

A Resource Guide to Bringing Critical Romani Studies into Anti-Racist Pedagogy

Eric Bergman - University of Helsinki, Finland
Simina Dragoş - University of Cambridge, UK
Luis Escobedo - University of the Free State (UFS), South Africa
Ram Hadroj - University of Tirana, Albania
Danielle Schoon - The Ohio State University, USA
Nick J. Sciallo - Texas A&M University - Kingsville, USA
Ioana Țișteea - Tampere University, Finland

Prepared during the Summer 2021 Central European University New Frontiers in
Romani Studies: Insights from Critical Race Theory class.

Special thanks to the Open Society University Network (OSUN) and the Romani Studies
Program of Central European University for providing the institutional framework for this
work. Also many thanks to Angéla Kóczé, our mentor on the project.

March 2022

* The views expressed herein are those of the authors and not of their respective
universities nor Central European University.



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Introduction

This anti-racist pedagogy guide is intended for teachers of students from roughly age 12 through the university level. It is specifically aimed at spreading knowledge about Romani peoples through the lens of critical race theory. It asks: How do we teach about Romani individuals, culture, history, and the intersection of politics, society, economics, gender, and more? What does anti-Romani racism look like, where does it come from, and what can we do about it?

We do not pretend to offer conclusive answers to these questions. Rather, the guide opens a small space from which we all can continue learning, teaching, and asking questions. In the spirit of the guide, we hope you will continue to develop pedagogies of anti-racism and spread them forward, your ideas becoming beacons of light in what can be a distressing topic.

Each chapter has three sections. First, the authors share how and why they came to Romani studies and anti-racist pedagogy. This is important because most of the authors are not Romani themselves; what implications does the author's positionality have on this well-intended material? Should they be allowed to write about Romani topics in the first place? What entitles them to do so? Should you listen?

Second, the authors offer a methodology for teaching anti-racism in the context of Romani peoples' experiences. The methodologies, which are the ways the authors go about better understanding their topics, are living and flexible, like little sparks that we hope will get ideas burning.

Third, and perhaps most importantly, the authors share a selection of the many resources that are available concerning their specific topic or Romani studies more generally. There's a lot out there. The selection of resources focuses mainly on English sources, for better or often worse, as English serves as a lingua franca in scholarly work, but readers are encouraged to explore resources in their languages as well. Spreading our networks of knowledge is one way of fighting racism. At its heart, this guide is about listening and learning, talking and asking questions, opening ourselves to topics that some find it easier to ignore.

Many years ago, a Romani family arrived at a farmhouse. As was the custom, the Romani women made coffee for their hosts. The mother of the house then laid a meal out on the table so that her guests might eat, as was also the custom.

"Would your children eat with us?" the Romani father asked the hostess.

"They're afraid," answered the mother.

"They've been taught to be afraid," said the father.

Instead of fear, let's teach understanding and humanity. We hope this guide helps.

Nick J. Sciullo
Critical Race Theory Introduction

Like most people who come to the formal study of critical race theory in the United States, I was introduced to the concept through law school. While critical race theory has a diverse set of origins that involve both activist and academic actors, critical race theory is often thought of as beginning in U.S. law schools in the mid-1980s. Critical race theory now finds usage in educational studies, sociology, gender studies, political science, and other disciplines in the social sciences and humanities along with law. When I entered law school, I had a good understanding that the world was not experienced the same way by people of different races, social classes, ethnicities, genders, religions, and more. But, I had trouble finding a way to address what seemed so obvious on television, in movies, and in the wide-ranging studies I encountered in my undergraduate studies.

As I began to think more critically about race, a natural outgrowth of my own lived experience growing up in a racially diverse neighborhood, attending a racially diverse high school, and listening to hip-hop music that exposed me to new arguments and attitudes about the world, I sought a way to better understand race so that I could better understand the people and issues around me. Critical race theory helped me do that. While there are many ways to think of common themes or through-lines in critical race theory thought, I come back to a few core concepts, which I think are important not only to understanding blackness in the United States, but also race and ethnic differences around the world.

The first idea that struck me as important was that race was central to modern life. Systematic racism is real. It is built into the policies and procedures of many governments, not to mention constitutions and other laws. Racism is also a part of life. It is something that people experience in a range of interpersonal and small group situations. These experiences may not seem bad to outsiders, but individually they still matter for the people that are affected, and their cumulative effects can cause a range of mental and physical health issues.

The second idea that struck me as important was the value of counternarratives. Prior to the introduction of critical race theory, scholars struggled to include who they were working with and for. Marginalized populations were not included in much academic study, which left out their voices. We had little way to account for people's experiences beyond the available statistics from governmental and non-governmental reports. Perhaps obviously, this left us with a poor understanding of how law and other cultural technologies affected diverse populations. Counternarratives helped challenge the largely white, middle-class narratives of law and academic research. Of course, critical race theory as it developed in law was not the only place that sought the contributions, opinions, and arguments of those often excluded from academic study, but there was increasingly a focus on how racial minorities experienced law.

Lastly, critical race theory emphasized the importance of activism in and out of the academy. It asked hard questions about who had power and what power could be and should be. It oriented scholars to questions of inequality in the legal profession, scholarly publishing, academia, and education. This helped scholars and activists raise important issues about representation in academic and professional life. This was important to the many people experiencing the world who did not attend Harvard Law School nor had the benefits of relative economic and social privilege.

Critical race theory devolved into several different movements that moved beyond the focus on blackness and law in the United States context. We now have scholars studying LatCrit (Latinx critical theory), ClassCrit (social and economic class theory), Indigenous or NativeCrit (Indigenous critical theory), FemCrit (gender critical theory), QueerCrit (sexuality critical theory), and AsianCrit (Asian critical theory). There are multiple permutations and reconfigurations of these theories hoping to better understand how different groups experience society.

In educational settings, critical race theory focuses our attention on who is represented and not represented in our classrooms, textbooks, educational administrations, and more. It asks why some students and teachers succeed, and why others do not. It orients us to who is writing the texts we read and what those texts are about. This is important both for offering a more complete education to students, as well as for continually testing what we know and think about difference.

Despite recent attacks on critical race theory from the political right in the United States, and other countries as well, critical race theory remains a hopeful project. Most critical race theorists understand change as possible, the value of enforcing various rights regimes, and the value of every person in making a better world. Critical race theorists advocate for legal change, better educational opportunities for all children, and more representative government institutions.

Methods

There are a series of questions one should ask in order to put critical race theory to use in the classroom. Every classroom and every school is different, however, and teachers at every level of education will have to think carefully about what questions they should and can ask, and how their students, colleagues, and administrators will respond.

Who is included and excluded from my subject of study? Why?

What ideas and events are included and excluded from our textbooks? Why?

Who makes up the faculty and students at my school? Is some group underrepresented? Why?

If I never engaged my students again, would they be prepared to participate in a diverse, multicultural world?

Am I aware of and highlighting the discriminatory practices in my society, governmental institutions, and school? Am I including these ideas in my teaching and encouraging students to think about and research them?

Are there rules, policies, or laws that prevent the discussion of issues of race, ethnicity, and other identities? Can I challenge them?

This list is not exhaustive, but is intended to encourage teachers and students to think critically about the political nature of education, and how education can best represent and serve a diverse population. The goal should not be to make everyone a critical race theorist, but rather to expose students and colleagues to the importance of thinking critically about race, exclusion, and how we can best interact given the different experiences people have with a world that often proclaims itself to be race-neutral or obviously inclusive.

Critical race theory requires a degree of reflexivity. Teachers have to ask themselves what their biases are, and what they can do given the constraints of their positions and institutions. This is not always easy, and can be a process that takes some time. So, teachers might be well-suited to start this process during a semester break or in summer or winter between semesters.

