

**"CHUMIDELPE-NASHFALO" / LOVE-AFFLICTION (OF ANY MALE WHO CASTS EYES ON THE FICTIONAL ,GYPSY' GIRL)**

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*Abstract: One should note this allegory, so explicit for a patriarchal reading: the endangered world order is announced by a rebellious woman; an adulteress, beaten half to death, stands up, the two halves of her body interchanged from the viewpoint of the mermaid whose lower part of her body is 'normally' uncovered. Likewise the character of Sabina in the film Gadjó Dilo. shows complete nudity only as prelude to a catastrophe: the Romanians set fire to Roma houses after Sabina is seen washing her hair, her breasts naked and skirts covering her lower body. It is worth mentioning that the main characters in all these various representations are males, as are the authors.*

*In a sexually repressed society from nineteenth century Europe, fantastic anecdotes of women at the margins of society, endowed with un unmatched sensuality and sexuality were continuously arousing all kinds of dangerous fantasies of temptation and breaking rules, only natural reactions to strict rules of interdiction.*

*„Just as in large numbers of images depicting colonial situations (postcards or press pictures), in the media that I am discussing here the women of the 'Other' are fantasised and displayed as aesthetically attractive and hence sexually desirable. But representations of Roma women are very different from the colonial images that emphasise the domestication of women, or display them nude for pornographic purposes”<sup>1</sup>*

**Keywords: 'Gypsy', woman, attraction, magic, Otherness**

Starting with Carmen turning and twirling in her skirts and throwing flowers to Azucena's awful revenge, descriptions of 'Gypsies' make their appearance quite frequently in written fiction. These portrayals are constructed more on received conventions than the truth, however, the truth is too complex to grasp. Starting from the fact that 'Gypsies' are dispersed geographically speaking various languages and owning no historical tradition recorded whatsoever, even assertedly anthropological narratives are founded on foreigners' preconceived or erroneous ideas. These observations often contradict even with each other and are surely glamorized in a romantic way. The anthropologist of the 19th century (when 'Gypsy' studies became popular) was searching for (and every now and again even made up) divergences which would consequently seduce their readers. „Following the literary currents of Romanticism, he rejected industrialism and searched for the exotic in 'primitive' pre-industrial cultures. As a result, the 'Gypsies' of both pseudoscience and fiction are mysterious, potentially alluring, and always dangerous 'Others' who defy the norms of the West and its civilizing influence.”<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Boris Wastiau, 'Les Plaques Sensibles de la Mémoire Ethnographique. Congo Belge 1890–1930', in *Xspéculations sur l'imaginaire et l'interdit*, Marc-Olivier Gonseth, Jacques Hainard and Roland Kaehr, MEN, Neuchâtel, 2003, pp 239–65

<sup>2</sup>Ilana Walder-Biesanz, *The Gypsy 'Other' in Opera*, in *Opera 21 Magazine*, May 16, 2014

The idea of the 'Other' has its origins in Hegel's dialectics<sup>3</sup> but was popularized by Edward Said in his book *Orientalism*. The 'Other' is something outside of one's own self or society, but the choice of 'Other' also defines the self or society that excludes it. Beauvoir famously analyzed how men construct women as the 'Other'; Said discusses the West's construction of the Orient as its inferior-but-romantic 'Other'.<sup>4</sup> 'Gypsies' seem to fit this model: They are originally from India, and when they first appeared in Europe, they were initially identified with Egyptians and or Turks. As the majority of the cases of Orientalism, they are denigrated and defamed but in the same time portrayed as passionately and voluptuously carnal—women in particular are portrayed as sexually available. This may be because the popularity of 'Orientals' and 'Gypsies' made their entrance into literature during the Victorian era, when society defined its own prudish sexual culture in contrast to an imagined East full of dancing harlots in exotic harems.

