


Mariana Sabino Salazar 

From ‘White’ Stolen Children to Devil’s Assistants: The Transformation of the ‘Gypsy’ Female Character in Mexican Cinema and its ‘Race’ and Nationalist Implications

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Abstract In this article, I analyze the ‘gypsy’ female archetype in 33 films that range from 1943 to 1978. I aim to answer the following questions: how was the character of the ‘gypsy’ woman in Mexican cinema influenced by European literary archetypes and how has this figure transformed? And what are the political implications of female ‘gypsy’ characters for ‘racial’ and national symbolic systems? I examine the gradual changes in the ‘gypsy’ stereotype from the motif of the ‘white’ Spanish girl kidnapped and raised as a ‘gypsy,’ which is found in Spanish literature, to the figure of the eerie Eastern European Vamp found in Gothic narratives. Perhaps the most common form of the stereotype is the figure of La Petenera, a realization of the fantasy of the sexually aggressive woman. The archetype of an attractive and dangerous nomad is a reaction to a recurring unease, a trope long embedded in literature, cinema, music, and popular culture on both sides of the Atlantic. In Mexico, this unease relates to miscegenation policies, the sublimation of nationalist pride vis-à-vis the former colonial power, and fear of communism.

Zusammenfassung In diesem Artikel analysiere ich den weiblichen Archetypus der „Zigeunerin“ in dreiunddreißig Filmen aus der Zeit von 1943 bis 1978. Dabei sollen folgende Fragen beantwortet werden: Wie wurde die Figur der „Zigeunerin“ im mexikanischen Kino von europäischen literarischen Archetypen beeinflusst und wie hat sie sich verändert? Welche politischen Auswirkungen haben weibliche „Zigeuner“-Figuren auf „rassische“ und nationale symbolische Systeme? Der Aufsatz untersucht den allmählichen Wandel des Stereotyps der „Zigeunerin“ vom Motiv des „weißen“ spanischen Mädchens, das entführt und als „Zigeunerin“ aufgezogen wird, wie es in der spanischen Literatur zu finden ist, bis hin zur Figur des unheimlichen osteuropäischen Vamps, wie er

in Gothic-Erzählungen vorkommt. Die vielleicht am weitesten verbreitete Form des Stereotyps ist die Figur der „La Petenera“, eine Umsetzung der Fantasie von der sexuell aggressiven Frau. Der Archetyp des attraktiven und gefährlichen Nomaden ist eine Reaktion auf ein immer wiederkehrendes Unbehagen, das seit langem in Literatur, Kino, Musik und Populärkultur auf beiden Seiten des Atlantiks zu finden ist. In Mexiko steht dieses Unbehagen im Zusammenhang mit der Politik der „Rassenmischung“, der Sublimierung des Nationalstolzes gegenüber der ehemaligen Kolonialmacht und der Angst vor dem Kommunismus.

Introduction

Romanies accounted for less than 0.01 percent of the Mexican population during the twentieth century, yet between 1943 and 1978, there were 33 films with ‘gypsy’ characters.¹ This is close to an average of one per year.² Twenty-eight of those films had ‘gypsy’ principal characters, twenty-six of whom were women. Twenty of those motion pictures relied on the narrative formula of a Spanish ‘gypsy’ (*gitana*) seductress who conquers the heart of a Mexican macho. Among those, ten films were produced by the Spanish mogul Cesáreo González. Lola Flores, the lead actress, played the role of a dangerously seductive *gitana* modeled on the archetype of Prosper Merimée’s novella *Carmen* (1845) and Julio Dantas’ play *A Severa* (1901). Other films were based on Miguel de Cervantes’ novella (1613) *La gitanilla* (*The Little Gypsy Girl*), Victor Hugo’s novel *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (1831), and Bram Stoker’s

1 A version of this article was published in Czech as “Vyvoj postavy ‘Cikánky’ v mexické kinematografii (1943–1978) a její rasové a nacionalistické implikace” *Romano džaniben*, 28.2 (2021): 9–29.

2 In this article, I use the terms ‘gypsy,’ ‘Gypsy,’ and ‘Romani’ to differentiate between the literary phantasm ‘gypsy,’ the exonym ‘Gypsies’ and the endonym ‘Romanies.’ Written with a small letter, the term ‘gypsy’ refers to the stereotype of the romantic traveler who abides by no rules and enjoys dancing and singing. Written with a capital letter, ‘Gypsy’ designates the exonym coined from the ethnonym ‘Egyptian’ due to the assumed connection with North Africa. ‘Romani people’ or ‘Romanies’ are self-appellations referring to a diasporic population that left India a thousand years ago and that has a history of persecution that includes their genocide during the Holocaust, where they were exterminated on a mass scale like the Jewish people. I also use the endonym ‘Calé’ and the exonym ‘*gitanos*’ to differentiate the Romani group that settled in the southern part of the Iberian Peninsula towards the end of the fifteenth century from its stereotypical image.

novel *Dracula* (1897). In these works, 'gypsy' characters are often othered and exoticized as strangers.³

Romanies are an extremely diverse group, but the cinematic Mexican 'gypsy' stereotype, over the course of 35 years, continued to rely on similar tropes. There were no Romanies participating in these films except for a few cast members in *Yesenia* (1971). These films were fictional narratives that had very little resemblance to the life of Romanies. A thorough analysis of the female 'gypsy' representation in Mexican cinema will reveal excessive nationalism, whitening racial policies, and the support of miscegenation (*mestizaje*) strategies. It will also expose preconceptions toward Romanies and other migratory and excluded communities. The questions I aim to answer in this article are: (1) how was the character of the 'gypsy' woman in Mexican cinema influenced by European literary archetypes and how has this figure transformed? And (2) what are the implications of female 'gypsy' characters for 'racial' and national symbolic systems in Mexico?

To answer these questions, I provide an overview of the 'gypsy' female stereotype and the 'gypsy' imagery in Mexican film production for three decades. The films I analyze were largely produced during the Golden Age of Mexican cinema and popular throughout Latin America, the Iberian Peninsula, and even Eastern Europe.⁴ Some of these films helped popularize Mexican culture, which is permeated by prejudice and racism against foreign populations.⁵ My goal is to introduce the reader to the ways in which Romanies were perceived during these years and how the ethnonym *gitana* became an empty signifier. A floating or empty signifier is a word that has no specific definition and instead has a diverse range of meanings. In this case, the *gitana* artifact in Mexican cinema helped communicate social anxieties related to 'race' and national character. These phenomena were often disconnected from the history or livelihood of Romani communities inhabiting Mexico;

3 I would like to express my gratitude to Carl Nagin for his honest feedback to my first draft and Prof. Arthur Autran for supporting my academic work in 2022, it was then that I could rewrite this chapter.

