

THE IDEOLOGY BEHIND THE IMAGE: THE REPRESENTATION OF ROMANI WOMEN IN THE CONTEMPORARY VISUAL MEDIA

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Abstract

In the existing visual representation of Romani women often the figure of Romani women is either underrepresented or misrepresented. This thesis aims to bring different prospective into discussion. By critically analysing the ways of representation, I trace the influence of media on creating “realities” and social relations. This thesis demonstrates that these “realities” are created based on the discourses produced or reproduced on the visual representation of Romani women through the selected movies, documentaries and cartoon production.

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I. INTRODUCTION

This thesis focuses on an examination of the roles that both gender and ethnical stereotypes show in media's creation as a social reality, and establish a critical analysis of the relation between stereotypical representations which influences on creation of certain fixed meanings and the own social commitment of persons. In order to focus this examination better, I limit it to the representation through movies, where the target group are the Romani women whose representation was/is affected from different intersects, such as ethnicity, gender, religion etc.

Before describing the situation of the Romani women, first I draw special attention on the representation of Roma culture in order the position of the Romani women to be better understood. In this thesis I will show that as all others identity, the identity of the Roma people is composed by several cultural aspects. However, among these aspects the representation of the traditional role of Romani women has an important role.

While approaching to the vision of the non Roma society on the cultural aspects of the Roma people, there are two constants poles might be called the romantic vision and colonialist point of view. I will show that these views are openly racists and construct a hierarchy of capabilities based on the difference that virtually denies the 'other' historically developed capacity.

While discussing Romani women, I highly claim that Romani women face intersectional discrimination, based on different intersection such as gender, race, ethnicity, sex, religion, and and so on. By such means, most authors who have written about Roma neglected consideration of gender maybe because of the

traditional importance on forms of political struggles in which men have occupied a principal part.

When comes the question why there is lack of information on women's issues as main reason appears the fact that Romani women have been publicly underrepresented and their rights were not taken into consideration among the creators of the Romani movement (Mihalache, 2004). Romani women are many times misrepresented or simply lacking, thus leading to internalized racism, especially among the young generations and/or to negative perceptions and anti-Gypsyism.

Looking upon the fiction depiction of Roma people in art, movies, literature and pictures we come a crossed Romanticized narratives such as people with "mystical power", fortune tellers, people with dark-skin, strong love of freedom, people with a criminal tendencies and etc. Very often the portrayed of Roma people was connected with the portrayed of other minorities groups, such as with those of Jewish and African-Americans, where the representation of these groups was stereotypical one (Mayall, 2001).

The methodology involve a close critical theoretical media discourse analysis, starting with a brief and basic introduction to representation based on Hall's theory of representation, moving to different theories (van Dijk 1995, Benjamin 1936, Foucault 1979, Lacey 1998 and so on) on media and film representation and the role and influence of media as creation of the discourse (Chapter 1), I will show how media has an important role and power on spreading ethnic and gender prejudice in the form of social representation. Further I will present theories on representation of minority groups (Chapter 2) including the representation the representation of Roma

w with a specific attention on the theory of intersectionality. Those theories will follow in Chapter 3 where I will talk specifically about the representation of women as a gender. In this regard, I examine the work of the authors who have written about the specific problems related to the media representation of minority women. Patricia Hill Collins points out the importance of *intersectional approach in examining the negative portrayals of African-American women*: " [...] *black feminist intellectuals investigating sexual politics imply that the situation is much more complicated than that advanced by some prominent white feminists [...] in which 'men oppress women' because they are men*". (1992:266-267).

Writing about white feminist "production of the 'Third World Women' as a singular, monolithic subject", Chandra Mohanty (1988) emphasizes that without looking at the historical, cultural, political context, without seeing how an individual functions on the local level, within the complex network of social interaction, it is impossible to understand the ways in which women are oppressed.

Furthermore, Chapter 4 will be dedicated for analysing certain movies created both by Roma and non Roma film makers. On my analyses I also include movies/documentaries made by Roma people because I also focus on examining people's portrayals of Romani "customs" often exclusively imagine Romani people playing music and getting married early. Writing about Romanian press discourse around early marriages in Romani communities, Nicoleta Bitu and Crina Morteau gave possible reasons for the negative representations of women. They come to the conclusion that those portrayals are "mostly limited to early marriages and pregnancies (as if they were a display of sexuality)" (2010:80).

CHAPTER I – Media Representation

“No matter how fuzzy, distorted or discoloured, no matter how lacking in documentary value the (photographic) image may be, it shares, by the process of its becoming, the being of the model of which it is the reproduction; it is the model”

Andre Bazin

1.1. Introduction to representation based on Hall’s theory of representation

In examining the role of the media in creation of gender and ethnical stereotypes shown as a social reality, this chapter focuses on presenting theories about representation, media and film representation as well as discusses the influence of the media’s on creating social representation.

In different studies of media and cultural industry, there have been constant debates about the influence of media on public life where the concept of representation takes an important role in the study of culture. The aim of the representation is to connect values and languages to culture which is a process that accrue while creating and exchanging the meaning between members of a culture. The representation itself is a method in which different meanings are given in order

to demonstrate words or/and images, which purpose is indeed for something else, therefore no fixed meaning exists before it reaches its own representation (Hall, 1997). According to Hall, there are three different ways in which language is used in order to represent a certain groups or individuals: *“the reflective, the intentional and the constructionist approaches to representation”* (1997: 2).

The function of the first is to analyse whether the used language reflect upon certain meaning which is already constructed. This theory of representation claims that language reproduces true meaning. Language replicate meanings which already exist of people, objects and so on. The second approach ask if the language demonstrate the intention of the transmitter. Further this theory pretends that arguments mean exactly what the painter/writer/editor/film-maker intends them to mean. In this case, language states only what they want to say or demonstrate. The third approach questions whether the language construct the meaning of people, objects etc. According to this approach, meaning is built in and through language.

“Constructionist approach, assumes neither things themselves nor the individual users of language can fix meaning to the language. Things don’t mean. We are those to construct meaning, using representational systems: concepts and signs” (2003: 25).

All of the Hall’s discursive approaches will be used as a basic reflection while examining the concrete movies and documentaries created by both majority and minority media in order to create classification and to show the intention of the transmitter.

1.1.1. *Media representation*

Media technologies give opportunity to people to fit and transform the approach of some different cultural forms in ways that had originally been assumed by people who thought about a certain question (in this case, the influence of the media) before its own existence in the society (Benjamin, 1936). By such means, the media occupied a vital site and play an important role on creating social relations and the production of cultural power (Cottle, 2000 & van Dijk, 1995) in order to understand the role of the media and their “messages”, one needs to pay detailed attention to the structures and strategies of such discourse and to the ways these relate to institutional arrangements, on the one hand, and to the audience, on the other hand (van Dijk, 1995: 10). In this respect, the media has the enormous power to influence on the minds of the viewers and based on the viewed images to create and spread generalisations for certain groups. Thus, very often the social power is also connected with media power by the limited access to public discourse where monitoring the ways of communication appears as one of the most central condition of social power. By such means, the transformers with its access on the information have the power to create a particular knowledge and “realities” (Foucault, 1979).

This control of knowledge is crucial component in order to understand the control and the creation of the discourse and beyond this entire are a as van Dijk calls the crucial forms named ‘social attitudes’ (1995: 15-16). Based on this control of knowledge a certain model is created.

“A model is a mental representation of an experience that is, an event people witness, participate in, or read about” (van Dijk, 1995: 14).

Every time when someone sees, or reads about certain event or particular situations, viewers create a model about it. In this regard, these models creates certain opinions and symbolize specific example of a shared opinions for different social issues, for example, about poverty, Roma and so on. The viewers or readers create its own knowledge about certain social group based on what it is shown or written. The crucial point is the fact that the structures of such models it might be manipulated by the contents of what is demonstrated. There are different ways to have an effect on the structure of a model, one of them is to mark and emphasize what is important, by presenting it in the media (van Dijk, 1995).

1.1.2. *The ideology of visual representation and film*

'Seeing comes before words. The child looks and recognizes before it can speak'

John Berger, Ways of Seeing, 1972

When it comes to a particular way of media representation, such as the visual representation it is argued that this role plays philosophically important roles in scientific reasoning especially on posing several questions, for example: How does the visual way of representation of a particular figure relate to its own role? Whether pictures can accurately the truth? or what are the advantages that visual representation can offer? (Pirini, 2006). To answer those questions, it is necessary first the nature of visual representation as such to be understood. Hence, as an important first step is providing an explanation of important representational figures in order to be able to understand the “epistemic roles played by the figures” (2006: 864). Further, visual representations are symbols in which some three-dimensional relations are understood to mean something about the referent. Lacey (1998) bases and develops his arguments based on the term *mise-en-scene* which means ‘put on stage’. This concept is used in different film studies whose aim is to demonstrate the control that the film director has while creating and implementing the concept of the film.

