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# Quintessential Strangers: The Representation of Romanies and Jews in Some Holocaust Films

Yosefa Loshitzky

I sat through nearly ten hours of Claude Lanzmann's magnificent film *Shoah* hoping to collect some Gypsy references, but to no avail . . . we, too, need a documentary like *Shoah*.

Ian Hancock (1987, 13)

I want to be able to watch epics such as *Schindler's List* and learn that Gypsies were a central part of the Holocaust, too; or [watch] other films[. . .]and not hear the word "Gypsy" except once, and then only as the name of somebody's dog

Ian Hancock (1996, 59)

The Jews have responded to persecution and dispersal with a monumental industry of remembrance. The Gypsies—with their peculiar mixture of fatalism and the spirit, or wit, to seize the day—have made an art of forgetting.

Isabel Fonseca (1995, 276)

One Holocaust, as we have come to learn at our cost, hides others, one image's symbolic force may obscure another reality. To reclaim the truth of the suffering of the European Sinti and Romani is not to make it 'compete' with that of the European Jews.

Thomas Elsaesser (1999)

Ian Hancock's statements regarding *Shoah* and *Schindler's List*, "both of which have already been canonized as the best films ever made on the Holocaust" (Loshitzky 1997, 105), call attention to the irony that even in

the age of commodified victimhood there are still hidden victims. The suffering of some victims, implies Hancock, a Romani scholar and activist, is more publicly recognized and acknowledged and therefore more visible on our film and television screens and ultimately on our memory screens. Not all minorities and not all victims have easy access to the media and consequently to global consciousness and conscience. Blinding ethnocentrism is at work even among ethnic minorities with a history of persecution who very often compete for the dubious 'honour' of being crowned as the 'ultimate victims.' Hancock's statements, which call for a wider public recognition of the Romani *Porrajmos* (the Romani word for the Holocaust), in which more than 250.000 Romanies found their death from Nazi terror.<sup>1</sup> reinforces the notion that for many people nothing has really happened until it has happened on screen.

Whereas the suffering of the Jews in the Holocaust has been acknowledged on screen, reaching its climax with the unprecedented global success of *Schindler's List* (Loshitzky, 1997). the Romani *Porrajmos* has never been a major topic of any feature film to this day. The reasons for this sad state of affairs are quite obvious, reflecting the marginality assigned to and forced upon the Romani people everywhere in the world and in Europe in particular.<sup>2</sup> The fact that there are very few high-profile Romani filmmakers is of course another reason for the absence of the *Porrajmos* from the film screens. However, the fact that there is only one internationally known Gypsy filmmaker (Tony Gatlif) is in part a symptom of the marginality and invisibility suffered by the Gypsies. Another reason is grounded, perhaps, in what many scholars (mostly non-Romanies, i.e. Trumpener, 1992: Fonseca, 1995) see as the anti-memory or forgetting type of culture which characterizes, according to them, the 'Gypsy way of life' based on oral tradition. Furthermore, since the Romani survivors of the Holocaust were deprived of education and social status, 'there is little in the way of diaries or memoirs to keep the experience in the public domain' (Younge 2003, G3). Another possible, yet rather disturbing, explanation is related to what some Romani scholars, and Hancock (1996) in particular, call "Jewish exclusivism," namely the desire to prevent 'de-Judaization' of the Holocaust. Exclusivists, notably among them the historian Yehuda Bauer (1980), argue that the *Porrajmos* is 'fundamentally different' from the Holocaust itself and that the Gypsies were less persecuted than the Jews, the 'supreme victims' of the Holocaust, in Elie Wiesel's (as quoted in Hancock, 1987a, 10) words.

Why the Romany have not been as vocal as the Jews in making the world recognize their Holocaust is a question frequently raised by Romani activists. To be 'vocal' in our media-saturated world means first and foremost to be 'visible.' Films, obviously, provide and generate visibility and therefore the absence of the *Porrajmos* from them both reinforces Gypsy

Invisibility, and helps to create it. While there are no feature films dealing specifically and 'exclusively' with the Romani Holocaust, there are some films which to one degree or another acknowledge it, though always alongside the Jewish Holocaust. The Romani Holocaust, when it appears in some Holocaust films, is always used either as a backdrop to the Jewish Holocaust or as a secondary 'companion' to it.