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Danielle V. Schoon
Critical Romani Studies in Turkey

I have been a dancer all of my life and many of my experiences have been shaped by connections made with various global dance communities. As a graduate student at UCLA in the World Arts and Cultures program in 2000-2002, my study of Middle Eastern dance (“belly dance”) led me to an interest in the Roma. My Master’s thesis critiqued stereotypical representations of the Roma as they are performed by American belly dancers. As a PhD student in Anthropology and Turkish Studies at the University of Arizona a few years later, I directed my studies toward the Ottoman Empire and present-day Turkey. There, my research looked at how gender and sexuality norms are embodied in dance practices, and that also led me to important forays into the history of Roma in that part of the world.

My first trip to Turkey was for language study in Istanbul in summer 2006. On one of many walks along İstiklal Caddesi (a famous pedestrian zone located in the city center), I happened to bump into an old dance acquaintance from the U.S. She invited me to a musical concert that evening by Selim Sesler (I immediately recognized that name from [a dissertation written on Romani music and identity by Dr. Sonia Tamar Seeman](#)). At the concert, I was introduced to another expat from the U.S. who was taking dance lessons with a woman in Sarıgöl, a Romani neighborhood – she offered to let me accompany her to one of the lessons the next day. The Romani dance instructor turned out to be [Reyhan Tuzsuz](#), someone I had already heard of through my dance networks in the U.S. I continued to take lessons with Reyhan for the remainder of that summer. However, in 2009, when I returned to Istanbul and contacted Reyhan to resume lessons, I found that her home and adjacent dance studio had been demolished in one of the city’s infamous urban renewal projects. This initiated my inquiry into other such state-led urban development projects, particularly the demolition of the neighborhood of [Sulukule](#), which was prominent in Turkish and international news stories at the time. I had heard of Sulukule’s reputation as a Romani neighborhood that produced some of the best Turkish musicians and dancers.

As I was studying Ottoman Turkish that summer of 2009, I requested from my instructor that he look out for any mention of Sulukule in Ottoman historical documents. One day, during a morning class, there was a knock at the door of the school. My instructor opened it to find a prominent figure in the ‘right to the city’ activist movement in Istanbul and a member of the [Sulukule Platform](#), which had formed to try to prevent the demolition of the neighborhood. She was simply looking for a place in which to hold an upcoming meeting, but upon hearing the name ‘Sulukule,’ my instructor immediately brought me out to speak with her. That chance encounter initiated several connections that became essential to my fieldwork in Sulukule, particularly with Funda Oral, a respected figure in the Sulukule community who was later to become my key informant and collaborator in the field.

Over the following three years, I would become deeply involved in the work of protesting Sulukule's demolition and of helping the community sustain their way of life. I taught English language classes to young Roma from the neighborhood, three of whom formed a hip hop group called [Tahribad-i Isyan](#). I continue to work with this group today, following [how they use music to create Roma solidarity in Turkey and critique the state-led urban renewal projects that continue to evict Roma from their homes in cities across Turkey](#).

I tell this story, in part, to point to the importance of serendipity and chance encounters in our research. We can make plans, but a lot depends on who we meet in the field and what we find there. I found my way into Romani studies in large part due to the stereotypes that I would later work to dismantle. When I went to study dance with a Romani woman in Turkey, what I also found was the truth of her marginalized situation and the reality of her experiences as a Romani woman in the inner city. It would have been impossible to continue researching Romani dance practices and ignore the systematic, state-led dislocation of Romani people from their neighborhoods once I became aware of it. [Dance, instead, became a tool for protesting marginalization and dislocation](#). All of this is to say that I believe we must be scholar-activists, and that the academic pursuit of Romani studies must be engaged deeply with the communities we study. Our work, both in publications and in the classroom, must contribute to the dismantling of anti-Roma racism and discrimination. I have come to believe deeply in engaged scholarship and I carry this into my pedagogy.

Within Romani studies, I have tried to contribute work on Turkey that challenges some of the assumptions we hold about the Roma in other parts of Europe. As a Muslim country with a secular history, Turkey takes a very particular approach to its Roma (Dom, Lom) populations. I find it important to understand the political discourses and practices internal to Roma communities in Turkey, rather than impose outside agendas or interpretations, and I think we need to revise some of our theoretical approaches in order to account for the Turkish case. There cannot be just one Romani rights paradigm or a universal prescription for solving Romani exclusion.

Methods

I am an advocate of community engagement and inclusive teaching and I utilize the methods of active learning in my classrooms. I am also interested in online teaching and digital tools for inclusion, access, and student engagement.

I teach several courses online as well as a Virtual Education Abroad Program in Istanbul, Turkey. For this course, I follow the work being done in the area of COIL ([Collaborative Online International Learning](#)). For inclusive teaching methods, including active learning, I have found the resources below to be quite useful.

Inclusive Teaching Resources:

- [University of Michigan Research on Inclusive Teaching](#)
- [The Sheridan Center for Teaching and Learning at Brown](#)
- [Liberating Structures](#)
- [Facilitating Online Discussions](#)
- [FLUX Pedagogy](#)
- [Accessible Syllabus](#)
- [Cult of Pedagogy](#)

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Turkish Studies Books on Race, Ethnicity, Identity with Relevance for Romani studies:

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Eric Berman
Critical Romani Studies in Finland

Illomantsi, a region in eastern Finland, can get bitterly cold in the winter. Minus 40 celsius is not unheard of. Even the snow takes on another texture in such a cold – squeaky underfoot.

In such a habitat, having a home is not a luxury one can do without, yet many Romani families through the 1950s and 60s lived by traveling from house to house in a precarious existence. My grandparents' house, known to be religious, was where one family was sent when arriving in the small village. The parents were Sanni and Eemil Nyman, the children named Taisto and Saaga.

My grandparents were poor farmers, my grandmother having arrived as a refugee when Finland lost the eastern part of Karelia to the Soviet Union in World War II. However, there was always room for four more in the *tupa*, the central room of the log house with a large bread-baking oven. The Nyman family returned regularly over the years.

I relate this story because I had observed that my aunt had a different relation to Romani people than I – or most any majority-culture Finn – could muster. She was comfortable, equal, non-hierarchical. In short, she was not racist because she did not place a different worth on Roma based on their race and a history of institutional and social subjugation.

Why? I speculated it was because she'd lived with Roma in a single room; her knowledge caused humanity to flourish. My lack of knowledge caused my racism.

This insight caused me to read Veijo Baltzar's *Polttava tie*, a novel from 1968 that tells the story of a Romani man's experiences of growing up in Finland. It illustrates the social, political, and economic manifestations of what racism looks like. It begins to show what it felt like to be turned away from house after house in the dead of winter, how the horse died from over-exertion, how the family became ill and everyone, save two of the children, perished.

This book changed the way I understood Roma in Finland and racism as a social force that is not only the emotions and thoughts people have, but a system that keeps people at a disadvantage. I told my wife, "Every high school student in Finland must read this book! It would bring about so much understanding!"

Most importantly, I think, the book helped me to see Roma as individuals and debunked some of the ideas, myths, and tropes we grow up learning about Roma in Finland. Lack of knowledge causes fear. Fear can cause racism. Hence, illuminating those spaces where knowledge is lacking is one way to confront racism.

I've since talked about Romani novels at my university, conferences, and with colleagues and friends. I think there is a lack of talking about the subject; it's semi-invisible. One reason for this may be that when majority-culture Finns *do* talk about Roma, you're going to hear many ignorant ideas. It's a painful process. But not talking about it is worse. Little by little, knowledge can be spread and, in my opinion, stories are one of the most effective ways to do that, and that's what I'll be writing about in the methods section below. We can relate to characters as individuals instead of as part of one big, homogenous group.