“In image analysis we must assume that everything in the picture has been ‘put there for a reason’” (Lacey, 1998: 20).

The idea is that we must function from is that everything that is included has a specific meaning and a particular reason. According to Lacey there are three components of *mise en scene*:

- the subject
- the lighting
- the settings of the image

Based on the psychoanalytic theories of Jacques Lacan (1977: 218) ideology functions by notifying that the existed relationships are involved in the progression where the individuals are established as subjects.

Specific attention will be given on the subject component in the chapter IV when analysing the representation of the Romani women on different movies. What exactly is a film subject? The subject of an image can be everything that can be visible. The subject can represents specific kind of reality or be rather an abstract. While creating a logic of the subject often it is brought the cultural knowledge and a particular viewpoint for a certain social rules (pp. 20-22).

“If the subject is a person, then we would consider all the aspects of non-verbal communication (...)” (Lacey, 1998: 21).

In the visual representation through films, contemporary film theorist had a tendency to consider the fact that the average film viewer is fundamentally betrayed into trusting on “what is seen is real” (Allen, 1993: 21), therefore the experience of illusion is crucial to our own knowledge of visual representation. Allen argues that the filmmaking illusions eventually originate from the ways in which the proposed moving image converts the properties of a particular image. In this point, he calls this

illusion “projective illusion” (1993: 22), and claims that this illusion come due to the fact of a failure to distinguish projective illusion from reproductive one, including the failure to mark an acceptable discrimination that exist inside the concept of illusion. There is always a possibility of experience as Allen calls “a sensory illusion” (1993: 98) without considering the option and being fully aware of what we see is real.

“An illusing is something that deceives or is liable to deceive the spectator, but the deception need not be of the epistemic kind. Sensory deception does not entail epistemic deception”. (1993: 98)

When discussing about the politics of filming, Robert Lapsley and Michael Westlake (1988) in their book *Film Theory: An Introduction*, two important questions are raised: “How does mainstream cinema contribute to maintaining the existing social structure (i.e., what is its characteristic ideological operation and what are its mechanism?)”? And, “what is the appropriate form for an oppositional cinema that will break the ideological hold of the mainstream and transform film from commodity to instrument of social change”? (1998:1-2). They argued that person’s social formation involves three practices: the political, the ideological and the economic, all of which change into a as they call it ‘determinate product’ (1998: 5). All of those practices characterize a break with the basic /structure model. The main idea here is that the society as a dominant structure based on an economic status did not give possibility for different changes between the performs through mutual interaction. As a result, hierarchical positions were dominant in the certain manner of production. Therefore, the pressure on representation is to think on the problem through the ways of ‘structural causality’ (1998: 6). The structural causality states that the basics of the total are determined by the structure of the total, meaning that the structural causality does not exist external its special effects but is internal within them.

Another worthily question that is raised on the same book is: “why the oppressed groups were/are unable to perceive their true political and economic interests” (1998: 7) and was highlighted that is due to the fact of the dominant ideology that allocates fully with the idea of wrong consciousness.

To understand representation, first of all requires is being able to understand the choices that have been made when it comes to depicting someone or something in a film or any other media representation, where certain characteristics of their appearance and personality get emphasized. When focusing on representing a person, media’s very often focus on the following statuses:

- Gender
- Race/Ethnicity
- Culture/Nationality
- Age
- Class
- Job

As mentioned earlier the focus on this paper will be on race/ethnicity representation of the Romani women that requires specific attention on the gender representation. The relation between visual media representation, gender, cultural differences and power relations are recognized as a significant part of transitional discourse (Jusic, et al. 2006, 12).

As many studies have demonstrated, permanent hegemonic ethnical and gender hierarchies continually generate multiply discrimination activities which contain gender regimes in polyvalent connections with religious, racial, ethnic and

class hatred. In this respect as Gallagher (1988) states that "if women are under-represented or misrepresented in media content, this is doubly so for those women who are not members of the dominant national culture" (p. 106).

Similarly, Laura Mulvey's essay 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema', issued in 1975, appears as one of the most influential texts on the role of women in film history. In this study of cinema spectatorship, she developed the concept of 'the gaze'. This aspects connecting to 'the gaze', that is meant for a male, heterosexual audience, meaning that the visual representation, especially film is a specific kind of an instrument of the male gaze, that produce representation of women as passive and not active and represents the sexual fantasy from a male viewpoint.

However, the race/ethnic representation will be discussed in the chapter 2, as mentioned with a focus on minorities, where the intersectionality will take an important place among the theories while developing the main arguments.

1.1.3. *The role of the media and the production of essentialism*

In this section I deliver different theoretical analysis of the role of the media in the creation of essentialism. In the social sciences, media reporting has been considered as an indicator for social phenomena such as, the creation of the joint identity. Different studies have shown that media play an important role in spreading ethnic prejudice in the form of social representation. On other words this means that the image of the minority groups and the understanding of ethnic minority in the media it is not purposely biased, but rather the media have an important part on creating social representation .Therefore, it is thought that stereotypes and prejudice are one of the settings of racist practice where racism is defined as society of ethnic minority power exploitation and the preservation of the white group power. (van Dijk, 2012).

(...) *“Racism is defined as a process of boundary drawing, i.e. categorization and attribution of identity markers to ethnic minority groups”* (ter Wal, 2002: 421) and those processes are in a relation with activities of marginalization.

Commonly, it is argued that racism in the media is regularly not so obvious, but the things that produce the spread prejudiced views, including the exclusionary activities are actually the hidden generalization and stereotypical representation of a group. Both, the hidden generalisation and the stereotypical representation drive into psychological basis of intergroup discrimination. Based on the Social Identity Theory the intergroup discrimination attempt to create in-group/self-categorizations and out-

group. The in-group drives into improvements in different ways that contributes towards the exclusions of the out-group. This theory is verified in different social standards and contains prejudice, discrimination, exclusion and language use (Tajfel and Turner, 1979).

The media problematize the minorities' issues in numerous ways, by categorisations and evaluations. Categorisations can be examined through the practise of precise linguistic devices in out-group labelling. For example, "criminals" or "dirty". In continuation, these labels are considered to be implied for the whole group and to represent negativity as an essentialising group trait. These kinds of representations of an ethnic group are identified as stereotypical depictions. The next form of social representation is characterized by the way the ethnic situations are covered by the media. Very often the minority groups are blamed for the situations they are, including for the problems the majority is facing. Alike, these labels are used in order to portray minorities in a negative ways and minorities are seen as the agents of causers of social problems (ter Wal, 2002). For example:

"Roma women are portrayed as "those disgusting beings" with "filthy and lewd women" dragging their "broods that shit on themselves" [...] "a living proof we come from monkeys" "hysterical", "cunning", "treacherous", "societal abortions" [...] "those gypsies multiply like rabbits (my apologies to rabbits) only to get their stinky dirty paws on the welfare of some poor children [...] the gypsies steal, are rapists". The difference between Gypsies and cattle is that cattle are subject to veterinary control. Livestock can't behave like Gypsies, but the reverse is allowed. Bovine rights and freedoms have been under serious pressure for years and during that time the Gypsy woman has given birth to twins again and she's as bloody-minded as a cow

yet again". (to be found in articles by Kalin Rumenov, the recipient of the 2008 Bulgarian Chernorizetz Hrabur [Young Journalist] Prize).

Another reason for such representation is the predominantly 'white' structures of editors, journalists, filmmakers and etc. The dominant media has usually been named as a reason for information that appears in a reliable interest of the readers and media bias.

For example, "(...) 'black' crime was over reported, feeding on worries about the threats posed by 'blacks' the 'white' majority group. Similarly, police harassment of 'black' families was rarely reported (Ley, 1974), because uninteresting for either the 'white' readership or the major advertisers, to whom 'blacks' were a group of no commercial importance" (ter Wal, 2002).

As seen in this section, minorities face with different intersects during their representation and as it is shown the link between, hierarchical domination, power and media is very strong, therefore it is important to analyze Foucault's understanding of the nature of power.