In this article I discuss some Holocaust films that portray both Jews and Gypsies as victims of Nazi atrocities. My discussion focuses on the 'voice' and 'visibility' accorded to each ethnic group's Holocaust and the ideological, political and ethical issues implied by these films' politics of representing (whose?) Holocaust. The article also explores how each minority has figured in the fantasies and nightmares of the European imagination, and how they were represented in these films.

### ***The Pariah People***

The Gypsies, alongside the Jews, are ancient scapegoats. The Jews, writes Isabel Fonseca "poisoned the wells: the Gypsies brought the plague" (1995, 271). Max Weber discussed the Jews and the Gypsies as 'pariah-people' who

had lost their territories, were confined to particular occupations and were endogamous in respect of dietary prohibitions, religious practices and social intercourse . . . The Jews developed a form of "pariah-capitalism," which started with money lending and built on speculative investment and thence to banking and high finance. The caste-like attributes of these groups provided the basis for complete trust inside the group and an acute need to create some security against the threatening outsider' (quoted in Cohen, 1997, 101).

Although for different historical reasons, writes Holocaust historian Yehuda Bauer, the Gypsies in many ways "shared with the Jews the doubtful honor of being the quintessential strangers in an overwhelmingly sedentary, Christian Europe" (1989, 634).<sup>3</sup> According to Hancock, Jews have been associated with Gypsies since the Middle Ages and 'Gypsies were at one time thought to be Jews themselves [...]' (c 1987a, 12). Gypsies and Jews are the two oldest minorities of Europe whose remote and foreign Oriental origin, lack of attachment to 'host' countries, 'nomadic character,' 'strange' language, dress code, customs, strict dietary practice and taboos that voluntarily isolate them from the *Gadjo* and/or the *Goy*, as well as their darker complexion and 'different' physical features, have cast them as 'the other within' (Boyarin, 1992).<sup>4</sup> To people tied to the routine exigencies of agriculture, or for people who work as employees for wages, it seems like no place is theirs, but they (the Gypsies and the Jews) are in all places.

Unlike the Jews, however, the Gypsy identity does not incorporate a religious identity as well. There are Muslim Romanies in the Southern Balkans and the Middle East, although the majority of Romanies are Christian. But perhaps for most Gypsies, argues Hancock 'any kind of western religion is an overlay, an outward manifestation of faith masking the far deeper commitment to *Romanija* [the Vlax name for Roman! culture in all its aspects]' (1987a, 7).

### ***Porrajmos versus Shoah: The Victims' Contest***

Although the Jews and the Gypsies have traditionally constituted for Europe 'the enemy within,' these two groups have for the last two decades been involved in a dispute over their victim status during the Third Reich. It is definitely beyond the scope of this article, let alone beyond the boundaries of my expertise, to present a very strong and judgmental verdict regarding the "historical truth" of either side's claims. In this section, therefore, I only attempt to draw the major contours of the debate by briefly summarizing the main positions voiced by the two sides of the conflict that engages mostly historians and Romani activists. It is important, however, to mention that the controversy goes beyond academic circles because it has more practical and concrete ramifications, such as reparations to the Gypsy victims of the Third Reich. To date, the German government has refused to pay reparations to the Gypsy survivors of the Holocaust, claiming that they were persecuted on social—being termed asocial by the Nazis- and not on racial grounds. The participation of the Gypsies in other Holocaust-related institutions and public activities is also affected by this victims' contest. A notorious example, exemplifying the exclusion of the Romanies from institutionalized memorializations of the Holocaust, is the fact that only after Elie Wiesel's resignation from the Council of the Holocaust Museum in Washington was a Romani delegate (Ian Hancock) elected. There have been only two Romani representatives in the 65-member U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council's seventeen year history.