One last point. Did you know that Roma have lived in Finland for 500 years? Perhaps you did. I didn't know that until quite recently. There's a feeling in Finland that Roma – or children of immigrants, etc. – aren't *really* Finnish. You're either Finnish or you're not. We must challenge the idea that Finnish-ness is a narrow, blond-haired archetype. Just as with sexuality, class, gender, religion, political affiliation, opinions, and more, Finland contains multitudes. We're afraid of what we don't know, so let's work on knowing more and teaching that knowledge forward.

Methods

Textual Analysis: Stereotypes

The most difficult part of this exercise will be finding a suitable text in your given context – one that students can digest in a limited amount of time and is at their reading skill level. While it is unlikely that many students will read an entire novel, there are also graphic novels available or you might find historical letters written by Roma. Alternatively, consider a short excerpt from a longer text.

1) Ask your students what a stereotype is. Elicit answers. Is a stereotype only negative? Can stereotypes be positive? Why and how can stereotypes be harmful?

As the teacher, you could list three things about yourself, one of which is not true. Depending on how well your students know you, it might be possible to come up with a rather confusing list based on the assumptions students might have based on your profession, station in society, ethnicity, background, etc. Go around the class and ask them to guess which 'fact' about you is not true.

Then ask students to come up with three 'facts' about themselves and go around the class and have other students guess which one is not true. The goal here is to work against assumptions based on what is visible about them in a social context.

Ask students: "What stereotypes do people hold about you that aren't true? How does this make you feel?"

2) According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, a stereotype is:

“A widely held but fixed and oversimplified image or idea of a particular type of person or thing: *the stereotype of the woman as the carer | sexual and racial stereotypes.*

- a person or thing that conforms to a widely held but oversimplified image of the class or type to which they belong: *don't treat anyone as a stereotype.*”

Discuss why we hold stereotypes, where they come from, and how we might be able to “think past” the stereotypes we’ve inherited from our society.

3) Ask your students to list stereotypes concerning Roma in their culture. They do not have to believe in these stereotypes themselves but simply know they exist.

Where do these stereotypes come from? How have we learned them? What perpetuates them? Do students think they are true for the Roma as a people? Do students think they are true for every Roma individual? Why and how?

4) Assign the chosen text with the prompt: “Pay special attention to both positive and negative stereotypes about Roma. Do these apply to every character in the text? What evidence do you find in the text that goes against the perceived stereotypes about Roma? How does the author illustrate the harmful effects of stereotypes for individuals?”

5) When discussing the text, ask questions about how their understanding of Roma has changed during the reading, especially in regard to the reality that in any group not everyone is alike. How do assumptions and stereotypes about any group of people or individual hamper people’s freedom? What might the effects of stereotypes be for Roma in your society? How are their lives shaped by stereotypes? What can we do to “think past” stereotypes?

Sources

[The Finnish National Agency for Education \(Opetushallitus\)](#) has published a course (three 45-minute classes) by teacher Katri Perho designed for 9th graders about Roma history, culture, and the contemporary situation. It is an excellent resource in Finnish and I believe any school system wishing to develop a program for teaching young people about Romani culture, etc. would be wise to consult it.

The first course asks students to read letters written by Roma to analyze the historical context, Romani culture elements, the position of Roma in Finland at the time, and so on. The second lesson has students analyze Romani music and lyrics. The third lesson has students watch and analyze an all-Romani panel and listen to Romani youth speak about their contemporary situation. Included are a list of contacts if teachers would like to invite an individual from the Romani community to visit their class.

I asked **Katri Perho** what she thought other school systems should consider when developing a pedagogy on Romani culture, history, position in society, etc. I here paraphrase her response.

- 1) It is paramount that the educational material addresses the Roma theme from the Roma perspective. In addition to basic information, it is good to have interviews with and writings by Roma.
- 2) We should strive to get education about Roma into the national curriculum of primary schools especially. The curriculum obliges all teachers to address the topic in at least some way. No matter how great the available learning material is, it will not be used if the theme is “extra” and not part of formal studies.
- 3) Teachers usually have quite little time to deal with one topic. One whole lesson about the Roma, for example, is already quite a lot. The learning materials must be concise and easy for teachers to adopt, such as ready-made assignments with answers for teachers. All videos, games, and other digital and inclusive content are always a plus.
- 4) Each school system should create its own material, preferably made by an experienced teacher. Paying a small amount of money to the author is ultimately a small expense compared to the benefit of all teachers having access to open material at any time.

Katri Perho has agreed to answer questions (in English) from any international pedagogists/teachers interested in learning more about creating resources in their own country (katri.perho@gmail.com).

Also, the Agency for Education has [an overview of material](#), including for teaching Romani students.

[About minority literature in Finland by the Finnish National Agency for Education.](#)

The [Elävä arkisto](#) resources, collected by the national media company YLE, run the risk of further ingraining a ‘mythical’ understanding of Roma stereotypes and archetypes, for example that Roma are primarily musical and the women wear distinct dresses. While these come into it, there is much more to the Roma than this archive will imply. If using the resource in conjunction with a text, for example, you could discuss how Roma, like any group, is made up of many distinct individuals that will differ from the stereotype and critically question what this “positive” caricature of Roma in Finland produces. Also, how does this picture of Roma create a group that, though positive, is defined as oppositional from the norms of Finnish society? How might this misrepresent the reality of the Roma community, which is made up of many different kinds of individuals? This also comes into play in the representation of Roma by some “official” Roma representatives, such as [here](#).

Latšo Diives is a newsletter for the Finnish Roma education team, which provides up-to-date information on education, especially for the Roma population. The free

magazine is published two to three times a year and can be ordered from:
romanit@oph.fi.

The Finnish Literature Society has an [extensive archives of Romani material](#), which you can contact here: arkisto@finlit.fi. They also [conducted a project in 2016–18](#) based on the archive. A key contact is Risto Blomster: risto.blomster@finlit.fi.

Literature:

- The best resource available is the [overview of Finnish Roma literature in the RomArchive](#). You can [search by country and region](#), which would be a good place to search for novels, poems, etc. for your own context. Many aren't translated and may even be hard to find, so this may take some perseverance.
- [Taikon, Katarina](#). (1969). [Katitzi](#). [Blog about the book](#). This book (or collection of books) has been widely translated and may be a good place to begin your search.
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[Lumberg, Kiba](#). (2011). [Memesa trilogy](#). [Blog about the book](#). I would only recommend this trilogy – or one of the individual novels – to advanced students, i.e., university level. It begins with the stereotypical depiction of Roma. If you read it as a whole, however, Lumberg deconstructs these stereotypes by, among other ways, showing that there are individuals in majority Finnish culture who could also be defined by Roma stereotypes, that there are all kinds of Roma, and that applying one definition to any group is unworkable. It also illustrates some of the historical, social, cultural, political, and economic reasons why/how Roma are marginalized. In short, the text demands some

critical thinking and skills in reading beyond the literal words in the text. I'm currently writing my dissertation on it, so stay tuned!

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Simina Dragos
Reflections on Critical Theory and Anti-racist Pedagogy from the Perspective of a Romanian

The power of critical social theory became evident to me in my second year of undergraduate studies, when I finally had the tools to realise the systemic and historicised nature of anti-Roma racism in my home country, Romania.