1.2. *Foucault's viewpoint of the nature of power*

Lots of people look the media as a basis of power, considered as the instrument of dominant services in society. Marxists perceives the mass media as methods for making an untrue reality so as to cover a reality of the existence of oppression and abuse. From the other hand, Foucault offers a diverse viewpoint on the basis of power which proposes ways in which the media could be inhibited. "Power comes from below; that is, there is no binary and all-encompassing opposition between rulers and ruled at the root of power relations, and serving as a general matrix - no such duality extending from the top down and reacting on more and more limited groups to the very depths of the social body" (Foucault, 1980). In other words he discards the simple way of power, and suggests that power is not a total concept, but power comes from downward, which means that there is no duality spreading from the top down approach. Instead, he looks at power as being spread through the system of relationships that is to propose that power it not used in one particular way.

The last point that Foucault brings is the idea of maintaining the power and the power of resistance. With these points he challenges many views, including those of the Frankfurt School's ideas of the Culture Industry as mass duplicity on two levels: first that mass culture could not use a general force on mass society as it has to function in a complex ground of different situations and, second, that actually the results in those situations are not pre-determined and everyone has the option of resistance. "Any exercise of power opens a dialectical field correlation of the forces so that the forms of oppression shape the forms of resistance" (Gramsci, 1980) Hence, Gramsci brings the idea of hegemony and the overall ideas about the exact

place of ideology in the media. All of them believe that the idea of power is through the system of relations and do not agree only with the idea of power being limited within individuals. The main point is that the demonstrated situations are actually basis of a discourse and, as Foucault places it: "discourse can be both an instrument and an effect of power, but also a hindrance, a stumbling-block, a point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy" (Foucault: 1980: 178).

Following Foucault's understanding on power, in chapter 4 when analysing the representation of the Romani women on movies, I will draw a specific attention on the notion of power as a discourse that could strongly support the developed arguments while presenting the aims of the visual representation of the Romani women. Further, it will be shown how the power of resistance could bring changes on the current representation, and that might also bring changes on the existing status of the Romani women.

1.3. Conclusion

In this chapter I have analyzed the different studies of representation, media and film as one aspect of module representation. Further based on the same theories I have demonstrated that there have been different debates about the influence of media on public life and that actually the concept of representation takes an important role in the study of culture on which through language different meanings were given in order to demonstrate words and images. Further and more importantly it is presented how language demonstrates the intention of the transmitter and that arguments mean exactly what the painter/writer/editor/film-maker intends them to mean. In this regard, as it is argued, media by creating certain knowledge and “realities” and with its access on creating those “realities” and illusions had an important role and power on the minds of the viewer’s that contribute towards creating and spreading generalization for different groups.

As a target group of these unrealistic and stereotypical representation as it was demonstrated appears the minority groups or as Foucault have stated everyone who has less power to influence on creating those representations. The specific representation of the minorities is going to be discussed on the next chapter or Chapter 2.

Chapter II - Media representation of ethnic minorities

“The Gypsies’ ancestors began leaving northwest India probably about the seventh century AD. They are characterized as robbers, murderers, hangmen and entertainers. These professions were prescribed for them by the rulers of the Hindu caste system. Thus they belonged to the so-called ‘wandering criminal tribes’ of India and were obliged to lead a parasitic way of life. Among the numerous outcast groups, they occupied the lowest rung on the social scale”.

(Vekerdi, 1988:14).

2.1. Introduction

After discussing the different theories of representation, the meanings of film production, how media influences on the creation of social relations and how the creation of language reflect upon certain meanings, in this chapter I will be looking on the media representation of Roma as an ethnic group, the ways in which Roma have been represented upon their arrival in Europe as well as the influence of race and ethnicity in the formation of social image. Nevertheless, first, I will draw attention on the meanings such as ‘ethnicity’, ‘race’ and ‘racism’ in order to understand the social interaction which are created under the influence of these complex determinants.

The idea of race has historically indicated the separation of humanity based on five criteria: *“(1) Races reflect some type of biological foundation, be it Aristotelian essences or modern genes; (2) This biological foundation generates discrete racial groupings, such that all and only all members of one race share a set of biological characteristics that are not shared by members of other races; (3) This biological foundation is inherited from generation to generation, allowing observers to identify an individual’s race through her ancestry or genealogy; (4) Genealogical investigation should identify each race’s geographic origin, typically in Africa, Europe, Asia, or North and South America; and (5) This inherited racial biological foundation manifests itself primarily in physical phenotypes, such as skin colour, eye shape, hair texture, and bone structure, and perhaps also behavioural phenotypes, such as intelligence or delinquency”* (Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy, 2008).

“Definitions of ethnic identity vary according to the underlying theory embraced by researchers’ and scholars’ intent on resolving its conceptual meanings. The fact that there is no widely agreed upon definition of ethnic identity is indicative of the confusion surrounding the topic. (...) Affiliation can be influenced by racial, natal, symbolic, and cultural factors (Cheung, 1993: 1209).

“We conceive of racism as a set of institutional conditions of group inequality and an ideology of racial domination, in which the latter is characterized by a set of beliefs holding that the subordinate racial group is biologically or culturally inferior to the dominant racial group. These beliefs, in turn, are deployed to prescribe and

legitimize society's discriminatory treatment of the subordinate group and to justify their lower status" (Lawrence D. Bobo and Cybelle Fox, 2003: 193).

Based on the academic dialogue, definitions of 'ethnicity', 'race' and 'racism', offer us with the resources of thinking about some of the most central categories and discriminatory practises that people have created and within which people develop their lives and construct their sense of group and individual identity. In doing so, ideas of ethnicity and race can be appraised positively or negatively, understood as enforcement from outside and accounted with detection of cultural dissimilarities. As seen from the provided definition, ideas of 'race' were established as a means to distinguish social groups marked by different characteristics such as physical appearances and/or any other characters. These ideas are usually followed back to the Enlightenment and other systematic efforts that are made in order to rank people in hierarchical positions (Cottle, 2000: 4).

Essentially, questions of 'ethnicity' and 'race' refer to representation and re-representation of boundaries that assist to mark out the bounds of a social place or given arena, dependent on where one is placed. These bounds serve as an indicator of people's inclusion or/and exclusion and to position social relation and the construction of identity. In such means, the excluded people can become as Cottle names it "the misrecognized" people (2000, 2), which as it is shown leads towards the creation of 'Others'.

As I discussed in chapter 1, the media occupy an important site and has a crucial role in the creation of public representation of social inequalities and in the production of national, ethnic and cultural power. Thus, the next sections will be

focused on discussing representation of Roma as an ethnic minority group, the matter of ethnicity, race and culture in the creation between 'our' and 'their', as well as the media creation of essentialism.

2.2. Roma representation

In order to understand why such representation exists, first it is necessary to look upon the roots of such representation.....In many countries the people collectively known as Roma also were known as gypsies. Gypsy is the English value for a varied category of people containing of numerous cultural dissimilar ethnic categories and groups. The term Gypsy signifies an exact European speech of power and assured romantic ideas and feelings of freedom that have been differently understood in different situations. The term itself usually refers to category of people who are perceived in particular way to clash with the majority's way of life and views as stated in names like travelers and so on. (Engebrigtsen, 2007). "It is remarkable that, when they first came into Europe, they were black, and that the women were still blacker than the men" (Crabb, 1831: 10) while before him Grellmann labeled Roma as "black horrid men...the dark brown or olive colored skin of the Gypsies (...), may be a disgusting sight to an European, unaccustomed to such objects" (1783: 10).

Also, Hancock argues that the churches have by such seen negatively the physical appearances of the Roma due to their beliefs that medieval Christian dogma linked light with something pure and clean and darkness with sin (2002: 57).

Hence, Hancock explains that the identity of Roma that was built as outsiders, non-white people actually still exist and serve as institutionalize structure that affect and increases the prejudice and stereotypes against Roma.

Considered as dark-skinned, nomadic, not tied to the land, belonging to different religion, especially non-Christian, speaking a foreign language, etc. Roma were treated very differently from the settled people of Europe. The different culture of the Roma people created fears, stereotypes doubts among the non-Roma. The negative stereotypes became essentially shaped into a racial identity and the Roma were systematically routed.

2.2.1. *The romantic people*

(Too) many of these stereotypes and prejudices are still gladly believed nowadays. By racism, I recognize not only prejudices created on physical features, but something called “new racism” (Cottle, 2004) – creating hierarchies of dominance and subordination in society to legitimize the marginalization of the imagined Other, that I argue lead to create cultural racism through cultural differences. In this regard, when trying to approach to the vision of the non Roma society on the cultural aspects of the Roma people, we always face two constant poles might be called the romantic vision and colonialist point of view. Sometimes these two points end in the same conclusion, which is the racist discourse, but the origins of the motives are different.