As Janina Bauman, a Jewish survivor of the Holocaust, argues:

The wholesale nature of the Gypsy *Porrajmos* tends to be overlooked or even denied by historians, also by a number of the Jewish historians of the Holocaust, who claim that Jews were the unique population targeted to the last man, woman and child for complete extermination. (1996, 85)

The most militant critic of Jewish scholars' exclusivist approach is Ian Hancock, who hones in the narrow view that overlooks the racism in Nazi ideology.

Jews and Gypsies, the only two populations in Nazi territories of non-European origin, were seen in particular as a racial threat, and were singled out for extermination because of this. But justification of the Final Solution beyond that differed sharply for our two peoples: Jews were outsiders who had become a part of the fabric of the European economy, and were resented for it. Gypsies, on the other hand, were outsiders who *refused* to conform with European society . . . (1987a: 9).<sup>5</sup>

The view that the Gypsies were persecuted on racial grounds is based on the fact that in 1935, the Nuremberg Laws claimed that both Gypsies and Jews were alien race whose blood was a mortal threat to German racial purity. Along with Jews and 'Negroes' they were labelled as 'racially distinctive' minorities with 'alien blood' (*artfremdes Blut*). Even earlier in 1928, Professor Hans Gunther published a document in which he claimed that it was the Gypsies who introduced foreign blood into Europe (Hancock, 1991).

Historian Sybil Milton argues that the failure of most researchers to incorporate a broad pattern of racism in their analysis of Nazi ideology 'has resulted in a monocausal emphasis on anti-Semitism as the primary motivation for genocide' (1990, 271). Assigning a central role to anti-Semitism is, according to Milton, usually linked to the belief in the uniqueness of the Holocaust (1990, 273). Most Holocaust scholars (particularly Jewish historians such as Yehuda Bauer) view the murder of Gypsies as differently motivated than the killing of the Jews, and usually do not include it in their definition of the 'final solution.'

Hancock goes even further, claiming that there is an element of racism evident in the Jewish response to the attempt to equalize the Romani *Porrajmos* with the Jewish *Shoah* (1996, 57). After all, he argues, Gypsies are a 'Third World people of color.' No less critical towards Jewish historians and organizations is the controversial (Jewish) scholar Norman G. Finkelstein (2000, 77) who argues that one of the motives behind the Jewish marginalization of the Gypsy genocide is the fear of 'the loss of an exclusive Jewish franchise over The Holocaust, with a commensurate loss of Jewish "moral capital".'

Historian Erika Thurner, who studied the persecution of the Gypsies in Austria during the Third Reich, presents a more balanced view in that it acknowledges qualitative and quantitative differences in the *Porrajmos* and the *Shoah*, but not regarding charges of Jewish exclusionism, observing that

Jews and Gypsies were equally affected by the racial theories and measures of the Nazi rulers. The persecution of the two groups was carried out with the same radical intensity and cruelty. The Jewish genocide received top priority in planning and execution—this because of the different social status of the

Jews and also their [larger] numbers. Due to their smaller numbers, the Roma and Sinti were [for the Nazis] a 'secondary' problem. (1998, xvi)

### ***Gypsies and Jews in Holocaust Films***

Most of the cinematic representations of Romanies have been made by non-Gypsy filmmakers and therefore they usually reflect more on the cultures that produce them rather than any 'authentic' Romani experience. Goran Gocic argues in his study of the cinema of Emir Kusturica—well known for his Gypsy films—that in reality, as well as in the world of representation, 'the Gypsies are Europe's extreme vision of marginality' offering as such 'one of the most persistent pictures of Eastern pagans in Western fiction [. . .]. Moreover, the Gypsies have remained one of the few mysterious, unspoken currencies of cinema, concentrated around identifiable stereotypes' (2001, 93). In her study of Balkan cinema, Dina Iordanova argues that Balkan Gypsy films evolve around the mechanism of 'projective identification' whereby they are not meant to represent the Romanies but to project concern about the 'Balkan self.' As the Romanies 'appear to mainstream society—marginal and poorly adapted but likeable for their vigour and non-traditional exuberant attitude—so the Balkans (would like to) appear to Europe[. . .] to a large extent, exploring the Roma serves as a means of self-representation, of admitting and reflecting on one's own marginality' (2001, 214, 215). Rochelle Wright (1998, 98), in her study of the representation of ethnic minorities in Swedish cinema, argues that the occurrence of Gypsy characters in Swedish cinema is comparatively rare due to the fact that the *tattare* (travellers) took over their function. In the films of the 1930s both Jews and *tattare* 'function within the respective film genres as pariahs or outcasts.' Portuges (1997) has also written on the representation of Jews and Gypsies in Hungarian cinema.