4 Although most specialists coincide that the Golden Age of Mexican cinema symbolically began with *Vámonos con Pancho Villa* (1936), not all agree about the point in time when it came to an end. Some of them believe it spans until the late fifties, while others claim it lasted until the late sixties.

5 Ranchero music, for instance, became popular during the fifties and sixties in countries like Chile, Colombia, Spain, and even the former Yugoslavia, where Mexican ranchero songs were interpreted by local artists becoming a hybrid genre known as Yu-Mex.

they were, rather, a means to express the way Mexico was inserted in certain global dynamics related to modernity.

This article analyzes Mexican racial ideology during the twentieth century by focusing on the figure of the mestizo. *Mestizaje* is “the sexual mixing, implicit in the spatial confraternization of the different people [the Spanish, indigenous groups, free and slaved groups of African origin], and the exchange of cultural elements, that results in new blended cultural forms” (Wade 38). Although Mexican cinema promoted mestizo values, it also supported the interests of ‘white’ elite groups by privileging whiteness. The ideology of *mestizaje*, first formulated by thinkers Justo Sierra, Manuel Gamio, and Molina Enríquez and then consolidated by José Vasconcelos, challenged scientific racism by embracing miscegenation as a nation-building strategy. But public and private institutions were mostly run by ‘whites’ who were preoccupied with national unification, and they needed to reinforce crossbreeding while still protecting ‘white’ interests. The ‘gypsy’ character could have been a veiled attempt to promote ‘racial’ miscegenation policies while at the same time promoting the idea of a nation in danger of dark nomads who pretended to be Europeans.

Several scholars, such as Dina Iordanova and José Angel Garrido, have explored the literary and cinematic ‘gypsy’ trope in Europe. Lou Charnon-Deutsch reviewed the Spanish ‘gypsy’ imagery in French and English romantic authors, and Eva Woods-Peiró analyzed early Spanish films. Yet, despite an extensive Latin American filmography that influenced the construction of antigypsyist stereotypes in twentieth century cinema, the image of ‘gypsies’ in those films has not been studied in depth. Ann Davis and Phil Powrie in *Carmen on Screen: An Annotated Filmography* (2006), one of the most exhaustive on the topic of Carmen, registered only four Latin American films (and only one of them Mexican). Marina Díaz López and José Gallardo Saborido studied the Mexican–Spanish co-productions during the Franco era, and, although ‘gypsy’-themed cinema is mentioned in these comprehensive studies, the stereotype in Mexican popular culture has been overlooked. This article thus fills a significant gap in the study of the ‘gypsy’ representation in Mexico, the country with one of the most important film industries in Latin America and the largest number of motion pictures with ‘gypsy’ characters.

For the purpose of this article and with the intention of covering as many film productions on the topic as possible, I assembled a corpus of Mexican ‘gypsy’-themed films based on a short survey that I

carried out informally.⁶ With that data, I created a list of references (film titles, directors, producers, and actors) that I used to conduct archival research in UNAM's Filmoteca, Cineteca Nacional, and Archivo General de la Nación. Based on this information, I created a table with a chronology of 33 'gypsy'-themed films outlining the most important plot elements and prominent character types. This article presents the four most common stereotypes: the 'white' Spanish *gitana*, the early *ranchero-españoladas*, the cinematic *Petenera*, and the Gothic marginal 'gypsy' character. This analysis will help us recognize which aspects of these films resonate with European literary archetypes and improve our understanding of Mexican, Iberian, and Latin American 'race' and national symbolic systems.

The 'White *Gitana*'

The films about so-called 'white gypsies' (*gitanas blancas*) are earlier Spanish and Argentinian films. The latter, in turn, are loosely based on *La gitanilla* (1613) by Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, widely considered a founding figure in Spanish literature. In this novella, a girl kidnapped by 'gypsies' becomes an accomplished singer and dancer of extraordinary beauty. The protagonist's exemplary character, physical attributes, and intelligence are over-emphasized by contrasting them with the despicable behavior of the 'gypsy' characters around her. In the novella, she is named Preciosa (Precious) for lacking the 'racial' traits of the stereotypical 'gypsy.' In *La gitanilla*, just as in a good number of these films, the protagonist's true aristocratic identity is revealed towards the end of the story. The evidence of her noble bloodline is her beauty, discretion, honesty, and white skin unaffected by the sun.

Films with 'white' female characters that were mixed-ancestry 'gypsies,' or rescued or stolen by 'gypsies,' became popular after the release of the Spanish silent film *La gitana blanca* in 1919.⁷ 'White gypsy' films achieved great success both in the Iberian Peninsula and in the Americas.

6 The survey was conducted among approximately one hundred respondents, who provided information about films, novels, or soap operas with 'gypsy' characters. Most of the respondents were selected for their knowledge of Mexican cinema and popular culture. More information about my theoretical background and methodology can be found in my unpublished Ph.D. dissertation.

7 Similarly, one of the principal characters of Victor Hugo's *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (1831) is the street dancer Esmeralda, assumed to be a 'gypsy.' Towards the

These stories portray ‘gypsies’ as alien to Spanishness because of ‘racial’ and color differences. Bloodline, religion, and skin color had been fundamental factors in Spanish identity formation since the union of the kingdoms of Aragon and Castile and the expulsion of Jews and Muslims from Spain between 1492 and 1502. The foundational Spanish nation-building experience is rooted in an obsession with blood purity based on a desire to purge itself of any African, Middle Eastern, and non-Christian elements.

Andalusia was an extension of Africa and a contact zone where populations, cultures, and religions clashed. Spanish ‘Gypsies’ embodied the continued presence of the defeated and exiled Jews, Muslims, and Africans (Goldberg *Sonidos* 87). In Mexico, the ‘white gypsies’ brought the public closer to the Other, and they were a step towards the assimilation of the mixed descent population by means of a whitening process initiated when President Porfirio Díaz (1884–1911) encouraged European immigration. Although his policies aimed to attract ‘white’ Russian, Austro-Hungarian, Greek, and Italian immigrants, Romanies were often among them and arrived from these countries too. After the Porfiriato, the program of eugenic interbreeding continued throughout the early twentieth century with policies that favored the settlement of Europeans, who were expected to produce offspring with the indigenous population for the ‘improvement’ of the Mexican ‘race.’

