 issues (Staten Island: Eclipse Comics, 1983).

¹⁶⁸ See Fabian Nicieza (writer) et al, “Point Blank,” *X-Men Unlimited*, no. 2 (1993).

background was revised, once again, in 2009 and he became Jewish instead.¹⁶⁹ Here, it turns out that his alleged background of a “Gypsy” had been only a cover identity. Since the turn of the millennium, DC’s *Ice* (2010) received a “Gypsy” background.¹⁷⁰ *Nightwing* too, better known as *Batman*’s first sidekick named *Robin*, was revealed as a child of “Gypsy” showmen in 2001.¹⁷¹

5. Outlook

Originally based on the antigypsyist motif of supernatural vindictiveness, the introduction of Romani pogrom and genocide from European settings into American superhero comics since the 1960s can be debatable. While its critiques may consider it a trivialization, its supporters might see it as a demystification of historical violence against Sinti and Roma. Undeniably though, Lee and Kirby were pioneers in establishing a lasting and comparatively high-complex design of a “Gypsy” character in American comics. This character and later “Gypsy” super-humans gained attention and there are cases where Romani activists and organizations considered these characters as identification figures to raise awareness of antigypsyist discrimination. For example, on the website of the German Roma Center e. V., we find a benevolent attitude towards the character design of *Doctor Doom*: It can

*“be seen that Stan Lee and Jack Kirby knew the history of the Roma well and that it [this history] was an important part of the comic world created by them. When the background story of Doctor Doom was created, in the mid-1960s, the Roma of Yugoslavia, Romania, and other East European countries began to fight for equal rights. This struggle for emancipation is also reflected by the story of Doctor Doom.”*¹⁷²

¹⁶⁹ See Greg Pak (writer), and Carmine Di Giandomenico (artist), *X-Men: Magneto Testament*, 5 issues (New York: Marvel Comics, 2008/9).

¹⁷⁰ See Judd Winick (writer), Fernando Dagnino (penciler), and Raúl Fernández (inker), *Justice League: The Cold Truth*, *Justice League: Generation Lost*, no. 12 (2010).

¹⁷¹ See Devin Grayson (writer), Roger Robinson (penciler), and John Floyd (inker), “Batman: Retribution Part 1 of 2; Sons and Lovers,” *Batman: Gotham Knights*, no. 20 (2001). Multiple later works repeated the information that *Nightwing* was at least “part-Romani”. For example, see Tim Seeley (writer), and Yanick Paquette (artist), *Nightwing: Rebirth* (New York: DC Comics, 2016).

¹⁷² Ger.: “lässt sich erkennen, dass Jack Kirby und Stan Lee die Geschichte der Roma gut kannten und sie ein wichtiger Teil der von ihnen geschaffenen Comicwelt war. Als die

A similarly positive statement, by the Spanish Roma rights activist Vicente Rodriguez Fernandez, who was listed by Forbes as one of the 30 most influential policymakers of Europe in 2016,¹⁷³ can be found in an interview for the *Travellers Times* in 2018: Looking at *Magneto's* previous design as a Sinto Holocaust survivor, "he was such an inspirational character"¹⁷⁴ for him. These examples show that the character designs, despite being frequently attributed to supervillains, have at least served as an instrument to raise awareness and inspired Romani activism in the past.

However, there is no evidence that this discourse on "Gypsy" notion in American comics did lead to an awareness of historical antigypsyist violence. Studying this aspect would be a matter of quantitative audience research that will be not conducted in this thesis. Still, it can be said that apart from *Magneto*, none of the previously mentioned "Gypsy" super-humans explicitly refers to historical violence. Their origin stories associate with exotic fantasies, connected to fictional events in often fictional countries that only imply the history of persecution in the actual world. Particularly, the causes of antigypsyist violence are most often ignored in these comics or shown as arbitrary (*The Fantastic Origin of Doctor Doom!*) or even partially as the victims' own fault (*The Avengers #182*). Obviously, the uses of themes of Romani pogrom and genocide in these comics were not serious attempts to make a documentation of antigypsyist violence in history. Rather, these themes joined the active inventory of the fantastic "Gypsy" motif, just like fortune tellers and criminals.

While American superhero comics introduced the "Gypsy" super-human as a new fantastical character trope, Francophone and Japanese comics take a different approach. In the next chapter, we explore how the themes of antigypsyism and Romani history are handled in *Bandes Dessinées*. On the one hand, rather than

Hintergrundgeschichte von Doctor Doom geschaffen wird, Mitte der 1960er Jahre, hatten die Roma aus Jugoslawien, Rumänien und anderen osteuropäischen Ländern damit begonnen, für ihre Gleichberechtigung zu kämpfen. Dieser Kampf um Emanzipation spiegelt sich auch in der Geschichte von Doctor Doom." Tripx, "Der Mächtigste Roma-Charakter im Marvel-Universum: Doctor Doom," *Roma Center e. V.*, 9 December 2021, <https://www.roma-center.de/der-maechtigste-roma-charakter-im-marvel-universum-doctor-doom/>.

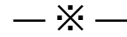
¹⁷³ "2016 30 under 30 Europe: Policy," *Forbes*, 4 March 2016 <https://www.forbes.com/pictures/edhd45llg/vicente-rodriguez-fernan/?sh=6fb3b0ae24d1>.

¹⁷⁴ "Did you know Magneto was a Roma Holocaust survivor in the original Marvel Comics?," *Travellers Times*, 17 May 2018, <https://www.travellerstimes.org.uk/news/2018/05/did-you-know-magneto-was-roma-holocaust-survivor-original-marvel-comics>.

relying on the superhero genre, Francophone comics often use the narrative tool of humour, particularly within their popular humorous adventure genres, to address these topics. On the other hand, later works tend to present Romani history in a more realistic and grounded way, avoiding sensationalism.

Chapter Three

Bandes Dessinées – Humour & Documentation



The most influential contributions of the Francophone world to the “Gypsy” motif are tragedies: *Notre-Dame de Paris* (1831) by Victor Hugo and *Carmen* (1845) by Prosper Mérimée that was later adapted into an opera by George Bizet in 1875. Additionally, Ambroise Thomas’ opera *Mignon* (1866) is a noteworthy example, at least containing tragic elements in some versions. “Gypsy” characters in prominent bandes dessinées (BD), Francophone comics, differ significantly from these influential literary and opera counterparts, leaning towards comedy rather than tragedy. This approach is a distinctive feature of BD discourse. Early bande dessinée series, such as *Bécassine* (1905–1962) and *Les Pieds Nickelés* (1908–2015), adopted a humoristic style. Previously, we have seen one example in the *Bécassine* series from 1913 that features the motif, comically addressing the trope of “Gypsy” child-theft.¹⁷⁵ These BD bear resemblance to American comics like *Yellow Kid* (1895–1898) and *Katzenjammer Kids* (1897–2006) in their satirical approach. But unlike the US market, which favoured the crime and superhero genres from the 1930s onward, the most iconic works of BD culture stuck to the humorous adventure, exemplified by the successes *Les Aventures de Tintin* (1929–1983) and *Spirou et Fantasio* (since 1938).

The preference for the humorous adventure bears narrative relevance, as this genre is characterized by specific narrative conventions shaped by the tool of humour. Humour can positively attribute its communicator, such as portraying the protagonist as clever and funny. Authors can also use it to emphasise key messages in the story. To define humour, this emphasis works through a sense of

¹⁷⁵ See “Chapter One” in this thesis, 29.

surprise or “the odd”, often conveyed through the bizarre – humour as a phenomenon of incongruity.¹⁷⁶ Humour, including racist jokes, may alienate via group-related mockery and establish hierarchies, leading to a definition of humour in certain contexts as an anti-social practice with its aim to subjugate or demolish “the other”.¹⁷⁷ But humour can likewise aid expressing or coping with subjects which are otherwise challenging to address openly. In this regard, it can act as a form of resistance, asserting the author’s autonomy, as exemplified in some cases of Holocaust literature by survivors.¹⁷⁸ Furthermore, as satire, humour can also serve as a form of journalism to criticize the state of society,¹⁷⁹ exemplified in anti-racist jokes that target social injustice. Departing from these assumptions, the narrative functions of humour are not arbitrary.

In this chapter, I argue that the “Gypsy” motif in bande dessinée stands out through an inclination for humorous adventures, British literary traditions, and – since the 1970s – comparably realistic storytelling. For this purpose, I explore Francophone comics and particularly their use of racist and anti-racist humour concerning this motif since 1945. First, I will illustrate narrative consequences of conventional jokes in the context of a “civilizing mission”, a paternalist agenda, before and after 1945. Thereafter, the post-war conditions of social commentary on antigypsyism in BD will be elaborated on. Subsequently, I analyse the ability of anti-racist and racist jokes to create new motific connotations, using Hergé’s *Les Bijoux de la Castafiore* (1961/62) in *Les Aventures de Tintin* as well as Albert

¹⁷⁶ That is a definition of humour according to the “incongruity theory”. See, for example, John C Meyer, “Humor as a Double-Edged Sword: Four Functions of Humor in Communication,” *Communication Theory* 10, no. 3 (2002): 310–331; also see Michael Clark, “Humor and Incongruity,” in *The Philosophy of Laughter and Humor*, ed. John Morreall (New York: State University of New York Press, 1987), 139–155; and see Brian Boyd, “Laughter and Literature: A Play Theory of Humor,” *Philosophy and Literature* 28, no. 1 (2004): 1–22.

¹⁷⁷ That is a definition of humour according to the Superiority Theory. This perspective is represented by, for example, philosopher Roger Scruton. See Roger Scruton, “Laughter,” in *The Philosophy of Laughter and Humor*, ed. John Morreall (New York: State University of New York Press, 1987), 168.

¹⁷⁸ See Jennifer I Bjornstad, *Functions of Humor in German Holocaust Literature: Edgar Hilsenrath, Günter Grass, and Jurek Becker* (PhD thesis, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2001), 14–23. Also see Frank Harry Katz, *Screaming Laughing: The functions and varieties of humor in American Holocaust literature* (PhD thesis, Arizona State University, 2000).

¹⁷⁹ See Ernst Gombrich, “Das Arsenal der Karikaturisten: Ein Vortrag, gehalten an der Duke University, North Carolina, am 22. März 1962,” in *Meditationen über ein Steckenpferd: Von den Wurzeln und Grenzen der Kunst*, translated by Lisbeth Gombrich (Vienna: Europaverlag, 1973), 232.

Uderzo's and René Goscinny's *Astérix en Hispanie* (1969). They reinterpreted stories from 19th-century British literature – drawn from works by writers such as Walter Scott, Arthur Conan Doyle, and George Borrow – when implementing “Gypsy” characters into their comics. Following this examination of humour in BD, I will reflect on the developments since the 1970s. The medium evolved into a platform for realistic storytelling on antigypsyism and Romani history. The chapter closes with an outlook on the contemporary implications of the BD discourse on “Gypsy” notion.

1. Hergé, Humour & the “Civilizing Mission”

Throughout history, societies worldwide have employed strategies to justify expansionist and imperialist endeavours. The concept of the “civilizing mission” is a key example, a term that was most widespread in the French context (as “mission civilisatrice”) and is nowadays used as an umbrella term for the idea of a supposedly moral obligation aimed to legitimize the exploitation and supremacy of Western societies in their colonies.¹⁸⁰ According to historian Alice L Conklin, this concept allowed societies with a democratic self-understanding like France (and Belgium) to ignore “the fundamental contradiction between democracy and the forcible acquisition of an empire”¹⁸¹. While the concept operated under the guise of elevating perceived “primitive” societies to a “civilized” state, the roots of this agenda can be traced back to Western European endeavours since the Middle Ages to religiously convert non-Christian societies. In the 18th and 19th centuries, the rationale for the “civilizing mission” expanded beyond religious reasoning to include a broader focus on moral and technological education.¹⁸² It extended not only to the colonies but also to the colonizing state itself, in establishing schools,

¹⁸⁰ See Mathew Burrows, “‘Mission civilisatrice’: French Cultural Policy in the Middle East, 1860–1914,” *The Historical Journal* 29, no. 1 (1986): 109–135.

¹⁸¹ Alice L Conklin, *A Mission to Civilize: The Republican Idea of Empire in France and West Africa* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), 2.

¹⁸² See Gilbert Rist, *The History of Development: From Western Origins to Global Faith* (London: Zed Books, 2002), 25–46.

extensively construct roads, urbanizing, and industrializing.¹⁸³ The “civilizing mission” found expression in various media, including comics, thereby shaping coeval public perceptions.

Before and after 1945, the portrayal of non-white characters in bandes dessinées was dominated by the establishment of hierarchies through the narrative tool of humour. Humour and the idea of “civilizing” the perceived “uncivilized”, a colonial agenda, were prominent features of the humorous genre in BD.¹⁸⁴ We also find them in the works of George Prosper Remi, better known as Hergé, a pioneer of the bande dessinée as a form of art.¹⁸⁵ The theme of “Otherness” played a crucial role in his adventures, which were usually located in settings beyond Western Europe. One infamous example can be found in his comic series *Les Aventures de Tintin* (1929–1976, Eng.: *The Adventures of Tintin*), featuring the journalist *Tintin* and his dog, which were Hergé’s most iconic characters. It is a series of humourist adventure comics and represents the Franco-Belgian interpretation of the hero genre.¹⁸⁶ One of the stories in the series was titled *Tintin au Congo* (Eng.: *Tintin in the Congo*), originally published between 1930 and 1931 in a supplement for the Belgian magazine *Le Vingtième Siècle*.¹⁸⁷ In this story, *Tintin* travels to the Belgian colony of the Congo. Like other Western artists, Hergé portrayed the native population as lazy and intellectually inferior. In the story, during a train accident, *Tintin* must motivate the locale inhabitants to help, to which one of them responds in broken French with, “Me tired”¹⁸⁸, making *Tintin*’s dog reply: “Come on you lazy people!... Get to work.....”¹⁸⁹. Moreover, Hergé presents the native population as beneficiary of the colonial regime, highlighting technological ad-

¹⁸³ See Eugen Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France, 1870–1914* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1976), 485.

¹⁸⁴ See Philippe Delisle, *Bande dessinée franco-belge et imaginaire colonial: Des années 1930 aux années 1980* (Paris: L’Harmattan, 2008); and see Robert Aman, “Spirou in the Congo: Colonial Racism and Civilizing Mission in Journal de Spirou 1938–1960,” *Journal of Graphic Novels and Comics* 14, no. 6 (2023): 853–874.

¹⁸⁵ See Matthew Screech, *Masters of the Ninth Art: Bandes Dessinées and Franco-Belgian Identity* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2005), 17.

¹⁸⁶ See Benoît Denis, “Hergé-Simenon, Thirties,” in *From Art Nouveau to Surrealism: Belgian Modernity in the Making*, ed. Nathalie Aubert, Pierre-Philippe Fraiture, and Patrick McGuinness (London: Routledge, 2007), 110.

¹⁸⁷ Georges P Remi, “Les Aventures de Tintin,” *Le Petit Vingtième*, no. 23/1930–23/1931 (1930/31).

¹⁸⁸ Fre.: “Moi fatigue!”. Ibid., no. 39/1930.

¹⁸⁹ Fre.: “Allons tas de paresseux! ... A l’ouvrage ...”. Ibid.

vancements while implying the necessity of ‘white masters’ educating the indigenous people. The comic omits any mention of the well-known atrocities committed by the Belgian rulers, especially, but not exclusively before 1908, when the Congo used to be King Leopold’s private possession. These elements propagate the Belgian “civilising mission” in its colonies.



Fig. 19: Jo presents the “Gypsies” a modern van. Remi, “Jo, Zette et Jocko”.

In a similar manner, “Gypsy” characters appear in Hergé’s interwar comics, specifically in *Les Aventures de Jo, Zette et Jocko* (1936–57, Eng.: *The Adventures of Jo, Zette and Jocko*). The series was published in a French children’s weekly Catholic newspaper, *Cœurs Vaillants*. In the story *Le Stratonef* (Eng.: *The Stratonef*¹⁹⁰, 1937–39), young hero *Jo* encounters a “Gypsy” family cooking over a campfire near a road, along with their horse-drawn wagon.¹⁹¹ In a rush to prevent a bomb attack on an airfield, he seeks the use of their wagon, but they dismiss his plea, prompting *Jo* to steal it. The comedic element emerges as the stolen wagon is partly destroyed by a passing train. Nonetheless, *Jo* manages to reach the airfield in time to prevent the attack. At the end of the story, he apologizes to the “Gypsies” and compensates them with a modern van (figs. 19). Eventually, the “Gypsies” are profiteers of the situation. The generous compensation symbolizes an upgrade from their premodern horse-drawn wagon and represents *Jo*’s

¹⁹⁰ This is also the name of a plane in the story. The story was reprinted in 1951 as a pair of albums, titled *Le Testament de M Pump* and *Destination New-York*. These two albums were subsequently translated into English and released under the titles *Mr. Pump’s Legacy* and *Destination New York*.

¹⁹¹ George P Remi, “Les Aventures de Jo, Zette et Jocko,” *Cœurs Vaillants*, no. 26/1937–7/1939 (1937–39).

commitment to introduce them to a more “civilized” lifestyle. Social scientist Jörn Ahrens, in his case study of this comic, concludes that “the luxury van stands for a consequential civilisation of the human even on the street”¹⁹². Like *Tintin au Congo*, *Le Stratonef* implies the idea of a “civilizing mission”, which presupposes a hierarchy.

This “civilizing mission”, operating through the genre of humour, sheds light on a “Gypsy” notion that was marked by paternalist philogypsyism. While there have been parallels between the images of “Gypsies” and Jews,¹⁹³ Jews were not subjects of this mission but were antagonized, reflecting the antisemitic idea of Jews as materially rich and influential as well as “overcivilized” threat for society.¹⁹⁴ Already in the 1920s, we find antisemitic caricatures by Hergé, exemplified by *Le Juif* that was published in the official journal of the Association Catholique de la Jeunesse Belge in 1925. It portrays a Jew as a vile figure with hooked nose. Antisemitism persisted in his comics during the 1940s when he worked in occupied France for the German-controlled newspaper *Le Soir*. His 1941–42 comic *L'Étoile Mystérieuse* (Eng.: *The Mysterious Star*¹⁹⁵) features greedy Jewish financiers, including a manipulative character named *Blumenstein* who has a bulbous nose.¹⁹⁶

Many French and Belgian artists collaborated with the Nazis and sought to absolve themselves after the war, including Hergé; however, Hergé never created a work that critically considers antisemitism, while his paternalistic stance might have been the groundwork for his social commentary on antigypsyist practices after 1945. It becomes evident that Hergé was quite conventional in his use of humour in support of the “civilizing mission”. Racist jokes remained prevalent in

¹⁹² Ger.: “Der Luxuswohnwagen steht für eine konsequente Zivilisierung des Menschen sogar auf der Straße”. Jörn Ahrens, “Randerscheinungen: Roma-Figuren im klassischen franko-belgischen Comic,” in *Selbst- und Fremdbilder von Roma in Comic und Graphic Novel: Vom Holocaust bis zur Gegenwart*, ed. Marina Ortrud M Hertrampf, and Kirsten von Hagen (Munich: AVM, 2021), 131.

¹⁹³ For example, see Iulia-Karin Patrut, *Phantasma Nation: ‘Zigeuner’ und Juden als Grenzfiguren des ‘Deutschen’, 1770 – 1920* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2014).

¹⁹⁴ For example, see Wolfgang Geiger, “Geldjuden: Die Grundlagen eines universellen Vorurteils vom Mittelalter bis heute,” in *Widerspruchstoleranz 3: Ein Methodenhandbuch zu antisemitismuskritischer Bildungsarbeit* (Berlin: Kreuzburger Initiative gegen Antisemitismus, 2019), 16–24.

¹⁹⁵ It was later translated into English under the title *The Shooting Star*. In French and translated albums after 1945, the Jewish financiers have been removed, and the character *Blumenstein* was renamed. See Benoît Peeters, *Hergé, fils de Tintin* (Paris: Flammarion, 2006), 144, 270.

¹⁹⁶ See *ibid.*

his work. Nevertheless, he exhibited a certain ambivalent endeavour as he later also emerged as a pioneer in using humour for social critique, particularly in addressing antigypsyism through anti-racist jokes. To comprehend this development, the new conditions of a post-war context will be discussed in the following pages.

2. (Non-)Narrating after 1945: Conditions of BD's Commentary on Antigypsyism

In post-war BD, the discourse on the "Gypsy" motif was as diverse as in American comics. Stories from *Fripounet et Marisette* (1946/47) by René Bonnet and *Frédéri le Gardian* (1951) by Robert Rigot featured "Gypsy" characters as nomads, femmes fatales or showmen. These characters were presented as exotic and thrilling.¹⁹⁷ Overt antigypsyism was also evident in bandes dessinées. For example, in a story from François Craenhals' *Pom et Teddy* (1956/57), later published by Le Lombard as an album, a "Gypsy" thief is the story's antagonist.¹⁹⁸ And the comic series *Le Grêlé 7/13* (1966–71) by Lucien Nortier, Christian Gaty and Roger Lécureux, which is about the French resistance during Nazi occupation, depicts the hero as fair-skinned and blue-eyed, while the collaborators of the Nazis are portrayed using antisemitic and antigypsyist stereotypes.¹⁹⁹

In contrast to American comics,²⁰⁰ there were no cases of BD by prominent artists or publishers from France or Wallonia prior the 1970s that addressed the Romani persecution in Nazi Germany. The previous policies of the Third Republic of France might have complicated addressing this topic for French audiences. After World War Two started, but before the German Empire occupied Western Europe, the French authorities suspected Roma as spies for Germany. This paranoid suspicion led to a ban on Roma from leaving France. President Albert Lebrun issued a decree ordering the collective immobilization of Roma, officially "for the national

¹⁹⁷ René Bonnet (writer, artist), "La Peau de Crocodile," *Fripounet et Marisette*, no. 13/1946–31/1947 (1946/47); and Robert Rigot (writer, artist), "Frédéri le Gardian: Sur la Piste des Carpathes," *Cœurs Vaillants*, no. 1/1951–42/1951 (1951).

¹⁹⁸ François Craenhals (writer, artist), "Pem et Teddy: Le Secret du Balibach," *Tintin: Le Journal des Jeunes*, no. 52/1956–30/1957 (1956/57).

¹⁹⁹ See Roger Lécureux (writer), Lucien Nortier (artist), and Christian Gaty (artist), *Le Grêlé 7/13*. 13 issues (Paris: Taupinambour, 1966–71).

²⁰⁰ See "Chapter Two" in this thesis, 49–53.

defense and the safeguarding of secrecy”²⁰¹. Later, during the German occupation and the Vichy regime in France’s South, these previous measures were exploited by the Nazi authorities and collaborators to deport the local Roma to concentration camps.²⁰² This chain of events, which followed a long history of antigypsyist politics in France, remained an unexplored topic in the post-war era – obviously casting the Third Republic in an unfavourable light. But before prominent BD artists considered this history, there was critical commentary on contemporary antigypsyism, particularly by one unexpected but well-known figure: Hergé.

When we examine Hergé’s post-war narratives in contrast to his comics before 1945, a shift in tone becomes evident. Besides the chronic paternalism among many artists including him, two factors can be considered as significant for Hergé’s “Gypsy” characters after 1945.

First, there was a shift towards pedagogic content, also taking the form of social commentary. In France, the *Loi du 16 juillet 1949 sur les publications destinées à la jeunesse* was enacted which restricted the depiction of violent and sexual content in bandes dessinées. But the law primarily aimed to distinguish BD from the often-bizarre superhero comics from the United States by accentuating pedagogical values. American works became more and more successful in Western Europe, but many considered them as harmful to the youth. Thus, the law can be seen in the context of an early cultural protectionism in France, a concept that is known since the 1990s as “l’exception culturelle” (Eng.: “cultural exception”). Both, the French and Belgian industry as well as their artists supported this agenda, emphasizing the education of children through more realistic and socially relevant scenarios. Belgian artists too were well advised to align their work with the preferences of French publishers.²⁰³

²⁰¹ Fre.: “pour la défense nationale et la sauvegarde du secret”. Quoted according to Marie-Christine Hubert, “1940–1946, l’internement des tsiganes en France,” *Hommes et Migrations*, no. 1188–1189 (1995): 31. For more information on the discriminatory policies by the French state, see Henriette Asséo, *Une mémoire française: Les Tsiganes pendant la Seconde Guerre mondiale, 1939–1946* (Paris: FNASAT, 2010).

²⁰² While the camps in occupied and Vichy France were no extermination camps, there were many cases where German authorities organized the onward deportation of Roma in France to the death camps. See, for example, the documentation on Nord-Pas-de-Calais in “La Déportation des Tsiganes du Nord-Pas-de-Calais (V.2.),” *Fondation pour la Mémoire de la Déportation*, 30 July 2008, <http://www.bddm.org/liv/details.php?id=V.2.>

²⁰³ See Screech, *Masters of the Ninth Art*, 86, 88–89.

Second, Romani activism started to leave a mark.²⁰⁴ In regard of France and Belgium, the Romani civil rights movement did not start to organize until the 1960s, marked by the establishment of the *Communauté Mondiale Gitane* in 1960 and the *Organisation Nationale Gitane* in 1961. But obviously, Romani activists existed prior to this period, the most famous one being Matéo Maximoff, a survivor of the Romani genocide. Maximoff became well-known as arguably the first Romani writer in France due to his novel *Les Ursitory* that was published in 1946 and presents a modern fairytale.²⁰⁵ Maximoff also expressed the issue of environmental racism. He collaborated with Otto Daettwyler for the Swiss German documentary photo book *Tsiganes* (1959). Multiple pages are devoted to a Romani settlement that was forced by the authorities to be set up on a landfill. Maximoff comments, “Nobody tolerates their proximity, they are avoided by inhabitants of villages and cities like the pestilence, and police and authorities are after them.”²⁰⁶ Despite the focus on Roma in France, a French version of the book, which would have included the probably French-language original commentary by Maximoff, was never published. Nevertheless, it would be a remarkable coincidence if Hergé had not been aware of Maximoff and his commitment, also possibly through one of his many anonymous assistants, when he created the story *Les Bijoux de la Castafiore* (1961/62) in his series *Les Aventures de Tintin*. Here, *Tintin* encounters a “Gypsy” camp, where a young man named *Matéo* and an elderly man explain that they were forced by the authorities to settle on a landfill. The “Gypsy” clichés appear once again, but this time there is a new social critique towards contemporary antigypsyism.

There was a post-war context marked by a new pedagogic agenda among the Francophone comic industry as well as by a new discourse on racism. In this context, we find new uses of humour by Hergé, as will be shown in the next section.

²⁰⁴ For an overview of the beginnings of the Romani civil rights movement in France, see Jean-Pierre Liégeois, “The emergence of the Roma Civil Rights Movement in France,” *romarchive*, accessed 2 February 2023, <https://www.romarchive.eu/de/roma-civil-rights-movement/emergence-roma-civil-rights-movement-france/>.

²⁰⁵ Matéo Maximoff, *Les Ursitory* (Paris: Flammarion, 1946).

²⁰⁶ Ger.: “Niemand duldet ihre Nähe, sie werden von Dorf- und Stadtbewohnern wie die Pest gemieden, und Polizei und Behörden sind hinter ihnen her”. Matéo Maximoff, and Otto Daettwyler, *Tsiganes: Wanderndes Volk auf endloser Straße* (Zürich: Büchergilde Gutenberg, 1959), 91.

3. The Racist & the Anti-Racist Joke: Hergé & New Critique on Antigypsyism

On the following pages, I argue that Hergé used humour and British literary traditions in a pioneering manner for a critique against antigypsyism. This use distinguishes his comic *Les Bijoux de la Castafiore* from similar cases of historical literature and comics. Following the story's synopsis, I consider the conventional as well as pioneering nature of the work under consideration of the discourses in literary and comic history. Thereafter, my focus moves to the interpretation of successive expressions of Hergé's racist jokes, as he uses humour for both a racist and anti-racist subtext. After this case study, it will be further elaborated on the conventional and evolving nature of ethnic humour during this era, exemplified by the case of *Astérix en Hispanie* (1969) by Albert Uderzo and René Goscinny.

Addressing a young European French-speaking audience, the protagonist in *Les Aventures de Tintin* regularly journeys to other countries and continents, where he experiences adventures. In only one of the issues this is not the case: in *Les Bijoux de la Castafiore* (1961/62, Eng.: *The Jewellery of Castafiore*²⁰⁷). Originally serialized in the Belgian *Tintin* magazine, *Les Bijoux de la Castafiore* is a crime story about an apparent theft at the fictional *Château de Moulinsart* (*Marlinspike Hall*). The *Château*, the setting of the issue, is a noble family estate of *Capitaine Haddock*, one of *Tintin's* closest friends. In the story, "Gypsies" become the prime suspects.

²⁰⁷ Published in English as *The Castafiore Emerald*.



Fig. 20: The palm reading old “Gypsy” woman. Remi, *Les Bijoux*, 4.

In the story, *Haddock* and *Tintin* encounter a “Gypsy” camp situated on a landfill, provoking disapproval from *Haddock*: “No sense of hygiene, those Zouaves²⁰⁸!”²⁰⁹. As they approach, an old woman offers to read *Haddock*’s fortune (figs. 20), predicting in broken French: “Jewels gone!... disappeared!... flown away!...”²¹⁰ *Haddock* subsequently learns from the camp residents, *Matéo* and an unnamed elder, that the police confined them to this location. Out of compassion, *Haddock* invites the “Gypsies” to relocate their camp from the landfill to the fields of his estate, an offer they accept. Back at the *Château*, both the butler and even the local police chief warn *Haddock* about potential trouble with the supposedly criminal “Gypsies”. The opera diva *Bianca Castafiore* visits the *Château*. Shortly after her arrival, her jewels, valued at millions of Francs, disappear. Given the earlier warnings to *Haddock*, suspicions of the “Gypsies” are fuelled. But it is

²⁰⁸ “Zouaves” = French colonial troops from Algeria.

²⁰⁹ Fre.: “Aucun sens de l'hygiène, ces zouaves-là!”. Georges Prosper Remi, *Les Bijoux de la Castafiore* (Brussels: Casterman, 1963), 1.

²¹⁰ Fre.: “bijoux partis!... disparus...! Envolés!...” Ibid., 4.

later revealed that *Castafiore* has merely misplaced her jewels. Subsequently, she loses another piece, an emerald. The police immediately jump to the conclusion of the “Gypsies” guilt, despite a lack of evidence. Eventually, *Tintin* discovers that the “Gypsies” are not guilty; the emerald was stolen by a magpie.

The plot, in which the “Gypsies” are wrongly suspected of a crime, is generally viewed positively in academia. The “Gypsy” characters function as what in the crime genre is called a “red herring”, with their false suspicion driving the story forward. Given the strong manifestation of antigypsyist sentiment in societies, they easily fit into this role. Based on this role, *Les Bijoux de la Castafiore* is praised for its supposed deconstruction of stigma. This praise extends beyond tsiganologists and journalists like Lucie Servin, who notes, “Hergé has already put on stage the clichés of his era about the Gitanos²¹¹ [sic] wrongly accused in place of a thieving magpie”²¹². Similarly, the semantic scholar Martin Frenzel writes that the false suspicion in Hergé’s *Les Bijoux de la Castafiore* succeeds “to deconstruct and to uncover resentment and stigmata”²¹³, even going so far as to describe it as a “quantum leap”²¹⁴ in BD history. Cultural scholar Kirsten von Hagen has a similar conclusion: “It is obvious [...] that in the case of the staged group of ‘Gypsies’ in *Les Bijoux de la Castafiore* (1961) a playful handling of portrayals of alterity and thus a parody of the common stereotypes can be observed”²¹⁵. She argues, “The stereotype that all Gypsies steal, is [...] parodied”²¹⁶,

²¹¹ Gitanos (Fre.: “Gitans”) = Spanish Roma. Many Gitanos live in France and Belgium, but in the French-speaking context, the term is often used interchangeably with “tsiganes” (Eng.: “Gypsies”).

²¹² Fre.: “Hergé mettait déjà en scène les clichés de son époque sur les Gitans accusés injustement à la place d’une pie voleuse”. Lucie Servin, “Les Tsiganes et leur représentation dans la bande dessinée contemporaine,” in *Les Tsiganes et les Gens du voyage dans la bande dessinée*, ed. Francis Groux (Paris: FNASAT, 2016), 10.

²¹³ Ger.: “Ressentiments und Stigmata zu dekonstruieren und zu entlarven”. Martin Frenzel, “Zwischen Hergés Klarer Linie, Emmanuel Guiberts Reisen zu den Roma und der Porajmos-Erzählung Batchalo: Das Bild der Sinti und Roma im frankobelgischen Comic,” in *Selbst- und Fremdbilder von Roma in Comic und Graphic Novel: Vom Holocaust bis zur Gegenwart*, ed. Marina Ortrud M Hertrampf, and Kirsten von Hagen (Munich: AVM, 2021), 89.

²¹⁴ Ger.: “Quantensprung”. Ibid., 87.

²¹⁵ Ger.: “Sinnfällig ist [...], dass im Fall der inszenierten Gruppe von ‘Zigeunern’ in *Les Bijoux de la Castafiore* (1961) ein spielerischer Umgang mit Alteritätsinszenierungen und damit eine Parodie der gängigen Stereotype beobachtbar ist”. Kirsten von Hagen, “La belle gitane: Zur Genealogie und Fortschreibung eines Stereotyps,” in *Selbst- und Fremdbilder von Roma in Comic und Graphic Novel*, ed. Marina Ortrud M Hertrampf, and Kirsten von Hagen (Munich: AVM, 2021), 145.

²¹⁶ Ger.: “Das Stereotyp, dass alle Zigeuner stehlen, wird [...] parodiert”. Ibid.

because “it is attributed to the group, but ultimately a thieving magpie is responsible for the theft of the pearl necklace [sic]”²¹⁷.

These claims regarding the story’s novelty and its significance in discourse tend to overlook the conventional sensation of the “Gypsy” motif in the comic. This sensation manifests through an exoticism conveyed in colourful wagons and dresses as well as the theme of fortune telling that is subject to ethnic humour. In this story, *Tintin* is not confronted with clichés of foreign countries but rather encounters a form of the “domestic exotic” embodied by the “Gypsies” (although that might have been not Hergé’s intention²¹⁸). Thus, the narrative structure of journey, a recurring theme of the humorous adventure series, has not vanished but is inverted in *Les Bijoux de la Castafiore*. The relevance of ethnic humour will be elaborated on more later. For now, concerning the “Gypsy” characters’ function as a red herring, we can assess the above-mentioned claims. By abstracting the narrative traditions upon which the work is built, we can identify the novel elements it introduces.

It becomes evident that Hergé replicates a 19th-century literary trope. “Gypsies” serve as scapegoats of historical literature. For example, *Carmen* is killed by the man whose jealousy was ignited, and *Esmeralda* in Victor Hugo’s *Notre-Dame de Paris* is being hanged for an alleged pact with the devil.²¹⁹ Within this narrative, we find variants such as in the novel *Guy Mannering* (1815) by Scottish author Sir Walter Scott, a bestseller of its time primarily set in Britain. It appears as highly influential for a discourse that is reflected in Hergé’s *Les Bijoux de la Castafiore*. In Scott’s tale, the benevolent laird *Godfrey Bertram* permits “Gypsies” to camp on his estate. Later, he and his wife await their first child, for whom a “Gypsy” fortune teller is present to predict the child’s fate. Eventually, it is not the “Gypsy” but an astrologer who foresees a potential hazard facing the child, a boy, once

²¹⁷ Ger.: “es der Gruppe zwar zugeschrieben wird, letztlich aber eine diebische Elster für den Diebstahl der Perlenkette verantwortlich ist”. Ibid.

²¹⁸ In an interview, he provided commentary on this comic in the following manner: “A story where nothing would happen. Without any recourse to exoticism... Simply to see if I was able to hold the reader in suspense until the end.” Fre.: “Une histoire où il ne se passerait rien. Sans aucun recours à l'exotisme ... Simplement pour voir si j'étais capable de tenir le lecteur en haleine jusqu'au bout.” Quoted according to Numa Sadoul, *Entretiens avec Hergé* (Tournai: Casterman, 1989), 70.

he reaches the age of five. Indeed, one day everything changes when Mr *Bertram* becomes Justice of the Peace (magistrate). His demeanour undergoes a rapid shift as he makes extensive use of his new power as part of the authorities. That results in the forceful eviction of the “Gypsies” from his estate. Shortly after this expulsion, Mr *Bertram*’s son, now five years old, disappears, prompting suspicions that the “Gypsies” kidnapped him. But it is later revealed that they are entirely unguilty of this accusation. The appearance of a fortune-teller and the pre-vision of a disaster,²²⁰ the laird who allows “Gypsies” to camp on his estate,²²¹ the discrimination by authorities and the false suspicion of a crime are elements in the story of Scott’s *Guy Mannering*. And they are key elements in Hergé’s *Les Bijoux de la Castafiore*. Combined, these elements constitute what we can describe as the motif of the “Gypsy” red herring, accentuating the conventional nature of Hergé’s work.

While this trope is not novel, it has been interpreted variously and creatively by prominent artists, sometimes philo-, sometimes antigypsyist. In Scott’s narrative, the red herring is associated with the expulsion of the “Gypsies” that may serve to highlight the issue of antigypsyism in society.²²² But creating empathy for “Gypsy” characters does not inherently deconstruct the stigma, as it can also solely express philogypsyism.²²³ An antigypsyist interpretation of this motif can

²²⁰ For a brief overview of the narrative element of the apocalyptic fortunetelling “Gypsy” in literary history, see Hans R Brittnacher, *Leben auf der Grenze: Klischee und Faszination des Zigeunerbildes in Literatur und Kunst* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2012), 264–266.

²²¹ Like the concept of the apocalyptic “Gypsy” fortuneteller, the notion that “Gypsies” would preferably camp on the estate of a benevolent laird has a long history. This notion is also evident in a French tale dating back to 1596, known as *La vie généreuse des mercelots, gueuz et boesmiens, contenant leur façon de vivre, subtilitez et gergon* [sic]. See Ulrich Völklein, *Zigeuner: Das verachtete Volk* (Oldenburg: Stalling, 1981), 45. Therefore, Scott’s narrative might have drawn partial inspiration from this prior notion, yet he created a fresh interpretation by weaving together various narrative elements, including prediction of a disaster, discrimination by authorities and false suspicion.

²²² See Deborah Nord, *Gypsies and the British Imagination: 1807–1930* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 161.

²²³ In the context of the eviction of “Gypsies” as a theme in romantic literary works, we may consider the reflections by literary scholar Günter Oesterle in his analysis of Achim von Arnim’s *Von Volksliedern* (1806). Oesterle rejects an anti-racist subtext and instead emphasizes the philogypsyist sensation of this narrative element: “Arnim does not raise the moral pointing finger when he talks about the persecution of the ‘Gypsies’ but connects the desire of the locals for the exotic, wonderful lifestyle of the ‘Gypsies’ with their expulsion” Ger.: “Arnim erhebt nicht den moralischen Zeigefinger, wenn er von der Verfolgung der ‘Zigeuner’ spricht, sondern bringt die Sehnsucht der Einheimischen nach dem exotischen, wunderbaren Lebenswandel der ‘Zigeuner’ in Zusammenhang mit deren Vertreibung”. Günter Oesterle, “‘Zigeunerbilder’ als Maske des Romantischen,” in *“Zigeunerbilder” in der deutschsprachigen Literatur*, ed. Wilhelm Solms, and Daniel Strauß (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag C Winter, 1995), 54.

be found in a short story by Arthur Conan Doyle, *The Adventure of the Speckled Band*, published in the *Strand Magazine* in 1892 and known from his collection *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*.²²⁴ In this story, an ambivalent laird allows “Gypsies” to camp on his estate. One day his stepdaughter is murdered, and her last words to her sister are: “It was the band! The speckled band!”²²⁵ This cryptic message leads to the suspicion of the “Gypsies” due to their speckled kerchiefs. But it ultimately turns out that they are not guilty, and the laird is the true killer. While the “Gypsies” are innocent, their connection to the true killer, the laird, in *The Adventure of the Speckled Band* underscores their threatening nature. Thus, the narrative consequences of this trope depend on the context in which it is employed.

Hergé was not the first prominent artist to employ this literary trope in humorous or non-humorous BD – nor was he the last as exemplified by *La patrouille des castors* (1965) by Jean-Michel Charlier and Michel Tacq shortly after. Earlier, André Franquin used the trope. Conan Doyle’s constellation of the “Gypsy” red herring and a rich or powerful true culprit appears in Franquin’s *Il y a un sorcier à Champignac* (1951) from the *Spirou et Fantasio* series.²²⁶ In this story, a strange phenomenon plagues farms and wildlife. Soon, a “Gypsy” is suspected to be a wizard master and is almost lynched by a mob. But the story takes a twist when the mayor, rather than the “Gypsy” or the laird (making his first appearance in the series), is revealed to be the true culprit. The laird wears a Sherlock Holmes costume in the second half of the comic. This could be seen as a comedic reference to a popular icon of the crime genre or perhaps a deliberate hint to Conan Doyle’s short story. The example highlights the previous significance of this literary trope in humorous BD’s “Gypsy” discourse. But despite being set in a humorous adventure, the “Gypsy” red herring in *Il y a un sorcier à Champignac* does not operate with humour. Instead, it stands out as serious and almost tragic insertion.

²²⁴ Arthur Conan Doyle, *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* (Champaign: Project Gutenberg, 1999), 115–132. The narrative parallels between Walter Scott’s *Guy Mannering* and Arthur Conan Doyle’s *The Adventure of the Speckled Band* have been previously observed by the literary scholar Deborah Nord. For further insights, you can refer to Nord, *British Imagination*, 160.

²²⁵ Doyle, *Sherlock Holmes*, 120.

²²⁶ André Franquin, “Il y a un sorcier à Champignac,” *Les Aventures de Spirou et Fantasio*, no. 2 (1951).

Considering the trope that Hergé has drawn upon and its previous interpretations, what truly emerges as pioneering in *Les Bijoux de la Castafiore* is its use of humour. What makes the case, the theft by the magpie, comically absurd is not the revelation that the “Gypsies” are unguilty; it is absurd because, first, no valid reason for suspicion existed in the first place. In Scott’s *Guy Mannering*, the “Gypsies” are accused of kidnapping due to their prior expulsion and a potential motive for retaliation. Likewise, in Conan Doyle’s *The Adventure of the Speckled Band*, the victim’s last words about a “speckled band” point to the “Gypsies”’ kerchiefs. In both Scott’s and Conan Doyle’s stories, while the stereotype of criminal “Gypsies” does contribute to suspicion, it ultimately relies on circumstantial evidence. This is not the case for *Les Bijoux de la Castafiore*. Here, the police suspect the “Gypsies” without any evidence whatsoever. Second, the theft by the magpie even reveals that neither a criminal nor a crime exists. Lastly, what makes it even more bizarre are the distinct hints for the reader that make this outcome retrospectively the most plausible: Not only did the “Gypsy” fortune teller foresee the jewellery being “flown away”, *Castafiore* had already misplaced it once before. Thus, the story does outright mock police work, exposing racial profiling. Humour, in the form of a parody of police work, serves as a powerful tool for social critique. As the exposure of the authorities replaces the suspicion against the “Gypsies”, the “Gypsy” characters’ urge to speak up is supported. *Matéo*’s and the old man’s initial indication of discrimination (such as environmental racism) gains significance.

Like the American *The Avengers #181–187* (1979, the character name *Django Maximoff* is probably no coincidence),²²⁷ we can see Hergé’s work aligning with an evolving discourse that is contributed by the Romani civil rights movement. While being an exotic fantasy, the “Gypsy” characters’ urge to speak up in these works is remarkable, if we consider Brittnacher’s findings on their portrayal in historical literature: “They [Gypsies] don’t know the desire for emancipation, for the recognition as a people with rights, for a voice that speaks up.”²²⁸ While the

²²⁷ See “Chapter Two” in this thesis, 63–70; David Michelinie (writer) et al, *The Avengers*, no. 181–187 (1979).

²²⁸ Brittnacher, *Leben auf der Grenze*, 43. Ger.: “Ein Bedürfnis nach Mündigkeit, nach völkerrechtlicher Anerkennung, nach einer Stimme, die sich Gehör verschafft, kennen sie nicht”. The term “Mündigkeit” can be also translated as “autonomy”, but in this context, it more closely aligns with the meaning of “emancipation”. Similarly, “nach völkerrechtlicher

comic could also be seen in the context of Hergé's chronic paternalism, the portrayal of "Gypsies" who rightfully express critical commentary on antigypsyism is not paternalist but aligns with the agenda of Romani activists. It also mirrors the zeitgeist in comics at a time when characters started to become more nuanced, human representations.²²⁹ We see, there is a fusion of old and new ideas in *Les Bijoux de la Castafiore*. Unlike the American artists though, who allude to fantastical yet historicizing analogies in their comics, humour in Hergé's work is narratively significant. The roots of his *Les Bijoux de la Castafiore* are not grounded in the new conventions of superhero comics. Instead, they stem from a reconsideration of British literary traditions in a Francophone post-war context.

However, the comic has not only an anti-racist but also a racist subtext that exemplifies the "Gypsy" motif's old and new connotations in a post-war context. The comic is clearly not intended for readers with a Romani background. To recall, in Francophone comics, artists like Hergé previously employed ethnic humour in support of a "civilizing mission", a narrative utilized by colonialist and apartheid regimes. Moreover, he used antisemitic jokes that were also provided for print media of the German propaganda machinery during the second world war. Following the war, this led to his temporary professional ban as he was suspected of having been a Nazi collaborator.²³⁰ We see, ethnic humour must not be detached from its evolving historical background.

While *Les Bijoux de la Castafiore* does propagate neither a "civilizing mission" nor overt hostility, the use of humour might bear at least some resemblance to these earlier works. Hergé portrays a nomadic group of people, including an old fortune-telling, hunched and hooked-nosed lady. The character's inability to speak proper French suggests either a foreign background or a domestic culture isolated from the rest of French-speaking society. In implying that readers find amusement in the ridiculed "Gypsy" character, a hierarchy is once again created – contradictory to the comic's overall message.

Anerkennung" literally translates to "recognition according to international law", but it rather leans towards the meaning of "recognition as a people with rights" in this context.

²²⁹ See Screech, *Masters*, 46.

²³⁰ See Benoît Peeters, *Le monde d'Hergé* (Tournai: Casterman, 1990), 18.

Moreover, in the context of coeval discourse, humour introduces new connotations of the “Gypsy” motif. For example, early in the story, *Haddock* uses the term “Zouaves” as a label for the “Gypsies”. At first glance, this label might appear inconsequential, considering that Hergé had previously employed it 26 times in *Objectif Lune* (1950), but not in reference to “Gypsies”; it was associated with the recurrent character *Professeur Tournesol*.²³¹ “Zouaves” is known as a term for “good-for-nothings” as well as misbehaving children – highlighting a paternalist dimension. However, it has also a meaning related to French colonial troops from Algeria, particularly in the early 1960s. Given that *Les Bijoux de la Castafiore* was published during the final years of the Algerian War, the term was probably prominent in French-speaking public discourse, especially before the Zouaves were disbanded in 1962/63 following Algerian independence. Additionally, there was an evident discursive connection between the Algerian War and the concept of the “Gypsy”, as Algeria was home to a substantial Romani population. By the end of the conflict, about 180.000 Romani refugees migrated from Algeria to France, almost tripling the French Romani population, according to reports in coeval newspapers.²³² Besides, the decolonization in Africa had particular significance for Hergé. This significance can be attributed not only to his general interest in exotic adventures and contemporary politics but also to emerging concerns related to the colonialist agenda in his works. These concerns prompted a response from his publisher, Casterman, following the Congolese independence from Belgium in 1960: Hergé’s comic *Tintin au Congo* ceased to be reissued until the 1970s to avoid the sensitive topic.²³³

In this political context, the use of the term “Zouaves” in *Les Bijoux de la Castafiore* serves a multi-layered yet subtle joke. On the one hand, children might have understood the joke in the context of parental reprehension. On the other hand, there may have been an allusion to political discourse in *Les Bijoux de la Castafiore*. The perception of Zouaves in the Francophone public during the Algerian war will not be discussed here in detail. Also, we must be cautious when assuming an ethnic meaning since the Zouaves were predominantly recruited from

²³¹ George Prosper Remi, *Objectif Lune* (Bruxelles: Casterman, 1953).

²³² See Liegeois, “emergence”.

²³³ See Pierre Assouline, *Hergé* (Paris: Plon, 1996), 623.

French settlers and their descendants rather than the native population.²³⁴ But we may consider that the Zouaves were particularly known in public for their ceremonial, colourful uniforms, which were influenced by historical North African attire and perceived as oriental.²³⁵ Thus, there exists a potential association with the fantasy of colourful “Gypsy” attire. This humour builds on conventional attributes of the “Gypsy” motif to create a new connotation that relates to coeval political discourse that does otherwise not appear in the comic. Such new connotations modify what the “Gypsy” motif does represent and, thus, have the potential to influence discourse evolution.

On the following pages, I will further illustrate the creative and innovative yet stigmatizing nature of (racist) jokes regarding the “Gypsy” motif in bandes dessinées, exemplified with *Astérix en Hispanie* (1969) by Albert Uderzo & René Goscinny.

4. Discursive Significance of Racist Jokes: Albert Uderzo & René Goscinny

In this section, I exemplify with Albert Uderzo’s and René Goscinny’s *Astérix en Hispanie* (1969) the discursive significance of ethnic humour in BD concerning the “Gypsy” motif, including the recurrent influence of British literary traditions. After providing a synopsis of the story, I will conduct an analysis of the jokes’ references to traditional narratives of the “Gypsy” motif. Here, conventional as well as creatively evolving aspects of ethnic humour will be considered. Ultimately, I will reflect upon BD’s evolving approaches in addressing antigypsyism since the 1970s.

Astérix is a humorous adventure, first serialized in the French *Pilote* magazine. The protagonist *Astérix* and his sidekick *Obélix* are Gauls who fight the Roman Republic while having adventures all around the world. The series often satirizes national stereotypes. In *Astérix en Hispanie* (1969, Eng.: *Asterix in Spain*), the

²³⁴ See Anthony Clayton, *Histoire de l’Armée française en Afrique 1830–1962* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1994), 258.

²³⁵ See Jean-Louis Larcade, *Zouaves et Tirailleurs: Les régiments de marche et les régiments mixtes (1914–1918)* (Arles: Actes Sud, 2001), 544–545; and see Laurent Mirouze, *The French Army: in the First World War; to battle 1914 1* (Vienna: Militaria, 2007), 186.

throughout the night, repeatedly yelling “olé!”. Therefore, *Brontosaurus* fails. The next day, *Astérix* and *Obelix* continue their journey.

The nomads are referring to the “Gypsy” motif. The flamenco dance, while adding a thematic link to the setting of Hispania as part of Andalusian culture, is also associated with the “Gypsy” motif since the 19th century.²³⁸ The “Gypsy” reference is further manifested by the group’s portrayal as poor nomads and by symbols such as the kerchiefs. The comic satirizes the nostalgic image of “Gypsy” music, contrasting it with the image of the macho. Uderzo’s caricaturing style, reminiscent of Walt Disney cartoons,²³⁹ allows for bolder and more pronounced character designs in comparison to Hergé’s minimalist *ligne claire*.

We observe subtle forms of ethnic humour that give the “Gypsy” motif unconventional meanings, all without breaking it down. These meanings can be summed up as unconventional inversion of stereotypes, pre-modern setting, and collision between the national cliché and the idea of the “noble savage”. These meanings are created through humour. We will discuss these meanings and how they are created in more detail here.

First, unconventional inversion of stereotypes. *Spurius Brontosaurus* cannot retrieve the child because the nomads have a bizarre urge for song and dance. Their unusual behaviour makes them unpredictable, and this unpredictability creates the joke. In this context, the typical idea of child-theft by “Gypsies” is inverted. This inversion is different from George Eliot’s *The Spanish Gypsy* (1864), where non-“Gypsies” steal a child from “Gypsies”, or E. T. A Hoffmann’s *Das öde Haus* (1817), where a supportive “Gypsy” woman returns a child back to the non-“Gypsy” mother.²⁴⁰ In *Astérix en Hispanie*, the situation is marked by the unintentional support from the nomads due to their strange nature. They are unaware of

²³⁸ For an overview of this development, see Lou Charnon-Deutsch, *The Spanish Gypsy: The History of a European Obsession* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2004).

²³⁹ See Screech, *Masters*, 76.

²⁴⁰ See George Eliot, *The Spanish Gypsy*, ed. Antonie Gerard van den Broek (London: Routledge, 2018).

the attempted child-theft, which adds a bizarre and potentially comedic philogypsyist subtext.

Second, pre-modern setting. Social scientist Jörn Ahrens suggests in his case study that the anachronistic display of “Gypsy” characters in this BD might be unique.²⁴¹ Meanwhile, similar portrayals can be found in both humorous and serious American cases, like *Dr. Voodoo. The Gypsy Brigands* (1942),²⁴² and the sword-and-sandal character *Groo the Wanderer* in *Destroyer Duck* (1982–84).²⁴³ Unlike many stereotypes in the *Astérix* series that related to contemporary clichés, the “Gypsy” motif does not contrast with the ancient setting. According to Bogdal, “Gypsy” characters would serve a historicizing function: “their existence is being interpreted as a negation of the presence. As archaic, premodern ethnicity, they always belong to the past.”²⁴⁴ That means that the joke amplifies the sensation of a pre-modern world by using the “Gypsy” motif rather than staging it as a pre-modern intruder into contemporary times that is usually the case.

Lastly, the collision between national cliché and the idea of the “noble savage”. One example of a national cliché is the image of a flamenco dancing woman, often used to symbolize Spanish culture in its entirety, even though it originates particularly from the region of Andalusia. This stereotype exists since the 19th century and is associated with the flamenco as a cultural heritage of Spanish Roma.²⁴⁵ *Astérix en Hispanie* depicts this cliché humorously. We see the emphasis on the national cliché in both the visual representation and text of the comic. Instead of using the language Romanes, the nomads in the story use Spanish exclamations commonly associated with flamenco, such as “ay” and “olé”. They express these exclamations through singing, which is a typical feature of BD's

²⁴¹ See E T A Hoffmann, *Das öde Haus* (Berlin: Schlesinger'sche Buch- und Musikhandlung, 1857).

²⁴² See “Chapter One” in this thesis, 33–34; and see “Dr. Voodoo: The Gypsy Brigands,” *Whiz Comics*, no. 34 (1942), 50–55.

²⁴³ See Steve Gerber (writer) et al, *Destroyer Duck*, 7 issues (New York: Eclipse Comics, 1982–84).

²⁴⁴ Ger.: “Ihre Existenz wird als Negation der Gegenwart gedeutet. Als archaische, vormoderne Ethnie gehören sie stets der Vergangenheit an”. Klaus-Michael Bogdal, *Europa erfindet die Zigeuner: Eine Geschichte von Faszination und Verachtung* (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2011), 247.

²⁴⁵ For example, see Mario Papenbrok, “Zur Geschichte des Flamenco,” in *Flamenco*, ed. Claus Schreiner (Frankfurt a. M.: Ullstein, 1985), 37–53. There have been speculations about cultural influences by other Spanish as well as Arabic, African and Jewish contributions.

use of national stereotypes.²⁴⁶ This lingual phenomenon is not unique to this comic but is part of a larger pattern in the *Astérix* series. For example, in another issue called *Astérix chez les Helvètes* (1970), the Helvetians are characterised by their yodelling, to analogically represent the Swiss.²⁴⁷ Moreover, the way the nomads are visually portrayed in *Astérix en Hispanie* reinforces the national stereotype. Aside from the clothing, the appearance of the male nomads does not differ to other male characters from Hispania in this BD. Uderzo later commented on this character design: “The Spaniards reproached me, with reason, for having represented their people in the sole form of the swarthy, proud and brown warrior, in short of the Gitano²⁴⁸ type, whereas this country is much richer in types of characters.”²⁴⁹

However, the depiction’s significance lies not in the national cliché itself, but in its collision with the concept of the “noble savage”. Coined as the “bon sauvage” by essayist Michel de Montaigne in 1580, this idea initially emerged as a rejection of the demonization of indigenous societies in the Americas.²⁵⁰ Over time, it transformed into an idealized representation of many more supposedly “primitive” cultures, becoming a trope in arts and literature applied to various societies on different continents, even beyond colonial contexts. Despite its benevolent nature, the “noble savage” trope relies on the otherness and imagined primitivity of the targeted people. In the context of “Gypsy” characters as “noble savages”, one important figure is George Borrow (1803–1881). “If Heinrich Grellmann was the most prominent tsiganologist of the 18th century, so was Borrow [...] the most prominent one of the 19th century”²⁵¹, claims Klaus-Michael Bogdal. Borrow, known for his travel writings, gained fame for his novel *The Bible in Spain* (1843)

²⁴⁶ See Frank Bramlett, *Linguistics and the Study of Comics* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 152.

²⁴⁷ See Ibid.; and see René Goscinny (writer), and Albert Uderzo (artist), *Astérix chez les Helvètes* (Paris: Dargaud, 1970), 34.

²⁴⁸ “Gitano” = endonym and exonym for Roma in Spain.

²⁴⁹ Fre.: “Les Espagnols m’ont un peu reproché, avec raison, d’avoir représenté leur peuple sous la seule forme du guerrier basané, fier et brun, bref plutôt de type gitan, alors que ce pays est beaucoup plus riche en types de personnages.” Quoted after Olivier Andrieu, *Le livre d’Astérix le Gaulois* (Paris: Albert René, 1999), 110–111.

²⁵⁰ For example, see Joseph R de Lutri, “Montaigne on the Noble Savage: A Shift in Perspective,” *The French Review* 49, no. 2 (1975): 206–211.

²⁵¹ Ger.: “Wenn Heinrich Grellmann der bekannteste Zigeunerforscher des 18. Jahrhunderts war, so war Borrow [...] der des 19.” Bogdal, *Europa erfindet die Zigeuner*, 242.

about his experiences as a missionary in Spain between 1835 to 1838.²⁵² During this time, he claimed to have met “Gypsies” who referred to him as *Lavengro*, meaning “wordmaster” in Romanes. This name would have indicated his proficiency in their language. In a letter to the Bible Society during his first year in Spain, Borrow also mentioned a warm welcome he would have received from the “Gypsies”: “welcomes and greetings were poured forth in torrents of musical Romany, amongst which, however, the most pronounced cry was [...] 'oh, how we love you', for at first they supposed me to be one of their brothers, who, they said, were wandering”²⁵³. Borrow’s writings not only created an idealized image of hospitality by the “Gypsies”, a type of the “noble savage”, but also introduces a new theme that also appears in *Astérix en Hispanie*: “The Romany Rye”. In his novels *Lavengro* (1851) and *The Romany Rye* (1857), Borrow invented the concept of “The Romany Rye” that represents “a kind of romany fellow traveler”²⁵⁴. Bogdal classifies this character as a relevant theme of literary history: “In the 19th century, the successfully introduced character of the 'friend of the strangers' to the literature, by Borrow, becomes an important element of narration in the travel and adventure genre”²⁵⁵. In *Astérix en Hispanie*, this idea from Borrow’s works is humorously exaggerated, demonstrating the lasting impact of his writings. The comic not only features the idea of the “Gypsy noble savage” but also embodies the *Romany Rye* trope through its main characters, *Astérix* and *Obelix*, who are constantly on journeys. This aligns with the nomadic lifestyle of the people they encounter in Hispania, making them suitable candidates for the role of *Romany Ryes*. However, Borrow’s narratives placed the “Gypsy” on the periphery of Spanish society, contrasting with the “Gypsy” being a symbol of Spanishness in the comic: In *Astérix en Hispanie*, despite living in the Pampas, the nomads are not portrayed as societally periphery; instead, they are connected to the broader Spanish nation through their nationalised attribution. This shifts the focus from *Astérix* and *Obelix* being the “friends of the ‘Gypsy’ strangers” to being the “friends

²⁵² See Nord, *British Imagination*, 73.

²⁵³ Quoted according to *ibid.*; and George Borrow to the Bible Society, September 1835, in *Letters of George Borrow to the British and Foreign Bible Society*, ed. T H Darlow (London: Direction of the Committee, 1911), 94.

²⁵⁴ Nord, *British Imagination*, 71.

²⁵⁵ Ger.: “Die von Borrow erfolgreich in die Literatur eingeführte Figur des 'Freundes der Fremden' wird im 19. Jahrhundert zu einem wichtigen Erzählelement im Reise- und Abenteuergenre”. Bogdal, *Europa erfindet die Zigeuner*, 245.

of the Spanish strangers”, implying the Spanish nation itself as the land of the “noble savages”. This creates a comical collision of national and minority stereotypes. Like Hergé, also Uderzo and Goscinny present an unconventional narrative rooted in the reinterpretation of British literary traditions.

While maintaining discriminatory narratives, racist jokes are inclined to give common ideas new meanings through unconventional interpretations. Thus, they have the power to change the way we talk about things, exhibiting a particular potential in discourse evolution. Jokes work well because they surprise us and can push storytelling in new directions, even though they do not necessarily challenge harmful ideas. This is relevant in the context of BD discourse, where the humorous adventure is more prevalent than in American comics and Japanese manga. Both *Astérix en Hispanie* and *Les Bijoux de la Castafiore* show this characteristic in BD discourse.

In bandes dessinées, humorous adventures have always been the most successful genre, also because classic reprints have still a large fanbase. But BD has also contributed to more serious storytelling. Concerning the “Gypsy” motif, we see remarkable changes in BD since the 1970s. The bande dessinée distinguishes itself not solely through humorous “Gypsy” stories and tales that are inspired by British literature. It is also a platform for telling realistic stories about Romani history and discrimination. We will explore this development in the next pages.

5. The New Protagonists & a New Realism.

To this day, “Gypsy” characters have maintained relevance in the humorous adventures of bandes dessinées – not only in reprints but also in new stories. One BD series which features the “Gypsy” motif and that stands out is Dargaud’s internationally acclaimed *Gypsy* (1992) by Thierry Smolderen and Enrico Marini.²⁵⁶ This series features a “Gypsy” protagonist who is a truck driver in a postapocalyptic world. The work has been praised for exposing resentment through anti-racist jokes.²⁵⁷ But two decades later, ambivalently, Marini was also involved in the BD *Le scorpion* (2014). This comic is characterized by overt antigypsyism, centring around a hero named *Scorpion* whose enemy is an erotic “Gypsy” woman with expertise in poisons.²⁵⁸ Another comedic bande dessinée series is *L’Honneur des Tzarom* (2010/11) by Wilfrid Lupano and Paul Cauuet. It deals with the world of a criminal “Gypsy” family, once again set in a science-fiction context.²⁵⁹ The series *De cape et de crocs* (1995–2012) offers yet another case, as one of the protagonists falls in love with a “Gypsy” character who stands out through her “oriental” attire, dancing skills, and beautiful appearance. This portrayal approximates the stereotype of the Spanish “Gypsy” woman.²⁶⁰ In summary, humorous adventures in bandes dessinées continue to variously present this motif.

²⁵⁶ Thierry Smolderen (writer), and Enrico Marini (artist), *Gypsy*, 6 issues (Paris: Dargaud, 1993–2002).

²⁵⁷ See Dirk Suckow, “Überzeichnungen: Zum „Zigeuner“-Bild der Comicserie Gypsy,” in “*Denn sie rauben sehr geschwind jedes böse Gassenkind*: „Zigeuner“-Bilder in Kinder- und Jugendmedien, ed. Petra Josting, Caroline Roeder, and Frank Reuter (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2017), 401–418.

²⁵⁸ Stephen Desberg (writer), and Enrico Marini (artist), *Le scorpion*, no. 11 (2014).

²⁵⁹ Wilfrid Lupano (writer), and Paul Cauuet (artist), *L’Honneur des Tzarom*, 2 issues (Paris: Delcourt, 2010/11).

²⁶⁰ Alain Ayroles (writer), and Jean-Luc Masbou (artist), *De cape et de crocs*, 10 issues (Paris: Delcourt, 1995–2012).



Fig. 22: “Gypsies” and other people fleeing from the German invasion. Comès, *Silence*, 90.

In the 1970s, there was a shift in BD where fantastical “Gypsy” characters, who had previously been portrayed as secondary characters or antagonists, began to take on the roles of protagonists in stories by well-known publishers. Examples are *Les Zingari* (1971–1973) by Yvan Delporte and René Follet in Disney’s *Le Journal de Mickey* as well as Dargaud’s *Le Petit Cirque* (1973) by Frédéric Aristidès.²⁶¹ Both stories are about traveling “Gypsy” showmen, evoking an exotic context. One work, which stands out during this period, is Casterman’s *Silence* (1979) by Didier Comès, a pioneer of the graphic novel medium. While it also draws from the exotic fantasy of “Gypsy” life, it subtly touches on historical antigypsyism. The protagonist is the son of two “Gypsies”, once again traveling showmen. In 1940, during the German invasion, the two flee from Belgium to France (figs. 22), as “the Germans, even more than the other ‘Gadje’, don’t like the Gypsies.”²⁶² They find refuge in a village, but tragically the protagonist’s father is being killed by a jealous French soldier, and, after giving birth to the protagonist, the mother too dies. Many years later, the protagonist learns that the man for whom he now works as a farmhand, is the very same former French soldier who

²⁶¹ Yvan Delporte (writer), René Follet (artist), “Les Zingari,” *Le Journal de Mickey*, 46 issues (1971–1973, 1985–1987).

²⁶² Fre.: “les allemands plus encore que les autres ‘gadjes’ n’aiment pas les tziganes”. Didier Comès (writer, artist), *Silence* (Tournai: Casterman, 1979), 90.

killed his father.²⁶³ There is a subtext in the story that hints at historical antigypsyism in the French context.

This shift towards “Gypsy” protagonists in prominent BD happened independently from American comics, where we see a similar development already since the 1960s. For example, *The Fantastic Origin of Doctor Doom!* (1964) by Stan Lee and Jack Kirby, which introduced the trope of the “Gypsy” super-human,²⁶⁴ was not published in French until much later, in 1981, by Editions Lug in France as *La fantastique origine du Docteur Fatalis* in *Une Aventure des Fantastique #24*.²⁶⁵

The breakthrough in the portrayal of antigypsyism and Romani history in bandes dessinées occurred in the 1990s. The new trend started with lesser-known BD like *Ecoute-moi Gadjó...* (1992), about travellers with Romani background, by the Syndicat Mixte Accueil des Gens du Voyage.²⁶⁶ But particularly the contributions by the artist Kkrist Mirror deserve attention in promoting this new trend. His personal connection to the Romani genocide, as the son of a survivor, ignited his interest in addressing the persecution of Sinti and Roma through his works.²⁶⁷ In his *Chronique du camp de Montreuil-Bellay (1940–1944) – Le Jollec* from 1994, Mirror offers an account of the concentration camp Montreuil-Bellay that was established in occupied France specifically for Romani internees.²⁶⁸ This story sheds light on a history that was yet frequently overlooked in BD. Later, in 2008, he dedicated another work to the camp, with *Tsiganes. 1940–1945. Le camp de concentration de Montreuil-Bellay*.²⁶⁹ Subsequently, he started to work on *Gitans – Le Pèlerinage des Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer* (2009).²⁷⁰ This comic describes the annual pilgrimage to Saintes-Marie-de-la-Mer, a religious tradition practiced

²⁶³ Ibid., 104–107.

²⁶⁴ See “Chapter Two” in this thesis, 53–62; and Stan Lee (writer), Jack Kirby (penciler), and Chic Stone (inker), “The Fantastic Origin of Doctor Doom!,” *Fantastic Four Annual*, no. 2 (1964).

²⁶⁵ Stan Lee (writer), Jack Kirby (penciler), and Chic Stone (inker), “La fantastique origine du Docteur Fatalis,” *Une Aventure des Fantastique*, no. 24 (1981).

²⁶⁶ *Ecoute-moi Gadjó...* (Paris: Syndicat Mixte Accueil des Gens du Voyage, 1992).

²⁶⁷ See Patrice Gentilhomme, “Kkrist Mirror (‘Manouches’ – Steinkis): ‘Détruire les nomades, c’est s’autodétruire’,” *ActuaBD*, 8 November 2016, <https://www.actuabd.com/Kkrist-Mirror-Manouches-Steinkis-Detruire-les-nomades-c-est-s-autodetruire>.

²⁶⁸ Kkrist Mirror (writer, artist), *Chronique du camp de Montreuil-Bellay (1940–1944)* (Précigné: Éditions d’Anjou, 1994).

²⁶⁹ Kkrist Mirror (writer, artist), *Tsiganes: 1940–1945; Le camp de concentration de Montreuil-Bellay* (Paris: Emmanuel Proust éditions, 2008).

²⁷⁰ Kkrist Mirror (writer, artist), *Gitans: Le Pèlerinage des Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer* (Paris: Emmanuel Proust éditions, 2009).

by many Roma, Manouches, Sinti and Yenish. Mirror also created the comic *Manouches* (2016) about a Romani family in France.²⁷¹

Mirror's works paved the way for BD as a platform for more realistic comics on antigypsyism and Romani history, distinguishing Francophone comics from American and Japanese works to this day. Numerous comics by both Romani and non-Romani artists testify this fact. There is, for instance, *Mélodie au crépuscule* (2006) by Renaud Dillies and Christophe Bouchard, a tribute to the works by Manouche Jazz musician Django Reinhardt (1910–53).²⁷² Another example is the exclusively French-published biography of the Italian Romani anarchist Leda Rafanelli (1880–1971) by Francesca Satta, Luca de Santis and Sara Colaone.²⁷³ *Les Années Noires* (2015) by Eric Wantiez, Fawzi, and Julien Maffre centers on the concentration camp for Gitanos in Angoulême, occupied France.²⁷⁴ Additionally, *Batchalo* (2012) by Michaël Le Galli and Arnaud Bétend, tells a story of a Romani child kidnapped in 1939.²⁷⁵ As the family searches for the child, their journey finds a tragic end as they are ultimately deported to Auschwitz. Beyond all the traditional “Gypsy” narratives which exist in bandes dessinées to the present day, these more realistic comics might serve as a bridge between storytelling and historical education.

²⁷¹ Kkrist Mirror (writer, artist), *Manouches* (Paris: Steinkis, 2016).

²⁷² Renaud Dillies (writer, artist), *Mélodie au crépuscule* (Geneva: Paquet, 2006).

²⁷³ Francesca Satta (writer), and Sara Colaone (artist), *Leda Rafanelli: La gitane anarchiste* (Paris: Steinkis, 2018).

²⁷⁴ Eric Wantiez (writer) et al, *Les Années Noires: Angoulême 1940–1944* (Paris: Le Troisième Homme, 2015).

²⁷⁵ Michaël Le Galli (writer), Arnaud Bétend (artist), *Batchalo* (Paris: Delcourt, 2012).

6. Outlook

The humourist adventure genre continues to play an outstanding role in Francophone comics compared to American and Japanese works. Also, classic humourist bandes dessinées (BD) continue to find new life through reprints in various countries and languages, maintaining their appeal and potentially shaping the way we think and talk about things. In contrast, publishers of American superhero comics tend to favour remakes, exemplified by the 2006 retelling of *Doctor Doom's* origin story.²⁷⁶ Meanwhile, reprints of classic manga by TEZUKA Osamu and TAKEMIYA Keiko are read by a comparably smaller group of people, primarily among dedicated Japanese enthusiasts of classic manga, with even less resonance in foreign markets. BD classics like *Astérix* and *Les Aventures de Tintin* are regarded as timeless successes.

In the context of the enduring success of BD classics, there has been a discussion on Hergé's problematic past since the 2010s, particularly concerning his anti-black jokes and collaboration with the Nazi occupiers. While this awareness has grown, we find not much public interest in the "Gypsy" motif in his works, especially in *Les Bijoux de la Castafiore* (1961/62), perhaps because of its mixed message. But the contemporary awareness serves as a potential starting point to discuss also ambivalent and philogypsyist storytelling in the works of Hergé as well as Albert Uderzo and René Goscinny. The potential use of Hergé's work in school education is questionable. A comprehensive analysis, lacking in existing case studies, is necessary to assess the work effectively. There is a risk of misclassification, especially if teachers lack a deep understanding of the subject of antigypsyism.

A more valuable educational resource could be found in realistic works since the 1970s that deal with Romani history and discrimination. While these works may not enjoy the same large readership as *Les Aventures de Tintin* and *Astérix*, they have already received use across diverse platforms. For instance, BD by Kkrist Mirror are employed for educational purposes, both in schools and museums such as the Musée national de l'histoire de l'immigration in Paris. This interest in realistic BD signifies a promising step forward. Still, we should not overlook the

²⁷⁶ See "Chapter Two" in this thesis, 53–62; and Ed Brubaker (writer) et al, *Books of Doom*, 6 issues (New York: Marvel Comics, 2006).

enduring popularity of humorous adventures and the creative and discursively relevant nature of the racist and the anti-racist joke.

Moreover, in contemporary bande dessinée, the portrayals of “Gypsy” and Romani characters exhibit a rich diversity of narratives and perspectives. Some works perpetuate explicit antigypsyist themes, depicting stories of individuals resorting to theft and begging until breaking free from familial constraints. This is evident in creations like *Le Fils de l’Ursari* (2019) by Cyrille Pomès, or *Rebecca* (1985) by Renato Queirolo and Anna Brandoli.²⁷⁷ Conversely, other works take a more conventionally philogypsyist stance, portraying “Gypsy” characters as noble nomads or joyful wanderers. Examples include *Zoo* (2001–2008) by Philippe Bonifay and Frank Pé, or *Vague à lame* (2003) by Patrick Pécherot and Jeff Pourquié.²⁷⁸ Some comics create unconventional narratives while still relying on stereotypes, as seen in *Episodes Romano* (1974–1982), featuring the football-playing protagonist *Romano* pursued by a “Gypsy” witch, a creation by Tom Tully and Francisco Solano López.²⁷⁹ Furthermore, the incorporation of flamenco themes in comics often brings forth more or less stereotypical “Gypsy” characters, as observed in *Mauvais garçon* (2009) by Christophe Dabitch and Benjamin Flao, or *Tsiganes – Le Paradis des yeux* (2017) by Johann Le Berre.²⁸⁰ Authors also engage in social critique against antigypsyism, exemplified in pieces like *Des nouvelles d’Alain* (2011) by Alain Keler and Emmanuel Guibert, or *Quand souffle le vent* (2009) by Laurent Galandon and Cyril Bonin.²⁸¹ Moreover, bande dessinée reflects the diverse participation of Romani authors, ranging from professionals like Kkrist Mirror to young amateurs and children involved in

²⁷⁷ See Cyrille Pomès (writer, artist), *Le Fils de l’Ursari* (Paris: Rue de Sèvres, 2019); and see Renato Queirolo (writer), and Anna Brandoli (artist), *Rebecca* (Grenoble: Glénat, Saint-Égrève: Mosquito, 1985).