The romantic conception of Roma people is of movement extended across Europe and is based on an idealized perception of Roma culture and idiosyncrasy, often emphasizing aspects such as freedom or capabilities of nomadic peoples, always from an optical purely formal and empty of content. An explanation for the exoticizing and stereotypical view can be found in the work of 'Carmen' by Bizet, or in academic plane, or in the linguistic work of G. Borrow on the Romany language in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century (for a critical review of this author see Hancock, 1998).

From the other hand, the colonialist view is more openly racist. However, very often this approach hides its last foundation which is not other than from an epistemological conception that constructs a hierarchy of capabilities based on the difference that virtually denies the 'other' historically developed capacity. This trend not only affects the Roma people, but rather is a constant in Eurocentric thinking (for a review developed on this review on the epistemological level see the work of Peruvian sociologist A. Quijano, 2007). The exotic and ghoulish are often related with nomadic peoples: perceived as risky strangers, especially they are threatening when perceived as escaping hegemonic control.

As mentioned before, the attitude of society and the individuum is also formed by the media – building up its own reality. As Judith Okely (1996: 52) explains, when it comes to perception and representation of Roma people there are four different categories: the first is *exotization*, second the *hidden culture of the Roma people* when it comes to acknowledgment of positive contribution in the society, the third one is *degradation* and the last one is the *neutralization*. As discussed above, I argue that with the neutral representation of the Roma people in the media we rarely meet, since the one that dominates is the exotized view.

As a social phenomenon increases people's reputation by being represented, the perception of people is influenced by the agenda-setting power of the mass media. Hence, Surdu (2013) argues that when it comes to visual representation, pictures of Roma are plentiful in stereotypes, very often depicted as beggars, dancers, the poor etc. Note that I do not claim that there are not poor Roma or dancers, but representing only these aspects not only leads towards negative vision of Roma but also narrow public perception.

Following Richardson who argues that “the ideological square is characterised by a *Positive Self-Representation* and a simultaneous *Negative Other-Representation*” (1993: 51); I state that it is a way of observing and creating separation, precisely between ‘our’ and ‘their’. By such means, he goes explaining that the “outsiders” are most likely to be represented in a negative connotation and ‘their’ negative characteristics most of the time are emphasized, where the “insiders” are always represented in a more positive way.

A similar explanation is offered by Roman Kuhar when he argues that:

“Media representations of Roma focus primarily on those traits interpreted by the media as negative. Using generalization and stereotyping, Roma people are presented as culturally different (they are lazy and rely on social aid), deviant (stealing is presumably their inherent trait), and as being a threat to our cultural pattern and in turn to the majority population” (2006: 148).

Based on his statement we can clearly see how the representation of Roma as a minority group or as “outsiders” is most likely to be represented in a negative way and only “their” negative characteristics to be exposed.

Many centuries Roma people have been the object of different kinds of research. The different perception of majority society show that Roma have never been recognized for what they are. Roma were and still are a as Hancock calls it a “notion of model clay figures” (2010: 59). Hancock argues that this tendency includes highlighting the cultural differences of different groups that marks the Roma people as the “Others”.

In different literature, especially in sociological and anthropological, Roma have been imagined as a group whose lifestyle and everyday activities are unlike from that of the majority (Laederisch and Tcherenkov, 2004).

It becomes clear that this kind of theorized narratives had also impact on the ways of the visual representation of Roma. Throughout the analyses of the movies and documentaries I will show that the romantic vision about Roma and the “mythical image” (Hancock, 1987) have been the targeted point when representing Roma, or representing something “exotic”.

2.2.2. *When representing Roma*

Discussing about an ethnic minority (in this case the Roma), though, it is not sufficient to stick only to the context of perceptibility. When analyzing the media representation of the Roma, the most important factor is who is talking about whom. Surdu (2013) in journal article entitled *Who Defines Roma*, claims that

“Roma have been subjected to a variety of scientific practices such as counting, classifying, demographic predictions, mapping, photographing, and DNA profiling. All these practices are part and parcel of a trained vision that itself needs to be observed. Many stereotypes are created by outsiders, of which the academic establishment is just a part, and then internalized and reproduced by Roma themselves”.

Following the importance of who talks, writes or depicts Roma, in 2005 there was a photo exhibition named *Pictures, Gypsies, Gypsy-Pictures*. Made by different academics, photographers, this photo exhibition’s aim was to show Roma people. However, those photos included representation of Roma in an essentialist manner – picturing them only as poor and deprived, living in bad conditions, illiterate people. The same photo exhibition was criticized by many Roma people who work on issues related with Roma and aim’s to improve their social position in the society.

It becomes clear that from the created narratives through the pictures, the authors, photographers aimed to show the nature of Roma “identity” which was and

if there is no tendency for a change, it will always be represented in a negative connotation.

Similar, Marushiakova and Popov argue that when Roma are represented as part of the perspective social culture, “they are mostly preferred in terms of marginalization, usually of social and economic kinds” (2011, 54).

It becomes clear that many researchers, academics and activists do not treat Roma as a “normal” group with different culture and identity, but as a stigmatized and “exotic” community that needs “special” attention and social support.

Since society and media are not only racialized but also gendered, chapter 4 will be dedicated on discussing Romani women representation, concentrating in analyzing documentaries, fiction movies and cartoon’s depictions of Romani women.

Chapter III – Theory and Methodology

3.1 Romani women's experience as intersectionality

When we discuss Roma women representation and discrimination become three-fold: for being women, Roma and for belonging to an ethnic minority group. To belong to an ethnic minority group and to be Roma are two different levels of belonging. First of all, the concept of minority implies that minorities have subordinate position as opposition of the majority. Further, culture as a concept do not have minor or major position, but society as such creates classifications which most of the time the created classifications have negative connotation. Nevertheless, these classifications do not refer only for Roma but also for other minorities as well. However, Roma do not face the same prejudice and discrimination in the same way as any other minority group. In this respect, as I have already mentioned it becomes clear that Roma women representation become three-fold and it requires attention of analysing all of the intersects that Romani women face. Mentioning this, Nicoleta Bitu, one of the leaders of the Romani women's movement, claims that certain forms of "anti-gypsy" racism have impacted more on women than on men, and that actually this racism is regularly represented by pictures of Romani women and children¹.

¹ Nicoleta Bitu, participant in the roundtable names "Romani women," which was organized by the Institute for Research on National Minority Issues in the framework of "Come Closer!" Summer University, July 12-19, 2008, Cluj-Napoca, Romania.

Kimberle Crenshaw (2000) has argued that intersectional subordination is regularly unseen mainly for women who experience numerous forms of discrimination, and it is inadequately addressed by either gender equality or anti-racist frameworks. The focus on women's discrimination, she advises, could lead to irresponsibility about the issues challenged by women who are concurrently helpless to other power paths, such as race/ethnicity or class. Crenshaw imagined intersectionality as a critical interference into traditional "identity politics". (1994: 179). Thus, she distinguishes between structural and political intersectionality.

Based on earlier feminist conceptualisation of intersectionality as a way to overthrow the boundaries of discussing "gender" and "race" as particular categories, Kocze (2009) claims that intersectionality has "offered a language" (p. 26) to express the multiple and multifaceted experiences of Romani women. Similarly, McCall suggests, that intersectionality means "the relationships among multiple dimensions and modalities of social relations and subject formations" (2005: 1771).

Thereby, throughout my thesis I will use the "language of intersectionality" to structure my thesis and shed light on some specific features that come and mark their status as "women", "Roma" and "members of an ethnic group".

3.2 Methodology

As a methodology for my thesis I have decided to do a critical analyses of movies about Roma that are the most known among the Roma and non Roma population. The selected movies and documentaries are created by Roma and non Roma movie makers. The reason for focusing on Roma film makers is based on the fact that they have also produced stereotypical representations of Romani women and there is not much difference between the created representation by Roma and non Roma film makers.

The fiction movies, documentaries and cartoon I am analysing are:

Latcho Drom ("safe journey") is a 1993 French Roma documentary film directed and written by Tony Gatlif. The movie is about the Romani people's journey from north-west India to Spain, and was awarded numerous prizes. The film was screened in the Un Certain Regard section at the 1993 Cannes Film Festival. As well as the movies named **Vengo** (2000) and **Gadjo Dilo** (1997). These are among the most famous movies of *Toni Gatlif* about Roma. I have chosen these three movies because in all of them the representation of the Romani women is the common.