The trope of the ‘white gypsy’ had a similar effect on Spanish and Mexican audiences, but it had different purposes. Spain’s ruling class did not promote miscegenation; instead, they promoted hybrid cultural forms like flamenco. In *White Gypsies: Race and Stardom in Spanish Musical Films*, Eva Woods-Peiró argues that in Spain, “whiteness provided the audiences of these box office hits with ideological solutions to the ‘problem’ of ‘race’ and its protracted debates since the mid-nineteenth century” (1). In Mexico, post-revolutionary mestizo ideology—a form of soft eugenics—justified the ethnic superiority of the blending of the ‘races’ and privileged those with ‘bronze’ skin over darker-skinned individuals. As opposed to the narrow colonial caste definition of a mestizo—the son of a Spaniard and an indigenous person—José Vasconcelos’ essay *La raza cósmica* (1925) supported the union of all ‘original races’: Amerindians, European, African, and Asian. Romanies were seen as embodying genetic material collected across continents, which after centuries made them

end of Hugo’s novel, it is revealed that Esmeralda was kidnapped by ‘gypsies,’ and is in fact the daughter of a French prostitute.

more 'white' than 'black.'⁸ In a way, the 'racially' hybrid 'gypsy' women in these motion pictures personified the epitome of Vasconcelos' ideology. This racist discourse was just another way to justify the claim to superiority of those of mixed ancestry but whiter skin and had an impact on which scripts were ultimately filmed and who acted in them.

The stereotype of the 'white gypsy' first appeared in Latin America as a character played by the Argentinian singing and dancing sensation Imperio Argentina. Her 1936 role of a pale 'gypsy' in the Spanish production *Morena clara* (light-skinned woman) later inspired the Mexican motion picture *Morenita clara* (1943). *Morenita clara* tells the story of a mixed-ancestry 'gypsy' girl—played by superstar actress Chachita—who reunites with her non-'gypsy' grandparents after her father's death. Besides the film reflecting on social mobility, *Morenita clara* represents the new mestizo: an improved Mexican of nobler feelings and whiter skin. Morenita Clara is eloquent, innocent, and an innate entertainer who sings and dances. She is a 'white *gitana*' child character who, despite her age, presents all the positive attributes of both 'gypsies' and 'white' Mexicans. As with Indigenous populations, Morenita is separated from her community and transferred at a young age to an upper-class family to help her achieve a certain level of 'civilization.' But unlike Mexicans of indigenous origin, Morenita Clara had fair skin like her adoptive family. In this film, as in many that will follow, lightly tanned *gitanas* in Mexican cinema were seen as 'gypsies' of European origin who happened to be roaming in Mexico.

Morenita clara is an emblematic example of 'racial' group dynamics during the Mexican post-revolutionary era. It conveys the message that children from mixed marriages have the possibility of passing as respected members of Mexican society as long as they have fair skin. This contradictory message permeated cultural production at the time: "while the mixed-race brown-skin individual became the esteemed national representative, the white phenotype was (and still is) very much prized" (Sue 18). The brown-skin mestizo was exalted in the post-revolutionary murals and ideology, while upper-class Mexicans continued to be fair-skinned.

Looking further into the symbolic gray areas of this film, the oxymoronic title—*Morenita Clara*—is also reminiscent of the Mexican system

8 The origin of Spanish Romanies was the Indian subcontinent. Most of them crossed Europe to reach Iberia, while some also traversed North Africa and arrived at the Iberian Peninsula via Gibraltar. They subsequently reached America starting with the voyages of Columbus.

of 'racial' beliefs. While 'morena' may be used as a euphemism for 'black,' it is more often used as someone with darker than average skin. By juxtaposing 'morena' with '*clara*' (light), the film producers promoted the image of the cosmic race while furthering the idea that the 'white' ideal surpassed the Indigenous, the African, and, indeed, the Romani. Mexican *mestizaje* ideology expected 'race' mixing to produce an enduring population that would become a cosmic human race. According to Vasconcelos, it was through the interbreeding with 'white'—and to a lesser extent Asian—individuals that Mexicans would achieve 'civilization.' Although he rejected 'racial' purity and pushed towards interethnic contact and coexistence, cosmic race ideology can now be seen as a form of soft eugenics for favoring mixing with those 'races' regarded at the time as the most fit.

Other titles of 'gypsy' films referring to Morenas are *La morena de mi copla* and *De color moreno*, which starred Lola Flores. More Mexican films with similar plots followed, such as *Zorina* (1949) and *La gitana blanca* (1954). Mexican 'gypsy' films based on the impersonator trope—*Zorina*, *La gitana blanca*, and *Yesenia*—were not limited to any one decade. For that reason, the stereotype of the 'white *gitana*' seems to be the most widespread and long-lasting. Almost anybody could claim 'gypsy' roots, without having the slight idea of who Romanies were. Some 'gypsy' characters based on the impersonator trope were runaways who identified with a carefree lifestyle and fantasized about either having been stolen by or given away to 'gypsies.'

The impersonator trope is founded on the idea that Romani people do not exist, and that one can put on and take off Romani identities as costumes. These ideas are reinforced by the fact that Romanies' 'racial' identity in Mexico is seen as fluid and situational. Unlike the racist dynamic they have had to endure for centuries in Europe, Romanies in Mexico can blend in with 'white' mestizos. There was a color and 'racial' range of what was considered an acceptable performer in Mexican cinema. While Calé would have been discriminated against for their dark skin in Spain, in Mexico where there were people with darker skin color, Romanies were on the 'white' side of the spectrum. These phenotypical similarities between Romanies and 'white' mestizo Mexicans can be seen in Romani dancer Carmen Amaya and non-Romani entertainer Lola Flores (two actresses who, along with the characters they impersonate, will be examined in the next two sections.) This comparison stands out in an era when most Mexican stars were upper-middle class and widely seen as 'white.'

Early *Ranchero-españoladas*

Ranchero-españoladas are a hybrid formula of two profitable national genres: *españoladas* and *ranchero* comedies. The *españolada* genre, developed during Francisco Franco's regime (1936–1975), popularized the romantic Spanish myth depicting traditional scenes that included 'gypsies' and flamenco. In *rancheras*, the Mexican cowboy or *charro* is the winner in a tale of rivals with "generously interspersed musical numbers punctuating a romantic story" (Berg 98). For Sergio de la Mora, the cinematic *charro* was the prototypical heterosexual male associated with the post-revolutionary state apparatus (7). Through the love affair between a Spanish 'gypsy' woman and a Mexican *charro*, these filmic foundational fictions reflected on the idea of a miscegenated nation. It was during the process of national consolidation that followed the Mexican Revolution (1944–1947) that the *ranchero-españolada* formula took shape. During these years, the principal roles in 'gypsy'-themed films were played by some of the biggest-name Mexican and Spanish singers and actors/actresses. Examples include *Jalisco canta en Sevilla* (1949), featuring Jorge Negrete and Carmen Sevilla, and *Ahí viene Martín Corona* (1952) and its sequel *Vuelve Martín Corona* (1952), featuring Pedro Infante and Sara Montiel. Infante and Negrete were regarded as two of the greatest actors and *ranchero* singers of the Golden Age of Mexican cinema.