²⁷⁸ See Philippe Bonifay (writer), and Frank Pé (artist), *Zoo*, 2 issues (Marcinelle: Dupuis, 1994/99); and see Patrick Pécherot (writer), and Jeff Pourquié (artist), *Vague à lame* (Tournai: Casterman, 2003).

²⁷⁹ See Tom Tully (writer), and Francisco S López (artist), “Episodes Romano,” *Trophée: Aventures et Voyages*, 32 issues (1974–1982).

²⁸⁰ See Christophe Dabitch (writer), and Benjamin Flao (artist), *Mauvais garçon*, 2 issues (Paris: Futuropolis, 2009); and see Johann Le Berre (writer, artist), *Tsiganes: Le Paradis des yeux* (Rennes: L’Œuf, 2017).

²⁸¹ See Alain Keler (writer), and Emmanuel Guibert (artist), *Des nouvelles d’Alain* (Paris: Les Arènes, 2011); and see Laurent Galandon (writer), Cyril Bonin (artist), *Quand souffle le vent* (Paris: Dargaud, 2009).

projects facilitated by institutions like the Centre social des Alliers.²⁸² Additionally, literary classics, particularly *Notre-Dame de Paris*, find adaptation and parody in bande dessinée.²⁸³ The discourse showcases the dynamic interplay between artistic expression, societal critique, and the ongoing evolution of Romani representation in this medium.

After having examined American and Francophone comics with their differences in portraying the “Gypsy” motif – particularly through presence or absence of humour, realism, and the fantastical – we now turn our attention to Japanese manga. Japan has historically had only a very small Romani population, which gives manga a distinct approach to the “Gypsy” theme. Unlike the superhero comics, or humorous adventure stories that dominate American and Francophone comics, Japanese manga often explore this theme through literary adaptation, romance, and stories primarily aimed at female readers. In these manga, the focus is more on social class than on racism.

²⁸² See Grégoire Carlé (writer, artist) et al, *Space Manouche Opera* (Poitiers: FLBLB, 2018); and see Clément Xavier (writer, artist), *Magic Manouches: Enfants voyageurs et auteurs de BD s'échangent des histoires* (Poitiers: FLBLB, 2015); and see Grégory Jarry (writer), and Otto T (artist) et al, *Django Banjo et Autres Histoires des Manouches* (Angoulême: Centre social des Alliers, 2012); and see *Le paysage des gitans* (Angoulême: Centre social des Alliers, 2011); and see *La super vie des gitans* (Angoulême: Centre social des Alliers, 2010).

²⁸³ For example, see Claude Gendrot, Claude (writer), and Paul Gillon (artist), *Notre-Dame de Paris* (Paris: Hachette, 1985); and see Dominique Vallet (writer, artist), *Cinemastock 2* (Paris: Dargaud, 1976).

Chapter Four

Manga – Class & Gender



In this chapter, I argue that the “Gypsy” motif in Japanese comics, known as manga, has evolved since 1945, significantly influenced by themes of gender and social inequality within the *shōjo* genre that targets young female readers. This appearance is heavily influenced by unique conditions of the motif’s dissemination in Japan before 1945 as well as narratives from European opera and literature. These characters often serve to create a fantastical image of Europe and to present a feminine role model, depicted either as opponents or embodiments of this model. First, I will provide an overview of how the “Gypsy” motif initially entered Japanese public discourse. In this context, the motif is communicated more as a social rather than an ethnic category, contributing to an exoticized image of Europe. It will become evident that these early receptions coincided with TEZUKA²⁸⁴ Osamu’s conceptualization of the “Gypsy” motif. Tezuka, one of the most influential figures in the history of Japanese comics, introduced the motif into *shōjo* manga, embedding it into fantastical European settings, starting with *Mignon* (1957). Here, the “Gypsy” motif antagonizes a feminine ideal. I then explore how Tezuka continued to use the motif in his subsequent works. Thereafter, it will be elaborated on the early appearance of “Gypsy” characters as protagonists in *shōjo* manga through the emergence of *shōnen ai*, or boys’ love, a subgenre about romantic relationships between male

²⁸⁴ The thesis follows the Japanese naming convention, where the family name comes first and the given name comes last, for authors whose cited works are all written in Japanese. While this differs from the *Chicago Manual of Style*, I use this approach because it is commonly accepted in academic works involving Japanese names, including publications like the *Journal of Japanese Studies*. See “Style Sheet,” *The Journal of Japanese Studies*, <https://depts.washington.edu/jjs/style-sheet/#:~:text=Japanese%20Names%20and%20Terms%3A%20Japanese,as%20for%20any%20foreign%20language>. Since 2020, it has become common to write the family name entirely in capital letters when written with the given name, to make the name order clear.

characters. Tezuka's exotic image of Europe and his popularization of gender-bending in *shōjo* manga laid the groundwork for this subgenre. I will highlight how TAKEMIYA Keiko, a pioneer of *shōnen ai*, reinterpreted the "Gypsy" motif, infusing it with new ethnic connotations. A case study of Takemiya's work *Kaze to Ki no Uta* (Eng.: *Song/Poem of Wind and Tress*, 1976–1984) illustrates this evolution. Finally, I conclude with reflections on the broader implications of this discourse.

1. Historical Conditions of the "Gypsy" Motif in Japan

The formation of the "Gypsy" motif in Japanese manga was influenced by distinct historical conditions, as outlined here: an initial disconnect from the Western discourse on the motif, a miscommunication of the motif, and an increasing interest in Western themes During the post-war period.

First, there was an initial disconnect from the Western discourse on the motif. The arrival of Sinti and Roma in Latin Europe during the 14th and 15th centuries, and the subsequent development of the "Gypsy" motif, went largely unnoticed in Japan for a long period. It was not until the 16th century, following the first contact with Portuguese traders, that updated information about the Western world reached Japan. This knowledge led to the creation of the *Bankoku sōzu* (万国総図, Eng.: *All-Countries World Map*) in 1645, along with many later world maps that were influenced by European cartography. These maps, available to the Japanese public,²⁸⁵ not only depicted geographical features but also displayed illustrations of people from European and other countries and cultures. They did not feature "Gypsy" depictions or other minority groups though, as they exclusively portrayed each people as a representative of a depicted region on the map.²⁸⁶ Due to the *Sakoku* (鎖国, Eng.: *Chained Country*) policy by the Tokugawa

²⁸⁵ See Kazutaka Unno, "Cartography in Japan," in *Cartopgraphy in the Traditional East and Southeast Asian Societies*, edited by J B Harley and David Woodward (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1994), 407.

²⁸⁶ See Elke Papelitzky, "A Description and Analysis of the Japanese World Map *Bankoku sōzu* in Its Version of 1671 and Some Thoughts on the Sources of the Original *Bankoku sōzu*," *Journal of Asian History* 48, no. 2 (2014): 65.

shogunate, which lasted from the 17th until the mid-19th century, Japan's trade relations with other countries were subsequently strongly restricted, and travel abroad was prohibited. Among Westerners, only Dutch merchants were permitted to exchange certain goods and information with Japan, via their trading post Dejima in the port of Nagasaki. However, to curb Western influence, works of entertainment literature from outside Japan were banned. As a result, the "Gypsy" motif remained absent from Japan's entertainment culture for a considerable period. Images of Europeans, particularly Dutch merchants, appeared in illustrations and accessories such as *inro* (decorated cases) and *netsuke* (miniature sculptures) in Japan during the Edo period (1603–1868).²⁸⁷ But "Gypsies" were likely less attractive subjects for communication and the non-Western gaze, as Europeans initially perceived them as outcasts rather than representatives of a distinct culture.²⁸⁸ Meanwhile, "Gypsy" characters might have made appearances in other contexts, particularly non-fictional works. While Western entertainment literature was banned, works related to the sciences, such as biology, medicine, and geography, were popular trade goods. The interest in the sciences encompassed a wide range of areas, and it is possible that some of the traded Dutch works on history do mention "Gypsies" as a side note. Based on the findings by cultural scholar IKEDA Tetsurō, there is evidence of an interest in European minority history during the Edo period, as exemplified by a traded book on Jewish history titled "Verbond Geschiedenis der Joden" from 1729 by an author named "Humfberg Prindeax".²⁸⁹ Apparently, it is a Dutch translation of an English book, as the author's name appears to be a defective indexation of the Cornish churchman Humphrey Prideaux (1648–1724) – or a Dutchification of his

²⁸⁷ For example, see "Netsuke: Ivory carved with Dutchman with moneybag, Japan, 18th century," *Collections: Victoria and Albert Museum*, accession no. A.62-1952, record created 5 May 2009, <https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O229722/netsuke-unknown/>; and see "Netsuke: Ivory, Dutchman holding a dog, 18th century," *Collections: Victoria and Albert Museum*, accession no. FE.284-1995, record created 11 March 2003, <https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O76527/netsuke-unknown/>; and see "Netsuke: Stag antler carved with Dutchman holding a cock, Japan, 18th century," *Collections: Victoria and Albert Museum*, accession no. A.62-1920, record created 5 March 2009, <https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O229715/netsuke-unknown/>; and see "Inro: Tortoiseshell, ivory and cracked eggshell, 17th century," *Collections: Victoria and Albert Museum*, accession no. W.356-1922, Record created 7 March 2003, <https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O76242/inro-unknown/>.

²⁸⁸ See "Chapter One" in this thesis, 18–23.

²⁸⁹ See IKEDA Tetsurō, "Edo jidai no orandakei 'rekishi'," *Fukushima daigaku gakugei gakubu ronshū shakai Kagaku* 8, no. 1 (1957): 48, 53. <https://www.lib.fukushima-u.ac.jp/repo/repository/fukuro/R000003171/6-4.pdf>.

name. He did author works such as *The Old and New Testament connected, in the History of the Jews and Neighbouring Nations* (1715–1717).²⁹⁰ However, the interest in this topic in Japan appears to have been related to religious history, while ethnology did not seem to have been a relevant category in the traded works.²⁹¹ There seems to be no evidence to suggest that tsiganology (“Gypsy Studies”) reached Japan during the Edo period. Moreover, learning about the Western world had been limited to a small group of people who practiced *Rangaku* (蘭学, Eng.: Dutch studies).

Second, there may have been a miscommunication of and disinterest into the motif’s association with an ethnic minority group. The introduction of the “Gypsy” motif into Japanese public discourse, characterized more as a sociographic concept rather than an ethnographic one, started at the latest in 1853. This was when the American navy forcefully opened the country, followed by the Meiji Restoration of 1867/68 and the increase of Western influence in Japan. This shift ended Japan’s isolationist policies, making foreign travel and studying other cultures more accessible to a wider range of the Japanese population. During this time, racial theories and ethnology gained attention in Japan and started to be included in school education.²⁹² The idea of the *Yamato minzoku* (大和民族, Eng.: Yamato ethnicity/race) delineated a Japanese ethnic identity from other populations, such as the ethnic minority groups of Ainu and Ryūkyūans. This demarcation not only encompassed ideas of cultural difference but, during the Meiji era, also of genetic divergence. Evidently, there existed a clear trend toward categorizing perceived cultural collectives, akin to ideas of ethnicity or race.²⁹³ However, aside from academics and intellectuals, there is little reason to assume that – in the context of school education –, there would have been a notable

²⁹⁰ See Humphrey Prideaux, *The Old and New Testament connected in the History of the Jews and Neighbouring Nations: From the Declension of the Kingdoms of Israel and Judah to the Time of Christ* (London: Sagwan, 2018).

²⁹¹ See Ikeda, “Edo jidai”.

²⁹² For example, see Yasuko Takezawa, “Translating and Transforming ‘Race’: Early Meiji Period Textbooks,” *Japanese Studies* 35, no. 1 (2015): 5–21.

²⁹³ For example, see Patrick Heinrich, *The Making of Monolingual Japan: Language Ideology and Japanese Modernity* (Bristol: Multilingual Matters, 2012); and see Jennifer Robertson, “Blood talks: Eugenic Modernity and the Creation of New Japanese,” *History and Anthropology* 13, no. 3 (2002): 191–216.

interest in “Gypsies”. The dissemination of the “Gypsy” motif within broader Japanese society initially occurred not through ethnological studies but rather through art historical publications, particularly via one influential Western non-fictional work written by Scottish author Samuel Smiles: *Self-Help* (1859). Smiles, a renowned writer known for advocating self-education and self-improvement, mentions “Gypsies” in chapter six of his book. In this chapter, Smiles elaborates on the biographies of influential Western artists, such as the Italian painter Antonio Solario (1465–1530), whom Smiles identifies as having faced challenges due to being a “Gypsy”.²⁹⁴ Smiles also details the experiences of the Lorrainian artist Jacques Callot (1592–1635), who temporarily joined a group referenced as “Gypsies” during his journey to Rome.²⁹⁵ Smiles’ book was translated into Japanese as *Saigoku risshi hen* (西国立志編), where we find the transcription “Jipushī” (ジプシー), derived from “Gypsy”.²⁹⁶ Subsequent translations of various works employed this term, as we will see later. While not explicitly defined within Smiles’ texts, the contextual usage implies a description of poor wanderers, rather than specifically identifying the term as referencing an ethnic group. Issued as a textbook in Japanese schools from 1872 onward, the work is noteworthy in introducing the concept of “Gypsy” to a broader Japanese public for the first time. As highlighted by historian Earl H Kinmonth, who quotes Japanese journalists and intellectuals from that period,²⁹⁷ it can be considered the most significant book of the Meiji era (1868–1912) in shaping a new generation in Japan:²⁹⁸

²⁹⁴ See Samuel Smiles, *Self-Help: With illustrations of character, conduct, and perseverance*; Author’s rev. and enlarged ed. (Chicago: Belford, Clarke & Company, 1881), 183.

²⁹⁵ See *ibid.*, 192–193.

²⁹⁶ For example, see Samuel Smiles, *Saigoku Risshi Hen*, translated by NAKAMURA Keiu (Tokyo: Kihira Aiji tō, 1898), 300. <https://dl.ndl.go.jp/pid/755558/1/194>.

²⁹⁷ See NOGUCHI Yonejirō, “A True Founder of Empire,” *Japan Times*, 9 March 1907; and see Ukita Kazutami, “Educationalists of the Past and Their Share in the Modernization of Japan,” in *Fifty Years of New Japan 2*, ed. Ōkuma Shigenobu (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1910), 156.

²⁹⁸ See Earl H Kinmonth, “Nakamura Keiu and Samuel Smiles: A Victorian Confucian and a Confucian Victorian,” *The American Historical Review* 85, no. 3 (1980): 536.

“Meiji writers who had grown up with *Saikoku risshi hen* declared that [...] it [...] ‘had a greater influence over young men in the early [1870s] than any other book of the day.’ [...] Early Meiji Japanese not only read *Saikoku risshi hen* but also attended plays based on its stories, studied it as a textbook, and were treated to a variety of imitations and derivative works. Commonly and quite correctly, *Saikoku risshi hen* is described as one of the ‘holy books’ (*seisho*) of the Meiji era.”²⁹⁹

While Smiles’ *Self-Help* received widespread attention, the “Gypsy” motif also made its way into Japan through Western fiction, often without clarifying its ethnic implications to readers. Western authors assumed that their audience already understood the motif’s connection to an ethnic minority group. Moreover, translators frequently did not provide any clarifications. For example, in the Japanese translation of Dostojewski’s *Bratja Karamasowy* (1880, Eng.: *The Brothers Karamazov*),³⁰⁰ the absence of context suggests that “Gypsy” characters are simply showmen and thieves rather than representatives of a specific ethnic group.³⁰¹ Similarly, other popular contemporary writers like Nobel Prize nominee Josip Kosor and Nobel Prize winner John Galsworthy focus on social dimensions of the motif in their works. On the one hand, Kosor often includes “Gypsy” characters in his novels, poetry, and drama to add atmosphere to the Croatian settings of his stories.³⁰² On the other hand, Galsworthy’s *The Apple Tree* (1916) features two young men on a tramp who are repeatedly likened to “Gypsies”. The story also includes a myth of a “Gypsy bogie”, a ghost believed to bring misfortune.³⁰³

Nevertheless, there existed also an ethnic connotation of the motif as an exclusively Western phenomenon, but it was not specifically tied to any particular ethnic minority group. An example are the early performances of George Bizet’s opera *Carmen* in Japan and the translation of Prosper Mérimée’s underlying

²⁹⁹ Ibid.

³⁰⁰ See Fjodor M Dostojewski, *Karamazov Kyōdai*, translated by KITAGAWA Ryukichi (Tokyo: Kamigataya, 1923), <https://dl.ndl.go.jp/pid/921124>.

³⁰¹ See Fjodor M Dostojewski, *The Brothers Karamazov* (New Delhi: Om Books International, 2018), 123, 135, 177, 461, 814.

³⁰² For example, see Josip Kosor, *Jōka*, translated by MATSUMOTO Tai (Tokyo: Shueikaku, 1921), <https://dl.ndl.go.jp/pid/968398>.

³⁰³ See John Galsworthy, *Shakai geki zenshū gekan*, Translated by NAKAGI Teiichi (Tokyo: Tenyūsha, 1921).

novella by ISHIKAWA Tsuyoshi.³⁰⁴ The opera was first performed in French by the *Grand Russian Opera Company* in 1919 at the Imperial Theatre in Tokyo.³⁰⁵ It continued to be presented several more times in Tokyo, Kyoto and Osaka until 1945, most often in Japanese. Even today, *Carmen* remains one of the most popular foreign operas in Japan.³⁰⁶ In the context of entertainment culture, *Carmen* initiated an interest in the motif, but it diverged from the prevailing Western idea of the Romani “savage”. According to musicologist Naomi Matsumoto, it was not before the 1940s that a noteworthy awareness of “Carmen’s racial implications”³⁰⁷ emerged, including the understanding that “Carmen was a gypsy, and therefore not stereotypically Western”³⁰⁸. This observation is reflected in a short story by AKUTAGAWA Ryūnosuke published in 1926.³⁰⁹ It is about two Japanese men who fall in love with a Russian opera singer portraying *Carmen*. But when they go to see her perform, she is not there. They speculate that her absence may be linked to a prior suicide by a man who loved her unsuccessfully. Eventually, they conclude that she might be like *Carmen* in her personal life, embodying a *femme fatale*. Akutagawa’s story contains an ethnic dimension, as he accentuates an ethnic connotated appearance of the singer. For example, this “Russian Carmen”³¹⁰ would be beautiful due to being a “sensual woman with large eyes and a wide nose”³¹¹, evoking typical features Japanese associated with Western looks. Any such exotic allure depicted does not stem from a “Gypsy” identity but rather from the singer’s Western background. This portrayal indicates a partial loss of the motif’s essence in the translation of imagery and narrative, reducing *Carmen* to simply a “Western” or “foreign femme fatale”, rather than emphasizing her ethnic minority identity.

Divergent interpretations of the “Gypsy” motif emerged due to its resonance with

³⁰⁴ See Prosper Mérimée, *Carmen*, translated by ISHIKAWA Tsuyoshi (Tokyo: Kaibunsha, 1923), <https://dl.ndl.go.jp/pid/979215>.

³⁰⁵ See Naomi Matsumoto, “The Other Reversed? Japan’s Assimilation of Carmen, 1885 to 1945,” in *Carmen Abroad: Bizet’s Opera on the Global Stage*, ed. Richard Langham Smith, and Clair Rowden (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 292.

³⁰⁶ See *ibid.*, 284.

³⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 298.

³⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁰⁹ See AKUTAGAWA Ryūnosuke, “Carmen,” in *Ryunosuke Akutagawa Complete Works: Japanese Edition* (Aozora Bunko, 2005), 829–833.

³¹⁰ Jap.: “露西亜のカルメン”. *Ibid.*, 831.

³¹¹ Jap.: “目の大きい、小鼻の張った、肉感の強い女である”. *Ibid.*, 829.

different fears and desires in East Asian and Western contexts. The literary scholar Klaus-Michael Bogdal describes the Western “Gypsy” motif as “Primitive people amidst civilization”³¹². In Western understanding, the idea of “civilization” or the “civilized” world was often seen as synonymous with one’s own culture. This led to the depiction of “Gypsies” as “domestic savages”. While colonial stories typically involved adventurous tales set in distant lands, the “Gypsy” motif’s appeal in the West came from the envisioned closeness of these characters to Western societies. They symbolized an encounter with the “savage” that was not limited to far-off adventurers but was instead an accessible experience within collective imagination. Conversely, in the Japanese and broader East Asian context, the idea of “Gypsies” as a foreign group in distant territories did not evoke the same fears and desires as in the Western context. The idea of them being the “domestic savage” did not resonate in Japan. Consequently, the role of the “Gypsy” motif in discourse must have been different in this country, leading to a divergent set of responses and perceptions.

Considering our prior analysis of comics from other cultural contexts in earlier chapters, one might falsely dismiss this notion of a non-domestic dimension of “Gypsy” characters in Japan. This tendency arises because we have notice that even American writers and comic artists often depicted “Gypsy” characters as Europeans, associating them with Spain or using pseudo-German and pseudo-Romanian settings, rather than portraying them as part of the American population.³¹³ Furthermore, in the Francophone context, works like Albert Uderzo’s and René Goscinny’s *Astérix en Hispanie* (1969) imply the “Gypsy” motif as synonymous with Spanish identity, existing beyond the boundaries of Belgium and France.³¹⁴ Therefore, the divergence from viewing “Gypsies” as “domestic savages” seems to persist in Western contexts too. However, first, these American and Francophone works need to be understood within their respective discourses. While American creators often imagined “Gypsies” as Europeans, they also portrayed them as Americans in other cases.³¹⁵ Additionally,

³¹² Ger.: “Naturvolk inmitten der Zivilisation”. Klaus-Michael Bogdal, *Die Welt erfindet die Zigeuner: Eine Geschichte von Faszination und Verachtung* (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2011), 254.

³¹³ See “Chapter Two” in this thesis, 40–72.

³¹⁴ See “Chapter Three” in this thesis, 91–97.

³¹⁵ See “Chapter Two” in this thesis, 45–47.

Uderzo's and Goscinny's identification of "Gypsies" with Spaniards is rooted in the narrative's humorous and ironic subtext.³¹⁶ Second, both Americans and Europeans were able to stray from the "Gypsy" concept of the "domestic savage" while also returning to it when desired – which was not possible to Japanese artists. The context in which the motif entered Japan differs considerably from its dissemination in the Western world.

Lastly, there is the Japanese fascination with Western themes in the post-war period. The defeat in the Pacific War resulted in American occupation from 1945 to 1952, marking an important period for Japanese entertainment media and how "Gypsy" characters were depicted. Despite being a former enemy and responsible for the devastating nuclear attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the USA became an aspirational model for lifestyle and culture in Japan during this period. The occupiers actively encouraged this perception, particularly through the Civil Information and Education (CIE) section, which established libraries to spread American culture and values via books, periodicals, and pamphlets.³¹⁷ Simultaneously, films from the United States flooded Japanese theatres, with an agenda towards promoting the Allies and censoring or banning less favourable portrayals.³¹⁸ This period of American influence coincided with a boom in Japan's domestic popular culture. Japanese artists sought to meet the growing interest of their audience in Western themes and stories.³¹⁹

TEZUKA Osamu played a significant role in the post-war history of manga and also introduced the "Gypsy" motif to manga culture. Dominating the manga industry during the 1950s, Tezuka held a level of influence unparalleled since that time.³²⁰ His artistic style and content was shaped by Western cinematic

³¹⁶ See "Chapter Three" in this thesis, 91–97.

³¹⁷ See Hiromi T Dollase, *Age of Shōjo: The Emergence, Evolution, and Power of Japanese Girls' Magazine Fiction* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2019), 81–96.

³¹⁸ For an overview, see Hiroshi Kitamura, *Screening Enlightenment: Hollywood and the Cultural Reconstruction of Defeated Japan* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2017).

³¹⁹ See Kinko Ito, "Manga in Japanese History," in *Japanese Visual Culture: Explorations in the World of Manga and Anime*, ed. Mark W MacWilliams (London: Routledge, 2008), 35.

³²⁰ See Susanne Phillipps, "Characters, Themes and Narrative Patterns in the manga of Osamu Tezuka," in *Japanese Visual Culture: Explorations in the World of Manga and Anime*, ed. Mark W MacWilliams (London: Routledge, 2008), 68. For example, for an overview, see Natsu O Power, *God of Comics: Osamu Tezuka and the Creation of Post-World War II Manga* (Mississippi: University Press of Mississippi, 2009).

techniques and themes, a reflection not only of the occupation policies but also of his father's great interest in foreign films. Before the war, Tezuka's father exposed the family to numerous American and European films, leaving a lasting impression on his son with these "exotic" images. Additionally, Tezuka often accompanied his mother to the *Takarazuka Revue*, a musical theatre ensemble known for its Western-style performances.³²¹ Growing up surrounded by diverse cultural influences certainly contributed to his craft, aligning well with the growing Japanese public's hunger for Western ideals and themes. Deliberately capitalizing on this trend, Tezuka strategically used English titles or at least *romaji* (Latin letters) alongside Japanese titles in his manga, creating an exotic and modern appeal.³²² Based on MORI Rintarō's 1913 translation of Goethe's *Faust*,³²³ Tezuka's first manga adaption was published in 1950,³²⁴ marking his initial foray into Goethe's works. This was followed by his adaptation of another European classic, *Mignon* (1957), which introduced the "Gypsy" into Japanese girls' comics.

2. TEZUKA Osamu & the Introduction of "Gypsy" Characters to *Shōjo* Manga

In the forthcoming analysis, I propose that TEZUKA Osamu introduced the concept of the "Gypsy" to *shōjo* manga, which are comics targeted towards young female readers. Specifically, I focus on his short story *Mignon* (1957) to illustrate that Tezuka's "Gypsy" characters serve two primary purposes. First, they align with a stereotypical image of historical Europe that is based on 19th-century European opera and literature. Second, these portrayals relate to the previously considered conditions of the "Gypsy" concept in Japanese discourse: The motif is repositioned from a reference to an ethnic minority group to a means to contrast social norms, in his interpretation specifically established feminine role models.

³²¹ See Ito, "Manga in Japanese History," 35; Power, *God of Comics*, 50.

³²² See Power, *God of Comics*, 47.

³²³ See Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Faust*, translated by MORI Rintarō (Tokyo: Fuzan Bō, 1913). An earlier yet incomplete Japanese translation by TAKAHASHI Gorō was published in 1904. See Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Faust*, translated by TAKAHASHI Gorō (Tokyo: Maekawa Buneikaku, 1904). Also see Hans Müller, "Goethe in Japan," *Monumenta Nipponica* 2, no. 2 (1939): 473.

³²⁴ See TEZUKA Osamu, *Faust* (Tokyo: Fuji Shobo, 1950).

Tezuka's innovative use of gender-bending and disruption of traditional gender roles became an important narrative tool in his works, where he explores themes of androgyny and societal marginalization. First, I provide a brief summary of the original story by Goethe and Thomas. Thereafter, I consider Tezuka's manga adaptation, a short story. After investigating his initial design of the "Gypsy" character in the splash of his comic, I will compare his narrative to the underlying opera and novel. This comparison highlights the character design and narrative in Tezuka's interpretation. Subsequently, I demonstrate how the story initialized the further dissemination of the "Gypsy" motif in the *shōjo* genre. It will become evident that Tezuka's "Gypsy" characters became a lasting influence, especially in the *shōnen ai* (boys' love) subgenre, as exemplified through the works of TAKEMIYA Keiko.

The opera *Mignon*, based on Goethe's novel *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* (1795/96), first debuted in Japan in 1921.³²⁵ The story revolves around the girl *Mignon*, once kidnapped by "Gypsies", who now accompanies their troupe of performers. The opera begins in front of a German inn, where the wandering singer *Lothario* mourns his long-lost daughter. *Mignon*, among the "Gypsies", dances for the inn's guests, but a conflict with her master *Jarno* arises. Bourgeois *Wilhelm Meister* intervenes, purchasing *Mignon's* freedom, and she chooses to accompany him. Due to an unsuccessful love to *Wilhelm*, she tries to kill herself at the castle where he and his fiancée, *Philine*, were engaged. *Lothario* prevents *Mignon's* suicide but sets the castle on fire. Ultimately, *Wilhelm* rescues her from the flames. He discovers his love for *Mignon*, and *Mignon* is revealed to be *Lothario's* long-lost daughter. The opera concludes with *Wilhelm* and *Mignon* declaring their love and staying together.

TEZUKA Osamu's 1957 adaptation of *Mignon's* story into a nine-page manga showcases significant changes to the opera and novel. The initial page (figs. 23) demonstrates two major takeaways from his interpretation.

³²⁵ See ŌTAGURO Motō, *Kageki Daijiten* (Tokyo: Ongaku no Tomo Sha, 1962), 388.



Fig. 23 (left) & 24 (right): The first page of TEZUKA Osamu's short story *Mignon* (1957): the original with a commentary on the margin (left) and a later edition without the commentary and title (right). Tezuka, "Mignon," *Shōjo*, 15; and Tezuka, "Mignon," in *Tonkaratani Monogatari*, 168.

First, we find the central theme of illusion and reality, which Tezuka later projects onto the perceived nature of gender. The text on the page presents the main character, *Mignon*, as the focus of a joyful event: "Come, a performance, a fun dance of the Gypsies (itinerant performers). The star among them is Mignon who rings the bells"³²⁶. However, a contradictory and less prominent comment in the left margin of the page sheds a different light: "Mignon is a poor Gypsy. ... Also today holding back the tears while singing and dancing"³²⁷. This text in the original manga was omitted in later editions, possibly in favour of a more positive tone (figs. 24). This contrast is not only evident in the original text but is also visually

³²⁶ Jap.: "さあさ おいでよジプシー (たびのげい人) のたのしいおどりだ かるわざだ なかでもスターは ミニヨンだ すずをならして はじまるよ". TEZUKA Osamu, "Mignon," *Shōjo*, Spring Special Issue 15 April 1957 (1957): 15.

³²⁷ Jap.: "ミニヨンは、まずしいジプシーです。 ... きょうも、じつとなみだをこらえて、うたいながらおどります。" Ibid.

manifested. On the one hand, *Mignon* is portrayed in a manner consistent with an idealizing tradition of the “Gypsy” imagery. The character is dressed in a kerchief and positioned prominently at the panel’s centre, assuming an uplifting dancing posture while holding a tambourine. On the other hand, the droplet on *Mignon*’s cheek, while initially seeming like sweat, is implied by the inconspicuous comment in the left margin as a tear, hinting at underlying sadness.

Second, there is no implication of a link between the “Gypsy” motif and an ethnic minority group. While Goethe’s work too lacks an ethnic dimension in the portrayal of the “Gypsies”, the opera, also in Japan,³²⁸ depicted “Gypsy” characters with darker skin tones through makeup, visually contrasting them with the non-“Gypsies”. Tezuka does not convey this convention. He transcribes the term “Gypsy” as “Jipushī” (ジプシイ) and defines it as “itinerant performer(s)” (たびのげい人, *Tabi no geinin*) in brackets. This addition clearly aims to clarify the term for readers who might not be familiar with it, using a sociographic description through profession. In the background, we see additional “Gypsy” dancers, and notably, there are no visible distinctions in skin tone between *Mignon* and the other characters. Thus, we observe a difference to the contrasting and racialized portrayals from the opera. Instead of an ethnic minority identity, there is a broader Western connotation. This is conveyed through the European-style buildings in the background, and the characters’ attire – such as cavalier boots. Moreover, the panel’s arrangement resembles a Western-style proscenium theatre stage akin to a scene in the *Takarazuka Revue* rather than in the opera.

In the initial page, it becomes evident that Tezuka does not consider the ethnic implications of “Gypsy” characters. He chooses instead to focus on the thematic interplay of illusion and reality, a motif projected onto the contexts of gender and social roles in the subsequent narrative: The story starts in accordance with the opera and novel, taking, however, a different path once *Wilhelm* threatens *Jarno* and buys *Mignon* free. In Tezuka’s rendition, *Philine* is unable to perform a song in a residence, prompting *Mignon* to decide autonomously to help. Sneaking into the changing room, *Mignon* dresses in a white flowing robe, while privately

³²⁸ See Matsumoto, “The Other Reversed?” 289.

questioning, “Does it suit me...? It is hard to disguise as a girl”³²⁹. For the first time, *Mignon*’s gender as a boy is signified. In this attire, *Mignon* sings Goethe’s poem *Mignon* about a land where “the flowers can bloom”³³⁰, “the birds are singing, and the butterflies are dancing”³³¹, which resembles the lines of Goethe’s poem *Mignon* that is also an aria in the opera. In contrast to the opera, the background of the panel visualizes these words (figs. 25). Post-performance, *Mignon*, back in “Gypsy” attire, wanders through the woods at night, hearing the same song by *Lothario*. Upon encountering him, *Mignon* expresses surprise and *Lothario* beliefs he has found his daughter, but *Mignon* corrects him, stating, “I am not [your] daughter; I am a boy!”³³². The conversation is cut short, and the narrative swiftly progresses as *Mignon* confronts *Jarno*, the former master. He sneaked to *Wilhelm*’s castle and is seeking revenge for a perceived humiliation, resulting in a violent confrontation where *Jarno* sets fire to the residence. To rescue *Wilhelm*, *Mignon* faces *Jarno* in the burning castle. He loses and confesses: “Mignon... there is something left to tell you. You are a girl..... That is right... long ago, from a certain Italian castle, I kidnapped a princess.....”³³³. This revelation unveils the past. Embracing the identity of a girl, *Mignon* and *Wilhelm* form a couple and the story concludes with a happy ending.

³²⁹ Jap.: “似合うかな。。。女の子にばけるのはむずかしいや”. TEZUKA Osamu, “Mignon,” *Tonkaratani Monogatari* (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1997), 172.

³³⁰ Jap.: “花は咲ける”. Ibid., 173.

³³¹ Jap.: “鳥は歌いチョウ舞い踊る”. Ibid.

³³² Jap.: “娘じゃないよ僕は男だよ”. Ibid., 174.

³³³ Jap.: “ミニヨン。。。おまえにいい残すことがあるおまえは女なんだから。。。そうさ。。。むかしあるイタリアのお城からおれがさらってきたお姫さまだ。。。”. Ibid., 176.



Fig. 25: *Mignon* singing in a magnificent dress. Tezuka, “Mignon,” in *Tonkaratani Monogatari*, 173.

Unlike the novel and the opera, Tezuka’s short story introduces uncertainty around *Mignon*’s gender for most of the narrative, disrupting established gender roles. Consequently, *Mignon*’s traits in Tezuka’s rendition diverge significantly from those portrayed in the original novel and opera, where the character is firmly known to be female. On the one hand, *Mignon* embodies during the singing scene in Tezuka’s adaptation a stereotypical feminine role. The scene is reminiscent of the portrayal of princesses in classic Walt Disney films such as *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937) and *Cinderella* (1950).³³⁴ This presentation combines a magnificent rope with a lovely song and an idealized image of wildlife. On the other hand, there is the self-perception of a male identity. Moreover, *Mignon* also displays traits traditionally perceived as masculine by independently stepping in for *Philine* without seeking consent, showing sovereignty. The climax of this masculine portrayal occurs when *Mignon*, dressed in “Gypsy” attire, demonstrates bravery by rescuing *Wilhelm* and confronting the antagonist, *Jarno*, in a dramatic showdown. This contrasts with Thomas’ opera, where *Wilhelm* is the rescuer of *Mignon*; Tezuka reverses their roles, emphasizing *Mignon*’s

³³⁴ See Ted Sears et al, writers, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, dir. David Hand et al (Burbank: Walt Disney Productions, 1937); and see Ken Anderson et al, writers, *Cinderella*, dir. David Geronimi, Wilfred Jackson, and Hamilton Luske (Burbank: Walt Disney Productions, 1950).

courage. Following *Mignon*'s ultimate revelation as a girl, the story concludes with a harmonious "happy end". This ending implies a liberating natural status where the character's identity is realized in terms of both self-perception and outward presentation. The conclusion contrasts the story's beginning (in the original edition), where *Mignon* is introduced as a poor and sorrowful "Gypsy".

The "Gypsy" motif assumes an important role in navigating the complexities of gender – and class – uncertainty within the narrative. Both visually and narratively expressed, there is a conflict between a refined female world associated with nobility and a menacing male world of the "Gypsies", criminals, and the poor. This tension between femininity and masculinity unfolds through *Mignon*, whose portrayal oscillates between the imagery of a magnificent lady and that of a "Gypsy" boy. The turning point transpires with the defeat of *Mignon*'s former master, a "Gypsy", leading to her abandoning the male and "Gypsy" role. Therefore, the "Gypsy" motif serves as a tool for contrast, defining and demarcating a feminine ideal. Tezuka suggests that adhering to this perceived natural role promises happy and fulfilling life. From a pedagogical viewpoint, the narrative encourages self-confidence of the female reader. It implies that there is no inherent obstacle preventing a girl from assuming the role of a boy or a "Gypsy". However, the comic's conclusion underscores the need for individuals to embrace their supposedly natural gender roles to attain satisfaction and a proverbial "happy end".

Therefore, Tezuka emphasises the "Gypsy" motif's sociographic dimension, with a classist rather than racist framing. This portrayal aligns closely with the prior implications of the Japanese discourse on the motif. Meanwhile, it contradicts its contemporary Western understanding. However, Tezuka introduces a novel aspect to the "Gypsy" image by portraying it as representative of toxic masculinity. In Tezuka's manga, the sole actual "Gypsy" is *Jarno*, a villain. Unlike in Thomas' opera and Goethe's novel, *Jarno* in the manga burns the castle and tries to kill *Wilhelm*. Therefore, Tezuka accentuates attributes like vindictiveness and violent tendencies more prominently than these traits are emphasized in the original works. Using the medium's potential for oversubscription, Tezuka crafts an unambiguous world where only stark distinctions between pure good and evil exist. These distinctions are projected onto gender roles, manifesting in the

demonization of the “Gypsy” motif.



Fig. 26: Screenshot of the “Gypsies” in the anime *Ribbon no Kishi* (1967/68).

As a trailblazer of themes like romantic foreign settings and gender-bending in manga,³³⁵ Tezuka associated the “Gypsy” motif recurrently to these themes in the *shōjo* genre. This gender- and class-focussed interpretation of the “Gypsy” motif is not unique to Tezuka’s manga adaptation of *Mignon*. This is exemplified by his *Ribbon no Kishi* (リボンの騎士, *Ribon no Kishi*, Eng.: *Ribbon Knight*³³⁶, 1953–56). It stands out as one of Tezuka’s major successes,³³⁷ adapted by his studio into an animated series in 1967/68.³³⁸ Unlike in the manga, a group of “Gypsy” footpads is featured in the anime adaptation (figs. 26), including a boy named *John*. Princess *Sapphire* (サファリア, *Safaia*) encounters them and learns about *John*’s hard life. Realizing their almost identical looks, she decides to swap roles

³³⁵ See Frederick Schodt, *Dreamland Japan: Writing on Modern Manga* (Berkeley: Stone Bridge, 1996), 253.

³³⁶ This manga was published in English as *Princess Knight*.

³³⁷ See TEZUKA Osamu (writer, artist), *Ribbon no Kishi*, 3 issues (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1953–56).

³³⁸ See TEZUKA Osamu, writer, *Ribbon no Kishi*, 52 episodes, dir. TEZUKA Osamu, KATSUI Chikao, and AKAHORI Kanji (Tokyo: Mushi Production, 1967/68).

with him.³³⁹ This narrative mirrors Mark Twain's *The Prince and the Pauper* (1881), where two boys with identical looks but different social backgrounds exchange roles.³⁴⁰ However, in the anime, the characters are a boy and a girl, once again underscoring the theme of gender-bending. Like *Mignon*, there exists a contrast between noble femininity and the image of the poor "Gypsy" boy.



Fig. 27: The "Gypsy" camp in TEZUKA Osamu's manga *Futago no Kishi* (1958).

³³⁹ See TEZUKA Osamu, writer, "Osorubeshi Saishūheiki," *Ribbon no Kishi*, dir. TEZUKA Osamu, KATSUI Chikao, and AKAHORI Kanji, episode 12 (Tokyo: Mushi Production, 1967).

³⁴⁰ See Mark Twain, *The Prince and the Pauper* (London: Puffin Classics, 2019).



Fig. 28: A “Gypsy” in TEZUKA Osamu’s manga *Niji no Pureryūdo* (1975).

Still, within this scope of gender and class, “Gypsy” characters in Tezuka’s works assume varied roles and are a recurring motif in his historical fiction. In 1958, a year after *Mignon* was published, Tezuka’s manga *Futago no Kishi* (双子の騎士, Eng.: *Twin Knight(s)*) was released. Here, “Gypsies” play a pivotal role as they shelter the heroine from her enemies (figs. 27).³⁴¹ In this manga, Tezuka introduced the motif of the beautiful and confident “Gypsy” woman for the first time, commonly associated with the trope of the *femme fatale*. This character falls in love with the female protagonist, princess *Sapphire*, who is disguised as a man – once again, underscoring the theme of gender-bending. Another instance is Tezuka’s *Niji no Prelude* (虹のプレリュード, *Niji no Pureryūdo*, Eng.: *Rainbow Prelude*, 1975), a semi-biographical manga depicting the life of composer Frédéric Chopin. In this work, the “Gypsy” motif serves as an ambient and fantastical symbol in a historical European setting (figs. 28).³⁴²

The motif was less relevant in his *shōnen* and *seinen* manga, comics aimed at

³⁴¹ See TEZUKA Osamu, *Futago no Kishi* (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1958).

³⁴² See TEZUKA Osamu, *Niji no Prelude* (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1975), 10.

boys and young men. On the one hand, the setting of premodern Europe was much more frequent in the fantasies of *shōjo* manga. On the other hand, Tezuka missed opportunities to incorporate the theme of antigypsyism in works that do consider the history of racism and contemporary politics. One notable example is his manga *Adolf ni Tsugu* (アドルフに告ぐ, *Adorufu ni Tsugu*, Eng.: *Message to Adolf*), serialized in *Shukan Bunshun* from 1983 to 1985.³⁴³ This crime story starts in Nazi Germany in 1936, featuring a fictional murder case involving a Japanese citizen and explores the national socialist persecution of political enemies. While the narrative addresses the fate of European Jews and the Shoah, it omits any mention of the Romani genocide. This omission can be contextualized within the broader theme of the manga serving as Tezuka's response to the Lebanon war in 1982. The last two chapters shift the narrative to the modern state of Israel. Tezuka provocatively draws parallels between Palestinian terrorism and Israeli suppressive politics, framing them as legacies of national socialism. While Tezuka addressed antisemitism, the matter of antigypsyism remained unexplored within his manga. However, his studio's anime *Tetsuwan Atom* (1963–1966, 鉄腕アトム, *Tetsuwan Atomu*), localized as *Astro Boy*, comes closest to incorporating the theme of antigypsyism in his works. In the series, the superhero *Astro Boy* is dedicated to safeguarding humankind. Absent in the original manga, the “Gypsy” motif becomes apparent in episode 157, *Gypsy no Hoshi* (ジプシーの星, *Jipushi no Hoshi*), localized as *Gypsy's Star*, of the anime adaptation.³⁴⁴ This episode portrays a wandering planet (akin to a “Gypsy”) traversing the cosmos and causing perilous disturbances on Earth. *Astro Boy* investigates this enigmatic entity. As he reaches the planet and explores its deeper layers under the surface, he encounters diverse architectural structures reminiscent of various cultures on Earth. It is revealed that the planet is under the control of a girl who sought refuge following the destruction of her home planet. In response to her loneliness, she constructs robots and recreates different earthly structures. In this context, the “Gypsy's Star” introduces themes of flight (seeking refuge after the destruction of a home) and nomadism (projected onto emulating diverse world architectures).

³⁴³ See TEZUKA, Osamu, *Adolf ni Tsugu*, 5 issues (Tokyo: Bungeishunjū, 1983–85).

³⁴⁴ See TOMINO Yoshiyuki, writer, “Gypsy no Hoshi,” *Tetsuwan Atom*, dir. TEZUKA Osamu, season 1, episode 157 (Tokyo: Mushi Production, 1966).

While this anime episode is both reproducing the “Gypsy” stigma and subtly hinting to the historical Romani marginalization and persecution, Tezuka’s manga and anime do not critically explore antigypsyism and the “Gypsy” motif appears dominantly as a fantastical element of his fairytale-like *shōjo* works.

However, another influential Japanese manga artist did explore the ethnic dimension of the “Gypsy” motif in connection to discrimination. The motif became part of the evolution of girls’ comics, particularly with the emergence of the boys’ love genre through TAKEMIYA Keiko’s works. This topic will be explored on the following pages.

3. Western *Bishōnen*: Introducing “Gypsies” as Ethnic Minority Group

In Tezuka’s works, “Gypsy” characters stand out by contrasting ideal images of class and gender, with their ethnic dimension gaining attention later, in TAKEMIYA Keiko’s works. While *shōjo* manga artists after Tezuka built on his legacy of gender-bending and the exoticization of Europe, the ethnic dimension of “Gypsy” characters was furthermore based on two interconnected preconditions: the success of the *bishōnen* trope, and a fascination with the looks of “exotic” Western men.

First, handsome and androgynous boys, known as *bishōnen*, became a trope in manga and anime. The preferences for androgynous protagonists in *shōjo* manga were initialized by Tezuka,³⁴⁵ but they underwent a significant transformation over time, transitioning from female to male characters. According to Japanologist Yulia Magera, “during its historical development, the genre of women’s manga at some point rejected the ‘girl dresses as boy’ character in favour of feminized boys”³⁴⁶. Therefore, “a female character is no more required to hide under the guise of a man, so it is easier to be a feminine boy, or *bishōnen*”³⁴⁷.

Subsequently, the fascination with “exotic” men as romantic partners, commonly

³⁴⁵ See Schodt, *Dreamland Japan*, 105.

³⁴⁶ Yulia Magera, “Origins of the *Shōnen-ai* and Yaoi Manga Genres,” *Russian Japanology Review* 2, no. 2 (2019): 103–127.

³⁴⁷ Ibid.

set against the context of 19th-century France, shaped the conventions of the *shōnen ai* genre, also known as boys' love genre. MORI Mari (1903–1978), identified by Magera as a pivotal figure in the early narratives of boys' love manga,³⁴⁸ significantly influenced the genre's perception of Western characters. In 1961, her novel *Koibitotachi no Mori* (恋人たちの森, Eng.: *The Lovers' Forest*) was published in Japan.³⁴⁹ The love story, situated in 19th-century France, centres on the romantic relationship between two men, *Paulo* and *Guydeau*. *Guydeau* is half French and half Japanese, while *Paulo*, born to a French mother and a British father, is particularly noted for his handsome and exotic appearance. The story emphasizes "Paulo's beauty, which made him look like the child of an English man and a French woman"³⁵⁰. *Guydeau* wonders, "if Paulo might be descended from Europeans. That gray color in eyes otherwise as black as a beetle could not be possessed by the Japanese"³⁵¹, and the narrator observes Paulo's "sweet smile that is characteristic of the French"³⁵². Mori's portrayal aesthetically exoticizes attractive Europeans, also by drawing parallels to the beauty of an animal ("eyes otherwise as black as a beetle"), distinctly marked as non-Japanese ("could not be possessed by the Japanese"). While Tezuka also incorporated an exoticized depiction of the West in his works, Mori's novels take a step further by eroticizing the characters. This eroticization is rooted in an interest in phenotypical looks and ethnicity. The combination of the 19th-century France setting and the mixed heritage of romantic partners, *Paulo* and *Guydeau*, laid the groundwork for *shōnen ai* manga, shaping its conception of Western characters.

Ultimately, the genre of *shōnen ai* emerged in manga, depicting romantic relationships between teenage boys. Over time, it gained recognition as a distinct genre, with its primary audience being heterosexual girls. According to sociologist Kazuko Suzuki, the "abandonment of the female body via the depiction of male homosexual relations emerged as the result of disappointment with a society

³⁴⁸ See *ibid.*, 105–108.

³⁴⁹ See MORI Mari, *Koibitotachi no Mori* (Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 1975).

³⁵⁰ Mari Mori, "The Lovers' Forest," translated by Kazumi Nagaike, in *Fantasies of Cross-dressing: Japanese Women Write Male-Male Erotica* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 168–169.

³⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 169.

³⁵² *Ibid.*, 175.

characterized by sexual oppression”³⁵³, rather than being a deliberate effort to broaden the audience.



Fig. 29: *Etoile* dies in the arms of *Serge* in Takemiya, *Sunroom Nite*, 181.

Based on these preconditions, a distinct interpretation of the “Gypsy” motif took shape, characterized by a newfound interest in its ethnic dimension. This is exemplified by the 52-page short story *Sunroom Nite* (サンルームにて, *Sanrūmu Nite*, Eng.: *In the Sunroom*, 1970) by TAKEMIYA Keiko. It was published in the girls' magazine *Margaret* and is set in 19th-century France, being considered the first *shōnen ai* manga.³⁵⁴ Similar to Tezuka, Takemiya refrains from phenotypical

³⁵³ Kazuko Suzuki, “Pornography or Therapy? Japanese Girls Creating the Yaoi Phenomenon,” in *Millennium Girls: Today's Girls Around the World*, ed. Sherrie A Inness (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 1998), 250.

³⁵⁴ For example, see Rebecca Suter, “Gender Bending and Exoticism in Japanese Girls’ Comics,” *Asian Studies Review* 37, no. 4 (2013), 548; and see Deborah Shamoon, *Passionate*

contrasts in this short story (figs. 29). However, she introduced an ethnic dimension of the “Gypsy” motif. The manga revolves around the love story of *Etoile Rael*, a handsome blond boy from a wealthy family, and *Serge Battour*, labelled as the “Fortune teller Amie’s Gypsy child”³⁵⁵. *Serge* faces bullying at school due to his skin colour that is remarked by a neighbour: “He will never make friends with a skin colour like that. No matter how hard he tries...”³⁵⁶. Despite societal challenges, the connection between *Etoile* and *Serge* deepens into a romantic relationship. The story takes a tragic turn when *Etoile* falls ill with pneumonia and is forbidden from seeing *Serge* by his disapproving mother, who associates the illness with *Serge*’s perceived negative influence, assuming, “It is because you play with the Gypsy child”³⁵⁷. Undeterred, the boys continue to meet in secret in the Sunroom of *Etoile*’s family. Ultimately, the narrative reaches a climax as *Etoile*, driven by the societal condemnation of their forbidden love, contemplates suicide in the Sunroom.

In this manga, the character *Serge* is a “Gypsy” boy, with his mother conforming with the fortune teller cliché. Remarkably, the narrative emphasizes not only *Serge*’s social standing but also colourism. On the one hand, the stark contrast between his attire and *Etoile*’s luxurious clothing and lifestyle underscores *Serge*’s lower social status. On the other hand, the neighbour’s remarks imply colourism, contributing to *Serge*’s experiences of bullying at school. *Etoile*’s mother, objecting to their contact, derogatorily refers to *Serge* as a “damn Gypsy boy”, highlighting disapproval rooted in his “Gypsy” identity. The tragedy in the story does not revolve around the stigma of homosexuality. Apparently, the mother of *Etoile* is oblivious to the nature of their relationship. The forbidden nature of their love is thus shaped by colourism and potentially classism, rather than homophobia.

Among *shōnen-ai* manga, *Sunroom Nite* stands out as the pioneering venture that set the stage for one of the most iconic works in the genre’s history:

Friendship: The Aesthetics of Girl’s Culture in Japan (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2012), 104.

³⁵⁵ Jap.: “占いのアミイばあさんとのジブシーっ子”. TAKEMIYA Keiko (writer, artist), *Keiko Takemiya Collection: Sunroom Nite; 70 Nendai Tanhenshū* (Tokyo: eBookJapan Plus, 2015), 142. BookLive.

³⁵⁶ Jap.: “今までだってつらい思いばかりしてきたのに。。。。。。また友だちか!” Ibid.

³⁵⁷ Jap.: “ジブシーの子なんかと遊ぶからだ”. Ibid., 173.

Takemiya's *Kaze to Ki no Uta* (風と木の歌, Eng.: *Song/Poem of Wind/s and Tree/s*).

4. Antigypsyism & Colourism: TAKEMIYA Keiko's Introduction of the Ethnic "Gypsy"

Serialized from 1976 to 1984 in the magazines *Shūkan Shōjo Comic* and later *Petit Flower*, TAKEMIYA Keiko's *Kaze to Ki no Uta* marked a departure from Tezuka's contrasting portrayal of "Gypsy" characters. Takemiya instead assigned the motif as embodiment – not opponent – of a feminine role model. The narrative intertwines multiple historical threads from European literature and opera, offering a perspective that diverges from conventional portrayals of "Gypsies" in other national discourses and media.

In this analysis, I argue that TAKEMIYA Keiko introduced an ethnic dimension of the "Gypsy" motif in her manga *Kaze to Ki no Uta*, which is influenced by European literature and opera, and partially lacks the associated stigma. However, the story also contains social idealization and philogypsyist thought. After summarizing the story of *Kaze to Ki no Uta*, I will explore two significant narrative influences, namely *La Traviata* (1853) by Giuseppe Verdi and *Narziss und Goldmund* (1930) by Hermann Hesse. I will emphasize their impact on the manga's "Gypsy" character design. Subsequently, it will be examined how this character design is rooted in the dramatic purpose of colourism. Ultimately, I will provide an outlook on contemporary portrayals of the "Gypsy" motif in manga, highlighting the evolving nature of this representation.

Kaze to Ki no Uta is a love story set in a 19th-century French boarding school, chronicling the relationship between two teenagers, *Serge* and *Gilbert*. In contrast to the 52-page short story *Sunroom Nite*, this tale spans thousands of pages. *Serge*, the protagonist and *bishōnen*, is a skilled pianist as well as the son of a "Gypsy" prostitute named *Paiva*, and a non-"Gypsy" aristocrat, *Aslan*, both of whom died during his childhood. Raised by an abusive aunt, *Serge* inherits his father's lineage. However, his identity as a half-"Gypsy" subjects him to discrimination, as he grapples with prejudice from fellow students, his aunts, and

various people he encounters. At the boarding school, *Serge* forges a connection with *Gilbert*, another handsome boy, who is not a “Gypsy”. As their relationship deepens, they become a romantic couple. Yet, their happiness is overshadowed by *Gilbert*’s mental health struggles and self-destructive tendencies, which result from experiences of rape and correlate with him prostituting to fellow students. *Serge* tries to help him, leading them to flee the boarding school to start a new life in Paris, where *Serge* secures employment as a waiter. In Paris, they encounter *Camille*, a “Gypsy” girl and prostitute akin to *Serge*’s deceased mother. A rejection by *Serge* triggers her to seek revenge by engaging in a liaison with *Gilbert*. Near the story’s end, *Gilbert* succumbs to drug addiction, and in an intoxicated state, dies in an accident with a carriage. Amidst this central narrative, the saga also narrates the story of *Serge*’s parents.



Fig. 30: *Paiva*. Takemiya, *Uta* (no. 1), 42.



Fig. 31: Paiva. Takemiya, *Uta* (no. 5), 29.

Serge, *Camille* and *Paiva* embody “Gypsy” characters in the manga. Besides the well-behaved aristocratic “Gypsy” boy *Serge*, *Paiva* too represents a departure from traditional literary depictions of the “Gypsy” motif. A friend of *Serge*’s deceased father describes *Paiva* as “having been beautiful, burning with the passionate Gypsy blood”³⁵⁸, but the visual representation (figs. 30) contradicts the typical depiction. In the panel, *Paiva* appears in an uncoloured, flowing dress, her skin and hair as white as the paper, presenting a noble image consistently portrayed throughout the manga (figs. 31). While this depiction can be explained with her profession of a high-class courtesan, it also defies the visual trope of the passionate “Gypsy” woman: *Paiva* is not visualized as an eschewing wild and

³⁵⁸ Jap.: “ジプシーの情熱の血に燃えたつような美しさだった”. TAKEMIYA Keiko, *Kaze to Ki no Uta*, no. 1 (Tokyo: Hakusensha, 1995), 42.

untameable character like *Carmen* or *Esmeralda* in historical literature and opera. Notably, *Paiva*'s appearance aligns more with the idealized image of a white, aristocratic woman, challenging the expected association of "Gypsy" characters with lower social status. This visual connection between the female "Gypsy" and aristocracy echoes the motif of the "Scheinzigeunerin"³⁵⁹ (Eng.: "Fake Gypsy"), as seen in the novella *La Gitanilla* (1613) by Miguel de Cervantes. Here, *Preciosa*, an aristocratic girl stolen and raised by Gypsies, becomes a "Scheinzigeunerin".³⁶⁰ *Paiva*, however, is not a "Scheinzigeunerin" but actually born as a "Gypsy". To illuminate this unconventional character design of *Paiva*, we may outline the emergence of this synthesis that draws inspiration from two prominent European works: the opera *La Traviata* (1853) by Giuseppe Verdi and the novel *Narziss und Goldmund* (1930) by Hermann Hesse.³⁶¹

On the one hand, there is the opera *La Traviata*, a tragic love story between a high-class prostitute, the "Lady of the Camellias" *Violetta Valéry*, and a young bourgeois, *Alfredo Germont*. They first encounter at a festive event where *Violetta* is accompanying a baron, her client. *Alfredo* and *Violetta* fall in love, unite, and move to the countryside. However, financial struggles lead *Alfredo* to Paris in search of employment. Tragically, *Violetta* ultimately succumbs to tuberculosis. *Kaze to Ki no Uta* repeatedly and explicitly references this opera. During the intermission of a performance of *La Traviata*, *Aslan* first lays eyes on *Paiva*, who is accompanying her client, a marquis. *Aslan*, likening *Paiva* to the "Lady of the Camellias"³⁶², initiates a romantic relationship, and they too retreat to the countryside. Ultimately, *Aslan* dies of tuberculosis. The narrative parallels between *Kaze to Ki no Uta* and *La Traviata* are evident, with *Aslan* and *Paiva*, as well as *Serge* and *Gilbert*, mirroring the relationship between *Alfredo* and *Violetta*. Notably, *Kaze to Ki no Uta* introduces the "Gypsy" motif, a theme less significant in *La Traviata*. While the opera features "Gypsies" as entertainers at a party,

³⁵⁹ See Hans R Brittnacher, *Leben auf der Grenze: Klischee und Faszination des Zigeunerbildes in Literatur und Kunst* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2012), 32–35.

³⁶⁰ See Miguel de Cervantes, *The Little Gypsy Girl* (North Charleston: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2016).

³⁶¹ See Giuseppe Verdi, *La Traviata: Italian Text, with an English Translation by T T Barker and the Music of the Principal Acts* (Philadelphia: Oliver Ditson Company, 1940).

³⁶² Jap.: "椿姫". Takemiya, *Kaze to Ki no Uta* (no. 5), 34. It literally means "Camellia(s) Princess", which is the name of the "Lady of the Camellias" in Japanese translations of the opera.

singing *Noi Siamo Zingarelle*,³⁶³ *Violetta* herself is not a “Gypsy”.

On the other hand, Hesse’s novel, *Narziss und Goldmund*, explores the platonic love between the two boys *Goldmund* and *Narziss* at a monastery school. *Goldmund*’s questioning of his monk aspirations leads him to a liaison with the “Gypsy” girl *Lise*, catalysing him to abandon the school. Becoming an artist, womanizer, and vagabond, *Goldmund*’s identity intertwines with the “Gypsy” motif. *Lydia*, *Goldmund*’s later lover, affectionately refers to him as a “little Gypsy”³⁶⁴. When he aspires to become a craftsman, his master perceives that “a Gypsy he has [...] taken in”³⁶⁵, noting the challenge “to tame this Gypsy”³⁶⁶. The motif intensifies as *Goldmund*’s disappeared mother is revealed to “have been a dancer, a beautiful wild woman of noble but disquieting and heathen descent”³⁶⁷, who was used to a non-sedentary life.³⁶⁸ His mother becomes a symbol of life force, further linking the “Gypsy” motif to *Goldmund*’s new lifestyle: He himself acknowledges, “She [mother] is everywhere. She was the Gypsy Lise, she was the beautiful Madonna of Master Nikolaus, she was the life, the love, the lust, she was also the fear, the hunger, the drive”³⁶⁹. The shared destinies of *Goldmund*, his mother, and *Lise* embrace a life of pleasure and non-sedentary existence, marked by the “Gypsy” motif. Remarkably, cultural scholar James Welker includes *Narziss und Goldmund* in the works recommended to Takemiya by her producer Matsuyama Norie before she created *Kaze to Ki no Uta*.³⁷⁰ This suggests plausible familiarity with the novel, and indeed, parallels emerge between the two works. In *Kaze to Ki no Uta*, the narrative centres on the personal connection between two boys, involving an escape from school and an encounter with a “Gypsy” femme fatale (*Lise / Camille*) who amplifies the story through

³⁶³ See Verdi, *La Traviata*, 31–32.

³⁶⁴ Ger.: “kleiner Zigeuner”. Hermann Hesse, *Narziss und Goldmund*, 56th ed. (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2022), 116.

³⁶⁵ Ger.: “er hatte da einen Zigeuner [...] aufgenommen”. Ibid., 164.

³⁶⁶ Ger.: “diesen Zigeuner zu zähmen”. Ibid., 184.

³⁶⁷ Ger.: “Eine Tänzerin war sie gewesen, ein schönes wildes Weib von vornehmer, aber unguter und heidnischer Herkunft”. Ibid., 57.

³⁶⁸ See *ibid.*

³⁶⁹ Ger.: “Sie ist überall. Sie war die Zigeunerin Lise, sie war die schöne Madonna des Meister Nikolaus, sie war das Leben, die Liebe, die Wollust, sie war auch die Angst, der Hunger, der Trieb”. Ibid., 304.

³⁷⁰ See James Welker, “A Brief History of Shōnen’Ai, Yaoi, and Boys Love,” in *Boys Love Manga and Beyond: History, Culture, and Community in Japan*, ed. Mark McLelland et al (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2015), 48.

seduction. The protagonists' mothers, similar in absence during the boys' childhood, are either "Gypsy" characters or embody the motif's attribute. Like *Goldmund's* mother and *Lise*, *Serge's* mother and *Camille* in *Kaze to Ki no Uta* are associatively linked to each other. They share the same professions and a penchant for melancholic singing.³⁷¹ The name *Camille*, reminding us of *Aslan's* "Lady of the Camellias", *Paiva*, further signifies this link and Takemiya's fusion of *La Traviata* and *Narziss und Goldmund*.

Therefore, the character design of *Paiva*, connected to other "Gypsy" characters in the manga, exemplifies how Takemiya incorporates and transforms European fictional traditions. As a result, the manga disrupts established storytelling conventions and partially challenges the associated stigma. *Paiva* emerges as a synthesis of *Violetta* from *La Traviata* and the character constellation found in *Narziss und Goldmund*. This synthesis contributes to the originality of Takemiya's work, introducing noble femininity to the "Gypsy" motif, a departure from the contrasting portrayal by Tezuka. Similarly, *Serge*, adopting the persona of a *bishōnen*, provides a contrast to Tezuka's "Gypsy" portrayal, which is embodying toxic masculinity.

³⁷¹ For example, see Takemiya, *Kaze to Ki no Uta* (no. 5), 84; and see *ibid.* (no. 10), 28.

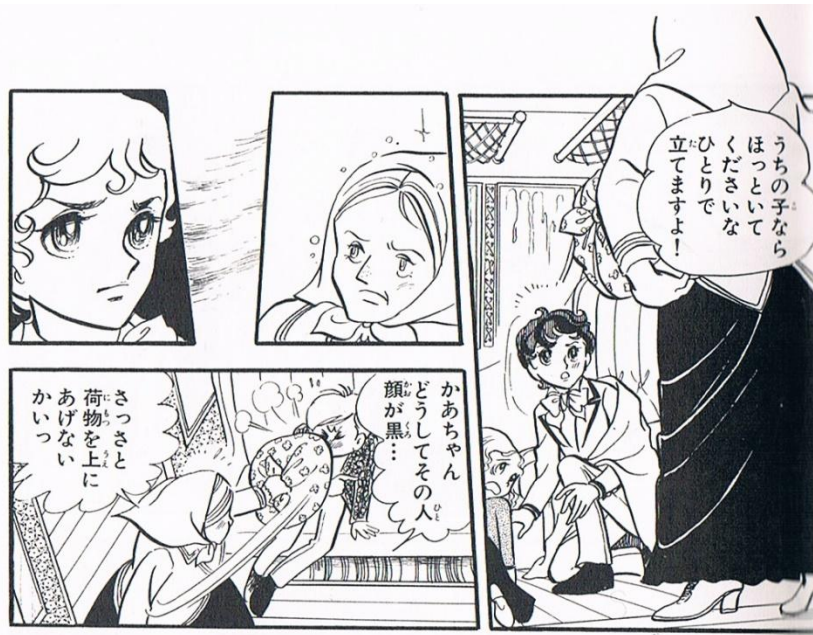


Fig. 32: The half-“Gypsy” Serge in the train. Takemiya, *Uta* (no. 1), 19.

However, despite the manga disrupting established conventions, we must refrain from interpreting it as proof of an interest in the issue of antigypsyism. Takemiya introduced an ethnic dimension of the “Gypsy” motif to *shōjo* manga, similar to approaches of Stan Lee, David Michelinie and Hergé, using the theme of ethnic discrimination.³⁷² But this portrayal of discriminatory practices in Takemiya’s work is not marked by antigypsyist narratives, rather by colourism,³⁷³ as exemplified by the challenges faced by the protagonist *Serge*. For example, consider his initial appearance in the manga, on a train. A little girl stumbles, and when *Serge* offers to help, her mother reacts aggressively, exclaiming, “If it’s my child, leave it alone; she can get up by herself!”³⁷⁴. The reason for her hostile reaction is not immediately clear. In the next moment, the brother of the girl questions his mother, asking, “Mom, why is this person’s face black...?”³⁷⁵ (figs. 32). This leads, implying *Serge*’s skin colour as reason for her hostility, to the mother hitting her bag into her son’s face, instructing him to put his luggage up quickly. Despite such

³⁷² See “Chapter Two” in this thesis, 43–72; and see “Chapter Three” in this thesis, 82–91.

³⁷³ For a definition of antigypsyism, see “Introduction” in this thesis, 5. It showcases that antigypsyism is mostly not to be identified as a form of colourism, meaning here the discrimination against people on the basis of their skin colour.

³⁷⁴ Jap.: “うちの子ならほっといてくださいなひとりで立てますよ！” Takemiya, *Kaze to ki no uta* (no. 1), 18.

³⁷⁵ Jap.: “かあちゃん どうしてその人顔が黒...” Ibid.

unwarranted rejection, *Serge* persists in his willingness to assist, portraying him as a sympathetic character and highlighting the injustice of rejection based solely on his phenotypical traits. This thematic underpinning of skin colour is consistently reinforced on a textual level through various instances.³⁷⁶ The discriminatory practices manifest in multiple forms: a random coachman initially refusing to take him as a passenger,³⁷⁷ negative biases from fellow students at the boarding school,³⁷⁸ and disdain from his aunt.³⁷⁹ The equation of *Serge*'s "Gypsy" identity with his skin colour is demonstrated when the superintendent at the boarding school, inquiring about *Serge*'s skin colour, receives the response that his mother is a "Gypsy".³⁸⁰ Meanwhile, other forms of the "Gypsy" stigma, not connected to colourist biases are present but much less prominent in the narrative. Such attributes are illiteracy and musicality that appear only once each: In one example, a fellow student derides *Serge*'s excellent grade in an exam, commenting, "This Gypsy does not do that!"³⁸¹, and adding, "It is definitely a fluke"³⁸², suggesting that it would be impossible that a "Gypsy" is so successful in an exam. Another time, when *Serge* plays a beautiful piece on the piano, a member of the audience gives an explanation by stating, "he is a boy with a strange hair colour, like a Gypsy"³⁸³. Consequently, the unconventional character designs in Takemiya's work appear to stem from an unconscious engagement with the "Gypsy" motif. Colourism takes precedence in her exploring ethnic discriminatory practices within the narrative. Therefore, her portrayal can be contextualized within the broader Japanese discourse since the 19th century, where the essential nature of the "Gypsy" motif has been recurrently and fundamentally miscommunicated. Considering the strong focus on colourism, Takemiya's portrayal of discrimination seems to be inspired by the American civil rights movement of the 1950s and 60s. Her work is rather not reflecting an awareness of antigypsyism and the Romani Civil Rights movement, although it

³⁷⁶ For example, see *ibid.*, 18, 21, 41, 145, 205; and see *ibid.* (no. 2), 247, 289; and see *ibid.* (no. 5), 244, 297, 327; and see *ibid.* (no. 6), 19, 64–65, 78, 102, 180; and see *ibid.* (no. 7), 220.

³⁷⁷ See *ibid.* (no. 1), 20–21.

³⁷⁸ For example, see *ibid.*, 145.

³⁷⁹ For example, see *ibid.* (no. 5), 327; and see *ibid.* (no. 6), 65.

³⁸⁰ *Ibid.* (no. 1), 41.

³⁸¹ Jap.: "あのジプシーやるじゃない!" *Ibid.*, 137.

³⁸² Jap.: "まぐれにきまってるさ". *Ibid.*

³⁸³ Jap.: "毛色のかわった少年ですジプシーのような". *Ibid.* (no. 2), 52.

received more and more attention since the 1970s. In essence, Takemiya does not present a form of intersectionality, meaning a discrimination of the protagonist because of both his “Gypsy” and Black identity. Rather, his “Gypsy” background is merely serving as an indicator of his Black identity. Still, Takemiya’s portrayal of “Gypsy” characters as members of an ethnic minority group is remarkable in this discursive context.

The text’s emphasis on *Serge*’s phenotypical traits, while visually less supported, can be explained by manga’s inherent nature as a black-and-white medium, saving production time and costs. However, in the first chapter, *Serge*’s skin is uncoloured in 76 out of 90 panels showcasing his skin, with 14 panels presenting him with coloured skin. Deviating from the medium’s norm, a deliberate use of skin colour as a dramatic tool is suggested, different from colour’s omnipresence in Francophone and American comics. The selective use of colour draws attention to *Serge*’s phenotypical appearance with occasional visual reminders, subtly underscoring how he stands out in his environment, recalling the discriminatory practices he faces.



Fig. 33: The unnamed black maid, together with the other maids. Takemiya, *Uta* (no. 5), 316.

However, the use of colour and colourism in *Kaze to Ki no Uta* does not operate as a social critique within a broader narrative. Instead, it functions as a means to highlight the injustice faced by a well-behaving aristocratic boy, including its philogypsyist subtext. The manga was apparently inspired by rather benevolent “Gypsy” depictions from works like *La Traviata* and *Narziss und Goldmund*. In *Kaze to Ki no Uta*, there exists a subtext which romanticizes “Gypsy” characters, presenting them as a unique exception among people of colour: This is supported by the portrayal of the only person of colour in the manga who is not identified as a “Gypsy”. It is an unnamed black maid from *Serge*’s family, who appears on only a few pages. In one scene (figs. 33), the maid inquires about *Serge*, and another maid responds, saying, “Despite being black, he is a cute child”³⁸⁴. This offensive comment not only targets *Serge* but also the black maid. In reaction, she expresses anger with “ムス” (“musu”) written beside her face, signifying “蒸す” (“musu”), meaning “to steam”. A visual metaphor of thick steam above her head reinforces her figurative “boiling with anger”. What indicates this scene as supposedly comedic is the illustration of this maid, which reinforces black stereotypes. She is portrayed with a unibrow and thick hair on the back of her hands, reminiscent of the historical caricatures of masculine black women. Notably, her head hair is not detailed but rather scribbled, contributing to a degrading visualization that has persisted for centuries, including in early Western comics like *Yellow Kid*. Despite the dramatic significance of colourism in the story, the manga does not critically explore this phenomenon. Rather, it instrumentalizes it as a central tool to create challenges for *Serge* and enhance his identification with the mentally ill character *Gilbert*.

Kaze to Ki no Uta appears to have served as a relevant influence on other *shōjo* manga. Particularly attributes of the aristocratic “Gypsy” character *Serge*, a skilled pianist born to parents of mixed ethnic background – a “Gypsy” and an aristocrat – in premodern Europe reappeared in other works. An illustrative example is Group Zero’s *Hello! Marian* (ハロー！マリアン, *Harō! Marian*, 1978)

³⁸⁴ Jap.: “黒いわりにはかわいい子よ”. Ibid. (no. 5), 316.

by SAEKI Kayono.³⁸⁵ Set in the 18th-century Netherlands, this work narrates the story of an aristocratic girl. She is the daughter of a Belgian mother and an English father and falls in love with a humorous “Gypsy” showman. Similarly, in Kōdansha’s *Fostine* (フォステイヌ, *Fosutinu*, 1978/79) by HARA Chieko, the protagonist, a blonde girl raised by “Gypsies”, emerges as a gifted pianist.³⁸⁶ These instances reflect a thematic resonance inspired by *Kaze to Ki no Uta*. Remarkably, the “Gypsy” motif did not extend to popular *shōnen* manga and anime for quite some time.

5. Outlook

The “Gypsy” motif in manga since 1945 is shaped by genres and contemporary political discussions and activism, similar to American and Francophone comics. But it is also influenced by the historical context surrounding the motif’s prior dissemination in Japan, significantly impacting its portrayal in manga. Here, the motif’s connotations with an ethnic minority group underwent inherent miscommunication and disinterest, developing its own distinct usage in contrast to the European and American contexts. Prominent artists, such as TEZUKA Osamu and TAKEMIYA Keiko, played a crucial role in shaping the Japanese discourse on the “Gypsy” concept in 20th-century manga through reinterpreting European opera and literature. Tezuka introduced the “Gypsy” motif to manga, contextualized with more sociographic dimensions like class and gender than an ethnographic understanding – a topic worthy to discuss. On the one hand, in a society without a significant Romani population, this usage dissociates from the Romani stigma. On the other hand, in the Western context where manga enjoy large readership and readers are aware of the ethnic implications, this may be problematic. However, Tezuka’s introduction of the motif and his impact in playfully narrating gender roles in *shōjo* manga marked the beginning of a unique discourse in manga. This discourse’s evolution is exemplified by TAKEMIYA Keiko’s portrayal of “Gypsy” characters. Her characters lack common antigypsyist stereotypes, offering a novel interpretation based on a synthesis of different

³⁸⁵ See SAEKI Kayono (writer, artist), *Hello! Marian*, 2 issues (Tokyo: Shūeisha, 1978).