I was born and raised in Romania in the late 1990s and have been actively socialised into anti-Roma racism by my parents, my schooling experiences, by the media, and by the wider discourses and collective memory in Romanian society. I moved to the UK in 2016 for my undergraduate studies at the University of Cambridge, where I became aware for the very first time that my home country was historically, institutionally, and systemically racist, building on a long history of slavery and genocide against Romani communities. It came as a shock when I realised that my schooling in 'Romanian' History was filled with deliberate gaps, silences, obfuscations, and what [C.W. Mills](#) termed "[white ignorance](#)", despite having completed specialised high school level studies in history and an end-of-highschool exam in 'Romanian' history. Needless to mention that this made me question the true meaning of education, of *my* education, but also of my white privilege and of the injustices I had observed in Romanian society and for which I had no vocabulary to name.

During my BA, I was lucky enough to have embarked on a journey of learning about myself and the world in a space that facilitated my access to critical social theory and communities of critical thinkers. I had the privilege of being educated by critical scholar-activists and learning – way too late in my teenage years/early 20s – about colonialism, coloniality, racism, struggles for justice. I had the honour of hearing Angela Davis, Patricia Hill Collins, and Raewyn Connell speak live at Cambridge – these instances are merely examples of moments in my educational journey when critical social theory uplifted and enabled me, handing me the tools to think and be in the social world. Overall, this education enabled me to think critically about anti-Roma racism in Romania and to be able to label it, for the first time in my life, as racism.

In my research journey, I first focused on the school segregation of Romani children in the Romanian education system from a Critical Race Theory perspective. Later on, I became increasingly interested in the wider systemic landscape of anti-Roma racism, focusing on the nation-state, knowledge, power and discourse – particularly the ways elite and official knowledges racialise – and the myriad of ways in which discourses shape society and actively prevent racial justice. As I have been moving further on my journey, I have also become increasingly interested in the notion of historical responsibility (here I am thinking with Hannah Arendt) for the injustices against Romani communities which carry on shaping Romanian society and beyond. I try to link these thoughts with scholarship and activism related to other injustices and other forms of oppression. I view anti-Roma racism as a contingent manifestation of global white supremacy and modernity/coloniality.

As a novice scholar and educator in higher education, I cherish critical social theory because I recognise its ability to enable people to speak truth to power. In my thinking, writing, and teaching, I seek to put theory to work to deconstruct and challenge the ways anti-Roma racism works in Romanian society and beyond, but also the ways other forms of racism and oppression are shaped by knowledge, discourse, education, and the state.

Reflections on Anti-racist Pedagogy:

I'm driven by the belief that teaching and learning are political acts and that the classroom is a political space. I cling on to the idea that teaching is one of the last available modes of political praxis within the highly marketised, individualised, and value- and performance-driven systems of (higher) education. Thus, decisions about teaching strategies, assessment, and curriculum are not only *political in their motivation and assumptions* (though they may seem 'neutral' particularly when 'evidence-based') but also *political in their effects*. The main question to ask ourselves, I believe, is: *what will uplift, enable, and empower students, as opposed to constrain, diminish, and alienate them?* I will elaborate briefly below on what I mean by this.

Although my teaching experience is limited, I have sought to be guided by the following principles when teaching social science topics to undergraduate students:

1. **Historicised** - setting the events/issues we teach in historical context, to enable students to think in structural terms and with a wider perspective on social, economic, cultural, and political developments.
2. **Theorised** - making use of critical social theory to frame, explain, deconstruct, describe and challenge social realities.
3. **Relational** - related to the point above, critical social theory can also enable students to see the relationships between contexts/places/events. The principle of relationality helps highlight the connection between struggles and developments over time, but also the interconnectedness of communities. This is not about cosmopolitanism or other such vague liberal dicta, but rather about highlighting world histories and the enduring global systems of exploitation, including coloniality, racism, patriarchy, and capitalism.
4. **Grounded** - basing discussions on empirical examples to encourage students to think critically about their present and localised realities. In this respect, I find it useful to bring in current news and current events in class discussions and activities so that students can use theoretical concepts to analyse and discuss their present situation.
5. **Reflexive** - perhaps the most difficult aspect to operationalise and implement, but also a crucial one. This principle refers to situating ourselves as researchers and educators and our students relationally but honestly vis-a-vis the topics we teach. It involves self-questioning, soul-searching, and reflecting on our power and position within systems of domination and institutions. We might ask such questions as: *how does this apply to our lives, our institution, our communities?*

How are we implicated, complicit, involved in domination? How are we responsible and in what ways may we enact such (historical responsibility)? The hope would be to encourage and enable students to enter their own journeys of political engagement and critical being in the world.

Sources

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- **Aresel** - asociație care luptă pentru drepturile romilor | [Website](#) | [Facebook](#)
- **E-Romnja** - asociație feministă romă | [Website](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Instagram](#) | [Support](#)
- **Centrul Național de Cultură a Romilor-Romano Kher** | [Facebook](#)
- **Giuvlipen** - companie de teatru feminist rom | [Website](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Instagram](#) | [Sustine](#)
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- **Uniunea Civică a Tinerilor Romi din România** | [Website](#) | [Facebook](#)
- **LikeRom** - comunitatea profesioniștilor romi | [Website](#)
- **Agencia Împreună** - agenție de dezvoltare comunitară | [Website](#) | [Facebook](#)
- **Proiectul Noii Povestitori** - diversitate în literatura pentru copii | [Ediția I](#) | [Ediția II](#) | [Support](#)
- **Centrul National de Cultura a Romilor-Romano Kher** | [Website](#) | [Facebook](#) |
- **Centrul de Cercetări Culturale și Sociale "Romane Rodimata"** | [Facebook](#)

Useful Web Pages in English:

- [ERiac - The European Roma Institute for Arts and Culture](#)
- [ERRC - European Roma Rights Centre](#)
- [Romani Studies Program at CEU](#)
- [Barvalipe Roma Online University](#)
- [The Romani Cultural & Arts Company](#)

Resources in English (Any Audience):

- Podcast [the Romani Tea Room](#)

- Book [Gypsy, Roma & Traveller LGBTQ+ Spoken History Archive Book](#)
- Video [Gypsies, Roma & Travellers: An Animated History](#)
- Book [We Roma: A Critical Reader in Contemporary Art](#)
- Curriculum for primary and secondary education [Romani Studies Curriculum](#) (by the Romani Cultural & Arts Co)
- Resource for children [A Romani & Traveller Alphabet](#) (by the Romani Cultural & Arts Co)
- Extensive resource for primary/secondary education relating to Gypsy, Roma, Traveller communities in UK [Atching Tan: An Educational Journey into the World of Gypsies, Romanies, and Travellers](#) (by The Romany Theatre Company)
- Theatre [The Romany Theatre Company](#)
- Fictional book [The Stopping Places: A Journey Through Gypsy Britain](#) (by Damian Le Bas)
- Archive [The Romani Herstory Digital Archive](#)

Resources for colleagues teaching in higher education who wish to integrate Critical Romani Studies in their teaching/research - in English

General:

[*Journal Critical Romani Studies*](#)

[*Journal Roma Rights*](#)

Blog post [A Life in the Margins: Understanding the Roma Experience](#) (17/04/2017)

3-part blog post series by Dr Margareta Matache (2016–2017):

- [Word, Image and Thought: Creating the Romani Other](#)
- [The Legacy of Gypsy Studies in Modern Romani Scholarship](#)
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Ram Hadroj
The Story of Discrimination and Segregation and the Necessity of Teacher Training about the Roma Community in Albania

My name is Ram Hadroj, and I am a Roma researcher from Albania. I grew up with a single Roma mother in the north of Albania. Since my childhood, I have remembered the discrimination the teacher showed towards me on my first day of school. I was walking into the class with one of my best friends and sat at the third table of the class. Immediately, the teacher approached me and said, "Rami, you have to sit at that table", and pointed towards the last table of the classroom, where I was left all alone. I could not name that behavior of the teacher but all that I can remember is going home and shouting to my mother, "why do I have to go to school?"