(RT Documentary) RT (Russia Today) is a global news network broadcasting from Moscow and Washington studios created a documentary about Roma named **Romany Romance**. On their YouTube channel can be found the following description about the documentary film: "Kalderash Romany have roamed the streets of Russia for more than a century, preserving their traditions and customs

despite living side-by-side with Russians. Their unique songs, dances and lifestyle have made them a true marvel for historians and researchers”.

Mangliaripe (ritual for asking the hand of a Romani woman) (2009) – the aim of this documentary is to show the ritual of arranging marriage between Roma men and Romani woman. This ritual is performed by the two Roma families, where the word of the fathers takes an important part for the life decision of the Roma future couple. Ramon Vazquez Salazar is an amateur Spanish Roma movie maker.

The Walt Disney Company, usually known as **Disney**, is an American expanded international mass media corporation. This company is the largest media corporation in the world. The company is best known for the major and best-known studios in Hollywood. Specifically, I have decided to analyse a scene from the cartoon Robin Hood. **Robin Hood** (1973) is a story of the legendary outlaw which is portrayed with the characters as humanoid animals. The director is *Wolfgang Reitherman* and the writers are Larry Clemmons and Ken Anderson. The purpose of choosing this cartoon is connected with a particular scene where one of the animals (character) is represented as a Romani woman and as a stealer.

In all of the mentioned documentary and fiction movies, I have met the following common and most present ways of representing Romani women:

- Romani women as singers and dancers
- Romani women as young mothers and housewife's

- Romani women's role as keepers of the honour and respectability of the family

Whereas, in Robin Hood's scene a Romani woman is represented as a stealer. Even though the representation as a stealer do not appear on the rest of the movies, I have still decided to include it on my analyses due to two main reasons: First, because very often Roma are represented as stealers and criminals, and second, because of the main audience of this cartoon, which are mostly children.

Each of the above mentioned ways of representing Romani women will be separately critically analysed and discussed in the next chapter or chapter 4.

Chapter IV – Romani women representation: Movie analyses

“The Gypsy women and girls . . . are capable of exciting passion of the most ardent description, most particularly in the bosoms of those who are not of their race, which passion of course becomes the more violent when the almost utter impossibility of gratifying it is known”.

(Borrow, 1841:l:88)

4.1 Introduction

After discussing representation of Roma people upon their arrival in Europe and from those perceptions about Roma came, this chapter examines how representations of gender are faced, reproduced and explained within today’s visual representation. Particular attention is dedicated to the representation of Romani women and the forces that shape and strengthen their image as women and Roma both inside and outside the communities.

I will demonstrate that when discussing the issues of Roma, including the issues of Roma representation, Romani women have been continue to be underrepresented or misrepresented by both Roma and non Roma scholars. Moreover, I will demonstrate that the lack of attention to Romani women’s issues and the lack of intersectional approach have allowed, recreated and in some way supported the stereotypical cultural representation Romani women face nowadays.

In all of the mentioned fiction movies and documentaries the representation of Roma starts with poverty, segregation, marginalization and illiterate people. In *‘Deprivation, the Roma “the underclass’* Stewart claims that representing Roma in such way or as underclass group brings stigmatization of Roma (Memedova, 2005)

and outline them as homogenous group of people without hopes (Stewart, 2001). In this respect he states:

“Segregated from the rest of society and discriminated against in such a way that those in the underclass have almost no chance on finding roles in the new division of labour or on having “normal” jobs, income, housing, social security, or access to better education for their children (...) people cut off from the civilizing effects of participation in “normal” social life” (cited in Zahariev, 2013: 7).

The idea of representing Roma only as a marginalized community, isolated from the majority and ignoring their social dimensions, does not only mean that Roma are being exoticized but have also created a discourse that it is in the tradition of Roma to be isolated from the others. In other words, this kind of discourse shows that isolation/exclusion is chosen by Roma and therefore there is no need of any attempts for inclusion.

For example, in 2013, the French Minister for Internal Affairs, Manuel Valls, in a public declaration about Roma have stated that

“The people who live in the settlements do not want to be integrated in our country because of cultural reasons” (Liberation, 15/03/2013)

In addition, it shows that the cultural activities of Roma are absolutely separate from the national/regional culture (the isolation and marginalization are highlighted in the documentary *Romany Romance and Mangliaripe*), but in fact the cultural contact between the majority and minority groups have influenced on creating a common culture. As Deleuzian consideration of *becoming* proposes

genuine identity is impossible because individual construct its own identity by adapting to the existing ones. This is also clear in Hancock's analysis that:

"(...) very often Roma are the ones who preserve the traditions of majorities, traditions which are lost or forgotten. The Roma adopt them as their own, however, at the same time there are so many traditions which are similar in different parts of the world among different groups, for example the understanding of —clean and —polluted, what is allowed to be done in the presence of adults and what is not allowed (...)" (Hancock, 2010: 9).

Nevertheless, code words such as "culture" and "tradition," when used to explain dysfunctional behaviour. The underlying assumption is that Romani culture exists in isolation from the larger society in which it is situated. However, cultures do not exist in a vacuum: they undergo constant change and are in perpetual dialogue with the state (Leti, 2011).

As explained above, any culture, including the culture of Roma is very dynamic; it exists to the relation of different practices and influences. So, as Liegeois (2004) and Hancock (1987) have claimed that there is no culture that exists as separate from the other, since they do not only influence but also have impact on each other. In this respect, the idea of representing something as part of Roma culture and tradition is very debatable. In this regard, In *Against Essentialism, A Theory of Culture and Society* (2001), Fuchs argues that according to the postmodernist theory, Culture suffers from an overall "crisis of representation" (p. 71), meaning there is no particular truth, there are many contradictory versions of what truth is, for which cultural aspect it might be claimed and many other related question.

“With both gender essentialism and cultural essentialism, discourses about “difference” often operate to conceal their role in the production and reproduction of such “differences,” presenting these differences as something pre-given and prediscursively “real” that the discourses of difference merely describe rather than help construct and perpetuate” (Narayan, 2009: 88)

When it comes to creating and supporting essentialism, It becomes clear that in the case of Romani women, we can see similarities between gender essentialism and cultural essentialism. Whereas gender essentialism regularly proceeds to construct binaries about equalities of “women” and “men”, cultural essentialism produce binaries between “Western culture” and any “Other” culture. In my understanding the creation of such “essential dissimilarities” functions in a way that helps construct their understanding of gender or/and cultural identities.

I argue that the perceptions and representations that Roma got upon their arrival in Europe in 19th century are still present on the current media where Romani women were/are portrayed in three ways: the first and most broadly is on TV where a Romani woman appears as illiterate being, who only knows how to give birth to children, dance and sing (Hancock 1987; Oprea, 2004; Kocze 2011). The representation of illiterate Romani woman appears in the movie *Romany Romance* when an older Romani woman says:

“I don’t need a book to read for my baby, simply because I cannot read”

Further is the poetic image of the clean, passive and fertile Roma woman. And the last is the Flamenco dancer. These aspects of representation appear also on the fiction movies and documentaries that I have chosen for my analyses.

4.2 Representation of Romani women as singers and dancers

“Gypsies are innately talented, embodying their wildness in their music; they are consummate musical technicians; they magically sense the desires of their patrons; but in the end, they can’t be trusted”.

Port, 1998

In *‘Romany Culture and Gypsy Identity’* (1997), Acton argues that in many books about Roma, they have been represented as musicians, the woman with many children, the hot dancer, the uneducated women, etc. The selected movie makers for my thesis seem to look at the Roma in relation to this conception, putting an emphasis on what is for them a “Roma identity” and “Roma lifestyle” – images on musicians, dancers, young mothers with many children etc. For example, the movie *Gadjo Dilo* (1997) Toni Gatlif starts the movie with a representation of young Romani women dressed in long colorful skirts, riding horses and singing. Similar representation of Romani women can be found on his other movie *Latcho Drom* (1993) where travelling from through countries such as India, Egypt, Turkey, Hungary, Spain and Romania, the only representation of Romani women is related with dance and song. In this movie, I focus on two particular scenes that were



Figure 1 - Screenshot from *Latcho Drom* (1993) by Tony Gatlif where appear a Egyptian Roma Women dancing on the table surrounded by men.

recorded in Egypt and Turkey.

Scene in Egypt: a Romani woman with dark skin, long dark hair represented as a barefoot dancer on a table surrounded by men. Scene in Turkey: Very similar representation, a

Romani women dancing for men’s satisfaction. Further, very particular scene that

indeed is very important to be discussed was when while the Romani women was dancing another little girl was imitating her dance. However, this part will be discussed in chapter 5.