„The Spanish Gypsy appears particularly often in works of literature and their operatic adaptations. Spain, with its long history of Arabic and Jewish inhabitants and its proximity to Africa, was often constructed as the 'Other' within Europe: the most accessible province of primitive exoticism. Andalusia, Spain, and gypsies were and still are conflated in popular imagination, rolled together in the vision of a dark-haired woman with a shawl and a fan, dancing and telling fortunes.”<sup>5</sup> (In a trip to southern Spain, it is easy to find modern tourists flocking to reconstructions of this image, which are entertaining and lucrative but perpetuate false stereotypes of bygone centuries.) „On both the page and the stage , Carmen is the embodiment of this all - singing, all-dancing, generically 'Oriental' type ; in fact, the narrator in Mérimée's novel muses about whether she is Andalusian , Moorish, or Jewish until she tells him she is a gypsy. Of course, the conglomeration of various 'Others' that is the fictional Spanish gypsy poses a greater threat than mere seduction: Anti-Jewish libel combined with myths about gypsy rituals historically led to both serious and literary allegations of baby-snatching, as in *Il trovatore*.”<sup>6</sup> , 'Gypsy' protagonists are almost always female—doubly the 'Other' because of both gender and ethnicity.

Although the reality of ,Gypsy' life is hardly recorded, the Western constructions of the gypsy 'Other' that appear in fiction are certainly more stereotype than truth, drawing on conventional omens, myths, and a convoluted and all-encompassing meaning of the 'Orient' in their plots. That's not to say that these aren't great pieces of fictional writing valuable in the past and in the future, too— apart from these portrays, literature is full of of classic works that mainly deal with discrimination based on numerous foundations that are nonetheless still consistent and fascinating. However, we should be careful as readers not to shape our perception of 'Gypsy' character and culture (in the past or present) founded on the way they present the literary figures.

Preciosa, for example in *La gitanilla*, by Cervantes, ”is successful as a Gypsy only to the extent of incorporating herself into the Gypsy practice of selling entertainment (...) In most regards, however, she is the embodiment of the court poet's esquivia, an idealized and elusive

<sup>3</sup>Stern, Robert (2013). *The Routledge guide book to Hegel's Phenomenology of spirit* (second ed.). Abingdon, Oxon New York: Routledge

<sup>4</sup> Edward Said, *Orientalism*, New York: Random House, 1979

<sup>5</sup> Ilana Walder-Biesanz, *The Gypsy 'Other' in Opera*, in *Opera 21 Magazine*, May 16, 2014

<sup>6</sup> idem

feminine subject who refuses to be bound by the social customs governing marriage, but who succumbs finally to patriarchal codes when she falls in love<sup>7</sup>

If we reject popular belief as unfounded, what does it mean that a myth as harmful as the baby-snatching Gypsy made its way into all sectors of society in so many countries; that it was taken up enthusiastically by the Romantics, (...) and transported into the twentieth century literature of all European countries?<sup>8</sup> The myth forms part of the shared Gypsy stereotype that, like every stereotype, hides behind a shield of false permanence. But its very unfoundedness means that, as Homi Bhabha puts it, the stereotype must be „anxiously repeated”, because no one can ever really demonstrate it empirically.<sup>9</sup>

One possibility of sensing the tragedy of Preciosa's identity is as a reenactment of a primal scene on a national scale specific to Spanish seventeenth century politics. Preciosa is the fetish that provides the reader/voyeur with the soothing vision of an imaginary plenitude: a Spain that is a ‚precious jewel of love’, as one of Preciosa's suitors calls her- a nation as beautiful, musical, poetic, and racially mysterious as Preciosa. That she also signifies a lack is clear from the novella's conclusion: P. Relinquishes her will, her livelihood, her freedom, her speech, her name, her Gypsiness, and her garments to come into full view of her new (old) aristocratic family. In doing so, she regains her dignity and her racial superiority, while the Gypsies with whom she lived, now without their stolen prized possession, revert to the baseness of the received stereotype. The Gypsy/non-Gypsy dichotomy is recycled as a reaffirmation of the *arbitrista* discourse that shadows the novella, and the story for modern readers at least gains knowledge value about the importance of fantasy in official attitudes and policies about marginalized groups, in an indirect way „authorizing” discrimination<sup>10</sup>.