If the representation of the Romanies in cinema is problematic then the representation of the *Porrajmos* is even more so. There are only a few films (most of them made by Jewish filmmakers) that mention the *Porrajmos* and the majority of them make only a passing reference to it. Among these films are Wanda Jakubowska's 'Auschwitz trilogy' [*Ostanti etap/The Last Stage* (Poland, 1948), *Koniec naszego swiata/The End of Our World* (Poland, 1964), *Zaproszenie/Invitation* (Poland, 1985)], *Golden Earrings* (Mitchell Leisen, USA, 1947) with Marlene Dietrich<sup>6</sup>; *The Keep* (Michael Mann, USA, 1983); Alexander Ramati's *And the Violins Stopped Playing* (USA/Poland, 1988)<sup>7</sup>, and Yolande Zauberman's *Moi Ivan toi Abraham (Ivan and Abraham, France/Belarus, 1993)* where Roma Alexandrovitch, who plays the Jewish child Abraham, is in reality a Gypsy boy from Lithuania who learned Yiddish for the production even though he could not read or write.<sup>8</sup>

A turning point in the Gypsy/Jewish cinematic 'repertoire' in the context of the Holocaust is the recent release of two major feature films: *Train de vie /Train of Life* (France, 1998) made by the Romanian Jewish filmmaker Radu Mihaileanu who lives in France, and Sally Potter's *The Man Who Cried* (U.K., 2000). Both are 'Holocaust films' and both, in a manner unprecedented in the genre, link the destiny of the Gypsies and the Jews together, presenting them as minority others/brothers sharing a similar history of persecution and oppression.

*Train de vie* tells an imaginary story about the inhabitants of a *shtetl* (East European Jewish village) who organize a fake deportation by train so that they can escape the Nazis and flee to Palestine, their 'promised land.' The plot centers on Shlomo (Lionel Abelanski), the village fool, who narrates what happens after the villagers decide to follow his 'crazy' idea of devising their own deportation. In hopes of tricking the Nazis, the village Jews buy a deportation train, make Nazi uniforms and select German-speaking Jews pretending to be German soldiers guarding the 'deported' Jews. They appoint Mordechai (Rufus), the most familiarized with the German language and 'mentality' to be the German commandant. The film focuses on their trials and tribulations and the ways in which they manage, for a while, to fool the Germans. The final soliloquy delivered by Shlomo, however, reveals that they have not succeeded in escaping their fate and have ended up, like most other East European Jews, in a concentration camp. Towards the end of their train journey they meet a group of Gypsies who are also try-ing to organize a fake deportation to their original homeland: India. Recognizing one another, the Jews and the Gypsies embrace and later, against the backdrop of a beautiful evening in the open fields, celebrate their union near the campfire with Gypsy and Klezmer music and dance.<sup>9</sup>

*Train de vie*—which preceded Roberto Benigni's *La vita e bella /Life Is Beautiful* (Italy, 1998) but was distributed in the United States after the latter<sup>10</sup> "deserves special attention in the context of the discussion about the Holocaust film because it opens the space of Holocaust representation to other ethnic groups who were victimized by the Nazis, especially to the Romani people. The film builds a coalition of minorities who share the same destiny under Nazi rule. In the film each group is trying to escape Nazi persecution through a flight to its mythic homeland. The Jews try to get to Palestine, the Romanies to India. Eventually, however, most of them perish in a concentration camp and the survivors end up in the wrong homeland: the Romanies in Palestine and the Jews in India. This comic inversion parodies the typical closure of the Hollywood Holocaust narrative, and *Schindler's List* in particular, whose teleology is embedded in the Zionist perception of the Holocaust which views the establishment of the State of Israel as its secular redemption.<sup>11</sup>