A similar representation appears on the documentary movie *Romany Romance* where a young girl appears as a model who in the end is transformed into a young “Romani dancer”. The physical transformation was made by two artists and researchers on Roma identity and culture. Their imagination of young Romani woman included: a girl with long dark hair, dark skin (the skin of the model was darkened, since it is believed that all Roma have black skin), dressed on a long colourful skirt. After the transformation, the model was asked to perform a barefoot dance while they recorded the performance.

One of the artists (Valeria) in the movie states that:

“There is a stereotype how the Romani woman supposed to look. It includes the colourful shirt and skirt. However, the Romani in England look like this because they mainly wore what people gave them”.

As they explained, their main idea was to recreate everyday Romani life. Their most important goal was to gather a record of the details of today’s Romani culture. As discussed above, it is clear that these researchers followed the stereotypical imagination about the image of the Romani women including their imagination of how Romani women should look.

“A very handsome race, the women especially. These bold, brown, beautiful women only make one astonished to think how such eyes, teeth and figures can exist in the stifling atmosphere of their tents.” (Bayle St. John (1853: 142).

From the quotation it is clear that Bayle back on the eighties had this imagination about Romani women’s appearance. However, based on the above discussion and based on *Gatlif’s movies and the movie Romany Romance*, it becomes clear that the perceptions who Romani women look are still present even on the 20th century.

Following the representation of women as dancers, in both movies, *Latcho Drom* (1997) and *Vengo* (1994), Toni Gatlif pays a special attention on Romani women as flamenco dancers. Flamenco as a dance is considered part of Roma culture after their arrival in Spain in 14th century (Gomez Alfaro, 1993), meaning flamenco dance is practiced only by those Roma who live in Spain. Flamenco was mentioned for the first time in literature in 1774, and its genre grew out of

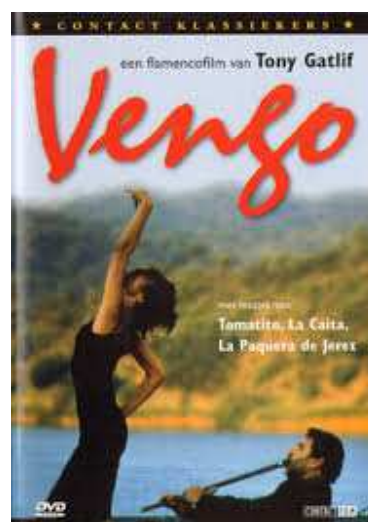


Figure 2 - Cover of film 'Vengo' (2000) by Tony Gatlif, showing a women as a dancer.

Andalusian and Romani music and dance (Rios Ruiz, 1997). The dance Flamenco is often linked with the Roma from Spain (Gitanos) and most of the famous flamenco artists were/are of the same ethnicity (Washabaugh William, 1996).

It is argued that women have a central part in the process of transmission of knowledge in flamenco, marked with a matrilineal character. This fact is reflected in the stage names such as Paco de Lucia, Pepe de la Matrona, Curro de la Morena,

etc. Women, in the case of flamenco, have been around since the very beginning and they have a fundamental part in its art creation and development. The figure of the women has been always omnipresent as singer and dancer.

An example of such beliefs is the scholar Esplugas (1999), who writes that “distrust of the Gypsies’ moral standards extended to their sexual behavior,” and that non-Gypsy men were “attracted to the mystery of this roaming race, to the beauty of the Gypsy women, or to their free lifestyle . . . [their] refusing to be tamed” (*op. cit.*, 148-9, 152).

An important aspect for Romani women’s connection with Flamenco is the context where Flamenco is developed as such. In the 19th century, Flamenco music and dance was developed in places called “cafes cantantes” (singer cafes), where lots of alcohol and cigarettes were served. In this regard, those women who took part as Flamenco singers or dancers did not have good reputation and were considered as being without morals.

“In England, a stereotype of the Spanish Gypsy is often thought to be typical, and is often depicted in popular paintings: a black-haired girl in dJcolletage, with flounced skirts and swaggering walk, hand on hip . . . sexually available and promiscuous in her affections” (Okely,1983: 201).

This phenomenon for the role of the Romani women exists for a century. More detailed historical explanation for such attitudes towards Romani women can be found in Hancock’s article *‘The Gypsy’s stereotype and the equalization of Romani women’* where he clearly explains these perceptions from a historical perspective. He argues that Romani women were used for sexual pleasure when

owned by white European slave-owners. The perception of Roma as “exotic people and women” brought stereotypical and over sexual representation of Romani women always represented as “hot dancers” and “exotic free women”.

The supposed lack of morals among the Gypsies was passionately applied to the critique of their sexual practices and their disrespect for decency. The Romani woman was characterized and stereotyped as free-spirited, sexual arousing, and so on. This romantic construct of Romani women is made as an opposition to the proper, educated, and skilful women depicted as the Victorian European ideal women.

Inappropriately this kind of representation is not only present on movies, but it is also included on poems, academic literature, cartoons etc. It is therefore to look at the depiction of Romani women in the work of Walt Disney Industry. As I will demonstrate below, Disney’s work for its created narratives and cartoon characters has received many critics for spreading prejudices and racist ideology among the youngest population.

4.3 Disney's racist and stereotypical representation of Romani women

Several cartoons movies made by Disney's productions for children have been criticized for spreading prejudice and patriarchal ideology (Key Stone, 1975 & Giroux, 1995). Specifically, the recreation of Robin Hood stories made by Disney in 1973 shows not only maleness but also racist prejudices against Roma. Concretely, this movie includes a scene which shows how two female bears dressed in traditional Romani women's clothes offer their service as fortune tellers to the King -represented as a lion.



Figure 3 - Screenshot from 'Robin Hood' (1973). Considered traditional image of Romani woman, represented as a fortune teller.

When the king shows an interest in listening his 'future', his advisor –a snake- suddenly say *'They may be bandits'* and the King with a surprising intonation reply's: *'Female bandits? What could they make me, rob me?'* Then the King said: *'My dear ladies, you have my permission to kiss the royal hand'*. So, the two female bears are depicted as users of this opportunity where while one of the women is inventing the future in order to distant his attention the other steals his money and rings.

Thus, the portrayal of the bears as Romani women in this film is clear, as women they are represented as weak and as Roma they are liars and thieves. It seems likely that such conception to portrayed Roma people as liars and thieves comes as Bardi notes even from the Victorian and British literature in which Roma

people were portrayed as people with criminal tendencies, people that cannot be trusted (Bardi, 2007).

Taking into consideration that the target populations of this kind of cartoon movies are children, this can be understood as a very powerful way of spreading prejudices even much more influential than any other work. In other words, it is very easily (for believe on social stereotypical representation) children and when being in a phase of early childhood development. In particular, Hancock (1987) have revealed how strong is the impact of the cultural industries in creating and maintaining prejudices among young people, especially by influential industries, such as Disney, is an early learning phase in the educational process among the youngest population. Thus, prejudices are shaped in an early stage and originate from how human groups are characterized in the media and in the literature to which we are bared as children. Same ideas continue into later stage of person's development, and the depiction of Romani characters repeats the stereotype for the older audience.

As I have already discussed, the categorisations are observed through the practise of precise linguistic devices in out-group labelling. For example, "criminals" or "dirty". Bu such means, these labels are considered to be implied for the whole group and to represent negativity as an essentialising group trait.

One of the strongest criticism related Walt Disney Industry as ideological spreader has been made by Henry A. Giroux and Grace Pollock (1995) where they

comment on the words of Michael Eisner, President of Walt Disney Company, about the ideology of power in his movies, concluding that:

“Eisner’s comments are telling because they imply a number of assumptions about Disney’s own conception of entertainment and its educative force. First, Eisner acknowledges that popular culture does not merely reflect the world but actually plays a role in shaping it. Second, he admits, though indirectly, that popular culture functions as an educational force in mobilizing our interest and desires. And third, his comments imply that culture is about both ideology and power. How else could one understand or explain the conditions through which specific messages are produced, circulated, and distributed to diverse populations in vastly different parts of the globe?” (Giroux & Pollock, 1995: 29).

Following the Foucauldian approach to discourse analysis it can be concluded that the discursive narrative created by Disney’s movies has become solid spreader of racist and conservative ideologies. In fact Disney’s subliminal messaging in the current society can be understood as one of the main supporter of ‘*cultural hegemony*’ in the sense that this concept as defines by Gramsci (1971): ‘*Hegemony*’ in this case means the success of the dominant classes in presenting their definition of reality, their view of the world, in such a way that it is accepted by other classes as ‘common sense’.