We also are aware that, throughout history, the figure of the ‚Gypsy’ witch was extremely popular for the Western imagination. Let us examine the following list of literary ‚Gypsy’ witches:

William Shakespeare in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1596) , introduces us to a beautiful, mesmerizing dark-skinned ‚Gypsy’, who could look like Helen of Troy

”One sees more devils than vast hell can hold:

That is the madman. The lover, all as frantic,  
Sees Helen's beauty in the brow of Egypt”<sup>11</sup>

(Egypt is used to refer to the Romani people of England in the context that imagining the face of a lover can make the dark-skinned Gypsy look like Helen of Troy a great beauty. In the same context, in *Othello* by William Shakespeare (1603) – Desdemona's handkerchief, a present to Othello's mother, proves to be in fact a gift from a ‚Gypsy’ "Egyptian charmer" who can almost read the thoughts of people)<sup>12</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Lou Charnon-Deutsch, *The Spanish Gypsy, The History of a European Obsession*, The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2004, p. 29

<sup>8</sup> Lou Charnon-Deutsch, *The Spanish Gypsy, The History of a European Obsession*, The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2004, p. 38

<sup>9</sup> Edward Said, *Nation and Narration*, Routledge, New York, 1990, p. 34

<sup>10</sup> Lou Charnon-Deutsch, *The Spanish Gypsy, The History of a European Obsession*, The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2004, p. 38

<sup>11</sup> William Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, V.i. 2-22, in *THE OXFORD SHAKESPEARE, THE COMPLETE WORKS*, General Editors: Stanley and Gary Taylor, p. 333

<sup>12</sup> Alden T. Vaughan and Virginia Mason Vaughan, *Shakespeare's Caliban*, Cambridge University Press, 1991, p. 36

The ambivalent portrayal of the 'Gypsy' hex in Miguel de Cervantes' novel *La Gitanilla* (1613)<sup>13</sup>, the figure of Meg Merrilies, in *Guy Mannering*, a wild-looking, strident 'Gypsy' woman, who has come to tell the child's fortune, these are all quite disturbing.<sup>14</sup> Meg Merrilies, for instance, stands like a "sibyl in frenzy" and scolds and curses the Scottish laird for his betrayal. Rather than silence her voice, her exotic dress, "a large piece of red cotton cloth rolled about her head in the form of a turban," gives her a heightened authority that contrasts with Godfrey Bertram's weak-spirited reform. The text compares her manner, charged with 'Gypsy' magic, with that of a displaced queen, the "proudly contemptuous" Margaret of Anjou "bestowing on her triumphant foes her keen-edged malediction"<sup>15</sup>. Again, at the moment of claiming their right as subordinates, the text associates Gypsies with independent sovereignty and majesty.<sup>16</sup> Fortune tellers 'Gypsy' women appear in Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847), where English Romanies visit Thornfield Hall as fortune tellers, or in Hermann Hesse's novel *Narcissus and Goldmund* which features a Romani girl called Lisa, of enchanting beauty. Goldmund comes across a beautiful 'Gypsy' woman, who kisses him and invites him to make love. This encounter becomes his epiphany; he now knows he was never meant to be a monk. With Narcissus' help, he leaves the monastery and embarks on a wandering existence. Goldmund finds he is very attractive to women, and has numerous love affairs afterwards.<sup>17</sup> We meet the figure of the evil witch in Dodie Smith's *The Hundred and One Dalmatians* (1957). After escaping from Cruella De Vil's country house, the dogs are nearly trapped by an old 'Gypsy' woman who wants to sell them. Her horse helps the dogs escape again.<sup>18</sup> The curse of a 'Gypsy' is a recurring topic, as we can see in *Thinner*, an 1984 novel by Stephen King, published under his pseudonym, Richard Bachman. It is about a man cursed by a 'Gypsy' to grow progressively thinner. Billy Halleck, an arrogant, obese lawyer in Connecticut, has recently fought an agonising court case in which he was charged with vehicular manslaughter. While he had been driving across town, his wife Heidi distracted him by giving him a handjob, causing him to run over an old woman who was part of a group of traveling 'Gypsies'. The case is dismissed at a preliminary stage thanks to the judge, who is a close friend of his. However, as Billy leaves the courthouse, the old woman's ancient father, Taduz Lemke, strokes Billy's cheek and whispers one word to him: "Thinner." The word, and the old man's behavior, startle Billy:

„...in a moment of carelessness, Billy sideswipes an old gypsy woman as she is crossing the street-and her ancient father passes a bizarre and terrible judgement on him.