Due to discrimination, I started my high school studies at the age of 28. In 2010, I graduated from Andrews University Michigan, European campus Newbold College UK. For my bachelor thesis, I wrote a paper about the relationships between Roma children and parents. I had heard that this is the problem why Roma children remain uneducated. But the research showed me that Roma parents and children love education, and their main barrier is the way they get treated by educators (teachers) at the school building.

All my life, I had heard that there are no educated Roma people in Albania. Therefore, I always thought that I was the only one who graduated with a bachelor's, which is why I decided to go back to Albania in 2012 and contribute to my community. I wanted those other Roma boys and girls to get an example of an educated Roma. At the beginning of my time back in Albania, I became part of the "Roma Political Academy" in which 29 Roma role models, students, graduates, and MA candidates were joined together to create the so-called "Roma Elite" in Albania.

At this point, Soros Albania asked me to conduct research on a topic I was interested in, and the first question that came to my mind was: how, among 120,000 Roma citizens in Albania, only 29 young Roma could make it to graduation? I was always taught by the media and society that Roma do not get educated. This is why, in collaboration with Open Society Albania, I conducted a research paper called "The Psychological Reasons Behind the Academic Success of 'Roma Elite' in Albania". It was surprising to see how, among 29 young educated Roma, none of them were given educational support from teachers, but rather from cousins and family members.

While living in Albania, I was asked by the Roma Education Fund to conduct research about the textbooks in Albania and Kosovo and how they represent the Roma community in both of these countries. I studied 137 books of social sciences, history, and geography. In all the long list, I was shocked to see the misrepresentation of the Roma community in Albania. The Roma community in these countries was portrayed at its worst: children begging, children recycling, the stereotyping of Roma as musicians only.

After the textbook research was published, the Minister of Education shared it among 400 schools in Albania, and I got in touch with different teachers to help them address the problem that the textbooks contain in portraying Roma in their worst examples. Teachers were not equipped with any information about the Roma community and therefore found it hard to teach children the history of the Roma community or explain it, one of the largest minorities in Albania. I was invited from different schools to deliver presentations about the Roma community. I was also asked to build a chapter about the Roma community representing the role models, the culture, and anything that could help stop the stereotyping of the Roma community.

Since 2013, I have conducted a campaign called “Walk in My Shoes”. Through a blog, I shared all the discrimination stories of the Roma community in Albania, as well as different activities that help with the integration of the Roma community in Albania. I am also leading a Roma NGO called “Walk in My Shoes”, through which we work with Roma role models in the field of education as well as conducting research in the field of education for the Roma community in Albania.

Considering the fact that education is the key point to the Roma integration process, I think that our education system in Albania is undergoing different challenges, as below listed, that need addressing:

1. Stereotyping through textbooks
2. Lack of information about the Roma minority for educators/teachers
3. Lack of literature/books for teachers to address the topic
4. Education curricula does not appoint experts to counter the stereotyping in the textbooks
5. Lack of literature about the Roma community to be used as support materials for teaching minority culture in Albania.
6. Lack of training for teachers about the methodologies, structures, and sources for teaching according to the curricula.

Materials to be used

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Ioana Țișteea

Roma and Non-Roma Migrants in Finland and Ethnodrama as a Teaching Method

When I came to Finland from Romania in 2014, I considered myself a so-called economic migrant, although my EU residence permit later was based on cohabitation with a Finnish partner. I also considered myself cosmopolitan and tolerant. I would later grasp the unequal power relations that only allow certain (white) bodies to pass as cosmopolitan and the paternalism of tolerance. Shortly after my arrival, I joined a migrant integration training programme, as suggested to me by the unemployment office, which consisted of daily courses for one year on Finnish language, 'culture,' and work life coupled with job practices, which was supposed to prepare students aged 17 or higher for further secondary or vocational education or for employment. Migrant students' possible higher education plans were seldom discussed in class. My classmates were mostly from postcolonial and postsocialist spaces, and instances of both solidarity and racism would occur. Later, I joined a doctoral studies program to write about the transformative shifts that come with migration and reflect deeply on privilege, racism, and what constitutes solidarity. One aspect I thought I should focus on was the lack of any Roma migrants in the integration training I attended and the related assumption made by teachers or classmates that I may be Roma. As I progressed in my studies, I became interested in voices: whose voices matter in migration research, whose voices are silenced, and who has the right to write about which topics. In the early days of my diasporic existence, I would have difficulties with the multiple conflicting ways in which I was read by others. Being read as 'Southern European' did not bother me that much, as it legitimized my perceived Europeanness and assumed Latinity, although that came at the expense of being read with sexualizing gazes. Being read as 'Eastern European' would position me as not-quite European, as catching up with the 'west' in my search for better socio-economic opportunities. Still, that did not bother me as much as being read as 'Roma'. I considered the latter to be racist, not against the Roma, but against me. I only later understood that taking offence with being misread as Roma perpetuates anti-Roma racism, since I could only perceive my misreading as Roma as hurtful if I reproduce whiteness as a desirable norm and being Roma as something negative. My ability to pass as not-quite/white and my ability to pass as Roma are rooted in different power dynamics. I may pass as white by adopting certain bodily characteristics that are associated with whiteness, such as speech, clothing, and gestures that produce a respectable image. My passing as Roma, however, involves access to knowledges embedded in white and colonial privilege that approximate a 'knowable' and decontextualized subjectivity and assume that one can pass for others by adopting their ways of being, thus fixing those ways of being as indicators of what it may mean to be Roma.

Passing through Ethnodrama

Passing is flexible, fluid, ongoing, and performative through actions or behaviours that maintain or break societal norms and makes one readable in non/conventionalized ways. Passing in ethnodrama differs from passing in everyday life. The latter refers to social performances of daily interactions that may or may not involve a self-conscious awareness that those interactions are socially scripted, while passing as enacted in ethnodrama involves self-conscious scripted acts set within certain cultural, political, or aesthetic conventions. Ethnodrama can therefore be used as a vehicle by students, researchers, or teachers for scripting, mocking, and staging (in the classroom or at different events like workshops or conferences) daily social performances to prompt, in readers and audiences, deep reflections on the problematics of passing in everyday life. Ethnodrama creates representations that are open to multiple open-ended readings to engage viewers emotionally through theatrical immersion, evoke deep reflections, and highlight uncomfortable complicities. The script is composed of multiple characters and scenes of dramatic tension through which audiences are reminded of their responsibility to confront their own problematic histories and subconscious racism while engaging with the characters' stories, dialogues, dilemmas, conflicts, tensions, and contradictions in ways that are entertainingly informative, aesthetically sound, intellectually rich, and emotionally evocative.

Script: Intersecting Migrant Stories

Act 1 Reception center for asylum seekers

Ioana is standing center-stage, facing the audience.

Ioana [*addresses the audience*]: I'm doing my job practice in a reception center for asylum seekers. It's part of my integration plan. I always have to be accompanied by one of the social workers when interacting with asylum seekers, until I learn the job, they said. They don't seem to trust me. Or maybe they don't trust the asylum seekers....

Aino, a Finnish social worker, enters the stage. She walks toward Ioana and stops, standing by her side, facing the audience.

Aino [*addresses the audience*]: Asylum seekers must clean the reception center premises as monthly work duties. If they fail to complete their duties, sanctions are applied as monthly allowance cuts of up to 30%. We distribute these work duties amongst residents, supervise them, and check if they have cleaned properly. If not, we tell them to come back and finish the job. [*Turns to Ioana and addresses her*]: I was looking for you, but couldn't recognize you.... When you are around the asylum seekers, I guess you also look ethnic, you blend in... [*slight laughter*]. Anyway, Ahmed is late for his cleaning duties. Let's go check on him.