By presenting Gypsies and Jews as kindred communities sharing the

same fate under the shadow of racism, *Train de vie* opens up the discourse on the victims of the Holocaust. It should be pointed out, however, that this opening is still limited because, as in all Holocaust films that deal with Jews and Gypsies, the film reserves the main role for the Jews.

The seeds of the relatively inclusive approach of *Train de vie* were already planted by earlier Holocaust comedies. In Charlie Chaplin's *The Great Dictator* (U.S., 1940), the Jewish barber shaves a customer to the rhythms of a Brahms Gypsy melody,<sup>12</sup> and in the American remake of *To Be Or Not To Be* (U.S., 1984), directed by Alan Johnson and produced by Mel Brooks, Bronski, the Polish head of the theatre, complains, after experiencing some difficulties with Nazi censorship, that 'without Jews, faggots and Gypsies there is no theatre,' thus symbolically creating a coalition of persecuted groups, while acknowledging their contribution to cultural life. Another significant addition in this remake is that Anna's dresser, Sasha Kinski, is gay. Hence the Holocaust comedy was the first mainstream genre to open up the discourse on the heterogeneity of Holocaust victims. It is interesting to note, however, that most of the reviews of *Train de vie*, as well as the plot summaries provided by different web sites, ignore the representation of the Romanies and focus mainly on the 'problematics' of the Holocaust comedy and the choice of humor to represent the Holocaust.<sup>13</sup>

*Train de vie* uses the train (one of the icons of the Holocaust film) as a symbol of a journey and life unfulfilled. The train in the film also functions as a microcosm, an icon of pre-Holocaust East European Jewish life. It condenses, encompasses and satirizes all the ideological trends that prevailed in pre-war Jewish culture: communism, Bundism, Orthodox Judaism and Zionism. The 'train de vie' of the film is what the Nazis call 'le train de phantom.' It is the phantom of the destroyed Jewish civilization of Eastern Europe which, the film acknowledges (particularly through the mixed love stories it constructs between a young Gypsy woman and a Jewish man, and a young Gypsy man and Jewish woman), maintained close ties with the Romani community.

Sally Potter's film *The Man Who Cried* tells the story of a young Jewish woman born as 'Feigele' (Claudia Lander-Duke) in a shtetl in Russia. Her father, a cantor (Oleg Yankovsky) emigrates to America, and immediately following his departure, violence erupts in the region and Feigele finds herself on a ship to England. She is sent to a Christian foster home, where her name is changed to Suzie and she is forbidden to speak Yiddish. Ten years pass and Suzie (now played by Christina Ricci) moves to Paris where she falls in love with Cesar, a *Gypsy* (Johnny Depp). When the Nazis occupy France, she joins her Romani lover and his musician friends, but in order to survive, they must separate. After many tribulations, she arrives in America, where her search for her father leads her to Hollywood.

The pretty little Jewess Suzie, and the dark princely Gypsy, become, in Potter's highly stylized mise en scene, visual icons of the power of love and

freedom to transcend racial hatred. This is evident in one of the most visually stunning scenes when three noble Gypsies led by Cesar ride their horses in the empty boulevards of Paris with its mythic icon, the Eiffel Tower, in the background. Suzie is seen following them on her bicycle and in the soundtrack we hear only the rhythmic clip-clop of the galloping horses mingled with Klezmer-Gypsy music. This surrealistic scene, created in the style of 'magical realism,' follows the scene in which Dante Dominio (John Turturro), the famous opera singer, delivers a stereotypical racist speech against the Gypsies. His speech is triggered by the fact that Cesar's horse defecated on the stage while he was singing his much acclaimed aria. Dante accuses the Gypsies of living 'on the road' and leading a unclean life. In response to this racist expression, the usually quiet and reserved Suzie attacks the arrogant Dante claiming that 'they [the Gypsies] live on the road because their homes were taken from them.' The proud Cesar, offended by this racist attack retorts angrily with 'they [the Gadji, the non-Gypsies] are the unclean.'<sup>14</sup>