<Thinner,> the old gypsy man whispers, and caresses his cheeks like a lover. Just one word...but six weeks later and ninety-three pound lighter, Billy Halleck is more than worried. He's terrified. And desperate enough for one last gamble...that will lead him to a nightmare showdown with the forces of evil melting his flesh away.”<sup>19</sup>

In Ana Castillo's novel *Peel My Love Like an Onion*, the seductive world of flamenco forms the backdrop for a classic tale of independence (of a mesmerizing 'Gypsy' woman) found, lost, and reclaimed. Like Bizet's legendary 'Gypsy', *Carmen* "La Coja" (The Cripple)

<sup>13</sup>Steve Hutchinson, *Cervantine Journeys*, The University of Wisconsin Press, Madison, Wisconsin, 1992, p. 182

<sup>14</sup><https://ecommons.library.cornell.edu/bitstream/1813/7945/1/Dissertation%201.pdf>, accessed 16.04.1

<sup>15</sup>Walter Scott, *Guy Mannering*, Penguin Classics, London, 2003, p. 64

<sup>16</sup>Abigail Rothblatt Bardi, Ph.D. 2007, *THE GYPSY AS TROPE IN VICTORIAN AND MODERN BRITISH LITERATURE*, <http://drum.lib.umd.edu/bitstream/1903/7703/1/umi-umd-4980.pdf>, accessed 16.04.15

<sup>17</sup>Herman Hesse, *Narcissus and Goldmund*, Bantam Books, Farrar, Strauss and Giroux Inc., 1971

<sup>18</sup>Dodie Smith, *The Hundred and One Dalmatians*, Puffin Books, Penguin Books USA Inc., 1989

<sup>19</sup> Stephen King, *Thinner*, Signet, New American Library, 1985, p.1

Santos is hilarious, passionate and triumphant. A renowned flamenco dancer in Chicago despite the legacy of childhood polio, Carmen has long enjoyed an affair with Agustín, the married director of her troupe--a romance that's now growing stale. When she begins a new, passionate liaison with Manolo, Agustín's grandson and a dancer of natural genius, an angry rivalry is sparked. Carmen finally makes her way back to happiness in this funny, fiery story that's equal parts soap opera, tragicomedy, and rhapsody.<sup>20</sup> An unconventional ‚Gypsy’ witch in Paulo Coelho's novel *The Witch of Portobello* (2007) who is only half ‚Gypsy’, as her biological mother was one:

„(Athena) is very human: born in Romania of gypsy descent, the adopted daughter of Lebanese parents, with a privileged upbringing in Beirut. She is divorced, and has a young son. She lives in London and works in a bank. Her real name is Sherine Khalil; she is still young. Yet she comes to exercise an extraordinary influence over those who are close to her – those who love, care for, guide and protect her. We see Athena only through the eyes of these lovers, protectors, caregivers and guides: in short chapters, each headed by the name of the narrator, his/her age and occupation. We don't know who transcribed these words until the end.”<sup>21</sup>

Her story is started by a journalist whom she met in Bucharest – a man who sees himself, wistfully, as only a “temporary inhabitant” of her world. Other voices chime in. Her ex-husband speaks; so does her priest, Roman Catholic – a faith she refuses; her Polish landlord; her employer in London; a Bedouin; her Romanian birth-mother; a successful stage actress, who becomes Athena's somewhat unlikely successor, continuing the journey.

„A French historian interjects a note on the growing popularity of pagan traditions: “Why? Because God the Father is associated with the rigor and discipline of worship, whereas the Mother Goddess shows the importance of love above and beyond all the usual prohibitions and taboos.”<sup>22</sup>

Actually, Coelho's book is about the power of the feminine; about the infinite sweep of love – a recurring theme – without boundaries; about teachers and followers, willing and unwilling. There are rituals – dancing to percussion music, staring at candles, long silences, nakedness. There is a lot of fashionable New Age symbolism: phrases like “channeling the Unity” and “I can see your aura,” and quotes from Jung and Gibran, the girl's ‚Gypsiness’ being a trendy ingredient for a successful tory, too.

Athena inevitably becomes a cult figure; it is impossible for her to hide, the same way as witches cannot avoid being revealed eventually. She gains a certain notoriety as “The Witch of Portobello,” sparking protests from a reverend gentleman and his congregation. She suffers, acquiesces, learns, teaches, struggles, at times manipulates, does the best she can – and in the end departs the scene.