³⁸⁶ See HARA Chieko (writer, artist), *Fostine*, 4 issues (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1978/79).

European works, potentially deconstructing the stigma towards Western audiences. In contrast, prominent American and Francophone comic artists, whether benevolent or hostile, tend to use at least some of the common clichés.

Since the 1990s, various aspects of the “Gypsy” motif found expression in Japanese comics, and not only in *shōjo* manga. One example of the “Gypsy” *femme fatale* is evident in *Silver Gypsy* (1993) by “Makiko”.³⁸⁷ The narrative revolves around a woman who manipulates and kills men to achieve her personal objectives. Furthermore, the motif of fortune-telling within the context of the “Gypsy” theme is observed in the manga series *Abra Mandala* (1995–1997) by KOYAMA Motoo.³⁸⁸ This series features a fortune-telling woman and her establishment, “Gypsy House”. Additionally, both commercial and fan-made works perpetuate the stereotype of the sexualized “Gypsy”.³⁸⁹

In manga, the terms “Gypsy” and “Roma” have transcended their romanticized associations with Europe and become enduring motifs. Considering the lack of notable Romani population in Japan, these terms are rather not used to depict a specific group of people. The observation emerges that, in 21st-century popular manga, the terms “Rom” and “Roma” are recurrently employed as names for non-Romani characters associated with magical elements, thievery, showmanship, or musical skills. Notable examples include the protagonist and “magic monger” in Shōgakukan’s *Mahō Gyōshōnin Roma* (2009–2011, 魔法行商人ロマ) by KURAZONO Norihiko, *Rom* (ロム, *Romu*),³⁹⁰ the owner of a stolen goods warehouse in Media Factory’s and Square Enix’s *Re: Life in a different world from*

³⁸⁷ See “Makiko” (writer, artist), *Silver Gypsy* (Tokyo: Takeshobō, 1993).

³⁸⁸ See KOYAMA Motoo (writer, artist), *Abra Mandala*, 4 issues (Tokyo: Shōnen Gahōsha, 1995–97).

³⁸⁹ For example, see “Sumeragi Sora” (writer, artist), *Gypsy Service* (self-published, Toranoana, 2016); and see KAWASAKI Sora (writer, artist), *Gypsy Dance* (Tokyo: Shūeisha, 2012); and see “Furukawa Lemon” (writer, artist), *Love Mix 7: Ragnarok Online Book* (self-published, pixiv), 2 August 2011, <https://www.pixiv.net/en/artworks/20780831>; and see “Natsuya” (writer, artist), *RO-WebComic*, 28 issues (self-published, Shiningroad), since January 2005, <https://ffp-shiningroad.com/ro/>; and see “Makiko”, *Silver Gypsy*; and see “Gypsy Doll” *Oshioki Joō* 2, no. 5 (1993).

³⁹⁰ See KURAZONO Norihiko (writer, artist), *Mahō Gyōshōnin Roma*, 5 issues (Tokyo: Shogakukan, 2009–11).

Zero (2014–2020) by NAGATSUKI Tappei,³⁹¹ and the clown-masked character *Roma* (ロマ), also known as *Gypsy* (ジプシー, *Jipushī*), in Shūeisha's *Tokyo Ghoul* (2011–2018) by ISHIDA Sui.³⁹² In YOKOSHIMA Takemaru's *Show by Rock!!* (since 2020), the character *Rom* (ロム, *Romu*) is portrayed as a male, attractive, and passionate drummer in a band, and he has a love for travel.³⁹³ Furthermore, we may consider the contemporary colloquial use of the term “Gypsy” in Japanese language, where it does refer to socially disadvantaged or itinerant individuals. This is exemplified by the term “nuclear Gypsy” (原発ジプシー, *Genpatsu jipushī*) coined by writer HORIE Kunio in 1979.³⁹⁴ It describes short-term employees, both Japanese and non-Japanese, who are responsible for maintaining nuclear plants. This term was prominent during the Fukushima disaster in 2011, drawing parallels between the inappropriate working conditions and nomadic employment patterns of these workers. The term “Gypsy” is similarly employed in manga. In HANAGATA Rei's *Barista* (2010), the protagonist identifies as a “coffee Gypsy” (コーヒジプシー, *Kōhi Jipushī*), having travelled across Italy to learn the art of being the best barista.³⁹⁵ HAZUKI Sei's *Black go Kinjo* (2017, ブラックご近所, *Burakku go Kinjo*) refers to the protagonist as a “noise Gypsy” (騒音ジプシー, *Sōon Jipushī*) due to constant exposure to neighbours' noise.³⁹⁶ “Kīyan's” *Salad Bowl* (2019) portrays non-Romani and -traveller protagonists living in a trailer house, referenced as “Gypsies”.³⁹⁷ Also, in “Nagimisō's” *Tourin' Girl!* (2021), one chapter is titled “Ocean Gypsy” (オーシャン・ジプシー, *Ōshan Jipushī*), alluding to the journeying protagonist and the volume's setting near an ocean.³⁹⁸ There are many more examples where the “Gypsy” term is not used in reference to Roma. Rather it frequently references a

³⁹¹ See NAGATSUKI Tappei (writer), and “Matsuse Daichi” (artist), *Re:Zero: Capital City*, 2 issues (Tokyo: Media Factor, 2014–15).

³⁹² See ISHIDA Sui (writer, artist), *Tokyo Ghoul*, 14 issues (Tokyo: Shūeisha, 2011–14); and see ISHIDA Sui, *Tokyo Ghoul:re*, 16 issues (Tokyo: Shūeisha, 2014–18).

³⁹³ See YOKOSHIMA Takemaru (writer, artist), *Show by Rock!!* (Tokyo: Kadokawa Shoten, 2020).

³⁹⁴ See HORIE Kunio, *Genpatsu Gypsy* (Tokyo: Gendaishokan, 1979).

³⁹⁵ See HANAGATA Rei, *Barista*, no. 1 (Tokyo: Hōbunsha, 2010).

³⁹⁶ See HAZUKI Sei, *Black go Kinjo*, no. 2 (Tokyo: Take Shobō, 2017).

³⁹⁷ See “Kīyan” (writer, artist), *Salad Bowl* (Tokyo: Ichijinsha, 2019).

³⁹⁸ See “Nagimisō” (writer, artist), *Tourin' Girl!*, no. 3 (Tokyo: Takeshobō, 2021).

particular lifestyle – reminiscent of its use by Western pop stars.³⁹⁹

Nevertheless, the ethnic implications associated with the “Gypsy” motif persist as relevant. While evident in manga adaptations of European works,⁴⁰⁰ and in allusions to European works,⁴⁰¹ these connotations also frequently surface in contemporary anime. Notable examples of this phenomenon can be seen in works such as *Cowboy Bebop* (1998–2000) and the *Fullmetal Alchemist* franchise (2001–2017). *Chapter Six* will examine this evolving trend in detail.

³⁹⁹ See SAIDA Mitsuya (writer, artist), *Shinainaru Gypsy e* (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 2019); and see ARAKI Hirohiko (writer, artist), *JoJo’s Bizarre Adventure*, no. 124 (2019); and see HIGASHIYAMA Yūki (writer, artist), *Peter Clown* (self-published, Note), 7 May 2018, <https://note.com/skunkman/n/n2df0df2dbc10>; and see TORIKAI Akane (writer, artist), *Gypsycat’s Barricade*, no. 2 (2017).

⁴⁰⁰ See “Cuvie” (writer, artist), *Don Quixote* (Tokyo: Tōhō Tōwa, 2019); and see *Notre-Dame de Paris* (Tokyo: Shinseisha, 2017); and see IWASAKI Yōko (writer, artist), *The Reluctant Fiancée* (Tokyo: Harlequin Shuppan, 2016); and see *Don Quixote* (Tokyo: East Press, 2009); and see Tezuka, “Mignon”.

⁴⁰¹ See “Mimoto” (writer, artist), *The Masterpiece I love*, no. 2 (Tokyo: Kadokawa, 2020); and see AKUI Makoto (writer, artist), *Ao no Orchestra* (Tokyo: Shōgakukan, 2019).

Interim Conclusion



The previous three chapters have shed light on blind spots of the “Gypsy” phantasma by demonstrating the multiplicity of its discourses. Using comics as an example, these different discourses often arise from the content produced by artists who challenge mainstream and traditional forms of representing the phantasma. Their interpretations are being imitated and inspire further creativity. These artistic changes are linked to the cultural and historical context in which the artists work, as I have demonstrated in each case. Some of these discourse evolutions contribute to specific comic markets becoming platforms for activist agenda (as seen in the US), educating on history (as in the Francophone world), or challenging stereotypes by dissociating from the motif’s original meaning (as shown in the Japanese market).

Many case studies in this thesis interpret Romani history. While some works explicitly address Romani persecution during the Nazi era, either to entertain or educate,⁴⁰² others feature more or less fictionalized stories inspired by these events.⁴⁰³ Moreover, some works present historicized “Gypsy” fantasies based on adaptations and hybridizations from literary history.⁴⁰⁴ Rarely, the works are entirely anachronistic.⁴⁰⁵ Representing Romani history in popular comics started to humanize significantly in the 1960s, a period when comic characters began to gain complexity and depth. This trend of portraying “Gypsy” and Romani characters more realistically started to accelerate in the late 1970s,⁴⁰⁶ possibly linked to the successes of the Romani civil rights movement during that time. However, the shift to non-fantastical portrayals did not occur uniformly across all

⁴⁰² See “Chapter Two”, “Chapter Three”, and “Chapter Six” in this thesis, 49–53, 98–101, 195–203.

⁴⁰³ See “Chapter Two” in this thesis, 53–72.

⁴⁰⁴ See “Chapter Three”, “Chapter Four”, “Chapter Five”, and “Chapter Six” in this thesis, 103–104, 114–142, 155–162, 186–195.

⁴⁰⁵ See “Chapter One”, “Chapter Three”, and “Chapter Six” in this thesis, 33–34, 94, 185.

⁴⁰⁶ See “Chapter Two”, “Chapter Three”, and “Chapter Four” in this thesis, 63–72, 98–101, 129–139.

national discourses. On the one hand, Francophone and Japanese comics depicted Romani characters more often as normalized individuals, while on the other hand, the fantastical “Gypsy” character with magical powers has persisted and even been strengthened as a convention in American superhero comics. Remarkably, the supernatural abilities these characters possess raise questions about whether this trend helps deconstruct the associated stigma or not – since this trend is frequently connected to contradictory hybridizations that distort the stigma nevertheless.⁴⁰⁷ In short, the multiplicity of discourses on the “Gypsy” motif affects not only the depiction of characters but also the representation of Romani history, leading to diverse memory cultures. Some depictions may be more appropriate than others. The appropriateness of these different memory cultures is briefly touched upon in the outlook of each chapter.

The “Gypsy” motif in comics was and is also influenced by the unique technology of the comic medium itself. However, some aspects – such as how readers experience time and space within comics, the structure of pages, or the “gutter” (the space between panels) – require audience research, which falls outside the scope of this thesis.⁴⁰⁸ Beyond these aspects, the comic medium also has international and mechanical features that shape the “Gypsy” motif. First, the role of Colour. The use (or omission) of colour can have narrative meaning. For example, in *Kaze to ki no Uta* by TAKEMIYA Keiko, skin colour is used sparingly, serving as an occasional reminder of the protagonist’s identity and the story’s aspect of colourism. By leaving skin colour out in many instances, its presence becomes more striking when it does appear, highlighting skin colour as a story element. Second, simplification. Like caricature, comics tend to simplify and exaggerate visual elements.⁴⁰⁹ This can reinforce stereotypes, including antigypsyist stigma. Features such as exaggerated gesture, facial expressions, and behaviours can also contribute to manifesting the “Gypsy” motif in characters.

⁴⁰⁷ See “Chapter Two”, and “Chapter Five” in this thesis, 53–72, 162–176.

⁴⁰⁸ On how these aspects may influence perception, see Scott McCloud, *Understanding comics: the invisible art*, 2nd ed. (Northampton: Kitchen Sink Press, 1993), 60-117; and see Will Eisner, *Comics and sequential art* (Tamarac: Poorhouse Press, 1985); and see Will Eisner, *Graphic storytelling and visual narrative: principles and practices from the legendary cartoonist; includes new and updated material* (New York: Norton, 2008).

⁴⁰⁹ On the means and categories of simplification, typification, and expressivity in comics, see McCloud, *Understanding Comics*, 24-59; and see Thierry Groensteen, *The System of Comics* (Mississippi: University Press of Mississippi, 2007), 161f.

However, the approach of exaggeration is not always narratively applied in comics. It is highly visible in the comedic context of *Astérix en Hispanie* but largely absent from *Kaze to Ki no Uta*. Lastly, the visual prominence of “Gypsy” characters: In these comics, “Gypsy” characters often take on central roles, such as protagonists or antagonists, reflected not only in the narrative but also in the visual language. They frequently appear in large panels, sometimes even in splash pages, showing the full body and signifying them as central figures of the plot. Besides indicating a character’s narrative significance, such visual emphasis may serve different purposes: in Japanese postwar comics, it might stem from the reader being unfamiliar with “Gypsy” characters, requiring detailed visual representation. Alternatively, it could be a way to demand minimal cognitive effort from the reader,⁴¹⁰ allowing them to fully absorb the spectacle of the “Gypsy” character’s visual presentation. Still, the “Gypsy” motif in comics has always been strongly influenced by the genres and storytelling conventions of different regions, shaped by local markets and cultural preferences. The cultural contexts of comics, as discussed in Part One of this thesis, continue to shape how these characters and themes are portrayed today.

In the following part, this discussion about the multiplicity of discourses on “Gypsy” notion will be expanded to explore not only how these ideas differ across different national contexts but also how they vary between different types of media. The case studies provide a groundwork for further discussing suitable representations and potential strategies for appropriately portraying themes of antigypsyism and/or Romani history.

⁴¹⁰ See Eisner, *Comics and sequential art*, 42.

3

Media-Specific Discourses

The “Gypsy” motif is not entirely uniform across different forms of media. It is constantly in the making – with different results, depending on the medium. In Part Three of this thesis, I will argue that the “Gypsy” motif in games and animated films after 1945 is embedded in different media-specific discourses. The form of operation and market of each medium, for example, influence these discourses in distinct ways. Based on these differences, I will trace the “Gypsy” motif and its changing use in the media, using five major case studies: For role-playing games, these are the *Dungeons & Dragons* module *Ravenloft* (1983) by Tracy and Laura Hickman; the *Ultima* series (1981–2013) by Origin Systems; and the *Fable* series (2004–2017) by Lionhead Studios. In the section on animated films, I will focus on *Fullmetal Alchemist the Movie: Conqueror of Shamballa* (2005) by Bones Inc. and *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (1996) by The Walt Disney Company. For all these case studies, I first summarise the plot, before embarking on a comparative study of narrative and/or characters, depending on the respective epistemological interest. That means comparing these works with existing narrative patterns from historical literature and arts. Thus, interactive simulation, animated films and sequential art will be examined as narrative text, as a matter of narratology,⁴¹¹ while character analysis will complement the ranges of analytical tools, as will cartoon analysis where relevant.⁴¹² Linking all case studies together, I will add brief historical contextualization before and between the case studies, including a reflection on works that have been published before 1945.

⁴¹¹ On the Narrativity of text and image in comics, see Gunter Kress, and Theo van Leeuwen, *Multimodal Discourse: The Modes and Media of Contemporary Communication* (London: A&C Black 3PI, 2001). The reader may consider that the investigation on-hand does not include audience research. Throughout the analysis single images and panels will be considered for demonstration while, for the sake of simplicity, multiple pages will be summarized.

⁴¹² For example, the elaboration on a splash – a large illustration on the comic’s first page – can be a tool for the analysis of characters, setting and tone.

Chapter Five

Games – World-Building & Simulation



“ONE child is chosen to be the gypsy and one the mother. The others are children. The mother leaves the children, saying as she goes away:

*‘I charge my children every one,
To keep good house while I am gone;
You and you, and specially you.’*

*Then she leaves the room. Immediately in comes the gypsy and takes away the children, sometimes one at a time, sometimes in groups of two and three. She hides the children in various places. The mother returns, finds her children all gone, and proceeds to hunt for them. When all have been found, they all chase the gypsy.”*⁴¹³

The quote above exemplifies the interplay between ethnic stigma and ‘world-building’ in games. Its author, Marian A Webb, describes a formerly well-known variant of the children’s game *Hide and Seek*, into which the roles of “gypsy” and “mother” are introduced to add an immersive backdrop to the game.⁴¹⁴ Although the game could just as well be played without the theme of “Gypsy” child theft, its inclusion serves to create a distinct ‘world’ for the players. It shapes a narrative where the “mother” strives to find her hidden children. Despite the theoretical possibility that the children might remain undiscovered and the “gypsy” uncaptured, the game is structured for the “mother” to emerge as the victor. Time becomes a crucial factor working against the “gypsy”, implying a sense of justice

⁴¹³ Marian A Webb, *Games for younger children* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1947), 29.

⁴¹⁴ See Helen Fried Joseph, *The Family Book of Games and Sports* (Minneapolis: Popular Mechanics Press, 1954), 16; and see Doris Anderson, *Encyclopedia of Games* (Bloomington: Zondervan Publishing House, 1954), 152–153.

as the game progresses, eventually undoing the crime, and punishing the “gypsy”. This classic children’s game thus inadvertently reflects historical justifications for the persecution of Roma, in the form of role-playing and world-building.

In this chapter, I explore this interplay between ethnic stigma and world-building in games, particularly role-playing games (RPG), to elaborate on the medium’s unique discourse on the “Gypsy” motif. I focus on the games *Dungeons & Dragons* and its module *Ravenloft* (1983) by Tracy and Laura Hickman, the *Ultima* series (1981–2013) by Origin Systems, and the *Fable* series (2004–2017) by Lionhead Studios. I chose *Dungeons & Dragons* as well as the *Ultima* series because they are the cornerstones of modern RPGs and have played a major role in the success of the global video game industry. Although the *Fable* series is not as groundbreaking, it is popular and provides a good example of how the “Gypsy” motif is used in 21st-century games. In all these case studies, it becomes evident that game mechanics and technology shape “Gypsy” characters in unique ways, leading to new interpretations and integration into the games’ operations: Fortune-tellers gave hints for treasures, encouraging players to explore an unknown world. “Gypsy” cartomancy variably determined the game setup. Nomads travel from one place to another, creating the phantasm of a world in progress. As I will demonstrate, the multifunctionality of the “Gypsy” motif becomes a prominent feature of the medium and its interactive simulations. The motif has become ubiquitous in role-playing games, especially those set in medieval, fantastical worlds inspired by European mythology and history, whereas “Gypsy” characters are uncommon in the medieval fantasies of literature.

1. The “Gypsy” Motif & Historicizing Fantasy

“Gypsy” characters are common in the contemporary, yet uncommon in the historicizing fantasy genre of literature. These genres use alternative and fantastical scenarios set either in the present (contemporary) or past (historicizing).⁴¹⁵ As linguist and human rights attorney Ian Hancock observed in 1987 with regard to contemporary fantasy and science fiction, Roma were not portrayed in literature as members of an existing real-world minority but rather as fantastical entities in worlds beyond ours. He names *Thinner* (1984) by Stephen King, *Child of Fortune* (1985) by Norman Spinrad, *Mulengro* (1985) by Charles de Lint, and *Star of Gypsies* (1986) by Robert Silverberg as cases in point.⁴¹⁶ Extending this argument in 1995, Diane Tong compiled an annotated bibliography focused on “Gypsy” characters in entertainment literature, with a particular emphasis on those set in the present or future.⁴¹⁷ Both Hancock and Tong, however, overlook the portrayal of the “Gypsy” motif in a fantastical past, which are numerous as well. Gabriel García Márquez’s *Cien años de soledad* (1967), for example, characterized by an historicizing magical realism, presents a notable instance featuring a mysterious band of “Gypsies”.⁴¹⁸ Moreover, the literature of historicizing fantasy has employed the “Gypsy” motif, as seen in works like the *Windsänger-Zyklus* (1983–1989) by Robin Hobb and *Kushiel’s Legacy* (2001) by Jacqueline Carey, drawing inspiration from medieval Europe.⁴¹⁹ While Hobb uses “Gypsies” as protagonists, Carey introduces the fictional *Tsingani*, a fictional people unmistakably based on the “Gypsy” motif. But prominent authors in historicizing fantasy, including John R. R. Tolkien, Clive S Lewis, Raymond Feist, George R. R. Martin, and Brandon

⁴¹⁵ Accordingly, I use the term “historicizing” to describe the use of visual, auditory, textual, or narrative ciphers that are commonly ascribed to specific historical periods, whether or not that ascription is accurate. For example, the image of the witch is often associated with the Middle Ages, even though the witch hunts mainly occurred during the Early Modern period. On the common ascriptions of narrative ciphers to specific historical periods, see Jörn Rüsen, “Die fünf Dimensionen der Geschichtskultur,” in *Angewandte Geschichte: Neue Perspektiven auf Geschichte in der Öffentlichkeit*, ed. Jacqueline Nießer, and Juliane Tomann (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2014), 46–57.

⁴¹⁶ See Ian Hancock, “The Origin and Function of the Gypsy Image in Children’s Literature,” *The Lion and the Unicorn: A Critical Journal of Children’s Literature* 11, no. 1 (1987), 47–59.

⁴¹⁷ See Diane Tong, *Gypsies: A Multidisciplinary Annotated Bibliography* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1947).

⁴¹⁸ See Gabriel García Márquez, *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (London: Penguin Books, 2014).

⁴¹⁹ See Megan Lindholm, *Windsänger*, 4 issues (Munich: Heyne, 1985–1998); and see Jacqueline Carey, *Kushiel’s Legacy* (New York: Tor Books, 2001).

Sanderson have not incorporated the “Gypsy” motif in their works; it is not part of the mainstream of historicizing fantasy literature.

However, the “Gypsy” motif has a significant presence in the nexus between the Middle Ages and the fantasy genre that is popular in the world-building of prominent role-playing games. Evidence for this are game franchises such as *Fable* (2004–2017), *Divinity* (2002–2017), or *The Dark Eye* (1984–2015). Sometimes it is mixed up with other motifs. In *The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim* (2011), for example, the cat people named *Khajiit* resemble antigypsyist stereotypes, as nomads, itinerant merchants, and thieves.⁴²⁰ So, how did “Gypsy” characters become prevalent in role-playing games? A part of the answer is that the world-building of role-playing games shapes the stigma and its manifestation in this medium. This manifestation of the stigma in role-playing games is associated with a discourse evolution specific to this medium.

To understand this discourse evolution, we must first recognize the distinct nature of games compared to other forms of storytelling such as novels or short stories. As highlighted by media scholar Henry Jenkins, we must understand the practical purposes of narrated stories in games.⁴²¹ For example, the use of different colours for game tokens may carry connotative meanings, but primarily it serves the purpose of helping players to distinguish between them. Many games’ pragmatism is rooted in interactive simulation, particularly evident in video games, which are often more complex than non-digital counterparts due to computational capabilities. This simulation aspect sets games apart from other media. Examining the impact of this logic on the portrayal of the “Gypsy” motif becomes important as the interplay between simulation and traditional storytelling determines the way in which the motif is presented.⁴²² We encounter a dual story structure. On the one hand, a scripted narrative by the game developers exists that can be experienced by the player. On the other hand, an emergent narrative unfolding through

⁴²⁰ See Bethesda Game Studios, *The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim*, Windows (Rockville: Bethesda Softworks, 2011).

⁴²¹ See Henry Jenkins, “Game Design as Narrative Architecture,” in *Electronic Book Review*, ed. Joseph Tabbi, 10 July 2004, <https://electronicbookreview.com/essay/game-design-as-narrative-architecture/>.

⁴²² See Gonzalo Frasca, “Simulation versus Narrative: Introduction to Ludology,” in *The Video Game Reader*, ed. Mark J P Wolf, and Bernard Perron (London: Routledge, 2003), 221–236.

interactive simulation, shaped by the player's actions.⁴²³ The dominance of either the authored or the simulative aspect depends on the game genre. Unlike other media, genres of games are defined by game-mechanical systems (strategy, first-person shooter, role-playing, etc.). These systems impact how themes are presented in the medium and determine the options of the player.

It was a new genre of social gaming, originating in the 1970s American student culture, that led to a distinct discourse evolution: the genre of pen & paper role-playing games. This genre of non-digital games was closer to improvisational theatre than classic games like chess or ludo. Here, players experience an adventure together via storytelling and improvising. They assume fictional roles created during the "character creation" phase of the game, assigning numerical values to abilities such as agility, intelligence, and weapon skills. There is no fixed script for the ensuing adventure. A "game master" describes the imaginary environment to the players, allowing them to interact and make decisions. The game master can intervene, determine consequences and introduce unexpected events that players must navigate. Success in these interactions is not solely decided by the game master; factors like dice rolls introduce an element of chance. For example, in a dramatic showdown between characters A and B, if character A attempts to shoot an arrow, the game master may set a minimum value for success. Setting the minimum value at 8 for a successful hit, the game master factors in character A's numerical value for "weapon skills", which is 5. However, the player of character A rolls a 3, resulting in a cumulative total of 8. Consequently, the arrow hits character B, and the consequence, be it injury or death, shapes the subsequent storyline. In this way, a story is playfully created. After having graduated, members of this student culture founded game companies laying the foundation for the commercializing this culture.⁴²⁴ In 1974, the highly successful pen & paper role-playing game *Dungeons & Dragons* was released, sold

⁴²³ See Stewart Woods, "Loading the Dice: The Challenge of Serious Videogames," *Game Studies* 4, no. 1 (2004), <http://www.gamestudies.org/0401/woods/>; and see Janet Murray, "From Game Story to Cyber-Drama," in *Electronic Book Review*, ed. Joseph Tabbi, 1 May 2004, <https://electronicbookreview.com/essay/from-game-story-to-cyberdrama/>.

⁴²⁴ See Rainer Nagel, "Die Geschichte der Rollenspiele: Von den Anfängen bis Ende der Neunziger Jahre des letzten Jahrhunderts," in *Abenteuer in anderen Welten: Fantasy-Rollenspiele; Geschichte, Bedeutung, Möglichkeiten*, ed. Ulrich Janus, and Ludwig Janus (Gießen: Psychosozial-Verlag, 2007), 35–37; and see Michael Bhatti, *Interaktives Story Telling: Zur historischen Entwicklung und konzeptionellen Strukturierung interaktiver Geschichten* (PhD Thesis at the Universität Osnabrück, 1999), 8.

as a handbook.⁴²⁵ It became the most successful franchise of this genre and was copied many times. Still, role-playing games and their culture are not mere improvisation; otherwise, they could not have been commercialized. Their origins can be traced back to non-digital war games that use Antiquity or the Middle Ages as settings. In this context, role-players often engaged in historical, often medieval, scenarios, and immersed themselves in military roles.⁴²⁶ However, with *Dungeons & Dragons* and following role-playing games, the focus shifted towards Tolkienesque world-building, and the idea of a heroic quest. While departing from a military scenario, these games often retained a violence-centric framework,⁴²⁷ unfolding within a fixed universe. Much like Tolkien's *Middle Earth*, a new fictional world served as the groundwork for the story, sometimes describing entire continents provided in the handbooks of the games. Incorporating mythical and legendary elements like dragons and elves, the medieval universe in which the players interact expanded to cater their fascination with fantasy.⁴²⁸ This departure from historical realism aimed to stimulate creativity among players. At the same time, game developers drew on historical sources and research to enhance the gaming experience with a historically authentic backdrop intertwined with legendary and fantastical elements.⁴²⁹ The handbook serves as a comprehensive guide, offering a coherent and diverse universe populated with fictional peoples, characters and objects that can be used by the players. Jenkins asserts that we should "think of game designers less as storytellers than as narrative architects"⁴³⁰. This assertion is particularly relevant when examining pen & paper role-playing games. Unlike traditional media such as novels and films, these games do not present a pre-determined story but offer a rich universe for players to engage with and craft their own stories. This characteristic indicates the medium's high potential to emancipate from conventions of genres, including fantasy. The introduction of the "Gypsy" motif in the mainstream of role-playing games

⁴²⁵ See Gary Gygax, and Dave Ameson, *Dungeons & Dragons*, 1st ed. (Lake Geneva: TSR, 1974).

⁴²⁶ See Bhatti, *Interaktives Story Telling*, 10; and see William J White, "The Right to Dream of the Middle Ages: Simulating the Medieval in Tabletop RPGs," in *Digital Gaming Re-imagines the Middle Ages*, ed. Daniel T Kline (New York: Routledge, 2014), 17.

⁴²⁷ See David W Marshall, "A World unto Itself: Autopoietic Systems and Secondary Worlds in *Dungeons & Dragons*," in *Mass Market Medieval: Essays on the Middle Ages in Popular Culture* (Jefferson: McFarland & Company, 2007), 171–175; and see Bhatti, *Interaktives Story Telling*, 12; and see White, "The Right to Dream", 19.

⁴²⁸ See White, "The Right to Dream", 17.

⁴²⁹ See Bhatti, *Interaktives Story Telling*, 14.

⁴³⁰ See Jenkins, "Game Design".

during the early 1980s is a testament to this potential for emancipation, as exemplified by the 1983 released module *Ravenloft* for *Dungeons & Dragons*.⁴³¹ Serving as a commercial add-on to the handbook, this module expanded the basic game and its universe, initiating a discourse evolution of the “Gypsy” motif in the fantasy genre of role-playing games. The module’s authors drew inspiration from popular gothic fiction of the 19th and 20th centuries, notably emphasizing vampires. A parallel emerges with the novel *Dracula* (1897) by Irish writer Bram Stoker, where a Transylvanian count, *Dracula*, is a vampire who feeds on human blood. Remarkably, the narrative climax of the novel involves a confrontation between a group of heroes and a group identified as “Gypsies”, attempting to defend the vampire with their lives.⁴³² *Ravenloft*’s incorporation of gothic fiction and its “Gypsy” motif reflects a departure from the previously Tolkienesque fantasies of the Middle Ages in *Dungeons & Dragons*. This departure expands the creative possibilities within the game, showcasing not only the dynamic nature of narrative construction in games but also underscoring the potential to reimagine and challenge established genre conventions – potentially creating new ones. A new convention of the fantasy genre in games introduced by *Ravenloft* is the synthesis of medieval fantasies and the “Gypsy” motif. In the following pages, this synthesis will be scrutinized in detail.

⁴³¹ See Tracy Hickman, and Laura Hickman, *Ravenloft* (Lake Geneva: TSR, 1983).

⁴³² See Bram Stoker, *Dracula* (London: Archibald Constable and Company, 1897).

2. Implementing the “Gypsy” in the Historicizing Fantasy of Role-Playing Games

In the following pages, I argue that the module *Ravenloft* for the second version of *Dungeons & Dragons* (*Advanced Dungeons & Dragons*, or *AD&D*) is remarkable in the history of the “Gypsy” motif in role-playing games for two reasons. First, the motif was implemented in the historicizing fantasy genre by blending it with themes of 19th-century gothic literature. This blending needs to be considered in the context of the functionality of role-playing games, as the medium often emancipates the plot from thematic conventions (like the fantasy genre) and presents a fresh yet recognizable setting that serves as a diverse universe where players create their own stories. Second, *Ravenloft* incorporates these characters into the game’s mechanics, interpreting it in a way that inspired many prominent games thereafter. After briefly summarizing how the “Gypsy” motif is blended with the medieval fantasy in *Ravenloft*, I will undertake an analysis of the motif’s incorporation in the game mechanics. For this purpose, I use two examples: the motif of fortune telling as a tool to make the game’s setup palpable, and the motif of nomadism that is shaped by the game world and employed to create a sense of a dynamically evolving world. It will become evident that in both examples the “Gypsy” motif is interpreted in an unconventional way, indicating a unique discourse on the motif specific to games.

Ravenloft from 1983 mirrors Bram Stoker’s *Dracula* (1897), intertwining “Gypsies” and vampires, reinterpreting the story and its motifs in the context of Tolkienesque medieval fantasy, in a world full of dragons, orcs, and elves. Set in the fictional land of *Barovia*, players confront the vampire *Strahd von Zarovich*. Victory requires defeating *Strahd*, aided by weapons and artifacts. *Ravenloft* also introduces “Gypsies” into *Dungeons & Dragons*’ medieval fantasy, portraying them as liars, telling tales “that are almost certainly untrue”⁴³³.

Ravenloft effectively blends this motif with medieval fantasy, further interweaving it with the fantasy genre, while maintaining implications of ethnic otherness and inferiority: One character introduced in the game is a banshee, a mournful spirit

⁴³³ Hickman, and Hickman, *Ravenloft*, 32.

of a deceased woman. Described as a “gypsy elf maiden”⁴³⁴, she met a tragic fate – stoned to death by her own people, the “Gypsies”, for planning to marry *Strahd*.⁴³⁵ This narrative intertwines the “Gypsy” motif with other mystical elements such as elves that are aligning with the medieval fantasy genre. Therefore, “Gypsies” are not inherently human in the world of *Ravenloft*, as elves are among the “non-human races”⁴³⁶, underscoring the implications of race differences projected onto the genre of fantasy. According to education scholar Antero Garcia, there even appears to be an implied inferiority of such characters to non-human races, regarding the maximum of obtainable power and skill (level) in the game. He observes that

*“when looking at the cleric class, gnomes are restricted to reaching only the ninth level, halflings eighth, and elves 15th; humans are unlimited in their potential. Perhaps a utopian perspective of human exceptionalism, these limitations fundamentally highlight implicit assumptions about racial inferiority within the game.”*⁴³⁷

Regarding the interpretation in a new context, the “Gypsy” motif is not only woven into the setting of medieval fantasy but also into the game’s operation, specifically through the themes of fortune-telling and nomadism. According to Jenkins, narratives in games serve as a tool to assign meaning to game mechanics.⁴³⁸ Game mechanics, being an unseen system, require symbolic elements to render them perceptible and tangible.

First, we observe a game mechanical significance of the theme of “Gypsy” fortune-telling in *Ravenloft* that also leads to its unconventional interpretation. Many well-known stories in history start with a prophecy, such as the old Greek epics or Shakespeare’s *Macbeth*. Similarly, each game of *Ravenloft* starts with a “Gypsy” fortune teller predicting the players’ future via cartomancy, known as “The

⁴³⁴ Ibid., 28.

⁴³⁵ See Ibid.

⁴³⁶ Gary Gygax, *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons: Players Handbook* (Lake Geneva: TSR, 1978), 7.

⁴³⁷ Antero Garcia, “Privilege, Power, and Dungeons & Dragons: How Systems Shape Racial and Gender Identities in Tabletop Role-Playing Games,” *Mind, Culture, and Activity* 24, no. 3 (2017): 240.

⁴³⁸ See Jenkins, “Game Design”.

gypsy card reading”⁴³⁹. However, the procedure has no predetermined outcome. The game master implements this mechanic by shuffling and drawing five cards, each with varying implications. The first reveals a holy symbol’s location, the second guides to the tome of *Strahd*, the third designates *Strahd* encounters, the fourth reveals the location of a mighty weapon, and the fifth exposes *Strahd*’s goals. A normal deck of cards is used, with the drawn numbers and symbols being linked to different game setup texts in the manual that are conveyed cryptically through thematic riddles to the players. This approach of randomly determining the game’s setup ensures a dynamic and unique playing experience. Additionally, the use of the cartomancy theme acts as a threshold experience, creating a timeless space that foreshadows players’ immersion into the game’s world. Evidently, the “Gypsy” fortune telling has game mechanical significance. Also, by assigning the role of the “Gypsy” fortune teller to the game master, a fundamental aspect of traditional “Gypsy” narratives is reversed, as the “Gypsy” becomes subject rather than object of the story: It is the game master who acts the parts of everyone who is not the player characters and will assume the role of characters “to talk with, drink with, gamble with, adventure with, and often fight with!”⁴⁴⁰ Although the game master embodies the alterity of the mystical “Gypsy”, the motif evolves beyond a mere narrative object. Instead, it becomes the narrative’s subject, directing the players who themselves embody fixed roles within the game world. This dynamic results in a distinct interpretation of the “Gypsy” motif, conditioned by the specific mechanics of pen & paper role-playing games, where not the players are but the game master is holding the ultimate decision-making authority, shaping the narrative trajectory – also in the role of a “Gypsy” fortune-teller. This is particularly the case for the early role-playing games of the 20th century, where, as Garcia describes, “the game mechanically reinforced subservience”⁴⁴¹ to the game master.

Second, once the players are immersed into the world of *Ravenloft*, they frequently cross paths with nomadic “Gypsies”, introducing an element of *wanderlust* into the narrative with its distinct implications for the context of a game world. Players are given agency in their interactions with these characters, reflecting

⁴³⁹ Hickman, and Hickman, *Ravenloft*, 1.

⁴⁴⁰ Gygax, *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons*, 7.

⁴⁴¹ Garcia, “Privilege, Power,” 242.

Janet Murray's concept of player-led narrative.⁴⁴² However, this agency may serve to reinforce existing power dynamics, with players having the option to trade, attack, or persuade "Gypsies" to join their party, while the "Gypsies" are described as "neutral evil"⁴⁴³, with the goal of "bringing maximum evilness to the world"⁴⁴⁴. Therefore, the characterization of the "Gypsies" advocates a cautious or hostile behaviour of the players towards the nomads right from the start of the game. Some of these encounters are scripted, like entering a tavern owned by "Gypsies".⁴⁴⁵ Others are chance based, with "Gypsy" encounters only during the day in *Dungeons & Dragons*. Night brings heightened risks from hostile creatures, advising players to travel in daylight to reduce dangers.⁴⁴⁶ Therefore, we may assume that the players predominantly traverse the world in daylight. Before considering the impact of these randomized encounters with "Gypsies" in the game world, we must calculate here the likelihood of experiencing these random encounters. In the original *AD&D* handbook, it is classified that "a *turn* is 10 minutes"⁴⁴⁷. Let *G* represent the chance of encountering "Gypsies" in one turn. An encounter can occur only every three turns (1/3), as the game master rolls a six-sided dice every three turns to predict a random encounter.⁴⁴⁸ During daytime, if the result is 1, the players encounter someone (probability of 1/6); otherwise, they do not. A second dice roll determines the encounter's nature. If the result is 2 or 5, the players encounter "Gypsies" (probability of 2/6); otherwise, they encounter someone else.⁴⁴⁹ Consequently, the chance of encountering "Gypsies" in one turn during the daytime is 1/54 or approximately 1,85% ($G = 1/3 \times 1/6 \times 2/6 = 1/54$). There is a fifty percent chance of encountering "Gypsies" in 27 turns. Since one turn equals 10 minutes of playtime, players can expect to encounter "Gypsies" on average every 270 minutes, or four and a half hours. Considering that a game of *Ravenloft* is completed in about 14 to 16 hours,⁴⁵⁰ players most

⁴⁴² See Murray, "Game Story".

⁴⁴³ Hickman, and Hickman, *Ravenloft*, 6.

⁴⁴⁴ Gyax, *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons*, 33.

⁴⁴⁵ See Hickman, and Hickman, *Ravenloft*, 8.

⁴⁴⁶ See *ibid.*, 6.

⁴⁴⁷ Gyax, *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons*, 39.

⁴⁴⁸ See Hickman, and Hickman, *Ravenloft*, 6.

⁴⁴⁹ See *ibid.*

⁴⁵⁰ The game journalist Sean Pagal reports a length of about 16 hours. See Sean Pagal, "Review: *Ravenloft* (1983)," *Uncanny Puppetry*, last modified 23 November 2023, <https://uncannypuppetry.substack.com/p/review-ravenloft-1983>. Multiple users in the *Dragonsfoot Forums* report 14 to 16 hours on average to complete the game module, while it

likely encounter approximately three random instances with “Gypsies” on their journey, in addition to scripted encounters. These random encounters with “Gypsies” always shape the game world’s design. In this world, extensive travel is imperative for players to craft their personal heroic saga and ultimately triumph by locating and defeating the vampire antagonist. On the one hand, the depiction of a nomadic lifestyle within a medieval setting underscores the narrative of mobility during that period. The random encounters, particularly with the nomadic “Gypsies” and their wagons, inject an element of unpredictability, making the world appear vibrant. Thus, the journey itself, not just the progression of the quest, contributes to a historical narrative that unfolds progressively. On the other hand, the world-building reinforces the conventional connotation of the “Gypsy” stigma with the idea of “Forest people” (Ger.: “Waldmenschen”⁴⁵¹) – the forest as space of the ostracized. This perspective aligns with the observations made by literary scholar Klaus-Michael Bogdal:

“Since the systematic persecutions from the 16th to the 19th centuries, Gypsies are considered as the ‘forest people’ of Europe who share the inaccessible and hardly comprehensible space with robbers or marginalized and pauperized like charcoal burners or ‘witches’”.⁴⁵²

might be also completed in shorter time. See “I6 Ravenloft: How many sessions?” *Dragonsfoot*, last modified 26 July 2011, <https://www.dragonsfoot.org/forums/viewtopic.php?t=50939>.

⁴⁵¹ Klaus-Michael Bogdal, *Europa erfindet die Zigeuner: Eine Geschichte von Faszination und Verachtung* (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2011), 133.

⁴⁵² Ger.: “Zigeuner gelten seit den systematischen Verfolgungen im 16. Jahrhundert bis ins 19. Jahrhundert hinein als die ‘Waldmenschen’ Europas, die sich den unzugänglichen und unübersichtlichen Raum mit Räubern oder Marginalisierten und Pauperisierten wie Köhlern oder ‘Hexen’ teilen”. Ibid.

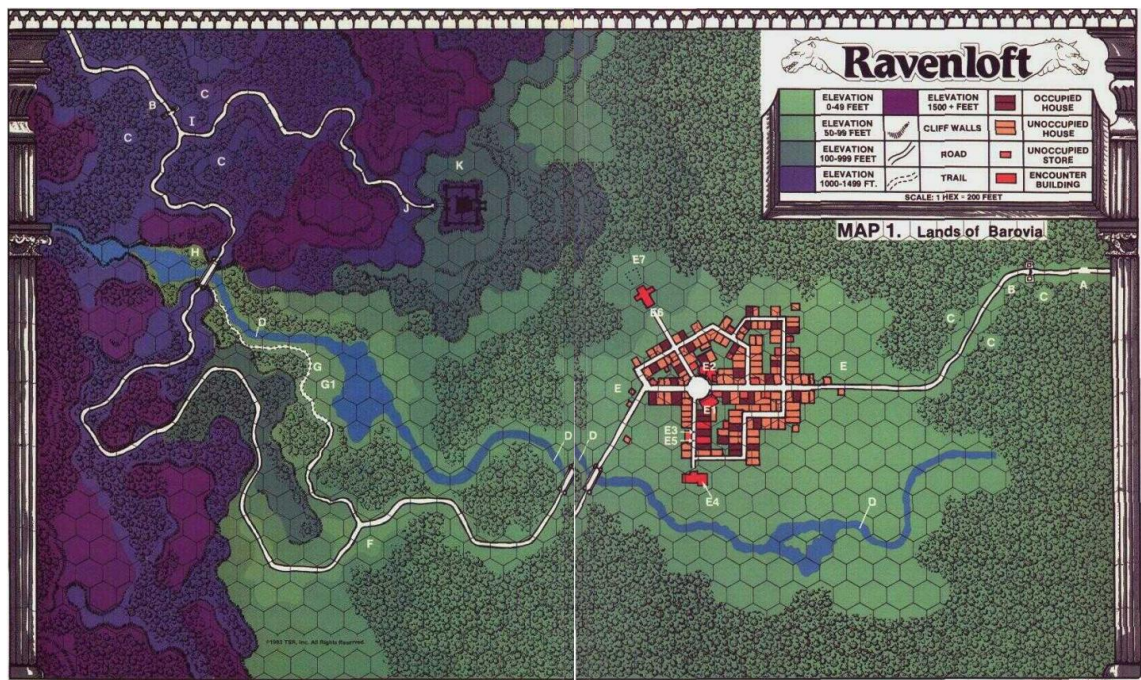


Fig. 34: The map of *Ravenloft*. Hickman, and Hickman, *Ravenloft*, 33–34.

That is because forests dominate two-thirds of the game world (figs. 34). The landscape comprises open areas (about two-elevenths), a village (about one-tenth), and a river (about one-twentieth).⁴⁵³ Players must follow a road to reach the castle (K), essential for crossing a gauge (H).⁴⁵⁴ Approximately 80% of this journey unfolds along a road bordered by forests.⁴⁵⁵ The forests evoke a pre-industrial atmosphere and align with gothic fiction conventions, where traversing dark and eerie woods is a common experience.⁴⁵⁶ While encounters with not only “Gypsies” but also villagers and monsters can happen throughout *Ravenloft*, the ubiquitous presence of forests effectively complements the theme associated with the “Gypsy” motif. This showcases how simulated environment in the unique world-building of games can reproduce stigma through game design rather than script. Remarkably, this theme of nomadism, associated with notions of freedom and mobility, starkly contrasts with the confined and oppressive atmosphere of *Barovia*. It is a land from which players are unable to leave due to “the trapping

⁴⁵³ See Hickman, and Hickman, *Ravenloft*, 33–34.

⁴⁵⁴ See *ibid.*

⁴⁵⁵ See *ibid.*

⁴⁵⁶ For example, see Elizabeth Parker, *The Forest and the EcoGothic: The Deep Dark Woods in the Popular Imagination* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020).

fog that exists everywhere in Barovia.”⁴⁵⁷ “Once it is breathed, it infuses itself around a character’s vital organs as a neutralized poison”⁴⁵⁸, only becoming active once a player character exits *Barovia*.⁴⁵⁹ Meanwhile, “the gypsies were given a potion by Strahd that cancels the effects of the fog”. This juxtaposition between “Gypsy” nomadism and the imprisonment of almost everyone else, including villagers and player characters, highlights a privileged position of the “Gypsies” within the narrative. This narrative departs from real-world marginalization where many Roma historically faced imprisonment in forced settlements and concentration camps, juxtaposed against a surrounding world that enjoyed freedom of movement. The game’s reversed narrative is the result of game design necessities in *Ravenloft*, because the players shall not leave the world of the game, staying within the confines of the illustrated map, while the “Gypsies” represent their key attribute of an unbound, nomadic, and free life.

We see, there is an evident interplay between distinct interpretations of the “Gypsy” motif and game mechanics on multiple levels, including game setup, experience of virtual environment, and the accessibility of the game world. *Ravenloft*, being revised and republished to this day,⁴⁶⁰ served as a catalyst for the recurrent portrayal of “Gypsy” characters in the medieval fantasy of role-playing games, retaining significance as – often similar – integral components of game mechanics. Digital role-playing games emerged shortly after, sharing a common game concept.⁴⁶¹ Unlike their social non-digital counterparts, these digital games were designed for solitary players (except for MUDs⁴⁶²), with the computer replacing the traditional game master. Played in front of a monitor, these games

⁴⁵⁷ Hickman, and Hickman, *Ravenloft*, 6.

⁴⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁹ See *ibid.*

⁴⁶⁰ The fifth edition was published in 2021. See F Wesley Schneider et al, *Van Richten’s Guide to Ravenloft* (Renton: Wizards of the Coast, 2021). Starting with the second edition, “Gypsies” were also referred to as the fictional people of the *Vistani*. Since the third edition, the term “Gypsies” has been avoided. However, the characteristics and visual language still clearly reference the “Gypsy” motif.

⁴⁶¹ See Andrew Williams, *History of Digital Games: Developments in Art, Design, and Interaction* (London: Routledge, 2017), chap. 6, sec. “Early Computer Role-Playing Games,” Kindle.

⁴⁶² MUD = Multi-User Dungeon: Already before the internet, there were digital role-playing games that could be played with multiple players, in local networks. In contrast to the online role-playing games since the turn of the millennium, MUDs were not a mass phenomenon.

generated action through computer algorithms, often accompanied by audio-visual elements. Rooted in the tradition of pen & paper role-playing games, particularly *Dungeons & Dragons*, and drawing inspiration from Tolkienesque medieval-supernatural world-building,⁴⁶³ the American-British series *Ultima* (1981–2013) contributed to the lasting success of the international video game industry.⁴⁶⁴ *Ultima IV: Quest for the Avatar* (1985) introduced “Gypsies” to digital role-playing games, albeit without any vampiric elements.⁴⁶⁵

3. Transitioning the “Gypsy” to Digital Role-Playing Games

In the following pages, it will become evident that the video game series *Ultima* has adapted the utilization of the “Gypsy” motif in the mechanics of *Ravenloft* to the realm of digital games.⁴⁶⁶ We may consider especially *Ultima IV: Quest for the Avatar* (1985) that reflects the impact of pen & paper games on the continuous appearance of the “Gypsy” motif. Here, players explore a virtual world at their own pace. Like in *Ravenloft*, the players may encounter diverse “Gypsy” characters who appear as scammers, criminals, showmen, “Gypsy” kings or dancers in *Ultima IV*. Despite the freedom of players to explore the virtual world, the overarching objective remains the completion of the primary quest to successfully conclude the game. There is an inclusion and reinterpretation of “Gypsy” cartomancy mechanics inspired by *Ravenloft*, distinguishing *Ultima IV: Quest for the Avatar*.

Like *Ravenloft*, the “Gypsy” cartomancy element is represented in a mandatory sequence at the beginning of the game. The protagonist, being the player character, begins their journey at a fair. The screen displays still images accompanied by text, including dialogue, without any background music. The sole interactive

⁴⁶³ See Gundolf S Freyermuth, *Games, Game Design, Game Studies: Eine Einführung* (Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag, 2015), 73–76; and see Matt Barton, *Dungeons and Desktops: The History of Role-Playing Games* (Wellesley: A K Peters, 2008), 17–24.

⁴⁶⁴ See Barton, *Dungeons and Desktops*, 63–70, 114–122, 173–181, 400–403.

⁴⁶⁵ See Origin Systems, *Ultima IV: Quest of the Avatar*, Amiga, Apple II, Atari 8-bit, Atari ST, Commodore 64, MS-DOS, FM Towns, FM-7, MSX2, Master System, NES, PC-88, PC-98, X1, X68000 (Austin: Origin Systems, 1985).

⁴⁶⁶ However, the games of the *Ultima* series are not the first that introduced the “Gypsy” motif to this digital medium. An earlier example is the arcade game *Gypsy Juggler* (1978) by Meadows Games. For an analysis of this case study, see Johannes Valentin Korff, “‘Zigeuner’-Motivik im Digital Spiel: Zur Alteritätskonstruktion in Geschichte und Geschichtskultur des Videospiele” (Master Thesis, Ruprecht-Karls-Universität Heidelberg, 2020).

option is to press a key to proceed to the next scene. The player character, entranced by a distant melody as per the text, navigates through the fair and arrives at a “gypsy wagon”. From within, a woman calls him [sic], declaring, “You may approach, o seeker”. Entering the wagon, the player character encounters an “old gypsy” who claims to have been expecting him. The “Gypsy” proceeds to predict the player’s future by drawing two cards resembling tarot cards from a deck. These cards prompt the player to confront an ethical dilemma. For instance, the “Gypsy” draws the cards labelled with the words “honor” and “spirituality”. Then she asks the player: “In the youth thou pledged to marry thy sweetheart. Now thou art on a sacred quest in distant lands. Thy sweetheart asks thee to keep thy vow. Dost thou A) Honor [sic] thy pledge to wed, or B) follow thy Spiritual [sic] crusade?” The player must choose between honouring the pledge or following the spiritual crusade. The chosen card remains, while the other is exchanged with a new one from the deck, a process that repeats six times, as there are eight cards in total. Initially, the consequences remain initially unclear. This “Gypsy” fortune-telling encounter recurs in the *Ultima* series, maintaining a consistent structure despite narrative variations. The “Gypsy” fortune telling is implemented with a distinct interpretation on two levels, as will be discussed here: Game mechanics and the setting of medieval fantasy.

On the first level, the game mechanical significance, the consequence of the “Gypsy” cartomancy and the player’s choices, becomes evident in subsequent gameplay. Following the initial sequence, the player character enters an expansive and accessible fictional world known as *Britannia*. The quest of the avatar involves embodying eight virtues depicted on the cards. The player character now possesses eight numerical values, each representing one of the virtues. The virtue represented by the remaining card from the previous fortune-telling session holds the highest numerical value. Armed with a sword and shield, the player character gains the freedom to explore the virtual empire, visit cities, delve into dungeons, engage in trade, combat enemies, and undertake diverse activities. Interactions like cheating on a blind merchant, negatively affect values such as “honesty”. We see, the role of the “Gypsy” fortune teller extends beyond mere storytelling, serving as a pivotal figure that shapes numerical attributes of the player character, crucial to completing the game. This role of the “Gypsy” fortune

teller aligns with a key aspect of role-playing games: character creation. Unlike the fortune-telling scenario in *Ravenloft*, the fortune teller theme in the *Ultima* series focuses on character development rather than directing the narrative. Still, both game franchises share game mechanical use of the “Gypsy” fortune teller. In the *Ultima* games, the fortune teller’s inquiries do not have a definitive right or wrong answer; instead, they have an impact on the qualities of the protagonist at the game’s outset. Traditionally, character creation in role-playing games involves allocating attributes like agility, intelligence, and strength, all crucial for gameplay. However, in the case of *Ultima*, these attributes are substituted with values like honour and spirituality, which are significant in advancing through the games’ quests. This departure from the standard character process does not just introduce new values; it transforms character creation into an indirect, abstract procedure determined by the player’s responses to the fortune teller’s questions. Consequently, the player relinquishes direct control over the character’s traits, relying on their interaction with the fortune teller to shape their virtual persona. This shift towards indirect character creation necessitates a mediator, and the fortune-telling “Gypsy” fulfils this role by making the revised creation process tangible and observable within the game world. The motif of fortune-telling imbues the player’s virtual fate with an aura of the mystical, obscuring the conventional character creation process and introducing an unpredictable aspect rooted in the player’s ethical choices. Ultimately, incorporating the fortune-telling mechanics enhances player immersion by infusing the character creation process with intrigue and uncertainty.⁴⁶⁷

On the second level, this game mechanical implementation is enabled by transporting the “Gypsy” fortune-teller to a medieval fantasy, for which the *Ultima* series utilizes a distinct facet of the motif, departing from *Ravenloft*’s mixing-in of elements from gothic fiction. This interpretation expresses through both textual and visual elements: the “Gypsy” fortune teller is equated with the medieval archetype of ‘the witch’, while her spoken language mimics Old English. The latter aspect is self-evident and requires no further elucidation. However, the former point merits to be explored. The allure of the fair’s melody captivates the player

⁴⁶⁷ Also see Johannes Valentin Korff, “‘Zigeuner’-Motivik im digitalen Spiel: Zur Alteritätskonstruktion in Geschichte und Geschichtskultur des Videospiele,” Master Thesis, Ruprecht-Karls-Universität Heidelberg, 2020.

character, guiding them to the “gypsy wagon”. This scene implies a magical prowess possessed by the “Gypsy” that transcends mere fortune-telling and aligns more closely with the witch motif. This visual intertwining with the witch archetype becomes more pronounced in later games of the *Ultima* series, such as *Ultima VI: The False Prophet* (1990), where the “Gypsy” fortune teller assumes the role of a potion brewer – a striking resemblance of the herb witch motif. While just recently used in medieval fantasy, the linkage between the “Gypsy” and the witch motif are not new to literary history. According to Brittnacher, “Particularly old Gypsy women”⁴⁶⁸ in literature “in modern times have taken on the vacant role of the witch”⁴⁶⁹. This comparison is also noted by literary scholar Wilhelm Solms and historian Frank Reuter, who highlight major similarities in the imagery of “Gypsies” and witches.⁴⁷⁰ The “Gypsy” motif’s resemblance to the witch, a prevalent medieval archetype, is integral to authenticating the “Gypsy” character within this medieval fantasy. Beyond identifying the “Gypsy” fortune teller as a witch and the use of textual language, there are no indicators in this scene that facilitate epochal classification. It was not until the 19th century that “Gypsy wagons” and “Gypsy cartomancy” emerged as *topoi* in arts and literature, depicting not a specific era but rather the presence of the “Gypsy” herself.⁴⁷¹ The proximity of this motif to medieval connotations such as the witch underscores the rich potential of the “Gypsy” motif in challenging conventional depictions of historical periods, accommodating historicizing fantasy narratives.⁴⁷² With the enduring tradition of the “Gypsy” motif spanning from the Middle Ages to contemporary times, it lends itself easily to authentication across diverse historical settings.⁴⁷³

⁴⁶⁸ Ger.: “Vor allem alte Zigeunerinnen”. Hans R Brittnacher, *Leben auf der Grenze: Klischee und Faszination des Zigeunerbildes in Literatur und Kunst* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2012), 233.

⁴⁶⁹ Ger.: “in der Moderne die vakant gewordene Rolle der Hexe übernommen”. Ibid.

⁴⁷⁰ See Wilhelm Solms, *Zigeunerbilder: Ein dunkles Kapitel der deutschen Literaturgeschichte; Von der Frühen Neuzeit bis zur Romantik* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2008), 215–230; and see Wilhelm Solms, “Zwei Zigeuner, schwarz und gräulich”: *Zigeunerbilder deutscher Dichter* (Frankfurt a. M.: Peter Lang, 2018), 51–52; and see Frank Reuter, *Der Bann des Fremden: Die fotografische Konstruktion des “Zigeuners”* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2014), 104–105.

⁴⁷¹ See Bogdal, *Europa erfindet die Zigeuner*, 81.

⁴⁷² Most people who were labelled as “witches” were persecuted and burned during the Early Modern Period, not during the Middle Ages. However, in public perception (see Medieval Fantasy, medieval connotations of European fairy tales, etc.), the witch motif is mainly associated with a medieval cipher.

⁴⁷³ Also see Korff, “‘Zigeuner’-Motivik”.

The “Gypsy” fortune teller as a game mechanical element in medieval fantasy, manifest in *Ravenloft* and the *Ultima* series, has become a widespread feature in subsequent role-playing games. In *King’s Quest V: Absence Makes the Heart Go Yonder!* (1990), the character of the fortune teller, depicted as a “Gypsy”, serves as a pivotal figure in the game’s story. Players are required to collect money and offer it to the fortune teller in exchange for a prophecy that guide their progression within the game.⁴⁷⁴ Similarly, in *Rune Factory 2: A Fantasy Harvest Moon* (2008), the “Gypsy” fortune teller named *Alicia* informs players for money on character locations or weather forecasts within the virtual world.⁴⁷⁵ Furthermore, in *Divinity 2: Ego Draconis* (2009), the “Gypsy” fortune teller known as *Sosostra* offers hints regarding hidden treasures in exchange for payment.⁴⁷⁶ Within these gaming contexts, the fortune teller serves as a facilitator of game mechanics or as a service provider. Remarkably, the prophecies delivered by the “Gypsy” fortune teller typically do not result in negative consequences for the player. Instead, they often contribute to the player character’s enhancement or provide valuable information, reflecting two distinct tendencies: first, the “Gypsy” fortune teller aligns with the modern concept of an “esoteric life counsellor”; second, her character is intertwined with the narrative conventions of medieval fantasy, drawing inspiration from historical heroic epics and thereby lending credibility to the character within a historical framework. In this new constellation, as an important mediator or counsellor of the hero in the heroic epic, and as a European post-ancient motif,

⁴⁷⁴ Sierra On-Line, *King’s Quest V: Absence Makes the Heart Go Yonder!* MS-DOS, Windows, NES, classic Mac OS, Amiga, FM Towns, Tandy Memorex VIS, NEC PS-9801 (Los Angeles: Sierra On-Line, Tokyo: Konami, 1990).

⁴⁷⁵ Neverland, *Rune Factory 2: A Fantasy Harvest Moon*, Nintendo DS (Tokyo: Marvelous Entertainment, Burlingame: Natsume, Hitchin: Rising Star Games, Torrance: Xseed Games, 2008).

⁴⁷⁶ Larian Studios, *Divinity 2: Ego Draconis*, Windows, Xbox 360 (Hamburg: dtp entertainment, 2009–10). More examples: In *RuneScape* (2001), the “Gypsy” *Aris* is acting as a merchant, where magical objects and abilities can be acquired in exchange for money. See Jagex, *RuneScape*, Windows, macOS, Linux (Cambridge: Jagex, 2001). In *Divinity: Original Sin* (2014), the fortune telling “Gypsy”, reminiscent to *Divinity: Ego Draconis* (2009), reveals the location of hidden treasures in exchange for money. See Larian Studios, *Divinity: Original Sin*, Windows (Ghent: Larian Studios, 2014). The fortune telling “Gypsy” from *Quest for Glory: Shadows of Darkness* (1993) reveals important information for the game progression to the player, if they saves the life of her son. See Sierra On-Line, *Quest for Glory: Shadows of Darkness*, MS-DOS, Windows (Los Angeles: Sierra On-Line, 1993).

she associates with the ancient motif of the Pythia, the Oracle of Delphi who offered manticism as a service, taking on a significant role in the early heroic epics.⁴⁷⁷

This unconventional portrayal of the “Gypsy” fortune teller in an indifferent or a positive light stands in contrast to the negative depictions throughout literary history. Characterized as deceitful or ominous, old “Gypsies” have often been cast in a bad light, as noted by Brittnacher.⁴⁷⁸ Frequently, they are depicted as self-serving figures and associated with apocalypse. Their predictions, unless revealed as outright scams, tend to foretell doom and tragedy.⁴⁷⁹ Positive depictions of these characters are rare,⁴⁸⁰ although even in those examples, ambiguity remains prevalent, as noted by Solms.⁴⁸¹ Sometimes, the fortune teller aids the protagonist in averting a foreseen fate, yet questions linger regarding her self-serving motives. Throughout, the “Gypsy” figure serves as a symbol of the unfamiliar and enigma within literary narratives. However, in role-playing games, she often assumes the role of a neutral mediator or a useful businesswoman, as we have seen. While this portrayal may not subscribe to either anti- or philogypsyist stereotypes, it nonetheless perpetuates the mystique and exoticism associated with the “Gypsy” archetype, thereby setting the character apart from the norms of society.⁴⁸²

This emergence of “Gypsy” characters as a convention in role-playing of medieval fantasy is not confined to regional discourses. Having originally appeared in Western role-playing games, the motif of the “Gypsy” has transcended geographical boundaries, appearing in the European medieval settings of East Asian video games since the late 1990s. Notable instances include its incorporation into acclaimed titles such as *The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time* (1998), and the

⁴⁷⁷ Also see Korff, “Zigeuner’-Motivik”.

⁴⁷⁸ See Brittnacher, *Leben auf der Grenze*, 248. Also consider the gender aspect of “Gypsy” fortune tellers regularly being represented by old women. For example, see *ibid.*, 93–124; and see Bogdal, *Europa erfindet die Zigeuner*, 71–86.

⁴⁷⁹ See *ibid.*, 266.

⁴⁸⁰ See *ibid.*, 233–238.

⁴⁸¹ See Solms, *Zigeunerbilder*, 215–230.

⁴⁸² Also see Korff, “Zigeuner’-Motivik”.

pioneering Massively Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Game (MMORPG) *Ragnarök Online* (2002). Here, the “Gypsy” motif has become a relevant theme in character designs.⁴⁸³ The portrayal of the “Gypsy” as fortune tellers or *femme fatales* has gained traction worldwide within role-playing games. While some iterations have relegated “Gypsy” motifs to superficial and sensational elements within historicizing fantasy settings, others have elevated it to iconic status within the genre, for instance, Germany’s successful tabletop role-playing game *The Dark Eye / Das Schwarze Auge*. Its module *Das Königreich Almada* (Eng.: *Kingdom of Almada*, 2000), set in a medieval fantasy resembling Spain, introduces “Gypsy” characters and further cemented its presence. Referred to as *Zahori* in the game, these characters have become recurring figures in the franchise, including English-translated modules.⁴⁸⁴ Also in digital games, such as the once immensely popular *World of Warcraft* (2004), the “Gypsy” motif persists through items like the *Gypsy Blade*, *Gypsy Tunic*, and *Gypsy Trousers*.⁴⁸⁵ Similarly, in the Korean MMORPG *Archeage* (2013), players can embody customizable “Gypsy” characters, imbued with magical, spiritual, and musical abilities, though this choice typically does not alter appearance or behaviour.⁴⁸⁶ We see, unlike the previously discussed discourses in comics, this convention in role-playing games is not confined to national discourses but internationalized in a medial discourse.⁴⁸⁷

We observe prominent examples where the “Gypsy” motif has evolved into a recurring theme within the medieval fantasy of role-playing games, gaining unique interpretations as part of game mechanics. This phenomenon can be traced back to the blending of medieval fantasy with gothic fiction in *Ravenloft* (1983), which inspired the *Ultima* series starting from 1985. Notably, the role of the “Gypsy”

⁴⁸³ See Johannes Valentin Korff, “Manga – Anime – Videospiel: Erscheinungsformen der „Zigeuner“-Motivik im ostasiatischen Videospiel und Anime-Stil,” in *Visuelle Dimensionen des Antiziganismus*, ed. Frank Reuter, Daniela Gress, and Radmila Mladenova (Heidelberg: Heidelberg University Publishing, 2021); and see Johannes Valentin Korff, “Videospiele aus Ostasien: Anti- und Philoziganismus aus globaler Perspektive,” in *Bilder – Macht – Antiziganismus* (Cologne: Rom e. V., 2023), 24–25; and see Korff: “Zigeuner’-Motivik”.

⁴⁸⁴ See Lena Falkenhagen, and Niklas Reinke, *Das Königreich Almada* (Erkrath: FanPro, 2000).

⁴⁸⁵ See Blizzard Entertainment, *World of Warcraft*, Windows, Mac OS X (Irvine: Blizzard Entertainment, 2004/5).

⁴⁸⁶ See XLGames, *ArcheAge*, Windows (Hamburg: Gamigo, 2013/14).

⁴⁸⁷ Also see Korff, “Zigeuner’-Motivik”.

fortune teller as a facilitator of game mechanics and the portrayal of “Gypsy” characters as sensational elements within the medieval setting have become prevalent. However, since the 1980s role-playing games have progressed rapidly, majorly based on technology and design evolution, leading to new ways this convention of “Gypsy” cartomancy and nomads resurfaced in games like the *Fable* series (2004–2018). These ways will be explored in the next section.

4. Evolving Game Mechanics & the Utilization of the “Gypsy” Motif

In the following pages, I contend that the *Fable* series reflects a continuous development in role-playing games to utilize the “Gypsy” motif for shaping the game mechanics, specifically “Gypsy” cartomancy, which appears again as a major mediator of game mechanics. However, as will be shown, players have a lot more freedom to customize the “Gypsy” motif this time, due to the ability to alter their characters and interact with “Gypsy” characters in the game world.

The *Fable* series is a digital role-playing game series set in a world named *Albion*, a land rich with fantasy elements inspired once again by medieval Britain (“Albion” being one of its names during antiquity). Within this world, players assume the role of the protagonist, a hero tasked with confronting an evil criminal or monarch. In *Fable II*, the protagonist survives an attempt on their life by a mighty lord, losing their sibling in the process. Raised by “Gypsies” who find and take the child with them, the protagonist’s journey intertwines with *Theresa*, a fortune teller. *Theresa* aligns herself with the hero who embarks on a quest for vengeance against the lord for his murder against the sibling. *Theresa* herself wishes to strip the lord off his power.⁴⁸⁸ The development studio behind *Fable III* (2011) avoided the term “Gypsy”, opting instead to introduce the nomadic *Dwellers*. These *Dwellers* represent a hybrid fantasy of “Gypsy” archetypes and Cossacks-inspired appearances within the game’s fantasy setting. However, in *Fable: The Journey* (2012), the “Gypsy” fortune teller *Theresa* once again assumes a central role. Throughout the game, the player character embarks on a journey on a “Gypsy” wagon, traversing a fantastic world, engaging in combat, and solving puzzles.

⁴⁸⁸ See Lionhead Studios, *Fable II*, Xbox 360 (Redmond: Microsoft Game Studios, 2008).

The *Fable* series continues a distinct interpretation of “Gypsy” fortune tellers in role-playing games. First, as we have seen before, the “Gypsy” motif in role-playing games since *Ultima IV* is frequently not characterized as inherently negative but as pragmatic and mostly neutral or benevolent. This also applies to the *Fable* series. Reminiscent of Karl May’s *Scepter und Hammer* (1879/80), *Theresa* assumes the role of a “Gypsy” fortune teller who wields significant influence over the fate of the world. According to Brittnacher:

*“In literature and music, Gypsies intervene with prophecies and child-theft in the succession regulation of European dynasties and, thus, allow the usual constructions [...] of the, eventually by coincidence, identified heir, who grows up under external care, chasing away the usurpers from the throne and establishing a just rule.”*⁴⁸⁹

Mirroring the theme of intervention in destiny, *Theresa* orchestrates the downfall of a lord, ultimately facilitating the protagonist’s ascent to power. Interestingly, while May’s tale involves a protagonist stolen by “Gypsies”, the player character in *Fable II* is not abducted but rather rescued and adopted by the “Gypsies”, creating a philo- rather than antigypsyist subtext. Second, *Theresa*’s “Gypsy” cartomancy serves as a mediator of the game mechanics, in a similar manner as in the *Ultima* series. The cartomancy appears in the beginning of the game, as players are prompted to choose between two cards representing a boy and a girl, thereby defining the gender of the player character. But the role of cartomancy becomes more pronounced towards the end of the game. In the narrative, the evil lord orders the construction of a tower possessing immense magical powers, utilizing an army of forced labourers who endure horrendous working conditions, resulting in many fatalities. Similarly, the remaining family of the protagonist can meet tragic ends. As the game concludes, *Theresa* presents the player with a decision: should they prioritize the resurrection of the victims of forced labour, bring back their deceased family, or opt for personal enrichment. Thus, akin to the *Ultima* series, “Gypsy” cartomancy is used to confront players with a dilemma.

⁴⁸⁹ Ger.: “Mit Prophezeiungen und Kinderdiebstahl mischen sich Zigeuner in Literatur und Musik in die Erbfolgeregelung europäischer Fürstenhäuser und erlauben damit jene [...] geläufigen Konstruktionen des unter fremder Obhut aufgewachsenen und schließlich zufällig identifizierten Thronfolgers, der die Usurpatoren wieder vom Thron verjagt und eine gerechte Herrschaft etabliert”. See Brittnacher, *Leben auf der Grenze*, 270.

They must weigh the selfish pursuit of wealth against the selfless act of saving strangers and the middle ground of resurrecting select individuals, particularly cherished loved ones. This decision stands as the paramount dilemma within the game's ending. However, this decision is not the sole dilemma in the game, as the *Fable* series adopts comparable mechanics to the virtue system found in *Ultima*, albeit in a more simplified manner. Players are empowered to determine their protagonist's moral stance, choosing between traits of benevolence, malevolence, or neutrality. This moral alignment evolves based on the player's actions throughout the game, where choices are classified as either "good" or "evil". Evidently, the *Fable* series of games is using mechanics from the influential *Ultima* series.

However, in contrast to the *Ultima* series, *Fable*'s virtue system mechanics carry an additional, racializing subtext associated with the player's ethical behaviour. The player's ethical decisions directly impact the looks of the character noticeably: In *Fable II* and *Fable III*, the player character's skin becomes lighter as they are perceived as more "good" rather than "evil". In *Fable II*, their hair even shifts to blond, and their eyes to blue. That is because, according to the *Fable II* manual, you may "perform noble deeds and you'll be a dashing figure"⁴⁹⁰ and "[p]urity makes Heroes more attractive"⁴⁹¹. Similarly, the *Fable III* manual states that through good deeds your physical appearance "will become a beacon of goodness and light"⁴⁹². Consequently, the *Fable* series associates positive attributes with a Nordic phenotype, suggesting a subtle form of racist bias that is manifest throughout the Western history of identifying black skin with the devil, demonic, and sin.⁴⁹³

This racialization is promoted by two key aspects. First, it is enabled by the player character embodying the trope of the "Scheinzigeunerin"⁴⁹⁴ (Eng.: "Fake Gypsy"),

⁴⁹⁰ *Fable II* (Redmond: Microsoft Game Studios, 2009), 2, manual for the digital game *Fable II* by Lionhead Studios.

⁴⁹¹ Ibid.

⁴⁹² *The Book of Heroes* (Redmond: Microsoft Game Studios, 2010), 3, manual for the digital game *Fable III* by Lionhead Studios.

⁴⁹³ For example, see Terri E Givens, *The Roots of Racism: The Politics of White Supremacy in the US and Europe* (Bristol: Bristol University Press, 2022), 36; and see Maaïke van der Lugt, "Race and Science," in *A Cultural History of Race in the Middle Ages*, ed. Thomas Hahn (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2022), 95.

⁴⁹⁴ Brittnacher, *Leben auf der Grenze*, 32–35.

as seen in the novella *La Gitanilla* (1613) by Miguel de Cervantes, where the non-“Gypsy” girl *Preciosa* is stolen and raised by “Gypsies”, becoming a “Scheinzigeunerin”. This motivic setup offers considerable flexibility to the player in terms of customization, including the racializing effects of ethical decisions. That means, as the protagonist is not born as a “Gypsy”, the design becomes more flexible. Second, a significant progression in computer graphics must be taken into account. Although the first 3D games emerged in the 1990s, it was not until the 2000s that 3D visualization became the standard in gaming. This era witnessed remarkable advancement in gaming technology, with the ability to dynamically alter the appearance of the three-dimensional player character in the *Fable* series based on the player’s decisions – in addition to the many other customizable elements such as clothes, hair styles, and sizes. Such details in graphic design would have been inconceivable in the gaming landscape of the 1980s and 90s. Consequently, the integration of *Ultima* mechanics into the graphical framework of the *Fable* series represents a progression driven by technological advancements.