The central figures of early *ranchero-españoladas* were inspired by the characters of Carmen and Severa. In Prosper Mérimée's and Georges Bizet's *Carmen*, the protagonist is a Spanish 'gypsy' delinquent who seduces a number of men before she is murdered by her lover, Don José. Lead female 'gypsy' characters in *ranchero-españoladas* are also reminiscent of Severa, a historical figure whose life is immortalized in the eponymous play and novel *A Severa* (1901) by Julio Dantas. Severa is a 'gypsy' prostitute who is in love with a famous bullfighter, the Marialva count. She is the myth of origin of Fado, the Portuguese national music genre, and constitutes a perfect example of the stereotype of a singing 'gypsy.' Both antiheroines are nomads, are involved in illegal activities, and use seduction as a weapon to manipulate men. They are young, beautiful, and their skin is fair enough that they could pass as non-'gypsies' if it were not for the clothes and jewelry they wore, their professions, and the people they were involved with. Carmen and Severa eventually became the epitome of Spanish and Portuguese identities.

The first *gitana* films that departed from the love story of the Mexican man and the 'gypsy' helped constitute the image of the Andalusian

femme fatale in later films. José Díaz Morales, a Spanish immigrant to Mexico, was the director and playwright of *Una gitana en México* (1945), *Una gitana en Jalisco* (1947), and *Los amores de un torero* (1945). In the first two comedies, Paquita de Ronda played the ‘gypsy’ temptress; in the latter, Romani flamenco legend Carmen Amaya played a proud and mysterious dancer named Carmen. Meira Goldberg recounts that the bursting passion Amaya displays when she danced was described by *The Brooklyn Academy of Music* magazine (1943) as “a human bombshell,” and a “human tornado” (“Border” 210). The Italian conductor Arturo Toscanini also declared that “(he) had never seen a dancer with so much fire,” and the English conductor Leopold Stokowski added that “she had the devil in her body” (210). Goldberg researched Carmen Amaya and asserted that she represented a “heart of darkness in the New World” for her embodiment of the Spanish ‘gypsy’ aesthetic (151). Amaya’s characterization as a force of evil or an element of nature is a reminder that ‘gypsies’ are often considered savages who are closer to their instincts and behave in an unpredictable and violent fashion.

Amaya was the first Romani flamenco dancer to achieve world recognition through her transatlantic tours. She was known for the performance of a dance style that fits the stereotype of the lawless ‘gypsy.’ Amaya personified Carmen, and she embodied the limits of the acceptable ‘racial’ and sexual otherness. *Los amores de un torero*, the only Mexican production in which Amaya starred, played a significant role in introducing Latin American audiences to the art of flamenco and, more importantly, in implanting the idea of the ‘gypsy’ *femme fatale*. Amaya also performed a short number in *Música en la noche* (1958), where she portrayed a European immigrant whose fair skin deemed her desirable. Not only did her skin color set her apart from the average Indigenous person (skin fair enough to pass as a non-‘gypsy’), but she also belonged to a higher social class. This could be confirmed by the fact that she was invited to perform in events that only the ‘white’ upper class attended.

In *Ahí viene Martín Corona*, Sara Montiel plays the double character of Rosario Medina / Carmen Linares. Rosario is a Spanish woman who immigrates to Mexico to claim her inheritance. When she runs into trouble, she decides to disguise herself as a *gitana* (Carmen Linares) to make some extra money singing in bars and cafes. Although Rosario ends up begging for Martín’s love, when she impersonates Carmen, she is daunting—almost hostile. The dual role of Rosario / Carmen shows the ambivalence of the mixed-ethnicity Andalusian whose identity

encapsulates that of the 'gypsy.' Carmen Linares was a daring woman who became transformed into a 'gypsy' when she sang and danced. Similar to Severa and Carmen, it was through her performance that her defiant personality would fully emerge. She would wear her hair down, dress in revealing attire, and act aggressively.

In *Gitana tenía que ser* (1953), *Dos Charros y una Gitana* (1956), and *Tercio de Quités* (1951), the leading men's occupations are like that of the Count of Marialva in Severa's story. Severa's tragic narrative is tied to her love affair with the Count of Marialva, one of the most talented Portuguese bullfighters and cattle breeders of his time. In these three films, the main characters are bullfighters or *charros*, who are the epitome of masculinity in Mexican and Iberian cultures. The figure of the *torero* is present in the opera *Carmen* as Escamillo and also appears in the dramatic, novelistic, and film versions of *Severa*. In both the film and the play *Severa*, a bullfight serves as a metaphor for the dangerous relationship between the 'gypsy' Severa and her aggressive male counterpart. This perilous liaison is reproduced in both *Dos Charros y una Gitana* and *Tercio de Quités*. While the bullfighter was common in Mexican *gitana* films, the *charro* was more prominent. The fearless *charro* represented the hypermasculine image of the Mexican macho for his many talents breaking wild horses, his deep singing voice that captivates women, and his play-hard-to-get attitude.

The *gitana* archetype was not solely suggestive of Spanishness but was an evocation of the failed attempt to improve the 'race' by means of the immigration of undesirable Europeans, whose ability to adapt to the local culture and work habits was deemed questionable. Mexican eugenicists argued that the *mestizaje* was a good solution to put an end to the indigenous 'race' that was slowly diluting through the physiological laws of inheritance, which maintained that superior 'races' would overcome the weakest. During the last two decades of the nineteenth century and the first decade of the twentieth, European migrants represented superior and virtuous beings that would 'better' the Mexican indigenous 'race,' but towards the fifties, they were seen as scroungers who were not necessarily working towards the improvement of the nation. These undesirables possessed traits, such as superstition, vice, criminality, laziness, and infertility, that were often connected to the primitive and degenerated 'races.' Although the plot in the *ranchero-españoladas* presents the relationship of a Mexican man and a Spanish 'gypsy' woman, their union is never consolidated through a mestizo offspring, probably to illustrate the infertility of degenerated 'race.'