Even so, do we resist her? Hardly. She remains as distant and cool as a Greek statue of Athena herself, a vessel for the philosophy that the author explores. Although she evokes love in several (male) characters, it is hard to understand. And, after pushing the boundaries of our imagination so far and deep, the sharp twist at the end somehow seems contrived and banal.

Yet there are many passages and observations that turn in one's mind. “Human beings are still asking the same questions as their ancestors. In short, they haven't evolved at all,”

<sup>20</sup>Ana Castilio, *Peel me like an onion*, Anchor Books, Random House, New York, 2000

<sup>21</sup>Paulo Coelho, *The Witch of Portobello*, transl. By Margaret Jull Costa, ebook available at <http://www.barnesandnoble.com/sample/read/9780061338816>, accessed at 16.04.15

<sup>22</sup><https://petchary.wordpress.com/book-review/the-witch-of-portobello-by-paulo-coelho/>

says one character. Athena simply advises her disciple: "Try to be different. That's all." This book is eloquent in its complexity and challenging in its simplicity. It stretches you; and yes, at times it is magical – without any tricks."<sup>23</sup>

As a combination of relics of ancient stereotypes, magic is attached to 'Gypsies' in 2002 the WB television series *Charmed* aired the episode "The Eyes Have It" which depicted Romanies as practicing a magical craft similar to those of modern-day witches. Much like the star witches in the series, Romanies possess supernatural powers and pass down family Books of Shadows; and the ancient 'Gypsy curse' still plays a part in the television series *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, Romanies in 19th Century Romania place a curse on the vampire Angelus to punish him for the murder of a little Romani girl, by restoring his human soul (and by extension, his conscience) and forcing him to feel guilt for his crimes. Angel was doomed to misery until he could enjoy a moment of pure happiness.

In Lavengro, George Borrow's novel from 1851 Mrs. Herne, Jasper's mother-in-law, is alone among the Petulengro kin in taking a dislike to Lavengro and leaves for Yorkshire to get away from him „I hates the gorgio”, ( the Gorgio being the evil spirit or the white man) she tells her daughter, „and would like, speaking Romanly, to mix a little poison with his waters”<sup>24</sup>

But although she leaves, she plots against him. Many chapters later, a young Romany girl appears in front of Lavengro, dancing and singing seductively in a virtual caricature of a sexually enticing Gypsy woman, and feeds him a rich cake. After becoming deadly ill from the cake, Lavengro realizes that he has been poisoned, and Mrs. Herne arrives to tell him why she has plotted his death :”Hallo, tinker! You must introduce yourself into a quiet family and raise confusion...You must steal its language, and, what was never done before, write it down Christianly”.<sup>25</sup> Putting it more graphically some pages later, Mrs. Herne accuses Lavengro of stealing the „tongue out of her head” . Guilty of masquerade, Lavengro also commits the offence of the ethnologist or philologist. He appropriates the Romany language, the very thing that attracts him to them most powerfully, and translates it into Christian form. (Mrs. Herne later hangs herself in despair)

A dangerous and anti-social character by definition, the female 'Gypsy' is the target of simultaneously contradictory feelings of magnetic force and disgust and loathing. She is the object of profound inexplicable desire, orinal in her own uncontrollability and immorality; standing for a rupture in the dominating social and moral expectations. ”In this sense, she epitomizes the condition of her ethnic group, perceived as marginal and dangerous by the dominant society: the wild nature of 'Gypsy' lifestyle and customs is presented as a sign of their radical diversity and incompatibility with the dominant social system. The readers may indeed sympathize with these tragic heroines for their determination to defend their freedom at the cost of their life- a form of celebration of the free spirit of the 'Gypsy'. It is clear, however, that these characters' heroic status is not meant to exceed the limits of the text: it is the outcome of a textual fiction of the 'Gypsies' which is ultimately functional to the reassertion of their position as outsiders. From this point of view, the death of the 'Gypsy'

<sup>23</sup> Idem.