The latter aspect, the technological advancement, has not only made video games more visually appealing but also more interactive. This means that in games featuring the motif, players can now engage with the virtual world in more complex ways. This level of interaction goes beyond what was possible in older games like *Ravenloft* and *Ultima*, more extensively contextualizing the “Gypsy” motif within the player-led narrative as specific to the medium of games. Remarkably, the player character’s background in the *Fable* games does not inherently affect the behaviour of non-player characters (characters controlled by the computer) towards them. Except for evil minions and bandits, all characters in the game are initially neutral towards the player character. The only indicator of the player character’s “Gypsy” legacy is their magical abilities, which they acquired from the “Gypsy” upbringing. This unbiased embedding of the player character into their surroundings is also evident in their optional interactions with “Gypsy” characters. Players may engage with other “Gypsy” characters in the camp the same way as with any non-“Gypsies” from a village. Within the game, players can choose to form romantic relationships, establish virtual friendships or rivalries, and, if they choose, engage in acts of violence. The main character may have a

family with a “Gypsy” (or non-“Gypsy”) character and reside with it in a caravan. Conversely, players can opt to eradicate all “Gypsies” in the virtual world with genocidal intent. On the one hand, traditional role-playing games like the *Dungeons & Dragons* module *Ravenloft* and the *Ultima* series typically prescribe encounters with characters without suggesting varied interaction options. On the other hand, the *Fable* series actively encourages players to engage with any character in both amicable and antagonistic ways. The expanded social dynamics present in 21st-century role-playing games like the *Fable* series highlight the medium’s capacity to actualize players’ desires and concepts, affirming its role as a platform for player-driven narratives and experiences. These complex mechanics are characteristic of what are commonly referred to as “sandbox” games, such as *Grand Theft Auto* (since 1997), *Fable* (since 2004), and *Assassin’s Creed* (since 2007). However, there is a difference between what is possible within the game world and what is actively encouraged by its design. While actions like harming “Gypsies” or other civilians in the game is possible, only fostering positive relationships with characters does offer benefits to the player. Computer-generated characters that exhibit a favourable disposition toward the player often provide valuable items as “gifts” or are integral to completing quests. Certainly, players can choose to act in ways that contradict the intended design of the game. This phenomenon, termed “ludonarrative dissonance”⁴⁹⁵ by game designer Clint Hocking, refers to the disconnect between gameplay and auctorial intention. But the concept underscores games as platforms for expression of existing consumer attitudes rather than demonstrating how they are shaping them.

⁴⁹⁵ Clint Hocking, “Ludonarrative Dissonance in Bioshock: The problem of what the game is about,” *Click Nothing*, 7 October 2007, https://clicknothing.typepad.com/click_nothing/2007/10/ludonarrative-d.html.

5. Outlook

Considering these examples, I conclude that the game mechanics and world-building strategies in role-playing games create unique interpretations and a specific discourse on “Gypsy” notion that is only found in the medium of games. We have seen different examples of how this can be observed. The most obvious observation is that “Gypsy” characters have become associated with the historical fantasies of video games, rather than of literature. Furthermore, the game mechanics and world-building strategies specific to this medium shape the motif and the motif shapes them, which can be summarized in three points: First, the non-digital game *Ravenloft* from 1983, exemplifies, as we have seen, how world-building strategies of games provide unique ways in manifesting the motif. Here, the open world subtly pushes players to predominantly experience specific environments within the game world, particularly forests, where they will randomly encounter “Gypsy” characters by chance, evoking the motif. Second, many role-playing games have given new meanings to the motif based on game mechanics. For instance, the motif of the “Gypsy” fortune-teller has evolved in this medium as a mediator of game mechanics and a useful service provider, moving away from its traditional association with tragedy and apocalypse. Lastly, the *Fable* series demonstrates how the motif is expressed in old and new forms, evolving with technological and design advancement and enhanced complexity in graphics and player interaction.

As can be seen, there are discourses and discourse evolutions associated with the specific medium of games. While the evolution of the motif in role-playing games appears to be benevolent in many cases, the stigma has manifested itself as a thrilling element in the mechanics and world-building of these games. It always represents the mystical and the strange, effectively distinguishing the characters from normative behaviour.

The “Gypsy” motif in medieval fantasy games has reached little awareness yet, with few exceptions: The previously discussed *Ravenloft*, while still reproducing the “Gypsy” motif, avoids the term “Gypsy” since the third edition from 2001. Furthermore, the publishing house Wizards of the Coast banned the playing card “Pradesh Gypsies” in their popular trading-card game *Magic: The Gathering* in 2020.

It is worth considering that there are many games with role-playing elements that are not set in fantasy or medieval worlds but use the “Gypsy” motif in the context of game mechanics. For example, *Assassin’s Creed: Revelations* from 2011, where the player takes on the role of an Italian assassin in Constantinople in the beginning of the 16th century. Here, all prostitutes in the game are referred to as Roma. They can be recruited by the player character, the assassin, to distract targets such as guards at a gate to enable the player character to reach parts of this virtual world that are otherwise not accessible. This portrayal could be seen in relation to “Gypsy” characters in literature and opera, such as *Carmen*, who embodied themes of death and lust, which are reinforced of the mechanisms of this virtual world. In the game, the label of Roma serves as a synonym for prostitutes, to indicate players how these characters can be utilized in their favour.

Finally, it can be concluded that the “Gypsy” motif permeates various genres of both digital and non-digital games. But beyond role-playing games and games with role-playing elements, its relevance often remains superficial, primarily serving cosmetic purposes rather than shaping game mechanics. For instance, consider the board game *Gypsy King* (2007) designed by Corné van Moorsel and “Czarnè”, where players strategically place caravan settlements on the game board to compete for the largest contiguous settlement. Despite its thematic focus on nomadism, the mechanics themselves do not really incorporate in-depth elements of this motif, but merely offering an alternative theme to traditional urban building games. Similarly, the card game *Madeline and the Gypsies* (1999), reminiscent of *Memory* and based on Ludwig Bemelmans’ 1959 children’s book, features “Gypsy” characters such as showmen and fortune tellers on its cards. However, these characters serve solely for visual appeal, lacking any influence on gameplay mechanics. Another example can be found in *First Journey (Europe)* (2017), a variant within the *Ticket to Ride* series by Alan R Moon, which portrays a “Gypsy” character in its cover. While the game revolves around the theme of train journeys, the inclusion of this sensationalist motif merely underscores the journey theme without integrating it into the mechanics of gameplay. In short, the mechanical significance of the “Gypsy” motif in games is primarily showcased in the context of role-playing games.

While this chapter explored the global discourse surrounding the “Gypsy” notion in (role-playing) games, the next chapter will examine another media-specific discourse in animated films. This medium is shaped by various influences, including musical cartoon conventions and the unique history of localization, among other factors. With this, the two key pillars of the argument for media-specific discourses on the “Gypsy” notion will be completed.

Chapter Six

Animated Films – Music & Philogypsyism



In this chapter, I elaborate on the specific discourse on the “Gypsy” motif in the medium of animated films. Animated films have their own distinct discourses that set them apart. It will be shown how specific conventions of the medium and its distinct form of globalization have shaped the “Gypsy” motif. For this purpose, I initially give three examples from the American market: genre conventions, trends of localization, and character design conventions. The United States were the cradle of globally successful animated films and, therefore, represent a strong interface between international media discourse and national discourse. To this day, Francophone animated films have not reached a global reception, except for adaptations of the comic series *Les Aventures de Astérix* or *Les Aventures de Tintin*. Thus, this chapter focusses on Japanese and particularly American animated films. I will consider two examples of American and Japanese animation in detail: *The Hunchback of Notre-Dame* (1996) by the Walt Disney Company and *Fullmetal Alchemist the Movie: Conqueror of Shamballa* (2005) by Bones Inc. These two examples showcase an international media discourse by sharing elements of musical cartoon, include themes of Romani emancipation, and are yet contextualized by different national discourses.

1. Genre Conventions: Musical Cartoons & Narratives of Childrens' Literature

Animation, like other forms of media, has always borrowed narratives and techniques from different media, influencing the “Gypsy” motif. But it is not mere comic strips brought to life. When we are focusing on animation in its current form, the earliest animated films date back to the 1890s when they were automatically moving pictures on celluloid film. However, it was not until the 1920s that animation became widely popular. During this decade, the American animation industry was just starting to take off, with Warner Bros. and the Walt Disney Company founded in 1923.⁴⁹⁶ Live-action films had a big influence in this, especially in a series called *Out of the Inkwell* (1918–29) by Max and Dave Fleischer. They later became famous for creating characters like *Betty Boop* (1930–39) and *Popeye* (1933–42). *Out of the Inkwell* is a blend of animation and live-action, featuring the adventures of *Koko* (figs. 35), a clown drawn on paper who comes to life. This character frequently leaves his paper world to interact with his human creator in the studio. In one of their films from 1923, called *Fortune Teller*, a “Gypsy” character makes an appearance (figs. 36).⁴⁹⁷ In the live-action part of the film, a fortune teller who is portrayed as a “Gypsy” offers her mystical services. *Koko* and his creator make fun of the “Gypsy”, who then curses them for revenge. This curse brings objects in the studio to life, and they start chasing *Koko*. This interplay of animation and live-action, with the clown from the paper world and the fantastical “Gypsy” fortune teller from the real world complementing each other, creates a carnival-like sensation.

⁴⁹⁶ See Giannalberto Bendazzi, *Foundations: The Golden Age*, London: Routledge, 2015, 41.

⁴⁹⁷ Dave Fleischer, writer, “Fortune Teller,” *Out of the Inkwell*, dir. Max Fleischer, and Dave Fleischer (New York: Inkwell Studios, 1923).



Fig. 35 (left): An animated sequence in *Fortune Teller* (1923), showing Koko the Clown.

Fig. 36 (right): A life-action sequence in *Fortune Teller* (1923), showing a “Gypsy” palm reading for Koko’s creator.

However, the example of *Out of the Inkwell* is rare, and there are two much more lasting instances where animated films blended narratives and techniques from different media. These instances shaped American animation’s discourse on the “Gypsy” motif with a lasting impact: musical cartoon, and the use of stories from children’s literature.

First, the tradition of musical cartoon that began during a time when live music was common in cinematic performances. Early examples include the previously mentioned *Fortune Teller* (1923) as well as *Through Thick and Thin* (1926) by Fables Studios, which features a “Gypsy” attempting to steal a farmer’s pigs. In these cases, music was used to enhance the film’s ambience rather than accentuating the narrative.⁴⁹⁸

The introduction of sound in films, notably in Warner Bros.’ live-action film *The Jazz Singer* (1927), marked a sonic revolution within the medium.⁴⁹⁹ Music became a significant narrative element of animated cartoons as well, with some resembling what we now call “music videos”. This change had implications for how the “Gypsy” motif was presented.

⁴⁹⁸ Ibid.; and Paul Terry, writer, “Through Thick and Thin,” *Farmer Al Falfa*, dir. Paul Terry (Delaware: Fables Studios, 1926).

⁴⁹⁹ See Bendazzi, *Foundations: The Golden Age*, 97–98; and Samson Raphaelson, and Alfred A. Cohn, writers, *The Jazz Singer*, dir. Alan Crosland (Burbank: Warner Bros. Pictures, 1927).

Multiple examples illustrate this shift: One is *Wake Up the Gypsy in Me* (1933) by Warner Bros. Here, synchronized with a jazz song, a “Gypsy” village scene with song and dance turns into a story where a lustful non-“Gypsy” character tries to kidnap a “Gypsy” girl.⁵⁰⁰ Another example, 20th Century Fox’ *Mighty Mouse in Gypsy Life* (1945), features anthropomorphic mice embodying a group of “Gypsies”, who sing and dance to the music.⁵⁰¹ A sensuous “Gypsy” girl appears, dancing with the tambourine. The song and cheerful atmosphere is disrupted when bats attack. All can escape except for the dancing girl with her tambourine. However, the girl is soon rescued by the hero who is rewarded with a kiss. The first scenes are accompanied by the pop piece *Gypsy life*, which is resonating with popular Broadway tunes. This song has its roots in an earlier animated film, *A Gypsy Fiddler* (1933), that has a resembling narrative structure.⁵⁰² In that cartoon, a group of “Gypsies” sings and dances in a similar manner to the same song. The song ends when the protagonist, a fiddler, gets into trouble with a non-“Gypsy” ruler due to his romance with the ruler’s daughter.

These musical cartoons from Warner Bros. and 20th Century Fox share a similar narrative framework. On the one hand, they start by showcasing an idealized notion of “Gypsy” life with singing and dancing. There is an emphasis on the motif’s sensation of showmanship reminiscent of the vaudeville acts of that era. That is because during the 1930s and 40s, these musical animations moved away from traditional storytelling, focusing more on carnivalesque entertainment.⁵⁰³ On the other hand, we observe narrative implications that inverted conventions of the “Gypsy” motif. For example, in *Wake Up the Gypsy in Me* (1933) and *Mighty Mouse in Gypsy Life* (1945), the joyful sequences are interrupted when non-“Gypsies” kidnap a captivating “Gypsy” girl.⁵⁰⁴ Since the

⁵⁰⁰ Paul Terry, writer, “Wake up the Gypsy in Me,” *Merry Melodies*, dir. Rudolf Ising, episode 55 (Long Island: Terrytoons, Burbank: Warner Bros. Entertainment Inc., 1933).

⁵⁰¹ John Foster, writer, *Mighty Mouse in Gypsy Life*, dir. Connie Rasinski (New Rochelle: Terrytoons, 1945).

⁵⁰² Paul Terry, writer, *A Gypsy Fiddler*, dir. Frank Moser (Long Island: Terrytoons, 1933).

⁵⁰³ Hank Sartin, “From Vaudeville to Hollywood, from Silence to Sound: Warner Bros. Cartoons of the Early Sound Era,” in *Reading the Rabbit: Explorations in Warner Bros. Animation*, ed. Kevin S Sandler (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1998), 70.

⁵⁰⁴ The story of award-winning *Mighty Mouse in Gypsy Life* was reproduced in a later episode of the franchise. See Ted Pedersen, writer, “Gypsy Mice,” *The New Adventures of Mighty Mouse and Heckle & Jeckle*, dir. Alberto De Mello, and Jim Fletcher, episode 3c (Reseda: Filmation Associates, Los Angeles: Viacom Productions, 1979).

“Gypsy” girls are implied as minors, this flips the typical portrayal of “Gypsy” child-theft,⁵⁰⁵ with a “Gypsy” being taken by a non-“Gypsy”. That is noteworthy because, ever since historical works like Miguel de Cervantes’ *La Gitanilla* (1613), “Gypsies” have often been portrayed as child kidnappers. The inversion of this trope alone is not remarkable, being not the first nor the last time in the popular history of literature and arts.⁵⁰⁶ But what makes the inversion significant is its use of the “damsel in distress” trope, which is unusual in “Gypsy” stories. We also see this trope in *A Gypsy Fiddler* (1933), where the girl, although not a “Gypsy”, is in distress. Moreover, the motif’s conventions can be broken by implying a successful romance between a “Gypsy” and a non-“Gypsy” like in *Mighty Mouse in Gypsy Life*. This departure challenges narratives of ethnic disparity between “Gypsies” and non-“Gypsies” which are omnipresent in historical arts and literature, according to literary scholar Lou Charnon-Deutsch.⁵⁰⁷ This trend continues in early animated cartoons like *The Gypsy Fiddler* (1933), where a “Gypsy” fiddler and a non-“Gypsy” princess can have a romantic relationship; and in Paramount’s *Dipsy Gypsy* (1941), where a non-“Gypsy” violinist falls for a “Gypsy” girl.⁵⁰⁸ Therefore, there is early evidence for a recurrent pattern of embedding the motif in a specific narrative framework of prominent American musical cartoons – a genre convention unique to this medium.

Second, regarding narratives of children’s literature, there is a noticeable difference between animation and comics. While comics started diverging from traditional norms of children’s literature in the 1920s,⁵⁰⁹ animation did not. By the 1930s and 40s, “Gypsy” characters began appearing in story-driven animations, not just in the comparably much shorter musical cartoons. For example, in Warner Bros’ *I Wanna Play House* (1936), two bear siblings sneak away from their father

⁵⁰⁵ On the trope of “Gypsy” child theft, see “Chapter One” in this thesis, 23, 30–31.

⁵⁰⁶ One prominent example is George Eliot’s novel *The Spanish Gypsy* (1864), where non-“Gypsies” steal a child from “Gypsies”. George Eliot, *The Spanish Gypsy* (London: Wildside Press, 2008). Also see “Chapter Three” in this thesis, 93–94.

⁵⁰⁷ See Lou Charnon-Deutsch, *The Spanish Gypsy: The History of a European Obsession* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2004), 240.

⁵⁰⁸ *Dipsy Gypsy*, dir. George Pal (Los Angeles: Paramount, Los Angeles: Famous Studios, 1941).

⁵⁰⁹ See “Chapter One” in this thesis, 29–37.

to play hide-and-seek.⁵¹⁰ One of them ends up in an empty “Gypsy” wagon and gets drunk on cider. Meanwhile, in episode 35 of Terrytoons’ *Farmer Al Falfa* (1936), an anthropomorphic puppy is kidnapped by a group of “Gypsies”, echoing themes of child theft common in children’s books.⁵¹¹ Also in Disney’s *Pinocchio* (1940), based on a children’s book, the theme of child-theft by a “Gypsy” can be found, as has been demonstrated previously.⁵¹² Another Disney film, *The Adventures of Ichabod and Mr. Toad* (1949), adapts the children’s book *The Wind in the Willows* (1908) by British author Kenneth Grahame.⁵¹³ Here, *Mr. Toad*, an anthropomorphic toad, travels in a “canary-yellow gypsy cart”, as explained by one of the other characters. In the film, *Mr. Toad* recklessly journeys with his cart through the countryside. He destroys hedges and a wintergarden, crosses private estates, and almost runs over a family of ducks, all while carelessly singing together with his horse. This depiction mirrors the chaos and joviality associated with the “Gypsy” motif. The motif complements *Mr. Toad*’s eccentric character.

We see, the distinct genres of animated films and their relationship to children’s literature, diverging from comics, associated with own discursive conventions of the medium from early on.

⁵¹⁰ Ben Hardaway, writer, “I Wanna Play House,” *Merrie Melodies*, dir. Isadore Freleng, episode 119 (Los Angeles: Leon Schlesinger Productions, 1936).

⁵¹¹ Paul Terry, writer, “Puddy the Pup and the Gypsies,” *Farmer Al Falfa*, dir. Paul Terry, episode 35 (Long Island: Terrytoons, 1936).

⁵¹² Ted Sears et al, writers, *Pinocchio* (Burbank: The Walt Disney Company, 1940); and see “Chapter One” in this thesis, 30–31.

⁵¹³ Erdman Penner et al, writers, *The Adventures of Ichabod and Mr. Toad*, dir. Ben Sharpsteen et al (Burbank: The Walt Disney Company, 1949); and Kenneth Grahame, *The Wind in the Willows* (North Yorkshire: Methuen, 1908).

2. Globalization: Fred Ladd and America's "Gypsies" in Anime

Another aspect of the unique discourse on the "Gypsy" motif in animated films is the matter of globalization. One example is how Japanese animated films, also known as anime, were localized for the American market. "Localization" refers to the process of translating language and content of a media product into another language and cultural context. Japanese comics, or manga, were translated into English rather late, such as the autobiographical work *Hadashi no Gen* (はだしのゲン, 1973–1987) by Keiji Nakazawa. It depicts the nuclear attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.⁵¹⁴ The American translation, titled *Barefoot Gen*, was serialized since 1980 as one of the first manga.⁵¹⁵ In contrast, Japanese animated films had already made their way to the Western world approximately two decades earlier. That underlines a specific globalization of animated films in comparison to comics.

Some of these anime that reached the United States of America early, did present the "Gypsy" motif. In *Chapter Four*, we observed how the renowned Japanese comic artist TEZUKA Osamu implemented the motif in his creations. He utilized it in both his manga and anime produced by his studio. Two notable examples, which we considered, are *Tetsuwan Atom* (鉄腕アトム, *Tetsuwan Atomu*, Eng.: *Iron Arm Atom*) and *Ribbon no Kishi* (リボンの騎士, *Ribon no Kishi*, Eng.: *Knight of the ribbon[s]*) that aired between 1963 and 1968.⁵¹⁶ These anime series were among the earliest to reach Western audiences, known as *Astro Boy* and *Princess Knight*. While these prominent works feature the "Gypsy" motif, they were exceptions, as it was not a common theme in Japanese animation of that time.

Crucially, some well-known anime productions incorporated the "Gypsy" motif only when shown to audiences outside Japan. This adaptation process, known as localization, had a significant impact, leading to substantial changes in the content of these anime series. These alterations influenced the perception of

⁵¹⁴ NAKAZAWA Keiji, *Hadashi no Gen* (Tokyo: Shūeisha, 1973–1987).

⁵¹⁵ Keiji Nakazawa, *Barefoot Gen*, ed. Leonard Rifas (n. p.: EduComics, 1980).

⁵¹⁶ TOMINO Yoshiyuki, writer, "Gypsy no Hoshi," *Tetsuwan Atom*, dir. TEZUKA Osamu, Season 1, episode 157 (Tokyo: Mushi Production, 1966); and TEZUKA Osamu, writer, "Osorubeshi Saishūheiki," *Ribbon no Kishi*, dir. TEZUKA Osamu, episode 12 (Tokyo: Mushi Production, 1967); and see "Chapter Four" in this thesis, 121–125.

anime worldwide, beyond just the United States. As explained by cultural scientist Brian Ruh,

*“U. S. licensors often obtained the non-Asian rights to such shows, and as a consequence the versions distributed to the rest of the Americas and Europe were often redubbed versions of the American alterations rather than translated versions of the Japanese originals.”*⁵¹⁷

For example, the screenwriting by Fred Laderman, also known as Fred Ladd, played a significant role in bringing popular anime to Western audiences during the 1960s. One of his projects was the American adaptation of TCJ's *Tetsujin 28-gō* (鉄人28号, Eng.: *Iron Man/Person Number 28*, 1963–66), directed by Yonehiko Watanabe.⁵¹⁸ It was renamed *The Gigantor* in the USA from 1966 onwards.⁵¹⁹ This anime, based on Mitsuteru Yokoyama's manga with the same title (1956–66), follows the story of a young boy controlling a war robot to fight evil.⁵²⁰ It can be considered a pioneering work for the modern mecha genre.⁵²¹ In the American version only, the “Gypsy” motif was introduced in episode 30, *The Space Submarine*.⁵²² Here, a criminal group led by a character named *Gypsy* steals a valuable document, emphasizing the association of the name with criminality, a prominent theme in American animations of that time.⁵²³ Ladd also made changes in the portrayal of characters in his localization of *Janguru Taitei*

⁵¹⁷ Brian Ruh, “Transforming U. S. Anime in the 1980s: Localization and Longevity,” in *Mechademia 5* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010) 31.

⁵¹⁸ OKAMOTO Kinzo, writer, *Tetsujin 28-gō*, 97 episodes, dir. WATANABE Yonehiko (Tokyo: TCJ, 1963–66).

⁵¹⁹ OKAMOTO Kinzo, writer, *Gigantor*, dir. WATANABE Yonehiko, loc. Fred Laderman, 52 episodes (Tokyo: TCJ, Allison Park: Delphi Associates, 1966).

⁵²⁰ YOKOYAMA Mitsuteru (writer, artist), *Tetsujin 28-gō*, 24 issues (Tokyo: Kōbunsha, 1956–1966).

⁵²¹ See Susan J Napier, *Anime from Akira to Howl's Moving Castle* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 87.

⁵²² OKAMOTO Kinzo, “The Space Submarine,” *Gigantor*, dir. WATANABE Yonehiko, loc. Fred Laderman, episode 30 (Tokyo: TCJ, Allison Park: Delphi Associates, 1966).

⁵²³ For example, see Dennis Marks, writer, “The Gypsy Caper,” *The Amazing Chan and the Chan Clan*, dir. William Hanna, and Joseph Barbera, season 2, episode 5 (Los Angeles: Hanna-Barbera Productions, 1972); and see Frank Crow, and Leo Rifkin, writers, “The Magic Shillelah,” *The New Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, dir. Hollingsworth Morse, season 1, episode 1 (Los Angeles: Hanna-Barbera Productions, 1968); and see Heywood Kling, writer, “Gypsy James,” *Batfink*, episode 52 (New York: Hal Seeger Productions, Los Angeles: Golden West Broadcasters, 1967); and see Crockett Johnson, James Thurber, and Eve Titus, writers, *Alice of Wonderland in Paris*, dir. Gene Deitch (New York: William L Snyder, 1966); and see *Madeline and the Gypsies*, dir. by Václav Bedřich (Weston, CO: Weston Woods Studios, New York: Rembrandt Films, 1959).

(ジャングル大帝, Eng.: *Jungle Emperor*, 1965/66),⁵²⁴ directed by Eiichi Yamamoto and based on TEZUKA Osamu's manga with the same name (1950–54).⁵²⁵ Known as *Kimba the White Lion* in the USA, this anime features anthropomorphic animals, including a white lion reigning over the jungle. Another character is an old, dark-brown owl. In the original Japanese manga and anime, this owl embodies a former criminal from Southern Africa, known as a poison brewer. Her name is *Mamī* (マミー) and she identifies the white Lion as the son she never had. In the Japanese version, her name and design appear to allude to the Anglophone stereotype of the “Mammy”, historically associated with black women employed by white families as a children’s nurse. In episode 13 of the American localization, which aired as *Gypsy’s Purple Potion*, she is forced by the antagonists to poison the protagonist.⁵²⁶ Ultimately, she does administer the poison before ensuring his recovery. She was renamed *Gypsy* in the American version, avoiding black stereotypes but introducing the cliché of the old “Gypsy” witch. These adaptations by Laderman set a precedent that others followed. An example is the localization of *Wanpaku Omukashi Kumukumu* (わんぱく大昔クムクム, Eng.: *Naughty Ancient Kumukumu*, 1975/76), directed by Shigeyuki Hayashi, presented to English-speaking audiences as *Kum-Kum*. This anime is about drama, adventure, and comedy among a group of individuals in prehistoric times. In episode 25, *Rōman o oikakero!* (ローマンを追いかける!, Eng.: *Chase Roman!*), localized as *The Broken Heart*,⁵²⁷ one of the characters encounters a group of nomads.⁵²⁸ They are anachronistically referred to as “Gypsies” in the American version, combined with references to song and dance in the camp.

⁵²⁴ TEZUKA Osamu, *Jungle Taitei*, dir. YAMAMOTO Eiichi, 52 episodes (Tokyo: Mushi Production, 1965/66).

⁵²⁵ TEZUKA Osamu, *Jungle Taitei*, 3 issues (Tokyo: Gakudōsha, 1950–54).

⁵²⁶ “Gypsy’s Purple Potion,” *Kimba the White Lion*, dir. YAMAMOTO Eiichi, loc. Fred Laderman, episode 13 (Tokyo: Mushin Production, Allison Park: Delphi Associates). Compare this episode to the original Japanese episode “Mori no Mamī” (森のマミー, Eng.: The Mammy of the Woods), which was episode 24 in the Japanese order of episodes.

⁵²⁷ YASUHIKO Yoshikazu, writer, “Romen o Oikakeru!” *Wanpaku Ōmukashi Kumukumu*, dir. YAZAWA Norio, episode 25 (Tokyo: Sōeisha, 1975).

⁵²⁸ YASUHIKO Yoshikazu, writer, “The Broken Heart,” *Kum-Kum*, dir. YAZAWA Norio, loc. Fred Laderman, episode 25 (Tokyo: Sōeisha, Allison Park: Delphi Associates, 1976).

Therefore, globalization and localization were factors from early on in introducing the “Gypsy” motif as Japanese animation spread to other countries.

Obviously, the “Gypsy” motif is present in prominent anime of the 21st century as well. We may think of the “Gypsies” in *Code Geass: Akito the Exiled* (2012), giving refuge to the main characters.⁵²⁹ And in *Blood+* (2005/6) by Production I. G. one of the characters (*Haji*) is implied to be a “Gypsy”, cared for in a caravan when he was a baby.⁵³⁰

3. Character Design Conventions: The Gypsy Moth Fortune Teller

A third example for a unique discourse of animation on the “Gypsy” motif is its character design conventions.

The motif of the “Gypsy” witch and fortune teller has been featured in many animated films, often without narrative innovation. These characters may cast curses in some instances, show kindness to the protagonist in others, or maintain an enigmatic and ambiguous demeanour. As always, the motif is used to create an atmosphere of mystery and fantasy. However, developing further on this established trope, a new character design convention emerged in American animated films since the 1980s: the use of an anthropomorphic “gypsy moth”. Since many animated films featured animals in human-like roles, the “Gypsy” motif was not absent from these animal fantasies. As seen in musical cartoons from the 1930s and 40s, which included “Gypsy” mice, the motif managed to find its way into these narratives. However, it was during the late 1980s that animated shows began to adopt a distinct approach to incorporating the “Gypsy” motif into their animal fantasies. This was through wordplay, with many animations introducing anthropomorphic gypsy moths as a nod to the motif. This trend can be at least traced back to Disney’s *Chip’n Dale. Rescue Rangers* (1988–90), directed by John Kimball and others. In season two, episode 22, *Seer No Evil* (1989), the adventurous chipmunks *Chip* and *Dale* cross paths with a character

⁵²⁹ ŌNOGI Hiroshi, writer, *Code Geass: Akito the Exiled*, dir. AKANE Kazuki (Tokyo: Sunrise, 2012).

⁵³⁰ *Blood+*, dir. FUJISAKU Junichi, 50 episodes (Tokyo: Production I. G., 2005/6).

named “Cassandra, the fortune telling gypsy moth” (2:30–33).⁵³¹ *Cassandra’s* predictions come true, leading one of the characters to remark, “Can’t live your life by a gypsy prediction” (20:52–55). This statement, while referring to the insect’s name, clearly resonates with the underlying “Gypsy” motif. Another example can be found in Disney’s *The Lion King’s Timon and Pumbaa*, season 2, episode 15a, *Beetle Romania* (1996).⁵³² Here, a gypsy moth places a curse on one of the protagonists. In Disney’s and Pixar’s *A Bug’s Life* (1998), a gypsy moth is depicted as part of a circus, assisting magic acts, reminiscent to the “Gypsy” theme of showmanship.⁵³³ Dreamwork’s *Turbo Fast*, episode 14a, *Gypsy Moth Prophecies* (2014), revisits the motif of the “Gypsy” fortune teller through yet another gypsy moth character.⁵³⁴

Animals, often depicted as cute and amusing, are commonly used as caricatures to represent human stereotypes. When media professionals translate anthropomorphic animals into human-like figures and introduce terminologies like “Gypsy”, it is not difficult for audiences to grasp the connection. Whether or not the audience, especially if they are young, fully understand the real-world meaning of the term “Gypsy” is not a major concern initially. However, as they grow and encounter external information, they may eventually grasp the significance of the term and its associations. This could lead them to link the portrayal of characters like the gypsy moth with the broader “Gypsy” motif. So, using insects as symbols does not avoid stereotyping groups of people. Including the term “Gypsy” in these narratives unavoidably ties them to real-life motifs, despite the use of animals as vehicles for representation. Still, it is a unique form of representation with the distinct implications of caricature (see also “Introduction” in this thesis, 9).

⁵³¹ Julia Lewald, writer, “Seer no Evil,” *Chip ‘n Dale: Rescue Rangers*, dir. John Kimball, and Rick Leon, season 2, episode 22 (Glendale: Walt Disney Television Animation, Burbank: Walt Disney Television, 1989).

⁵³² Mirith J Colao, Jason B Rote, and Linda Woolverton, writers, “Beetle Romania,” *The Lion King’s Timon and Pumbaa*, dir. Eddie Houchins, season 2, episode 15a (Burbank: Walt Disney Television, Glendale: Disney Television Animation, 1996).

⁵³³ John Lasseter et al, writers, *A Bug’s Life*, dir. John Lasseter (Emeryville: Pixar Animation Studios, 1998).

⁵³⁴ Devin Bunje, and Nick Stanton, writers, “Gypsy Moth Prophecies,” *Turbo FAST*, dir. Nate Clesowich, season 1, episode 14a (Los Angeles: DreamWorks Animation Television, 2014).

We observed how genre, localization, and character design represent unique aspects in the discourse of American animated films on the “Gypsy” motif. In the next sections, I present two case studies from the U. S. and Japan, further elaborating on the unique context of musical cartoon that we have previously considered. I will showcase in the Japanese case study how this discourse is not restricted to American animation and a national discourse but is internationalized.

4. Musical Cartoon & Philogypsyism in Disney’s *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*

In the following pages, I will explore Disney’s animated film *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (1996) that follows ideas of children’s film.⁵³⁵ It taps into the medium’s tradition of musical cartoons to convey a key message, while being embedded in the national context of religion and American conservatism. First, I will give a quick overview of Victor Hugo’s original story. Then, Disney’s adaptation will be analysed. I will examine how the film incorporates a new philogypsyist subtext, considering the film’s production and its intended audience of young viewers. Thereafter, it will be scrutinized how the film uses its musical sequence to challenge certain aspects of this philogypsyist stigma. And it does so by aligning with conservative viewpoints prevalent in the United States at the time.

The film, directed by Gary Trousdale and Kirk Wise, is a family-friendly adaption of Victor Hugo’s novel *Notre-Dame de Paris* from 1831.⁵³⁶ The novel is situated in 15th-century France, mainly around the Notre-Dame de Paris cathedral. The main characters include the bell ringer, *Quasimodo*, and the beautiful “Gypsy” dancer, *Esmeralda*. However, her true heritage is not “Gypsy”; actually, a group of “Gypsies” stole her as a child, while the same group abandoned *Quasimodo* who was later taken in by the archdeacon, *Claude Frollo*. *Frollo* has desires for *Esmeralda*, which take a dark turn. When she rejects him, he orchestrates her to be executed. Hugo’s portrayal of *Esmeralda* draws inspiration from the character

⁵³⁵ Tap Murphy et al, writers, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, dir. Gary Trousdale, and Kirk Wise (Burbank: Walt Disney Animation Studios, 1996).

⁵³⁶ Victor Hugo, *Notre-Dame de Paris* (New York: Signet Classics, 1975).

Preciosa from Miguel de Cervantes novella *La Gitanilla* (1613).⁵³⁷ *Esmeralda* fits the archetype of the captivating dancing girl known as the “Scheinzigeunerin”⁵³⁸ (Eng.: “Fake Gypsy”). This character trope is supposedly a “Gypsy” despite actually being born into a non-“Gypsy” family and later being kidnapped by “Gypsies”. Throughout Hugo’s novel, *Esmeralda* is depicted as wild and passionate, possessing the skills to protect herself.

Disney’s story takes a different path from the original tale, implementing the historical Romani persecution. *Esmeralda* is no longer portrayed as a “Scheinzigeunerin” but as a genuine “Gypsy” character. The ending of the story also changes from the tragic outcome of the original. *Quasimodo*’s backstory is altered as well. While he remains of “Gypsy” descent, he is no longer abandoned by “Gypsies” in his infancy. Instead, his parents suffer persecution by the authorities and tragically die, leaving *Quasimodo* orphaned. Moreover, *Frollo* is not more the archdeacon but has the secular profession of a judge. The art historian Peter Bell has examined Disney’s *The Hunchback of Notre-Dame* through the lens of antigypsyism research. Bell critically considers the producers’ attempt to address the issue of antigypsyism in contrast to Victor Hugo’s original novel:

*“Frollo’s stereotypical misjudgement that the ‘Gypsy’ woman [Quasimodo’s mother] would hide stolen goods, is one of the main reasons for her death. Thus, the film shows the fatale impact of prejudices, already in the very first shots. A careful consideration of stereotypes might be also the reason, why the backstory, which contains a ‘Gypsy’ child-theft in Victor Hugo’s original, has been revised so extensively.”*⁵³⁹

⁵³⁷ Miguel de Cervantes, *The Little Gipsy Girl* (North Carlestone: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2016).

⁵³⁸ Hans R Brittnacher, *Leben auf der Grenze: Klischee und Faszination des Zigeunerbildes in Literatur und Kunst* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2012), 32–35.

⁵³⁹ Ger.: “Die stereotype Fehleinschätzung Frollos, dass die ‘Zigeunerin’ Diebesgut verbirgt, ist eine der Hauptursachen für ihren Tod. So zeigt der Film bereits in den ersten Einstellungen die fatale Wirkung von Vorurteilen. Ein vorsichtiger Umgang mit Stereotypen mag auch der Grund dafür sein, warum die Vorgeschichte, die bei Victor Hugo einen ‘zigeunerischen’ Kindsraub enthält, so stark abgewandelt wurde. Die Tilgung dieses Komplexes aus der Handlungsstruktur führt unabhängig davon allerdings auch zu einer deutlichen Vereinfachung und Verharmlosung und macht [...] *Esmeralda* zu einer ‘echten Zigeunerin’.” Peter Bell, “‘You can’t right all the wrongs’: ‘Zigeuner’-Figuren in Disneys Glöckner von Notre Dame,” in *“Denn*

By acknowledging the historical Romani persecution and removing the antigypsyist theme of child-theft, Disney's departure from Hugo's novel suggests the filmmakers' goodwill. However, in the film, we observe both philogypsyism, meaning the idealized form of the stigma, and the partial breaking down of that stigma.

On the one hand, the philogypsyism is mainly there due to the film connecting Hugo's stereotypical traits for *Esmeralda* – as a beautiful dancer and thief – with the new theme of Romani persecution. Statements made by important figures involved in the filmmaking reveal a fundamental issue of misunderstanding that lies at the core of the character's unaltered stigmatizing portrayal. Stephen Rebello, who collaborated closely with the Walt Disney Company, explores the film extensively in his book *The Art of The Hunchback of Notre-Dame* (1996). In this book, he includes various interviews with the filmmakers, which provide insights into their creative process and intentions. For instance, we learn that

*“[a]rtist Jean Gillmore, whose early research and designs for the character [Esmeralda] were adapted almost unaltered for the film, conceptualized the heroine and the gypsy population as ‘nomadic people, true survivors, from various ethnic groups who grabbed a little bit from every culture’.”*⁵⁴⁰

Besides the myth of collective nomadism and survival in nature, Gillmore's claim belittles the cultural products by individuals he labels as “gypsies”. He does so by suggesting that their creativity stems only from borrowing from various cultures (grabbing “a little bit from every culture”). It remains unclear what “research” Gillmore relied on, but we may assume that his perspective was influenced by biased tsiganologist (“Gypsy Studies”) literature, which historically dominated academic discourse on the “Gypsy” label.⁵⁴¹ Another contributor to the stigma in the film is the artistic coordinator, Randy Fullmer, who commented on a scene involving a threat of execution by “Gypsies”. Fullmer remarks, the “Gypsies” are “pretty ruthless, but at the same time they're still the gypsies. They approach this

sie rauben sehr geschwind jedes böse Gassenkind”: “Zigeuner”-Bilder in Kinder- und Jugendmedien, ed. Petra Josting et al (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2017), 352.

⁵⁴⁰ Stephen Rebello, *The Art of the Hunchback of Notre Dame* (Glendale: Disney Editions, 1996), 36.

⁵⁴¹ See “Introduction” in this thesis, 18–23.

execution, like everything else, with a sense of celebration”,⁵⁴² perpetuating the idea of carefree, always dancing and singing, yet cruel “Gypsies”.

On the other hand, we observe a breaking down of the stigma, influenced by narrative elements drawn from Disney’s tradition of musical cartoons. I will explore and explain these conflicting aspects of *Esmeralda*’s character design here. There is a key message compressed by the film’s use of musical cartoon elements. This key message reflects morale and religious themes in contemporary America but also – as will be explained later – an established convention among Disney’s animated productions. Disney films have a long tradition of incorporating musical elements, going back to the musical cartoons from the 1930s and 40s, but added depth to the storytelling. One notable song in Disney’s *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* is the ballad *God Help the Outcasts*, written by Stephen Schwartz. In the film, this ballad is sung by the character *Esmeralda* (voiced by Heidi Mollenhauer) as a prayer in Notre-Dame de Paris for the “outcasts”, referring to those she identifies with. Here are the lyrics:

“1. (Singer: *Esmeralda*)

*I don't know if you can hear me
Or if you're even there
I don't know if you would listen to a gypsy's prayer
Yes, I know I'm just an outcast
I shouldn't speak to you
Still I see your face and wonder
Were you once an outcast too? [Esmeralda looking at a statue of Mary]*

2. (Singer: *Esmeralda*)

*God help the outcasts
Hungry from birth
Show them the mercy they don't find on Earth
God help my people
We look to you still
God help the outcasts or nobody will*

⁵⁴² Rebello, *The Art*, 77.

3. (Singer: *Praying people in the Cathedral*)

*I ask for wealth
I ask for fame
I ask for glory to shine on my name
I ask for love I can possess
I ask for God and his angels to bless me*

4. (Singer: *Esmeralda*)

*I ask for nothing, I can get by
But I know so many less lucky than I
Please help my people
The poor and down trod
I thought we all were the children of God
God help the outcasts
Children of God”⁵⁴³*

Esmeralda’s prayer for divine help, for freedom from unjust circumstances, shows a departure from conventional “Gypsy” characters. It deals with the theme of social exclusion. According to Brittnacher, the motif rarely associates with desires for emancipation.⁵⁴⁴ Furthermore, her prayer is not just for herself (“I ask for nothing, I can get by – But I know so many less lucky than I”). This selflessness shows her good character, which explains why *Quasimodo* is drawn to her as he listens to her song. Hugo also presents *Esmeralda* as having a sense of selflessness, but the key difference to the animated film is her background. Only in the original novel, *Esmeralda* is a “Scheinzigeunerin”, since she was born into a non-“Gypsy” family. Brittnacher explains the different meanings of the “Scheinzigeuner”. In regard of the historical “Gypsy” motif, he argues that “the natural readiness of the Gypsies for thievery, which the literature, even the benevolent one, is most often rock-solid convinced of, sets the limits to the idea

⁵⁴³ According to Bell, the lyrics would include a stereotype, implying the myth that those labelled as “Gypsies” were historically heathen (“I don’t know if you can hear me” and “I don’t know if you would listen to a gypsy’s prayer”). See Bell, “You can’t right,” 356. Now, considering the second and fourth verses, this is not the case, as *Esmeralda* makes clear that she and “her people” are believing in god (“We look to you still” and “I thought we all were the children of God”).

⁵⁴⁴ See Klaus-Michael Bogdal, *Europa erfindet die Zigeuner: Eine Geschichte von Faszination und Verachtung* (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2011), 405.

of cultural approximation”⁵⁴⁵. The “Scheinzigeuner”, stolen by “Gypsies”, often takes a morally superior stance compared to the actual “Gypsy”, who is seen as “born for theft”.⁵⁴⁶ Disney’s *Esmeralda* contradicts this convention, due to being designed as a selfless, genuine “Gypsy”. Therefore, the ballad *God Save the Outcasts* challenges the stigma.

The cause of this destigmatizing narrative element may lie in the national context of American conservatism. It is likely that the Walt Disney Company aimed to please religious conservatives in the United States to prevent a negative reaction like one that followed the BBC film *Priest*. This film was criticized for having a homosexual cleric as the protagonist and was released two years earlier.⁵⁴⁷ According to theatre scholar George Rodosthenous, Disney toned down criticism of the church found in Hugo’s novel,⁵⁴⁸ exemplified by the fact that

*“Disney not only gave Frollo a secular profession, but also provided a clerical foil, in the form of the archdeacon who interferes at regular intervals and makes his dissatisfaction with some of Frollo’s more devious schemes known: it is the archdeacon who prevents the judge from murdering the misshapen baby [Quasimodo], an intervention that symbolically takes a stand against both euthanasia and abortion – key issues with conservative groups specifically in the US.”*⁵⁴⁹

Voice actor Jason Alexander supposedly stated that “we were on thin ice with a lot of the religious overtones. Most of our nun and priest jokes are not in”⁵⁵⁰ the finished film. This decision might have been made to avoid upsetting religious conservatives, according to Rodosthenous.⁵⁵¹ However, despite this precaution, the Southern Baptist Convention, the largest Protestant organization in America, boycotted Disney in 1997, a year after the film’s release. They encouraged their members not to support Disney or its products. While the official reasons for the

⁵⁴⁵ Ger.: “Die selbstverständliche Bereitschaft der Zigeuner zum Diebstahl, von dem die Literatur, selbst die wohlwollende, zumeist felsenfest überzeugt ist, setzt der Idee kultureller Annäherung Grenzen”. Brittnacher, *Leben auf der Grenze*, 33.

⁵⁴⁶ See *ibid.*, 33–35.

⁵⁴⁷ See George Rodosthenous, *The Disney Musical on Stage and Screen: Critical Approaches from ‘Snow White’ to ‘Frozen’* (London: Bloomsbury, 2017), 104.

⁵⁴⁸ See *ibid.*, 103.

⁵⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 104.

⁵⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵¹ See *ibid.*

boycott were not directly related to *The Hunchback of Notre-Dame*, they focused on what the convention saw as a “homosexual agenda” in Disney’s policies and the content of its theme parks and books. In a case study by business managers Robert A MacDonald and Katie MacDonald, they argue that “several Disney-controlled productions served to inflame its critics”⁵⁵². The first example they highlight is *The Hunchback of Notre-Dame*.⁵⁵³ Whether or not Disney’s adaptation played a major role in the boycott, it is clear that adapting Hugo’s anti-church novel presented a challenge for Disney.

In light of this challenge, the ballad *God Help the Outcasts* shifts the focus away from *Esmeralda*’s identity as a “Gypsy” and instead emphasizes the importance of Christian faith and the power of prayer. Even though the song’s lyrics feature the “Gypsy” motif, it highlights an interchangeable portrayal of the marginalized and altruist believer. This approach breaks away from older musical traditions linked to the “Gypsy” motif as a carnivalesque appearance from the musical cartoons of the 1930s and 40s. As a result, *God save the Outcasts* rather matches with Disney’s traditional use of musical cartoon elements to attribute female lead characters in the story and implement a theme of desire for a better reality. We observe this use in other prominent films: For example, in *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937), the song *I’m Wishing* introduces the character of *Snow White* and her motive, a strong desire for love. Similarly, the song *A Dream Is a Wish Your Heart Makes* in *Cinderella* (1950), encourages the audience to emancipate from grief by dreaming for a better reality.

Considering Disney’s global influence on animated films around the world, we may consider the analysed musical sequence combined with the theme of emancipation in *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* not only in the context of national but also more broadly global media discourse: Disney’s use of musical cartoon techniques to attribute “Gypsy” characters and the theme of emancipation are not only relevant in *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*. They also appear in a widely

⁵⁵² Robert A MacDonald, and Katie MacDonald, “Case Study: Tragic Kingdom? The Southern Baptist Convention Boycott of Walt Disney,” *Christian Business Academy Review* 9 (2014): 49, <https://cbfa-jbib.org/index.php/cbar/article/view/31>.

⁵⁵³ See *ibid*.

known Japanese anime: the *Fullmetal Alchemist* franchise. Even though they come from different cultural backgrounds, we will explore how both examples share a similar approach in their portrayal within a global media discourse.

5. Musical Cartoon & Philogypsyism in Bones' *Fullmetal Alchemist*

In this case study, I examine how the anime *Fullmetal Alchemist the Movie: Conqueror of Shamballa* by Bones Inc. further exemplifies the unique discourse on the “Gypsy” motif in animated films.⁵⁵⁴ I argue that it does so in three main ways: First, the film incorporates aspects of musical cartoons, including their carnivalesque “Gypsy” characters, also showing a globalized perspective with Romani artists having been involved in the production process. Second, we find the theme of Romani emancipation in the film, linked to religious themes and echoing Disney’s tradition of stories about longing and emancipation. Lastly, the film’s visualization of “Gypsy” characters differs from American animation at the same time, demonstrating the connection between media and national discourse. It reflects anime’s specific style, reminiscent of manga traditions. I begin by summarizing the film, then analyse how the “Gypsy” character is initially presented in a significant musical scene, showcasing the musical cartoon tradition. I then explore how the theme of empowerment is depicted in subsequent scenes, drawing from the narrative elements of the manga that inspired the film’s universe.

From 2001 to 2010, Arakawa Hiromu’s manga series *Fullmetal Alchemist* gained widespread popularity through its publication in Square Enix’s Gekkan Shōnen Gangan magazine.⁵⁵⁵ Set in the fictional country of *Amestris* (アメストリス, Amesutorisu), the story is inspired by historical events, particularly German fascism. In 2003/4, the first anime adaptation by studio Bones aired, deviating from the manga in several aspects.⁵⁵⁶ In the beginning, *Edward* encounters *Rosé* (ロゼ, *Roze*), a deeply religious girl who desires for a better reality and later

⁵⁵⁴ AIKAWA Shō, writer, *Fullmetal Alchemist the Movie: Conqueror of Shamballa*, dir. MIZUSHIMA Seiji (Tokyo: Bones, 2005).

⁵⁵⁵ ARAKAWA Hiromi, *Fullmetal Alchemist*, 27 issues (Tokyo: Square Enix, 2001–2010).

⁵⁵⁶ *Fullmetal Alchemist*, 51 episodes, dir. MIZUSHIMA Seiji (Tokyo: Bones, 2003/4).

becomes the survivor of a genocide. Eventually, *Edward* accidentally travels to a parallel universe, ending up in the city of Munich in the year 1923. In 2005, the sequel and animated feature film *Fullmetal Alchemist the Movie: Conqueror of Shamballa* was released in the theatres. It blends a historical scenario (Weimar Germany) with historicizing fantasy, addressing issues like antigypsyism. However, some aspects of the plot and character design can be considered problematic. Remaining in Munich in 1923, *Edward* discovers that some people he encounters in Germany are doppelgänger to those in *Amestris*. They look the same but are somewhat different due to their personal background. One of these doppelgängers is the “Gypsy” girl *Noah*, who at first glance seems to be *Rosé* from *Amestris*, a religious survivor of genocide. Let us consider here the three aspects of music, Romani emancipation and visualization that make up the film, being embedded into a larger discursive context.

First, Music plays a central role in conveying the “Gypsy” motif, in a carnivalesque manner similar to classic American musical cartoons yet modified by a new aspect of participation by Romani artists. To begin with, I examine the scene that introduces the “Gypsy” girl *Noah*. On their way to a carnival, *Edward* and his friend *Heiderich* hitch a ride on a truck bed. “These Gypsies, too, are going to open a shop at the carnival”⁵⁵⁷ (8:08–13), the driver explains to the two boys, referring to the other passengers. All are young women in colourful garments and have a much darker complexion than *Edward* and *Heiderich* who are fair-skinned and blond. After getting into the car, the boys blush because of the “Gypsy” women’s beauty (Fig. 37). During the ride, they get to know *Noah*. The other women explain her special abilities: “It is fortune-telling”⁵⁵⁸ and “She has the reputation to be right”⁵⁵⁹ (8:33–8:36). Without asking permission, *Noah* touches *Edward* briefly, then backs away and says: “You are... the same as us... No...

⁵⁵⁷ Jap.: “あのジプシーたちも、カーニバルで店を出すんだとき。” AIKAWA Shō, *Fullmetal Alchemist the Movie: Conqueror of Shamballa; Scenario Book* (Tokyo: Square Enix, 2006), 24.

⁵⁵⁸ Jap.: “そいつは占い。” Ibid., 25.

⁵⁵⁹ Jap.: “よく当たるって評判さ。” Ibid.

home.”⁵⁶⁰ (8:57–9:01). Shortly thereafter, the women begin to sing in Romanes, some of them having drums and start playing.



Fig. 37: Screenshot from the animated film by Aikawa, *Conqueror of Shamballa*. Edward and Heiderich blush because of the ‘Gypsy’ women’s beauty.

In *Noah*’s introducing scene, there is a significance of global influences: On the one hand, it bears striking resemblances to the initial scenes in the live-action film *Gadjo Dilo* (1997) by Romani French director Tony Gatlif, underscoring the film medium’s global discourse.⁵⁶¹ There, a young man and non-“Gypsy” manages to hitch a ride on a truck bed (3:03–3:20). In the next scene, he is already out of the car and walking behind a wagon. The wagon is full of female “Gypsy” passengers, marked by their colourful robes, who start singing in their language while looking back at him (3:20–5:09). These similarities do not prove that the producers of *Conqueror of Shamballa* knew Gatlif’s film. Rather, the similarity exemplifies the recurrence of motifs in the global discourse of “Gypsy” characters in film. On the other hand, the scene aligns with the conventions of musicals and of Disney films where a musical scene is usually combined with an introductory scene that is attributing all the character’s traits: Compared to the initial scenes in *Gadjo Dilo*,

⁵⁶⁰ Jap.: “あなたは 私たちと同じね 。 故郷が ない ” Ibid.

⁵⁶¹ Tony Gatlif, Jacques Maigre, and Kits Hilaire, writers, *Gadjo Dilo*, dir. Tony Gatlif (Paris: Centre national du cinéma et de l’image animée, n. p.: Princess Films, Paris: Canal+, 1997).

the motifs in *Conqueror of Shamballa*, which are used to construct the “Gypsy” character, are much denser. Fortune-telling, showmanship, colourful garments and the young, beautiful and glowing “Gypsy” girl with her passionate musical skills all appear simultaneously in *Noah*’s introductory scene. They are centuries-old *topoi* of Western entertainment culture.⁵⁶² This also applies to the idea of a nomadic lifestyle that is implied in *Noah*’s statement of having no home.⁵⁶³ This implication is also described by Brittnacher: “As correlate of the nomadic lifestyle, homelessness is a central element of the Gypsy image”⁵⁶⁴. The historical context of the plot in *Conqueror of Shamballa* identifies these fantastic “Gypsy” characters with Sinti and Roma. However, *Noah* and her co-workers are not representative of the reality of Romani people in Weimar Germany. The majority of Sinti and Roma led a sedentary life for many centuries, having regular jobs in the midst of society.⁵⁶⁵ In *Conqueror of Shamballa*, the characters are designed as exotic members of an alien, peripheral and isolated culture – as part of a carnivalesque sensation.⁵⁶⁶

At the same time, the song they are singing, titled “Kelas” (Let’s Dance), and represents a significant example of an internationalized Romani participation in a film project. It was exclusively composed for this film by the Romani Jazz musician Ferenc Snétberger from Hungary and performed by the German Afro-Sintezza Tayo Awosusi (the term “Afro-Sintezza” is self-referential⁵⁶⁷). “Kelas” is

⁵⁶² Moreover, the antigypsyist motif of criminality is reproduced: Noah is betrayed and sold by her co-workers, becoming a victim of human trafficking. This narrative reinforces the stereotype of ‘Gypsies’ being involved in criminal activities, with Noah being the exception that proves the rule of criminal “Gypsies”. The idea of human-trafficking by “Gypsies” is closely tied to the centuries-old narrative of child-theft by this group. See Brittnacher, *Leben auf der Grenze*, 171–180; and see “Introduction” in this thesis, 18–29.

⁵⁶³ See *ibid.*

⁵⁶⁴ Ger.: “Als Korrelat der nomadischen Lebensweise ist die Heimatlosigkeit ein zentrales Element der Zigeunerimago” Brittnacher, *Leben auf der Grenze*, 155.

⁵⁶⁵ This has been examined in several local studies in the German-speaking world. An example is one of Sandner’s case studies where he considers the situation of Sinti and Roma after but also before 1933 in the city of Frankfurt. See Peter Sandner, *Frankfurt: Auschwitz; Die nationalsozialistische Verfolgung der Sinti und Roma in Frankfurt am Main* (Frankfurt a. M.: Brandes & Apsel, 1998), 25–48. Additionally, Pientka briefly touches upon the life circumstances of the minority in Berlin. See Patricia Pientka, *Das Zwangslager für Sinti und Roma in Berlin-Marzahn: Alltag, Verfolgung und Deportation* (Berlin: Metropol, 2013), 24–25.

⁵⁶⁶ Also see Johannes Valentin Korff, “Imagining the ‘Gypsy’ and the Jew in Japanese Animation: The Case of Aikawa Shō and Mizushima Seiji,” in *Counterstrategies to the Antigypsy Gaze*, ed. Radmila Mladenova (Heidelberg: Heidelberg University Publishing, 2024), 420–421.

⁵⁶⁷ See Tayo Awosusi-Onutor, “Mit Bitte um Vorstellung,” *Heimatkunde*, 3 December 2014, <https://heimatkunde.boell.de/de/2014/12/03/mit-bitte-um-vorstellung>.

about a girl and a boy who met one night, danced together, and enjoyed themselves. The song itself was not even a commissioned work but entirely designed by the composer: As director Seiji Mizushima states, the production initially wanted a song about carnival, but Snétberger rejected the idea and realized his own concept.⁵⁶⁸

Second, while reproducing centuries-old clichés in the context of carnivalesque fantasy, the film *Conqueror of Shamballa* also addresses the issue of antigypsyism and the theme of Romani emancipation. The theme of desire and emancipation is also common in Disney films, and, similar to Disney's *The Hunchback of Notre-Dame*, there is a religious subtext that becomes visible through the preceding anime series the film continues. This can be demonstrated through *Noah's* motivation and fate within the narrative.

In *Noah's* initial scene that we have considered, she is accompanied by fellow "Gypsy" women, en route to work at a carnival. But after they arrive, she is betrayed by her co-workers, as she is sold by them to a man of the Thule Society. The fascist Thule Society pursues *Noah*, convinced that her supernatural abilities can aid them in opening a gateway to a mythical kingdom known as Shamballa. Once this is accomplished, they want to conquer this other world and use its legendary powers for the political rise of the German Empire. However, *Edward* saves *Noah* from the Thule Society. Meanwhile, as a "Gypsy", she is repeatedly confronted with everyday racism in the course of the story, seen by others as a drifter, thief and seductress for *Edward*. Eventually, *Noah* decides to assist members of the Thule Society in their efforts to create a gateway to Shamballa. She has a strong desire to find a true home, a place where there is no hatred towards people like her, "Gypsies". The opening of the gateway is successful, but *Edward* manages to destroy it and to stop the Thule Society.

Through the character *Noah*, social exclusion and exile emerge as central elements of the story. One theme that stands out in the film is the concept of

⁵⁶⁸ See "Audio Commentary with the Crew," in *Fullmetal Alchemist: Der Eroberer von Shamballa*, dir. MIZUSHIMA Seiji (Tokyo: Bones, Wiesbaden: KSM Anime, 2015), Blu-ray Disc. Also see Korff, "'Gypsy' and Jew," 420.

journeys between parallel universes, particularly between Germany and what the Thule Society identifies as Shamballa. *Noah*'s personal goal is obvious: she supports the Thule Society, because she wants to escape into the fantastical and mythical realm of Shamballa in search of a place she can call home. On the one hand, the character's tragic pursuit of personal peace and fulfilment in an alternate, improved reality follows a narrative pattern that is closely tied to the genre of scientific romance, a precursor to modern science fiction. This connection is explicitly referenced in the film, as *Edward* encounters a film director who tells him about an unnamed novel of scientific romance (54:16–54:45). Within this genre, Herbert G Wells (1866–1946) as one of the fathers of science fiction must be highlighted.⁵⁶⁹ In 1923, the same year depicted in the film, Wells's book *Men Like Gods* was published, wherein the protagonist accidentally travels to a parallel universe that reveals itself to be a utopia.⁵⁷⁰ Upon his return to his own world, he is determined to transform it into a similar utopia. While the story of the film *Conqueror of Shamballa* aligns with Wells' concept of utopian parallel worlds, it offers a different, tragic interpretation: Idealized by *Noah* as her own utopia, Shamballa reveals as *Edward*'s home world of *Amestris* that is plagued by war and racism, much like the world on Earth in 1923. As a result, the film refutes Wells' concept of utopia, depicting it as an unattainable illusion. While the film may seem to have a happy ending due to the people being saved from the Thule Society, *Noah* does not find a way out of her misery.⁵⁷¹

The religious aspect of this struggle becomes evident when considering the universe the film references. The story of *Noah*, the doppelgänger of *Rosé*, is implied as an alternative version of *Rosé*'s struggle: In the manga and anime series, *Rosé* pins her hopes on a corrupt priest's promise to resurrect her deceased lover. Consequently, she supports the priest who reveals as an evil man pursuing political power by manipulating her and others who aspire to a better reality. *Edward* confronts and defeats him. *Rosé* supports an antagonist who strives for political power, in order to reach a better reality, and so does *Noah*.

⁵⁶⁹ Cf. Mark Bould, and Sherryl Vint, *The Routledge Concise History of Science Fiction* (London: Routledge, 2011), 13–16.

⁵⁷⁰ Herbert G Wells, *Men Like Gods* (London: Cassell, 1923).

⁵⁷¹ Also see Korff, "'Gypsy' and Jew", 424–425.

Lastly, there is a connection between a media specific discourse and a national discourse, a unique aspect of Japanese animation, its visualization – however, this aspect too can be only understood in the context of the global animation market, as will be shown here.

In *Chapter Four*, we discussed how the “Gypsy” motif appeared in prominent Japanese comics, particularly in shōjo manga, which are targeted at girls. The motif was not common in popular shōnen manga and anime for a long time, Japanese comics and animation for boys. However, since the 1990s, various elements of the “Gypsy” motif have started to appear not just in shōjo manga. One example of the “Gypsy” femme fatale in a shōnen work is evident in *Silver Gypsy* (1993) by Makiko.⁵⁷² The narrative revolves around a woman who manipulates and kills men to achieve her personal objectives. In manga, the artwork is typically black and white, which helps save time and money during production. Colours are usually reserved for the cover and the beginning pages of a volume. As I mentioned earlier in *Chapter Four*, this choice of visuals can sometimes lead to unique ways of racialization, as seen in the works of TAKEMIYA Keiko. In Japanese comics, explicit depictions of skin colour are rare, but in Takemiya’s case they are sometimes used to mark a character. For example, she visualizes skin colour to stereotype and mock a character through racist caricature.⁵⁷³

However, most often differences in skin colours between characters are not explicitly visualized, both in manga and anime. According to the sociologist Koichi Iwabuchi, manga and anime have an “international style”.⁵⁷⁴ That can be illustrated with an example, the portrayal of a well-known anime character, Faye Valentine, a 23-year-old wandering space bounty hunter. In episode 3 of the internationally successful Japanese science-fiction anime series *Cowboy Bebop* (1998/99), she names herself a “Gypsy” who wanders the stars.⁵⁷⁵ The usual clichés are employed here. In the same episode, she assumes the role of a card dealer in a casino and is known in the series for her trickery and thievery. Yet,

⁵⁷² See “Makiko” (writer, artist), *Silver Gypsy*. 2 issues (Tokyo: Takeshobō, 1993).

⁵⁷³ See “Chapter Four” in this thesis, 129–139.

⁵⁷⁴ See Koichi Iwabuchi, *Recentring Globalization: Popular Culture and Japanese Transnationalism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002), 33–34, 70–79, 94.

⁵⁷⁵ See NOBUMOTO Keiko, writer, “Honky Tonk Women,” *Cowboy Bebop*, dir. WATANABE Shinichirō, episode 3 (Tokyo: Sunrise, 1998), 15:25–37.

appearances can be deceptive. Subsequent revelations unveil that she does not know her true identity, due to amnesia. This narrative seems to draw inspiration once again from the motif of the “Scheinzigeunerin”. For viewers who attribute specific physical traits to “Gypsies”, this plot twist might be perceived as strange. *Faye’s* appearance is not distinctly “White” or “Asian” marked. Her hair colour is violet. According to Iwabuchi, this aspect should be seen in the context of stylistic “mukokuseki” (Eng.: “statelessness”).⁵⁷⁶ This concept would enable the story to unfold in any global setting while retaining consistent aesthetics, therefore allowing individuals from diverse background to identify with the characters. This approach is driven by global marketing strategies. The characters’ hair colours often appear unrealistically diverse, such as red, blue, or violet. As a result, physical characteristics are not inherently tied to ethnic attributes. This adaptability in representation marks a shift from the ethnocentric tradition in Western visual media. Nevertheless, the global strategy outlined above does not manifest without exceptions, especially when it has dramatic significance. Such an exception is evident in the Japanese anime film *Fullmetal Alchemist the Movie: The Conqueror of Shamballa* (2005), particularly concerning the “Gypsy” motif.

In *Conqueror of Shamballa*, *Noah’s* visualized skin colour is remarkable due to visual language in anime being much less ethnocentric than in Western animated films. The visual difference between *Noah* and *Edward* is apparent: *Noah* and the other “Gypsy” characters have dark skin, contrasting with the otherwise fair-skinned environment. *Noah’s* visual design, particularly her skin colour, identifies her as a “Gypsy” throughout the film, even if she does not wear colourful dress or undertake certain actions (dancing, fortune-telling, etc.).⁵⁷⁷ Therefore, her visual design is significant in evoking the theme of racism that the film addresses. Due to their most-often non-ethnocentric visualization, Japanese animated films possess a remarkable potential to utilize racializing picturing for exploring themes of racism and colourism. While in Western animated films it is the standard mode of visual language, anime’s visualization of skin colour is shaped by both global market strategies and narrative significance. This demonstrates how Japanese

⁵⁷⁶ See Iwabuchi, *Recentering Globalization*, 33–34, 70–79, 94.

⁵⁷⁷ After *Edward* gives shelter to *Noah*, she receives new clothes.

animation, though grounded in a national context, extends its visual language to a broader international framework of media discourse.⁵⁷⁸

6. Outlook

“Gypsy” characters are commonly featured in animated films, often appearing as fortune tellers or witches.⁵⁷⁹ Recently, many of these portrayals have been influenced by a philogypsyist view, particularly by companies like Disney. Additionally, many animated films are based on comics (or video games), which can also reflect dominant narratives from other media.⁵⁸⁰

⁵⁷⁸ Also see Korff, “‘Gypsy’ and Jew”, 426–427.

⁵⁷⁹ See Shane Prigmore et al, writers, *Rapunzel's Tangled Adventure*, dir. Tom Caulfield et al, 3 seasons, 60 episodes (Glendale, CA: Disney Television Animation, 2017–2020); and Craig Gerber, writer, *Sofia the First*, dir. Hamie Mitchell, 4 seasons, 113 episodes (Los Angeles: Disney Television Animation, 2013–18); and see Amy K Rogers, writer, “Witch-ay Woman,” *Johnny Bravo*, dir. Robert Alvarez, and Van Partible, season 4, episode 55b (Burbank: Cartoon Network Studios, 2004); and see Barry Harman, and George A Bloom, writers, “R-Fair City,” *Cyberchase*, dir. Larry Jacobs, season 1, episode 3 (New York: WNET New York, Toronto: Nelvana, 2002); and see Jim Fortier, Any Merrill, and Pete Smith, writers, “Hippo,” *The Brak Show*, dir. Jim Fortier, Andy Merrill, and Pete Smith, season 1, episode 5 (Atlanta: Wild Hare Studios, Atlanta: Primal Screen, Atlanta: Turner Entertainment, Atlanta: Williams Street, 2001); and see Joel H Cohen et al, writers, “Threehouse of Horror XII,” *The Simpsons*, dir. Jim Reardon, season 13, episode 1 (Los Angeles: Gracie Films, Los Angeles: 20th Television, 2001); and see “It’s Just a Gypsy in My Soup,” *The Pink Panther*, dir. Charles Grosvenor, and Byron Vaughns, season 2, episode 11 (Burbank: Mirisch-Geoffrey DePatie-Freleng, Beverly Hills: United Artists, Santa Monica: Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Animation, 1994); and see Jim Davis, and Mark Evanier, writers, “The Carnival Curse,” *Garfield and Friends*, dir. Dave Brain, Becky Bristow, and Allen Foster, season 5, episode 4c (Los Angeles: Film Roman, Chicago: United Media, New York: Paws, Inc., Burlingame: Lee Mendelson Film Productions, 1992); and see Jim Davis, and Mark Evanier, writers, “The Idol of Id,” *Garfield and Friends*, season 4, episode 14a (Los Angeles: Film Roman, Chicago: United Media, New York: Paws, Inc., Burlingame: Lee Mendelson Film Productions); and see Calvin Kelly, writer, “What the Hex Happening,” *Beverly Hills Teens*, dir. Craig Zukowski, and Michael Maliani, season 1, episode 45 (Burbank: DIC Animation City, 1987); and see Gene Ayres et al, writers, “Dennis and the Gypsy Woman,” *Dennis the Menace*, dir. Michael Maliani, season 1, episode 58c (Burbank: DIC Entertainment Corporation, 1986); and see Kevin Hopps, writer, “Tummi Trouble,” *Adventures of the Gummi Bears*, dir. David Block (Glendale: Walt Disney Television Animation, 1991); Sharman Divono, writer, “The Phantom Brigade,” *G. I. Joe: A Real American Hero*, dir. John Gibbs, and Terry Lennon, ani. Toei Animation, season 1, episode 18 (New York: Sunbow Productions, Los Angeles: Marvel Productions, 1985); and see Felicia Freeman, and Michael Maliani, writers, “Gargamel’s Miss-Fortune,” *The Smurfs*, dir. George Gordon et al, season 4, episode 26b (Los Angeles: Hanna-Barbera Productions, Marcinelle: SEPP International S. A., 1984).

⁵⁸⁰ For example, see animations with DC’s superhero Gypsy or Marvel’s supervillain Doctor Doom who are based on the “Gypsy” motif and derive from comics. See Dwayne McDuffie, writer, *Justice League: Crisis on Two Earths*, dir. Sam Liu, and Lauren Montgomery (Los Angeles: Warner Bros. Animation, Burbank: Warner Premier, Burbank: DC Entertainment, 2010); and see Bob Kane et al, writers, *Justice League Unlimited*, dir. Joaquim dos Santos, and Dan Riba, 3 seasons, 39 episodes (New York: DC Comics, Los Angeles: Warner Bros. Animation, Burbank: Warner Bros. Family Entertainment, 2004–6). Particularly in the context of Japanese popular culture, anime often reproduces the same narratives from manga. For example, see

An examination of animated films reveals that these portrayals are influenced by a distinct history of genre, localization, and character design conventions that significantly influence how the “Gypsy” motif is depicted. In this chapter, the themes of music and philogypsyism served as prime examples. The Walt Disney Company in particular has played a critical role in shaping global animation and developed its own conventions. These conventions and their stigmatizing and destigmatizing effects have been showcased with the Disney animation *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*. Furthermore, the international media discourse through cross-cultural influence between films around the world and global marketing have been discussed using the case study of *Fullmetal Alchemist the Movie: Conqueror of Shamballa*.

Clearly, there is no consensus among activists and academics on how to evaluate certain films. For instance, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* is often criticized for its ambiguous use of the “Gypsy” motif, with many seeing it primarily as an antigypsyist work due its reliance on the stigma. On the other hand, a film like *Fullmetal Alchemist the Movie: Conqueror of Shamballa* explicitly depicts an antigypsyist theme, as the character *Noah* is being sold by her fellow “Gypsy” coworkers, which aligns with narratives about human trafficking and criminality. Despite this, the film was seemingly endorsed without criticism by German Romani activist Tayo Awosusi-Onutor and Hungarian Romani musician Ferenc Snétberger. Additionally, the film’s problematic aspects have largely gone unnoticed by scholars, even though the *Fullmetal Alchemist* franchise remains popular.

ISHIDA Sui, writer, *Tokyo Ghoul:re*, dir. MORITA Shūhei, 12 episodes (Tokyo: Pierrot, 2018); and see ISHIDA Sui, writer, *Tokyo Ghoul*, dir. MORITA Shūhei, 12 episodes (Tokyo: Pierrot, 2014); and see TAKEMIYA Keiko, writer, *Kaze to Ki no Uta*, dir. YASUHIKO Yoshikazu (Tokyo: Triangle Staff, 1987). For more information on these examples, see “Chapter Four” in this thesis, 114–142. In regard of animated film adaptations of video games, consider particularly the *Show by Rock!!* franchise where there is an anthropomorphic leopard who is based on the “Gypsy” motif: See “Chapter Four” in this thesis, 140-141.

Conclusion

Counterstrategies to Antigypsyism in Entertainment Media



This thesis has confirmed and substantiated in detail its two-pronged research hypothesis, namely that the “Gypsy” stigma is neither uniform across the globe, nor across different types of media. Rather, comics, animated films, and games each use distinct conventions to represent the “Gypsy” stigma, and these conventions are heavily influenced by the cultural context from which these media products originate, even if they engage with a global audience. Before further discussing these results, I will recapitulate the benefits of this research as outlined in the beginning of the thesis:

“This thesis aims to benefit academia and society on three levels: first by shedding light on the blind spots of the “Gypsy” phantasma. Variations in the “Gypsy” concept used by different media and in diverse cultural contexts mean that people are exposed to different narratives and attributions to varying degrees. While the portrayal of Roma in European entertainment literature prior to 1945 has been researched in some detail, other media, regions, and historical periods have received much less attention, leading to potential blind spots, which obscure other traditions of the “Gypsy” stigma. Second, the study explores counterstrategies, for combatting antigypsyism. The case studies conducted herein will reveal both the challenges and opportunities in connection with Romani representation in comics, animated films, and games. The findings will not prescribe how media producers should depict people in their products. Rather, they serve as a resource for artists and media producers who are genuinely interested in producing works that engage with Romani history and contemporary topics of social justice, with the intention of deconstructing the stigma. This thesis offers new thoughts for those seeking to reflect upon and refine their creative processes. Lastly, this research considers memory cultures of Romani history in popular visual media, something that has hitherto been largely overlooked. The representation of

*people often encompasses an interpretation of their past. Romani history, particularly the national socialist genocide, has been recurrently featured in comics, animated films, and games since 1945. Despite their large audiences, especially in contemporary times, these media have been often ignored by antigypsyism researchers. The study illuminates how popular artists have interpreted, constructed, and been inspired by this history. Furthermore, it recognizes the role of Romani artists and activists in shaping discourse. Prominent cultural products that represent Romani history can be seen as indicators of societal awareness and efforts towards recognizing social issues. Moreover, media possess the potential to raise awareness of the history of institutional racism.*⁵⁸¹

Light has been shed on blind spots of the “Gypsy” phantasma by demonstrating the multiplicity of its discourses. As demonstrated for the realm of comics, these differences between discourses often arise from the content produced by artists who challenge mainstream and traditional forms of representing the phantasma. Their interpretations are then being imitated, inspiring further creativity. These artistic changes are linked to the cultural and historical context in which the artists work, as I have shown in each case. Some of these discourse evolutions contribute to specific comic markets becoming platforms for activist agenda (as seen in the US),⁵⁸² educating on history (as in the Francophone world),⁵⁸³ or challenging stereotypes by dissociating from the motif’s original meaning (as shown in the Japanese market).⁵⁸⁴ Moreover, global discourses tied to specific media are often influenced by the medium’s functionality or conventions, as games’ simulative nature, or Musical- and Disney-influenced global animated films exemplify.⁵⁸⁵ As a result of this multiplicity of discourses, the “Gypsy” motif is conveyed differently to various groups of media users. Each discourse has distinct outcomes, which I have discussed in every chapter. The analysis of these variants provides a basis for correctly assessing the *evolution* of the “Gypsy” motif,

⁵⁸¹ See “Introduction” in this thesis, 6-7.