The Cinematic Petenera

Perhaps the most common form of the ‘gypsy’ stereotype in Iberia and Latin America was the figure of La Petenera, the sexually aggressive diasporic woman who has a tragic death at a young age. The Petenera films, a subset of *ranchero-españoladas*, had Lola Flores as their lead actress playing an attractive and dangerous nomad for audiences on both sides of the Atlantic. Flores was the epitome of the ‘racially’ ambivalent ‘gypsy’ and one of the best-known entertainers in the history of Spanish show business. She was a dancer, a singer, and an actress in more than 30 films. Flores did not identify as a *gitana*, although there are rumors concerning one of her grandparents being Romani and her two most important relationships being with Calé men: early in her career, she partnered with flamenco singer Manolo Caracol, and later, she married guitarist Antonio González “El Pescaílla.”

Flores navigated in the interstices between Gypsy and *paya*; her greatest ability was performing as a ‘gypsy’ without carrying the symbolic burden of being Romani. Her performance reminds us of minstrelsy, with Lola stereotypically depicting a dumb, sensual, and careless ‘gypsy’ by exaggerating her Andalusian accent, with folkloric dancing numbers emulating a spirit possession. Flores’ passing phenomenon was consistent with the experience of many light-skin Mexicans of indigenous background who successfully navigated elite circles and with the experience of uneducated and newly arrived Spanish immigrants who had a higher chance to succeed than the average indigenous person.

The issue of Lola Flores’ ‘race’ was significant in Mexico and Spain because both were pigmentocratic societies with strong ethno-‘racial’ hierarchical belief systems. While Spanish Calé audiences read Flores as *paya* (non-Calé), *payos* on both sides of the Atlantic read her differently. In Spain, they thought of her as a racialized ‘Gypsy,’ with her sharp nose, brunette skin, wild black mane, and big black eyes highlighted by large amounts of *kohl*, a traditional Arab eye cosmetic. In a way, the controversy surrounding her grandfather’s Romani origin in mass-circulation Spanish magazines supplements the vision *payos* had of Flores’s ‘race’: a woman with ‘Gypsy’ blood who married a Calé and had Romani children. In Mexico, though, her skin tone flips the equation, because her dark complexion is seen as the consequence of tanning. Dark as it is, Lola’s skin tone seems ‘white’ in comparison to the majority population of darker Indigenous and Afro-Latino individuals. Since Mexicans seldomly had contact with Romanies, Lola was

mostly seen as the Orientalized version of a 'white' Spanish woman, with her baroque golden jewelry and brightly colored nails and lips. To some extent, her ethnic chameleonic abilities made her one of the most sought-after Spanish actresses of her generation.

From 1953 to 1970, Lola Flores starred in ten Spanish–Mexican co-productions where she played the role of a seductive *gitana* entertainer. All of these motion pictures were financed by the Spanish producer Cesáreo González through the production house Suevia Films and followed the *ranchero-españolada* formula. Lola Flores made her debut in *Reportaje* (1953), directed by Emilio “el Indio” Fernández, regarded as the founding figure of the Golden Age of Mexican cinema. *Reportaje*, released in 1953, was a star-filled affair that included the most prominent Hispanic actors and actresses of the time: Dolores del Río, Jorge Negrete, María Félix, Pedro Infante, Joaquín Pardave, Miroslava, Libertad Lamarque, Germán Valdés “Tin-Tan,” and many more. Among these entertainers was Flores, who would become the personification of La Petenera in Mexican cinema.

In her next two films, *¡Ay, pena, penita, pena!* (1953) and *Tú y las nubes* (1955), Lola plays singers pursuing a career in the entertainment industry who end up enamoring *charros*.⁹ In *¡Ay, pena, penita, pena!*, Carmen Heredia, a bullfighter's girlfriend, travels to Mexico accompanied by a pair of brothers. She falls in love with both but prefers the attention of the *charro*. Like Severa, she finds success as a singer with her ability to express her soul through music. The story of the singer who tries her luck in Mexico is repeated in *Tú y las nubes*, where Dolores plans a Latin American tour but is robbed when she crosses the United States southern border into Mexico. The *charro* who rescues her would eventually have his heart broken after finding out that Dolores is also interested in a *torero*.

From 1952 to 1963, González had adjusted Suevia Films' machinery using models and thematic lines with proven track records. He had found a reliable Mexican working team, and together, they produced a series of films starring Lola Flores. Flores was also featured in four films co-produced by the Zacarías family production companies. *La faraona* (1956) and *Lola torbellino* (1956) were directed by René Cardona, who was married into the Zacarías family. Miguel Zacarías, one of the

9 Castro mentions false co-productions, with the objective of benefiting from both government subsidies. This could lead to affecting the order of appearance of the actors, and the addition of a Spanish director (128). This is why almost all Lola Flores films had two titles, a Mexican and a Spanish one.

leading forces in commercial Mexican cinema, was responsible for writing the script of *La faraona*. In the latter and *Lola torbellino*, the protagonist shares the screen with the legendary singer Agustín Lara, the foremost Mexican composer of his day.

In *La Faraona*, the image of Iberian internal and external Others—the ‘gypsy’ and the Moors—converge through Lola Flores. The nickname Faraona is a great example of a double stereotype that can be deciphered through the etymology of the word ‘gypsy.’ When Romani people were first seen in Western Europe in the fifteenth century, they were often mistaken for Tartars or wrongly identified as Athinganoi and Egyptians. That is how the exonyms ‘Gypsy’ and ‘Gitano’ evolved from the ethnonyms Egyptian and Egiptano. The stage name *La Faraona* (female pharaoh) evokes the purported Egyptianness of ‘gypsies’ and brings to mind Cleopatra, the original African *femme fatale*. Cleopatra, the best-known female pharaoh, was the prototype of the dangerously seductive woman who, through sexual liaisons, built partnerships that allowed her kingdom to thrive. *La Faraona* was a stage name that several flamenco artists adopted, among them Juana Amaya (Carmen Amaya’s aunt), Pilar Montoya, and Lola Flores.