The Romanies, Erika Thurner observes, 'as incarnations of free spirits, were especially suited as objects of persecution. Desires and especially sexual fantasies were projected onto them. The despised group became the scapegoat for one's own repressed desires. In addition, the Gypsies' nomadic way of life was seen as a challenge to the German sedentary way of life' (1998, 7-8). Both *Train de vie* and *The Man Who Cried* are not free of this mechanism of projection. The films' 'hot' Gypsy lovers are based on romantic stereotypes of the sensuous, tantalizing and promiscuous Gypsy woman (epitomized by the numerous popular versions of Carmen), and the seductive and adventurous Gypsy man. *The Man Who Cried*, which devotes a large portion of its narrative space to the love story between Cesar and Suzie, represents the Gypsy lover as a noble savage, a dark, wild prince, a Fellinisque Sheik, riding a white horse.

The nostalgic look of *The Man Who Cried* was created by the cinematographer Sacha Vierny, who himself lived through the German occupation in Paris. Born into a Russian-Jewish family, Vierny was the same age during the occupation as the character 'Suzie' in the film. It is for this reason that Potter decided that Vierny would be the ideal choice to capture the colour and the atmosphere of pre-World War II Paris. Vierny studied hundreds of images, from Henri Cartier-Bresson's photographs of Paris in the thirties, to Josef Koudelka's portraits of Eastern European Romanies to form the visual look of the film. The production designer Carlos Conti created a style of 'magical realism' whereby sets and locations were accurate to the period but evoked something more than themselves 'a lost world, perhaps, or the intense quality that memory brings to places.' The final piece of the jigsaw in creating the look of the film was the work of Duboicolor in Paris, digitally grading the film to achieve a gradual progression from de-saturation (for the early scenes in Russia and England) through to a form

of colour saturation that resembles some of the photographic printing techniques of the 1930's and 1940's, and incidentally, some of the look of the three-step printing techniques of early Technicolor.<sup>15</sup>

To a certain extent the linking of Jews and Gypsies in both *Train de vie* and *The Man Who Cried* can be seen as part of the 'ethno-retro' movement with its commodification of the exotic other. The use of the Yiddish language, as well as the anchoring of part of the plot in the Jewish shtetl are the signifiers of this nostalgic mode which also constitutes an audio-visual *lieux de memoire* of a destroyed Jewish civilization. Yet as much as these two films evoke nostalgia towards a lost East European Jewish past they also refer indirectly to the current discrimination of the Romanies in contemporary Europe. The Romanian background of film director Mihaileanu might explain his sensitivity and empathy for the 'Gypsy question.' More than in any other country, the Gypsies of Romania have suffered persecution after the fall of the Eastern Block. The collapse of the communist regimes of Eastern Europe has rekindled anti-Romani sentiment in Eastern and Western Europe. Violent attacks and pogroms against the Romanies were particularly severe in Romania with little or no restraint from government authorities.<sup>16</sup> Potter's film, on the other hand, was made at a time when the 'Gypsy question' became an urgent one in the United Kingdom as a result of a flow of legal and illegal Romani refugees from former Yugoslavia, as well as other Eastern European countries, especially Slovakia, The Czech Republic and Romania where they had been and continue to be subject to systematic harassment, persecution and discrimination.<sup>17</sup>