Ahmed enters the stage. He lays down on the floor. Aino and Ioana walk toward him.

Aino [addresses Ahmed]: Wake up, it's time for your work task!

Drowsy, Ahmed stands up and follows Aino and Ioana to the other side of the stage, where some cleaning products are lined up on the floor. Aino instructs him on how to clean with some demonstrations.

Aino [addresses Ahmed]: This product is for the floor. This is how you do it. [She takes one of the cleaning products, pours a small amount in a bucket, soaks the mop, and then mops the floor briefly.] These products are for the toilet [she grabs another cleaning product in one hand and a toilet brush in the other hand.] When cleaning the toilet, it is important to also lift the seat and clean thoroughly with circular motions, with special attention to the backside of the toilet bowl. Now you do it.

Ahmed takes the cleaning products for the toilet and, in the air, mimics the circular gestures of cleaning a toilet bowl.

Aino [addresses Ahmed as he mimics cleaning a toilet]: Good. No, not like that, remember how I showed you. Good. Keep it that way. [Addresses Ioana, who is observing them]: Alright, I think you've done enough observing and you are finally ready to be a supervisor. Watch Ahmed as I go finish some office duties. [she leaves the stage].

Ahmed [addresses Ioana]: After I finish with this, can you help me with my Finnish language course assignment?

Ioana: Sure, I'll do my best. My Finnish is not that good yet....

Ahmed: Oh, you're not Finnish? Where are you from?

Ioana: Romania....

Ahmed: Oh... [he leaves the stage].

Ioana arranges the cleaning products in a neat row. End of act.

Act 2 Conference dinner

A small table in the center of the stage with drinks and plates on it and two chairs around it. Ioana and Antti are sitting on the chairs, facing each other.

Antti [addresses Ioana]: We're so busy these days working on our new album. We're experimenting with sound and language. On top of our songs in Finnish, we also need interlude skits in different languages.... Hmm... [scratches the top of his head and bites his lower lip]. Can we record you while you talk? Romanian sounds so sensual....

Ioana [*looks at Antti puzzled and addresses him*]: Oh... but what should I say?

Antti: It doesn't matter what you say, nobody will understand [*slight laughter*].

Ioana: Yeah, maybe... [*slight nervous laughter*]. Will you mention my name in the album credits?

Antti: Maybe it won't be necessary to mention your name. More mysterious... [*smiles suggestively*]. You smell so good, like a trip to India....

Ioana takes a sip from her drink, crosses her legs, and turns around in her seat, with her back to Antti. End of act.

Act 3 Emergency accommodation center for Roma migrants

Three office desks with chairs lined up facing the audience. Seated at the desks are, in the following order from left to right: Ioana, Minna, and Bogdan. A tall reception desk on the right side of the stage, facing the office desks, with Daria standing behind it. Lavinia and Veronica are mopping the floor.

Bogdan: Ioana, can you come to my office, please?

Ioana walks over to Bogdan's desk.

Ioana: Yes, you wanted to see me.

Bogdan: What is this thing about a training taking place here? You think you can have training sessions at the center whenever you want? What is it about?

Ioana: It's about discrimination at the workplace. Minna has informed you about it quite some time ago; I thought you knew.

Bogdan: Is the training also for Daria?

Ioana: It's actually for Roma people, so for Manuela, Lavinia, and Veronica. But Daria could also come, if she is being discriminated against at the workplace.

Bogdan: Ha, ha... she would say she is discriminated against by me... I want to join this training. Send me a calendar invitation, I have so many things going on, hard to keep track of everything.

Ioana: Alright....

Bogdan: By the way, you have to be more authoritative with the cleaners. When you come to work, they have to fear you. Don't be their friend. That will not work with them. They will get lazy if you are too friendly with them.

Ioana: Right... [*sighs and rolls her eyes*]. I will go now.

Ioana walks over to Minna's desk.

Ioana [*addresses Minna*]: Did you hear how Bogdan just talked to me? He instructed me on how to do my job. He is not my boss.

Minna: Jesus! He *NEVER* does that with me! I guess he does it depending on your cultural background, given that both of you are Romanian. He is an important client for our project with Roma cleaners, but that does not mean he can be disrespectful to you. I will talk to him. Don't feel discouraged by this.

Ioana: Thanks! I don't feel discouraged [*she walks back to her desk and sits down*].

Lavinia leaves the mop on the floor and walks over to Daria's reception desk.

Lavinia [*addresses Daria*]: I have not been feeling well the past couple of days. I have back pains. I need to go see the doctor. Can you come with me to translate?

Daria: Go with your husband, he speaks some Finnish, doesn't he?

Lavinia: But wait a minute, he only knows a little bit how to speak, he doesn't speak well [*sighs*]. He doesn't know how to explain my medical problems.

Daria: Ah, there is always something with you. We have many other residents here, I cannot come to translate for you all the time.

Lavinia [*raises her voice*]: You know what? I don't need you anymore, nothing from you! I don't need you to come with me anywhere! I will pay my person and go by myself! [*She walks to Ioana's desk and addresses her*]: You have to talk to Daria, she is doing it again.

Ioana: Alright, Lavinia, I'll see what I can do.

Lavinia: You have to help us! What, you sit there on that chair in the office for nothing?

Ioana: Ok, I'll do my best... [*sighs*]. Now, could you please tell Veronica to come to my office? She is late for her personal development meeting.

Lavinia goes back where she had left the mop and resumes cleaning the floor. Veronica leaves the mop and walks over to Ioana's desk.

Ioana: Hi Veronica, how are you?

Veronica: How can I be, a lot of work, tired....

Ioana: Are you still doing double shifts? Maybe you should consider quitting the other cleaning job.

Veronica: What to do, if I have to send money back home to my children? But I think they will fire me anyway....

Ioana: Really? Why do you think that?

Veronica: They hired this new person, a Romanian guy as the staff manager. And he asked me once, 'are you from Romania?' I said yes. 'Are you Roma?' Yes. 'And you, you Roma people work?' he asked me. Well yes, do you think only people like yourself, only Romanians work? Us Roma also work, I told him. We are maybe 1000 times more hard working than Romanians. Because I can carry a bag of cement, but your Romanian girls will not do that kind of work.

Ioana: That's true.

Veronica: And I can do many things. Hm ok, he said. I felt like he talked to me in a certain way, but anyway.... The next day I hear from the other cleaners that they will let some people go, they are doing some restructuring. I am sure I will be the first to be fired.

Ioana: Oh no. That's really bad... [*nods her head in disapproval*].

Veronica: Yes... [*sighs deeply*]. But you should know that Romanians here sometimes are more racist than the Finns. At first, I was thinking, how can they be like that? They are Romanian like us. But with time I noticed, I'm very sorry, that from Romanians very often.

Ioana: No need to be sorry. It's very bad that things like that happen to you.

Veronica: It also happened to my son, in England. Um, the big one who was employed in England and, I'm sorry to say this, a Romanian of ours heard him speaking Romani and the next day he was no longer called at work.... So when my son told me what had happened, I thought the earth vanished from under my feet, my legs would not, no.... How dear, you are a boy... and his skin is a lot lighter than mine.... But now, thank God, he found a job at a different firm and they made him a contract, they are all well. They are well now.

End of act.

Parts of the script have been published and are freely available in the Nordic Journal of Studies in Educational Policy, 21 Dec 2021,

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/20020317.2021.2009102>

Method: Ethnodrama

One can use multiple types of data for creating an ethnodrama, including interview transcripts, auto/ethnographic notes, stories from both oral and written sources, memory stories, non/fictional texts, news articles, etc. For my ethnodrama, I used autoethnographic notes taken during my PhD studies, experiences from my jobs in a reception center for asylum seekers and an emergency accommodation center for Roma migrants, and interviews with Romanian Roma migrants living in Helsinki as my data. The interviewees gave their informed consent for me to utilize this data in creating the ethnodrama. I used pseudonyms for all characters except myself.