⁵⁸² See “Chapter Two” in this thesis, 43–72.

⁵⁸³ See “Chapter Three” in this thesis, 98–104.

⁵⁸⁴ See “Chapter Four” in this thesis, 105–142.

⁵⁸⁵ See “Chapter Five”, and “Chapter Six” in this thesis, 146–204.

which is often overlooked by scholars who traditionally paid more attention to its reproduction.

This discussion could conclude here, as the question about the purpose has already been answered: Based on the Foucauldian assumption from the introduction that language shapes discourse and discourse significantly impacts real-world issues and discriminatory practices against Roma, the analysis of the “Gypsy” phantasma in various contexts is self-sufficient. A possible further step building on this research could be audience research, investigating how audiences perceive these discourses across different media. However, this is beyond the scope of the thesis. To analyse the reception of media content, we must first define the content, which I have done here – one step at a time. Nonetheless, previous chapters have gone beyond this aim and shown how artists have used or challenged the “Gypsy” motif for their creative, political, or educational purposes. Based on the findings of the thesis, I will further discuss strategies to address in what form the “Gypsy” stigma is continuously reproduced in entertainment media, providing an outlook on how this new knowledge can be applied in practice.

In the 21st century, some journalists and academics advocate for censoring racist or otherwise troubling content in contemporary or historical entertainment media. Others, however, emphasize the importance of artistic freedom, preserving historical culture and legacy, and suggest alternatives such as adding critical commentary when republishing works that contribute to the stigmatisation. Moreover, educating people about media literacy through school, exhibitions, and educational events is a prominent idea. Many academic works already address pedagogical approaches to combatting antigypsyism through media literacy.⁵⁸⁶

⁵⁸⁶ For example, see Wolfram Stender, ed., *Konstellationen des Antiziganismus: Theoretische Grundlagen, empirische Forschung und Vorschläge für die Praxis* (Wiesbaden: Springer VS, 2016); and see Alte Feuerwache e. V., and Jugendbildungsstätte Kaubstraße, ed., *Methodenhandbuch zum Thema Antiziganismus: Für die schulische und außerschulische Bildungsarbeit*, 2nd ed. (Münster: Unrast, 2014). see Astrid Messerschmidt, “Kontexte des Antiziganismus und Perspektiven antiziganismuskritischer Bildung,” *Enzyklopädie Erziehungswissenschaft Online*, 2019, https://www.erziehungswissenschaft.uni-wuppertal.de/fileadmin/erziehungswissenschaft/fach_gender-und-diversity/Messerschmidt_2019_EEO_Antiziganismus.pdf.

Therefore, this concluding chapter will not provide a comprehensive list of all possible strategies to counter antigypsyism in entertainment media but will instead focus on articulating and discussing those directly related to the main findings of this thesis. These findings are the multiplicity of discourses on the “Gypsy” motif, the differently evolving nature of each discourse, and their appearance in visual popular entertainment media.

On the one hand, I conclude that counterstrategies to antigypsyism in entertainment media should be tailored to each medium and national context. For example, artists can be encouraged to engage with themes of antigypsyism and Romani history in ways that fit their unique narrative styles and the specific cultural and media context they work in. Different genres and media have unique points of interest. Superhero comics, humorous adventure *Bandes Dessinées*, boys’ love manga, medieval fantasy games, and musical cartoons each offer (and demand!) distinct sensations and themes. While almost every artist and company considered in this thesis reproduces antigypsyist stereotypes to some extent, various counterstrategies have been found. These include potentially demystifying Romani history through fantastical stories (Stan Lee et al.),⁵⁸⁷ addressing institutional racism through anti-racist humour (Hergé),⁵⁸⁸ and normalizing Romani characters (Keiko Takemiya).⁵⁸⁹ Furthermore, this thesis has explored how the specific functionalities of media like games and animated films can either reinforce or challenge stigma, suggesting that these functionalities can be consciously used to combat racist depictions. Each user group (gamers, comic readers, etc.) can be addressed within the context of how “Gypsy” characters are used in their medium, providing tangible examples.

On the other hand, some strategies are relevant regarding all media and cultures, again in the context of the multiplicity of discourses surrounding the motif. I will discuss two such strategies in the following pages: First, hybridization: This refers to blending different, sometimes contradictory motifs. As observed throughout the thesis, new discourses can emerge from this blending process. Many stereotypes evolve or may be deconstructed through the mixing of previously separate

⁵⁸⁷ See “Chapter Two” in this thesis, 43–72.

⁵⁸⁸ See “Chapter Three” in this thesis, 82–91.

⁵⁸⁹ See “Chapter Four” in this thesis, 129–139.

images, creating new, complex representations that can be addressed. This approach has potential to deconstruct stigma by juxtaposing traditional motifs with contrasting ones. Second, combatting media scepticism: I use this term to address how some academics and parts of the public assess specific media. Antigypsyism scholars still excessively focus on literature and fine arts, while modern popular culture is often overlooked. This should not just be seen as a critique of extant scholarship but as a call to action for researchers in antigypsyism to engage with a broader range of media, especially those with a much higher popular appeal and thus impact.

1. Counterstrategies: Hybridization & Combatting Media Scepticism

The first counterstrategy presented here is hybridization, the blending of different motifs. This approach highlights both the continuity of stigma and its evolving nature. Before discussing hybridization, I will explain the problem of focusing too much on the coherence of stigma.

Antigypsyism research, like all racism research, relies on Critical Theory – a school of thought aiming to combat unjust power structures that are manifest and self-stabilizing. Theodor Adorno, in his famous *Dialektik der Aufklärung* (1944), analyses antisemitism [sic] as a “pathic projection”⁵⁹⁰, the “transfer of societally tabooed tendencies of the subject onto the object”⁵⁹¹. Similarly, the literary scholars Klaus-Michael Bogdal and Hans Brittnacher, in their significant monographs on the “Gypsy” motif, examine classic literature and arts, focusing on bourgeois fantasies and their imaginative worlds as the cradle of a coherent “Gypsy” motif existing as alterity. For example, the idea of free “Gypsies” would represent an alterity, a “pathic projection” of the tabooed desire of bourgeois society for an unbound life without duties or constraints. Although the use of Critical Theory in antigypsyism research is often implicit, it has also been explicitly referenced and discussed. Social and cultural scientist Franz Maciejewski applies this concept of “pathic projection” to antigypsyism, describing the “Gypsy” motif

⁵⁹⁰ Ger.: “pathische Projektion”. Theodor Adorno, and Max Horkheimer, *Dialektik der Aufklärung: Philosophische Fragmente*, 16th ed. (Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 2004), 201.

⁵⁹¹ Ger.: “Übertragung gesellschaftlich tabuierter Regungen des Subjekts auf das Objekt”. Ibid.

that exists as a counter-image to societal norms.⁵⁹² Political scientist Markus End, referencing Maciejewski, further discusses this application, noting that while Adorno himself held antigypsyist views,⁵⁹³ he remains relevant for antigypsyism research: The *Dialektik der Aufklärung* could be “considered already very explicitly as a theoretical approach for the understanding of antigypsyism”⁵⁹⁴. However, issues of overemphasising these self-stabilizing power structures in society can be exemplified with Adorno’s idea of the “Culture Industry” (Ger.: “Kulturindustrie”). He argues that all popular culture serves as a tool for the “executive powerful”⁵⁹⁵, meaning the leaders of media production companies. According to Adorno, “Culture today beats everything in similarity. Film, radio, magazines make a system. Every branch is unanimously in itself and all together.”⁵⁹⁶ He attributes this to the “technical and personnel apparatus” being part of the “economical selection mechanism”⁵⁹⁷, which determines media professionals’ success based on their alignment with the executives’ criteria, who would “not produce or let pass anything that is not equal to their charts, to their term of consumers, particularly to themselves.”⁵⁹⁸ This view considers the hierarchies of a film studio the same way as those of a steel factory, assuming a single mode of discourse directed at maintaining power structures. It is a claim that contrasts with the evidence of the subversive tendencies and the dynamic nature of “Gypsy” depictions in popular media, as demonstrated in this thesis.

⁵⁹² See Franz Maciejewski, “Das geschichtlich Unheimliche am Beispiel der Sinti und Roma,” *Psyche* 48, no. 1 (1994): 47.

⁵⁹³ See Markus End, “Adorno und ‘die Zigeuner’,” in *Antiziganistische Zustände: Zur Kritik eines allgegenwärtigen Ressentiments*, ed. Markus End, Kathrin Herold, and Yvonne Robel, 2nd ed. (Münster: Unrast, 2013), 95–109.

⁵⁹⁴ Ger.: “bereits sehr explizit als theoretischer Ansatz zum Verständnis von Antiziganismus betrachtet werden” Markus End, “Die Dialektik der Aufklärung als Antiziganismuskritik,” in *Konstellationen des Antiziganismus: Theoretische Grundlagen, empirische Forschung und Vorschläge für die Praxis*, ed. Wolfram Stender (Wiesbaden: Springer VS, 2016), 90.

⁵⁹⁵ Ger.: “Exekutivgewaltigen”. Adorno, and Horkheimer, *Dialektik der Aufklärung*, 130.

⁵⁹⁶ Ger.: “Kultur heute schlägt alles mit Ähnlichkeit. Film, Radio, Magazine machen ein System aus. Jede Sparte ist einstimmig in sich und alle zusammen. Die ästhetischen Manifestationen noch der politischen Gegensätze verkünden gleichermaßen das Lob des stählernen Rhythmus.” *Ibid.*, 128.

⁵⁹⁷ Ger.: “Erklärung durchs Eigengewicht des technischen und personellen Apparats, der freilich in jeder Einzelheit als Teil des ökonomischen Selektionsmechanismus zu verstehen ist”. *Ibid.*, 130.

⁵⁹⁸ Ger.: “die Verabredung, zumindest die gemeinsame Entschlossenheit der Exekutivgewaltigen, nichts herzustellen oder durchzulassen, was nicht ihren Tabellen, ihrem Begriff von Konsumenten, vor allem ihnen selber gleicht.” *Ibid.*

That said, we shall focus on hybridization – the blending of different motifs – as it provides a more comprehensive understanding of the “Gypsy” motif and its history by recognizing that the continuities and breaks within the motif coexisted throughout history. For example, we may critically assess Markus End’s idea of “Sinnstrukturen” (Eng.: “Sense Structures”). Using the portrayal of nomadic “Gypsies” as an example, he explains:

*“The term Sinnstruktur displays an attempt to detect continuities and logics within racist stereotypes and prejudices, even though these themselves subject to processes of transformation. As most simple example can be considered the transformation of the visual stereotype of the ‘Gypsy horse wagon’ into a ‘camper’. The visual stereotype modernized itself, but the core of the statement stayed the same.”*⁵⁹⁹

End demonstrates convincingly how the “core of the statement” – about a nomadic lifestyle – can persist in an evolved visual language. He describes the stereotype of the “Gypsy horse wagon” being “modernized” to a “camper” as a process of adaptation, where the core stereotype remains unchanged.

Yet, the various connotations surrounding the image change. The very concept of modernity introduces new, contradictory meanings to this stereotype. Originally, the “Gypsy” stigma implied a sense of pre-modernity. According to Brittnacher, the allure of the “Gypsy” fantasy lies in “the notion of a past that is still present in today’s life, evoked by covered wagons, colourful sequins, and charming disorder.”⁶⁰⁰ Consider one earlier case study from this thesis, Hergé’s comic *Le Stratonef* (1937–39).⁶⁰¹ Here, one of the protagonists accidentally destroys a horse wagon and compensates the “Gypsy” owners with a modern camper.

⁵⁹⁹ Ger.: “Der Begriff Sinnstruktur stellt einen Versuch dar, Kontinuitäten und Logiken innerhalb rassistischer Stereotype und Vorurteile zu erfassen, auch wenn diese selbst Wandlungsprozessen unterliegen. Als simpelstes Beispiel kann die Transformation des visuellen Stereotyps des ›Zigeunerpferdewagens‹ hin zu einem ›Wohnwagen‹ gelten. Das visuelle Stereotyp hat sich modernisiert, der Kern der Aussage ist jedoch gleich geblieben”. Markus End, *Antiziganismus in der deutschen Öffentlichkeit: Strategien und Mechanismen medialer Kommunikation* (Heidelberg: Dokumentations- und Kulturzentrum Deutscher Sinti und Roma, 2016), 37.

⁶⁰⁰ Ger.: “die von Planwagen, buntem Flitter und reizvoller Unordnung evozierte Vorstellung einer im Leben von heute noch gegenwärtigen Vergangenheit”. Hans R Brittnacher, *Leben auf der Grenze: Klischee und Faszination des Zigeunerbildes in Literatur und Kunst* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2012), 198.

⁶⁰¹ See “Chapter Three” in this thesis, 77–78.

According to social scientist Jörn Ahrens, this part of the story symbolizes an agenda to civilize,⁶⁰² suppressing the motif's attribute of archaic and primitive pre-modernity. While the symbol of a nomadic lifestyle remains in the image of the modern camper, the attribute of pre-modernity disappears. This pre-modern attribute of the "Gypsy horse wagon" includes various fantastical, mysterious, and idealized connotations. Their disappearance might help us understand the entirely disenchanted discourses of journalism on Romani migrants since the 1990s. The coverage resembled more orientalized discussions about Turkish migrants in Germany or North-African migrants in France, than connecting to the older stigma of "Gypsies" as "wood people" living in mysterious spaces of the ostracized.

Therefore, the "Gypsy horse wagon" does not simply become a "camper"; rather, the "camper" emerges as a fusion of multiple elements, including the "Gypsy horse wagon" (nomadism), technological advancement and consumption (modernity and the camper as obtainable good), and the image of "leisure travel" (contrasting the survival aspect of the previous "Gypsy" motif). Each of these elements brings its own set of meanings, creating a complex and layered image. This blending reflects broader cultural shifts and the dynamic nature of stereotypes. It is an important ingredient to almost all discourse evolutions and emerging variants this thesis has demonstrated regarding the "Gypsy" concept in American, Francophone, and Japanese comics, animated films, and games.

However, these hybridizations do not just come naturally; they show up in creative ways in entertainment and the arts, as we have seen. Criticizing antigypsyism in fictional media products is not just about social justice. It is also an artistic critique that values creative work. Stereotypes are just imitating and do not reflect a creative process. Creative work involves innovation, which goes against the very nature of stigma and challenges essentialist views.

Therefore, the creative use of hybridization has special potential in countering the "Gypsy" stigma. This thesis provides and analyses key examples of this. For

⁶⁰² See Jörn Ahrens, "Randerscheinungen: Roma-Figuren im klassischen franko-belgischen Comic," in Hertrampf, Marina Ortrud M. / Von Hagen, Kirsten (ed.): *Selbst- und Fremdbilder von Roma in Comic und Graphic Novel: Vom Holocaust bis zur Gegenwart*, ed. Marina Ortrud M Hertrampf, and Kirsten von Hagen (Munich: AVM, 2021), 131.

instance, the comic book super-villain *Doctor Doom*, created by Stan Lee and Jack Kirby, not merely reproduces but also challenges the “Gypsy” stigma by blending it with themes of intellectual leadership, elitist striving, and revolutionary desires for emancipating. These themes contradict traditional stereotypes.⁶⁰³ We also analyse other contradictory hybridizations, such as Keiko Takemiya’s character *Serge*, an aristocratic half-“Gypsy”, in the manga *Kaze to Ki no Uta*,⁶⁰⁴ and the reimagined “Gypsy” fortune tellers in medieval fantasy games.⁶⁰⁵ Ultimately, Romani activists and representative organizations should decide what counterstrategies are appropriate, not academics. For example, some Romani activists, like Vicente Rodriguez and members of the German Roma Center e. V., appreciate Lee’s and Kirby’s hybridized “Gypsy” characters,⁶⁰⁶ while others may not. The approach of hybridization differs from normalizing Romani portrayals in the arts, for example, depicting Romani protagonists in conventional jobs, living in regular apartments, and doing mundane things. While these portrayals are essential for challenging stigma, they only address one aspect of combatting antigypsyism. They do not fulfil the desire for sensation, which is why the fantastical stigma persists in art, and therefore, these normalizing depictions are incapable in replacing the stigma. Hybridization fulfils this desire for sensation through creative efforts. It plays a key role in preparing to break down the stigma in public perception through its contradictory distortion.

The second counterstrategy we are discussing here is the necessity to combat media scepticism. I use the term ‘media scepticism’ in reference to how some academics and parts of the public critically evaluate specific media content, mostly based on the medium it is presented in. While discussing scepticism towards specific media might be not important in a study focused solely on literature and fine arts, this discussion becomes significant in a thesis that explores popular culture, especially among younger generations. This includes media like comics and video games, which have been just recently, or are still, seen as corrupting influences. There are misunderstandings in public discussions

⁶⁰³ See “Chapter Two” in this thesis, 53–62.

⁶⁰⁴ See “Chapter Four” in this thesis, 129–139.

⁶⁰⁵ See “Chapter Five” in this thesis, 155–176.

⁶⁰⁶ See “Chapter Two” in this thesis, 70–72.

that contribute to confusion and setbacks in combatting harmful media content. This thesis finds a multiplicity of media-specific discourses. However, we may not assume that some media are inherently creating discourses that are worse than others.

To decipher media content means to participate in a medium. An obvious example is video games. Understanding video games starts with getting to know the basic game mechanics and player controls. Some users go further and learn the code used in game files, allowing them to create software modifications (“mods”). Each medium requires a different form of deciphering. Marshall McLuhan explains in his *Understanding Media* (1964) how people adapt to different media formats based on the level of required participation in and complexity of each medium. He elaborates on the paradox that

*“in the TV age, Johnny can’t read because reading, as customarily taught, is too superficial and consumerlike an activity. Therefore the highbrow paperback, because of its depth character, may appeal to youngsters who spurn ordinary narrative offerings. Teachers today frequently find that students who can’t read a page of history are becoming experts in code and linguistic analysis.”*⁶⁰⁷

While some people might find certain media too superficial and boring, others feel overwhelmed by the complexity of unfamiliar media. This can lead to suspicion among the latter group. McLuhan also discusses this in relation to historical debates about violent depictions in comics:

*“The elders of the tribe, who had never noticed that the ordinary newspaper was as frantic as a surrealist art exhibition, could hardly be expected to notice that the comic books were as exotic as eighth-century illuminations. So, having noticed nothing about the form, they could discern nothing of the contents, either. The mayhem and violence were all they noted. Therefore, with naïve literary logic, they waited for violence to flood the world. Or, alternatively, they attributed existing crime to the comics. The dimmest-witted convict learned to moan, “It wuz comic books done this to me”*⁶⁰⁸

⁶⁰⁷ Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The extensions of Man* (Berkeley: Gingko Press, 2016), 112.

⁶⁰⁸ Ibid.

This misunderstanding of media has led to misguided discussions about supposedly harmful content, not only in comics but also in other forms of entertainment such as rock, and metal music, and video games. This is also relevant for understanding how racism in media is interpreted, hindering effective analysis of antigypsyism in media as well.

This is also demonstrated clearly in the recent case of the video game *Through the Darkest of Times* (2020) in Germany, which will show how the public, including journalists, and politicians, often fail to correctly evaluate entertainment media.⁶⁰⁹

A thematic exploration of the history of Romani persecution in Nazi Germany has become publicly prominent in only one video game, which was *Through the Darkest of Times* by the development studio Paintbucket Games. Initially launched for PC and later for mobile devices and gaming consoles, the game immerses players in the role of a fictional resistance group in Berlin from 1933 to 1945. The game presents an interactive narrative with the aim of conveying historical knowledge. In the game, the player is confronted with atrocities of the Nazi regime and its victims. It also considers the experience of Sinti and Roma, shedding light on their fate.

Through the Darkest of Times was the first video game in Germany to feature Nazi symbols, including the swastika. This inclusion was made possible following a permission from the “Unabhängige Selbstkontrolle” (USK), the German rating board for video games. While other game series such as *Wolfenstein* (since 1981) and *Call of Duty* (since 2003) had previously used those symbols, they were removed from versions for the German market due to a law (§ 86a Strafgesetzbuch) that restricts the public use of “verfassungswidrigen” (Eng.: “unconstitutional”) symbols,⁶¹⁰ with a few exceptions for educational and artistic purposes. But the determination of whether games could be regarded as educational or art was a sensitive issue, particularly in regard of mature themes. This issue must be understood in the context of international debates, such as the “Killerspieldebatte” (Eng.: “Killer Game Debate”) in Germany and the Jack

⁶⁰⁹ Paintbucket Games, *Through the Darkest of Times*, Windows, macOS (Giebelstadt: HandyGames, 2020).

⁶¹⁰ Muse Software, *Castle Wolfenstein*, Apple II, Commodore 64, MS-DOS, Atari 400, Atari 800 (Baltimore: Muse Software, 1981); and Infinity Ward, and Aspyr, *Call of Duty*, Windows, macOS, Nokia N-Gage (Santa Monica: Activision, 2003).

Thompson debate in the USA during the 1990s and 2000s. In these debates, users were frequently stigmatized as potentially violent as well as intellectually and socially challenged due to assumed negative influences from the medium of video games. Journalists and politicians demanded the prohibition of violent depictions in games, without considering the varying contexts of violence within the medium. Moreover, it was discussed to legally persecute consumers who engaged with such content.⁶¹¹

In the context of this stigma's legacy, the developers of *Through the Darkest of Times* faced backlash when the game was announced in 2018. The article *Jetzt auch mit Hakenkreuz* (Eng.: *Now also with Swastika*) by journalist Jens Blankennagel in the *Frankfurter Rundschau* drew attention,⁶¹² as did that of Israel's ambassador in Germany at the time, Jeremy Issacharoff. He expressed on Twitter: "Shocked that a Berlin company has been allowed to use the hideous and offensive swastika in a new video game. This horrific symbol has no place in Germany and particularly games [sic] in the hands of the young."⁶¹³ Agreeing with this sentiment, German Minister for Family Affairs, Franziska Giffey (of the social democrat SPD party), stated towards the *Funke Mediengruppe*: "One does not play with swastikas"⁶¹⁴. Elisabeth Winkelmeier-Becker, speaking on legal matters for the conservative CDU party, argued that video games could not "appropriately deal with the historical injustice of national socialism"⁶¹⁵. The German Trade Union Confederation (*Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund*, DGB) issued the official statement that "We demand a revocation of the USK decision"⁶¹⁶. Although

⁶¹¹ For example, see Matthias Dittmayer, *Stigma-videospiele: Hintergründe und Verlauf der Diskussion über gewaltdarstellende Videospiele in Deutschland*, vers. 1.003, 2014, last modified 1 January 2015, <https://docplayer.org/29029167-Stigma-videospiele-hintergruende-und-verlauf-der-diskussion-ueber-gewaltdarstellende-videospiele-in-deutschland-von-matthias-dittmayer.html>.

⁶¹² See Jens Blankennagel, "Jetzt auch mit Hakenkreuz," *Frankfurter Rundschau*, between 10 and 17 August 2018, last modified 22 November 2019, <https://www.fr.de/politik/jetzt-auch-hakenkreuz-10958405.html>.

⁶¹³ Jeremy Issacharoff, (@JIssacharoff), "Shocked that a Berlin company has been allowed to use the hideous and offensive swastika in a new video game," X, 17 August 2018, 16:24pm, <https://x.com/JIssacharoff/status/1030460280373997571>.

⁶¹⁴ Ger.: "Mit Hakenkreuzen spielt man nicht". Quoted according to Diana Zinkler, and Jan Mölleken, "Giffey kritisiert Veröffentlichung von Spiel mit Hakenkreuz," *Berliner Morgenpost*, 23 August 2018, <https://www.morgenpost.de/politik/article215152539/Giffey-kritisiert-Veroeffentlichung-von-Spiel-mit-Hakenkreuz.html>.

⁶¹⁵ Ger.: "ungeeignet, sich 'angemessen mit dem historischen Unrecht des Nationalsozialismus' auseinanderzusetzen." Quoted according to *ibid*.

⁶¹⁶ Ger.: "Wir fordern die Rücknahme der USK-Entscheidung". Quoted after *ibid*.

Through the Darkest of Times was relatively unknown in the gaming community, it gained significance as a subject of political debate in Germany. There were not such debates on the use of swastikas in films or other forms of visual popular culture, let alone the appropriateness of, for example, films to educate about the history of racist ideologies.

Ultimately, following its release in 2020, the game received numerous awards and nominations. For example, it won the *Deutsche Computerspielpreis* (Eng.: *German Computer Game Prize*), which is jointly awarded by the government and the gaming industry. The jury justified its decision with the following lines:

*“The game excels, especially due to the profound research by the developers. Each new beginning reveals further fates and shattering abysses of everyday life in Berlin that confront the players with the immediate consequences of their actions. Given the right-wing shift in Europe, this game is more relevant than ever and poses the pressing question: How would I act?”*⁶¹⁷

Yet, some commentators, notably those associated with the Central Council of German Sinti and Roma, still expressed reservations concerning the game, in particular its inclusion of scenes depicting the concentration camp for Sinti and Roma in Berlin-Marzahn. Initially, these reservations not only addressed how it was depicted but also the mere fact that it was depicted in a video game. Some aspects of the camp’s depictions in the game were justifiably worthy of concern. Still, while antigypsyism researchers critique the work of media professionals, they have not yet effectively outlined constructive strategies to counteract antigypsyist portrayals. There are media professionals who actively aim to critically explore the historical or contemporary forms of antigypsyism but struggle to do so. With the intention to give support to these media professionals, the following pages provide an overview of those sections of the game that have been disliked, highlighting the main points of my assessment, which was undertaken as part of a commissioned contract research for the Central Council of German Sinti and Roma in 2020.

⁶¹⁷ “Through the Darkest of Times,” *Deutscher Computerspielpreis*, 2020, <https://deutscher-computerspielpreis.de/chronik/through-the-darkest-of-times/>.

2. The Four Dimensions of Representing Romani History and Historical Antigypsyism in Visual Entertainment Media

The conclusion of this assessment of the game *Through the Darkest of Times* will be following a predetermined scheme that I explain here. Many works of popular culture appropriately address the histories of antisemitism and American slavery. However, the accurate and nuanced representation of Romani history and antigypsyism – without relying on stereotypes like fortune tellers, nomads, or thieves – remains largely absent from popular culture. This gap is evident in various visual media products from the 20th and 21st centuries, as discussed in previous chapters. As a result, scholars studying antigypsyism often find themselves confronted with a vast array of stigmatizing representations, yet this spectrum has not been fully documented.

To address this, we can categorize the educational value of works on Romani history or antigypsyism in visual popular culture into four main areas: behavioural representation, historical contextualization, visual language, and explicitness.

1. Behavioural Representation: This focuses on how the behaviour and roles of Romani characters are portrayed. It covers the overall narrative and the typical “Gypsy” motifs it conveys, such as depictions of criminal activity, fortune-telling, or the femme fatale.
2. Historical Contextualization: This category addresses the “why” behind a narrative. For example, in stories about historical antigypsyism, it asks what context is given for Romani characters being shown as persecuted, or living in poverty.
3. Visual Language: Visual media often conveys meaning through imagery. For instance, this category examines whether the appearance of Romani characters reinforces stereotypes, and how their social status is visualized.
4. Explicitness: This refers to how clearly a work conveys its message. Unlike historical contextualization, which deals with underlying implications, explicitness assesses how much prior knowledge or intellectual effort is required from the audience to understand the other three levels of representation.

Considering these four dimensions, we should not only focus on criticizing works but also on offering constructive suggestions for better representation.

3. Suggestions for a Better Representation: The Case of *Through the Darkest of Times* (2020)

Since 1935, concentration camps were set up in many sites throughout Germany, including the closely monitored camp for Sinti and Roma in the Marzahn district of Berlin. The activities of the police were closely supported by the “Rassenhygienischen Forschungsstelle” (Eng.: “Racial Hygiene Research Centre”) identifying the people. This identification laid the groundwork for subsequently deporting Sinti and Roma to concentration and extermination camps. In Berlin-Marzahn, these deportations were systematically executed starting in spring of 1943.⁶¹⁸

The video game *Through the Darkest of Times* uses these historical events as the backdrop for its story. Players are presented with narrative text and dialogues accompanied by cartoon images and can choose between different text options representing responses by the player character. The story follows members of a fictional resistance group in Berlin from 1933 to 1945. At one point, they encounter an American journalist who seeks proof of Nazi atrocities.

In the game’s short story *Das Lager* (Eng.: *The Camp*), the player character, along with an ally named *Schwester Berta* (Eng.: *Sister Berta*), visits the Berlin-Marzahn camp. The characters carry a camera and a milk crate as they approach the camp, portrayed as a collection of wagons with children playing in the dirt. A strong smell of human waste is present, which *Schwester Berta* explains is due to the camp’s location between a sewage area and a cemetery. She comments, “Whether with evil intention or not... but for Sinti and Roma there is no worse place.”⁶¹⁹ The protagonists gain entry to the camp by pretending to deliver milk. Inside, they meet children who recognize *Schwester Berta* and are happy to see her. The player can choose to take photos of them. They also talk to a mother and her son, who is wrapped in a dirty blanket and familiar with *Schwester Berta*. The mother explains that there is “this strange doctor” (Ger.: “dieser seltsame Arzt”) and a woman who is “equally strange” (Ger.: “genauso seltsam”). She

⁶¹⁸ See Karola Fings, *Sinti und Roma: Geschichte einer Minderheit* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 2016), 62–69; and see Patricia Pientka, *Das Zwangslager für Sinti und Roma in Berlin-Marzahn: Alltag, Verfolgung, und Deportation* (Berlin: Metropol, 2013), 32–43, 155–162.

⁶¹⁹ Ger.: “Ob mit böser Absicht oder nicht... aber für Sinti und Roma gibt es keinen schlimmeren Ort”.

describes that “the doctor and this woman – they examine us, they look at us from head to toe: body, teeth – like animals. They take pictures. And they take the children with them.”⁶²⁰ Her son, *Oskar*, has been taken twice, measured, and photographed. In the following moments, a doctor and a woman, his assistant, arrive. The game does not show these events visually but describes them: The man forcefully holds *Oskar* and examines his head, while the woman takes notes. Some people in the camp gather and resist, and the camp police threaten them with batons. The situation escalates. *Oskar*’s mother tries to free him but is severely beaten by the police. More officers arrive and disperse the crowd. *Oskar* is then taken away in a car that quickly departs. During this scene, the player can choose to take photos for evidence or try to intervene, but these actions do not change the outcome. In the end, the protagonist and their friend leave the camp and discuss what might come next. *Schwester Berta* mentions, “Mr Hitler has been announcing for years now that he intends to solve the ‘problem’ of the Jews, the Sinti and the Roma, and all those who are not healthy ‘German-blood Aryans’. But no one seems to care about what exactly the ‘solution’ to the problem really entails”⁶²¹. If the player asks, “Do you think they will kill these people?”⁶²² *Schwester Berta* replies, “I don’t know. [...] But I fear what we have just witnessed is only the beginning.”⁶²³

After this interactive part, a short film segment in the same aesthetic style shows the camp again. A narrator says, “No one outside the camp knew what had happened here on this day. No one wanted to know.”⁶²⁴ The game does not revisit the American journalist or the sought-after photos, nor does it mention the fate of the kidnapped boy or the other camp inmates. This story about the concentration camp in Berlin-Marzahn is the only part of the game that focuses on Sinti and Roma as victims of National Socialism. The genocide of the Sinti and Roma is not explicitly mentioned later in the game, only briefly hinted at in the conclusion

⁶²⁰ Ger.: “Der Arzt und diese Frau – die untersuchen uns, die schauen uns von oben bis unten an: Körper, Zähne – wie Tiere. Sie machen Fotos. Und sie nehmen die Kinder mit“.

⁶²¹ Ger.: “Herr Hitler kündigt schon seit Jahren an, das ‘Problem’ der Juden, der Sinti und der Roma und aller, die keine gesunden ‘deutschblütigen Arier’ sind, zu lösen. Aber niemand scheint sich dafür zu interessieren, was genau die ‘Lösung’ des Problems wirklich bedeutet”.

⁶²² Ger.: “Glaubst du, sie werden diese Menschen umbringen?”

⁶²³ Ger.: “Ich weiß es nicht. [...] Aber ich fürchte, was wir gerade gesehen haben, ist nur der Anfang.”

⁶²⁴ Ger.: “Niemand außerhalb des Lagers wusste, was hier an diesem Tag geschehen war. Niemand wollte es Wissen”.

of this short story. The game exhibits three major problems, on the dimensions of context, visual language, and narrative conclusion that will be discussed here.

First, the matter of context: According to personal correspondence with Jörg Friedrich, one of the founders of the development studio, the developers drew inspiration from three books, along with various magazine and newspaper articles, when portraying the experiences of Sinti and Roma during the Nazi era. They referred to the two monographs by Daniel Neumann and Patricia Pientka on the concentration camp of Berlin-Marzahn.⁶²⁵ Moreover, they looked at the autobiography of Auschwitz survivor Otto Rosenberg, who was persecuted, deported, and interned as a Sinto in Berlin.⁶²⁶ After the war, Rosenberg became a dedicated civil rights activist and served as chairman of the State Association of German Sinti and Roma in Berlin-Brandenburg. Consequently, the game developers conducted research.

We see the developers' knowledge of the history through the game subtly referencing historical individuals, and the living conditions of camp residents. For example, an institute mentioned, and linked to *Oskar's* kidnapping, seems to reference the former "Rassenhygienischen Forschungsstelle" (RHF), even though the game does not explicitly name it. This institute was run by the psychiatric and 'racial scientist' Robert Ritter, who, together with his assistant Eva Justin, appears to be the "strange doctor" and his helper in the game. The RHF staff played a significant role in the persecution, deportation, forced sterilization, and killing of Sinti and Roma.⁶²⁷ Players learn about how Sinti and Roma were persecuted and imprisoned based on ideas of "race", along with the scrutiny they faced from 'race scientists', which may be new to many players. *Through the Darkest of Times* helps spread awareness about these historical events.

However, the game fails to provide enough historical background for the story, which results in portraying Sinti and Roma as if they were simply poor outsiders.

⁶²⁵ Daniel Neumann, *Kein Vergessen: Sinti- und Roma-Zwangslager Marzahn*, 2nd ed. (Berlin: Bündnis kein Vergessen, 2009); and Pientka, *Das Zwangslager*.

⁶²⁶ Otto Rosenberg, *Das Brennglas: Aufgezeichnet von Ulrich Enzensberger* (Berlin: Klaus Wagenbach, 2012).

⁶²⁷ See Fings, *Sinti und Roma*, 65–66, 79–80.

Their long history in Germany and their diverse lives within German society are overlooked. The game leaves a key question unaddressed: How did the lives of Sinti and Roma in the concentration camp differ from their lives before the Nazis persecuted and imprisoned them? Caravans, dirt, and stench not only symbolize the suffering caused by the National Socialists in the camp but also existing stereotypes about Roma, which still affect people today. Pientka, in her research on the concentration camp of Berlin-Marzahn, points out that many Sinti and Roma in Berlin lived similar lives to the majority society before being interned. They held various jobs, such as “clerks, labourers, and self-employed individuals”⁶²⁸, and resided in regular rented apartments.⁶²⁹ The game developers do not communicate these details about the differences in living conditions before and after internment. Sinti and Roma were not a uniform group; they came from diverse backgrounds and social strata. They were not merely marginalized but an integral part of the society they inhabited. The game reinforces the perspective towards Sinti and Roma as “Others”. This also happens because members of the minority are not shown as part of the political resistance. The game does touch on various aspects such as the political beliefs, sexual orientation,⁶³⁰ and Jewish background of resistance members and their resulting persecution: The personal backgrounds of the members of the resistance group are randomly and diversely generated each time a new game is started,⁶³¹ but a Romani identity is never an option. During the scene in the camp, Romani individuals resist when Oskar is kidnapped, but they are mostly shown as reacting rather than being active participants in the story.

Additionally, we find another misleading part in the game. It is about what *Schwester Berta* says about the terrible smell at the concentration camp, explaining that it is close to a sewage treatment plant and a cemetery. She says,

⁶²⁸ Ger.: “Angestellte, Arbeiter und Arbeiterinnen sowie als Selbstständige”. Pientka, *Das Zwangslager*, 24.

⁶²⁹ See *ibid.*, 24–25.

⁶³⁰ There are scenes where the player learns about the homosexual orientation of a resistance group member. As the game progresses, this character may also experience violence in their everyday life. See the file `TextAsset member_event_scene_de` in `[...]\TtDoT_Data\resources.assets` of the game’s directory.

⁶³¹ For example, the game developers have created specific files for generating Jewish character names. You can find these files under `Steam\steamapps\common\Through The Darkest of Times\TtDoT_Data\StreamingAssets\Resources`. The names are listed in the files `jewish_lastnames(.txt)`, `jewish_surnames_female(.txt)` and `jewish_surnames_male(.txt)`, and also in assets within `[...]\resources.assets`.

“Whether it is on purpose or not... but for Sinti and Roma, there is no worse place”. The sentence appears to reference a decontextualized statement by Pientka and Rosenberg. Pientka explains that

“the proximity of the area [of the camp] to the cemetery as well as to the sewage fields, along with the harassment by the unbearable smells, was an additional burden to the in the camp imprisoned Sinti and Roma, as such places were considered by many Sinti and Roma as traditionally ‘unpure’ and, thus, inappropriate as a place of residence.”⁶³²

Similarly, Rosenberg remarks, “it smelled horribly. Usually, we would not have stayed at such a place, already due to our laws, which are prohibiting that.”⁶³³ However, the game presents the information in a misleading way, because it does not clarify why these smells affect Sinti and Roma more compared to others.



Fig. 38: Screenshot from the game, depicting the concentration camp of Berlin-Marzahn.

⁶³² Pientka, *Das Zwangslager*, 60.

⁶³³ Rosenberg, *Das Brennglas*, 18–19.



Fig. 39: A photograph by amateur photographer Artur Georgi, which is also cited by Pientka, *Das Zwangslager*, 63–67 – one of the game developer’s main references. The photo was used in Nazi propaganda at the Lichtenberger Heimatmuseum. In the game, the developers clearly traced elements from Georgi’s photo, including the perspective, wagons, the oven, and even the hanging laundry, as seen in figs. 38.

Second, there is a problematic dimension in the game’s visual language. The game’s portrayal of the camp reflects actual historical photos (figs. 38 & 39). However, these images are not from the prisoners themselves but from the perspective of those who caused their suffering. This means we should look at them critically. The images in the game do not fully depict the harsh reality most prisoners faced. Instead of having their own living spaces, they had to settle for makeshift accommodations made from poor materials like cardboard and corrugated iron. Many had to share cramped trailers or even sleep outside.⁶³⁴ Moreover, all prisoners shown are women and children, often pictured outside

⁶³⁴ See *ibid.*, 59–62.

and sometimes barefoot.⁶³⁵ No men are shown as prisoners. These images play into a stereotype from colonial times, showing barefoot people outside and reinforcing the image of a “Gypsy” woman surrounded by many children, with no man present (figs. 40).⁶³⁶ The images also resemble those staged by missionaries, with a nun giving milk to dirty, barefoot children who seem happy to have visitors and pose for photos.



Fig. 40: Screenshot from the game.

Lastly, apart from not providing enough background information and having problematic content and presentation, there is one more significant issue: the story does not give a broader perspective that highlights Sinti and Roma as victims of the Nazi genocide. In the game, the player encounters various people who suffer from antisemitic persecution. One such group is a Jewish family that appears in several short stories. As the player progresses through the game, they may start to emotionally connect to this family and understand the challenges they endure. The stories depict them as being discriminated and, ultimately, sent

⁶³⁵ See Frank Reuter, *Der Bann des Fremden: Die fotografische Konstruktion des ‘Zigeuners’* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2014), 198–202.

⁶³⁶ See *ibid.*, 112.

to an extermination camp. Here, while the game allows players to actively participate in resisting oppression, it too highlights moments where they may feel powerless. This is also evident in the short story set in the concentration camp of Berlin-Marzahn. Throughout the game, players might hope to influence and save characters like young *Oskar*, as they have successfully intervened in other stories before. Even though the interactions are simulated, they still draw the player into the gameplay, potentially strengthening their emotional connection to the characters. However, the story “Das Lager” ends abruptly without resolving key plot points. We do not find out what happens to *Oskar* after he is taken away, nor do we learn about the fate of the Sinti and Roma who were sent to concentration and extermination camps, even though the main characters were nearby and could see what was happening. The most intense part of the persecution story, the genocide of hundreds of thousands of Sinti and Roma, is not given much attention.

In conclusion, *Through the Darkest of Times* educates players about the persecution and forced imprisonment of Sinti and Roma, as well as their scrutiny by racial scientists during the Nazi rule. By doing so, the game spreads awareness and encourages players to explore the topic further. Also, the behavioural representation in *Through the Darkest of Times* can generally be considered appropriate. However, its depiction of the suffering of Sinti and Roma during the Nazi era has issues. There is a lack of context, and while the game presents Nazi-era photos from a fresh angle, focusing on resistance against the regime, it still perpetuates biased views and stereotypes against Sinti and Roma. Moreover, the game sidelines Sinti and Roma as victims of the Nazi genocide.

To improve the game’s portrayal, the following steps could have been taken:

Context: To better understand the scene at the concentration camp of Berlin-Marzahn, it would help to provide more context about the people who the Nazis interned there. For example, a short video clip or a written section could show what their lives were like before their internment. This approach would challenge the idea that the conditions in the camp were somehow related to the people’s previous living conditions or that they reflected cultural norms among Sinti and

Roma. It can combat the Romani stigma of the people being collectively nomadic, homeless, uneducated, lazy, and poor. The developers should also consider portraying Sinti and Roma as actively resisting their oppressors, just as other groups in the game. To accurately represent this, they should be depicted as integral part of society, and as individuals with agency in the story. One way to acknowledge their role in resistance could be through a scene where a character from the resistance group refers to their Romani identity in a dialogue or at least the option of a Romani identity among resistance group members.

Visual language: Currently, the elements and perspective in the images are biased. For example, showing Sinti and Roma outside with a caravan, or women with many barefoot children, reinforces common stereotypes. The developers should change how scenes are portrayed visually, instead of reproducing coeval, biased Nazi photography.

Explicitness: Finally, to expand the educational outcome, the game could explicitly name the “Rassenhygienische Forschungsstelle” as well as Robert Ritter and Eva Justin that are already appearing in the scene. Also, Sinti and Roma should be specifically named, along with other groups, as victims of the Holocaust. While it might not fit the game’s storyline to depict the deportation of Sinti and Roma from the concentration camp of Berlin-Marzahn in 1943, they could be mentioned in the later scene titled “Gefangene” (Eng.: “Prisoners”). The scene features the account of a fictional Auschwitz inmate who manages to escape and recounts to the player the systematic extermination of people carried out there.

4. Final Remarks on Portraying Romani History in Comics, Animated Films, and Games

Portraying Romani history in popular visual media, including in games like *Through the Darkest of Times* (2020) by Paintbucket Games, is not a novelty. Many case studies in this thesis interpret Romani history in one way or another. Some works explicitly address Romani persecution during the Nazi era, either to entertain or educate.⁶³⁷ Others feature more or less fictionalized stories inspired by these events.⁶³⁸ Moreover, some works present historicized “Gypsy” fantasies based on adaptations and hybridizations from literary history.⁶³⁹ Rarely, the works are entirely anachronistic.⁶⁴⁰

Representing Romani history in popular comics, for example, started to humanize significantly in the 1960s, a period when comic characters began to gain complexity and depth. This trend of portraying “Gypsy” and Romani characters more realistically continued to grow from the late 1970s,⁶⁴¹ possibly linked to the successes of the Romani civil rights movement during that time. However, the shift to non-fantastical portrayals did not occur uniformly across all national and media-specific discourses. On the one hand, in Francophone and Japanese comics, as well as animated films, Romani characters were more often depicted as normalized individuals. On the other hand, the fantastical “Gypsy” character with magical powers has persisted and even strengthened as a convention in American superhero comics and role-playing games. Remarkably, the supernatural abilities in these characters raises questions about whether this trend helps deconstruct the associated stigma or not – since this trend is frequently connected to contradictory hybridizations and media-specific reinterpretations that distort the stigma nevertheless.⁶⁴²

In short, the multiplicity of discourses on the “Gypsy” motif affects not only the depiction of characters but also the representation of Romani history, leading to

⁶³⁷ See “Chapter Two”, “Chapter Three”, and “Chapter Six” in this thesis, 49–53, 98–101, 195–203.

⁶³⁸ See “Chapter Two” in this thesis, 53–72.

⁶³⁹ See “Chapter Three”, “Chapter Four”, “Chapter Five”, and “Chapter Six” in this thesis, 103–104, 114–142, 155–162, 186–195.

⁶⁴⁰ See “Chapter One”, “Chapter Three”, and “Chapter Six” in this thesis, 33–34, 94, 185.

⁶⁴¹ See “Chapter Two”, “Chapter Three”, and “Chapter Four” in this thesis, 63–72, 98–101, 129–139.

⁶⁴² See “Chapter Two”, and “Chapter Five” in this thesis, 53–72, 162–176.

diverse memory cultures. Some depictions may be more appropriate than others. The appropriateness of these different memory cultures is briefly touched upon in the outlook of each chapter. The case studies provide a groundwork for further discussing suitable representations and potential strategies for appropriately portraying Romani history. Moreover, the insights of this thesis can contribute to future discussions on the impact of these representations on remembering Romani history as part of audience research.

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Appendices – Annotated Index



Remarks

Here is a summary of the purpose of this index, as indicated in introduction of this thesis:

As a basis for my investigation, I created a systematic index cataloguing occurrences of the “Gypsy” motif in comics, animated films, and games. This index was compiled through a three-steps approach. First, exploration of high-impact productions: I systematically engaged with the works of the most influential artists and companies, irrespective of prior expectations regarding their relevance to the study. The majority of the examined artifacts were discovered through this method. Second, database research: Databases proved valuable for identifying relevant comics and animated films. I discovered a substantial number of American comics through the *Grand Comics Database* and *Comic Book +*.⁶⁴³ Additionally, the *Disney Wiki*, the *Pixar Wiki*, and the *Big Cartoon Database* as well as the *Bedetheque* (for *bandes dessinées*) were relevant tools.⁶⁴⁴ Lastly, abstraction from existing case studies: Some Franco-Belgian comics could be abstracted from existing case studies found in papers in the anthologies *Les Tsiganes et les Gens du voyage dans la bande dessinée* (2016) by Francis Groux and *Selbst- und Fremdbilder von Roma in Comic und Graphic Novel* (2021) by Marina Ortrud M Hertrampf and Kirsten von Hagen.⁶⁴⁵ In conclusion, the inventory of my thesis comprises 357 entries, predominantly from the financially strongest publishers such as La Lombard, Marvel Comics, and Shogakukan as well as production companies like The Walt Disney Company, and Nintendo. A sample of works from

⁶⁴³ See *Grand Comics Database*, accessed 2 May 2023, <https://www.comics.org/>; see *Comic Book +*, accessed 2 May 2023, <https://comicbookplus.com/>.

⁶⁴⁴ See “Home,” in *The Disney Wiki: 100 Years of Wonder*, accessed 2 May 2023, https://disney.fandom.com/wiki/The_Disney_Wiki; see *Bedetheque*, accessed 2 May 2023, <https://www.bedetheque.com/>.

⁶⁴⁵ See Francis Groux, ed., *Les Tsiganes et les Gens du voyage dans la bande dessinée* (Paris: FNASAT, 2016); see Marina Ortrud M Hertrampf, and Kirsten von Hagen, eds., *Selbst- und Fremdbilder von Roma in Comic und Graphic Novel* (Munich: AVM, 2021).

these entries will be used for the case studies, all originating from the personalities and companies mentioned above. Beyond its role in the study itself, this comprehensive index serves as a foundational resource for further research into “Gypsy” imagination in media.

The length of the annotations for each entry varies a lot because the significance of the “Gypsy” motif differs in how it is used in each work’s story and presentation.

Bandes Dessinées

Pomès, Cyrille (writer, artist). *Le Fils de l'Ursari*. Paris: Rue de Sèvres, 2019.

Comment: *Ciprian's* is a young Romani boy who does not attend school. His father is a showman and bear tamer, known as an Ursari. One day, the family is offered a chance to go to Paris for work and to earn money. However, the offer turns out to be a scam. In Paris, *Ciprian's* mother and his sister become beggars, his older brother and *Ciprian* himself become thieves to make a living. Despite these challenges, *Ciprian* discovers his talent for chess, which gives him hope for a better future. While the story portrays Roma once again as criminals and beggars, it also highlights social injustice.

Satta, Francesca (writer), and Sara Colaone (artist). *Leda Rafanelli: La gitane anarchiste*. Paris: Steinkis, 2018.

Comment: This biographical comic tells the life of Romani Italian anarchist Leda Rafanelli (1880-1971). She became a central figure in Italian anarchism at the beginning of the 20th century. Rafanelli also had a transformative experience in Egypt, where she converted to Islam. She had numerous lovers, including an affair with young Benito Mussolini, and pursued a career as a publisher and writer under different identities. In the 1930s, she turned away from activism and worked as a fortune teller. The comic is a tribute to Rafanelli.

Carlé, Grégoire (writer, artist), Amélie Laval (writer, artist), Léo Louis-Honoré (writer, artist), and Zeldia Pressigout (writer, artist). *Space Manouche Opera*. Poitiers: FLBLB, 2018.

Comment: *The Space Manouches* are nomadic and have a strong passion for food. They go on various adventures, such as escaping from a despot, and coming to the rescue of a princess. The comic features four stories created by thirty Romani children and comic book authors. The idea of "Gypsy" characters in a science fiction setting in space was first introduced in **Hamilton, Edmond (writer), Curt Swan (penciler), and John Fischetti (inker). "Tommy Tomorrow: The Gypsies of Space!" *Action Comics*, no. 148 (1950). New York: DC Comics.**

Carlotto, Massimo (writer), and Giuseppe Palumbo (artist). *Tomka: Le Gitan de Guernica*. Paris: Rackham, 2017.

Comment: During the Spanish civil war (1936-1939), *Tomka's* wife, and child are killed, his entire world destroyed by bombings. Seeking revenge, the Rom *Tomka* joins the Republican army to fight the fascist troops who were responsible for the attack. This story gives a more humanized portrayal of a Romani character, compared to the ridiculed "Gypsy" character in Ernest Hemingway's novel *For Whom the Bell tolls* (1940), which also depicts the fight against fascist troops during the Spanish civil war.

Le Berre, Johann (writer, artist). *Tsiganes: Le Paradis des yeux*. Rennes: L'Œuf, 2017.

Comment: This comic tells the story of the Romani musician *Ivan Akimov* who, with his wife *Helena*, founded *Kesaj Tchavé* in the 2000s, a music group that comprises children and teens from Romani ghettos in northeastern Slovakia. *Akimov*, who fled during the Prague Spring (1968) and the invasion of Czechoslovakia by the Soviet Union and its satellites, became a performer in Parisian Russian cabaret, before returning to Slovakia. There, he fulfilled his dream of bringing talented young Roma onto international stages. The comic is a tribute to this music group.

Mirror, Kkrist (writer, artist). *Manouches*. Paris: Steinkis, 2016.

Comment: *Archange*, also known as *Tinoir*, is the patriarch of a large Manouche family who live as impoverished nomads. They frequently face discrimination from settled communities, who unjustly label them as thieves and force them to leave. The comic also touches on widespread ignorance of the Romani genocide during World War Two, and Romani history in general. It explores themes of resignation and fear due to political decisions, and precarious living conditions, including difficulties in accessing healthcare, employment discrimination, and the hardships of surviving the winter in caravans.

Mirror, Kkrist (writer, artist). *Tsiganes: une mémoire française: 1940-1946*. Paris: Steinkis, 2016.

Comment: During World War Two, many Roma in France were imprisoned in camps run by French authorities. This comic tells the story of the Montreuil-Bellay camp, based on personal accounts from those interned there. The book opens with a portrait of Spanish Republican Manuel Sesma. A refugee, interned at Saint Cyprien and then Gurs, he is sent to Montreuil-Bellay, which would become the largest internment camp for Roma in France. For some detainees, freedom did not come until 1946. Those detainees were the last to be liberated from the camps. The protagonist is Father Jollec, a heavy drinker but a man of faith in both god and humanity, wholly devoted to his mission. A chaplain of the camp, he becomes the priest of the Roma in the camp. However, he is ultimately sent back to his parishioners. He tries to convince civil, religious, and even German authorities to reverse the decision, but he fails.

Wantiez, Eric (writer), Julien Maffre (artist), Thierry Leprévost (artist), Nathalie Ferlut (artist), “Fawzi” (artist), Étienne Oburie (artist), and “Alexei” (artist). *Les Annees Noires: Angoulême 1940-1944*. Paris: Le Troisième Homme, 2015.

Comment: During World War Two, many Roma in France were imprisoned in camps administered by French authorities. This comic deals with the Angoulême camp, where Roma, Spanish republicans, Jews, and resistance fighters were interned. The comic comprises of five separate stories: The first, “Liberté”, recounts the imprisonment of over 300 Roma in the camp from 1940 to 1946. The second story, “Feu de paille”, depicts Gontran Labregère, a resistance fighter who was executed in 1941. The third story, “Le convoi des 927”, details the first deportation train from Angoulême, which carried 927 Spanish Republicans to the German concentration camp of Mauthausen on 20 August 1940. The fourth story, “Un homme libre” is about René Chabasse, a young resistance member shot by German forces on 21 February 1944. Lastly, “La rafle” portrays the deportation of 387 Jews from Angoulême to Auschwitz on 8 October 1942. The comic educates the reader about the historical events.

Xavier, Clément (writer, artist), Robin Cousin (writer, artist), Lisa Lugin (writer, artist), Grégory Jarry (writer), and Otto T (artist) et al. *Magic Manouches: Enfants voyageurs et auteurs de BD s'échangent des histoires*. Poitiers: FLBLB, 2015.

Comment: This comic features eight stories created in a workshop by Romani children and non-Romani comic book authors and artists. In this collaborative effort, the children told stories that the artists illustrated, and the authors wrote stories that the children illustrated. The stories revolve around Romani identity and include fantastical or sensational elements of various kinds, including animal fantasies like mailman kangaroos. The comic was published by FLBLB in partnership with the Centre Social Les Alliers in Angoulême. Also see the comics from similar projects by the Centre social des Alliers and the FLBLB in this index.

Desberg, Stephen (writer), and Enrico Marini (artist). *Le scorpion*, no. 11 (2014). Paris: Dargaud.

Comment: The story takes place in Rome during the latter half of the eighteenth century. The protagonist, known as the *Scorpion*, is a relic dealer seeking revenge after his mother was burned alive as a heretic for seducing a priest. The Cardinal hires *Mejai*, a “Gypsy”, to assassinate the *Scorpion*. *Mejai* is skilled in poisons and a seductive young woman. While the story reproduces the trope of the “Gypsy” femme fatale, it also shows a collaboration between religious authorities and a “Gypsy”. However, it overlooks the historical persecution of Roma.

Burcklen, Jérôme (writer), and Julien Revenu (artist). *Les Gens du Lieu: Portraits de familles de voyageurs en Essonne*. La Forêt-le-Roi: L'Association départementale Gens du voyage de l'Essonne, 2012.

Comment: The comic explores the challenges faced by people labelled as “gens du voyage”, or travellers, a group often subjected to specific administrative rules. It tells six different stories, each based on testimonies from travellers. The narratives capture a range of experiences, moving between the ordinary moments of daily life and the unique, sometimes extraordinary, journeys of these individuals.

Le Galli, Michaël (writer), and Arnaud Bétend (artist). *Batchalo*. Paris: Delcourt, 2012.

Comment: Starting in 1939, this fictional story follows a nomadic “Gypsy” family whose children are abducted, inverting the trope of child-theft by “Gypsies”. Along with a policeman whose son is also missing, the family searches through German-controlled Bohemia to find their children. Ultimately, they are captured and deported to Auschwitz. Imprisoned in the death camp, they slowly waste away and eventually perish in the national socialist murder machinery, still separated from their children. The author raises awareness of the Romani genocide but also perpetuates stereotypes in the context of his ethnological studies.

Jarry, Grégory (writer), and Otto T (artist) et al. *Django Banjo et Autres Histoires des Manouches*. Angoulême: Centre social des Alliers, 2012.

Comment: Children from Manouches families illustrated their grandparents’ stories. Also, Grégory Jarry tells the life of Romani jazz musician and pioneer of European jazz Django Reinhardt (1910-1953), illustrated by young Roma. And Otto T has drawn the adventures of *Tintin Mystère* and *Lindsay*, Manouche heroes invented by the children. This comic was created as part of a project that encouraged young Roma to express themselves through comic art and stories. Also see the comics from similar projects by the Centre social des Alliers and the FLBLB in this index.

Keler, Alain (writer), and Emmanuel Guibert (artist). *Des nouvelles d’Alain*. Paris: Les Arènes, 2011.

Comment: This is an autobiographical story by photojournalist Alain Keler, who spent ten years visiting those Romani settlements that were particularly poor. It highlights harsh conditions there and the small things that bring people happiness. The comic may (in parts, rightly so) evoke comparisons to George Borrow’s tradition of othering, autobiographical stories by men who lived among Romani communities. However, it is also to be seen as a successor to another comic about a photojournalist that critically addresses challenging living conditions and political contexts: *Le photographe* by Emmanuel Guibert, which explores the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan (1979-1989). Guibert is also the artist of this new work on Alain Keler’s experiences.

Le paysage des Gitans. Angoulême: Centre social des Alliers, 2011.

Comment: Children from Manouches families wrote and illustrated these diverse stories. This comic was created as part of a project that encouraged young Roma to express themselves through comic art and stories. Also see the comics from similar projects by the Centre social des Alliers and the FLBLB in this index.

Lupano, Wilfrid (writer), and Paul Cauuet (artist). *L'Honneur des Tzarom. 2 issues. Paris: Delcourt, 2010/11.*

Comment: *Tzarom* is a “Gypsy” family of intergalactic criminals living in a space trailer. The mother was imprisoned for alien theft, and the father takes the kids to traffic toxic substances with terrorist octopuses. The comic is a satire on antigypsyist stereotypes like criminality and nomadism. The idea of “Gypsy” characters in a science fiction setting in space was first introduced in **Hamilton, Edmond (writer), Curt Swan (penciler), and John Fischetti (inker). “Tommy Tomorrow: The Gypsies of Space!” *Action Comics*, no. 148 (1950). New York: DC Comics.**

Amar, Marianne (writer), Marie-Claude Blanc-Chaléard (writer), Liêm-Khê Luguern (writer), Gérard Noiriel (writer), Philippe Rygiel (writer), Michelle Zancarini-Fournel (writer), Étienne Davodeau (artist) et al. *Immigrants: 13 témoignages, 13 auteurs de bande dessinée et 6 historiens. Paris: Futuropolis, 2010.*

Comment: The comic showcases the stories of 11 immigrants, including Roma, who have sought refuge in France. Through illustrations, these personal accounts highlight their experiences and challenges. Additionally, the comic features six texts written by historians that provide context. These texts explain the historical factors behind immigration to France.

La super vie des gitans. Angoulême: Centre social des Alliers, 2010.

Comment: Children from Manouches families wrote and illustrated these diverse stories. This comic was created as part of a project that encouraged young Roma to express themselves through comic art and stories. Also see the comics from similar projects by the Centre social des Alliers and the FLBLB in this index.

Dabitch, Christophe (writer), and Benjamin Flao (artist). *Mauvais garçon*. 2 issues. Paris: Futuropolis, 2009.

Comment: The protagonist and young man, *Manuel*, lives in France, but his family is originally from Andalusia. He loves traditional flamenco, which is strongly influenced by the Roma of Spain. He and his Romani friend *Benito*, an extraordinary singer, share this deep love for flamenco and are very close. They also have a strong passion for women. One day, *Manuel* falls in love with *Katia*, a social worker for Romani people, sparking a rivalry between him and *Benito*. The story subtly shows how music brings people together.

Mirror, Kkrist (writer, artist). *Gitans: Le pèlerinage des Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer*. Paris: Emmanuel Proust éditions, 2009.

Comment: This comic is about the pilgrimage to Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer. It is a religious tradition undertaken particularly by many Roma from across Europe. Held annually on 24 and 25 May in Camargue, in the French town of Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer, this event has taken place in its current form since 1935. The author and artist, Mirror, who is Romani himself, has visited the pilgrimage several times. In this comic, he captures his observations, illustrating the places and describing the proceedings during this special time.

Galandon, Laurent (writer), and Cyril Bonin (artist). *Quand souffle le vent*. Paris: Dargaud, 2009.

Comment: In Northern France at the beginning of the 20th century, multiple “Gypsy” caravans arrive in a mining village. The inhabitants are distrustful of the newcomers. Among them is a young Miner named *Antoine*, who is captivated by the “Gypsies” due to his yearning for travel. He falls in love with a beautiful “Gypsy” woman named *Kheshalya*. However, the “Gypsies” soon become victims of a plot orchestrated by *Antoine*’s former lover. The story also unveils a tragic past: *Kheshalya*’s mother was murdered by the villagers, who blamed her for the deaths of several miners following one of her prophecies. *Kheshalya*, like her mother, possesses the ability to tell fortunes. The comic explores themes of jealousy and antigypsyism, but it also reinforces stereotypes.

Mirror, Kkrist (writer, artist). *Tsiganes: 1940-1945; Le Camp de concentration de Montreuil-Bellay*. Paris: Emmanuel Proust éditions, 2008.

Comment: During World War Two, many Roma in France were imprisoned in camps run by French authorities. This comic tells the story of the Montreuil-Bellay camp, based on personal accounts from those interned there. The book opens with a portrait of Spanish Republican Manuel Sesma. A refugee, interned at Saint Cyprien and then Gurs, he is sent to Montreuil-Bellay, which would become the largest internment camp for Roma in France. For some detainees, freedom did not come until 1946. Those detainees were the last to be liberated from the camps. The protagonist is Father Jollec, a heavy drinker but a man of faith in both god and humanity, wholly devoted to his mission. A chaplain of the camp, he becomes the priest of the Roma in the camp. However, he is sent back to his parishioners. He tries to convince civil, religious, and even German authorities to reverse the decision, but he fails. Also see **Mirror, Kkrist (writer, artist). *Tsiganes: une mémoire française: 1940-1946*. Paris: Steinkis, 2016.**

Dillies, Renaud (writer, artist). *Mélodie au crépuscule*. Geneva: Paquet, 2006.

Comment: The protagonist, *Scipion Nisimov*, is a wanderer at heart. One day, he meets *Tchavolo*, a Romani guitarist, and they become friends. However, that evening, when *Nisimov* returns home, he catches his fiancée cheating on him. He then finds refuge in *Tchavolo*'s music. The comic is a tribute to the Romani jazz musician and pioneer of European jazz, Django Reinhardt (1910-1953). The title of the comic is inspired by one of Reinhardt's songs with the same name. The scenario aims to capture the essence and energy of his music.

Kubert, Joe (writer, artist). *Yossel: 19 Avril 1943*. Paris: Delcourt, 2005.

Comment: The story takes place in Poland during World War Two, focusing on a teenage boy named *Yossel* who lives in the Warsaw Ghetto. As he faces the harsh realities of life there, *Yossel* finds comfort and strength in the imaginary characters he draws, which help him survive his struggles. However, when someone who has escaped from Auschwitz tells *Yossel* about the horrors happening there, he and his companions realize that there is no hope for escape. This leads them to join the Warsaw Ghetto uprising in the spring of 1943. The comic also touches on the mass murder against Roma under Nazi rule.

Christin, Pierra (writer), and Annie Goetzinger (artist). *Agence Hardy*, no. 3 (2004). Paris: Dargaud.

Comment: The comic takes place in Paris during the 1950s and follows *Édith Hardy*, who runs the *Agence Hardy*, a detective agency that investigates unsolved cases. In addition to the main plot, the comic also features “Gypsy” showmen who trained a bear to ride a bicycle.

Soufflard, Thierry (writer), and Gilles Cazaux (artist). *Le Grand Large*. Brussels: Casterman, 2003.

Comment: The “Gypsy” *Angelo Broccoli* travels with his mother, *la Vieille*, and a beautiful woman named *Mélodie*. They are on their way to the Somme, so that *la Vieille* can experience the fresh sea air. Throughout their journey, the comic shows them playing the violin, dancing and living on the streets with their trailer. The story also touches on a cultural practice, a traditional ritual, where the trailer of someone who has passed away is burned.

Pécherot, Patrick (writer), and Jeff Pourquoié (artist). *Vague à lame*. Tournai: Casterman, 2003.

Comment: Old *Marcel* is known to be a great storyteller. One day, he recounts the love story between two Romani lovers, *Angélique* and *Ascaso*. The tale revolves around their struggles to keep hold of a piece of land amidst political and financial schemes, with the site protected by a curse cast by a fortune teller. The story includes typical elements of the “Gypsy” motif like caravans, Romani music, and a captivating Romani woman, exhibiting nomadism, sensation, and the trope of the seductive “Gypsy” girl.

Pavlovic, Boro (writer), and Chirstian Perrissin (artist). *El Niño*. 7 issues. Paris: Les Humanoïdes Associés, 2002-2009.

Comment: The protagonist, *Vera*, is a Red Cross nurse who witnesses the genocide in Rwanda. When she returns home to Paris, she discovers that her father, *Jakob*, a famous “Gypsy” violinist, has died. While visiting his grave, *Vera* meets an old “Gypsy” man who knew her father. He invites her to visit his camp on the outskirts of Paris. There, the “Gypsies” reveal the existence of her twin brother, *Kolya*. When their father went to France with young *Vera* to play the violin, he left *Kolya* behind because his fragile health prevented him from traveling. Later, *Kolya* and his people were exiled to Central Asia, and their father believed *Kolya* had died. However, this turns out to be false, and *Vera* begins to search for her brother.

Vehlmann, Fabien (writer), and Matthieu Bonhomme (artist). *Le Marquis d'Anaon*. 5 issues. Paris: Dargaud, 2002-2008.

Comment: In the 1720s, *Jean-Baptiste Poulain*, the son of a merchant and former medical student, travels to places where mysterious events had occurred or unexplained crimes had been committed. He wants to learn more about the sciences and wishes to help people who had suffered from what seemed like supernatural happenings. *Poulain* often encounters people in remote areas where ignorance and superstition are common. "Gypsies", shown as living in tent camps and being skilled at palmistry, are blamed for the events and persecuted. The comic explores themes of antigypsyism, while also reproducing the stigma.

Chabouté, Christophe (writer, artist). *Pleine Lune*. Grenoble: Vents d'Ouest, 2000.

Comment: The story is about *Edouard Tolweck*, a clerk who works for Social Security and has a bad attitude – he is both sexist and racist. He enjoys looking down on the people. One evening, his boss asks him to deliver a letter to someone's house to save the cost of a stamp. Along the way, he is mistaken for a police officer, and when some "Gypsies" falsely think they see him hitting a woman, they start chasing after him. The story shows "Gypsies" as nomads and potentially violent individuals.

Corbeyran, Eric (writer), and Olivier Berlion (artist). *Lie De Vin*. Paris: Dargaud, 1999.

Comment: The comic follows the life of a man who was abandoned as a baby and now lives in a small, isolated village. In the story, it is described that a "Gypsy" regularly visits the village in a truck to collect scrap metal to sell it. The locals are spreading negative stereotypes, saying that "Gypsies" should be avoided as they are known for stealing and practicing magic. The comic neither confirms nor rejects these stereotypes.

Lapière, Denis (writer), and Magda Seron (artist). *Charly*, no. 8 (1999). Paris: Dupuis.

Comment: *Charly* is a boy who is haunted by the ghosts of a serial killer's victims. The story also includes "Gypsy" characters, portrayed as nomadic people with a special talent for music.

“Magnin” (writer, artist). *L'héritage d'Émilie*. 5 issues. Paris: Dargaud, 1997.

Comment: The story takes place in 1923. *Émilie*, a dancer at the Moulin Rouge, is approached by a man with a proposal after one of her performances. She turns him down and as a result, loses her job at the cabaret. Soon after, a lawyer informs her that she has inherited a castle in Ireland. Curious and without knowing many details, *Émilie* decides to go there. Along the way, she is taken in by a group of “Gypsies”. The story depicts a typical “Gypsy” camp, with wagons, and a fire burning at the centre. The next morning, they drop her off at the gates of the castle.

Wasterlain, Marc (writer, artist). *Jeannette Pointu*, no. 11 (1996). Paris: Dupuis.

Comment: The heroine of this series, *Jeannette Pointu*, is a journalist who travels the world. In the 11th album, strange events occur, including several fires breaking out at nearby farms. When her aunt asks for help, *Jeannette* tries to solve the mystery. In this story, a few “Gypsies” appear, doing various jobs, as they are having no permanent home. They are accused of starting the fires, but it turns out they are unguilty. The story has strongly resembles **Franquin, André (writer, artist). “Il y a un sorcier à Champignac.” *Les Aventures de Spirou et Fantasio*, no. 2 (1951). Marcinelle: Dupuis.**

Ayroles, Alain (writer), and Jean-Luc Masbou (artist). *De cape et de crocs*. 10 issues. Paris: Delcourt, 1995-2012.

Comment: A comic series mainly set in 17th century Venice follows two anthropomorphic animals on a treasure hunt. One of the protagonists, *Don Lope de Villalobos y Sangrin*, is a Spanish wolf who falls in love with *Hermine*, a human young “Gypsy” woman. They first meet in Malta, and she joins their group. *Hermine*’s Oriental dress, dancing skills and beautiful appearance fit the stereotype of the Spanish “Gypsy” women. Ultimately, *Don Lope* and *Hermine* get married.

Bonifay, Philippe (writer), and Frank Pé (artist). *Zoo*. 2 issues. Marcinelle: Dupuis, 1994/1999.

Comment: This story is set in the Normandy, shortly before World War One. One of the secondary characters, *Piotr*, is a “Gypsy” who travels in a wagon with his mother, his partner, and Anna, a woman they took in after she lost her husband and was disfigured in a village altercation. *Piotr* enters the story when he assists *Célestin*, the zoo’s doctor. This act of kindness leads to his integration into the life of the zoo. *Piotr* and his family become part of the small community at the estate, contributing to its daily operations. Overall, it is a philogypsyist narrative, as he does not question the othering stigma.

Mirror, Kkrist (writer, artist). *Chronique du camp de Montreuil-Bellay (1940-1944)*. Precigne: Éditions d’Anjou, 1994.

Comment: During World War Two, many Roma in France were imprisoned in camps run by French authorities. This comic tells the story of the Montreuil-Bellay camp, based on personal accounts from those interned there. The book opens with a portrait of Spanish Republican Manuel Sesma. A refugee, interned at Saint Cyprien and then Gurs, he is sent to Montreuil-Bellay, which would become the largest internment camp for Roma in France. For some detainees, freedom did not come until 1946. Those detainees were the last to be liberated from the camps. The protagonist is Father Jollec, a heavy drinker but a man of faith in both god and humanity, wholly devoted to his mission. A chaplain of the camp, he becomes the priest of the Roma in the camp. However, he is sent back to his parishioners. He tries to convince civil, religious, and even German authorities to reverse the decision, but he fails. Also see **Mirror, Kkrist (writer, artist). *Tsiganes: une mémoire française: 1940-1946*. Paris: Steinkis, 2016.**

Smolderen, Thierry (writer), and Enrico Marini (artist). *Gypsy*. 6 issues. Paris: Dargaud, 1993-2002.

Comment: The main character, *Tsagoi*, is a “Gypsy” and truck driver in a post-apocalyptic world dominated by a vast network of global motorways. *Tsagoi* is charismatic, impulsive, and melancholic, with a talent for music, including singing sad songs and playing the violin. His portrayal blends stereotypical traits with deeper emotional and personality nuances. *Tsagoi*’s strong bond with his sister *Oblivia*, whom he protects and supports, adds a layer of familial loyalty and cultural pride. The series highlights *Tsagoi*’s resilience and adaptability, traits often associated with the “Gypsy” motif, while also exploring the broader implications of cultural identity in a rapidly changing world.

Gani, Jakubi (writer), and Labiano Hugues (artist). *Matador: Lune Gitane*. 3 issues. Grenoble: Glenat, 1992.

Comment: In 1930s Spain, the main character *Manuel* wants to become a bullfighter, a torero. The story is inspired by the real-life famous bullfighter Manuel Laureano Rodríguez Sánchez (1917-1947), known as *Manolete*. Despite the subtitle *Lune Gitane*, which might suggest a connection to the “Gypsy” theme, the term is used more as a mystical symbol. It reflects the risky nature of a torero’s life, balancing between life and death.

***Ecoute-moi Gadjó...* Paris: Syndicat Mixte Accueil des Gens du Voyage, 1992/93.**

Comment: Two teenagers visit a “Gypsy” camp where they learn about the history and situation of the people living there. The comic highlights social issues, showing “Gypsies” living in trailers and have to collect scrap metal to sell. It also discusses Romani history, tracing an historical migration from India to Europe over centuries, and including a map illustrating this journey. Additionally, it addresses the persecution of Roma during World War Two. The comic also portrays acceptance and understanding between different cultures despite their differences, relying on the comic’s othering “Gypsy” phantasma.

“Rodolphe” (writer), and Marc Renier (artist). *Melmoth: Sur la route de Londres*. Paris: Dargaud, 1990. Adaptation of the novel *Melmoth the Wanderer* by Charles Robert Maturin.

Comment: The story is about a scholar who made a deal with the devil, trading his soul for an extra 150 years of life. As time goes on, he travels the world, desperately looking for someone who will take over the deal for him. Along the way, “Gypsies” make a brief appearance as performers.

Hamme, Jean Van (writer), and Philippe Francq (artist). *Largo Winch*. Paris: Dupuis, 1990.

Comment: The main character, *Largo Winch*, is wrongly arrested in Istanbul and thrown in one of Turkey’s worst prisons. Beyond the prison, the comic also depicts “Gypsies” as entertainers who live in horse-drawn wagons.

Desberg, Stephen (writer), and Willy Maltaite (artist). *La 27e Lettre*. Paris: Dupuis, 1990.

Comment: The story takes place in Berlin during the interwar period. The main character is a street kid who gets by through stealing and begging. One day, he is taken in by a brothel where the women, “Gypsies”, take a liking to him. They do their best to care for him, even hiring private tutors to educate him. The story also shows the trope of a “Gypsy” camp with wagons and an open fire. The boy experiences a happy life. However, this all changes with the rise of the Nazis, who either execute or deport the “Gypsies” to concentration camps.