<sup>24</sup>Deborah Epstein Nord, *Gypsies and the British Imagination 1807-1930*, Columbia University Press, New York Chi ATTRACTION, p 108

<sup>25</sup>George Borrow, *Lavengro*,G.P. Putnam,New York, 1851, p.389

character may be likened to a sort of expiatory rite which confirms the validity of the hegemonic order.”<sup>26</sup>

The magic of ‚Gypsies’

„Ki shan i Romany

Adoi san’ i chov’hani. ”

„Wherever ‚Gypsies’ go,

There the witches are, we know” (Charles Leland, *Gypsy Sorcery and Fortune Telling*, 1891)<sup>27</sup>

The association of ‚Gypsies’ with magic is undoubtedly one of the most deeply rooted in the imagination of the non-Gypsies. Since their first appearance among sedentary populations, the general disfavour surrounding ‚Gypsies’ ’ nomadic way of life was likely to result in witchcraft allegations. As shown in the first chapter, such allegations functioned as powerful strategies of social control and determined their inclusion in the ranks of sorcerers, witches and deviants, rebels and trouble-makers. ‚Gypsies’ ’ itinerary was also frequently connected with some kind of supernatural entities and mysterious events which had occurred in a distant, obscure past. They were thought to be carrying the weight of a terrible curse, to be the descendants of biblical figures, and consequently regarded as the phenomenal materialization of a reality forever lost in the mists of time. As a result of these beliefs, ‚Gypsies’ were rarely seen as a people „immersed in the historical present. Rather, they were looked at as relics of a vanished humanity, the living remnants of a separate dimension, remote from the present both in terms of space and time. It was this temporal and spatial displacement that laid the basis for the unrealistic images and features projected in the course of time onto this enigmatic people. Atypical in their outward features and bizarre in their habits and occupations, ‚Gypsies’ gradually came to epitomize, in the ‚collective conscience’, the source of all the arcane, occult phenomena falling outside the domain of the ordinary.”<sup>28</sup>

What is the magic fascination surrounding the image of the ‚Gypsy’ in the eyes of non-‚Gypsy’ authors? It is almost impossible to give a precise answer to this question. For certain, the magic of the fictional ‚Gypsy’ may not be easily identified with some specific features, although some physical and material traits have been frequently associated with the belief in some special powers. The magnetic and piercing look of the ‚Gypsy’ male character, his deep voice, his agile limbs, the dark eyes and the sensual movements of the female ‚Gypsy’ seem to exert a mysterious, irresistible attraction on the non-‚Gypsies’ and may lead to disastrous events.

The ‚magic characterization’ of the ‚Gypsy’ within the body of non-‚Gypsy’ literature is so wide and pervasive that the mere attempt to investigate here its endless ramifications would represent an impossible, fruitless undertaking. However, a recurrent pattern that can be easily deduced from these representations consists in using the ‚Gypsy’ as a repository of some exceptional qualities, ranging from some arcane connection with the devil to a number of occult powers. On the one hand, the ‚Gypsies’ seem to be the guardians of a secret world, the

<sup>26</sup>Deborah Epstein Nord, *Gypsies and the British Imagination 1807-1930*, Columbia University Press, New York, p 110

<sup>27</sup>Charles Leland, *Gypsy Sorcery and Fortune Telling*, 1891, quoted in Paola Toninato, *The Rise of Written Literature among the Roma: A study of the Role of Writing in the Current Re-Definition of Romani Identity with Specific Reference to the Italian Case*, University of Warwick, March 2004, p.72

<sup>28</sup>Paola Toninato, *The Rise of Written Literature among the Roma: A study of the Role of Writing in the Current Re-Definition of Romani Identity with Specific Reference to the Italian Case*, University of Warwick, March 2004, p.85

only creatures to have right of access to a mysterious, alternative dimension. The ‚Gypsy’ characters appear to dwell on the threshold between truth and illusion. As for ‚Gypsy’ female characters, they are represented as having divining faculties, as experts in the magic arts. They are frequently depicted as exotic creatures with a diabolic ability to bewitch non-‚Gypsy’ males, who cannot help falling madly in love with them against their will.

The role played by ‚Gypsy’ female characters in works by non-‚Gypsy’ artists appears to follow a recurrent pattern. In many works, the ‚Gypsy’ is at the centre of some intricate plot, often entailing child stealing, the use of magic or various forms of trickery. ‚Gypsies’ are here perceived as synonymous with ruse, deception and double-dealing: they are ambiguous, mischievous characters by definition. Female figures in particular are portrayed as malicious and treacherous. In addition to hatching evil plots and harbouring hostile feelings against non-‚Gypsies’, they are also employed to give the narration a magic connotation.

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