In *La Faraona*, the musical numbers reveal a cross-cultural style that merges ‘gypsy’ and North African stereotypes. Around a bonfire, Lola and her troupe sing to the rhythm of a guitar and the beat of palmas: “Oh Gitana, you are a Moor, a Moor from the Moreria (Moorish community), if you were to fall in love with me, the Alhambra would be yours.” Although *La Faraona* is a black-and-white film, the scene where Lola Flores dances to Maurice Ravel’s “Bolero” is in full color. This scene is a great example of the crossover nature of Lola Flores films and a convergence of her Faraona/Petenera stage personas. The combination of music, dance, dialogue, and costumes created a hyperbolic and orientalized version of Carmen in Mexico. For Meyra Goldberg, Carmen was the paradigmatic hybrid Gitana: “She fascinates, precisely because she treads the line between Saracen and European worlds” (*Sonidos* 88). Her performance lies at the intersections of black and white, slave and free, Christian and heathen (88). The “adopted” *gitana*, Lola Flores, represented the epitome of the Andalusian whose ‘racial’ and ethnic common ground was Iberian, Sephardic, North African, and Romani.

From 1962–1968, Suevia Films experienced a period of decline that was reflected in the exhaustion of the *ranchero-españolada* formula. Lola acted in two motion pictures directed by Gilberto Martínez Solares in 1963, *De color moreno* and *La Gitana y el Charro*. During the 1950s

and early 1960s, *gitana* Mexican co-productions changed very little. Martínez Solares set the scene of these films in a space that architecturally and geographically resembled the Iberian south, a similar location to that in which Carmen and Severa had become legends. *La Gitana y el Charro* would be Lola's last film set in the context of ranches and the countryside. At that point, rural landscapes were so scarce in the Mexican central valley that the film had to be shot in Guatemala. The timeless farmhouses that reminded us of nineteenth-century Iberia were exchanged for the yachts and Pacific beach-front holiday houses of Lola's last Mexican film, *Una señora estupenda* (1967).

Lola was a professional cross-dresser who performed 'gypsiness' in Spain, where Romanies were and continue to be stigmatized. Romani-ness in Spain has been a social stigma that is not contingent on 'racial' traits as much as on ethnic differences, which are mostly behavioral and could be easily transposed to Andalusian ethnic traits. As with many Andalusians, Lola was so 'racially' and ethnically ambiguous that she could drift in and out of Romani identity and safely perform as a 'gypsy' in an act similar to minstrelsy. Lola's phenotype allowed her to be marketed as a 'true' Spanish with exotic eyes, jet black hair, and bronze skin. She represented the ideal overlap between Romani and *payo* identities and freely wore Romani identity throughout her career, to the point that she was accepted among Romanies to a large extent for forming a family with a Caló.

In the Petenera films, Lola represents the uneducated mass of Spanish immigrants that had arrived in Mexico in the 1950s and 1960s, which contrasted with the Republican intellectual refugees who arrived in the 1930s. According to Clara Lida, a historian of Spanish immigrants in Mexico, most Spanish immigrants in those decades were young men from 16 to 30 years old, while the Spanish women who migrated had a low participation in manufacturing activities and instead represented a high percentage of prostitutes (Hernández and Miño 208). They spoke Spanish with a strong Andalusian accent, and their clothes were reminiscent of those of Spanish peasants.

The Dangerously Marginal Gothic 'Gypsy'

The 'gypsy' films from the 1960s and 1970s signal the end of the *ranchero-españolada* era. The female 'gypsy' motive changed from the Iberian *femme fatale* central figure to the marginal Eastern European Vamp

found in Gothic narratives. The 'gypsy' character changed from the ignorant Spanish woman to a side character in horror and Gothic tales. Carmen- and Severa-type stories were on their way out; among the new referents were Victor Hugo's *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (1833) and Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897). In 1960, a family of 'gypsies' appeared in the children's film *Caperucita y sus tres amigos*, loosely based on Charles Perrault's *Little Red Riding Hood* which was disseminated in print form starting in the seventeenth century (1697). In the movie, Little Red Riding Hood is stolen by the 'gypsies' and dressed to appear like one of them. She then performs in the family troupe together with her dazzling adoptive 'gypsy' sister, Esmeralda, the name of the 'gypsy' female character in *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*. *Caperucita y sus tres amigos* was marketed for children and relied on the gruesome myth of 'gypsies' stealing babies.

There are other literary instances where 'gypsies' are portrayed as inferior in comparison to other 'white' Europeans. In fact, Eraclio Zepeda parodied Porfirio Díaz's whitening undertaking by writing the short story "Gente bella" (1979). In this racist political parable, a dictator sends a mission to Emperor Franz Joseph of Austria asking for 300 families to "whiten the race" and "put an end to laziness" (Zepeda 41). Wise men who advise the dictator agree on this mission based on scientific principles, the goal of which is to "whiten the homeland from blackness" (41). By importing complete families, they prevent immigrant men from seducing Mexican women and going against good customs. But to the dictator's surprise, the Emperor cheats him by sending a boatload of 'gypsies'—the same people who (according to the story) had delayed the progress of Europe due to their laziness. Despite there not being historical evidence supporting Zepeda's story, it relates to anecdotal evidence of 'gypsies' being part of the dark-skinned Central and Eastern European immigrants, specifically "Hungarians," who arrived in Mexico during the three decades of Porfirio Díaz's presidency. Stories like "Gente bella" portray Central and Eastern European immigration from countries where imaginaries are closer to characters like vampires and werewolves instead of *toreros* and flamenco dancers.¹⁰

10 In "Gente bella" (beautiful people), Hungarian authorities agree to send 'gypsy' families away to control their population in Transylvania (43). Since the origin of many of the Romani families arriving in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century was the Austro-Hungarian Empire, one of the terms used in Mexico to designate Romanies is *hungaros* (Hungarians).

In *La loba* (1965) and *Santo vs. las lobas* (1976), 'gypsies' are the assistants of supernatural lupine characters that originated in the short story "Dracula's Guest" (1914), a deleted chapter of Bram Stoker's *Dracula*. In *La loba*, the she-wolf, the house-servant of the woman who turns into a devouring animal, is a 'gypsy' man. This motion picture is regarded as an early serious attempt to stimulate the production of horror films in Mexico. Coincidentally, *Santo vs. las lobas* also involves she-wolves and 'gypsies.' But the film is squarely in the wrestlemania genre (*cine de luchadores*) with a science fiction/horror twist, as seen when El Santo fights against evil forces with the help of a 'gypsy' woman. In both films, 'gypsies,' who look increasingly more mysterious, use their physical and supernatural powers to aid the principal characters. Both films have suggestive nudity during the she-wolf transformation scenes, which, together with cheap make-up effects of bloody bites and sudden hair growth, set up an eerie environment for the 'gypsy' character.