Vance, William (writer, artist). *Bruce J. Hawker, no. 2* (1986). Paris: La Lombard.

Comment: At the end of the 19th century, *Bruce J Hawker*, a former Royal Navy lieutenant turned privateer, fights to regain his status in society, navigating a world filled with wars and conspiracies. The story also includes depictions of “Gypsies”, portrayed as lively, festive people with excellent dancing skills.

Milani, Mino (writer), and Attilio Micheluzzi (artist). *Molly Manderling*. Paris: Dargaud, 1985.

Comment: *Molly Manderling* is a student of surgical medicine who arrives in Mecklenburg, Imperial Germany, in 1888. During her adventure, she comes across a group of “Gypsies”. In the story, these individuals are depicted in a camp, joyfully dancing around an open fire. This lively scene illustrates their attempt to escape the hardships of life. The comic reproduces the philogypsyist imagery of the stigma.

Gendrot, Claude (writer), and Paul Gillon (artist). *Notre-Dame de Paris*. Paris: Hachette, 1985. Adaptation of the novel *Notre-Dame de Paris* by Victor Hugo.

Comment: An adaptation of Victor Hugo's novel *Notre-Dame de Paris*. The novel is situated in 15th-century France, mainly around the Notre-Dame de Paris cathedral. The main characters include the bell ringer, *Quasimodo*, and the beautiful "Gypsy" dancer, *Esmeralda*. However, her true heritage is not "Gypsy"; actually, a group of "Gypsies" stole her as a child, while the same group abandoned *Quasimodo* who was later taken in by the archdeacon, *Claude Frollo*. *Frollo* has desires for *Esmeralda*, which take a dark turn. When she rejects him, he orchestrates her to be executed. Hugo's portrayal of *Esmeralda* draws inspiration from the character *Preciosa* from Miguel de Cervantes novella *La Gitanilla* (1613). *Esmeralda* fits the archetype of the captivating dancing girl known as the "Scheinzigeunerin" (Eng.: "Fake Gypsy"). This character trope is supposedly a "Gypsy" despite actually being born into a non-"Gypsy" family and later being kidnapped by "Gypsies". Throughout Hugo's novel, *Esmeralda* is depicted as wild and passionate, possessing the skills to protect herself.

Giardino, Vittorio (writer, artist). *Rhapsodie Hongroise*. Grenoble: Glénat, 1982 (=Les Aventures de Max Fridman, vol. 1).

Comment: The comic takes place in Hungary in 1938. In the story, members of the French counterintelligence service are killed, so Paris sends Max Fridman to investigate. Alongside this main plot, the story also shows a "Gypsy" musician with has a trained bear to perform on the city's streets.

Malet, Léo (writer), and Jacques Tardi (artist). *Brouillard au pont de Tolbiac: Nestor Burma*. Tournai: Casterman, 1982.

Comment: This story, set in Paris and featuring Léo Malet's fictional detective *Nestor Burma*, includes several "Gypsy" characters. The detective encounters a "Gypsy" man who threatens him with a knife and women who are portrayed as quarrelsome and hostile. Throughout the narrative, these characters are depicted as rude, combative, and prone to violence – except for one "Gypsy" girl. She is ultimately murdered by another "Gypsy". The comic overall carries an antigypsyist narrative.

Bucquoy, Jan (writer), and Jean-François Charles (artist). *Le Bal du rat mort*. Brussels: Michel Deligne, 1980.

Comment: The story is set in the coastal city of Ostend, where rats invade the town. Alongside this crisis, a group of “Gypsies” becomes a part in the narrative, facing harsh and unfair treatment from the local authorities. The townspeople harbour deep-seated prejudices against the group, quickly accusing them of being thieves. The narrative goes further, critically considering the stereotype of child theft, revealing how the “Gypsies” are wrongly blamed for the kidnapping of a child.

Comès, Didier (writer, artist). *Silence*. Tournai: Casterman, 1980.

Comment: Didier Comès is a pioneer of the graphic novel medium. While this comic also draws from the exotic fantasy of “Gypsy” life, it subtly touches on historical antigypsyism. The protagonist is the son of two “Gypsies”, once again traveling showmen. In 1940, during the German invasion, the two flee from Belgium to France, as “the Germans, even more than the other ‘Gadje’, don’t like the Gypsies.” (90). They find refuge in a village, but tragically the protagonist’s father is being killed by a jealous French soldier, and, after giving birth to the protagonist, the mother too dies. Many years later, the protagonist learns that the man for whom he now works as a farmhand, is the very same former French soldier who killed his father. There is a subtext in the story that hints at historical antigypsyism in the French context.

Chabrol, Jean-Pierre (writer), and Marcel Tillard (artist). *Le Barlafré*. Paris: La Farandole, 1978.

Comment: The story depicts a group of “Gypsies” traveling with their horse-drawn wagon, accompanied by a bear for showmanship, along with a donkey, horse, cat, bird, two goats, and a rooster. The comic also shows their three children gathering food in the woods to support their livelihood. The scenes reinforce the romanticized view of “Gypsies” as living in harmony with nature, as they cook over an open fire and play the tambourine. However, despite this idealized portrayal, their clothes are worn and tattered, and the horse appears underfed and thin.

Vallet, Dominique (writer, artist). *Cinemastock 2*. Paris: Dargaud, 1976.

Comment: A parody on the novel *Notre-Dame de Paris* by Victor Hugo. The novel is situated in 15th-century France, mainly around the Notre-Dame de Paris cathedral. The main characters include the bell ringer, *Quasimodo*, and the beautiful “Gypsy” dancer, *Esmeralda*. However, her true heritage is not “Gypsy”; actually, a group of “Gypsies” stole her as a child, while the same group abandoned *Quasimodo* who was later taken in by the archdeacon, *Claude Frollo*. *Frollo* has desires for *Esmeralda*, which take a dark turn. When she rejects him, he orchestrates her to be executed. Hugo’s portrayal of *Esmeralda* draws inspiration from the character *Preciosa* from Miguel de Cervantes novella *La Gitanilla* (1613). *Esmeralda* fits the archetype of the captivating dancing girl known as the “Scheinzigeunerin” (Eng.: “Fake Gypsy”). This character trope is supposedly a “Gypsy” despite actually being born into a non-“Gypsy” family and later being kidnapped by “Gypsies”. Throughout Hugo’s novel, *Esmeralda* is depicted as wild and passionate, possessing the skills to protect herself.

Blondeaux, Georges (writer, artist). *Une plume pour Clovis*. Paris: Square, 1975.

Comment: The main character, *Clovis*, is an old, grumpy man who lives in a junkyard. One day, he finds an old class photo and remembers his former friend *Casimir*. This memory sparks a desire in him to find *Casimir*. In the story, the reader also learns about “Gypsies” as owners of a traveling cinema. Their cinema, originally set up in a horse-drawn wagon, becomes very popular. Eventually, the family builds a much larger cinema that attracts a large audience.

Tully, Tom (writer), and Francisco S López (artist). “Episodes Romano” *Trophée: Aventures et Voyages*. 32 issues (1974-1982). Lyon: Mon Journal.

Comment: The comic magazine *Trophée* frequently featured a story about *Romano*, a fictional football player and “Gypsy” from the Lengros tribe. *Romano* plays for the *Highboro* team and is known for his unique trait of playing barefoot. He is followed by the “Gypsy” witch *Morag*, which adds elements of mysticism and further otherness to his character. The series portrays his journey through various matches, highlighting his determination to become a top-tier football player despite the challenges he faces.

Aristidès, Frédéric (writer, artist). *Le Petit Cirque*. Paris: Dargaud, 1973.

Comment: The comic was first published in the magazine *Hara-Kiri* and then released as an album in 1973. The comic blends poetic, surreal, melancholic, cruel, and tender elements, portraying the life of *Carmen*, her husband *Léopold*, and their son. The family embodies the “Gypsy” motif of nomadism and showmanship, traveling with their small circus and constantly seeking new opportunities to expand their troupe. *Carmen*’s character, kind and strong, symbolizes the often romanticized yet harsh depictions of “Gypsy” life. Moreover, the comic deals with the melancholy and absurdity of circus life.

Delporte, Yvan (writer), and René Follet (artist). “Les Zingari” *Le Journal de Mickey*. 46 issues (1971-1973). Drap: Hibou.

Comment: A comic series about a “Gypsy” family – *Max*, *Carlo*, and *Rita* – along with their pet wolf, *Lobo*. Set in 19th-century France, they travel in a wagon and perform circus acts. Although the comic does not explore their personal relationships or deep psychology, it shows their shared goal: to help others. The family faces prejudice and hostility wherever they go. The stories highlight themes of friendship, generosity, courage, and tolerance. In the fourth story, “Pierrot a disparu!”, the family comes into conflict with villagers who believe they have kidnapped a teenager named *Pierrot*. Although *Pierrot* initially wants to join the circus, he is soon discouraged by the hard work and daily chores required of him.

Goscinnny, René (writer), and Albert Uderzo (artist). *Astérix en Hispanie*. Paris: Dargaud, 1969.

Comment: The protagonist *Astérix* and his sidekick *Obelix* are Gauls who fight the Roman Republic while having adventures all around the world. In *Astérix en Hispanie*, the chief’s son in an Andalusian [sic] village faces Roman captivity, but *Astérix* and *Obelix*, intervening, liberate him from a Roman escort led by *Spurius Brontosaurus*. The heroes then travel with the child to Hispania, aiming to return him safely. Here, *Astérix* and *Obelix* encounter a wagon camp in the pampas. The young boy identifies them as friendly and funny nomads, who are always singing and dancing. The nomads reference to “Gypsies”. Welcomed warmly by the camp’s colourful and barefoot inhabitants, the heroes are invited to stay overnight. Two out of three men wear kerchiefs and tattered pants. The people in the camp sing melancholically and dance flamenco. Meanwhile, *Brontosaurus* has travelled after them and tries to kidnap the child under the cover of the night, but the nomads sing and dance throughout the night, repeatedly yelling “olé!”. Therefore, *Brontosaurus* fails. The next day, *Astérix* and *Obelix* continue their journey. The nomads, thus, invert the stereotype of “Gypsy” child-theft, as they protect the child from being kidnapped. Also, the nomads serve as a parody of Spanish cultural identity.

Cubbino, Mario (writer, artist). “Le secret de la gitane.” *Shirley*, no. 77 (1969) Lyon: Mon Journal.

Comment: A story featuring a fortune telling “Gypsy” woman. The author of this thesis was not able to get access to this piece.

Lécureux, Roger (writer), Lucien Nortier (artist), and Christian Gaty (artist). *Le Grêlé 7/13*. 13 issues. Paris: Taupinambour, 1966-71.

Comment: A nationalistic portrayal of the French resistance during the German occupation in World War II. The hero, Jean-Pierre Gavroche, known as Le Grêlé 7/13 for his freckles, is a young French resistance fighter and secret agent. With the help of his best friend, l'Ermite, he fights against the Nazis, with Colonel von Hartz as his main adversary. Lucien Nortier, who was a resistance fighter himself, created the character of Le Grêlé. However, the comic depicts the hero as fair-skinned and blue-eyed, while the collaborators of the Nazis are portrayed using antisemitic and antigypsyist stereotypes.

Charlier, Jean-Michel (writer), and Michel Tacq (artist). “Menace en Camargue” *La patrouille des Castors*, no. 12 (1965). Charleroi: Dupuis.

Comment: The comic series centres around a scout patrol and their adventures. In the story *Menace en Camargue*, the scouts are involved in a case where “Gypsies” are wrongfully accused of committing murder. A knife found at the crime scene is linked to them. The story depicts the harsh treatment of the nomads, including a scene where an elderly “Gypsy” man is nearly whipped by a local. Ultimately, it is revealed that the “Gypsies” are innocent.

Remi, Georges Prosper (writer, artist). *Les Bijoux de la Castafiore*. Brussels: Casterman, 1963 (=Les Aventures de Tintin, vol. 21).

Comment: A crime story about an apparent theft at the fictional *Château de Mou-linsart* (*Marlinspike Hall*). The *Château*, the setting of the issue, is a noble family estate of *Capitaine Haddock*, one of the protagonist's, *Tintin's*, closest friends. In the story, "Gypsies" become the prime suspects. At the beginning, *Haddock* and *Tintin* encounter a "Gypsy" camp situated on a landfill. They from the camp residents, *Matéo* and an unnamed elder, that the police confined them to this location. Out of compassion, *Haddock* invites the "Gypsies" to relocate their camp from the landfill to the fields of his estate, an offer they accept. Back at the *Château*, both the butler and even the local police chief warn *Haddock* about potential trouble with the supposedly criminal "Gypsies". The opera diva *Bianca Castafiore* visits the *Château*. Shortly after her arrival, her jewels, valued at millions of Francs, disappear. Given the earlier warnings to *Haddock*, suspicions of the "Gypsies" are fuelled. But it is later revealed that *Castafiore* has merely misplaced her jewels. Subsequently, she loses another piece, an emerald. The police immediately jump to the conclusion of the "Gypsies'" guilt, despite a lack of evidence. Eventually, *Tintin* discovers that the "Gypsies" are not guilty; the emerald was stolen by a magpie.

Craenhals, François (writer, artist), "Pom et Teddy: Le Secret du Balibach," *Tintin: Le Journal des Jeunes*, no. 52/1956-30/1957 (1956/57).

Comment: One night, while the protagonists, *Pom* and *Teddy*, are camping under the stars with their companions, a rockslide occurs. A dark figure falls into the nearby river. Suddenly, a group of "Gypsies" appears, searching for the man, *Antonio Oyo*, accusing the protagonists of killing him. Having agreed to explain themselves, the protagonists follow the group to their camp. Cleared of all suspicion, they encounter a tsiganologist named Jean-Marc Faber who lives with the "Gypsies" to study them. The clan has recently faced thefts and attacks, seemingly from a mysterious assailant searching for something. They discover that the target is the treasure of Balibach.

Rigot, Robert (writer, artist). "Frédéri le Gardian: Sur la piste des Carpathes." *Cœurs Vaillants*, no. 1-42 (1951). Paris: Cœurs Vaillants, 1951.

Comment: A conflict among violinists leads to *Ulysses* being kidnapped after being mistaken for someone else. His friend, *Frédéri le Gardian*, teams up with the "Gypsy" *Zoltan* to track him down. Together, they embark on a journey across Central Europe, encountering "Gypsies" as showmen, and nomads. The "Gypsies" are presented as skilled horse breeders and riders, who respect their elders. It also depicts the trope of the old "Gypsy" fortune teller and introduces ideas such as "Gypsies" using secret signs to communicate with each other – reminiscent of signs among freemasons.

Franquin, André (writer, artist). “Il y a un sorcier à Champignac.” *Les Aventures de Spirou et Fantasio*, no. 2 (1951). Marcinelle: Dupuis.

Comment: In this story, a strange phenomenon plagues farms and wildlife. Soon, a “Gypsy” is suspected to be a wizard master and is almost lynched by a mob. But the story takes a twist when the mayor, rather than the “Gypsy”, is revealed to be the true culprit. The laird in the story wears a Sherlock Holmes costume in the second half of the comic. This could be seen as a comedic reference to a popular icon of the crime genre or perhaps a deliberate hint to Conan Doyle’s short story *The Adventure of the Speckled Band* (1892) that likewise uses a “Gypsy” red herring.

Bonnet, René (writer, artist). “La Peau de Crocodile.” *Fripounet et Marisette*, no. 13/1946-31/1947 (1946-1947). Paris: Cœurs Vaillants.

Comment: *Fripounet* and *Marisette*, the main characters of the series, witness the theft of a valuable crocodile skin from *Marius Pascalou*’s living room. The thief, identified as a “Gypsy”, later escalates his criminal activities by kidnapping a child to extort ransom money. This specific adventure in the series holds particular significance with the series, as it marks the beginning of a bond between *Marius*, *Fripounet*, and *Marisette*, with *Marius* becoming a loyal friend in their future adventures.

Remi, Georges Prosper (writer, artist). “Les Aventures de Jo, Zette et Jocko.” *Cœurs Vaillants*. No. 26/1937-7/1939 (1937-1939). Paris: Union des œuvres ouvrières catholiques de France.

Comment: Young hero *Jo* encounters a “Gypsy” family cooking over a campfire near a road, along with their horse-drawn wagon. In a rush to prevent a bomb attack on an airfield, he seeks the use of their wagon, but they dismiss his plea, prompting *Jo* to steal it. A comedic element emerges as the stolen wagon is partly destroyed by a passing train. Nonetheless, *Jo* manages to reach the airfield in time to prevent the attack. At the end of the story, he apologizes to the “Gypsies” and compensates them with a modern van. Eventually, the “Gypsies” are profiteers of the situation. The generous compensation symbolizes an upgrade from their premodern horse-drawn wagon and represents *Jo*’s commitment to introduce them to a more “civilized” lifestyle. *Le Stratonef* implies the idea of a “civilizing mission”, which presupposes a hierarchy.

Giffey, René (writer, artist). “Les Bohémiens.” *Les exploits de Jacquou*. No. 6 (2003 [1936/37]) Paris: Regards.

Comment: The protagonist, *Jacquou*, encounters a man who calls himself a bohémien but does not disclose his name. The man survives by doing seasonal work, assisting with harvests in the fields. As they befriend, the “Gypsy” introduces *Jacquou* to his family, which includes multiple children. The family cooks something over a fire and lives in a horse-drawn wagon. The adults wear kerchiefs and earrings, which aligns with common stereotypes. Additionally, the comic depicts “Gypsies” as showmen.

Languereau, Maurice (writer), and Joseph Pinchon (artist). *Bécassine en aéroplane*. Paris: Gautier-Languereau, 1930 (=Bécassine, vol. 16).

Comment: This series, about a naïve maid from the countryside of Brittany, is the most iconic comic series in French pre- and interwar history. In this album, a “Gypsy” caravan is briefly depicted on the road.

Languereau, Maurice (writer), and Joseph Pinchon (artist). *Bécassine*. Paris: Gautier-Languereau, 1913 (=Bécassine, vol 1).

Comment: This series, about a naïve maid from the countryside of Brittany, is the most iconic comic series in French pre- and interwar history. In the first comic album, the maid *Bécassine* encounters a “Gypsy” camp and a man named *père Chevaudebois*. She asks him to kidnap her, but he rejects her plea. He calls over multiple children from the camp, who line up, each with different looks and hair colours – clearly not his own. He says, “I really don’t have to steal anymore. It’s hard enough to feed those!”. It is a comedic scene that makes fun of “Gypsy” child theft, a motif that had been present in various media since its introduction by Miguel de Cervantes’ novella *La Gitanilla* (1613). This motif had also found its way into children’s literature, where it was used as a thrilling element and a deterrent to misbehaving children – the “Gypsies” would come and take away naughty children.

American Comics

Nicieza, Fabian (writer), Brett Booth (penciler), and Adelso Corona (inker). *X-Men Legends*, no. 5-6 (2021). New York: Marvel Comics.

Comment: The superheroes *Imbolc*, *Lughnasa*, *Beltane*, and *Samhain* belong to the *Zefiro* clan of “Gypsies” in the fictional country of *Latveria*. The country’s “Gypsy” dictator, *Dr. Doom*, captures and experiments on them to activate their latent superpowers. The group manages to escape and they decide to overthrow the regime. *Imbolc*, whose powers are primarily defensive, is the most cautious of the group, often hesitant to harm innocent people. *Beltane* possesses special psychic abilities. *Lughnasa* is physically very strong and responsible for securing escape routes. *Samhain*, the ruthless leader of the group, is willing to kill innocent people to achieve his goals. Under his lead, the groups commit terrorist attacks, including on the *Latverian* embassy in Washington D.C.

Robinson, James (writer), Leila del Duca (artist), Annapaola Martello (artist), Jonathan M Barravecchia (artist), and Shawn Crystal (artist). *Scarlet Witch*, no. 11-14 (2016). New York: Marvel Comics.

Comment: This comic series retells the origin story of the superheroine *Wanda Maximoff*, known as *Scarlett Witch*. She is a powerful sorceress and has extraordinary supernatural abilities to alter reality. Fitting her powers, she was raised in a “Gypsy” camp, which was attacked in a pogrom. Also see the earlier version of the origin story in **Gruenwald, Mark (writer), Steven Grant (writer), David Michelinie (writer), John Byrne (penciler), and Dan Green (inker). *The Avengers*, no. 185-187 (1979). New York: Marvel Comics.**

Winick, Judd (writer), Fernando Dagnino (penciler), and Raúl Fernández (inker). “Justice League: The Cold Truth” *Justice League: Generation Lost*, no. 12 (2010). New York: DC Comics.

Comment: The superheroine *Tora Olafsdotter*, known as *Ice*, has the ability to create and control ice at will. In this comic issue, it is revealed that she was born into a Norwegian “Gypsy” clan. Her father tried to keep her supernatural powers a secret from the rest of the clan, fearing that her grandfather would see her as the reincarnation of a goddess and use her powers for criminal purposes. The storyline reinforces stereotypes of “Gypsy” magic and criminality.

Medoff, Rafael (writer), Neal Adams (artist), and Joe Kubert (inker). “The Last Outrage.” *X-Men: Magneto Testament*, no. 5 (2009). New York: Marvel.

Comment: The short biographical comic tells the story of Holocaust survivor Dina Babbitt. In Auschwitz, to save both herself and her mother from certain death, Dina was forced to paint portraits of Romani prisoners for the infamous Nazi doctor Josef Mengele, who was obsessed with accurately capturing their skin colours. The title of the comic reflects Dina’s later struggle with the museum that came to possess her paintings. The museum refused to return these works to her, the original artist.

Pak, Greg (writer), and Carmine Di Giandomenico (artist). *X-Men: Magneto Testament*. 5 issues. New York: Marvel Comics, 2008-2009.

Comment: This comic reimagines the origin story of *Magneto*, an infamous supervillain from the *X-Men* franchise. In this version, *Magneto* is portrayed as being of Jewish descent, changing the earlier depiction of him as a Sinto Holocaust survivor, as established in **Nicieza, Fabian (writer), Jan Duursema (penciler), Dan Panosian (inker), Keith Williams (inker), Jimmy Palmiotti (inker), and Joe Rubinstein (inker). “Point Blank.” *X-Men Unlimited*, no. 2 (1993). New York: Marvel Comics. *X-Men: Magneto Testament*, set during World War Two, follows a Jewish boy named Max Eisenhardt, who later becomes the supernaturally powered Magneto, as he endures the horrors of Auschwitz. The comic series also features *Magda Lehnsherr* and her mother, *Anya*, who are “Gypsy” characters. *Anya* is murdered by the Nazis, while *Magda* manages to escape from Auschwitz.**

Parker, Jeff (writer), Juan Santacruz (penciler), and Raúl Fernández (inker). “Scarlet Witch: Birth of a Witch.” *Mystic Arcana: Scarlet Witch*. New York: Marvel Comics, 2007.

Comment: This comic tells the childhood of the superheroine *Wanda Maximoff*, later known as *Scarlett Witch*. She is a powerful sorceress and has extraordinary supernatural abilities to alter reality. Fitting her powers, she was raised in a “Gypsy” camp, and encounters various characters, including the “Gypsy” queen *Lilia Calderu*, which was attacked in a pogrom. Also see the earlier version of Scarlett Witch’s origin story in **Gruenwald, Mark (writer), Steven Grant (writer), David Michelinie (writer), John Byrne (penciler), and Dan Green (inker). *The Avengers*, no. 185-187 (1979). New York: Marvel Comics.**

Brubaker, Ed (writer), Pablo Raimondi (penciler), Mark Farmer (inker), Andrew Hennessy (inker), and Robin Riggs (inker). *Books of Doom*. 6 issues. New York: Marvel Comics, 2006.

Comment: The comic retells the origin story of the “Gypsy” supervillain *Victor von Doom*, known as *Doctor Doom*. *Books of Doom* begins in the “Gypsy” camp where he was raised, before *Victor*’s mother dies. In contrast to his first origin story from 1964, he and the other “Gypsies” are permanently persecuted by the country’s ruler, the baron, and without a visible reason. As a result, *Victor*’s mother summons a demon who shall kill the baron’s soldiers. She cannot control this power and becomes obsessed by the creature which then arbitrarily kills soldiers and villagers, including children. Thus, the villagers too are after the “Gypsies” and lynch her. Compare this story with **Lee, Stan (writer), Jack Kirby (penciler), and Chic Stone (inker). “The Fantastic Origin of Doctor Doom!” *Fantastic Four Annual*, no. 2 (1964). New York: Marvel Comics.**

David, Peter (writer), Joe Corroney (artist), Mike Ratera (artist), Zack Howard (artist), Nicola Scott (artist), and Jeff Dabu (inker). *Spike vs. Dracula*. 5 issues. San Diego: IDW Publishing, 2006.

Comment: The comic series is based on the *Spike* film franchise and the *Buffyverse*, where a vampire named *Angelus* has been cursed by Romanian “Gypsies”. Because *William the Bloody*, also known as *Spike*, is part of *Angelus*’ family, he is also affected by this curse. As *Spike* seeks to break the curse, he finds himself in conflict with the vampire *Dracula*, who serves as the protector of the “Gypsies”. The story is loosely inspired by Bram Stoker’s novel *Dracula* (1897).

Hine, David (writer), and Jorge Lucas (artist). *X-Men Colossus Bloodline*. 5 issues. New York: Marvel Comics, 2005.

Comment: Set in the Russian Empire during World War One, *Elena* is a “Gypsy” from Siberia who possesses supernatural powers. Her abilities catch the eye of *Rasputin*, the influential advisor to Tsar *Nicholas II*. Together they hatch a plan to create a new generation of superhumans. *Rasputin* eventually seduces *Elena*, and they have a child named *Grigory*. However, *Elena*’s brother, *Ivan*, becomes angered by *Rasputin*’s manipulation and the influence he exerts over her. *Ivan* decides to take revenge by killing him. The comic blends a historical fantasy with “Gypsy” tropes.

Mariotte, Jeff (writer), David Messina (artist), and Andrea Fattori (inker). *Angel: The Curse*. 5 issues. San Diego: IDW Publishing, 2005.

Comment: The comic series is based on the *Angel* film franchise and the *Buffyverse*. The main character, a vampire named *Angelus*, has been cursed by Romanian “Gypsies”. This curse forces him to feel intense guilt and remorse for the terrible things he has done to other people. Struggling with this newfound conscience, *Angelus* initially moves to the United States. However, he eventually returns to Romania in an attempt to lift the curse and free himself from its burden.

Kolins, Scott (writer, penciler), Geoff Johns (writer), Andy Lanning (inker), and Doug Hazlewood (inker). *The Thing: Freakshow*. 4 issues. New York: Marvel Comics, 2002.

Comment: *Istvan*, also known as *Albino*, is a “Gypsy” character who was part of a circus freakshow, reflecting the common stereotype of “Gypsies” as performers. He is mocked by others because of his physical deformities. His names may have been inspired by the fictional *Ishval* people from the Japanese manga series *Fullmetal Alchemist* (2001-10) by ARAKAWA Hiromu. The *Ishval* are an albinistic group who face discrimination from the majority society, similar to *Istvan*’s/*Albino*’s experiences of exclusion.

Grayson, Devin (writer), Roger Robinson (penciler), and John Floyd (inker). “Batman: Retribution Part 1 of 2: Sons and Lovers.” *Batman: Gotham Knights*, no. 20 (2001). New York: DC Comics.

Comment: *Yoska Graesinka* is a “Gypsy” character from Romania who believes that he is be the biological grandfather of *Dick Grayson*, who is also known as *Batman*’s sidekick *Nightwing*. Because of this belief, *Yoska* tries to stop *Batman* from adopting *Nightwing* but is unsuccessful. Ultimately, it turns out that *Yoska* is not actually his grandfather, but despite this revelation, the two develop a close bond. Tragically, *Yoska* dies in a bombing attack carried out by a supervillain. Multiple later works repeated the information that *Nightwing* was at least “part-Romani”. For example, see **Seeley, Tim (writer), Yanick Paquette (artist). *Nightwing: Rebirth*. New York: DC Comics, 2016.**

Jones, Gerard (writer), Mark Waid (writer), Howard Porter (penciler), and John Dell (inker). *JLX*. New York: DC Comics, 1996.

Comment: The comic represents the debut of the “Gypsy” superheroine *Anna Marie Reynolds*, who is also known as *Runaway*. She has the power to absorb the abilities, and memories of anyone she touches. In addition to this, she can also fly and possesses great physical strength. The character design is a combination of two other superheroines: Marvel’s *Rogue* (whose real name is *Anne-Marie Rankin*), and DC’s *Gypsy* (whose real name is *Cynthia Reynolds*). This blending of character designs is reflected in her abilities, background and name.

Velez Jr, Ivan (writer), Salvador Larroca (penciler), and Sergio Melia (inker). “Bitter Smoke.” *Ghost Rider*, no. 77 (1996). New York: Marvel Comics.

Comment: Set in the 17th century, *Magdalena* is a Gypsy character. She first appears as a performer with the traveling *Quentin Carnival*. *Magdalena* falls in love with a young Puritan *Noble Kale*. However, his father, a pastor, disapproves of their relationship because of *Magdalena*’s “Gypsy” race. Despite the pastor’s objections, *Magdalena* and *Noble Kale* stay together, and she becomes pregnant. After their child is born, the pastor takes the baby away, believing *Magdalena* would not raise the child as a proper Christian. It is later revealed that the pastor was involved in dark dealings with a demon. When *Magdalena* discovers this, she is accused of witchcraft and is tragically burned at the stake. Even after her death, members of her family can still summon her spirit through prayer. The comic features multiple aspects of the “Gypsy” motif, including showmanship, nomadism, and the supernatural. But it also portrays the historical discrimination and persecution of people who were labelled “Gypsies”.

DeMatteis, J M (writer), Mark Buckingham (penciler), and Kev F Sutherland (inker). *Doctor Strange: Sorcerer Supreme*, no. 86-87 (1996). New York: Marvel Comics.

Comment: The supervillain *Astrid Mordo* is the daughter of the “Gypsy” *Lilia*. *Astrid* learned black magic from her father, *Karl Mordo*, who in turn had learned it from a “Gypsy” witch. Using her magical abilities, *Astrid* transfers her father’s cancer into the superhero *Dr. Strange*. However, her father then deceives his daughter into believing that he intends to kill *Dr. Strange* himself. Finally, *Karl Mordo* reverses the process, putting the cancer back into his own body. The story evokes the old conception of “Gypsies” as having demonic, magical powers.

Colón, Ernie (writer, artist), John F Moore (writer), Peter David (writer), Warren Ellis (writer), Tom Peyer (writer), Evan Skolnick (writer), Tom DeFalco (writer) et al. *Doom 2099*. 44 issues. New York: Marvel Comics, 1993-1996.

Comment: In the fictional country of *Latveria*, its dictator, *Doctor Doom*, vanishes for a century due to an energy sphere. When he returns, he finds that *Latveria* is now controlled by a cyborg baron. Leading the *Zefiro* clan, a group of “Gypsies”, *Doom* starts a revolution and overthrows the current ruler. He then claims the throne for himself once again and declares that the world needs to be saved from chaos and corruption, which he believes can only be achieved through his conquest. As he embarks on his quest, he is supported by several allies from the *Zefiro* clan: *Fortune*, the fortune teller; *Wire*, the information expert; *Xandra*, the soldier; *Vox*, who has magical powers; and *Poet*, a skilled martial artist. Thus, the comic reproduces stereotypes such as fortune telling, and the supernatural, but it also introduces unconventional elements to the “Gypsy” motif. This story reimagines the revolutionary aspects of *Doctor Doom*’s character from his origin story in **Lee, Stan (writer), Jack Kirby (penciler), and Chic Stone (inker). “The Fantastic Origin of Doctor Doom!” *Fantastic Four Annual*, no. 2 (1964). New York: Marvel Comics.**

Nicieza, Fabian (writer), Jan Duursema (penciler), Dan Panosian (inker), Keith Williams (inker), Jimmy Palmiotti (inker), and Joe Rubinstein (inker). “Point Blank.” *X-Men Unlimited*, no. 2 (1993). New York: Marvel Comics.

Comment: In this comic, it is briefly revealed that the real name of the supervillain *Magneto* would be *Erik Lehnsherr*, a Sinto holocaust survivor. However, this portrayal was later changed, revised to depict *Magneto* as a Jewish Holocaust survivor instead. See **Pak, Greg (writer), and Carmine Di Giandomenico (artist). *X-Men: Magneto Testament*. 5 issues. New York: Marvel Comics, 2008-2009.** *Magneto* has several powerful abilities. He can create magnetic fields, bend metal, shoot electromagnetic pulses, and fly. Additionally, he can control people by manipulating their blood and interact with electronic devices using magnetism.

Moore, John F (writer), and Pat Broderick (artist). "Doom 2099: Muses of Fire." *Marvel Comics Presents*, no. 118 (1992). New York: Marvel Comics.

Comment: In the fictional country of *Latveria*, its dictator, *Doctor Doom*, vanishes for a century due to an energy sphere. When he returns, he finds that *Latveria* is now controlled by a cyborg baron. Leading the *Zefiro* clan, a group of "Gypsies", *Doom* starts a revolution and overthrows the current ruler. He then claims the throne for himself once again and declares that the world needs to be saved from chaos and corruption, which he believes can only be achieved through his conquest. As he embarks on his journey, he is supported by several allies from the *Zefiro* clan: *Fortune*, the fortune teller; *Wire*, the information expert, *Xandra*, the soldier; *Vox*, who has magical powers; and *Poet*, a skilled martial artist. Thus, the comic reproduces stereotypes such as fortune telling, and the supernatural, but it also introduces unconventional elements to the "Gypsy" motif. This story reimagines the revolutionary aspects of *Doctor Doom's* character from his origin story in **Lee, Stan (writer), Jack Kirby (penciler), and Chic Stone (inker). "The Fantastic Origin of Doctor Doom!" *Fantastic Four Annual*, no. 2 (1964). New York: Marvel Comics.**

Thomas, Roy (writer), Jean-Marc Lofficier (writer), and Tom Sutton (artist). "The Book of the Vishanti." *Doctor Strange: The Sorcerer Supreme*, no. 6 (1989). New York: Marvel Comics.

Comment: In this comic appears the character *Miarka*, a "Gypsy" queen and witch with powers in black magic. After the defeat of Austria-Hungary during World War One, the baron *Nikolai Mordo* learns her magic, in order to create a powerful state of Transylvania. *Miarka* is his mistress, with whom he has a child. She is also the great-grandmother of the "Gypsy" supervillain *Astrid Mordo*. See **DeMatteis, J M (writer), Mark Buckingham (penciler), and Kev F Sutherland (inker). *Doctor Strange: Sorcerer Supreme*, no. 86-87 (1996). New York: Marvel Comics.**

Giffen, Keith (writer, penciler), J. M. DeMatteis (writer), Kevin Maguire (penciler), Steve Leialoha (penciler), Ty Templeton (penciler), Mike McKone (penciler), Al Gordon (inker), and Joe Rubinstein (inker). *Justice League International*. 19 issues. New York: DC Comics, 1987-1989.

Comment: First appearance of the superheroine *Tora Olafsdotter*, known as *Ice*. She has the ability to create and control ice at will. In a later issue, it is revealed that she was born into a Norwegian "Gypsy" clan. See **Winick, Judd (writer), Fernando Dagnino (penciler), and Raúl Fernández (inker). "Justice League: The Cold Truth" *Justice League: Generation Lost*, no. 12 (2010). New York: DC Comics.**

Claremont, Chris (writer), and John Bolton (artist). "A Fire in the Night." *Classic X-Men*, no. 12 (1987). New York: Marvel Comics.

Comment: In 1936 Nazi Germany, the Romani girl *Magda Lehnsherr* is deported to the Berlin-Marzahn concentration camp and later to Auschwitz, together with her mother *Anyia*. However, with the help of *Max Eisenhardt*, who is later known as *Magneto*, she manages to escape. Also see **Gruenwald, Mark (writer), Steven Grant (writer), David Michelinie (writer), John Byrne (penciler), and Dan Green (inker). *The Avengers*, no. 185-187 (1979). New York: Marvel Comics.** Her mother dies in the National Socialist murder machinery.

Nocenti, Ann (writer), Don Perlin (penciler), and Kim DeMulder (inker). *Beauty and the Beast*. 4 issues. New York: Marvel Comics, 1984-1985.

Comment: *Alexander Flynn* is a superhuman with telepathic abilities. He is allegedly the son of *Doctor Doom*, the "Gypsy" dictator of the fictional country of *Latveria*. His mother is also a "Gypsy". Doom does not recognize *Alexander* as his son and banishes both him and his mother from *Latveria*.

Conway, Gerry (writer), Chuck Patton (penciler), and Dave Hunt (inker). "The End of the Justice League!" *Justice League of America Annual*, no. 2 (1984). New York: DC Comics.

Comment: The superheroine *Gypsy*, member of the *Justice League of America*, first appears in this comic. The story is clearly influenced by **Gruenwald, Mark (writer), Steven Grant (writer), David Michelinie (writer), John Byrne (penciler), and Dan Green (inker). *The Avengers*, no. 185-187 (1979). New York: Marvel Comics.** Gerry Conway was obviously inspired by this arc. In *The Avengers* #181, the superhero team is reorganized, reduced to a smaller group of members who are supposed to be the new elite. This reboot of a superhero team also happens in *Justice League of America Annual* #2. The Marvel arc also introduces the "Gypsy" motif through the origin story of *Scarlet Witch* and *Quicksilver*, who are revealed to have been raised in a "Gypsy" camp. Conway echoes this theme by introducing a new superheroine named *Gypsy*, who joins the *Justice League of America*. She matches the motifs her name indicates: a femme fatale and thief in a colourful and ragged dress.

Michelinie, David (writer), Kerry Gammill (penciler), Luke McDonnell (penciler), and Mel Candido (inker). “The Fourth Nail Chapter 2: Swords and Spikes!” *The Further Adventures of Indiana Jones*, no. 12 (1983). New York: Marvel Comics.

Comment: *Indiana Jones* searches for an artifact – the fourth nail, said to have once been used in the crucifixion of Jesus. According to a rumour, the nail was stolen long ago by “Gypsies”. During his search, *Indiana* befriends a member of this group and is entertained in their camp, where the nail is supposedly hidden. However, he soon discovers that the prized artifact is nothing more than a rusty railroad spike. Shortly after this revelation, the camp is attacked by people who are seeking a treasure. This scene closely mirrors one from Ian Fleming’s novel *From Russia with Love* (1957) and its film adaptation from 1963. The story reproduces various aspects of the motif such as nomadism, showmanship, and primitivity.

Klein, Todd (writer), and Dave Gibbons (artist). “Hero.” *Green Lantern*, no. 164 (1983). New York: DC Comics.

Comment: A group of blue-skinned space “Gypsies” travels through space with their caravan. When the superhero *Green Man* discovers that they are in danger from an “anti-matter leak”, he offers to help. However, the space “Gypsies” refuse assistance from outsiders, adhering to the traditions of their ancestors. To overcome this, *Green Man* selects a young member of the clan named *Gretti* to save the caravan. *Green Man* gives *Gretti* a power ring that grants him supernatural abilities. At first, *Gretti* is arrogant, but he eventually rises to the challenge and helps save his people. The comic showcases themes of nomadism and primitiveness, associated with the “Gypsy” concept. But it also introduces a narrative of emancipation. The idea of space “Gypsies” in a comic was first introduced in **Hamilton, Edmond (writer), Curt Swan (penciler), and John Fischetti (inker). “Tommy Tomorrow: The Gypsies of Space!” *Action Comics*, no. 148 (1950). New York: DC Comics.**

Englehart, Steve (writer), Marshall Rogers (penciler), and Tom Palmer (inker). *Scorpio Rose*. 2 issues. Staten Island: Eclipse Comics, 1983.

Comment: *Rosa* is a “Gypsy” girl born in 1593. At 16, she is lured into the woods by a handsome stranger who turns out to be a demon. He rapes her, leaving her traumatized and unable to age. Now known as *Scorpio Rose*, she learns magic as a tarot card reader, and starts to fight evil. The comic uses the common “Gypsy” stereotype with its supernatural elements, but it flips the femme fatale trope. Instead of a seductive woman leading a man to his downfall, it is *Rosa*, the “Gypsy” girl, who is deceived and harmed by a man.

Jones, Bruce (writer), John Buscema (penciler), and Ernie Chan (inker). "Deathmark." *Conan the Barbarian*, no. 149 (1983). New York: Marvel.

Comment: This comic includes a flashback that shows "Gypsies" and their leader, *Morlock*. For details about their previous appearance, see **Jones, Bruce (writer), Steven Grant (writer), Ernie Chan (artist), Danny Bulanadi (artist), Alfredo Alcala (artist), Gil Kane (penciler), Marc Silvestri (penciler), John Buscema (penciler), Joe Rubinstein (inker), and Mel Candido (inker). *Conan the Barbarian*, no. 131-137 (1982). New York: Marvel Comics.**

Gerber, Steve (writer), Martin Pasko (writer), Buzz Dixon (writer), Jack Kirby (penciler), Gary Kato (penciler), and Alfredo Alcala (inker). *Destroyer Duck*. 7 issues. New York: Eclipse Comics, 1982-84.

Comment: *Groo the Wanderer* is a sword fighter living in an ancient fantasy world. Raised by "Gypsies", it is unclear whether he identifies as one himself. The story taps into ideas of nomadic life and primitive cultures, reflecting aspects of the "Gypsy" motif. *Groo* is also a wandering vagabond and serves as a parody of *Conan the Barbarian*, mocking the heroic and fierce warrior archetype. The comic is an example for an anachronistic display of "Gypsy" characters.

Jones, Bruce (writer), Steven Grant (writer), Ernie Chan (artist), Danny Bulanadi (artist), Alfredo Alcala (artist), Gil Kane (penciler), Marc Silvestri (penciler), John Buscema (penciler), Joe Rubinstein (inker), and Mel Candido (inker). *Conan the Barbarian*, no. 131-137 (1982). New York: Marvel Comics.

Comment: *Conan* is a fierce fighter in an ancient fantasy world. The issues #131-137 feature two different stories with "Gypsies". In the first story, a ruler gets a young "Gypsy" woman pregnant. She demands that he divorces his wife, but instead, he throws her into the dungeon. While imprisoned, the woman loses the child. Once she gets out, she seeks revenge by cursing the ruler's wife, condemning her to be chained to the top of a mountain made of glass to starve. In the second story, in a fictional kingdom, a king offers all his gold to anyone who can defeat his champion, *Bolo*, in a fight. *Conan*, intrigued by the offer, considers the challenge. A traveling "Gypsy" in a wagon suggests to help *Conan* in exchange for a share of the gold. *Conan* agrees, and the "Gypsy" explains how he can secure a match with *Bolo*.

Stern, Roger (writer), Kevin Nowlan (penciler), and Terry Austin (inker). “Gather My Disciples Before Me!” *Doctor Strange*, no. 57 (1982). New York: Marvel Comics.

Comment: *Doctor Strange* is a superhero and sorcerer with a variety of magical powers. In this comic, a woman named *Jimaine Szardos* wants to become his apprentice, but he refuses her request (and that of others). Upset by his decision, her mother, *Margali*, who is a powerful sorceress, challenges him to a battle. *Margali*’s strength is equal to *Doctor Strange*’s, thanks to her magic wand. Realizing this, *Strange* gets close enough to take the wand from her and breaks it. When the wand is destroyed, *Margali* reveals an old “Gypsy” woman. She thanks *Doctor Strange* for freeing her and her family from the wand’s control, explaining that it had possessed them for decades. The comic intertwines the traditional image of the old “Gypsy” woman with that of a witch.

Magin, Elliot (writer), and Murphy Anderson (artist). “Where have you gone, solid citizen?” *The Unexpected*, no. 208 (1981). New York: DC Comics.

Comment: A commissar, under the impression that he has stumbled upon illegal activities at a “Gypsy’s” home, instead finds only a seemingly harmless old lady living there. The story then takes a comedic turn when the commissar discovers that she is actually a sorceress surrounded by various magical creatures. Therefore, this story plays into the conception of “Gypsies” being inherently linked to magic, witchcraft, and the supernatural. It particularly emphasizes the trope of old “Gypsy” women as mysterious and magical figures.

Claremont, Christ (writer), John Romita Jr. (penciler), and Bob McLeod (inker). “Nightcrawler’s Inferno.” *X-Men Annual*, no. 4 (1980). New York: Marvel Comics.

Comment: *Kurt Wagner*, also known as *Nightcrawler*, is a superhuman with extraordinary agility, the power to teleport, and the ability to cling to surfaces with his hands and feet. In this comic, his origin story is revealed. As a baby, *Kurt* was found by a “Gypsy” sorceress named *Margali*, who raised him with her family’s traveling circus. As he grows up, tragedy strikes when *Margali*’s son, *Stefan*, commits a series of murders. *Kurt* intervenes to stop him but is mistakenly blamed for the crimes. An angry mob chases *Kurt* until he is rescued by *Professor X* of the *X-Men*. Moreover, it is revealed that his girlfriend *Amanda Sefton* is actually his sister *Jimaine Szardos*. The comic reflects stereotypical themes of “Gypsy” magic, nomadic life, criminality, and showmanship.

Glut, Don (writer), Fred Kida (penciler), and Dave Simons (inker). “Doctor Doom: What If Doctor Doom Had Become a Hero?” *What If?*, no. 22 (1980). New York: Marvel Comics.

Comment: In this comic, the “Gypsy” supervillain *Doctor Doom* is reimagined, with a twist: instead of becoming a supervillain, he becomes a superhero. With him as the main character, the story reworks *Doctor Doom*’s origin, closely following the original 1964 version, where his “Gypsy” clan suffers under the rule of the baron of *Latveria*, a fictional country. Once again, *Doom* leads a revolution, overthrows the baron, and becomes *Latveria*’s leader, like in **Lee, Stan (writer), Jack Kirby (penciler), and Chic Stone (inker). “The Fantastic Origin of Doctor Doom!” *Fantastic Four Annual*, no. 2 (1964). New York: Marvel Comics.** However, in this 1980 version, *Doom* successfully brings his deceased mother’s soul back from hell. After taking power, he marries his childhood love, *Valeria*. But the demon who once held his mother’s soul in hell demands retribution. *Doom* is forced to choose between the souls of everyone in *Latveria*, *Valeria*’s soul, or his own. Driven by his enormous ego, *Doom* sacrifices *Valeria*’s soul. In this alternate reality, *Doom* is celebrated as a hero across the world and does not seek to conquer it. However, he is haunted by his failure to save *Valeria*’s soul. Every year, he makes an unsuccessful attempt to rescue her, replacing his original quest to save his mother.

Gruenwald, Mark (writer), Carmine Infantino (penciler), and Al Gordon (inker). “Things That Go Flit in the Night.” *Spider-Woman*, no. 10 (1979). New York: Marvel Comics.

Comment: In this comic, *Sybil Dvorak*, also known as *Skein* or *Gypsy Moth*, makes her first appearance as a Marvel character. She is a “Gypsy” woman, raised by “Gypsies”, and spent much of her time tending to her gardens. Her life took a turn when an American actor courted her and brought her to Los Angeles. However, the relationship soured when as he refused to marry her and frequently left on trips, possibly having affairs with other women. Frustrated and hurt, *Sybil* began to channel her anger by attacking Hollywood social gatherings. She took on the persona of *Gypsy Moth*, a name inspired by her “Gypsy” background and her love of nature, particularly gardens and insects. Over time, *Sybil* founded a hedonistic cult, providing her followers with illegal drugs. She became a recurring villain in the Marvel universe, appearing in numerous comic series.

Kashdan, George (writer), and Jess Jodloman (artist). "The Specter Struck Twice." *Ghosts*, no. 81 (1979). New York: DC Comics.

Comment: A Man commits murder to take full credit for someone else's research. However, the ghost of the person he killed returns to seek revenge. The murderer is saved by a "Gypsy's" magical powers, but he refuses to pay for this help. As a result, he is cursed. This storyline, along with the portrayal of "Gypsies" as vindictive, is a recurring theme in Marvel comics. In these stories, "Gypsies" are depicted as victims of betrayal who seek revenge.

Wessler, Carl (writer), and Stephen R Bissette (artist). "The Ouija's Omen." *The Unexpected*, no. 191 (1979). New York: DC Comics.

Comment: A man sexually harasses a young woman who is a "Gypsy" fortune teller foreseeing a terrible fate for him. As she rejects him, he kills her. Shortly after, she reappears in his car while he is driving. As he sees her, he kisses the woman. But at that moment she transforms into a decaying corpse in front of his eyes. Terrified by the sight, he loses control of the car and crashes, leading to his death. portrayal of "Gypsies" as vindictive is a recurring theme. Particularly in Marvel comics, "Gypsies" are often depicted as victims who seek revenge.

Michelinie, David (writer), Mark Gruenwald (writer), Steven Grant (writer), John Byrne (penciler), and Dan Green (inker). *The Avengers*, no. 185-187 (1979). New York: Marvel Comics.

Comment: In a storyline reminiscent of the 1964 origin story of the supervillain *Doctor Doom*, the origin of the *Scarlet Witch* also involves a violent attack on a "Gypsy" camp. See **Lee, Stan (writer), Jack Kirby (penciler), and Chic Stone (inker). "The Fantastic Origin of Doctor Doom!" *Fantastic Four Annual*, no. 2 (1964). New York: Marvel Comics.** In this particular storyline of *The Avengers*, a man named *Django Maximoff* journeys from the Soviet Union to the United States in search of Scarlet Witch and her brother *Quicksilver*, believing they are his long-lost children. *Maximoff* has magical abilities and reveals that he comes from a nomadic "Gypsy" tribe where the two superheroes were raised. However, due to widespread antigypsyist discrimination, *Maximoff* was unable to find work and resorted to stealing to keep the tribe from starving. His criminal acts did not go unnoticed, and as a result, the camp suffered a pogrom. As a result of the events, their ways parted.

Drake, Arnold (writer), and Jess Jodloman (artist). "Gypsy Shade." *House of Mystery*, no. 261 (1978). New York: DC Comics.

Comment: The comic deals with a fictional lawsuit in the 1970s. An elderly German woman stands in court, being accused to have traded with Nazi Gold during the 40s. She was the wife of a Lagerkommandant, a death camp commander. In a flashback, we see that she came to the camp regularly, buying from camp officials the victims' jewellery and belongings. Another main character in this story is an unnamed "Gypsy". He is an inmate and visualized as an inked man, with large colourful tattoos of a butterfly, a rabbit, and a clown – marking the fantastic attribute of showmanship. In the camp, he additionally receives a tattoo of his prisoner number on his arm. One day he disappears. The flashback ends. Back in court, the Nazi Gold trader is acquitted due to lack of proof for crimes. The connection between this lawsuit and the flashback is made clear when the woman arrives home. The shade of the lamp by her bed is made of the "Gypsy's" skin and his (unspecified) gold. To the woman's surprise the tattoos – the butterfly, the rabbit, and the clown – start to cast large shadows on the walls of her room. They come alive and kill her. When her body is found, the man's inked camp number from his arm is now also tattooed on her arm.

Weiss, Alan (writer, artist), Steve Gerber (writer), Sal Buscema (penciler), John Buscema (penciler), Rich Buckler (penciler), and Al Milgrom (inker). "Kiss." *Marvel Comics Super Special*, no. 1 (1977). New York: Marvel Comics.

Comment: In this tribute to the iconic band Kiss, the "Gypsy" supervillain *Doctor Doom* makes a dramatic appearance, flanked by a group of alluring "Gypsy" women who are armed with machine pistols. *Doctor Doom* is after the mysterious *Box of Khyscz*, which contains a "Gypsy" mystic powers. A street musician had given this box to the band, and now Kiss, having gained superpowers from it, must fight the "Gypsies" to protect it.

Claremont, Chris (writer), Dave Cockrum (penciler), and Sam Grainger (inker). "Merry Christmas, X-Men..." *X-Men*, no. 98 (1976). New York: Marvel Comics.

Comment: The superheroine *Amanda Sefton* makes her first appearance as a powerful sorceress with abilities like teleportation, creating illusions, shapeshifting, and hypnotism. In a later comic, it is revealed that her true identity is *Jimaine Szardos*, the daughter of the "Gypsy" sorceress *Margali Szardos*. See **Claremont, Chris (writer), John Romita Jr. (penciler), and Bob McLeod (inker). "Nightcrawler's Inferno." *X-Men Annual*, no. 4 (1980). New York: Marvel Comics.**

Wein, Len (writer), Joe Sinnott (artist), and John Buscema (penciler). *Thor*, no. 246-247 (1976). New York: Marvel Comics.

Comment: A woman named “Gypsy” is the lover of *Firelord*, a tyrannic revolutionary with superpowers. The scenario clearly draws parallels to the Cuban revolution. *Thor*, member of the superhero group named *Avengers*, tries to convince *Firelord* to abandon his revolutionary plans. However, the “Gypsy” has cast a spell on *Firelord*, compelling him to continue his actions. Eventually, one of *Thor*’s allies manages to toss away the magical gem that the “Gypsy” used for her enchantment. This breaks the spell, leading *Firelord* to see the situation more clearly. He stops fighting *Thor*, and they join forces to oppose the revolutionaries. The story reinforces the stereotype of “Gypsies” as evil witches.

Claremont, Chris (writer), Len Wein (writer), and Dave Cockrum (artist). “Second Genesis.” *Giant-Size X-Men*, no. 1 (1975). New York: Marvel Comics.

Comment: First appearance of *Kurt Wagner*, also known as *Nightcrawler*, who is a superhuman with extraordinary agility, the power to teleport, and the ability to cling to surfaces with his hands and feet. In a later comic, he is revealed as being raised by a “Gypsy” sorceress. See **Claremont, Christ (writer), John Romita Jr. (penciler), and Bob McLeod (inker). “Nightcrawler’s Inferno.” *X-Men Annual*, no. 4 (1980). New York: Marvel Comics.**

Gerber, Steve (writer), Sal Buscema (penciler), Al McWilliams (inker), and Joe Giella (inker). *Marvel Spotlight*, no. 20-21 (1975). New York: Marvel Comics.

Comment: *Daimon Hellstrom*, a superhero also known as the *Son of Satan*, visits a “Gypsy” fortune teller with his friends. The fortune teller draws a card from her Tarot deck – it is “The Moon”, which features an image of a dog and a jackal howling at the moon. She then reveals *Daimon*’s secret identity as the *Son of Satan* to his friends. In response, *Daimon* transforms into his form as *Son of Satan* and angrily attacks the fortune teller before attempting to leave. However, as he steps outside, he is confronted by a pack of wild dogs, eerily similar to the creatures depicted on the card. When *Daimon* decides to return to the fortune teller, he finds her house nailed shut, abandoned, as if no one had been there for a long time.

Moench, Doug (writer), Virgil Redondo (artist), Yong Montaña (artist), Don Perlin (penciler), Vince Colletta (inker), and Sal Trapani (inker). *Giant-Size Werewolf*. 4 issues. New York: Marvel Comics, 1974-75.

Comment: *Maria Russoff* was accused by the villagers of bringing a demon into the world, leading them to force her out of the village. A group of “Gypsies” took her in, and she lived with them for fifteen years. One day, when *Maria* returned to the camp, she discovered that the villagers had killed her new family in a brutal attack, driven by the belief that they were thieves and criminals. Consumed by a desire for revenge, *Maria* uses magic to bring the dead “Gypsies” back to life as zombies, who then attack and kill the villagers. Throughout the story, *Maria* also uses a trained bear to fight, reinforcing the “Gypsy” motif, including attributed like showmanship, nomadism, fortune-telling, and magic.

Friedrich, Mike (writer), Mike Ploog (penciler), and Frank Chiaramonte (inker). “Death in the Cathedral.” *Werewolf by Night*, no. 16 (1974). New York: Marvel Comics.

Comment: A group of superheroes encounters a hunchbacked hijacker at the Paris airport. This hijacker is a parody of *Quasimodo*, the famous Hunchback of Notre-Dame from Victor Hugo’s novel *Notre-Damen de Paris* (1831). In the novel, *Quasimodo* is the abandoned son of “Gypsies”. In the comic, this character is portrayed negatively because of his criminal activities.

Wolfman, Marv (writer), Gene Colan (penciler), and Frank Chiaramonte (inker). “Night of the She-Demon.” *Giant-Size Chillers Featuring Curse of Dracula*, no. 1 (1974). New York: Marvel Comics.

Comment: In this comic, the character *Lilith* first appears in Marvel’s universe, as the daughter of *Dracula*, the famous vampire from Bram Stoker’s novel *Dracula* (1897). She and her mother were once banished from *Dracula*’s castle. Afterward, *Lilith* was adopted by a “Gypsy” woman named *Lianda*, who was the one who originally turned *Dracula* into a vampire. As an act of revenge, *Dracula* feeds upon *Lianda*’s son. In response, *Lianda* cast a spell on *Lilith*, turning her into a vampire with the purpose of seeking revenge against her father.

Oleck, Jack (writer), and Abe Ocampo (artist). “Eve: Island of the Damned.” *Weird Mystery Tales*, no. 11 (1974). New York: DC Comics.

Comment: A “Gypsy” femme fatale tricks a wealthy, hunchbacked count. These characters seem loosely inspired by *Esmeralda*, a beautiful “Gypsy” woman, and *Quasimodo*, a hunchbacked bellringer, from Victor Hugo’s novel *Notre-Dame de Paris* (1831). In the comic, the rich count is shocked that such a beautiful woman would want to marry someone as unattractive as him. His castle is inhabited with other people who are similarly deformed, but the woman insists that he sends them away because she finds them repulsive. She claims that only he does not disgust her. The count agrees and sends them away. Once they are alone, the woman and her secret lover kill the count and steal his treasures. However, the count returns from the dead, transforms into a man with two heads, and forces the woman to marry him as punishment.

Moench, Doug (writer), and Vicente Alcázar (artist). “The Color of Crimson Gold.” *Vampire Tales*, no. 6 (1974). New York: Marvel Comics.

Comment: A man named *Tevye* works for vampires, luring unsuspecting victims to their lair so they can be fed upon. One day, *Tevye* tries to trick a “Gypsy” man named *Tovarr*, who is portrayed with stereotypical features like a kerchief, gold coins, and a vest. *Tovarr* faces discrimination in the story; a bartender refuses to serve him simply because he is a “Gypsy” and considered a vagabond. The narrator explains: “**W**ere it not for the **strength** of his pride, *Tovarr* might **reply** to the barkeeper’s vehemence, he might point out that his people **would** settle somewhere... were they only **welcomed**, or merely **accepted**.” Outside the bar, *Tovarr* encounters *Tevye*, who sells him a map, claiming it leads to a hidden treasure. However, the map actually leads to the vampires’ hiding place. *Tevye* not only plans to offer *Tovarr* as the vampires’ next victim but also intends to frame him for the disappearance of other victims, exploiting the townspeople’s prejudice against “Gypsies”. *Tovarr*, however, discovers the plot. He follows the map to a hut, where he kills *Tevye* and uses his dead body to lure the vampires. *Tovarr*, together with fellow “Gypsies”, then traps the vampires inside the hut, locks it, and burns it down, killing the vampires. The connection between “Gypsies” and vampires is rooted in Bram Stoker’s *Dracula* (1897) where “Gypsies” work for a vampire.

Pearson, Kit (writer), Tony Isabella (writer), and Win Mortimer (artist). “The Death-Dealing Mannikin.” *Monsters Unleashed*, no. 3 (1973). New York: DC Comics.

Comment: The story takes place in Austria during the 1930s. The character *Lucio Nuti* is a “Gypsy” seeking revenge against “the tyrannous ones who had **destroyed** his family”. His family had been forced to work like slaves for a wealthy Austrian man, who eventually sent them away in 1935, leaving them to die in the wilderness. *Lucio*, the only survivor, vows to avenge them. Four years later, and one year after the Anschluss, he summons Satan and creates a human-like monster, the *Death-Dealing Mannikin*, a figure made of clay. Once the *Mannikin* comes to life, it turns on its creator, *Lucio*, and kills him. The monster then seeks out and kills the Austrian man as he attempts to flee to Switzerland upon learning of the German invasion of Poland. The character of the *Death-Dealing Mannikin* resembles Frankenstein’s Monster.

Brunner, Frank (writer, penciler), Steve Englehart (writer), Mike Friedrich (writer), Neal Adams (inker), Alan Weiss (inker), and Crusty Bunkers (inker). “Doctor Strange: Portal to the Past!” *Marvel Premiere*, no. 12 (1973). New York: Marvel Comics.

Comment: *Doctor Strange* is a superhero and sorcerer with a variety of magical powers. In this comic, he finds himself in a “Gypsy” camp where he falls victim to a witch’s spell, taking control of his actions. However, the “Gypsies” are not the real villains here – the true antagonist is a living gargoyle that craves power. During the battle with the gargoyle, the witch releases *Doctor Strange* from her spell to protect herself and the camp. Freed from the spell, *Doctor Strange* defeats the gargoyle and saves the witch.

Friedrich, Gary (writer), John Buscema (penciler), John Romita (penciler), and John Verpoorten (inker). "The Fury of a Fiend!" *Frankenstein*, no. 7 (1973). New York: Marvel Comics.

Comment: *Frankenstein's monster* rescues a beautiful "Gypsy" woman named *Carmen* – a reference to the character from Prosper Mérimée's novella *Carmen* (1845), known as a femme fatale – from being raped by a hunched "Gypsy" man, who seems inspired by *Quasimodo*, the bellringer from Victor Hugo's *Notre-Dame de Paris* (1831). Grateful for his bravery, *Carmen's* grandmother invites *Frankenstein's monster* to their "Gypsy" camp. There, he is warmly welcomed and offered food. The "Gypsies" explain that they, like *Frankenstein's monster*, are considered "different" and "outcasts". He decides to join them, becoming a performer in their traveling circus. Later, when a vampire kills a man in a German town, the townspeople blame the "Gypsies" for bringing the vampire. Fearing persecution, the "Gypsies" flee to the mountains. Once there, *Carmen's* grandmother tricks *Frankenstein's monster* into reviving *Dracula* – the famous vampire from Bram Stoker's novel with the same name (1897). Mostly philogypsyist, the comic mixes characters from a variety of works from literary history.

Friedrich, Gary (writer), and Mike Ploog (writer, artist). "In Search of the Last Frankenstein!" *Frankenstein*, no. 6 (1973). New York: Marvel Comics.

Comment: In this historicising fantasy, a "Gypsy" is imprisoned for stealing horses. This subtly sets the stage for "Gypsies" to play a much larger role in the next issue (as discussed in the entry above).

Wolfman, Marv (writer), Archie Goodwin (writer), and Neal Adams (artist). "That Dracula May Live Again!" *Dracula Lives!*, no. 2 (1973). New York: Marvel Comics.

Comment: This is the first appearance of *Lianda*, an old "Gypsy" woman who is both a healer and a vampire. Her full story is explored in more detail in a later issue. See **Wolfman, Marv (writer), Gene Colan (penciler), and Frank Chiaramonte (inker). "Night of the She-Demon." *Giant-Size Chillers Featuring Curse of Dracula*, no. 1 (1974). New York: Marvel Comics.**

Meredith, Bill (writer), and Nestor Redondo (artist). "Abel: Beyond His Imagination." *House of Secrets*, no. 99 (1972). New York: DC Comics.

Comment: A man loses his job and visits a "Gypsy" fortune teller for guidance. She sends his spirit to a place called *limbo*, where he encounters other spirits. They try to convince him to stay, but he refuses, defies them, and returns to his body in the real world. Shortly after, he gets his old job back. However, the man feels a strong urge to return to limbo. The fortune teller warns him against it, but he threatens her to make it happen. This time, when he returns to limbo, his spirit is trapped there, and the spirits in limbo kill the fortune teller as punishment for her earlier defiance. The story uses the stereotypical motive of the apocalyptic "Gypsy" fortune teller for an comparably innovative story.

Kubert, Joe (writer, artist). "Gypsy Girl." *Weird War Tales*, no. 4 (1972). New York: DC Comics.

Comment: A mysterious and attractive "Gypsy" woman appears with her people, traveling in a caravan. During World War Two, an American soldier crosses paths with them. The woman shares with him tales of soldiers from other wars in history, connecting past and present through her stories. The story uses the "Gypsy" motif for a mysterious fantasy.

Kanigher, Robert (writer), Alan Weiss (penciler), and Dick Giordano (inker). "The Gypsy Curse!" *All-Star Western*, no. 7 (1971). New York: DC Comics.

Comment: In this philogypsyist Western comic, an unguilty man is hanged simply because he is a "Gypsy". Just before his death, he curses those responsible. The hero, *El Diablo*, who is inspired by Johnston McCulley's character *Zorro*, witnesses the execution. Soon after, the judge responsible for the hanging is mysteriously killed at night by someone who appears to be the hanged man. However, *El Diablo* discovers that the murderer is the "Gypsy's" daughter, who disguised herself as her father to seek revenge. The daughter, who is in love with *El Diablo*, asks him to marry her, but he refuses, repulsed by what she has done.

Lieber, Larry (writer, penciler), Roy Thomas (writer), Frank Giacoia (penciler), and Vince Colletta (inker). "Doctor Doom: This Man... This Demon!" *Marvel Super-Heroes*, no. 20 (1969). New York: Marvel Comics.

Comment: In this comic, the "Gypsy" character *Valeria* has her first appearance in the Marvel universe. Also, the "Gypsy" supervillain *Doctor Doom* appears once again. *Valeria* grew up in the same "Gypsy" camp as him and was his childhood love. She becomes an important character in later issues. For example, see **Glut, Don (writer), Fred Kida (penciler), and Dave Simons (inker). "Doctor Doom: What If Doctor Doom Had Become a Hero?" *What If?*, no. 22 (1980). New York: Marvel Comics.**

Gill, Joe (writer), and Pat Boyette (artist). "'Spacious' Rooms for Rent." *Shadows from Beyond*, no. 50 (1966). Derby: Charlton Comics.

Comment: The story is narrated by an old "Gypsy" fortune teller who recounts Nazi atrocities. However, the story does not acknowledge that people labelled as "Gypsies" were also victims of the Nazis. Instead, the "Gypsy" narrator contributes to the fantasy-driven mystification of the horrors committed by the Nazis.

Gill, Joe (writer), and Pat Masulli (artist). "He'll Go a Long Way." *Shadows from Beyond*, no. 50 (1966). Derby: Charlton Comics.

Comment: The story is narrated by an old "Gypsy" fortune teller who recounts Nazi atrocities. However, the story does not acknowledge that people labelled as "Gypsies" were also victims of the Nazis. Instead, the "Gypsy" narrator contributes to the fantasy-driven mystification of the horrors committed by the Nazis.

Gill, Joe (writer), Mo Marcus (penciler), and Dick Giordano (inker). "Reprieve!" *Shadows from Beyond*, no. 50 (1966). Derby: Charlton Comics.

Comment: The story is narrated by an old "Gypsy" fortune teller who recounts Nazi atrocities. However, the story does not acknowledge that people labelled as "Gypsies" were also victims of the Nazis. Instead, the "Gypsy" narrator contributes to the fantasy-driven mystification of the horrors committed by the Nazis.

Roth, Werner (penciler). "His Magic Spell!" *Young Romance*, no. 139 (1966). New York: DC Comics.

Comment: A man and a woman are on a romantic date, having a candlelight dinner while an old "Gypsy" fiddler plays music. The "magic spell" mentioned in the title does not refer to "Gypsies".

Lee, Stan (writer), Jack Kirby (penciler), and Chic Stone (inker). "The Fantastic Origin of Doctor Doom!" *Fantastic Four Annual*, no. 2 (1964). New York: Marvel Comics.

Comment: The comic narrates the origin story of the "Gypsy" supervillain *Doctor Doom*. In the fictional country *Latveria*, located "in the Bavarian Alps", the boy *Victor von Doom* grows up in a colourful wagon camp. He experiences how his father is seized by a baron whose wife is critically sick. *Werner* is a renowned healer, but he is unsuccessful and cannot save the baron's wife. Therefore, the baron's soldiers attack and destroy the unarmed camp. Father and child try to escape but do not get far, due to a snowstorm, where *Werner* freezes to death while protecting his son with the warmth of his body. *Boris* from the former camp finds them and rescues *Victor*. The child vows vengeance and learns the use of black magic. Simultaneously, he studies the sciences. Years pass in which he starts a revolution in *Latveria* and becomes the ruler of the land. On the one hand, the comic tells the old story of a "Gypsy" who is ill-treated and takes revenge, with all the clichés. On the other hand, there is a post-war context that evokes the themes of historical pogrom and genocide in Europe. With *Doctor Doom*, Lee and Kirby did not only provide a platform for the theme of Romani pogrom in the superhero genre. They also contributed a remarkably complex and humanizing anti-hero who was quite unconventional.

Lee, Stan (writer), Jack Kirby (penciler), and Paul Reinman (inker). "The Brotherhood of Evil Mutants!" *The X-Men*, no. 4 (1964). New York: Marvel Comics.

Comment: First appearance of the supervillains (soon superheroes) *Scarlet Witch* and *Quicksilver*. Their backstory, which includes being raised by "Gypsies", as explained later in **Gruenwald, Mark (writer), Steven Grant (writer), David Michelinie (writer), John Byrne (penciler), and Dan Green (inker). *The Avengers*, no. 185-187 (1979). New York: Marvel Comics.**

Lee, Stan (writer), Larry Lieber (writer, penciler), and Sol Brodsky (inker). "The Sorcerer's Spell." *Tales of Suspense*, no. 41 (1963). New York: Marvel Comics.

Comment: A general wants to overthrow his king, but he is too scared to go through with it. So, he visits a "Gypsy" sorcerer and asks for help to remove his fear using magic. The sorcerer grants the general's request but curses him instead, turning him into a toy soldier. This story is another example of Marvel comics featuring a "Gypsy" fortune teller who, after being betrayed or threatened, curses the person who wronged them as an act of revenge.

Lee, Stan (writer), Larry Lieber (writer), Jack Kirby (penciler), and Dick Ayers (inker). "Won't You Step into My Parlor...???" *Journey into Mystery*, no. 80 (1962). New York: Marvel Comics.

Comment: Count *Darius Zamora* is a wealthy "Gypsy" whose family made their fortune by building aircraft in Europe. When he is invited to the mansion of his rival *Luther Krumhausen*, *Zamora* is drugged and wakes up in a room with gigantic furniture. He believes he has shrunk, which causes him to have a heart attack. As he is dying, *Zamora* uses "Gypsy magic" to transfer his spirit into *Krumhausen's* cat. He also shrinks *Krumhausen* and takes his revenge.

Lee, Stan (writer), Larry Lieber (writer), Jack Kirby (penciler), and Dick Ayers (inker). "Sazzik the Sorcerer." *Tales of Suspense*, no. 32 (1962). New York: Marvel Comics.

Comment: *Sazzik the Sorcerer* is a "Gypsy" who practices black magic. In the comic, it is narrated that he first used his powers to control other "Gypsies" in his camp, and later offered his services to those willing to pay, using his magic to influence battles throughout history. In modern times, a film producer decides to make a film about *Sazzik's* life. However, many people are against his films because they believe those would glorify crime. One day, while the producer is alone, he says *Sazzik's* name out loud. This awakens the sorcerer from his centuries-long sleep, and in response, *Sazzik* sends the producer to the "nether world".

Lee, Stan (writer), Larry Lieber (writer), and Paul Reinman (artist). "The Enchanted Paint." *Tales of Suspense*, no. 25 (1962). New York: Marvel Comics.

Comment: A painter gives some money to an old "Gypsy", who, in return, gives him magic paint. When he uses the paint, his artwork becomes more beautiful than ever, which makes him happy. However, as he starts seeing the world through the lens of this magical beauty, his girlfriend no longer seems beautiful enough to him, and he breaks up with her. The "Gypsy" then casts a spell on him, making him see her as beautiful again. The comic is one of three created by Stan Lee during the years 1960-62 that connect the idea of magical "Gypsies" with the theme of painting. See **Lee, Stan (writer), and Steve Ditko (artist). "The Painting." *Journey into Mystery*, no. 71 (1961). New York: Marvel Comics**; and see **Lee, Stan (writer), Larry Lieber (writer), and Don Heck (artist). "Beware the Hands of Hundu." *Strange Tales*, no. 74 (1960). New York: Marvel Comics.**

Lee, Stan (writer), Jack Kirby (penciler), and Joe Sinnott (inker). "Prisoners of Doctor Doom! Part 1." *Fantastic Four*, no. 5 (1962). New York: Marvel Comics.

Comment: This comic first introduces the supervillain *Doctor Doom*. In a later issue, he is revealed to be a "Gypsy". **Lee, Stan (writer), Jack Kirby (penciler), and Chic Stone (inker). "The Fantastic Origin of Doctor Doom!" *Fantastic Four Annual*, no. 2 (1964). New York: Marvel Comics.**

Lee, Stan (writer), and Steve Ditko (artist). "The Little Gypsy Tea Room." *Amazing Adult Fantasy*, no. 13 (1962). New York: Marvel Comics.

Comment: A criminal forces a "Gypsy" fortune teller into hiding him from the police. She agrees, but instead of simply helping him, she traps him inside her crystal ball for eternity. This story is one of many in Marvel Comics where "Gypsy" characters, often depicted as fortune tellers, are betrayed or threatened. In response, they use curses or enchantments to exact revenge on those who wronged them.

Lee, Stan (writer), and Steve Ditko (artist). "The Painting." *Journey into Mystery*, no. 71 (1961). New York: Marvel Comics.

Comment: An art dealer, known for buying valuable paintings from struggling artists at extremely low prices and then selling them for huge profits, tries to steal a beautiful painting from a "Gypsy" man who refuses to sell it. Frustrated, the dealer has the "Gypsy" falsely arrested and then sneaks into his wagon to steal the painting. However, when the "Gypsy" is released because the dealer cannot be found, he quickly realizes what has happened. He goes to the art dealer's apartment to retrieve his enchanted painting, only to discover that the dealer has magically become part of the artwork. The comic is one of three created by Stan Lee during the years 1960-62 that connect the idea of magical "Gypsies" with the theme of painting. See **Lee, Stan (writer), Larry Lieber (writer), and Paul Reinman (artist). "The Enchanted Paint." *Tales of Suspense*, no. 25 (1962). New York: Marvel Comics;** and see **Lee, Stan (writer), Larry Lieber (writer), and Don Heck (artist). "Beware the Hands of Hundu." *Strange Tales*, no. 74 (1960). New York: Marvel Comics.**

Lee, Stan (writer), Larry Lieber (writer), and Paul Reinman (artist). "The Hands of Hogarr!" *Tales of Suspense*, no. 16 (1961). New York: Marvel Comics.