## ***Conclusions***

In his article (1999), *One train may be hiding another: private history, memory and national identity*, Thomas Elsaesser refers to a struggle over an image of a girl pictured in a small opening of a cattle truck, just before the door is shut and bolted in the Westerbork concentration camp from which the Jews were transported to Auschwitz by trains. This image, first discovered in a documentary film shot by a German officer, has been the icon of the Holocaust for Dutch Jews for many years. Yet, recently, it turned out that the girl, in what has become the symbol of the Jews, is not Jewish at all but a Sinti who was transported to Bergen-Belsen and not to Auschwitz, 'the most significant memorial site of the Shoah' (Dwork and Van Pelt, cited in Hartman, 1994, 232). No doubt, Elsaesser perceptively observes, 'she perished in Bergen-Belsen as surely as she would have in Auschwitz, but the difference is not negligible. One Holocaust, as we have come to learn at our cost, hides others, one image's symbolic force may obscure another reality. To reclaim the truth of the suffering of the European Sinti and Romani is not to make it 'compete' with that of the European Jews, however much the

discovery of Settela's [the name of the Sinti girl, Y.L.] identity at first upset the sensibilities of Dutch Jewry.' Now, Elsaesser observes, when we see the image of this girl, 'we think of Jews and Gypsies [. . .] so that one truth can not only cover another but also be recovered by another.'

The idea of the title for Elsaesser's article came to him from this discovered/covered/re-discovered image of the little Sinti girl. The story of this image reminded him of a road sign, 'un train peut en cacher un autre,' common in rural France which, translated from the French, means 'Attention! One train may be hiding another.' In *Train de vie*, we may recall, the main train was the Jewish one that meets the Romani caravan and so the two unite. Yet the main story of the film is the story of the Jewish train, which hides yet recovers the truth of the Gypsies' escape. As one image hides another and one Holocaust obscures another, in the fascinating case that Elsaesser discusses, so in *Train de vie*, *The Man Who Cried* and other Holocaust films does the Jewish story eclipse the Romani one. Despite the relative progressiveness of these films and emerging openness towards the 'stranger' in both of them, the full scope of the *Porrajmos* still hidden. Perhaps, in the spirit of Elsaesser's morally sensitive approach, it is time that the image of the *Porrajmos* cease to be hidden, or even recovered. Instead, it is time that it occupy the center of the film frame and become an image in its own right, a hidden image no more.

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## Notes

- 1 The exact figures are disputed. Estimates have ranged from 200,000 to 1.5 million. Determining the percentage or number of Romanies who died in the Holocaust is not easy. Many murders were not recorded since they took place in the fields and forests where Romanies were apprehended. For further discussion see Hancock (1996, 49-50).
- 2 On the current state of Romanies in Europe see Fox and Brown (2000), Bauman (1996).
- 3 Georg Simmel's (1921) model for his concept of the stranger (*der Fremde* in German) was the Jewish trader.
- 4 The word 'gentile' has also been traditionally used in the Romani context to mean 'non-Gypsy.' The word *Gadjo* (non-Gypsy) in Romani is the equivalent of *Goy* (non-Jew) in Hebrew and Yiddish.
- 5 See in particular Hancock, *Responses to the Porrajmos: The Romani Holocaust* (1996). For an earlier and therefore milder appeal to Jews for the recognition

of the Gypsy Holocaust see Hancock's *Gypsies, Jews, and the Holocaust* (1987a). A similar argument is raised by Zygmunt Bauman:

Why, then, ought the Jews be the particular object of the Nazi will to obliterate? Together with the Gypsies, they were self-evidently nationless, even though as Bauman observes the Jews were perhaps more fully accommodated into German culture, by the Weimar Republic, than any other such group (1989a: 31). Plainly the Jews could be fitted nicely into the category of the other. (Bauman 1989a discussed in Beilhartz, 2000, 92).