Alucarda (1978) is regarded as one of the most daring horror films in the history of Mexican cinema for its powerful religious counter-narrative, loaded with erotic lesbian scenes, exorcisms, and crucifixions.¹¹ The central characters in *Alucarda*, the title character and Justine, were inspired by Sheridan Le Fanu's novel *Carmilla* (1882) and the Marquis de Sade's *Justine, or the Misfortunes of Virtue* (1791). The adolescents meet in a convent that also serves as an orphanage. When they come across an enigmatic hunchbacked 'gypsy,' they follow him to the woods where a 'gypsy' sorceress reads Justine's palm. This triggering event puts the story into motion as her magic attracts a diabolic presence through an amulet. Once Justine and Alucarda are possessed by the forces of evil, they participate in orgies orchestrated by the 'gypsy' sexual sorceress. Unlike Stoker's male-centered narrative, in *Alucarda*, beautiful young women are responsible for seducing other women and spreading vampirism among them.

At first sight, *Alucarda* does not seem to be directly associated with vampirism, but there are hidden references that connect the story with this literary tradition. The name Alucarda is anagrammatically related to Dracula (Alucarda is Dracula spelled backwards). Also, Alucarda's mother's name is Lucy Westenra, one of *Dracula's* female vampires. Like

11 This outrageous film based on taboo topics found limitations in its production and distribution. Although the cast was mostly Mexican, the dialogues were in English. Despite having been restricted to the B film circuit, it became a referent of Gothic horror in Mexico and is nowadays regarded as one of the most important cult films in the history of Mexican cinema.

Dracula, in *Alucarda*, ‘gypsies’ are responsible for serving vampires. In Stoker’s classic Gothic novel, the vampire’s mobility is limited since he cannot tolerate sunlight. For this reason, he needs the help of ‘gypsies,’ who transport the boxes with the vampire cargo from his castle to England. For Stoyan Tchapravov, “Gypsies are central to the plot of the novel, without them the Count’s threat to anyone except the local Transylvanians is rendered essentially absent” (532). This proves to be true for *Alucarda*, too: if it were not for the presence of ‘gypsies,’ the vampire adolescents would not have been able to spread their satanic spell across the convent. In addition to *Alucarda*, *La venganza de las mujeres vampiro* (1970) is another example of ‘gypsies’ being instrumental in the expansion of the rule of female vampires striving for world domination.

During the 1960s and 1970s, ‘gypsies’ were no longer associated with flamenco and *mestizaje* but, rather, with she-wolves, vampires, and satanism. ‘Gypsies’ in Gothic horror films were generally in servant and underling roles. These horror films took place in old dwellings surrounded by the woods and mountains, spaces that resembled the Carpathian range and neighboring natural areas in Eastern Europe. Perhaps this change was due to this region holding greater mysteries than Spain for its remoteness and cultural and linguistic differences. The stereotype of the Andalusian *gitana* was gradually transformed into that of an accomplice of Satan. The new image was a more exaggerated version of La Petenera; ‘gypsies’ were fearless, sadistic, and conjurers of black magic. In this way, their image became associated with Gothic literature, and then those archetypes were passed down to cinema.

The last two films in this series, *Renzo, el gitano* (1973) and *Yesenia* (1971), were probably inspired by Eastern European Romanies. *Renzo* is the only known Mexican movie with a male ‘gypsy’ as the leading character, while *Yesenia* was the last motion picture of this era with a ‘gypsy’ leading role. *Yesenia* diverges from previous ‘gypsy’ films by seeking the advice of a Kalderash Romani family whose members also acted in the film.¹² In that sense, *Yesenia* brought a kind of authenticity to an industry that for a long time lacked input from the people who

12 In an informal interview, Gianni Kwick Castelo, a Rom Kalderash, spoke about the participation of his family in *Yesenia*. The same information was corroborated by Neyra Alvarado in her presentation “La fábrica de lo rom en películas mexicanas” given at the DocRoma Conference that took place in Madrid from May 24 to 26, 2023.

were being represented. This film is also innovative for being set in a very particular time in history: the French intervention in Mexico (1861–1867). The plot is like that of the 'white *gitana*' films, but Yesenia has traits of every previous stereotype. Emilio García Riera, one of the most important Mexican cinema critics, comments in *Historia documental del cine mexicano*: "An erroneous antiracism canonizes the sons of exotic 'races' to clarify they are actually white. In the film you cannot tell the difference between the Gypsies and the whites, because they are all the same color: white, tanned, and bronzed" (224). At that point, Vasconcelos' mestizo ideology has already left its mark in an indelible way on the 'gypsy' image.

As Mexico was slowly transitioning to a neoliberal state, its national image was revised. Similar to what Anikó Imre noted about "screen gypsies" in Hungary, nationalism clashed "with a world of economic and cultural globalization, where the nation's purity and centrality was under intense scrutiny" (16). Imre argues that the 'gypsy' image provided an outlet for the conflict generated between the national and global, a phenomenon that could have also impacted the exhaustion of the *ranchero-españolada* formula and change of the 'gypsy' trope from Spanish to Eastern European (16). 'Gypsies' became cinematic expressions of repulsive and threatening erotic transgressors originating in communist lands.

Similar to what had occurred in the United States and Britain, the 'gypsy' image of the sixties and seventies was associated with the Cold War and an increased fear of infiltration. In this sense, Cynthia Hendershot's analysis of horror films with sexualized monsters in American cinema could be extended to Mexico. When the Gothic 'gypsy' films were made, Mexico was quickly changing its policies to align with capitalist ideals, and there were plenty of Mexican remakes of American films. In them, vampires and werewolves were allegories of social concerns that symbolized the communist takeover and relied on the erotic to reinforce taboos (Hendershot 3–4). The monsters in these horror pictures were part of Eastern European folklore and common during the Cold War. The 'gypsies' were among those cinematic characters that expressed fear of a regime change and fear of communism in a nation that neighbored the largest capitalist nation, the United States, but at the same time had a long communist history.

Conclusion

In this article, I examine the image of the female 'gypsy' in Mexican cinema, beginning with films produced during the Golden Age and continuing until 1978. The four types of stereotypes I isolate in my analysis are the 'white' *gitana*, the female 'gypsy' in *ranchero-españolada*, the cinematic Petenera, and the Gothic 'gypsy.' The first expands on the child-stolen-by-'gypsies' trope found in Cervantes' *La gitaniilla*. This character maintains the miscegenation ideal promoted by post-revolutionary 'racial' policies. The cinematic Patenera comes from early *ranchero-españoladas*, a genre that depicts the union between a *charro* and an Andalusian *gitana* and shares the plot lines of Merimée's and Bizet's *Carmen* and Dantas' *Severa*. These romantic films allegorize a long-lasting colonial relationship that introduces a power inversion. The filmic foundational fictions portray a shift of political, economic, and cultural center to the old colony, represented by the masculine macho who disdains the love of a Spanish *gitana*, a woman to have fun with but not to marry. A subsection of the *ranchero-españoladas* feature Lola Flores, who portrays the character of La Petenera, the Orientalized *femme fatale*. In the 1960s, only three *ranchero-españolada* productions were released, and none was a blockbuster success. After Flores's return to Spain in 1970, the Petenera trope was never experimented with again.