In other words, as discussed in chapter 1 and based on the arguments in this chapter, it is clear how much the media as a popular culture helps into the process of creating and supporting a certain social image where most of the time this image

refers for each member of an ethnic or minority group. Further, it has the power to disseminate information's which in the end becomes eligible and "real enough".

4.4 Romani women as young mothers, housewives and keepers of the family honour

If we examine the representation and depiction of Romani women then, it becomes that their representation has always been represented and connected with certain duties towards the family and communities and with a specific focus on their sexuality. In the academic literature, Roma are defined as a group with different social organisation, meaning maintaining internal mechanisms that force strict control over female sexuality (Leigeois, 2007). The created narratives that in the "Roma world" are different sets of practices such as early marriages, large families in opposition to non-Roma people and the idea of maintaining virginity before marriage, as I will show that these practices became the most "frequent" and "central" points while representing Romani women as they are present on the movies I have chosen.

For example, the documentary movie *Romany Romance* starts with showing a Romani wedding in which Roma people are represented as musicians and dancers. However, in one point the narrator says:

The little husband is standing behind (the camera points on 15 years old boy)
and continues saying:

marriage is the main objective for Roma, but none of them are free to choose their own partners, children have no say with whom they marry, is the parents who arrange the wedding.

In this point, he goes on to emphasise the statement of a young Romani girl who is represented as a young wife, mother, and daughter in law, when she says:

When they found the husband I didn't like him, but it makes no difference they have already made their choice. These are our costumes

Further, by stating *Marriage is the main objective for Roma*, he makes generalisation for all Roma, and implies that except for marriage, Roma do not have any other objective in life. In this sense, he creates and represents the *Otherness*.

Undoubtedly that for *some* Roma marriage and virginity not only matter but play an important role, but based on my own experience do I claim that these views do not refer for *all* Roma. However, different scholars such as Teresa San Roman (1997), Paloma Gay Blasco (1997), Juan Gamella (1996, 2000), Marcel Courthiade (2008) and so on, argue that the identity of Roma people is very strong and it is constructed as an opposition of the non Roma people. Like all other identities, it is supported by numerous cultural aspects such as language, history, tradition and values. Among these aspects is the idea of the role of the women, especially the idea of maintaining their virginity until marriage. In other words, as Kozce has argued “gender is important in assuming [one’s] Roma identity” (p. 19) and Roma identity is very strong, this explains some strong traditions which is portrayed in the media as otherness.

From the above, it follows the different gender play took an important part in the movies *Gadjo Dilo*, *Mangliaripe* and in *Romany Romance* as a way of representing the “culture” of Roma people.

For example, in the documentary *Romany Romance*, there is a scene when a young (15 years old) Roma boy represented as husband says:

She is hard working. That's great. Why else I would marry her. Working is good; all the dishes should be done. Everything must be in in order home.

As I have discussed earlier, the media's role is greater than ever, and has a major role on effecting people's opinion, especially when it comes on creating gender norms and stereotypes. Different literature about nation and nationalism, as well as Anne McClintock argues that "all nations depend on powerful constructions of gender" (1993: 61) therefore still there is no nation that provides equal opportunities and access both to men and women in the society.

However, based on the above statement the movie maker of the *Romany Romance* does not only show the clear gender roles and men's patriarchal understanding in general, but also by choosing to represent a fifteen years boy as a young husband he creates and confirms the stereotype about the existence of early marriages among Roma.

Further, the narrator continues:

Girls here must live by many strict rules. They cannot refuse to work; (...)

Thus, looking into the traditional housewife identity, it becomes that the concept that appeared during the Second World War as social phenomenon and a belief construction that the only duty of



Figure 4 -Screenshot from *Romany Romance* (RT Documentary) where Romani women are represented as a young mother and hose wives.

women is to stay home and do the housework it is still present when representing Romani women.. This concept for many years is followed and represented by the media and do not refer only for Romani women, but for women in general. The biggest difference between other women's representation and Romani women is the fact that the representation of Romani women on movies was only connected with the ways I have identified also on the selected movies for this thesis.

Similarly, in the documentary *Mangliaripe*, there is a scene which represents a process of arranging marriage between two Roma families. In this scene, an older Roma man represented as the father of the future bride says:

(...) of course that woman is for marriage, we are not going to have them for their whole life at home

By this statement it becomes clear that the movie maker wanted to demonstrate that not only Roma people are patriarchal and Roma men have the last words (since the once that had the last words were the fathers), but also to show that in Roma understanding Romani women serve only for marriage and nothing more.

To understand what the film makers wanted to show, first of all requires being able to see the choices that they have made and why certain characteristics of their appearance and personalities got emphasized. Therefore, based on Hall's classification of language, especially based on the intentional approach he offers, I claim that the intention of the film makers was not only to capture the romantic views about Roma but also by choosing to represent Roma wedding, poor communities, arranged marriages, young mothers, etc. but also to support the earlier created stereotypical representation of Roma as well as to confirm the existed expectations

of the others. Thus, I argue that the dominant culture affects which kinds of representations are shaped.

The used discourse on the movies did not only represent the world of Romani women, it has also created it by being meaningful. Startin with the idea that gender identity is built through representation in discourse, language is never objective, it is always biased. In these movies, by the selected certain words, they have constructed identities in ways which seemed natural for some culture, in this case in the culture of Roma. Meaning based on the selected or constructed statements they have defined how Romani women should behave, what is their role, and what is expected from them. Thus, it does not only matter who media represent, but also what kind of identities and what cultural values and social relations they create. Fairclough's (1995) supposition is that any language is concurrently representing and set up identities:

“Language use (...) is always simultaneously constitutive of (1) social identities, (2) social relations, (3) systems of knowledge and belief (...) (p. 55).

Therefore, those representations gave the norms and roles for Romani women which can be very easily adopted and become part of everyday activities. The representations of women as housewives I claim it influences on women's own perception for them and “force” them to adjust on the presented housewives identity which leads towards exclusion of their own needs and desires. Friedman, in her book entitled *Feminine Mystique* (1976) claims that the housewives identity came to be constructed by sexuality which meant women's duty is to have babies.

These examples can be found in the movie *Gadjo Dilo*, in which the movie maker who also belongs to the Roma ethnicity emphasizes two important scenes, one related with Romani women's virginity and one with women's duty of having babies.

The first, the romantic vision has created a mythology about Romani woman, according to which most prized possession is her virginity that she has to give only to her husband, thus developing the common idea of all patriarchal societies that considered women as a possession, who has the virginity also owns the woman. Some of these views could be found among Prosper Merimee and George Borrow's work and some other "romantic travelers" in the nineteenth century. On the other hand, the colonialist point of view considered Romani women to be more backward than the rest of the non Roma women, meaning nowadays the virginity it is not that much important as it is for Romani women.

This can be seen in movie *Gadjo Dilo* where the movie maker has created a scene where a Roma father says:

I am entrusting my daughter to you. The youngest is a virgin, you know it. Here is the virginity certificate from the doctor (showing medical paper), if she doesn't return as virgin, I will cut your head off.

In the traditional Roma point of view the virginity of the woman is a symbol not only of the honor of the woman but the honor of all her family. The pride of a family

depends almost completely of the behavior of her women. Similar argument can be found in Mosse (1985) when argues the concept of women's virginity is a way of representing dignity and morality for one nation.

The emphasis on Romani women's virginity lead towards different activities that denied further educational and professional empowerment of Romani women, meaning in order to make sure that Romani woman will remain virgin until the marriage; the traditional families exclude all activities that could bring her educational or professional development. Still, I do not claim that this refers for all Roma.

From the other side, for some Roma, the idea of virginity is a way of separation of the non-Roma. A very good demonstration of this can be found in the article *A 'Different' Body? Desire and Virginity among Gitanos (1997)* from Paloma Gay, where the Spanish Roma man explains how a girl who is having sex before marriage cannot be considered as clean and pure. Moreover, this perception is not present only among men but among women as well. In the same article, elderly women argue that "Among the non Gitanos there are not decent women, but with us in order to get married you have to prove that you are pure" (p. 517).

From all of the above mentioned, these understanding regarding virginity demonstrate three points: the first refers that the only expectation that Roma families have from a female child is the virginity and the only "proudness" that Roma women can bring in the family is the maintenance of their virginity. The second point refers on creating separation between two cultures and the understanding of "purity". The third one is strongly connected with the expectations of Romani women which cannot be different than being housewives and mother. This aspect is related with the second scene which is with women's duty to give a birth. In this scene Gatlif included a conversation between two people (Romani woman and non Roma man)

in which he not only show the different culture between them, but once again represents the Romani women's stereotype which includes women with many children:

Romani woman (ask non Roma man): do you have siblings?