Comment: "In a large European City", a diamond merchant is robbed and killed. The criminal responsible for the crime seeks out a "Gypsy" named *Hogarr*, who is rumoured to have the ability to change a person's face completely – providing the perfect disguise. Initially, *Hogarr* refuses to help because the task is too risky. However, the criminal insists and even threatens him, leaving *Hogarr* with no choice but to agree. The man receives a new face, but in an ironic twist, he is eventually caught because his new face turns out to be identical to that of the inspector pursuing him. This story is one of many in Marvel Comics where "Gypsy" characters, often depicted as fortune tellers, are betrayed or threatened. In response, they use curses or enchantments to exact revenge on those who wronged them.

Lee, Stan (writer), Larry Lieber (writer), Paul Reinman (artist), and Sol Brodsky (artist). "The Magic of Mordoo!" *Journey into Mystery*, no. 75 (1961). New York: Marvel Comics.

Comment: A young and attractive "Gypsy" sorcerer named *Mordoo* helps a middle-aged man by casting a spell to make his lover, who is also middle-aged, appear younger. The man had promised to marry her if she became younger. The magic works, but the woman, now rejuvenated, no longer wants to be with the middle-aged man. Instead, she falls in love with the "Gypsy" sorcerer, and they end up together. The story blends the stereotype of the handsome, mysterious "Gypsy" with the common trope of the "Gypsy" witch.

Lee, Stan (writer), Larry Lieber (writer), and Don Heck (artist). "The Gypsy's Revenge!" *Tales to Astonish*, no. 25 (1961). New York: Marvel Comics.

Comment: A criminal robs an old "Gypsy" fortune teller, who, in this story, is a man. Later, they cross paths again in a circus hut. Seeking revenge, the "Gypsy" man places a curse on the criminal, trapping him in the hut forever. This story is one of many in Marvel Comics where "Gypsy" characters, often depicted as fortune tellers, are betrayed or threatened. In response, they use curses or enchantments to exact revenge on those who wronged them.

Lee, Stan (writer), and Steve Ditko (artist). "For Whom the Drum Beats!" *Tales to Astonish*, no. 22 (1961). New York: Marvel Comics.

Comment: A drummer wants to improve his skills, so he forces a "Gypsy" sorcerer to cast a spell on him. The sorcerer agrees, and the drummer becomes incredibly talented. However, the spell has a downside: he can never stop playing, not even for a second. This story is one of many in Marvel Comics where "Gypsy" characters, often depicted as fortune tellers, are betrayed or threatened. In response, they use curses or enchantments to exact revenge on those who wronged them.

Lee, Stan (writer), Larry Lieber (writer), and Paul Reinman (artist). "The Man Who Fell!" *Strange Tales*, no. 85 (1961). New York: Marvel Comics.

Comment: A mayor wants to marry a "Gypsy" fortune teller who does not love him. He gives her an ultimatum: either marry him or go to jail for making fake predictions. She insists her fortunes are real, so he challenges her to prove it by reading his fortune. The fortune teller warns him that he will be injured by a fall. The mayor tells her that if the prediction does not come true, she must choose between prison or marrying him. To avoid falling, the mayor locks himself in his basement as he expects to fall himself, but it turns out that a loose chandelier hanging above his head in the basement, falls on him. This story is one of many in Marvel Comics where "Gypsy" characters, often depicted as fortune tellers, are betrayed or threatened. In response, they use curses or enchantments to exact revenge on those who wronged them.

Bernstein, Robert (writer), and Ramona Fradon (artist). "The Menace of Aqualad!" *Adventure Comics*, no. 270 (1960). New York: DC Comics.

Comment: The superhero *Aquaman* rescues an old "Gypsy" fortune teller, after she falls into the water. Grateful for his help, she offers him a free fortune telling session. In her tent, she warns *Aquaman* of a great danger: somebody new in his life might replace him. Soon after, *Aquaman*'s side-kick, *Aqualad*, begins acting strangely. He starts collecting unusual items and asking questions about *Aquaman*'s weaknesses. Eventually, *Aqualad* traps *Aquaman* in a net and leaves him alone. However, it turns out that *Aqualad* was not planning to harm him. Instead, he was gathering items to create a trophy collection as a birthday gift for *Aquaman*. In the end, the fortune teller's prophecy seems to be false.

Lee, Stan (writer), Larry Lieber (writer), and Don Heck (artist). "Beware the Hands of Hundu." *Strange Tales*, no. 74 (1960). New York: Marvel Comics.

Comment: A painter receives magic paint from a "Gypsy" that brings everything he paints to life. He plans to use it to become the dictator of the world, but his handyman accidentally kills him by knocking his latest painting out the window. The comic is one of three created by Stan Lee during the years 1960-62 that connect the idea of magical "Gypsies" with the theme of painting. See **Lee, Stan (writer), and Steve Ditko (artist). "The Painting." *Journey into Mystery*, no. 71 (1961). New York: Marvel Comics;** and see **Lee, Stan (writer), Larry Lieber (writer), and Paul Reinman (artist). "The Enchanted Paint." *Tales of Suspense*, no. 25 (1962). New York: Marvel Comics.**

Ditko, Steve (writer, artist). “My Friend is... Not Quite Human!” *Tales to Astonish*, no. 13 (1960). New York: Marvel Comics.

Comment: The story deals with a woodcarver in France during the year 1799 who develops romantic feelings for his work – the statue of a woman. The piece was commissioned by French consul Napoleon Bonaparte himself. The woodcarver does not want to deliver it to his client, despite being threatened with death. Thus, he has the idea of becoming like his piece – a wooden statue –, selling himself to the client and living together with his loved wooden woman forever. He goes to a “Gypsy” witch and buys a potion from her that shall fulfil his wish, but he does not pay her. Therefore, she curses his statue of the woman. While he drinks the potion and transforms into wood, she, the wooden statue, becomes a real human and leaves him. This story is one of many in Marvel Comics where “Gypsy” characters, often depicted as fortune tellers, are betrayed or threatened. In response, they use curses or enchantments to exact revenge on those who wronged them.

Lee, Stan (writer), Larry Lieber (writer), and Paul Reinman (artist). “The Metal Monster.” *Journey into Mystery*, no. 57 (1960). New York: Marvel Comics.

Comment: An engineer is building a road through a forest where a group of “Gypsies” live. Upset by the intrusion, they put a curse on his steel shovel, which then starts to turn against him. This story is one of many in Marvel Comics where “Gypsy” characters, often depicted as fortune tellers, are betrayed or threatened. In response, they use curses or enchantments to exact revenge on those who wronged them.

Lee, Stan (writer), and Joe Sinnott (artist). “I am the Man Without a Face!” *Strange Tales*, no. 71 (1959). New York: Marvel Comics.

Comment: A few men dress in black sheets, going out to chase people they consider foreigners. Their hate is directed at a group of “Gypsies” whom they want to expel from the edges of their neighbourhood. The xenophobic group attacks their camp and successfully expels the “Gypsies”. However, on his wagon the chieftain casts a spell over their leader. Soon, the cursed one realizes that he is unable to remove his hood – finding another hood beneath – for the rest of his life. In the last panel he states: “If I ever get free of these hoods, I swear I’ll never be intolerant of anyone again!”. The leader of the criminal group eventually regrets his decision, after a terrible curse has made him think about his deeds. The chieftain’s curse is not a form of protection, as the “Gypsies” are expelled anyway. He merely takes revenge. This story is one of many in Marvel Comics where “Gypsy” characters, often depicted as fortune tellers, are betrayed or threatened. In response, they use curses or enchantments to exact revenge on those who wronged them. *I am the Man Without a Face* distinguishes from all his other works, as it connects the revenge by “Gypsies” with racist violence that is inspired by crimes in the real world – resembling crimes by the white-supremacist Ku Klux Klan.

Lee, Stan (writer), Larry Lieber (writer), and John Buscema (artist). “I was the Man Who Lived Twice!” *Strange Worlds*, no. 3 (1959). New York: Marvel Comics.

Comment: The story follows a boy named *Gyor Kosice*, who was abandoned in the woods and later adopted and raised by a group of “Gypsies”. Unlike the other boys in the group, who enjoy reading and learning, *Gyor* shows no interest in these activities. Instead, he suggests stealing to one of the other boys, who refuses because it would be dishonest. As *Gyor* grows older, he seduces a girl from a wealthy family. Eventually, he gets a second chance at life, transforming back into a child and being adopted by non-“Gypsy” parents. *Gyor*, although not born a “Gypsy” himself (he is a “Scheinzigeuner”, or “fake Gypsy”), embodies common negative stereotypes, such as criminality and laziness. The “true Gypsies”, on the other hand, reject these behaviours, though they are still portrayed as poor nomads. Overall, the story inverts the narrative of “Gypsy” child-theft, and it combats the stigma’s aspects of criminality, laziness, and illiteracy.

Doxsee, Richard (writer, artist). "The Uncanny Keys." *World of Fantasy*, no. 15 (1958). New York: Marvel Comics.

Comment: A man discovers that a locksmith has a set of magic keys that were given to him by a "Gypsy". The man steals the keys and uses them to unlock doors that lead to treasure rooms and beautiful places. However, when he uses the last key, it opens a door to a jail cell. He gets trapped inside, and the keys vanish, leaving him stuck. This story is one of many in Marvel Comics where "Gypsy" characters, often depicted as fortune tellers, are betrayed or threatened. In response, those who wronged them are being punished.

Schwartz, Julius (writer), Morris Waldinger (penciler), and Tom Nicolosi (inker). "Wedding Forecast!" *Wonder Woman*, no. 88 (1957). New York: DC Comics.

Comment: A short comic that explores traditional and folkloristic methods of predicting one's own marriage. In the first panel, it describes the practice of "Gypsy" girls who would whisper a question to the mule with the biggest ears in the camp, asking about their future marriage. The mule's reaction would determine the outcome: if it responded in a particular manner, it means an early wedding; if not, it suggests the girl might never marry at all.

Woodbridge, George (writer, artist). "Doomsday!" *Strange Stories of Suspense*, no. 15 (1957). New York: Marvel Comics.

Comment: A man discovers gold near a "Gypsy" camp and wants to keep it for himself. To get the camp's inhabitants to leave without raising suspicion, he lies to them, saying that a meteor is about to strike their campsite. Believing him, they quickly leave. However, when the man goes to claim the gold, a meteor actually strikes and kills him. This story is one of many in Marvel Comics where "Gypsy" characters, often depicted as fortune tellers, are betrayed or threatened. In response, they use curses or enchantments to exact revenge on those who wronged them.

Torres, Angelo (writer, artist). "The Gypsies' Secret." *Spellbound*, no. 33 (1957). New York: Marvel Comics.

Comment: A quack tries to sell fake medicine to a group of "Gypsies". When they realize it is a scam, they beat him up. However, an elderly "Gypsy" healer heals the quack, and saves his life. Many stories in Marvel Comics feature "Gypsy" characters, often depicted as fortune tellers, who are betrayed or threatened. In response, they use curses or enchantments to exact revenge on those who wronged them. However, in this case, the story inverts this convention and instead reproduces the Christian parable of the Good Samaritan, inserting the "Gypsy" healer into the role of the Samaritan.

Whitney, Ogden (writer, artist). "The Gypsies!" *Adventures into the Unknown*, no. 74 (1956). New York: American Comics Group.

Comment: In a flashback, a member of the Wehrmacht named Ludwig Brenner comes to a family in their remote farmhouse in Germany. He enters the house and gets a cup of coffee at their table while having an uncomfortable conversation with the family members about their loyalty to the Führer. Unexpectedly, Brenner notices that the family hides "Gypsies" under the farmhouse's floor, and so a squad is ordered to kill them. The "Gypsies" can escape, but they do not get far and are all shot. Brenner is amused because one of his victims has cursed him before being murdered. Ten years pass. He has still not been held accountable for his crimes. While lying in bed, Brenner thinks: "The allied war crimes tribunal never learned of my action... I was small fry! I have nothing to fear...". But one day, when he goes on the hunt, he suffers from what appears to be a hallucination: The "Gypsies", whom he once killed, pursue him. Later he is found dead in the woods. This comic was quite progressive in the context of memory culture. People labelled as "Gypsies" are illustrated as victims of national socialist persecution. However, this story is one of many in Marvel Comics where "Gypsy" characters use curses or enchantments to exact revenge on those who wronged them.

Powell, Bob (writer, artist). "There's No Tomorrow." *Astonishing*, no. 48 (1956). New York: Marvel Comics.

Comment: A pirate captures a "Gypsy's" boat, and she warns him on a Tuesday that the next day he will be caught in a storm and arrested by the Spanish army. The following day passes without incident, but on the second day, everything happens just as predicted. Furious, the captain vows to find the "Gypsy", blaming her for getting the day wrong. However, his Spanish captors reveal that it actually is Wednesday – his ship crossed the International Date Line during the storm, which caused the mix-up in the days.

Schwartz, Julius (writer). "Marriage a la Mode!" *Wonder Woman*, no. 82 (1956). New York: DC Comics.

Comment: A short comic that explores wedding rituals from different cultures around the world, briefly including those of "Gypsies". Also see **Schwartz, Julius (writer), Morris Waldinger (penciler), and Tom Nicolosi (inker). "Wedding Forecast!" *Wonder Woman*, no. 88 (1957). New York: DC Comics.**

Miller, Jack (writer), and Raymond Perry (artist). "The Mysterious Gypsy Cards." *House of Mystery*, no. 43 (1955). New York: DC Comics.

comment: A short comic that explains Tarot cards, which are referred to as "Gypsy cards". In the panels, it is said that these cards would be used by "Gypsy" fortune tellers.

Maneely, Joe (writer, artist). "Modred and the Gypsies." *Black Knight*, no. 3 (1955). New York: Marvel Comics.

Comment: The comic series takes place in the world of King Arthur. In the third issue, a character labelled as "Gypsy" appears. He wears a kerchief and has a wagon with lions in it, hinting at the motif of showmanship. This character is hired by someone named *Modred* to carry out a contract killing, and he agrees to the job eagerly. The comic reproduces the stigma of criminal, nomadic, violent "Gypsies". Also see **"Dr. Voodoo: The Gypsy Brigands." *Whiz Comics*, no. 34 (1942). Robbinsdale: Fawcett Publications.**

Keller, Jack (writer, artist). "Surprise!" *Adventures into Weird Worlds*, no. 16 (1953). New York: Marvel Comics.

Comment: An elderly man falls in love with a young "Gypsy" woman and ends up killing his rival for her affection. The woman then asks him to use magic to bring back her dead lover's face so she can switch it with his own. The story features the motif of the "Gypsy" femme fatale and includes supernatural elements.

Luster, Al (writer, artist). “Don’t Ever Gyp a Gypsy!” *Mystery Tales*, no. 14 (1953). New York: Marvel Comics.

Comment: This comic is about a criminal who buys a magic potion from an old “Gypsy”. It shall make him immortal, but he cheats on her, paying only half the price, and so the woman curses him, leading to a side-effect of the potion. He becomes immortal but transforms into a skeleton – his flesh rotten off from his body. This story is one of many in Marvel Comics where “Gypsy” characters, often depicted as fortune tellers, are betrayed or threatened. In response, they use curses or enchantments to exact revenge on those who wronged them.

Lee, Stan (writer), and Steve Ditko (artist). “I Must Find Korumbu.” *Journey into Mystery*, no. 64 (1952). New York: Marvel Comics.

Comment: *Korumbu* is a “Gypsy” healer who lives deep in the forest, making various potions and remedies for his people. One day, *Hugo Barge* comes to him asking for a potion to help him lose weight. *Korumbu* is working on such a potion but has not finished perfecting it yet and worries it might be unsafe. Despite this, *Barge* insists and threatens to reveal the location of *Korumbu*’s community to the hostile authorities if he does not get the potion. Fearing for his people, *Korumbu* reluctantly gives *Barge* the potion. After taking it, *Barge* begins to lose weight rapidly. He soon needs to eat constantly to avoid wasting away, so he tries to find *Korumbu* for help. However, *Korumbu* disappeared and has not been seen since. This story is one of many in Marvel Comics where “Gypsy” characters, often depicted as fortune tellers, are betrayed or threatened. In response, they use curses or enchantments to exact revenge on those who wronged them. This particular comic exhibits similarities to Stephen King’s 1984 novel *Thinner*.

Oksner, Bob (artist). [Cover] *A Date with Judy*, no. 27 (1952). New York: DC Comics.

Comment: Although the comic magazine does not include a “Gypsy” fortune teller within its pages, one is featured on the cover. In the story of *A Date with Judy*, the main character, *Judy*, goes to see a “Gypsy” fortune teller with her friend *Carol*. *Carol* says to *Judy*, “Psst-- Judy, ask her if that handsome fellow you're going to meet has a friend?” This moment captures the overall theme of the comic series, which revolves around *Judy* going on dates with men.

Everett, Bill (writer, artist). “Sorry... Mr. Hopkins!” *Mystic*, no. 8 (1952). New York: Marvel Comics.

Comment: An old and unsightly “Gypsy” fortune teller uses magical glasses to make herself appear as a beautiful young woman. She then persuades a man to kill his wife and steal from her boss. After he carries out her demands, she reveals her true, old appearance.

McLean, Al (writer, artist). “Beware the Rackets.” *Gang Busters*, no. 21 (1951). New York: DC Comics.

Comment: The comic tells the story of a “Gypsy” fortune teller who tricks a client. The client is advised by the fortune teller on how to double her saving. Unfortunately, the client ends up losing all the money to the fortune teller. The comic aims to warn readers about the dangers of being too trusting.

Hamilton, Edmond (writer), Curt Swan (penciler), and John Fischetti (inker). “Tommy Tomorrow: The Gypsies of Space!” *Action Comics*, no. 148 (1950). New York: DC Comics.

Comment: This comic is a science-fiction story. A big community of “Gypsies” travels from planet to planet in space. They are not exploring for fun; they are refugees because their home world was destroyed by a comet. *Tommy Tomorrow*, the hero, goes undercover among them after they are accused of a series of robberies. The “Gypsies” are expelled from Venus, but it turns out they did not commit the crimes. Ultimately, they can settle in beautiful landscapes on Venus. The comic questions the “Gypsy” motif’s attributes of nomadism and criminality.

Henkel, Vern (writer, artist). “Curse of the Gypsy!” *All-True Crime Cases Comics*, no. 35 (1949). New York: Marvel Comics.

Comment: A “Gypsy” fortune teller warns a man name *Sully*, saying, “Water... black with trouble for you!” Later, *Sully* and his friend, both lawyers, conspire to steal half a million dollars from a wealthy client who is trying to evade taxes. Instead of helping him hide the money, they decide to keep it for themselves. *Sully’s* friend takes the money and hides it. While on a boat ride together, *Sully* demands to know where the money is hidden, but his friend refuses to tell him. This leads to a heated argument, and *Sully* ends up punishing his friend, causing him to fall overboard and drown in the dark water – just as the fortune teller predicted. *Sully’s* actions catch up with him, and he is eventually pursued by the police and arrested.

Marston, William (writer), and Harry Peter (artist). “Tale of the Tigers.” *Wonder Woman*, no. 29 (1948). New York: DC Comics.

Comment: Somewhere in Ireland, two “Gypsies” are vying for the attention of a woman named *Tama*. The conflict escalates, leading one of them to kill the other. The killer then ties up *Tama*, as well as the *Holliday Girls* – a band of sorority members who often assist the superheroine Wonder Woman – who witnessed the crime. However, *Tama* manages to escape. Ultimately, *Wonder Woman* arrives just in time to rescue the *Holliday Girls* from being attacked by the circus tigers that belong to the “Gypsies”. The story reinforces common stereotypes associated with the “Gypsy” motif, such as criminality, violence, and showmanship.

“Super Rabbit: Foiling the Fortune Teller!” *Super Rabbit*, no. 11 (1948). New York: Marvel Comics.

Comment: In this comedic superhero comic series featuring anthropomorphic animals, the hero, *Super Rabbit*, works as a shoe shiner. One day, a “Gypsy” bulldog comes to have his shoes shined but refuses to pay, even though the service is very cheap. Feeling insulted, *Super Rabbit* chases after the “Gypsy” to seek revenge. He eventually finds him disguised as a fortune teller. The “Gypsy” uses hypnosis to take control of *Super Rabbit* and forces him to rob a bank. However, *Super Rabbit* eventually snaps out of the hypnosis on his own and helps the police arrest the “Gypsy”. The story reinforces typical stereotypes associated with the “Gypsy” motif, such as criminality, and fortune telling.

Binder, Otto (writer), Syd Shores (penciler), and Al Avison (inker). “The Dance of Death!” *Captain America Comics*, no. 62 (1947). New York: Marvel Comics.

Comment: *Betsy Ross* is the love interest of *Captain America*. At the Thorndike Ball, she becomes a target of a knife-wielding man named *Signor Zagana*, a “Gypsy”, along with his group of thieves. However, *Captain America* and his sidekick, *Bucky*, step in to stop them and avenge the attack. The story also features “Gypsy” wagons and a young “Gypsy” woman, who dances and plays the tambourine. The comic reinforces the usual “Gypsy” stereotypes of criminality, violence, dancing “Gypsy” girls, and nomadism.

Finger, Bill (writer), Al Avison (penciler), and Frank Borth (inker). “Crime on Cue.” *Captain America Comics*, no. 58 (1946). New York: Marvel Comics.

Comment: A “Gypsy” woodcarver tries to sell his carvings but becomes furious when three people refuse to buy them. In a fit of revenge, he kills the three individuals. Later, he confronts the superhero *Captain America* and his sidekick, challenging them with riddles that reference William Shakespeare’s works. The woodcarver is portrayed as an old, hunched man with a large hook nose. This depiction, along with his knowledge of Shakespeare – indicating literacy –, seems to draw not only on antigypsyist but also antisemitic stereotypes.

Cameron, Don C. (writer), Paul Cooper (penciler), and Ray Burnley (inker). “Batman with Robin the Boy Wonder: Steeplejack’s Showdown!” *Detective Comics*, no. 117 (1946). New York: DC Comics.

Comment: A man visits a “Gypsy” fortune teller, who warns him to be careful around heights. Later, he has a close call when he nearly dies falling from a skyscraper, but the superhero *Batman* and his sidekick *Robin* save him.

Finger, Bill (writer), Dick Sprang (penciler), and George Roussos (inker). “Batman and Robin: Ally Babble and the Four Tea Leaves!” *Batman*, no. 34 (1946). New York: DC Comics.

Comment: In this story, a man named *Ally* visits a fortune teller named *Madame Patio* at her “Gypsy Tea Room”. After *Ally* finishes his tea, *Madame Patio* takes his cup and examines the tea leaves left at the bottom. “They are like the four fates!” she exclaims. She sees symbols in the leaves: money, a girl, a ship’s deck, and happy faces. *Ally* interprets these mysterious clues as signs of good luck, but they actually hint at the opposite.

Du Bois, Gaylord (writer), and H R McBride (artist). “Uncle Wiggily: Helping the Homeless.” *Animal Comics*, no. 13 (1945).

Comment: The characters in this comic magazine are all anthropomorphic animals. At one point in this particular story, an alligator tries to trick the main character by creating a trap disguised as a “Gypsy” inn. Although no actual “Gypsy” characters appear in the comic, the use of the “Gypsy” theme is linked to danger and deceit, evoking the stigma.

Bester, Alfred (writer), and Stan Kaye (artist). “Genius Jones: The Saving Scot and the Gypsy Gyp!” *Adventure Comics*, no. 92 (1944). Meriden: Detective Comics.

Comment: The villain in this story is a “Gypsy” fortune teller who predicts terrible futures for people. She uses these prophecies to convince their clients to buy her charms, claiming they will protect them. Surprisingly, her predictions come true for those who refuse to buy the charms. However, when the hero, *Genius Jones*, starts investigating, he discovers that the fortune teller is actually a fraud. She secretly instructs her employees to follow those who do not buy her charms and make sure the bad things she predicted really happen.

Little, Frank (writer, artist). “Red Kamphor: It’s the Gypsy in Them!” *All Great Comics*. New York: Fox Feature Syndicate, 1944.

Comment: “*Red*” *Kamphor the Skunk* is the villain in the story. He is a dangerous criminal involved in robbery, murder, and kidnapping. In the plot, he forms an alliance with a wandering “Gypsy” fortune teller. This fortune teller assists *Kamphor* in his plan to kill two people who are his intended victims.

Cameron, Don C (writer), and Jerry Robinson (artist). “Batman and Robin: Destiny’s Auction.” *Detective Comics*, no. 79 (1943). Meriden: Detective Comics.

Comment: The story features a “Gypsy” fortune teller named *Madame Calagra*, who earns money by giving people predictions about their futures. One day, she tells a failed actor that he will make a successful comeback, which eventually happens. However, she also predicts the future of a criminal planning to steal valuable jewellery. Despite knowing his bad intentions, she accepts his money and gives him a prediction. Although her prophecy comes true, it does not go as the thief expected – he is caught by *Batman* and *Robin*.

Beaven, Frank (writer, artist). [untitled] *Best Cartoons of the Year: 1943*. New York: Crown Publishing Group, 1943.

Comment: The book includes a short humourist cartoon that was originally published in *The New Yorker*. The cartoon shows a “Gypsy” fortune teller.

Winiarski, Ed (writer, artist), and Don Rico (inker). "Gypo and Bobby." *U.S.A. Comics*, no. 5 (1942). Meriden: U.S.A. Comic Magazine Corporation.

Comment: *Gypo* is a "Gypsy" giant who lives in a magical world with his pet dragon. One day, a young boy named *Bobby* wanders into *Gypo's* forest. *Gypo* attempts to frighten *Bobby*, but his efforts fail. No matter what *Gypo* does, *Bobby* is not scared at all. Therefore, *Gypo* becomes frustrated and upset that he cannot intimidate the boy. The "Gypsy" motif represents a fantastical element that matches this fantasy world.

Fox, Gardner (writer), and Howard Sherman (artist). "Doctor Fate: The Two Fates." *More Fun Comics*, no. 83 (1942). New York: Detective Comics.

Comment: *The Two Fates*, once known as the "Gypsy" showmen *Jagor* and *Mario*, serve as the villains in the story. They deceive people by selling poorly made tapestries for a high price, claiming that these tapestries reveal the buyer's destiny. While their work is far from professional, they lure in customers by preying on the hope and curiosity of those seeking to know their future, making them manipulative figures in the narrative.

Bower, T E (writer), and Bob Lubbers (artist). "Captain Wings." *Wings Comics*, no. 28 (1942). New York: Wings Publishing.

Comment: *Captain Wings* is a pilot of the US Airforce in the Pacific, fighting the Japanese forces. One day, a beautiful "Gypsy" woman visits the base. She predicts death for one, safety for another (Llyod), and a grim fate for *Captain Wings*: "Death will court you every day of your life!". Shortly thereafter, the first soldier dies in a Japanese attack, fulfilling her prophecy. Lloyd is assigned a suicide mission, but Captain Wings knocks him out and takes his place, declaring "This is a job for Captain Wings!" Against the odds, he destroys a Japanese destroyer. However, due to the damage sustained to his plane during the mission, he is forced to steal a Japanese fighter. When his comrades encounter him in this enemy aircraft, they fail to recognize him. *Captain Wings* is subsequently attacked by American planes, and gets a critically hit, leading to a crash landing. Eventually, he returns to the base and is celebrated for his accomplishment in sinking the Japanese destroyer. The "Gypsy" woman is mocked by the soldiers for her allegedly incorrect prophecy, but her skull tells her that she was right. *Captain Wings*, keeping the events secret, remarks: "That skull shouldn't talk so loudly!" A key figure in this narrative is the "Gypsy" woman, who assumes the role of a revealer. She reveals the threat of war.

Ollendorff, Julian (writer, artist). "Olly of the Movies." *Famous Funnies*, no. 99 (1942). New York: Eastern Colors.

Comment: The "Gypsy" *Zwycko* earns his living through wrestling, which the protagonist, *Skip*, disapproves of. Disgusted by *Zwycko*'s lifestyle, *Skip* decides to challenge him to a wrestling match. As the fight gets underway, two other "Gypsies" try to help *Zwycko* by cheating on his behalf. However, the attempts to interfere go badly wrong, and they fail to give *Zwycko* any real advantage.

Nicholas, Charles (penciler), and Sol Brodsky (inker). "Little Leaders: Gypsies." *Cat-Man Comics*, no. 13 (1942). Holyoke: Holyoke Publishing.

Comment: *Katie* and *Mickey*, two children, come across a "Gypsy" woman who offers to tell their fortunes. During the reading, she reveals that *Mickey* has feelings for *Katie*, which makes him uncomfortable, so he urges them to leave, and they both walk away. Later, they run into a group of "Gypsies" carrying dynamite. It becomes clear that these individuals are planning something illegal when one of them says, "There will be a big explosion, but no one will suspect us poor Gypsies". Although their exact plan remains unclear, *Katie* and *Mickey* confront the group, and the dynamite ends up exploding without hurting anyone.

"Dr. Voodoo: The Gypsy Brigands." *Whiz Comics*, no. 34 (1942). Robbinsdale: Fawcett Publications.

Comment: The protagonist, *Dr. Voodoo*, is a time traveller searching for an artefact known as the *Golden Flask*, which is located in the High Middle Ages. During his journey into the past, he encounters a group of crusaders, and together, they pursue the search, eventually finding the artefact. However, before returning to his own time, *Dr. Voodoo* is required to travel to England in the company of the crusaders. Along their journey, they come across a "Gypsy" camp, where one of the knights issues a warning to *Dr. Voodoo*, characterizing the "Gypsies" as "the worst cutthroats and robbers in christendom!". Despite this caution, *Dr. Voodoo* proceeds through the camp. But his daring is met with consequences, as one of the "Gypsies" skilfully snatches the *Golden Flask* from his pocket using a long whip. Shortly thereafter, the group is attacked by the "Gypsies", who initially gain the upper hand due to the crusader's heavier equipment. In one panel, a "Gypsy" forcefully pushes a crusader to the ground and levels a dagger at him. Ultimately, *Dr. Voodoo* intervenes and manages to turn the situation in their favour, leading to the defeat of the "Gypsies". Beyond the overt allusions to King Arthur's quest, this comic follows storytelling patterns typical to adventure literature about colonial expeditions in Africa.

Thomas, Frank (writer, artist). "The Owl." *Crackajack Funnies*, no. 43 (1942). Racine: Western Comics.

Comment: *Gypsy Lou* serves as the story's villain, portrayed as a dangerous drug dealer who nearly kills the hero with a gun. She is depicted as a beautiful and seductive fortune teller, mixing two different aspects of the "Gypsy" motif – the femme fatale and the mystical seer. Furthermore, she has a dark skin and a strong Eastern European accent, which emphasizes her othering, foreign background.

"Larson Wells" (writer). "The Great Zarro: Origin of the Great Zarro." *Great Comics*, no. 1 (1941). New York: Great Comics Publications.

Comment: The main character in the story is an aerialist in a circus. One day, a "Gypsy" fortune teller predicts that he will achieve great things in the future and become a just fighter against crime. She also warns him about an upcoming tragedy, without providing details. To help him on his journey, she gives him a box of magical herbs. Later, the circus is destroyed by racketeers. In response, the protagonist uses the magical herbs from the fortune teller, which give him the ability to fly, transforming him into *The Great Zarro*. This fortune teller is notable because she is one of the few early comic characters identified as a "Gypsy" who supports the hero, rather than opposing him.

Pinajian, Art (writer, artist). "Madam Fatal: The Gypsy Murder." *Crack Comics*, no. 13 (1941). New York: Comic Magazines.

Comment: In a "Gypsy" camp, two lovers are planning to marry, but a jealous man in the camp is determined to ruin their happiness. He feels threatened because the girl's father supports the marriage. He tries to kill the girl's father but fails. However, he stole the lover's knife for the deed, which is then found at the scene, leading everyone to believe the boy is guilty. Thereafter, the jealous man attempts to drown the young lover in a river. Just before this is about to happen, *Madam Fatale*, a crossdressing vigilante known for infiltrating criminal groups, swoops in to save the day.

“True Spy Stories: Gypsy Fortune Teller.” *Popular Comics*, no. 67 (1941). New York: Dell Publishing.

Comment: It provides a brief biography of Nastia “Madam Zara” Antionova, a 30-year-old entertainer in the Soviet Union during the interwar period. Before the Russian Revolution, Nastia was famous for singing Romani songs and had many admirers among those loyal to the tsar. After the revolution, she transitioned to working as a fortune teller, attracting clients who were often anti-Soviet activists. This drew the attention of the GPU, the Soviet Secret Police. In exchange for amnesty regarding her criminal past, Nastia agreed to gather information for the GPU about opponents of the new regime. Eventually, the GPU also sent her abroad as a spy. However, she was captured by the French Secret Police and imprisoned until 1936.

Finger, Bill (writer), Bob Kane (penciler), and Jerry Robinson (inker). “Batman: Robin the Boy Wonder.” *Detective Comics*, no. 38 (1940). New York: Detective Comics.

Comment: It features the first appearance of *Dick Grayson*, also known as *Batman’s* sidekick *Robin*. He is later revealed to have been raised by “Gypsies”. **Grayson, Devin (writer), Roger Robinson (penciler), and John Floyd (inker). “Batman: Retribution Part 1 of 2: Sons and Lovers.” *Batman: Gotham Knights*, no. 20 (2001). New York: DC Comics.**

Blair, Joe (writer), and Ed Smalle (artist). “Gypsy Johnson.” *Blue Ribbon Comics*, no. 4-8 (1940-41). Pelham: M. L. J. Magazines.

Comment: *Gypsy Johnson* is a hero in several issues and a Texan soldier serving in the French colonies. The term “Gypsy” in his name does not refer to an ethnic identity; instead, it refers to his nickname “soldier of fortune”, someone who brings luck to his comrades and allies. This nickname carries a sense of mystique and adventure.

“Mark Swift and the Time Retarder: Napoleon and the Gypsies.” *Slam-Bang Comics*, no. 7 (1940). Robbinsdale: Fawcett publications.

Comment: The protagonists travel bac in time to Spain during the Napoleonic Era. Early in the story, a “Gypsy” saves them, but later, a conflict arises between the heroes and the “Gypsies”, who turn out to be robbers stealing from defenceless villagers. The “Gypsies” demand access to time travel technology and insist the protagonists join them. When they refuse, the violent leader of the “Gypsies” threatens to burn them alive. The heroes manage to unite with French and British forces to face the “Gypsies”. The comic follows storytelling patterns typical to adventure literature about colonial expeditions in Africa.

Armbruster, G B (writer), and Gloria Kamen (inker). “Rinaldo’s Revenge.” *Superman*, no. 7 (1940). New York: DC Comics.

Comment: *Rinaldo*, a “Gypsy” prince, had grown up hearing rumours that his adoptive father had hidden a fortune in gold somewhere in their caravan. However, his father always denied these stories. One night, *Rinaldo* discovers his adoptive father dead, clutching a note. The message told *Rinaldo* to safeguard a fortune in gems that rightfully belonged to them. What *Rinaldo* did not know was that the son of the “Gypsy” chief was actually the one who had murdered his father. *Rinaldo* wants to take revenge. Treasure hunting, and revenge are typical themes of many historical “Gypsy” stories.

Moe, Claire S (writer, artist). “The Circus and Sue: Jon the Gypsy Cuts a Rope.” *Funny Pages*. New York: Centaur Publications, 1940.

Comment: To avenge their friend Carlos, a group of “Gypsies” decide to take revenge. *Jon*, one of them, uses his skills to get a job at the circus. Once hired, Jon plans to sabotage the act by cutting a rope in an attempt to kill one of the aerial performers.

Loughlin, Edwin (writer), Eisner and Iger Studio (artist), and Will Eiser (penciler). “Spencer Steel: The Perfect Crime.” *Jumbo Comics*, no. 10 (1939). New York: Fiction House.

Comment: In the story, the victim is poisoned with a substance called *Drei*, which, according to the comic, is something only “Gypsies” would use. This leads *Detective Steel* to visit a “Gypsy” camp to gather more information. While there, he discovers the culprit, who had been hidden by a “Gypsy” fortune teller.

Briefer, Dick (writer, artist). "The Hunchback of Notre Dame." *Jumbo Comics*, no. 10 (1939). New York: Fiction House. Based on the novel *Notre-Dame de Paris* by Victor Hugo.

Comment: This is a two-page comic teaser, designed to encourage readers to read Victor Hugo's novel *Notre-Dame de Paris* (1831). The character *Esmeralda*, raised by "Gypsies", appears briefly in a single panel.

Mills, Tarpé (writer, artist). "Cat-Man: The Return of the Cat Man." *Amazing Man Comics*, no. 8 (1939). New York: Centaur Publications.

Comment: *Cat Man*, a superhero, is tracking down a criminal named *Joseph "Gypsy" Greco*. The use of the name "Gypsy" plays into the "Gypsy" motif of criminal behaviour.

Crane, Roy (writer, artist). "Captain Easy." *The Funnies*, no. 6 (1937). New York: Dell Publishing.

Comment: At the beginning, the main character *Captain Easy*, decides to go on a trip. He says, "Got the Gypsy feet and it's time to travel". Here, he is referring to the "Gypsy" motif of nomadism.

Gottfredson, Floyd (writer, penciler), and Al Taliaferro (inker). "Mickey Mouse and the Ransom Plot". New York: King Features Syndicates, 20 July to 7 November 1931.

Comment: In this story, "Gypsies" kidnap *Mickey's* girlfriend, *Minnie Mouse*, and demand a ransom for her release. While *Mickey* and *Minnie*, anthropomorphic mice, are never explicitly stated as underage, the action toward these innocent-looking characters potentially invokes the cliché of child theft by "Gypsies".

Manga

“Nagimisō” (writer, artist) 風水そう. *Tourin’ Girl!* ツーリンガール 3 (2021). Tokyo: Takeshobō 竹書房.

Comment: The manga series follows a girl and her friends who enjoy going on trips together. In this volume, chapter 28 is titled “Ocean Gypsy” (オーシャン・ジプシー, Ōshan Jipushī). The title clearly reflects the setting of the chapter, which takes place near the ocean, and the idea of a “Gypsy” evokes the theme of wandering or nomadic lifestyles. This ties into the overall plot of the manga, which revolves around travel and exploration.

Yokoshima, Takemaru (writer, artist) 邪 武丸. *Show by Rock!!* ショウバイロック!! Tokyo: Kadokawa Shoten 角川書店, 2020.

Comment: This manga series is based on a video game of the same name and features several fictional music bands. One of the character, *Rom*, is the drummer for the band *ShinganCrimsonZ*. *Rom* is an anthropomorphic leopard. He is depicted as a young, attractive, and passionate man who loves to travel. His name and characteristics, such as his association with nomadism, musical talent, and a sense of dangerous seduction (being a leopard who looks like an appealing young man), reflect the “Gypsy” motif.

“Mimoto” (writer, artist) みもと. *The masterpiece I love* 恋する名画 2 (2020). Tokyo: Kadokawa.

Comment: “第11話 アンリ・ルソー『眠るジプシー女』” (Eng.: “Chapter 11: Henri Rousseau ‘La Bohémienne endormie’”) in this volume is a medieval fantasy yuri manga, a romantic story between two women. The chapter draws inspiration from Henri Rousseau’s painting *La Bohémienne endormie* (1897), which depicts a sleeping “Gypsy” woman in a desert alongside a lion. In the manga, the story feature a “Gypsy” girl who is accompanied by a white lion that acts as her protector.

Saida, Mitsuya (writer, artist) 齊田 ミツヤ. *Shinainaru Gypsy e* 親愛なるジプシーへ. 2 issues. Tokyo: Kōdansha 株式会社, 2019.

Comment: It is 1973 and *Trevor*, a lawyer, loses an important document. Amidst heavy snowfall, the document is unexpectedly returned by *Jean*, a cleaner. Learning that *Jean* lives in a shabby, plain, old boiler room, *Trevor* offers him a job as a housekeeper as a way of showing his gratitude. Despite *Jean*'s awkwardness, as if he had stepped out of the Middle Ages, he exhibits a surprising level of education. This young, formerly Amish man, whose beauty and intelligence stand out, moves in with *Trevor*. Their cohabitation brings *Trevor* – who is homosexual – a sense of quiet happiness and a longing for more. The “Gypsy” in the title of the manga references *Jean*. Though *Jean* is not actually a “Gypsy”, he embodies certain stereotypes associated with the motif, such as a lack of education, poverty, and seduction.

“Kīyan” (writer, artist) きいやる. *Salad Bowl* サラダボウル. Tokyo: Ichijinsha 一迅社, 2019.

Comment: Even though there are no actual “Gypsy” characters in this manga, some Japanese comic journalists identify the girl traveling in a trailer, the main character, as a “Gypsy”.

Akui, Makoto (writer, artist) 阿久井 真. *Ao no Orchestra* 青のオーケストラ 3 (2019). Tokyo: Shōgakukan 小学館.

Comment: *Ao no Orchestra* (Eng.: *Blue Orchestra*) is a story about the symphonic orchestra at *Chiba Prefectural Makuhae Sohgo High School*. In Volume 6, the opera *Carmen* is briefly introduced.

“Cuvie” (writer, artist). *Don Quixote* ドン・キホーテ. Tokyo: Tōhō Tōwa 東宝東和, 2019. Based on the ballet *Don Quixote* by Marius Petipa and Léon Minkus and the novel *Don Quixote* by Miguel de Cervantes.

Comment: This manga is an adaptation of the ballet *Don Quixote* (1869) by Marius Petipa and Léon Minkus, which was itself based on Miguel de Cervantes' famous novel from 1605/15. The story, like the ballet, centres on the love between *Kitri*, an innkeeper's daughter, and *Basilio*, a barber. Since *Kitri*'s father disapproves of their relationship, the couple must flee. In the second act, they find refuge in a camp on the outskirts of the village, where they are taken in by a group of “Gypsies”. Although they are pursued by *Gamache* and *Don Quixote*, their disguises as members of the group allow them to go unrecognized.

“Kikuko” (writer, artist) きくこ. *Roma (Gypsies) no Koto* ロマ (ジプシー) のこと. 4 issues. Self-published, Kikuko, 13-16 March 2019, https://www.kikuko3011.eu/_/history.

Comment: Although these are just comics posted on a blog and not widely known, they are still worth noting. The writer and artist is a Japanese traveller who shares her experiences and opinions about Roma in France. However, these descriptions are generalizing and stereotype Roma.

Higashiyama, Yūki (writer, artist) 東山 勇樹. *Peter Clown* ピータークラウン. Self-published, Note, 7 May 2018, <https://note.com/skunkman/n/n2df0df2dbc10>.

Comment: *Peter* is a clown known as the *Gypsy Clown* because he leads a group of performers called the *Gypsy Circus*. The names play on the idea of “Gypsies” being linked to entertainment and showmanship.

***Notre-Dame de Paris* ノートルダム・ド・パリ. Tokyo: Shinseisha 新声社, 2017. Based on the novel *Notre-Dame de Paris* by Victor Hugo.**

Comment: This manga is an adaptation of Victor Hugo’s 1831 novel of the same name. It is part of the publisher’s series called トキメキ夢文庫 (*Tokimeki Yume Bunko*, Eng.: *Tokimeki Dream Library*). The script and artwork were created by anonymous members of the publisher’s editorial team.

Torikai, Akane (writer, artist) 鳥飼 茜. *Gypsycat’s Barricade* マンダリン・ジプシーキャットの籠城. 2 issues. Tokyo: Media Factory, 2017.

Comment: The manga takes place in a near-future, dystopian world in Asia where only women live, as men are rarely born and are mainly seen as reproductive partners. Society is matriarchal, and life is peaceful, without wars or conflicts. However, some women choose to leave the city and live in a slum on the outskirts. One of these women is Sanada. The term “Gypsy” in the title refers to the motif of poverty, and the lifestyle of these women.

Hazuki, Sei (writer, artist) 葉月 せい. *Black go Kinjo* ブラックご近所 2 (2017). Tokyo: Take Shobō 竹書房.

Comment: This is a josei manga, a type of manga aimed at adult women. In the story, the protagonist is called “noise Gypsy” (騒音ジプシー, *Sōon Jipushī*) because they are always moving around due to the constant exposure to neighbours’ noise.

“Sumeragi Sora” (writer, artist) 皇ソラ. *Gypsy Service* ジプシーサービス. Self-published, Toranoana とらのあな, 24 January 2016, https://ec.toranoana.jp/joshi_r/ec/item/040030387014/.

Comment: This is a fan-made, pornographic yaoi doujinshi (a manga featuring male same-sex romance) that centres on the two male characters, *Mikazuki Augus* (三日月・オーガス) and *Orga Itsuka* (オルガ・イツカ), from the anime series *Mobile Suit Gundam: Iron-Blooded Orphans* (2015-17). The title appears to suggest a connection to sexual services, with the author comparing this to the seductive allure of an erotic “Gypsy”.

Ishida, Sui (writer, artist) 石田 スイ. *Tokyo Ghoul:re* 東京喰種:re. 16 issues. Tokyo: Shūeisha 集英社, 2014-2018.

Comment: *Roma Hoito*, also known as “Gypsy”, is a vicious, human-eating creature who looks like a child but hides her true nature behind a clown-like mask. This mask reflects “Gypsy” stereotypes, such as being criminal, wild, and performers. This character first appeared in the manga series *Tokyo Ghoul* (2011-14).

Nagatsuki, Tappei (writer) 長月 達平, and “Matsuse Daichi” (artist) マツセ ダイチ. *Re:Zero: Capital City* Re:ゼロから始める異世界生活 第一章 王都の一日編. 2 issues. Tokyo: Media Factory, 2014-2015.

Comment: This manga adapts the light novel series *Re:Zero* (since 2012) by NAGATSUKI Tappei and retells its first part. The character *Valga Cromwell*, also known as *Old Man Rom* (ロム爺), runs a warehouse for stolen goods, and his liked to the stereotypes that associate Roma with criminality and theft.

Kawasaki, Sora (writer, artist) 川崎 宙. *Gypsy Dance* ジプシーダンス. Tokyo: Shūeisha 集英社, 2012.

Comment: This work, first published in Shūeisha's *Jump Square* magazine, marks the debut of KAWASAKI Sora. It includes a "Gypsy dance", shown with intense emotions through close-up panels.

Ishida, Sui (writer, artist) 石田 スイ. *Tokyo Ghoul* 東京喰種. 14 issues. Tokyo: Shūeisha 集英社, 2011-2014.

Comment: *Roma Hoito*, also known as "Gypsy", is a vicious, human-eating creature who looks like a child but hides her true nature behind a clown-like mask. This mask reflects "Gypsy" stereotypes, such as being criminal, wild, and performers. This character reappeared in the manga series *Tokyo Ghoul:re* (2014-2018).

"Furukawa Lemon" (writer, artist) 古川 れもん. *Love Mix 7: Ragnarok Online Book*. Self-published, pixiv, 2 August 2011, <https://www.pixiv.net/en/artworks/20780831>.

Comment: A fan-made, pornographic manga featuring the female "Gypsy" character type from the video Game Ragnarök Online (2002). It was once available on the Japanese comic book shop Toranoana but has since been taken down. In the game, "Gypsy" is a role with unique magical skills and abilities. The theme uses the trope of the seductive "Gypsy" femme fatale.

Hanagata, Rei (writer, artist) 花形 怜. *Barista* バリスタ 1 (2010). Tokyo: Hōbunsha 芳文社.

Comment: This story is about a highly skilled Japanese bartender who trained in Italy. On page 13 of this book, he refers to himself as a "coffee Gypsy" ("コーヒジプシー"). This nickname reflects his journey through various Italian cities to master the art of making exceptional coffee.

***Don Quixote* ドン・キホーテ. Tokyo: East Press, 2009. Based on the novel *Don Quixote* by Miguel de Cervantes.**

Comment: This manga adapts Miguel de Cervantes' famous novel from 1605/15. The manga is part of the publisher's collection "Variety Art Works".

Kurazono, Norihiko (writer, artist) 倉蘭 紀彦. *Mahō Gyōshōnin Roma* 魔法行商人ロマ. 5 issues. Tokyo: Shogakukan 小学館, 2009-2011.

Comment: The protagonist and “magic monger” is named *Roma*, highlighting the stereotypical link between Roma and magic.

“Natsuya” (writer, artist) 夏屋. *RO-WebComic*. 28 issues. Self-published, Shiningroad, since January 2005, <https://ffp-shiningroad.com/ro>.

Comment: This is a fan-made manga based on the video game Ragnarök Online (2002). One of the main characters in this comic is Astrid “Asu” Quill, who plays a role known as a “Gypsy” in the game. In the game, “Gypsy” is a role with unique magical skills and abilities. The character of Asu is designed to resemble the classic, seductive image of a Spanish “Gypsy” as a femme fatale, combining historical stereotypes with fantasy elements.

Koyama, Motoo (writer, artist) こやま 基夫. *Abra Mandala* アブラ・マンダラ. 4 issues. Tokyo: Shōnen Gahōsha 少年画報社, 1995-1997.

Comment: This series features a fortune-telling woman and her establishment, *Gypsy House*.

“Makiko” (writer, artist) 魔木子. *Silver Gypsy* 銀色のジプシー. 2 issues. Tokyo: Takeshobō 竹書房, 1993.

Comment: The manga follows an international assassin called the “Silver Gypsy”. This woman uses her charm and attractive looks to manipulate and eliminate men in order to achieve her own goals. This plotline is based on the idea of the “Gypsy” femme fatale.

“Gypsy Doll” “ジプシードール” *Oshioki Joō* おしおき女王 2, no. 5 (1993). Tokyo: Sōryūsha 蒼竜社.

Comment: It is a pornographic manga featuring a superheroine who is portrayed as a powerful, seductive, and fortune-telling “Gypsy” woman.

Hara, Chieko (writer, artist) 原 ちえこ. *Fostine* フォスティヌ. 4 issues. Tokyo: Kōdansha 株式会社, 1978/79.

Comment: The story centres on a blonde girl who was brought up by a traveling theatre group of “Gypsies”. She has a natural talent for piano and dreams of becoming a renowned musician in Vienna. When she is scheduled to perform at a mansion, she meets a charming young man named Frederick. This sets the tone of this shōjō manga. The plot suggests that her upbringing with the “Gypsies” influences her musical talent and incorporates stereotypes about showmanship and musical skill.

Saeki, Kayono (writer, artist) 佐伯 かよの. *Hello! Marian* ハロー!マリアン. 2 issues. Tokyo: Shūeisha 集英社, 1978.

Comment: Set in 18th-century Amsterdam, this work narrates the story of an aristocratic girl named Marian. She is the daughter of a Belgian mother and an English father. Breaking a promising she made to her grandfather, Marian attends a city festival. There, she meets and falls in love with a charming and funny “Gypsy” showman.

Takemiya, Keiko (writer, artist) 竹宮 恵子. *Kaze to Ki no Uta* 風と木の詩. 17 issues. Tokyo: Shōgakukan 小学館, 1976-1984.

Comment: It is a love story set in a 19th-century French boarding school, chronicling the relationship between two teenagers, *Serge* and *Gilbert*. *Serge*, the protagonist, is a skilled pianist as well as the son of a “Gypsy” prostitute named *Paiva*, and a non-“Gypsy” aristocrat, *Aslan*, both of whom died during his childhood. Raised by an abusive aunt, *Serge* inherits his father’s lineage. However, his identity as a half-“Gypsy” subjects him to discrimination, as he grapples with prejudice from fellow students, his aunts, and various people he encounters. At the boarding school, *Serge* forges a connection with *Gilbert*, another handsome boy, who is not a “Gypsy”. As their relationship deepens, they become a romantic couple. Yet, their happiness is overshadowed by *Gilbert*’s mental health struggles and self-destructive tendencies, which result from experiences of rape and correlate with him prostituting to fellow students. *Serge* tries to help him, leading them to flee the boarding school to start a new life in Paris, where *Serge* secures employment as a waiter. In Paris, they encounter *Camille*, a “Gypsy” girl and prostitute akin to *Serge*’s deceased mother. A rejection by *Serge* triggers her to seek revenge by engaging in a liaison with *Gilbert*. Near the story’s end, *Gilbert* succumbs to drug addiction, and in an intoxicated state, dies in an accident with a carriage.

Tezuka, Osamu (writer, artist) 手塚 治虫. *Niji no Prelude* 虹のプレリュード. Tokyo: Kōdansha 講談社, 1975.

Comment: It is a semi-biographical manga depicting the life of composer Frédéric Chopin. In this work, the “Gypsy” motif serves as an ambient and fantastical symbol in a historical European setting

Takemiya, Keiko (writer, artist) 竹宮 恵子. “Sunroom Nite” “サンルームにて”. *Bessatsu Shōjo Comic* 別冊少女コミック. December issue (1970). Tokyo: Shōgakukan 小学館.

Comment: It was published in the girls' magazine *Margaret* and is set in 19th-century France. The manga revolves around the love story of *Etoile Rael*, a handsome blond boy from a wealthy family, and *Serge Battour*, labelled as the “Fortune teller Amie’s Gypsy child”. *Serge* faces bullying at school due to his skin colour that is remarked by a neighbour: “He will never make friends with a skin colour like that. No matter how hard he tries...”. Despite societal challenges, the connection between *Etoile* and *Serge* deepens into a romantic relationship. The story takes a tragic turn when *Etoile* falls ill with pneumonia and is forbidden from seeing *Serge* by his disapproving mother, who associates the illness with *Serge*’s perceived negative influence, assuming, “It is because you play with the Gypsy child”. Undeterred, the boys continue to meet in secret in the Sunroom of *Etoile*’s family. Ultimately, the narrative reaches a climax as *Etoile*, driven by the societal condemnation of their forbidden love, contemplates suicide in the Sunroom. In this manga, the character *Serge* is a “Gypsy” boy, with his mother conforming with the fortune teller cliché. Remarkably, the narrative emphasizes not only *Serge*’s social standing but also colourism.

Tezuka, Osamu (writer, artist) 手塚 治虫. *Futago no Kishi* 双子の騎士. Tokyo: Kōdansha 講談社, 1958.

Comment: In this story, “Gypsies” play a pivotal role as they shelter the heroine from her enemies. In this manga, Tezuka introduced the motif of the beautiful and confident “Gypsy” woman for the first time, commonly associated with the trope of the *femme fatale*. This character falls in love with the female protagonist, princess *Sapphire*, who is disguised as a man – underscoring the theme of gender-bending.

Tezuka, Osamu (writer, artist) 手塚 治虫. “Mignon” “ミニヨン”. *Shōjo*, Spring Special Issue 15 April 1957 (1957): 15-23. Tokyo: Kōbunsha 光文社. Based on the opera *Mignon* by Ambroise Thomas and the novel *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe.

Comment: This manga adapts the opera *Mignon* (1921) by Ambroise Thomas, which itself was based on the novel *Wilhelm Meister Lehrjahre* (1795/96) by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. Unlike the novel and the opera, Tezuka’s short story introduces uncertainty around *Mignon*’s gender for most of the narrative, disrupting established gender roles. Consequently, *Mignon*’s traits in Tezuka’s rendition diverge significantly from those portrayed in the original novel and opera, where the character is firmly known to be female. The “Gypsy” motif assumes an important role in navigating the complexities of gender – and class – uncertainty within the narrative. Both visually and narratively expressed, there is a conflict between a refined female world associated with nobility and a menacing male world of the “Gypsies”, criminals, and the poor. Tezuka emphasises the “Gypsy” motif’s sociographic dimension, with a classist rather than racist framing.

Animated Films

Machida, Touko, writer 待田 堂子. ***Show by Rock!! Stars!!*** Directed by **IKEZOE Takahiro** 池添 隆博, and **Yamagishi Daigo** 山岸 大悟. **12 episodes. Tokyo: Kinema Citrus** キネマシトラス, **since 2021.**

Comment: This anime series is the third sequel of *Show by Rock!!*, which first aired in 2015, followed by *Show by Rock!!#* in 2016 and *Show by Rock!! Mashumairesh!!* in 2020. The story centres around several fictional music bands. *Rom*, one of the characters, is the drummer for the band *ShinganCrimsonZ*. He is an anthropomorphic leopard, depicted as a handsome and passionate young man who enjoys traveling. His name, combined with the imagery of nomadism, music, and a dangerous seduction (as a leopard in the form of an attractive man), evokes the classic “Gypsy” motif.

Tazawa, Daisuke, writer 田沢 大典. ***Show by Rock!! Mashumairesh!! Show by Rock!! ましゅまいれっしゅ!!*** Directed by **CHO Seung-hui**. **12 episodes. Tokyo: Kinema Citrus** キネマシトラス, **2020.**

Comment: This anime series is the second sequel of *Show by Rock!!*, which first aired in 2015, followed by *Show by Rock!!#* from 2016. The story centres around several fictional music bands. *Rom*, one of the characters, is the drummer for the band *ShinganCrimsonZ*. He is an anthropomorphic leopard, depicted as a handsome and passionate young man who enjoys traveling. His name, combined with the imagery of nomadism, music, and a dangerous seduction (as a leopard in the form of an attractive man), evokes the classic “Gypsy” motif.

Ishida, Sui, writer 石田 スイ. ***Tokyo Ghoul:re*** 東京喰種トーキョーグール:re. Directed by **MORITA Shūhei** 森田 修平. **12 episodes. Tokyo: Pierrot** ぴえろ, **2018.**

Comment: The anime series is based on a manga series with the same name. See **Ishida, Sui (writer, artist)** 石田 スイ. ***Tokyo Ghoul:re*** 東京喰種:re. **16 issues. Tokyo: Shūeisha** 集英社, **2014-2018.** *Roma Hoito*, also known as “Gypsy”, is a vicious, human-eating creature who looks like a child but hides her true nature behind a clown-like mask. This mask reflects “Gypsy” stereotypes, such as being criminal, wild, and performers. This character first appeared in the manga series *Tokyo Ghoul* (2011-14).

Prigmore, Shane, Jase Ricci, Chris Sonnenburg, Ricky Roxburgh, Dave Schiff, Kelly Hannon, Jeremy Shipp et al., writers. *Rapunzel's Tangled Adventure*. Directed by Tom Caulfield, Joe Oh, Stephen Sandoval, Shane Zalvin, Philip Pignotti, Chris Sonnenburg, Bosook Coburn, and Benjamin Balistrery. 3 seasons, 60 episodes. Glendale, CA: Disney Television Animation, 2017-2020.

Comment: *Madame Canardist* is an old “Gypsy” woman who wears a vest and a red headscarf, along with mixed earrings, necklaces, and bracelets. She has a fortune telling pet monkey, and she demands money in exchange for the monkey’s prophecies. At one point, she finds *Rapunzel’s* telescope and claims it as her own. When *Rapunzel* takes it back, *Madame Canardist* convinces her that she is now cursed. *Madame Canardist* serves as a parody of the stereotypical “Gypsy” fortune teller.

Nagatsuki, Tappei, writer 長月 達平. *Re:ZERO: Starting Life in Another World* Re:ゼロから始める異世界生活. Directed by WATANABE Masaharu 渡邊 政治. 2 seasons, 50 episodes. Tokyo: White Fox, since 2016.

Comment: *Valga Cromwell*, also known as the *Old Man Rom* (ロム爺), is the owner of a stolen goods warehouse. His pseudonym and role in this illegal business reflects the stereotype of criminality and thievery by Roma.

Machida, Touko, writer 待田 堂子. *Show by Rock!! Short!!* Directed by IKEZOE Takahiro 池添 隆博. Tokyo: Bones, 2016.

Comment: This is a short anime film adapted from the video game of the same name. The story centres around several fictional music bands. *Rom*, one of the characters, is the drummer for the band *ShinganCrimsonZ*. He is an anthropomorphic leopard, depicted as a handsome and passionate young man who enjoys traveling. His name, combined with the imagery of nomadism, music, and a dangerous seduction (as a leopard in the form of an attractive man), evokes the classic “Gypsy” motif.

Machida, Touko, writer 待田 堂子. ***Show by Rock!!*** Directed by IKEZOE Takahiro 池添 隆博. 12 episodes. Tokyo: Bones, 2016.

Comment: This anime series is the first of multiple sequels of *Show by Rock!!*, which first aired in 2015. The story centres around several fictional music bands. *Rom*, one of the characters, is the drummer for the band *ShinganCrimsonZ*. He is an anthropomorphic leopard, depicted as a handsome and passionate young man who enjoys traveling. His name, combined with the imagery of nomadism, music, and a dangerous seduction (as a leopard in the form of an attractive man), evokes the classic “Gypsy” motif.

Machida, Touko, writer 待田 堂子. ***Show by Rock!!*** Directed by IKEZOE Takahiro 池添 隆博. 12 episodes. Tokyo: Bones 2015.

Comment: This is an anime series adapted from the video game of the same name. The story centres around several fictional music bands. *Rom*, one of the characters, is the drummer for the band *ShinganCrimsonZ*. He is an anthropomorphic leopard, depicted as a handsome and passionate young man who enjoys traveling. His name, combined with the imagery of nomadism, music, and a dangerous seduction (as a leopard in the form of an attractive man), evokes the classic “Gypsy” motif.

Ishida, Sui, writer 石田 スイ. ***Tokyo Ghoul*** 東京喰種-トーキョーグール. Directed by MORITA Shūhei 森田 修平. 12 episodes. Tokyo: Pierrot ぴえろ, 2014.

Comment: This is an anime series adapted from the manga series of the same name. **Ishida, Sui (writer, artist)** 石田 スイ. ***Tokyo Ghoul*** 東京喰種. 14 issues. Tokyo: Shūeisha 集英社, 2011-2014. See *Roma Hoito*, also known as “Gypsy”, is a vicious, human-eating creature who looks like a child but hides her true nature behind a clown-like mask. This mask reflects “Gypsy” stereotypes, such as being criminal, wild, and performers.

Bunje, Devin, and Nick Stanton, writers. "Gypsy Moth Prophecies." *Turbo FAST*. Directed by Nate Clesowich. Season 1, episode 14a. Los Angeles: DreamWorks Animation Television, 2014.

Comment: This episode of the racing snail series introduces a fortune-telling gypsy moth. It is a wordplay, with the anthropomorphic gypsy moth as a nod to the motif of "Gypsy" fortune tellers. Animals, often depicted as cute and amusing, are commonly used as caricatures to represent human stereotypes. When media professionals translate anthropomorphic animals into human-like figures and introduce terminologies like "Gypsy", it is not difficult for audiences to grasp the connection. Whether or not the audience, especially if they are young, fully understand the real-world meaning of the term "Gypsy" is not a major concern initially. However, as they grow and encounter external information, they may eventually grasp the significance of the term and its associations. This could lead them to link the portrayal of characters like the gypsy moth with the broader "Gypsy" motif. So, using insects as symbols does not avoid stereotyping groups of people. Including the term "Gypsy" in these narratives unavoidably ties them to real-life motifs, despite the use of animals as vehicles for representation. Still, it is a unique form of representation with the distinct implications of caricature.

Gerber, Graig, writer. *Sofia the First*. Directed by Hamie Mitchell. 4 seasons, 113 episodes. Los Angeles: Disney Television Animation, 2013-18.

Comment: In this philogypsyist fantasy, *Madam Ubetcha* is a "Gypsy" fortune teller, who regularly helps the main character, *Sofia*, by giving her advice to locate specific places, objects, and people. She also gives *Sofia* a cloak for a disguise, which *Sofia* uses to rescue one of her friends.

Ōnogi, Hiroshi, writer 大野木 寛. *Code Geass: Akito the Exiled* コードギアス 亡国のアキト. Directed by AKANE Kazuki 赤根 和樹. Tokyo: Sunrise, 2012.

Comment: The "Gypsies" in this film provide shelter to the main characters. They are portrayed using common motifs, like dancing and living as nomads in wagons in remote settings.

Blood+. Directed by FUJISAKU Junichi 藤咲 淳一. 50 episodes. Tokyo: Production I.G, 2005/6.

Comment: One of the characters, *Haji*, is briefly implied to be of a “Gypsy” background who was looked after in a caravan when he was a baby.

Aikawa, Shō, writer 會川 昇. *Fullmetal Alchemist the Movie: Conqueror of Shamballa* 劇場版 鋼の錬金術師 シャンバラを征く者. Directed by MIZUSHIMA Seiji 水島 精二. Tokyo: Bones, 2005.

Comment: Set in interwar Germany, the story features a “Gypsy” named *Noah* as a central character. On their way to a carnival, the main characters *Edward* and his friend *Heiderich* encounter a group of “Gypsies”. All are young women in colourful garments. After getting into the car, the boys blush because of the “Gypsy” women’s beauty. During the ride, they get to know *Noah*. The other women explain her special ability of fortune telling. Shortly thereafter, the women begin to sing in Romanes, some of them having drums and start playing. As the story unfolds, the fascist Thule Society seeks to exploit *Noah*’s magical powers to open a gateway to a parallel world, aiming to gain power for the German Empire. The film also examines themes of antigypsyism and the desire for a better reality by showing how *Noah* often faces racist bias.

Kane, Bob, William M Marston, Joe Shuster, Jerry Siegel, Dwayne McDuffie, J M DeMatteis, Matt Wayne et al., writers. *Justice League Unlimited*. Directed by Joaquim Dos Santos, and Dan Riba. 3 seasons, 39 episodes. New York: DC Comics, Los Angeles: Warner Bros. Animation, Burbank: Warner Bros. Family Entertainment, 2004-2006.

Comment: This animated film features the superheroine *Gypsy*, a member of the Justice League of America. She is dressed and attributed as a stereotypical “Gypsy”.

Rogers, Amy K, writer. “Witch-ay Woman.” *Johnny Bravo*. Directed by Robert Alvarez, and Van Partible. Season 4, Episode 55b. Burbank: Cartoon Network Studios, 2004.

Comment: This is a comedic series that follows a young, muscular man named *Johnny Bravo*, who is always trying – and consistently failing – to impress women. His overconfidence and obliviousness often lead to humorous situations. In this episode, *Johnny* finds himself in trouble after crossing paths with an attractive “Gypsy” fortune teller. Upset by his bad behaviour, she curses him as a punishment. The curse transforms Johnny into an attractive woman, forcing him to experience life from the perspective of someone like the women he constantly bothers. He must remain in his form until he learns what it is like to be harassed by men, just as he has harassed women. The “Gypsy” not only embodies the trope of the fortune teller but also that of the femme fatale, which is used to address sexism in society.

Harman, Barry, and George A Bloom, writers. “R-Fair City.” *Cyberchase*. Directed by Larry Jacobs. Season 1, episode 3. New York: WNET New York, Toronto: Nelvana, 2002.

Comment: A group of kids is drawn into a digital world, where their primary mission is to stop an evil hacker. In this particular episode, *Digit*, a helpful robot who works with the kids, runs into the hacker at a fair. The hacker is disguised as a “Gypsy” fortune teller, blending in among the carnival attractions. He tricks Digit into playing a seemingly harmless game, only to cheat him and trap him inside a cage.

Selbo, Jule, Flip Kobler, and Cindy Marcus, writers. *The Hunchback of Notre Dame II*. Directed by Bradley Raymond. Burbank: Walt Disney Studios Home Entertainment, 2002. Based on the novel *Notre-Dame de Paris* by Victor Hugo.

Comment: This film is the sequel to another work: **Murphy, Tap, Irene Mecchi, Bob Tzudiker, Noni White, Jonathan Roberts, Kevin Harley et al., writers. *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*. Directed by Gary Trousdale, and Kirk Wise. Burbank: Walt Disney Animation Studios, 1996.** The first film is based on Victor Hugo's novel *Notre-Dame de Paris* (1831), set in 15th-century France, mostly around the Notre-Dame cathedral. The story features *Quasimodo*, the cathedral's bell ringer, and *Esmeralda*, a beautiful "Gypsy" dancer. In both the novel and the film, *Quasimodo* is linked to "Gypsies", but the details differ. In the novel, he was abandoned by the "Gypsies" as a child, whereas in Disney's adaptation, his "Gypsy" mother dies while fleeing from authorities who were persecuting the "Gypsies", highlighting the theme of historical antigypsyism. In the novel, *Esmeralda* is not truly of "Gypsy" origin, but Disney's version presents her as a "Gypsy" character throughout. In the sequel, the characters return, but the story is entirely new and does not focus much on the "Gypsy" theme. However, an important character named *Madellaine* is introduced. She was an orphan who joined a circus troupe as a child. *Madellaine* seems to be loosely inspired by Ludwig Bemelmans' children's book *Madeline and the Gypsies* (1959), where a young girl named *Madeline* also becomes part of a troupe of "Gypsy" performers.

Fortier, Jim, Andy Merrill, and Pete Smith, writers. "Hippo." *The Brak Show*. Directed by Jim Fortier, Andy Merrill, and Pete Smith. Season 1, episode 5. Atlanta: Wild Hare Studios, Atlanta: Primal Screen, Atlanta: Turner Entertainment, Atlanta: Williams Street, 2001.

Comment: A comedy series follows *Brak* and his family living in the fictional town of Spacetown. In this episode, Brak's mother gives him a doll she bought from a "Gypsy". The doll turns out to be alive and can talk, but aside from this magical twist, the "Gypsy" theme does not play any important role in the story.

Cohen, Joel H, John Frink, Don Payne, and Carolyn Omine, writers. "Treehouse of Horror XII." *The Simpsons*. Directed by Jim Reardon. Season 13, episode 1. Los Angeles: Gracie Films, Los Angeles: 20th Television, 2001.

Comment: A comedic series about the *Simpson* family, who live in the city of *Springfield*. In this episode, the family visits a place called *Ethnictown*, where *Homer*, the father, destroys the office of a "Gypsy" fortune teller. As punishment, she curses him, bringing bad luck to *Homer* and endangering his loved ones. The curse takes hold in strange ways. *Marge*, his wife, becomes covered in hair; *Lisa*, his eldest daughter transforms into a centaur; *Bart*, his son, develops a long, floppy neck from *Homer*'s usual habit of strangling him; and baby *Maggie* turns into a ladybug with a human head. In an effort to lift the curse, *Homer* captures a leprechaun. In a bizarre twist, the leprechaun ends up marrying the fortune teller in a wedding attended by other "Gypsies" and magical creatures, as well as the *Simpson* family. The episode parodies the stereotype of the "Gypsy" fortune teller.

McKay, Sindy, Scott Soden, and Diane P Eskenazi, writers. *The Red Shoes*. Directed by Diane P Eskenazi. Los Angeles: Golden Films, 2000.

Comment: This love story between "Gypsies" follows a "Gypsy" girl who aspires to become a ballerina, despite the challenges posed by her circumstances. The film opens with a musical scene in a "Gypsy" camp, showing colourful wagons, musicians, and a woman dancing with a tambourine. The girl's love interest, a man from the same camp, shares a tragic story about his parents. They were falsely accused of theft in Budapest, leading to a brutal attack by soldiers.

Nobumoto, Keiko, writer 信本 敬子. "Honky Tonk Women." "ホンキィ・トック・ウイメン" *Cowboy Bebop* カウボーイビバップ. Directed by WATANABE Shinichirō 渡辺 信一郎. Episode 3. Tokyo: Sunrise, 1998.

Comment: Faye Valentine is a 23-year-old wandering space bounty hunter. In this episode, she names herself a "Gypsy" who wanders the stars. The usual clichés are employed here. In the same episode, she assumes the role of a card dealer in a casino and is known in the series for her trickery and thievery. Yet, appearances can be deceptive. Subsequent revelations unveil that she does not know her true identity, due to amnesia. This narrative seems to draw inspiration once again from the motif of the "Scheinzigeunerin" – a "Gypsy" who turns out to not be one. This motif originates from the novella *La Gitanilla* (1613) by Miguel de Carvantes where the "Gypsy" girl *Preciosa* reveals as a child stolen by "Gypsies" from a family of aristocratic non-"Gypsies".

Lasseter, John, Andrew Stanton, Joe Ranft, Don McEnery, and Bob Shaw, writers. *A Bug's Life*. Directed by John Lasseter. Emeryville: Pixar Animation Studios, 1998.

Comment: *Cassandra* is an antropomorphic Gypsy Moth, and her name is a pun. She reflects common “Gypsy” stereotypes, like being connected to showmanship and magic. In the story, *Cassandra* works in a circus, as her husband’s assistant in his magic act. Animals, often depicted as cute and amusing, are commonly used as caricatures to represent human stereotypes. When media professionals translate anthropomorphic animals into human-like figures and introduce terminologies like “Gypsy”, it is not difficult for audiences to grasp the connection. Whether or not the audience, especially if they are young, fully understand the real-world meaning of the term “Gypsy” is not a major concern initially. However, as they grow and encounter external information, they may eventually grasp the significance of the term and its associations. This could lead them to link the portrayal of characters like the gypsy moth with the broader “Gypsy” motif. So, using insects as symbols does not avoid stereotyping groups of people. Including the term “Gypsy” in these narratives unavoidably ties them to real-life motifs, despite the use of animals as vehicles for representation. Still, it is a unique form of representation with the distinct implications of caricature.

Colao, Mirith J, Jason B Rote, and Linda Woolverton, writers. “Beetle Romania.” *The Lion King’s Timon and Pumbaa*. Directed by Eddie Houchins. Season 2, episode 15a. Burbank: Walt Disney Television, Glendale: Disney Television Animation, 1996.

Comment: The anthropomorphic animals *Timon*, a meerkat, and his friend *Pumbaa*, a warthog, go on adventures together. In this episode, visit a gypsy moth fortune teller. *Pumbaa* asks her to predict his future. After telling him that his future is uncertain, she turns to *Timon*. But instead of listening, *Timon* tries to eat her, and as punishment, she curses him. The next morning, *Timon* wakes up to find he has been turned into a beetle. *Pumbaa*, not recognizing him, eats him. However, *Timon* manages to escape from *Pumbaa*’s stomach.

Murphy, Tap, Irene Mecchi, Bob Tzudiker, Noni White, Jonathan Roberts, Kevin Harley et al., writers. *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*. Directed by Gary Trousdale, and Kirk Wise. Burbank: Walt Disney Animation Studios, 1996. Based on the novel *Notre-Dame de Paris* by Victor Hugo.

Comment: The film is based on Victor Hugo's novel *Notre-Dame de Paris* (1831), set in 15th-century France, mostly around the Notre-Dame cathedral. The story features *Quasimodo*, the cathedral's bell ringer, and *Esmeralda*, a beautiful "Gypsy" dancer. In both the novel and the film, *Quasimodo* is linked to "Gypsies", but the details differ. In the novel, he was abandoned by the "Gypsies" as a child, whereas in Disney's adaptation, his "Gypsy" mother dies while fleeing from authorities who were persecuting the "Gypsies", highlighting the theme of historical antigypsyism. In the novel, *Esmeralda* is not truly of "Gypsy" origin, but Disney's version presents her as a "Gypsy" character throughout.