In creating the characters of an ethnodrama, one should have in mind one's objectives, any conflicts that might prevent one from achieving the objectives, tactics and strategies to overcome conflicts, emotions and journeys from one emotion to another, attitudes (toward one's self, other people, and particular issues), and covert layers of unspoken meaning suggested through stage directions. In interview adaptations, one can include both verbatim extracts as well as edited and slightly revised passages from transcripts while trying to remain faithful to the interviewees' voices. One should further consider how the resulting dialogues may be performed on stage and insert italicized stage directions between brackets, such as movements, gestures, acting recommendations, or interactions between characters or with objects on stage. In the adaptation of various types of stories or non/fictional texts, one should transform the 'in-my-head' reflective narratives into engaging conversational performances. If the original texts or stories do not contain enough material for dialogues, one can write plausible exchanges between characters based on the texts or stories and elaborate on the characters' thought processes through the italicized stage directions. Anonymity and pseudonyms are highly important when creating the characters, unless the people on whom the characters are based requested otherwise.

An ethnodrama can be performed in the classroom in various ways. If possible, the teacher can cast people to play the characters. If the teacher does not have the resources for that, another option is reader's theatre: reading the script and attempting multivocal interpretations. The teacher can do this alone or together with students who will play the roles of different characters. However, this raises several issues. Who can play whom? Which body can play which character? What if the performance colonizes and appropriates the characters' experiences or voices? What if it centers the teacher's voice, or the voices of students speaking from privileged positions, as an 'authority'? Critically reflecting on the representations created together with the students is therefore crucial. In the classroom following the reading of the script, the teacher can invite students to engage in open discussions, ask questions, critique the performance, offer recommendations for improvement, and reflect on their own positionings in relation to the topics explored in the ethnodrama. During the discussion, the teacher can guide students toward questioning how the characters' positionalities are constructed and linked with structures of power, challenging representations, mis/readings and the problematic tendencies of giving voice and empowering or speaking on behalf of others, and envisioning new subjectivities and relationalities. By inviting students to critique the assumptions and biases in the script, the teacher can question notions of authority,

explore possibilities for collaboration, and explore how knowing and teaching are tenuous, never quite right, always transforming. The class experience can potentially guide students towards explorations of how their own positionings connect with broader socio-historical discourses and with paradigms of power, privilege, and oppression within which we each play a part. Furthermore, the students can practice creative writing and write their own ethnodramas that they can then perform in class and receive feedback from their classmates.

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[*Re-Connect / Re-Collect*](#): art and research project (re)collecting memories of diverse childhood experiences during the Cold War, bringing into public view alternative and multiple personal histories that have the potential to transfigure divisions into connections in new and bold ways. The project draws on collective biography, as well as artistic representations of childhood memories through drama, exhibitions, film, animation and visual arts.

[*Re-Connect / Re-Collect's archive of memories*](#) that continually recreates itself, inciting experimentation, by responding to continuously changing experiences of the communities and fostering multiple, even panoramic, viewpoints about diverse identities, cultures, and histories as experienced during and after the Cold War.

[Blog entry: *Re/connecting research and teaching. Memory work as a pedagogical tool.*](#)

Luis Escobedo
Anti-racist Pedagogies in Mexican Classrooms: Lessons for Romani Studies

Once holding a classic of Latin American literature in my hands, I imagined Roma people as enigmatic, mystical, and remote. This was during my teenage years, while embedded in a particular context, one in which I held a certain class privilege. But even then, this privilege was just relative. Racial categorization and its nihilistic consequences had been part of my life since the day I was born. Yet, in the shoes of the teenage reader that I was, it never crossed my mind that the process of racialization of which I and millions of other non-white Peruvians had been part in our own country and the Latin American region of our birth was parallel to how we exoticized those who at the time existed in our books, and our minds, under the label of *gitanos*.

It took a few years and transatlantic (im)mobility for me to realize that – under my new status as an entry-visa-requiring, non-white immigrant from a former colony then perceived as significantly more disadvantaged and unequal than it is today – Europe’s dominant discourse of its racial Other categorized someone like me closer to a Roma individual than I could ever have imagined. I realised that the lives, experiences, relations, and stories of a variety of marked or racialized local and foreign individuals – like myself, navigating countries such as Germany, Poland, or Romania, as I have done for several years of my life – intersected with each other and were similarly entangled with the global context. This has made me increasingly interested in the field of Romani Studies, regarding racial categorization and otherness, an interest that has persisted ever since.

Melquíades was the first name that I remember having ever associated with the term *gitano*, the Spanish word that means ‘gypsy’, or, more specifically, ‘male gypsy’. In my mind, the fictional character Melquíades, identified in García Márquez’s *One Hundred Years of Solitude* as a *gitano* alchemist, radiated an aura of enigma, mysticism, melancholy, and wisdom, most likely constituted by his movement across foreign lands and distant places – and life and death.

In the late-1990s, when, as a teenager, I first picked up García Márquez’s seminal novel, I was part of a minority of non-white schoolchildren attending a private British school considered to be among the most prestigious in my natal city of Trujillo, in Peru. Whiteness, racism, and related beliefs and practices certainly, and not so covertly, played out in the relations among the students as well as between members of the parent’s association, the academic and administrative staff, and other stakeholders. These beliefs and practices were reproduced in other spaces with a similar demographic distribution, largely inhabited by the same groups of people, as in certain coastal towns, private clubs (including those forbidding the membership of women) and high-income neighbourhoods (including gated communities). This aspect significantly influenced our early socialisation and identification. However, although my mother regularly had to convince the school’s photographer to take photos of me during school events – given that in his eyes I did not reflect the local standards of beauty – I was

never the recipient of the more direct racist slurs and nicknames, and other expressions of violence, that most of my fellow non-white students had to endure. Neither was I ostracised upon graduation in the same way others were. After all, within the larger Peruvian society most of us still constituted the comparatively more privileged Spanish speaking middle-class world of Peru's urban north coast, a social world where *gitano* symbolised the exotic.

In the early 2000s, now a first-year undergraduate student in Germany, I began to perceive a different connotation for the word 'gypsy' in the stories of mostly Central and Eastern European classmates. The word was often articulated in relation to poverty, crime, marginalisation, segregation, lack of access to education, and distinct physical and behavioural traits, with dark skin often emphasised as a relevant marker of identification. In the space of a supposedly prestigious private Western European university with an internationally diverse student body and faculty and with interdisciplinary programmes in English, the term 'gypsy' no longer connoted the exotic. Curiously, yet controversially, dark skin (often) did connote the exotic. On campus, students who were perceived to be non-white, like me, were exposed to covert forms of racism. This was enacted in practices such as exoticization (as, for example, in the visual promotional material and activities aimed at enhancing the institution's international image), in racist slurs in languages other than English or German (for example, in Bulgarian), or in the reproduction of racial inequalities within certain national or regional representations in the space of the university campus (for example, among Latin Americans). Off campus, the relation with the larger German or European context was tainted by heightened degrees and forms of injustice and violence, including that exercised by the police and other public and private institutions.