After the exhaustion of the Andalusian *gitana* trope, a new image arose: the Gothic Eastern European 'gypsy.' In the seventies, 'gypsies' were more often supporting characters in horror films based on those found in Victor Hugo's *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* and Bram Stoker's *Dracula*. The daunting 'gypsies' channeled communist fears during decades of political turmoil in Latin America when the spread of communism led to the intervention of the United States. Mexico's revolution precedes that of Russia and China, and fears of an uprising were revived by the student movement repressed in Tlatelolco (1968), the election of Salvador Allende (1970), and the military victory of the Sandinista National Liberation Front in Nicaragua (1979). The ghost of communism was represented by she-wolves and vampires who had 'gypsies' as their main collaborators.

Throughout the film history recounted here, 'gypsy' characters were perhaps most often Spanish, because Mexican elites had a certain familiarity with Spanish cultural representations and French romantic travelogues written about Spain. Mexico is geographically, as well as ideologically, far removed from the Indian subcontinent, Anatolia, the

Balkans, and Eastern Europe, the regions where the largest Romani populations once lived and continue to live. The south of the Iberian Peninsula, though, had some of the oldest Romani settlements in Europe, and their image was more accessible, owing to Mexico being a former Spanish colony. It was because of this shared history that the 'gypsy' was often depicted as an Andalusian. I believe that the cliché of the *gitana* was largely based on the image of low-class Spanish immigrants, who often came from the south of Spain. *Gitano* characters performed as Andalusians through the way they spoke, what they wore, and how they made a living. Also, the locations of these films were mixed landscapes that could be mistaken for Andalusia, Alentejo, or Mexico. The ambiguity of settings was also expressed through the 'racial' ambivalence of Spanish 'gypsies,' since the south of Spain was a contact zone where Romani, Jewish, North African, and other populations coexisted.


The 'gypsy' stereotype in Mexican cinema helped establish a clearer notion of "us" and "them" during the nation-building process. These films were meant to bind the nation through secular discourses that pointed to traditional music and dance, the figure of the *charro*, rural landscapes, and the conquest of the Other. Scenes of love and attachment to the homeland contrasted with the character of the low-class wanderer who inhabits caravans. In these rural landscapes, 'gypsies' coexisted with Mexican symbols and narratives. By representing the Other in this way, Mexicans solidified their identity and symbols. It was a matter of collective pride that the *charro* had the means to conquer females outside of his group. Though the Spanish 'gypsy' was fetishized and depicted as sexually irresistible, the Mexican nation was never in danger because these unions did not produce any offspring.

There were unsettling aspects of the way nation and ethnicity were rendered in Mexican 'gypsy' films. Sometimes, there were purposefully created ethnic concoctions, and at other times, 'gypsies' were portrayed negatively out of ignorance. Representing 'gypsies' as Romanian, Hungarian, or Spanish rather than as a distinct ethnic group implied that there was no need to explain the Romanies' thousand-year history of deprivation, genocide, and displacement and, therefore, the erasure of their history. According to Emilio Gallardo Saborido, *ranchero-españoladas* were "not a paternalist assertion of Romani culture in Spain and Mexico, but a cinema full of generalizations, conventions and exaggerations" (171). Working-class Mexicans did not go to the movies to endure vicarious pain or to be educated about the traumatic history of the Romanies; they just wanted to be entertained.

Directors produced amusing comedies and melodramas that generated high revenue without being aware of Romani history, in part because the first study about Mexican Romanies only appeared in English in 1962 (see D. W. Pickett, *Prolegomena to the Study of Gypsies in Mexico*). For this reason, scriptwriters did not generate a more accurate Romani portrayal, partly because, at the time, even most Mexican Romani families were unaware of the history of their diaspora.¹³ Even if there had been the means to research their history, the members of the audience who watched these films were largely uneducated, and some of them were born and died in the same town. More importantly, most nations were made up of sedentary groups, and depicting the life of diasporic populations and refugees in a positive light would have undermined the nation's goals of stability, cohesiveness, and homogeneity.

'Gypsies' were malleable characters that transcended space, since they could come from Spain, Romania, or Hungary. They were stateless, phenotypically ambivalent, and could be characterized as dark- or light-skinned characters. This plasticity allowed the 'gypsy' image to be used in different contexts, from castles and haunted mansions to modern pool parties and actual Latin American venues. In short, 'gypsies' were read as nationally and 'racially' ambivalent, and that is how these films filtered messages related to color, 'race,' and ethnicity in Mexico.

ORCID®

Mariana Sabino Salazar  <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4580-2341>

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Alucarda. Dir. Juan López Moctezuma. Yuma Films, 1978.

Los amores de un torero. Dir. José Díaz Morales. Perf. Carmen Amaya. Producciones Guillermo y Pedro Calderón, 1945.

Caperucita y sus tres amigos. Dir. Roberto Rodríguez. Producciones Roberto Rodríguez, 1960.

La faraona. Dir. René Cardona. Perf. Lola Flores. Dina Films & Suevia Films, 1956.

13 A decade later, in 1972, Ian Hancock established the Romani Archives and Documentation Center in the University of Texas at Austin. One of his main objectives was to show the discrepancy between the 'gypsy' stereotype and Romani history (Sabino "Romani Archives" 7).

- Gitana tenías que ser*. Dir. Rafael Baledón. Cinematográfica Filmex & Suevia films, 1953.
- La gitana y el charro*. Dir. Gilberto Martínez Solares. Perf. Lola Flores. Panamerican Films, and Suevia Films, 1963.
- La loba*. Dir. Rafael Baledón. Producciones Sotomayor, 1965.
- Morenita Clara*. Dir. Joselito Rodríguez. Producciones Rodríguez Hermanos, 1943.
- Renzo, el gitano*. Dir. Manuel Zecena Diéguez. Pan American Films, 1973.
- Reportaje*. Dir. Emilio Fernández. Perf. Lola Flores, Pedro Infante, Jorge Negrete, and Carmen Sevilla. Asociación Nacional de Actores, 1953.
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