Rocky, Kati, writer. *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*. Directed by Diane P Eskenazi. Los Angeles: Golden Films, 1996. Based on the novel *Notre-Dame de Paris* by Victor Hugo.

Comment: This film is an adaptation of Victor Hugo's novel *Notre-Dame de Paris* (1831). The story features *Quasimodo*, the cathedral's bell ringer, and *Esmeralda*, a beautiful "Gypsy" dancer.

"It's Just a Gypsy in My Soup." *The Pink Panther*. Directed by Charles Grosvenor, and Byron Vaughns. Season 2, episode 11. Burbank: Mirisch-Geoffrey DePatie-Freleng, Beverly Hills: United Artists, Santa Monica: Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Animation, 1994.

Comment: *The Pink Panther* is a series about an anthropomorphic pink panther who experiences diverse adventures. In this episode, the *Pink Panther* meets an old "Gypsy" woman who speaks in an unclear way and demands that he follow her. When he refuses, she curses him. As a result, he narrowly escapes being hit by a vehicle and is almost struck by a lightning. Desperate to lift the curse, he finds the woman's camp, where she tells him that the only way to break the curse is by becoming the king of the "Gypsies". Reluctantly he agrees and takes on the role of their king. The episode draws on the centuries-old themes of "Gypsy" fortune tellers, and "Gypsy" kings.

Davis, Jim, and Mark Evanier, writers. "The Carnival Curse." *Garfield and Friends*. Directed by Dave Brain, Becky Bristow, and Allen Foster. Season 5, episode 4c. Los Angeles: Film Roman, Chicago: United Media, New York: Paws, Inc., Burlingame: Lee Mendelson Film Productions, 1992.

Comment: This tv series is based on the comic series *Garfield* (1978) by Jim David. In the series, *Garfield* the anthropomorphic pet cat and his friends go on various adventures. In this episode, a "Gypsy" fortune teller approaches *Garfield's* owner and offers to tell his fortune. However, this fortune teller is actually a scammer. *Garfield* informs the police about the scam, leading to the fortune teller's arrest. In retaliation, the fortune teller curses *Garfield*, causing him to transform into a werewolf every full moon. Eventually, *Garfield* and his friends manage to break the curse by finding and confronting the fortune teller. This storyline is quite similar to a previous episode. See **Davis, Jim, and Mark Evanier, writers. "The Idol of Id." *Garfield and Friends*. Season 4, episode 14a. Los Angeles: Film Roman, Chicago: United Media, New York: Paws, Inc., Burlingame: Lee Mendelson Film Productions, 1991.**

Davis, Jim, and Mark Evanier, writers. "The Idol of Id." *Garfield and Friends*. Season 4, episode 14a. Los Angeles: Film Roman, Chicago: United Media, New York: Paws, Inc., Burlingame: Lee Mendelson Film Productions, 1991.

Comment: This TV series is based on the comic series *Garfield* (1978) by Jim David. In the series, *Garfield* the anthropomorphic pet cat and his friends go on various adventures. In this episode, a "Gypsy" fortune teller approaches *Garfield's* owner and offers to reveal some "mysteries". It turns out to be a scam, but when *Garfield* and the owner's pet dog touch a mysterious artifact called the *Idol of Id*, they accidentally swap minds. They only manage to break the curse by touching the idol again. See **Davis, Jim, and Mark Evanier, writers. "The Carnival Curse." *Garfield and Friends*. Directed by Dave Brain, Becky Bristow, and Allen Foster. Season 5, episode 4c. Los Angeles: Film Roman, Chicago: United Media, New York: Paws, Inc., Burlingame: Lee Mendelson Film Productions, 1992.**

Hopps, Kevin, writer. "Tummi Trouble." *Adventures of the Gummi Bears*. Directed by David Block. Glendale: Walt Disney Television Animation, 1991.

Comment: The series follows a group of anthropomorphic gummi bears who go on adventures in a magical land. In this episode, one of the gummi bears buys a love potion from a wandering "Gypsy" named *Madame Placebo*. However, things go wrong when the potion causes his love interest to fall for a different gummi bear. Despite the mix-up, he makes an effort to win her heart and convince her to be with him instead. The episode blends the "Gypsy" and the witch motif.

Lewald, Julia, writer. "Seer no Evil." *Chip 'n Dale: Rescue Rangers*. Directed by John Kimball, and Rick Leon. Season 2, episode 22. Glendale: Walt Disney Television Animation, Burbank: Walt Disney Television, 1989.

Comment: *Cassandra* is an antropomorphic gypsy moth. *Cassandra's* predictions come true, leading one of the characters to remark, "Can't live your life by a gypsy prediction". This statement, while referring to the insect's name, clearly resonates with the underlying "Gypsy" motif. Animals, often depicted as cute and amusing, are commonly used as caricatures to represent human stereotypes. When media professionals translate anthropomorphic animals into human-like figures and introduce terminologies like "Gypsy", it is not difficult for audiences to grasp the connection. Whether or not the audience, especially if they are young, fully understand the real-world meaning of the term "Gypsy" is not a major concern initially. However, as they grow and encounter external information, they may eventually grasp the significance of the term and its associations. This could lead them to link the portrayal of characters like the gypsy moth with the broader "Gypsy" motif. So, using insects as symbols does not avoid stereotyping groups of people. Including the term "Gypsy" in these narratives unavoidably ties them to real-life motifs, despite the use of animals as vehicles for representation. Still, it is a unique form of representation with the distinct implications of caricature.

Takemiya, Keiko 竹宮 恵子, writer. *Kaze to Ki no Uta* 風と木の詩. Directed by **YASUHIKO Yoshikazu** 安彦 良和. Tokyo: Triangle Staff トライアングルス タッフ, 1987.

Comment: This animated film adapts the manga of the same title. See **Takemiya, Keiko (writer, artist)** 竹宮 恵子. *Kaze to Ki no Uta* 風と木の詩. 17 issues. Tokyo: Shōgakukan 小学館, 1976-1984. It is a love story set in a 19th-century French boarding school, chronicling the relationship between two teenagers, *Serge* and *Gilbert*. *Serge*, the protagonist, is a skilled pianist as well as the son of a “Gypsy” prostitute named *Paiva*, and a non-“Gypsy” aristocrat, *Aslan*, both of whom died during his childhood. Raised by an abusive aunt, *Serge* inherits his father’s lineage. However, his identity as a half-“Gypsy” subjects him to discrimination, as he grapples with prejudice from fellow students, his aunts, and various people he encounters. At the boarding school, *Serge* forges a connection with *Gilbert*, another handsome boy, who is not a “Gypsy”. As their relationship deepens, they become a romantic couple. Yet, their happiness is overshadowed by *Gilbert*’s mental health struggles and self-destructive tendencies, which result from experiences of rape and correlate with him prostituting to fellow students. *Serge* tries to help him, leading them to flee the boarding school to start a new life in Paris, where *Serge* secures employment as a waiter. In Paris, they encounter *Camille*, a “Gypsy” girl and prostitute akin to *Serge*’s deceased mother. A rejection by *Serge* triggers her to seek revenge by engaging in a liaison with *Gilbert*. Near the story’s end, *Gilbert* succumbs to drug addiction, and in an intoxicated state, dies in an accident with a carriage.

Kelly, Calvin, writer. “What the Hex Happening.” *Beverly Hills Teens*. Directed by **Craig Zukowski**, and **Michael Maliani**. Season 1, episode 45. Burbank: DIC Animation City, 1987.

Comment: This series focuses on rich teenagers living in Beverly Hills, dealing with everyday problems like school and romance. In this episode, one of the teenagers refuses to return a diamond pendant to a “Gypsy” fortune teller. As a result, the teens face bad luck, as they are cursed by the fortune teller.

Uitz, Matt, writer. “Deadly Keep.” *Rambo: The Force of Freedom*. Directed by John Kimball, and Charles Nichols. Episode 10. Burbank: Ruby-Spears Productions, Los Angeles: Carolco Pictures, 1986.

Comment: This series is based on the novels *First Blood* (1982) and *Rambo: First Blood Part II* (1985) by David Morrell, as well as the films of the same names from 1982 and 1985 by Ted Kotcheff and George P Cosmatos. The protagonist John Rambo is a soldier in a special unit fighting the terrorist group S.A.V.A.G.E. The animated series introduces new adventures. In this episode, the special unit is tasked with rescuing a Nobel Prize winner who has been kidnapped. The kidnapper, *Vladimir*, is hiding the hostage in his castle in Moldavia. To save the prisoner, the special unit disguises itself as “Gypsies” and sneaks into the castle in a wagon – a reference to the “Gypsy” motif in gothic fiction like Bram Stoker’s novel *Dracula* (1897).

Ayres, Gene, Reed Brown, Joy Buchholtz, Eleanor Burian-Mohr, Steve Bussard, David Carren, J Larry Carroll et al., writers. “Ruff Come Home.” *Dennis the Menace*. Directed by Michael Maliani. Season 1, episode 62b. Burbank: DIC Entertainment Corporation, 1986. Based on the comic series *Dennis the Menace* by Hank Ketcham.

Comment: The story is based on a comic series (since 1951) by Hank Ketcham featuring a young boy named *Dennis* and his adventures with his friends. In this philogypsyist episode, *Dennis’* dog, *Ruff*, goes missing. A group of “Gypsies” is introduced, and they assist *Dennis* in finding *Ruff*. The group is portrayed living in a wagon camp, is introduced with a scene of a woman dancing around a campfire. The characters are depicted wearing kerchiefs, colourful clothing, and large earrings.

Ayres, Gene, Reed Brown, Joy Buchholtz, Eleanor Burian-Mohr, Steve Bussard, David Carren, J Larry Carroll et al., writers. “Dennis and the Gypsy Woman.” *Dennis the Menace*. Directed by Michael Maliani. Season 1, episode 58c. Burbank: DIC Entertainment Corporation, 1986. Based on the comic series *Dennis the Menace* by Hank Ketcham.

Comment: The story is based on a comic series (since 1951) by Hank Ketcham featuring a young boy named *Dennis* and his adventures with his friends. In this philogypsyist episode, they meet a “Gypsy” fortune teller named *Zelda*, who is described as a “Gypsy” woman. She is portrayed as friendly, with a mule, a “Gypsy” wagon, and a foreign accent – evoking themes of nomadism, the witch motif, and outcastship. *Zelda* warns them to protect their neighbour from an unknown danger. In the end, *Dennis* and his friends manage to save their neighbour just in time from being crushed by a collapsing building.

Divono, Sharman, writer. “The Phantom Brigade.” *G.I. Joe: A Real American Hero*. Directed by John Gibbs, and Terry Lennon. Animated by Toei Animation. Season 1, episode 18. New York: Sunbow Productions, Los Angeles: Marvel Productions, 1985.

Comment: Sunbow Entertainment and Marvel commissioned a Japanese animation studio, Toei Animation, to produce this series, which was entirely written in the United States. The storyline centres on American soldiers who save the world through various adventures against the malevolent *Cobra Commander*. In this particular episode, the *Cobra Commander* forces an old “Gypsy” woman to use her supernatural powers to summon ghosts against the *G.I. Joes*, hoping to eliminate them and advance his plans for global domination. The character of the “Gypsy” embodies the trope of the witch in this scenario.

Freeman, Felicia, and Michael Maliani, writers. “Gargamel’s Miss-Fortune.” *The Smurfs*. Directed by George Gordon, Rudy Zamora, Carl Urbano, John Walker, Oscar Dufau, and Alan Zaslove. Season 4, episode 26b. Los Angeles: Hanna-Barbera Productions, Marcinelle: SEPP International S.A., 1984.

Comment: The TV series *The Smurfs*, based on the comic *Les Schtroumpfs* by Pierre Culliford (“Peyo”), follows the adventures of small blue creatures called *Smurfs* who live in a forest. Their main enemy, the wizard *Gargamel*, has various plans to either capture, eat, or turn the *Smurfs* into gold, depending on the episode. Most of the TV episodes are original stories, not direct adaptations of the comic. In this particular episode, *Gargamel* tricks “Gypsy” charlatans into helping him capture two *Smurfs*. However, the “Gypsies” eventually turn against *Gargamel*, helping the *Smurfs* escape. The plot draws on common antigypsyist narratives.

Matsuzaki, Kenichi 松崎 健一, and Ōnogi Hiroshi 大野木 寛, writers. *Shōji Kūseiki Ōgasu* 超時空世紀オーガス. Directed by ISHIGURO Noboru 石黒 昇, and Mikamoto Yasuyoshi 三家本 泰美. Animated by TMS Entertainment トムス・エンタテインメント. Tokyo: Artland アートランド, 1983-84.

Comment: The opening and ending songs of this anime are *Life in the Sky*, also known as *Gypsy Heart*, by Casey Rankin. The song is about someone who calls himself “Gypsy”, and idealizes what he thinks is the “Gypsy” way of life.

Sauder, Peter, writer. "Prince of the Gypsies." *Inspector Gadget*. Directed by Bruno Bianchi. Season 1, episode 44. Burbank: DIC Entertainment Corporation, New York: Lexington Broadcast Services Company, Toronto: Nelvana, 1983.

Comment: In this series, *Inspector Gadget* tries to arrest the villain *Dr Claw*. In this particular episode, a group of "Gypsies" is falsely accused of a theft they did not commit. It turns out that *Dr Claw* is the true culprit. This narrative follows an old pattern, also found in prominent 19th-century literature, where "Gypsies" are wrongly blamed for crimes. Similar examples can be seen in *Guy Mannering* (1815) by *Sir Walter Scott*, and *The Adventure of the Speckled Band* (1892) by *Arthur Conan Doyle*.

Pedersen, Ted, writer. "Gypsy Mice." *The New Adventures of Mighty Mouse and Heckle & Jeckle*. Directed by Alberto De Mello, and Jim Fletcher. Episode 3c. Reseda: Filmation Associates, Los Angeles: Viacom Productions, 1979.

Comment: A series about an anthropomorphic mouse superhero named *Mighty Mouse*. In this episode, we see a "Gypsy" camp, where anthropomorphic mice are shown playing and dancing. A dancing, beautiful "Gypsy" mouse from the camp is being kidnapped by a cat, but she is eventually rescued by *Mighty Mouse*. This plot is similar to the 1945 film *Mighty Mouse in Gypsy Life*, which features a similar storyline. See **Foster, John, writer. *Mighty Mouse in Gypsy Life*. Directed by Connie Rasinski. New Rochelle: Terrytoons, 1945.**

Yasuhiko, Yoshikazu, writer 安彦 良和. "The Broken Heart." *Kum-Kum*. Directed by Yazawa, Norio 矢沢 則夫. Localized by Fred Laderman. Episode 25. Tokyo: Sōeisha, Allison Park: Delphi Associates, 1975.

Comment: *Wanpaku Omukashi Kumukumu* (わんぱく大昔クムクム, Eng.: *Naughty Ancient Kumukumu*, 1975/76), directed by Shigeyuki Hayashi, was presented to English-speaking audiences as *Kum-Kum*. This anime is about drama, adventure, and comedy among a group of individuals in prehistoric times. In episode 25, *Rōman o oikakero!* (ローマンを追いかける!, Eng.: *Chase Roman!*), localized as *The Broken Heart*, one of the characters encounters a group of nomads. They are anachronistically referred to as "Gypsies" in the American version, combined with references to song and dance in the camp.

Marks, Dennis, writer. "The Gypsy Caper." *The Amazing Chan and the Chan Clan*. Directed by William Hanna, and Joseph Barbera. Season 2, episode 5. Los Angeles: Hanna-Barbera Productions, 1972.

Comment: A series about a legendary detective named *Charlie Chan*, based on the novel series *Charlie Chan* (1925-1932) by Earl Derr Biggers. In this episode, Chan and his family encounter a group of "Gypsy" showmen while visiting Germany. Soon after, a valuable golden icon is stolen, and the local authorities immediately accuse the "Gypsies" of the theft. Along the way, there is a comedic moment where Chan's children interact with a fortune teller from the group. In the end, it is revealed that the real thief is the town's mayor, not the "Gypsies". This narrative follows an old pattern, also found in prominent 19th-century literature, where "Gypsies" are wrongly blamed for crimes. Similar examples can be seen in *Guy Mannering* (1815) by Sir Walter Scott, and *The Adventure of the Speckled Band* (1892) by Arthur Conan Doyle.

Crow, Frank, and Leo Rifkin, writers. "The Magic Shillelah." *New Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. Directed by Hollingsworth Morse. Season 1, episode 1. Los Angeles: Hanna-Barbera Productions, 1968.

Comment: This fantasy series, combining live-action and animation, is a new fiction based on Mark Twain's characters *Huckleberry Finn* and *Tom Sawyer*, and his adventures. In the first episode, *Becky Thatcher* encounters a group of Leprechauns in Ireland who are struggling to keep their powerful talisman, the Shillelah, hidden. A "Gypsy" named *Zarko* is after the talisman's magical power, leading him to kidnap *Huck* and *Tom*. Their friend *Becky* and the Leprechauns come to the rescue.

Kling, Heywood, writer. "Gypsy James." *Batfink*. Episode 52. New York: Hal Seeger Productions, Los Angeles: Golden West Broadcasters, 1967.

Comment: *Batfink* is a show about a superhero who is an anthropomorphic bat. In this episode, a thief and fortune teller named *Gypsy Jones* fights *Batfink* using a voodoo doll. *Gypsy Jones* ties up the doll, which causes *Batfink* to be immobilized. Then, using his crystal ball, *Gypsy Jones* predicts *Batfink's* death, imagining *Batfink* tied to his wagon, falling into a deep pit. However, *Gypsy Jones* unintentionally ruins his own plan when he accidentally unties *Batfink* through the voodoo doll, allowing *Batfink* to escape and arrest him. This episode presents a typical antigypsyist narrative about a "Gypsy" who is a criminal, fortune teller, and nomad with a fascination for death and deception.

Tezuka, Osamu, writer 手塚 治虫. “Osorubeshi Saishūheiki” “おんぼろ王子”. *Ribbon no Kishi* リボンの騎士. Directed by TEZUKA Osamu 手塚 治虫, Katsui Chikao 勝井 千賀夫, and Akahori Kanji 赤堀 幹治. Episode 12. Tokyo: Mushi Production 虫プロダクション, 1967.

Comment: Unlike in the manga of the same name, a group of “Gypsy” footpads is featured in this anime adaptation, including a boy named *John*. Princess *Sapphire* (サファイア, *Safaia*) encounters them and learns about *John*’s hard life. Realizing their almost identical looks, she decides to swap roles with him. This narrative mirrors Mark Twain’s *The Prince and the Pauper* (1881), where two boys with identical looks but different social backgrounds exchange roles. However, in the anime, the characters are a boy and a girl, underscoring the theme of gender-bending.

Brodax, Al, Bruce Howard, Heywood Kling, Dennis Marks, and Jack Mendelsohn, writers. “What You’re Doing.” *The Beatles*. Directed by Jack Stokes, Graham Sharpe, Ron Campbell, Jim Hiltz, Ray Leach, John Dunn, Bob Godfrey et al. Season 1, episode 21a. New York: King Features Syndicate, n.p.: Artransa/Graphik, Bellingham: Canawest Studios, London: TVC London, 1966.

Comment: In this fictional adventure, the British rock band *The Beatles* get lost in the woods and each member goes off to search for a way out on their own. *Ringo Starr* stumbles upon a camp of “Gypsies”, where a fortune teller falls in love with him and demands that he marries her. *Ringo* tries to run away, but the other “Gypsies” stop him. Eventually, the other *Beatles* find *Ringo* and together they help him escape from the situation.

“Gypsy’s Purple Potion.” *Kimba the White Lion*. Directed by YAMAMOTO Eiichi. Localized by Fred Laderman. Episode 13. Tokyo: Mushi Production, Allison Park: Delphi Associates, 1966.

Comment: The original Japanese animation *Jungle Taitei* (ジャングル大帝, *Janguru Taitei*) was adapted into English as *Kimba the White Lion*. However, the English version introduced elements not found in the Japanese original, particularly the use of the “Gypsy” motif. Known as *Kimba the White Lion* in the USA, this anime features anthropomorphic animals, including a white lion reigning over the jungle. Another character is an old, dark-brown owl. In the original Japanese manga and anime, this owl embodies a former criminal from Southern Africa, known as a poison brewer. Her name is *Mamī* (マミー) and she identifies the white Lion as the son she never had. In the Japanese version, her name and design appear to allude to the Anglophone stereotype of the “Mammy”, historically associated with black women employed by white families as a children’s nurse. In episode 13 of the American localization, which aired as *Gypsy’s Purple Potion*, she is forced by the antagonists to poison the protagonist. Ultimately, she does administer the poison before ensuring his recovery. She was renamed *Gypsy* in the American version, avoiding black stereotypes but introducing the cliché of the old “Gypsy” witch.

Johnson, Crockett, James Thurber, and Eve Titus, writers. *Alice of Wonderland in Paris*. Directed by Gene Deitch. New York: William L Snyder, 1966.

Comment: The character *Alice*, inspired by the young girl from Lewis Carroll’s *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* (1865), returns from wonderland with a dream one night: to visit Paris for a student exchange and meet *Madeline*, the little girl from Ludwig Bemelmans’ 1959 children’s picture book *Madeline and the Gypsies*. With the help of a talking mouse from France, *Alice* makes her dream come true and travels to Paris. There, she embarks on a series of adventures, each one told as a short story inspired by different children’s books written since the 1940s.

Okamoto, Kinzo, writer. *Gigantor*. Directed by Watanabe Yonehiko. Localized by Fred Laderman. Episode 30. Tokyo: TCJ, Allison Park: Delphi Associates, 1966.

Comment: The American adaptation of TCJ's *Tetsujin 28-gō* (鉄人28号, Eng.: *Iron Man/Person Number 28*, 1963–66), directed by Yonehiko Watanabe, was renamed *The Gigantor* in the USA from 1966 onwards. This anime, based on Mitsuteru Yokoyama's manga with the same title (1956–66), follows the story of a young boy controlling a war robot to fight evil. It can be considered a pioneering work for the modern mecha genre. In the American version only, the “Gypsy” motif was introduced in episode 30, *The Space Submarine*. Here, a criminal group led by a character named *Gypsy* steals a valuable document, emphasizing the association of the name with criminality.

Tomino, Yoshiyuki, writer 富野 喜幸. “Gypsy no Hoshi” “ジプシーの星”. *Tetsuwan Atom* 鉄腕アトム. Directed by TEZUKA Osamu 手塚 治虫. Season 1, episode 157. Tokyo: Mushi Production 虫プロダクション, 1966.

Comment: In the series, the superhero *Astro Boy* is dedicated to safeguarding humankind. Absent in the original manga, the “Gypsy” motif becomes apparent in episode 157, *Gypsy no Hoshi* (ジプシーの星, *Jipushī no Hoshi*) in the anime adaptation. This episode portrays a wandering planet (akin to a “Gypsy”) traversing the cosmos and causing perilous disturbances on Earth. *Astro Boy* investigates this enigmatic entity. As he reaches the planet and explores its deeper layers under the surface, he encounters diverse architectural structures reminiscent of various cultures on Earth. It is revealed that the planet is under the control of a girl who sought refuge following the destruction of her home planet. In response to her loneliness, she constructs robots and recreates different earthly structures. In this context, the “Gypsy’s Star” introduces themes of flight (seeking refuge after the destruction of a home) and nomadism (projected onto emulating diverse world architectures). This anime episode is both reproducing the “Gypsy” stigma and subtly hinting to the historical Romani marginalization and persecution.

Biggers, W Watts, and Chester Stover, writers. “Fortune Teller” *King Leonardo and His Short Subjects*. Directed by Sal Faillace, and Lu Guarnier. Season 2, episode 25. New York: Total Television, New York: Leonardo Television Productions, Los Angeles: Gerald Ray Studios, n.p.: Creston Studios, Mexico City: Gamma Productions, 1961.

Comment: This animated series is a comedic show. *Leonardo the Lion* is the king of a fictional country named *Bongo Congo*. His main enemy, *Biggie Rat*, constantly tries to take over the throne but always fails. In this particular episode, *Biggie Rat* and his accomplices dress up as “Gypsies”, with *Biggie Rat* pretending to be a fortune teller. Their goal is to deceive *Leonardo*. The episode relies on the stereotype of “Gypsies” as tricksters and criminals.

***Madeline and the Gypsies*. Directed by Václav Bedrich. Weston (Connecticut): Weston Woods Studios, New York: Rembrandt Films, 1959. Based on the children’s book *Madeline and the Gypsies* by Ludwig Bemelmans.**

Comment: An animated adaptation of Ludwig Bemelmans’ children’s book, which was published that same year. In this story, the children *Madeline* and *Pepito* run away to join a group of “Gypsies”. At first, they have a lot of fun, but after a while, they start to miss home and want to go back. However, the “Gypsies” refuse to let them leave. In the end, *Miss Clavel* comes to the rescue and brings the children back home.

Penner, Erdman, Winston Hibler, Joe Rinaldi, Ted Sears, Homer Brightman, and Harry Reeves, writers. *The Adventures of Ichabod and Mr. Toad*. Directed by Ben Sharpsteen, Jack Kinney, Clyde Geronimi, and James Algar. Burbank: The Walt Disney Company, 1949.

Comment: This animation adapts the children’s book *The Wind in the Willows* (1908) by British author Kenneth Grahame. Here, *Mr. Toad*, an anthropomorphic toad, travels in a “canary-yellow gypsy cart”, as explained by one of the other characters. In the film, *Mr. Toad* recklessly journeys with his cart through the countryside. He destroys hedges and a wintergarden, crosses private estates, and almost runs over a family of ducks, all while carelessly singing together with his horse. This depiction mirrors the chaos and joviality associated with the “Gypsy” motif. The motif complements *Mr. Toad*’s eccentric character.

Foster, John, writer. *Mighty Mouse in Gypsy Life*. Directed by Connie Rasinski. New Rochelle: Terrytoons, 1945.

Comment: This short film is part of the *Mighty Mouse* series, which centres on the adventures of an anthropomorphic superhero mouse named *Mighty Mouse*. At the start of this particular film, we see a stereotypical “Gypsy” camp, where the people are shown as performers with animals. A woman dances with a tambourine in the camp. Suddenly, a group of anthropomorphic bats attack the camp and kidnap the dancer. In the end, *Mighty Mouse* rescues her, and she kisses him.

***Dipsy Gipsy*. Directed by George Pal. Los Angeles: Paramount, Los Angeles: Famous Studios, 1941.**

Comment: In this episode of the *Puppetoons*, a violinist named *Jim Dandy* falls in love with a “Gypsy” woman called *Ninia*. The film features a jazz version of Franz Liszt’s famous piece, “Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2”, which adds to the atmosphere.

Sears, Ted, Otto Englander, Webb Smith, William Cottrell, Joseph Sabo, Erdman Penner, and Aurelius Battaglia, writers. *Pinocchio*. Burbank: The Walt Disney Company, 1940. Based on the children’s book *Pinocchio* by Carlo Collodi.

Comment: It is loosely based on a children’s book by the Italian writer Carlo Collodi from 1881/1883, originally a tragic story about a boy who is an anthropomorphic wooden puppet. As a result of his bad behaviour and lies, the story ends with his execution. The script of the 1940 animation is quite different because here the wooden puppet *Pinocchio* tries to fulfil the wish of his creator *Gepetto* to become a real human boy. During the adventure, he encounters a character called *Stromboli* who is based on the “Gypsy” *Mangiafuoco* from the children’s book. In contrast to the original character, *Stromboli* is antagonized. Moreover, he is shown with dark skin, exaggerated thick lips, and in Oriental dress. He buys *Pinocchio* from thugs for his private theatre, imprisoning him between shows to prevent his escape. *Stromboli* embodies multiple “Gypsy” motifs, most obviously in his appearance and associations with showmanship and criminality. Furthermore, the subtext of his actions alludes to child theft, as *Pinocchio* closely resembles a young boy.

Hardaway, Ben, writer. "I Wanna Play House." *Merrie Melodies*. Directed by Isadore Freleng. Episode 119. Los Angeles: Leon Schlesinger Productions, 1936.

Comment: Two bear siblings sneak away from their father to play hide-and-seek. One of them ends up in an empty "Gypsy" wagon and gets drunk on cider.

Terry, Paul, writer. "Puddy the Pub and the Gypsies." *Farmer Al Falfa*. Directed by Paul Terry. Episode 35. Long Island: Terrytoons, 1936.

Comment: Farmer Al Falfa is a cartoon about an old farmer named Al Falfa. In this particular film, Al Falfa's dog, Puddy, is kidnapped by a group of "Gypsies". One of them also tries to steal the farmer's pigs but fails, leading to a shootout between him and the farmer. In the end, Puddy manages to save Al Falfa, forcing the "Gypsy" to flee. For a similar film by Paul Terry, see **Terry, Paul, writer. "Through Thick and Thin." *Farmer Al Falfa*. Directed by Paul Terry. Delaware: Fables Studios, 1926.**

Terry, Paul, writer. *A Gypsy Fiddler*. Directed by Frank Moser. Long Island: Terrytoons, 1933.

Comment: The introduction presents a typical image of a "Gypsy" caravan, bustling with children and surrounded by animals. In this scene, a "Gypsy" fiddler falls in love with a princess from a nearby castle. When her father learns of their romance, he orders his soldiers to kill the fiddler. However, the princess stands up to her father, and together they escape on a flying carpet, heading back to the "Gypsy" camp.

Terry, Paul, writer. "Wake up the Gypsy in Me." *Merrie Melodies*. Directed by Rudolf Ising. Episode 55. Long Island: Terrytoons, Burbank: Warner Bros. Entertainment Inc., 1933.

Comment: This film takes place in a Russian village inhabited by "Gypsies". The characters sing a song by the famous jazz singer Paul Whiteman and have a joyful time dancing. An influential monk name Rice Puddin' – a playful nod to Rasputin – watches a dancing "Gypsy" girl with a tambourine and orders a soldier to kidnap her. Fortunately, the other "Gypsy" villagers come together to rescue her.

Terry, Paul, writer. "Through Thick and Thin." *Farmer Al Falfa*. Directed by Paul Terry. Delaware: Fables Studios, 1926.

Comment: Farmer Al Falfa is a cartoon about an old farmer named Al Falfa. In this particular film, Al Falfa's son is kidnapped by a "Gypsy". He also tries to steal the farmer's pigs but fails. For a similar film by Paul Terry, see **Terry, Paul, writer. "Puddy the Pub and the Gypsies." *Farmer Al Falfa*. Directed by Paul Terry. Episode 35. Long Island: Terrytoons, 1936.**

***Gypping the Gypsies*. N.p.: Pinellas Films, n.p.: Sering D. Wilson & Company, 1925.**

Comment: This film is now considered lost. It is mentioned in the 4 July 1925 issue of *Motion Picture News*, a film industry trade paper. In this issue, the film is listed under the "Comedy Releases" for 21 February 1925. See William A Johnston, ed., *Motion Picture News: 4 July 1925* (New York: Exhibitors' Time, 1925): 124, 234, 350, 488. The main character (referred to as the "star" in the publication) was *Ebonezer Ebony*, a recurring figure in other animations by Sering Wilson from the same year. Ibid., 1075.

Fleischer, Dave, writer. "Fortune Teller." *Out of the Inkwell*. Directed by Max Fleischer, and Dave Fleischer. New York: Inkwell Studios, 1923.

Comment: It is a blend of animation and live-action, featuring the adventures of *Koko*, a clown drawn on paper who comes to life. This character frequently leaves his paper world to interact with his human creator in the studio. In one of their films from 1923, called *Fortune Teller*, a "Gypsy" character makes an appearance. In the live-action part of the film, a fortune teller who is portrayed as a "Gypsy" offers her mystical services. *Koko* and his creator make fun of the "Gypsy", who then curses them for revenge. This curse brings objects in the studio to life, and they start chasing *Koko*. This interplay of animation and live-action, with the clown from the paper world and the fantastical "Gypsy" fortune teller from the real world complementing each other, creates a carnival-like sensation.

Non-Digital Games

Moon, Alan R (writer, artist), Cyrille Daujean (artist), Jean-Baptiste Reynaud (artist), and Régis Torres (artist). *Ticket to Ride: First Journey: Europe* [Board Game] Los Altos: Days of Wonder, 2017.

Comment: On the cover of this board game, one of the characters is dressed in clothing that is commonly associated with “Gypsy” aesthetics in popular culture. This character’s appearance should be viewed in the context of the game’s main theme: Journeys. It seems to reference the idea of a nomadic lifestyle associated with “Gypsies”.

Blankenship, Clay (writer), Blaise Hanczar (writer), Michael Haverty (writer), Philippe Keyaerts (writer), Jörg Krismann (writer), Jason Oman (writer), Miguel Coimbra (artist), and Cyrille Daujean (artist). *Small World: Grand Dames of Small World* [Board Game Expansion]. Los Altos: Days of Wonder, 2009.

Comment: This is an expansion for the board game *Small World* (2009). In the game, players control different “races” in a fantasy world to expand their territory. This expansion introduces a new race called the “Gypsies”, who are depicted using stereotypical imagery and a knife. The “Gypsies” special ability involves placing a valuable coin in any area they leave behind. This coin is later collected by the player, reflecting the attribute of nomadism.

Harris, Robert (writer), John Goodenough (writer), Robert Raya Alexander (artist), Tim Arney-O’Neil (artist), Ryan Barger (artist), Massimiliano Bertolini (artist), Jason Caffoe (artist) et al. *Talisman: The Dungeon Expansion*. Nottingham: Games Workshop; Roseville: Fantasy Flight Games, 2009.

Comment: This is an expansion pack for the board game *Talisman*. The game is set in a medieval fantasy. One of the available playable character tokens from this expansion is a beautiful “Gypsy” woman, reminiscent of the motif of the dancing, Spanish “Gypsy”. However, this character does not have any special abilities or unique powers in the game; her role is purely cosmetic, meaning she is there only for appearance and does not affect gameplay in any significant way.

van Moorsel, Corné (writer), and “Czarnè” (artist). *Gypsy King* [Board Game]. Maastricht: Cwali, 2007.

Comment: In this board game, players strategically place caravan settlements on the game board to compete for the largest contiguous settlement. Despite its thematic focus on nomadism, the mechanics themselves do not really incorporate in-depth elements of this motif, but merely offering an alternative theme to traditional urban building games.

Falkenhagen, Lena, and Niklas Reinke. *Das Königreich Almada*. Erkrath: FanPro, 2000.

Comment: Set in a medieval fantasy world inspired by Spain, this expansion for the pen & paper role-playing game *The Dark Eye* introduces characters called *Zahori*, who serve as the game’s version of “Gypsies”. The *Zahori* are described as nomadic people, often wearing bright, colourful clothes, and are known for their dancing, music, fortune-telling, horse-riding skills, and showmanship. They have dark hair and eyes, are often poor, and practice the vendetta, underscoring their vindictiveness. These characters also appear in the franchise’s English-translated versions.

Moon, Alan R. (writer), Mark Hauser (writer), and John B Marciano (artist). *Madeline and the Gypsies* [Card Game]. Ravensburg: Ravensburger, 1999.

Comment: Reminiscent of *Memory* and based on Ludwig Bemelmans’ 1959 children’s book, this card game features “Gypsy” characters such as showmen and fortune tellers on its cards. However, these characters serve solely for visual appeal, lacking any influence on gameplay mechanics.

Garfield, Richard (writer), and Quinton Hoover (artist). “Pradesh Gypsies” [Playing Card] (1997) *Magic: The Gathering* [Playing Card Game]. Renton: Wizards of the Coast.

Comment: This card game included a card named “Pradesh Gypsies”, which featured a group of “Gypsy” characters with horses. The card’s description read: “A mysterious people indeed. Their origins are as secret as their traditions”. When played, it offered advantages to players in this fantasy-themed card game. Obviously, it was based on the fantastical, and mystical conception of the “Gypsy” motif. However, in June 2020, the publisher decided to remove the card and stop producing it.

Hickman, Tracy, and Laura Hickman. *Ravenloft*, Lake Geneva: TSR, 1983.

Comment: Serving as a commercial add-on to the pen & paper role-playing game *Dungeons & Dragons*, this module expands the basic game and its universe, introducing the “Gypsy” motif. The module’s authors drew inspiration from popular gothic fiction of the 19th and 20th centuries, notably emphasizing vampires. *Ravenloft* particularly mirrors Bram Stoker’s *Dracula* (1897), intertwining “Gypsies” and vampires, reinterpreting the story and its motifs in the context of Tolkienesque medieval fantasy, in a world full of dragons, orcs, and elves. Set in the fictional land of *Barovia*, players confront the vampire *Strahd von Zarovich*. Victory requires defeating *Strahd*, aided by weapons and artifacts. *Ravenloft* also introduces “Gypsies” into *Dungeons & Dragons*’ medieval fantasy, portraying them as liars. Each game of *Ravenloft* starts with a “Gypsy” fortune teller predicting the players’ future via cartomancy, known as “The gypsy card reading”. Once the players are immersed into the world of *Ravenloft*, they frequently cross paths with nomadic “Gypsies”, introducing an element of *wanderlust* into the narrative. Players are given agency in their interactions with these characters, reflecting Janet Murray’s concept of player-led narrative. However, this agency may serve to reinforce existing power dynamics, with players having the option to trade, attack, or persuade “Gypsies” to join their party.

Digital Games

Double Fine Productions. *Psychonauts 2*. PS4, Windows, Xbox One. Redmond: Xbox Game Studios, 2021.

Comment: This video game is the sequel to *Psychonauts* (2005/6). In this contemporary fantasy story, the protagonist is a “Gypsy” and comes from a family of traveling “Gypsy” performers. However, in the first game he left this life behind to pursue training as a “psychonaut” – a type of spy with supernatural abilities like telepathy and fortune-telling. An element of the story is a “Gypsy” curse that was placed on his family, making him especially vulnerable to water. The “Gypsy” motifs of nomadism, showmanship, and magic play a central role in shaping the character’s journey and challenges.

Paintbucket Games. *Through the Darkest of Times*. Windows, macOS. Giebelstadt: HandyGames, 2020.

Comment: The story follows fictional resistance group in Berlin from 1933 to 1945. In one mission, the player character visits the Berlin-Marzahn concentration camp for Sinti and Roma. The camp is depicted as a collection of wagons where children play in the dirt. A doctor and a woman are described as examining the Roma, measuring and photographing them. In one scene, a boy named *Oskar* is forcefully examined by the doctor, while the woman takes notes. Some camp internees resist, but the police beat them. *Oskar* is then taken away in a car. The player can choose to take photos or intervene, though neither changes the outcome. The “doctor” and “woman” refer to Robert Ritter and his assistant Eva Justin, who worked for the Racial Hygiene Research Centre (RHF). The RHF helped identify Sinti and Roma, laying the groundwork for their deportation to extermination camps. In Berlin-Marzahn, deportations began systematically in 1943. This segment is the only part of the game that highlights Sinti and Roma as victims of National Socialism.

Square Enix, and Acquire. *Octopath Traveler*. Nintendo Switch. Kyoto: Nintendo 任天堂, Tokyo: Square Enix, 2018.

Comment: The game is set in a medieval fantasy world. One of the main characters, *Primrose Azelhart*, is a hybrid figure representing different stereotypes. She embodies elements of the exotic “Oriental” beauty and the image of the Spanish “Gypsy” girl. Shortly after her story begins, she is forced into a wandering lifestyle and, driven by the desire to avenge her murdered father, transforms into a determined fighter. This character’s journey reflects common themes of displacement and survival that are also relevant to the “Gypsy” motif.

Pocketwatch Games. *Tooth and Tail*. Windows, macOS, Linux, Playstation 4. San Diego: Pocketwatch Games, 2017.

Comment: The events of the game are inspired by the February and October Revolutions in Russia in 1917. However, the visual style is closer to popular works of French art that depict the June Rebellion of 1832 or the February Revolution of 1848. The country and events in the game are not directly named, but rather presented in the form of a fable. The setting is a country inhabited by anthropomorphic animals, mostly rats, which is undergoing a period of upheaval. After the death of the ruler, referred to as a “Tsarina”, a famine breaks out. This leads to uprisings by the lower social classes, led by the playable character, Hoppe, who leads a communist faction. Hopper is not explicitly identified with any ethnic group. However, it is notable that she wears a scarf decorated with gold coins, a garment traditionally associated with Romani women. While her background is not a central focus of the game and is not further explored, it is striking how an ethnically charged aesthetic is used in this historical setting to represent resistance by characters who face a choice between starvation or fighting back.

The Moonwalls. *Bohemian Killing*. Windows, macOS. Liezen: Libredia Entertainment, 2016.

Comment: This game is set in Paris in the year 1894. The player takes on the role of Alfred Ethon, a Rom who rises from humble beginnings to wealth through his brilliant engineering projects. His former classmate, Marie Capet, learns of his newfound prosperity. Like Alfred once was, she is in a difficult and unstable social position. Marie is not only envious of Alfred but also a fervent supporter of a fictional and racist movement called the “New Revolution”. This group targets the upper class and is characterized by its rhetoric of racial struggle. One day, unexpectedly, Marie appears at Alfred’s door. He lets her in, but when he turns his back, she strikes him on the head with a heavy object, knocking him unconscious. She then steals his cash from the blueprints for his current projects. Believing she has killed Alfred, Marie flees the scene. When Alfred regains consciousness, he tracks her down. In a fit of rage, he kills her. As the main suspect, Alfred must defend himself in court. The player, in the role of Alfred, must use careful dialogue choices during the trial to convince the judge that he is innocent – even though he actually committed the crime. This is made more difficult by the judge’s racial bias against Alfred. The characters and events in the story are fictional.

Le Cartel Studio. *Mother Russia Bleeds*. Windows, OS X, Linux. Austin: Devolver Digital, 2016.

Comment: The game is set in the Soviet Union in the 1980s. The four protagonists, all of whom are Roma, earn their living through street fights in the slums, where spectators place bets. The mafia, however, benefits the most from these fights. During one street fight, the police intervene and arrest the four heroes. However, instead of being sent to prison, they wake up in a secret government lab. There, they are forcibly made dependent on a fictional drug that causes intense hallucinations. The group manages to escape and, as the plot unfolds, learns about a partnership between the Kremlin and the mafia. The four heroes then head to Moscow and assassinate the Soviet Union’s leader. Due to the protagonists’ powerful hallucinations, which are simulated on-screen for the player, this leader is not recognizable as a historical figure like Nikolai Tikhonov or Nikolai Ryzhkov. What happens to the country afterward is left unclear, and it remains ambiguous what was real and what was merely a hallucination.

UserJoy Technology. *The Legend of Heroes: Trails at Sunrise* 英雄伝説 暁の軌跡. Windows, PlayStation Vita, PlayStation 4, Android, iOS, Nintendo Switch. Tachikawa: Nihon Falcom 日本ファルコム, 2016.

Comment: In this medieval fantasy, the character *Scherazard Harvey* is portrayed as a beautiful “Gypsy” dressed in colourful clothing. She wears multiple pieces of jewelry, including necklaces, rings, bracelets, gold hoop earrings, and a gem on her forehead. *Scherazard* also has mystical abilities, such as reading Tarot cards, and she fights using a whip. As a child, she was a member of a circus troupe. Her character design draws on “Gypsy” motifs such as showmanship, the Spanish “Gypsy”, fortune telling, and the duality of lust and death. She also appears to be based on the interpretation of the “Gypsy” character in the video game *Ragnarök Online*, where the “Gypsy” is an attractive woman fighting with a whip and reading cards. See **Gravity. *Ragnarök Online*. Windows. Seoul: Gravity, 2002-2004.**

Larian Studios. *Divinity: Original Sin*. Windows. Ghent: Larian Studios, 2014.

Comment: In this medieval fantasy world, a “Gypsy” fortune teller offers to reveal the location of hidden treasures in exchange for payment. She lives in a wagon camp, and her distinctive French accent adds to her foreign character. This role fits the common “Gypsy” fortune teller stereotype often found in games, where the character usually provides helpful services and rarely causes harm to the player.

Ilving Studio. *Love Alchemy: A Heart in Winter*. Windows. Alexandria: Alawar Entertainment, 2014.

Comment: In this contemporary fantasy game, a woman falls in love with a man and visits his fairy-tale-like castle. However, she soon uncovers several strange and magical secrets about him. While exploring, the player comes across a “Gypsy” wagon in the woods, next to an open fire. A violin and Tarot cards are nearby, hinting at the wagon owner’s skills in music and fortune-telling. The owner, a “Gypsy” woman, who has been cursed to take the form of a wolf-like creature, asks for help. The player assists by making a potion from a recipe passed down by the “Gypsy’s” grandmother. After the player successfully gives her the potion and the curse is lifted, transforming her back into a human, she gives the player an item needed to advance in the game.

Nomad Games. *Talisman: The Dungeon Expansion*. Windows, macOS. Lymm: Nomad Games, 2014.

Comment: This is the expansion pack for the digital version of the board game *Talisman*. The game is set in a medieval fantasy. One of the available playable characters from this expansion is a beautiful “Gypsy” woman, reminiscent of the motif of the dancing, Spanish “Gypsy”. However, this character does not have any special abilities or unique powers in the game; her role is purely cosmetic, meaning she is there only for appearance and does not affect gameplay in any significant way. Also see the non-digital version, **Harris, Robert (writer), John Goodenough (writer), Robert Raya Alexander (artist), Tim Arney-O’Neil (artist), Ryan Barger (artist), Massimiliano Bertolini (artist), Jason Caffoe (artist) et al. *Talisman: The Dungeon Expansion*. Nottingham: Games Workshop; Roseville: Fantasy Flight Games, 2009.**

XL Games. *ArcheAge*. Windows. Hamburg: Gamigo, 2013/14.

Comment: This game takes place in a medieval fantasy world where players can choose different roles, such as the role of the *Gypsy*. This role does not determine the appearance of the player character, but it defines their abilities. The character excels in magical, spiritual, and musical skills, regardless of their physical traits or class. These talents make them a unique and powerful presence in the game, offering special abilities that set them apart from other characters.

Mythic Entertainment, and Escalation Studios. *Ultima forever: Quest for the Avatar*. iOS. Redwood City: Electronic Arts, 2013.

Comment: In this European medieval fantasy world, a “Gypsy” fortune teller is a recurrent character of this gaming series. She accompanies the creation of the player character. Character creation in role-playing games involves allocating attributes like agility, intelligence, and strength, all crucial for gameplay. In the case of *Ultima*, these attributes may be substituted with values like honour and spirituality, which are significant in advancing through the games’ quests. The motif of fortune-telling imbues the player’s virtual fate with an aura of the mystical.

***Small World: Grand Dames.* Windows, macOS. Los Altos: Days of Wonder, Guyancourt: Asmodée Digital, 2013.**

Comment: This is an expansion for the digital version of the board game *Small World*. In the game, players control different “races” in a fantasy world to expand their territory. This expansion introduces a new race called the “Gypsies”, who are depicted using stereotypical imagery and a knife. The “Gypsies” special ability involves placing a valuable coin in any area they leave behind. This coin is later collected by the player, reflecting the attribute of nomadism. Also see the non-digital version, **Blankenship, Clay (writer), Blaise Hanczar (writer), Michael Haverty (writer), Philippe Keyaerts (writer), Jörg Krismann (writer), Jason Oman (writer), Miguel Coimbra (artist), and Cyrille Daujean (artist).** *Small World: Grand Dames of Small World [Board Game Expansion]*. Los Altos: Days of Wonder, 2009.

Nintendo Entertainment Analysis & Development 任天堂 情報開発本部, and Monolith Soft. *Animal Crossing: New Leaf* とびだせ どうぶつの森. Nintendo 3DS. Kyoto: Nintendo 任天堂, 2012/13.

Comment: In this social simulation adventure game, all the characters, except for the player character, are anthropomorphic animals. One of these characters, *Katrina*, is a panther and a fortune-telling “Gypsy”. She runs the *Fortune Shop*, where the player can spend in-game currency to have their fortune told, remove bad luck, or buy lucky charms. This role fits the common “Gypsy” fortune teller stereotype often found in games, where the character usually provides helpful services and rarely causes harm to the player.

Daedalic Entertainment. *Das Schwarze Auge: Satinavs Ketten.* Windows, macOS, Nintendo Switch. Höfen: Deep Silver, 2012.

Comment: In this medieval fantasy game, based on the pen & paper role-playing franchise *Das Schwarze Auge (The Dark Eye)*, the player encounters a “Gypsy” who plays a lute near her wagon in a marshy area under a tree. She explains that she is headed to a fair to perform but is stuck because one of her wagon’s wheels is broken. She also shares on request that her husband, a performer, died while trying to take increasingly dangerous risks in his acts, as the earnings had been dwindling. The player character can offer to fix the wagon wheel, which allows him and his companion to use the wagon to reach their next destination.

Lionhead Studios. *Fable: The Journey*. Xbox 360. Redmond: Microsoft Studios, 2012.

Comment: The “Gypsy” fortune teller *Theresa* assumes a central role. Throughout the game, the player character embarks on a journey on a “Gypsy” wagon, traversing a fantastic world, engaging in combat, and solving puzzles.

EA Salt Lake. *The Sims 3: Supernatural*. Windows, macOS, iOS, Android. Redwood City: Electronic Arts, 2012.

Comment: This expansion for the video game and social simulation *The Sims 3* introduces fantasy elements. In the game, the player controls characters (called *Sims*) who have needs, can build relationships, and pursue careers. One of the available careers is a fortune teller. A *Sim* who chooses this career can work at a *gypsy wagon rabbit hole*, which is simply a “Gypsy” wagon, a site in the game where other characters can visit to get their fortunes told in exchange for in-game money.

Bethesda Game Studios. *The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim*. Windows. Rockville: Bethesda Softworks, 2011.

Comment: In this European medieval fantasy world, the fictional cat people named *Khajiit* resemble antigypsyist stereotypes, as nomads, itinerant merchants, and thieves.

Ubisoft Montreal. *Assassin's Creed: Revelations*. Windows, Xbox360, PlayStation 3. Saint-Mandé: Ubisoft, 2011.

Comment: The player takes on the role of an Italian assassin in Constantinople in the beginning of the 16th century. Here, all prostitutes in the game are referred to as Roma. They can be recruited by the player character, the assassin, to distract targets such as guards at a gate to enable the player character to reach parts of this virtual world that are otherwise not accessible. This portrayal could be seen in relation to “Gypsy” characters in literature and opera, such as *Carmen*, who embodied themes of death and lust, which are reinforced of the mechanisms of this virtual world. In the game, the label of Roma serves as a synonym for prostitutes, to indicate players how these characters can be utilized in their favour.

Lionhead Studios. *Fable III*. Xbox 360. Redmond: Microsoft Game Studios, Redmond 2010.

Comment: The *Fable* series is a digital role-playing game series set in a world named *Albion*, a land rich with fantasy elements inspired once again by medieval Britain (“Albion” being one of its names during antiquity). Within this world, players assume the role of the protagonist, a hero tasked with confronting an evil criminal or monarch. In contrast to the previous games of the *Fable* series, the development studio behind *Fable III* avoided the term “Gypsy”, opting instead to introduce the nomadic *Dwellers* that appear as benevolent people in the story. These *Dwellers* represent a hybrid fantasy of “Gypsy” archetypes and Cossacks-inspired appearances within the game’s fantasy setting.

Larian Studios. *Divinity 2: Ego Draconis*. Windows, Xbox 360. Hamburg: dtp entertainment, 2009/10.

Comment: In this European medieval fantasy world, the “Gypsy” fortune teller known as *Sosostra* offers hints regarding hidden treasures in exchange for payment. This role fits the common “Gypsy” fortune teller stereotype often found in games, where the character usually provides helpful services and rarely causes harm to the player.

Nintendo Entertainment Analysis & Development 任天堂 情報開発本部. *Animal Crossing: Let’s Go to the City* 街へいこうよ どうぶつの森. Wii. Kyoto: Nintendo 任天堂, 2008.

Comment: In this social simulation adventure game, all the characters, except for the player character, are anthropomorphic animals. One of these characters, *Katrina*, is a panther and a fortune-telling “Gypsy”. She runs the *Fortune Shop*, where the player can spend in-game currency to have their fortune told, remove bad luck, or buy lucky charms. This role fits the common “Gypsy” fortune teller stereotype often found in games, where the character usually provides helpful services and rarely causes harm to the player.

Neverland. *Rune Factory 2: A Fantasy Harvest Moon*. Nintendo DS. Tokyo: Marvelous Entertainment, Burlingame: Natsume, Hitchin: Rising Star Games, Torrance: Xseed Games, 2008.

Comment: In this medieval fantasy world, the “Gypsy” fortune teller named *Alicia* informs players for money on character locations or weather forecasts within the virtual world. This role fits the common “Gypsy” fortune teller stereotype often found in games, where the character usually provides helpful services and rarely causes harm to the player.

Lionhead Studios. *Fable II*. Xbox 360. Redmond: Microsoft Game Studios, 2008.

Comment: The *Fable* series is a digital role-playing game series set in a world named *Albion*, a land rich with fantasy elements inspired once again by medieval Britain (“Albion” being one of its names during antiquity). Within this world, players assume the role of the protagonist, a hero tasked with confronting an evil criminal or monarch. In *Fable II*, the protagonist survives an attempt on their life by a mighty lord, losing their sibling in the process. Raised by “Gypsies” who find and take the child with them, the protagonist’s journey intertwines with *Theresa*, a fortune teller. *Theresa* aligns herself with the hero who embarks on a quest for vengeance against the lord for his murder against the sibling. *Theresa* herself wishes to strip the lord off his power.

Nihon Falcom 日本ファルコム. *The Legend of Heroes: Trails in the Sky the 3rd Evolution* 英雄伝説 空の軌跡 the 3rd. Tachikawa: Nihon Falcom 日本ファルコム, 2007.

Comment: In this medieval fantasy, the character *Scherazard Harvey* is portrayed as a beautiful “Gypsy” dressed in colourful clothing. She wears multiple pieces of jewelry, including necklaces, rings, bracelets, gold hoop earrings, and a gem on her forehead. *Scherazard* also has mystical abilities, such as reading Tarot cards, and she fights using a whip. As a child, she was a member of a circus troupe. Her character design draws on “Gypsy” motifs such as showmanship, the Spanish “Gypsy”, fortune telling, and the duality of lust and death. She also appears to be based on the interpretation of the “Gypsy” character in the video game *Ragnarök Online*, where the “Gypsy” is an attractive woman fighting with a whip and reading cards. See **Gravity. *Ragnarök Online*. Windows. Seoul: Gravity, 2002-2004.**

Nihon Falcom 日本ファルコム. *The Legend of Heroes: Trails in the Sky SC* 空の軌跡 SC. Windows, PlayStation Portable, PlayStation 3, PlayStation Vita. Tachikawa: Nihon Falcom 日本ファルコム, Torrance: Xseed Games, 2006.

Comment: In this medieval fantasy, the character *Scherazard Harvey* is portrayed as a beautiful “Gypsy” dressed in colourful clothing. She wears multiple pieces of jewelry, including necklaces, rings, bracelets, gold hoop earrings, and a gem on her forehead. *Scherazard* also has mystical abilities, such as reading Tarot cards, and she fights using a whip. As a child, she was a member of a circus troupe. Her character design draws on “Gypsy” motifs such as showmanship, the Spanish “Gypsy”, fortune telling, and the duality of lust and death. She also appears to be based on the interpretation of the “Gypsy” character in the video game *Ragnarök Online*, where the “Gypsy” is an attractive woman fighting with a whip and reading cards. See **Gravity**. *Ragnarök Online*. Windows. Seoul: Gravity, 2002-2004.

Nintendo Entertainment Analysis & Development 任天堂 情報開発本部. *Animal Crossing: Wild World* おいでよ どうぶつの森. Nintendo DS. Kyoto: Nintendo 任天堂, 2005/6.

Comment: In this social simulation adventure game, all the characters, except for the player character, are anthropomorphic animals. One of these characters, *Katrina*, is a panther and a fortune-telling “Gypsy”. She runs the *Fortune Shop*, where the player can spend in-game currency to have their fortune told, remove bad luck, or buy lucky charms. This role fits the common “Gypsy” fortune teller stereotype often found in games, where the character usually provides helpful services and rarely causes harm to the player.

Double Fine Productions. *Psychonauts*. Windows, Xbox, PlayStation 2, Mac OS X, Linux. Hazlet: Majesco Entertainment, 2005/6.

Comment: In this contemporary fantasy story, the protagonist is a “Gypsy” and comes from a family of traveling “Gypsy” performers. However, he leaves this life behind to pursue training as a “psychonaut” – a type of spy with supernatural abilities like telepathy and fortune-telling. An element of the story is a “Gypsy” curse that was placed on his family, making him especially vulnerable to water. The “Gypsy” motifs of nomadism, showmanship, and magic play a central role in shaping the character’s journey and challenges.

EA Redwood Shores. *From Russia with Love*. Nintendo GameCube, PlayStation 2, Xbox. Redwood City: Electronic Arts, Beverly Hills: Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Studios, 2005.

Comment: Set during the Cold War era, this video game is based on the 1963 film of the same name. In the game, the player takes on the role of the British spy, *James Bond*, also known by his codename *007*. One of the missions involves *Bond* being caught in a violent shootout at a “Gypsy” camp, showing a collection of horse-drawn wagons. This mission mirrors a more complex scene from the film, where *Bond* is welcomed in a “Gypsy” camp before violence with intruders from outside breaks out.

Maxis. *The Sims 2: Nightlife*. Windows, Mac OS X. Redwood City: EA Games, Austin: Aspyr Media, 2005.

Comment: This expansion for the video game *The Sims 3* introduces a fantasy element, featuring a gypsy matchmaker as a key character. One of her main roles is setting up blind dates for other characters. In the game, the player controls characters (called *Sims*) who have needs, can build relationships, and pursue careers. The more money a *Sim* (controlled by the player) pay her, the better the match will be in terms of compatibility. In addition to matchmaking, the “Gypsy” also sells various potions. This character clearly draws on the motif of the “Gypsy” fortune teller.

Blizzard Entertainment. *World of Warcraft*. Windows, Mac OS X. Irvine: Blizzard Entertainment 2004/5.

Comment: In this European medieval fantasy role-playing game, the “Gypsy” motif is represented through items like the *Gypsy Blade*, *Gypsy Tunic*, and *Gypsy Trousers* that can be equipped by the player character.

Level-5. *Dragon Quest VIII: Journey of the Cursed King* ドラゴンクエストVIII 空と海と大地と呪われし姫君. PlayStation 2, Android, iOS, Nintendo 3DS. Tokyo: Square Enix, 2004.

Comment: In this European medieval fantasy world, the character *Jessica* is a blend of different motifs. She is portrayed as a sexualized dancer and femme fatale with magical abilities, loosely drawing on stereotypes often associated with the “Gypsy” trope. Her use of a whip in combat further connects her to the “Gypsy” role from the historically influential role-playing games *Ragnarök Online*. See **Gravity. *Ragnarök Online*. Windows. Seoul: Gravity, 2002-2004.**

Nihon Falcom 日本ファルコム. *The Legend of Heroes: Trails in the Sky* 英雄伝説 VI 空の軌跡. Windows, PlayStation Portable. Tachikawa: Nihon Falcom 日本ファルコム, Torrance: Xseed Games, Braintree: Ghostlight, 2004.

Comment: In this medieval fantasy, the character *Scherazard Harvey* is portrayed as a beautiful “Gypsy” dressed in colourful clothing. She wears multiple pieces of jewelry, including necklaces, rings, bracelets, gold hoop earrings, and a gem on her forehead. *Scherazard* also has mystical abilities, such as reading Tarot cards, and she fights using a whip. As a child, she was a member of a circus troupe. Her character design draws on “Gypsy” motifs such as showmanship, the Spanish “Gypsy”, fortune telling, and the duality of lust and death. She also appears to be based on the interpretation of the “Gypsy” character in the video game *Ragnarök Online*, where the “Gypsy” is an attractive woman fighting with a whip and reading cards. See **Gravity. Ragnarök Online. Windows. Seoul: Gravity, 2002-2004.**

Idol FX. Nosferatu: The Wrath of Malachi. Windows. New Jersey: iGames Publishing, Boulogne-Billancourt: Mindscape, 2003/4.

Comment: In this horror game and first-person shooter, the player encounters hostile “Gypsy” mercenaries in a vampire story set in Transylvania in 1912. This echoes Bram Stoker’s novel *Dracula* (1897), where the Transylvanian count *Dracula* is a vampire who feeds on human blood. Notably, the novel’s climax involves a confrontation between the heroes and a group identified as “Gypsies”, who defend the vampire with their lives. The game is further inspired by F W Murnau’s *Nosferatu* (1922), and John William Polidori’s *The Vampyre* (1816).

FASA Studio. Crimson Skies: High Road to Revenge. Xbox. Redmond: Microsoft Game Studios, 2003.

Comment: In this action flight simulation game, the player takes on the role of the fictional character *Nathan Zachary*, the leader of a pirate crew. His airplane is named *Gypsy Magic*, which ties into the game’s themes of freedom, adventure, and taboo. The name “Gypsy” connects to ideas of traveling and breaking norms, while “Magic” suggests the plane is extraordinary and powerful. This choice of name also plays on the old association of “Gypsy” with the supernatural.

Gravity. *Ragnarök Online*. Windows. Seoul: Gravity, 2002-2004.

Comment: Between 2002 and 2004, the Korean manhwa series *Ragnarök* by Lee Myung-jin was published. The plot is loosely based on Norse mythology. The manhwa itself does not feature characters labelled as “Gypsies”, but it contains many fictional elements and is set in a European medieval fantasy world. A few months after the first volume was released, the associated video game *Ragnarök Online* launched. There are significant differences between the manhwa and the game. One notable addition in the game is the introduction of the “Gypsy” character. Players can choose to play as a female “Gypsy”, a character with abilities typical of this trope. For example, she can tell fortunes by reading cards. In this game, the “Gypsy” is portrayed as a seductive young woman in “Oriental” clothing, which aligns with the common portrayal of the Spanish “Gypsy” trope. Her skills, including dancing, allow her to manipulate her enemies, turning them into puppets under her control, giving her an advantage in battle. The link between lust and death is made very clear in this character. She can also fight enemies using a whip.

Nintendo Entertainment Analysis & Development 任天堂 情報開発本部.

***Animal Crossing* どうぶつの森+. Nintendo 64, Nintendo GameCube. Kyoto: Nintendo 任天堂, 2001-2004.**

Comment: In this social simulation adventure game, all the characters, except for the player character, are anthropomorphic animals. One of these characters, *Katrina*, is a panther and a fortune-telling “Gypsy”. She runs the *Fortune Shop*, where the player can spend in-game currency to have their fortune told, remove bad luck, or buy lucky charms. This role fits the common “Gypsy” fortune teller stereotype often found in games, where the character usually provides helpful services and rarely causes harm to the player.

Jagex. *RuneScape*. Windows, macOS, Linux. Cambridge: Jagex, 2001.

Comment: In this European medieval fantasy role-playing game, the “Gypsy” motif is represented through items like the various object such as *Gypsy Wine* that can be equipped by the player character.

Sacnoth. *Shadow Hearts*. PlayStation 2. Tokyo: Aruze, Chicago: Midway Games, 2001/2.

Comment: This contemporary fantasy is set in late 19th-century Britain. A character in the story is *Koudelka Lasant*, a young woman born into a poor “Gypsy” family in Wales. When Koudelka was nine years old, she predicted her father’s death with accuracy. Her family, terrified by her supernatural abilities, chose to abandon her, leaving her to face the world alone at a very young age. As a teenager, she was forced into prostitution. Therefore, she matches typical attributes of the “Gypsy” motif such as fortune-telling, and poverty.

Capcom, and Klein Computer. *Power Stone 2*. Arcade, Dreamcast. Osaka: Capcom, Wimbledon: Eidos Interactive, 2000-2002.

Comment: In this fighting game, the character *Rouge* is portrayed as an attractive woman with an “Oriental” appearance who also is a “Gypsy” fortune teller. She combines her skills as a dancer with combat, fighting her opponents while performing graceful dance moves. *Rouge* is on a quest to find the *Power Stone*, which she plans to use to bring happiness to people around the world. At the Paris World Fair, she sets up a tent where she fulfils simple wishes. It is a philogypsyist fantasy that includes typical attributes such as the femme fatale trope, fortune telling, and “Gypsy” dance.

Sacnoth. *Koudelka*. PlayStation. Suita: SNK, Paris: Infogrames, 1999/2000.

Comment: This contemporary fantasy is set in late 19th-century Britain. A character in the story is *Koudelka Lasant*, a young woman born into a poor “Gypsy” family in Wales. When Koudelka was nine years old, she predicted her father’s death with accuracy. Her family, terrified by her supernatural abilities, chose to abandon her, leaving her to face the world alone at a very young age. As a teenager, she was forced into prostitution. Therefore, she matches typical attributes of the “Gypsy” motif such as fortune-telling, and poverty.

Verant Interactive, and 989 Studios. *EverQuest*. Windows. San Diego: Sony Online Entertainment, Saint-Mandé: Ubisoft, 1999/2000.

Comment: In this European medieval fantasy role-playing game, the player may find various “Gypsy” characters living in the virtual world. These characters are nomads who set up camps and include roles like dancers, performers, and fortune tellers. The game also features items associated with these characters, such as the *Gypsy Lute* and *Gypsy Wine*, which player characters can use. Overall, the game maintains the traditional representation of the “Gypsy” motif, fitting it into its fantastical setting without significant changes.

Origin Systems. *Ultima IX: Ascension*. Windows. Redwood City: Electronic Arts, 1999/2000.

Comment: In this European medieval fantasy role-playing game, the player may find various “Gypsy” characters living in the virtual world. These characters are nomads who set up camps and include roles like dancers, performers, and fortune tellers. A “Gypsy” fortune teller is a recurrent character of this gaming series. She accompanies the creation of the player character. Character creation in role-playing games involves allocating attributes like agility, intelligence, and strength, all crucial for gameplay. In the case of *Ultima*, these attributes may be substituted with values like honour and spirituality, which are significant in advancing through the games’ quests. The motif of fortune-telling imbues the player’s virtual fate with an aura of the mystical.

Capcom, and Klein Computer. *Power Stone*. Arcade, Dreamcast. Osaka: Capcom, Wimbledon: Eidos Interactive, 1999.

Comment: In this fighting game, the character *Rouge* is portrayed as an attractive woman with an “Oriental” appearance who also is a “Gypsy” fortune teller. She combines her skills as a dancer with combat, fighting her opponents while performing graceful dance moves. *Rouge* is on a quest to find the *Power Stone*, which she plans to use to bring happiness to people around the world. At the Paris World Fair, she sets up a tent where she fulfils simple wishes. It is a philogypsyist fantasy that includes typical attributes such as the femme fatale trope, fortune telling, and “Gypsy” dance.

Nintendo Entertainment Analysis & Development 任天堂 情報開発本部. *The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time* ゼルダの伝説 時のオカリナ. Nintendo 64. Kyoto: Nintendo 任天堂, 1998.

Comment: In this European medieval fantasy action-adventure, the hero, *Link*, encounters the *Gerudo*, a fictional people inspired by Amazons, “Orientals”, and “Gypsies”. They reside in the Western part of the fictional kingdom of *Hyrule*, and *Link* must travel there to find an important artifact. As *Link* approaches their territory, a flamenco-inspired musical theme plays. Flamenco has been deeply influenced by the Roma of Spain and is still closely associated with them today, particularly through the dance performed by Gitanas. This connection is exemplified by the romanticized image of the “Spanish Gypsy”, popularized in Prosper Mérimée’s novella *Carmen* (1847). This character type is often depicted as a femme fatale. Once *Link* enters the *Gerudo* realm, he faces challenges from them but ultimately gains acceptance into their society. True to the “Gypsy” motif, the *Gerudo* characters are depicted as skilled in thievery, treasure hunting, and horseback riding.

Event Horizon Software. *Veil of Darkness*. MS-DOS, FM Towns, PC-98. Mountain View: Strategic Simulations, 1993.

Comment: This adventure game features a vampire story set in a contemporary scenario. Early in the game, players encounter a “Gypsy” camp, which they must interact with to progress in the plot. This echoes Bram Stoker’s novel *Dracula* (1897), where the Transylvanian count *Dracula* is a vampire who feeds on human blood. Notably, the novel’s climax involves a confrontation between the heroes and a group identified as “Gypsies”, who defend the vampire with their lives.

Sierra On-Line. *Quest for Glory: Shadows of Darkness*. MS-DOS, Windows. Los Angeles: Sierra On-Line, 1993.

Comment: In this European medieval fantasy game, the player character needs to complete a quest in a “Gypsy” camp to advance the story. After saving a “Gypsy” from danger, the player is accepted into their group. The camp’s leader, an old fortune teller, teaches the player a protective spell. In the game, the “Gypsies” can shapeshift into wolves for hunting a live in a traveling wagon camp around a campfire. They are itinerant traders. One of the “Gypsies” shares a story stealing corn from a town and narrowly escaping a lynching. Therefore, the story includes common themes associated with the “Gypsy” motif, like fortune telling, nomadism, and criminal behaviour. It ties these themes to antigypsyism and introduces new elements, such as shapeshifting. This shapeshifting is linked to the traditional supernatural aspects of the “Gypsy” stereotype.

Origin Systems. *Ultima VII: The Black Gate*. DOS. Austin: Origin Systems, 1992.

Comment: In this European medieval fantasy role-playing game, the player may find various “Gypsy” characters living in the virtual world. These characters are nomads who set up camps and include roles like dancers, performers, and fortune tellers. A “Gypsy” fortune teller is a recurrent character of this gaming series. She accompanies the creation of the player character. Character creation in role-playing games involves allocating attributes like agility, intelligence, and strength, all crucial for gameplay. In the case of *Ultima*, these attributes may be substituted with values like honour and spirituality, which are significant in advancing through the games’ quests. The motif of fortune-telling imbues the player’s virtual fate with an aura of the mystical.

Sierra On-Line. *King's Quest V: Absence Makes the Heart Go Yonder!* MS-DOS, Windows, NES, classic Mac OS, Amiga, FM Towns, Tandy Memorex VIS, NEC PS-9801. Los Angeles: Sierra On-Line, Tokyo: Konami, 1990.

Comment: In this European medieval fantasy adventure, the player encounters a "Gypsy" fortune teller in her wagon. She is kind and uses her abilities to predict the player character's future. To help protect him from magical dangers, she gives him a special charm. This role fits the common "Gypsy" fortune teller stereotype often found in games, where the character usually provides helpful services and rarely causes harm to the player.

Chunsoft. *Dragon Quest IV: Chapters of the Chosen*. Famicom, NES. Tokyo: Enix, 1990.

Comment: In this medieval fantasy world, the characters *Meena* and *Maya* are enchanting dancers with the ability of fortune telling. Their performances are accompanied by special music tracks named *Gypsy's Journey* and *Gypsy's Dance*, which highlight their roles as "Gypsy" characters.

Origin Systems. *Ultima VI: The False Prophet*. MS-DOS. Austin: Origin Systems, 1990.

Comment: In this European medieval fantasy role-playing game, the player may find various "Gypsy" characters living in the virtual world. These characters are nomads who set up camps and include roles like dancers, performers, and fortune tellers. A "Gypsy" fortune teller is a recurrent character of this gaming series. She accompanies the creation of the player character. Character creation in role-playing games involves allocating attributes like agility, intelligence, and strength, all crucial for gameplay. In the case of *Ultima*, these attributes may be substituted with values like honour and spirituality, which are significant in advancing through the games' quests. The motif of fortune-telling imbues the player's virtual fate with an aura of the mystical.

Paragon Software. *The Amazing Spider-Man and Captain America in Dr. Doom's Revenge!* Amiga, Amstrad CPC, Atari ST, Commodore 64, MS-DOS, ZX Spectrum. London: Empire Software, n.p.: Medalist International, Greensburg: Paragon Software, 1989/90.

Comment: This game marks one of the first times Marvel's supervillain and "Gypsy" character, *Doctor Doom*, appears in a video game. For more information, see the comic **Lee, Stan (writer), Jack Kirby (penciler), and Chic Stone (inker). "The Fantastic Origin of Doctor Doom!" *Fantastic Four Annual*, no. 2 (1964). New York: Marvel Comics.**

Origin Systems. *Ultima V: Warriors of Destiny*. Amiga, Apple II, Atari ST, Commodore 64/128, MS-DOS, FM Towns, NEC PC-8801, NEC PC-9801, NES, Sharp X68000. Austin: Origin Systems, 1988.

Comment: In this European medieval fantasy role-playing game, the player may find various “Gypsy” characters living in the virtual world. These characters are nomads who set up camps and include roles like dancers, performers, and fortune tellers. A “Gypsy” fortune teller is a recurrent character of this gaming series. She accompanies the creation of the player character. Character creation in role-playing games involves allocating attributes like agility, intelligence, and strength, all crucial for gameplay. In the case of *Ultima*, these attributes may be substituted with values like honour and spirituality, which are significant in advancing through the games’ quests. The motif of fortune-telling imbues the player’s virtual fate with an aura of the mystical.

Origin Systems. *Ultima IV: Quest of the Avatar*. Amiga, Apple II, Atari 8-bit, Atari ST, Commodore 64, MS-DOS, FM Towns, FM-7, MSX2, Master System, NES, PC-88, PC-98, X1, X68000. Austin: Origin Systems, 1985.

Comment: In this European medieval fantasy role-playing game, the player may find various “Gypsy” characters living in the virtual world. These characters are nomads who set up camps and include roles like dancers, performers, and fortune tellers. A “Gypsy” fortune teller is a recurrent character of this gaming series. She accompanies the creation of the player character. Character creation in role-playing games involves allocating attributes like agility, intelligence, and strength, all crucial for gameplay. In the case of *Ultima*, these attributes may be substituted with values like honour and spirituality, which are significant in advancing through the games’ quests. The motif of fortune-telling imbues the player’s virtual fate with an aura of the mystical.

Meadows Games. *Gypsy Juggler*. Arcade. Washington D.C.: Meadows Games, 1978.

Comment: In this sports game, there is a stick-figure-like character with arms stretched wide on a black background. The figure is wearing a white top with buttons, and its head is the same colour. The lower part of its body is yellow, as is the ground it stands on. The player’s task is to control this figure and juggle eggs. The more eggs juggled, the more points the player earns. If an egg is dropped, the game ends. The character references the motif of traveling performers, which has been associated with Sinti and Roma since the early modern period.