More recently, I have had the opportunity to begin a research project primarily exploring concepts and issues such as the refractive gaze, racial forms of categorization, poverty, and interethnic marriages in the intersection of Roma/non-Roma, foreigner/local, and white/non-white (or Western/non-Western) relations in Romania. In this endeavour, I am increasingly convinced that the socio-historical and global processes that have led to the disenfranchisement of many Roma individuals and groups in Romania are conceptually not that distant from those that have similarly affected non-white immigrant bodies in this country. The social geographies where their bodies continue to be racialized (Frankenberg 1993) and where they have become racially identifiable (Butler 1997: 5) are also conceptually not far apart. Racial categorization, while structuring Roma and non-white immigrant lives and experiences in multiple, often intersecting, ways, has reduced their idiosyncrasy, complexity, plurality, and diversity into rather simplistic racial interpretations (see Kurzwelly and Escobedo 2021).

In line with this guide's endeavour to bring Critical Romani Studies into anti-racist pedagogy, and with my interest in Romani Studies regarding racial categorization and otherness, this chapter draws on some of the experiences I made applying anti-racist pedagogies when lecturing at a private Mexican university in 2015 and 2016 to expose some of the lessons that emerged in the process. During my first days as visiting lecturer in Mexico, I realised that this was a context in which racism was widely denied

or trivialised, backed by nationalist, multiculturalist, and non-racialist arguments that reduced inequality solely to class. In line with the anti-racist pedagogies I was committed to, I decided to focus on topics, theories, and methods related to race, racism, and inequality in every single one of my assigned courses – African and Latin American Studies, International Perspective, Geopolitics, and Sociology – for the next two years. To encourage critical reflection among the students, I also included in each syllabus the same module dealing with discourse, language, and meaning. Most importantly, to diversify the style of teaching and to adapt it to the proposed curriculum and syllabus, and to contribute back to the community on and off campus, I engaged the students in multiple activities, including several lecturer-student collaborative projects. To illustrate this point and assist the reader to visualize some of the lessons I drew from the application of an anti-racist pedagogy, I focus on a single case.

In the second half of 2015, I designed and taught a course entitled ‘Visual Culture in the Racial State’ to junior and senior students. The course discussed how a modern state’s reproduction of ‘national identity, the national population, labour, and security in and through the articulation of race, gender, and class’ (Goldberg 2002) materialises in visual artefacts of the everyday, such as in fine art, photography, film, television, newspapers, magazines, and publicity. The fact that, of all my classes, this was the only one in which all students were Mexican allowed me to design the class assignments in a way that catered for and emphasised the diversity among them, for example in terms of personal and professional interests, and to facilitate collaboration between them that was based on more just terms.

One assignment required all teams into which I had divided the class to focus on the single region of Malaysia and Singapore and to explain how the choices made by different political leaders had shaped the region’s social environment racially. They had to illustrate this with a single artefact that materialised this transformation. The output had to be a class presentation in any way the team chose, for example through a short film or a poster. A few weeks later, they had to do the same activity with any region in the world except for Mexico. While they worked on their assignments, I engaged them in related extracurricular activities. I took a representative of each group to visit a migrant shelter that was occupied by transiting migrants mostly coming from Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, and Nicaragua, and gave them but one task: to eat what the migrant shelter offers those who use its facilities. I purposefully did not give the students a reason why I was taking them there, so that they had to define their own objectives. But they had to enter the space inhabited by a group that was a minority within their own country. What mattered to me in that moment was the visibility of the boundaries between them and ‘the rest’, or ‘the Other’ – not whether this minority was privileged or underprivileged. The experience allowed them to look at me and each other differently, while engaging in conversations and expanding their boundaries in new ways.

Later in the semester, I engaged the most artistic members of each team in a new project for which I had acquired funding: *Proyecto43*. To commemorate the Iguala mass kidnapping and disappearance of 43 male students from the Ayotzinapa Rural Teachers’ College one year earlier, on 26 September 2014, and the anniversary of the

Tlatelolco massacre on 2 October 1968, I coordinated several educational activities on campus under the name *Proyecto43* and gave my students the task of leading them and the funding to do so. Three activities stood out.

The first one was the printing of a booklet including 43 anonymous testimonies provided by members of the university community, which the students collected. The second was an installation that commemorated 43 randomly selected victims of some form of ascriptive violence, such as genocide or an ethnic riot, from around the world. It aimed to depict them as persons with faces, names, and stories. Finally, the third one was a closing event at which members of the audience picked that testimony from the 43 anonymous testimonies that they identified with most and read it out loud. The reading not only exposed the humanity and complexity of the members of the university community but became a public podium for the exercise of social justice for those who secretly chose to read their own stories, most of them my own students, most of them female, reading out loud their own experiences of harassment and other forms of sexual violence.

There was no grading for these extracurricular activities, but the students who engaged in them enthusiastically embraced the significance of the course, one which while endowing them with suitable theories, concepts, methods, and cases would also teach them so much about themselves and the social identifications that they bear. Most importantly, they started seeing themselves and those around them as more than just part of social categories (for example, Mexican, or foreigner), an approach into which they had been socialised since childhood. They were first human, then unique individuals in their own right, and as such also part of diverse groups. They were engaged in academic, journalistic, artistic, activist, organisational, editorial, and other tasks. They identified themselves with each other and with others despite the boundaries drawn in terms of nationality, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, and other markers. They felt that they had been able to engage in a meaningful project and contribute to social change with their own hands. They exercised their own capacities and abilities while influencing their most immediate environment.

But in this process of change, conflict was inevitable. Yet this too contained important lessons. Let me highlight some of them. Any measure that disturbs the grading system is a direct attack on the university's banking system. The students in the class for whom grades were critical expected clear measuring mechanisms of their performance; my class did not provide this. Yet the conflict this created allowed all of us to work out more clearly how we conceptualised our roles and goals in society and the multiple ways in which one could achieve them. I grasped deeply through this conflict that students assumed, and expected, that their classes would teach them all that was necessary to pass the final exam, a written multiple-choice assessment that had replaced the bachelor thesis. I saw it as my task during these two years to challenge and change this traditionally held expectation, one often conveyed by the university, and to initiate students to set their own expectations instead.

More fundamentally, challenging the long-established social categories of Mexican society that normally is reproduced in the space of the classroom also did not come without major struggle. Classrooms were spaces of power struggle, and I was trying to change the existing power relations, recognising talented students over those who, for example, had connections within the academic hierarchies. This triggered a backlash and had a serious impact on my well-being, even leading me to exclude myself from certain academic activities and collaborations. The change of the curriculum and the syllabus also attracted criticism from students and academics who could not understand 'why we should be learning about race, racism, and inequality for two years when it is enough to learn "all" about them in a single class?'

The lessons learnt from the continuous application of anti-racist pedagogies in Mexican classrooms over the course of two years can be useful in the field of Romani Studies, especially regarding racial categorisation and otherness. Certainly, the two realities are different. But my experiences in Mexico and, more recently, conducting research on ethnic relations in Romania show that unequal relations, racial categorisation, stigmatisation, racial and racist beliefs and practices, racism denial and trivialisation, and other related aspects in both places make them part of the same global and socio-historical entanglement. The lives, experiences, relations, and stories of the various marked or racialized local and foreign individuals living in Mexico, Romania, or elsewhere intersect with each other and could offer important lessons for the reality of one another. Applying an anti-racist pedagogy that integrates Critical Romani Studies as one of its pillars is not only able to impact the Romanian university classroom significantly but also Roma/non-Roma relations and society as a whole.

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Conclusion: The Future of This Document

We hope that this document will be copied, pasted, forwarded, and used as widely as possible. Most importantly, we hope that it continues to live as teachers, pedagogists, activists, scholars, artists, and others continue to add to it from their own experiences and contexts.

Please add chapters roughly following the same three-part format as the authors above
1) why you are interested in anti-racist Romani pedagogy, 2) a methodology for anti-racist pedagogy, 3) a list of sources from your experiences, geography, and subject. This way, it can be adapted to other local needs and situations. It is, we hope, a living text that can continue to grow.