- 6 'I learned recently from James Michael Holmes of Phoenix Productions International that two Hollywood studios have already declined to consider an updated script of the 1947 film *Golden Earrings*, because it is a screenplay with the Holocaust that does not deal with Jewish victims.' (Hancock, 1996, 57).
- 7 Hancock is harshly critical of this film (1996, 57).
- 8 The story is set in a Jewish village in Poland during the 1930s, where Ivan (Sasha Yakovlev), an orphan apprentice, and Abraham (Roma Alexandrovitch), the young son of the house live as brothers. Threatened with separation, they run away. When they return home at the end of the film, the village has been razed. The movie was made mostly in Yiddish, shot in an old Jewish shtetl in the Ukraine, with Russian, Gypsy and Polish actors. For director Yolande Zauberman, the film was an attempt to understand the Polish insensitivity toward the destruction of their long settled Jewish compatriots. 'The Poles knew the Jews well, they lived with them, and they know the Gypsies better than the French do. But they still have fear and awe, the feeling that these people are different, both blessed and damned' (quoted in Dupont, 1993). Roma Alexandrovitch was quoted by *Le Monde* (1993, 27) saying: 'For one scene I had to shout: "I am not a Gypsy, I am a Jew!" At the end of shooting, I shouted: "I am not a Jew, I am a Gypsy!" Everyone laughed.'
- 9 The score is by Goran Bregović who composed the music to Kusturica's 1989 Yugoslav *Time of the Gypsies*.
- 10 There is, as a critic from *Positif* suggested, a correspondence between the titles of the two films. See Y.D. (1998, 65). Mihaileanu, it should be noted, accused Benigni of plagiarism. See Blumenfeld (1998, 28).
- 11 I am indebted to Hanno Lowey for drawing my attention to the implied critique of the Zionist solution to the 'Jewish question' provided by the ending of the film. For a discussion of Hollywood's Zionisation of the Holocaust see Loshitzky (1997, 2001).
- 12 Chaplin's Romani ancestry is a subject of speculation. Many sources present Chaplin as being of Jewish descent. According to Hancock (1997, 57), how ever, the widespread misassumption of Chaplin's Jewish ancestry 'is a curious one, and serves to illustrate how the lack of information about the Romani people can lead to such popular myths.' The notion that Chaplin was Jewish can probably, according to Hancock, 'be traced to his role in *The Great Dictator*. . .' (57). The film, Hancock notes, 'was thought naturally enough to have been stimulated by Jewish concern, as indeed it probably was—but so little was known then, as even now, of the immensity of the Nazi campaign against Chaplin's own people, [the Roma according to Hancock, Y.L.] that it was automatically assumed that he was Jewish.'
- 13 An exception was Verhaeghe's statement 'this reunion with the Gypsies at the end of the film is an excellent idea' (1998).

- 14 According to the Gypsy way of life, the *Gadjos* are unclean and therefore Roma are not allowed to eat in *Gadjo's* homes. Some of these prohibitions regarding 'uncleanness' recall Jewish religious practices, particularly those related to dietary laws of *Kashrut*. Religious Jews who eat only *Kosher food* are not allowed to eat in the home of *goyim* or even in the homes of Jews who do not keep *Kashrut*.
- 15 See the UIP's site for *The Man Who Cried*.
- 16 For a report on some of the atrocities committed against the Romanies in Romania see Szente (1996).
- 17 It should be noted that this racist discourse and rhetoric is still prevalent in the UK. *Face the Facts*, a Radio Four programme broadcast on 26/7/02 quoted 'an honourable member of the House of Commons' who 'described the Gypsies as "scum".' The British government has recently been using increasing force to evict Gypsies and travellers from undesignated sites. The introduction by home secretary's, David Blunkett, of a 'white list' of safe countries to end the automatic right of asylum seekers to claim welfare benefits was aimed mostly against the Romani people who come to Britain from Eastern Europe. Human rights activists argue that the 'white list' failed to recognize the persecution of the Romani people across Eastern Europe and constitutes a breach of the refugee convention. British consular office at the Prague airport pre-screen Romani applicants for visas to the UK thus prohibiting them from entering the country. A notorious case in point occurred in July 2001 when a female Romani journalist and a Czech male journalist went undercover to be interviewed by immigration officials. Both gave the same information yet the Romani journalist was not allowed to board the plane. Although this case created a stormy public debate and was extensively covered by the British media, the practice of pre-screening set up specifically to stop Czech Romanies coming to the UK continues.

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