Non Roma man's answers: A little brother.

Romani woman: That's all?

Looking closely upon the above mentioned representations, besides the stereotypical representation of Romani women, firstly as someone that belongs to Roma ethnic, and then as women, I see more than issues of equal chances or sexist portrayals. Accordingly, analysing the content, images and minority and gender representation, I see discourse about power, meaning the visual representation in the media is actually a symbol of power of *who catches to look at whom, in what ways and who decide about whom – structural power*. Thus, based on the above discussion it becomes clear that connotations/implications are built as part of established social and power relation. From this approach, we can clearly see how Romani women build meaning from systems of popular culture traditionally measured oppressive and how gender identity is strengthened and preserved in that culture.

4.5 Roma movie makers VS Non Roma: different origin, same perception

Shown in this chapter, on the movie analyses I have decided to include also movies and documentaries made by movie makers who belong to the Roma ethnic group (the movies: *Gadjo Dilo*, *Vengo*, *Latcho Drom*, *Mangliaripe*). As it can be clearly seen throughout the ways in which Romani women have been represented, there is similar if not the same created representation between Roma and non Roma movie makers. As I have demonstrated, the reason for being this is highly connected with the dominant created narratives about the role of Romani women, as well as the dominant “ideological culture” that have effected which kinds of representation are shaped. When one ideology dominates, it overpowers any other ways of clarifying reality. Actually, hegemony can hold a range of ideologies. Some that have theoretical explanations created by academics are actually artificial. Other ideologies which come from the people’s living experience are considered as “organic”. My point is to show that these contain of a culture’s way of looking and believing, and among all others institutions that support and create these beliefs, the media has an important place in the creation of these beliefs.

Therefore, we cannot see how media “ideology has very little to do with ‘consciousness’, (...) it is profoundly *unconscious*, even when it presents itself in a reflective form” (Althusser, 1969 cited by Hebdig, 1993: 363). As seen from the discussion in chapter 1, the transmitters of the messages most of the times have a clear message that they want to be seen and understood. By such means, the transmitter of the message has the power to influence on the minds of the viewers.

As I have argued that the relation between the transmitter and the receiver is not simple, but a relation between intentioned interrelation.

A second reason why movie makers of Roma ethnicity have same representation as the majority is the influence of the White dominant culture and the oppression of Roma people. Thus, it becomes clear that the divided self-perception of the Roma subject who has lost his own culture, try not only to appropriate and imitate the culture of the dominant, but also by representing his own people in such way (confirming majorities perceptions) try to be dominant among the dominants (The movies *Gadjo Dilo* was awarded numerous prizes besides all its stereotypical representation).

The result for such behaviour and activities, I claim that brings internalized racism which might be described as an elaborate term for a problem that's easy to comprehend. In a place where racial prejudice flourishes in communities, popular culture and so on, it is hard for racial minorities to evade absorbing the racism messages that continually attached them. Thus, I believe that even for some Roma sometimes is easier to adopt a white supremacist mind-set that results in self-hatred.

Third, it is not irrelevant t that all of the movies makers are males. It would have been nice to see whether the representation of Romani women would have been different if the movie makers were females. However, in my understanding, those societal visions about women have also impacted on them as men's. Gender as a social category which proposes that the formation of gender is a process in which the media play an important role. In such means, in the on-going creation of gender discourse, media can be understood as "*social tools of gender*" that are, as

Zoonen states “central sites at which discursive negotiation over gender takes place” (Zoonen, 2002: 57)

4.6 Conclusion

In this chapter I examined how representation of gender and minority ethnicity are confronted, reproduced and explained. I argued that individual and common identity is built through representation in discourse and I have shown that language is never objective and the meaning is always constructed based on the formed narratives.

The analysis it has shown that existed from the very beginning of the Roma arrival in Europe. With a precise focus on Romani women’s representation, the analyses of the movies have shown that there is a common representation reproduced by both Roma and non Roma film makers which included three common ways of representation which I argued leads towards prediction about how Romani women should behave, what is their role, and what is expected from them. More precisely, on those three common ways of representation the shaped narratives have depicted Romani women as dancers and singers, young mothers and housewives, and keepers of the family honour. Throughout the analyses I have come to the conclusion that the reasons for those depictions are highly tight to the romantic vision of the Romani women which is created by different academic scholars, researchers, painter etc., as well as the societal created narratives when talking about Romani women and their suppose role. More importantly, those narratives have lead towards internalized racism as seen on the representations created by the Roma movie makers.

Chapter V - Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

This thesis focused on an examination of the roles that both gender and ethnical stereotypes show in media's formation as a social reality, and have established a critical analysis of the relation between stereotypical representations which influences on creation of certain fixed meanings and the own social commitment of persons. My research methodology was limited to the representation through movies, where the target group were the Romani women whose representation was/is affected from different intersects, such as ethnicity, gender, religion etc.

I have analysed several theories of representation, media and films as one aspect of representation. The analysis have shown that there are constantly debates about the influence of media and that actually media has an important role in the study of culture as well as in the formation of social image. Moreover, the analysis have demonstrated that most of the time the intention of the transmitter and the built arguments mean exactly what the transmitter planned them to mean. By such means, as I have shown, media by producing certain knowledge and so called "realities" and illusions has an important role and power that contribute towards creating essentialism and spreading generalization

By examining the ways of how Romani women have been represented through movies, I aimed to identify the most common ways of representing Romani women, the specific understandings, practices and reasons for that representation,

as well as to identify reasons why Roma and non Roma movie makers are producing same representation of Romani women.

The three common ways of representation I argued that lead towards expectation about how Romani women should behave, what is their role, and what is expected from them. More precisely, on those three common ways of representation the formed narratives have depicted Romani women as dancers and singers, young mothers and housewives, and keepers of the family honour. The analysis have shown that when discussing the issues of Roma representation, they have been continue to be underrepresented or misrepresented by both Roma and non Roma scholars. Moreover, I demonstrated that the ideas of “being part of Roma culture” the lack of intersectional approach when examining Roma issues have allowed and supported the stereotypical cultural representation Romani women face nowadays.

Beyond the created stereotypical representation by Roma and non Roma movie makers my analysis have shown that the created narratives in the media about minority and gender representation are narratives symbolizing structural power which are established as part of social power relation and social positions in the society. Accordingly, through the analysis it became clear that the position of Romani women is built through systems of current cultural traditional understandings and that media contribute towards strengthening their gender role.

From the other hand I have shown that the impact of these racial and stereotypical understandings against minorities has lead towards internalized racism which resulted with adaptation to white supremacist mind-set and self-hatred.

5.2 Recommendations:

As an outcome of the analyses I came to the following conclusions:

- *Economic empowerment* – based on all above mentioned, especially based on the traditional representation and traditional understandings about the role of Romani women, it becomes clear that compared with their non-Romani counterparts, Romani women have lower educational levels and higher rates of fertility. In this respect, It is needed representations that will emphasize the importance of educational and professional empowerment of Romani women. This empowerment will not only give them economical independency, but also will contribute towards building different ideology among young Romani women and their supposed role in the society. Further, their social empowerment will not only contribute towards changing the stereotypical perceptions that exist about them but also make professional and educational capable to fight against those perceptions – power of resistance that will lead towards reducing the lack of Roma voices and increase the responsibilities about issues challenged by Romani women.
- *Positive representation of Romani women* – based on “*what you see you become*” it becomes clear that representation not only has impact on outsiders viewpoint, but also influences on building life ideology. This might also influence on Romani women’s way of building their own perceptions of what should be their role as Roma and as women. This way of representation contributes towards building common ideology and understanding among young Romani women. For example, in the movie *Latcho drom*, the scene

recorded in Egypt when a young girl was represented as dancer, little Romani girl was represented as an “imitator” of the same role, meaning trying to dance on the same way as the other woman did. In this regard, it is needed representations that are not connected with stereotypical visions of Romani women, and offer representation of Romani women as successful women on different positions by creating Romani women’s role model.

- *Including Romani women’s issues on local, national and European agenda* – as seen from the analyses the sensible and patriarchal position of the Romani women have allowed many policy-makers on Roma issues to be blind about their position and specific needs that contributed many issues to be understood as “part of Roma culture and tradition. In order the two above mentioned recommendations to be implemented there is a necessity policy makers to take into consideration the intersectional approach and create policies that will tackle Romani women’s problems and promote equal opportunities.

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