TRAVELLER THEOLOGY: A THEOLOGICAL ANTHROPOLOGY OF THE UK'S GYPSIES AND TRAVELLERS

by

Steven Horne

Canterbury Christ Church University

Thesis submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

2020

DISCLAIMER

I declare that no portion of the work referred to in the Thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this (Canterbury Christ Church University) or any other university or other institute of learning.

I confirm that this Thesis is entirely my own work.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to identify and thread cultural strands (beliefs and customs, narratives and histories, and rituals and traditions) from Gypsy and Traveller culture into a coherent theology. The researcher's hypothesis is that the most effective method in which one can truly and fully access Gypsy and Traveller culture and community is via the 'vehicle' of Christianity and Christian theological interpretation. The original contribution to knowledge is a theological interpretation of Gypsy and Traveller practices, beliefs, and communities in the UK. This introduces the secondary aim of the thesis, which is to contribute to the field of Gypsy, Traveller and Roma (GRT) studies, an area typically dominated by social-science approaches.

The thesis engages both the historical and present-day context, critically examining and addressing relevant themes in GRT studies and specific theological literature. In addition, field research conducted in various parts of the UK enables the examination of cultural tropes, including 'Purity', 'Sin', 'Nomadism', 'Space' and 'Time'. From these multiple streams, a hermeneutic is developed that forensically reveals original data. This data includes foundational theological elements of: a 'Mosaic' camp analogy; a Traveller Christology; and a Traveller eschatology.

The thesis is both ethnographic and theological in nature, with the researcher being uniquely placed, having familial ties with the Traveller/Gypsy community. To accommodate these approaches and the participation of the researcher, this thesis employs a mixed method approach, consisting of both Autoethnographic and Black Liberation theology methodologies. Theologically and theoretically the thesis is both a demonstration and an act of Constructive Liberation theology, so, namely a '*critical reflection on praxis… worked out in light of the Word*' (Gutiérrez, 1973).

Table of Contents

TABLE OF FIGURES

All photos, charts, diagrams (including Venn), and cycles are the property of the researcher, unless otherwise stated in the accompanying image's footnote.

<u>INTRODUCTION</u>

'I once asked an Irish Traveller to tell me about his culture. His response was unexpected and wise in a way that I was beginning to recognise as 'Traveller'. "OK but can you tell me about yours first?" Immediately I realised what a difficult and seemingly impossible thing I had just asked. With a smile he continued…'[1]

0.1 – Reasoning and Hypothesis for the Thesis

Religious engagement by Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) groups spans many centuries. Of note is the Evangelical movement in Europe from the late 1950's onwards, which has spawned both a global GRT Christian revival and a growing body of international GRT religious literature. In the UK the vast amount of *readily available* religious GRT texts, for the most part, occupy sociological books and Journals. Whilst theological themes are present in some of the explicitly Christian material, many seem primarily concerned with ecclesiological matters. As the literature review element of this thesis will reveal, such dialogues are crucial and provide essential foundations to any discussions of religious concern. However, two primary concerns remain:

Firstly, a large percentage of the aforementioned dialogues have been undertaken by non-Travellers/non-Gypsies/non-Romani (gorgers[2]). Secondly, there is a gap amongst the available texts and sources for a contemporary, possibly UK-based and Gypsy-led 'Traveller Theology'.

It is evident from the literature review of this thesis that there are numerous 'Traveller theologies' in existence; they exist both denominationally and outside of ecclesiological parameters. However, they are seldom categorised, recorded, explained or shared in readily available, mass-produced formats or via a broader academic sphere. Working from a central hypothesis that suggests that there is a theological centring to Gypsy and Traveller culture, this thesis will attempt to go beyond the oral nature[3] of its community

---

[1] G4S / HMPS, 2016, p. 6.

[2] A 'gorger' is a non-Romani person (Hancock, 2013, p. xx – xxi).

[3] GRT communities are widely considered to be an 'oral' community. Cultural values, history and traditions are often passed on orally, rather than through text or other means. Sometimes this is undertaken to ensure the security and privacy of some communities. In his analysis of a particular part of London, historian Jerry White notes the 'Gypsy connection' amongst some of the people resident there, describing their oral tradition as being 'overwhelming' despite having no 'clear documentary evidence' (White, 2003). Clark & Greenfields (2006, pp. 110-111) highlight some of the oral tradition that White speaks of as relating to specific stopping places used frequently by different Travellers.

and formulate *a* Traveller theology; a Traveller theology amongst *many* others, but for all to see (Matthew 5:14–15)[4]. Exploring Gypsy religion and belief structures in this manner has and does offer the potential of breaking new ground – not only in the form of new data, but perhaps more importantly in the potential for practically demonstrating a resistance to dominant narratives concerning GRT communities. In this way, a Traveller theology is not purely about understanding, but about resisting oppression, democratising theology and encouraging inclusivity. Inclusivity issues include both the theological process and academically-originated theology, a global domain in which Gypsies and Travellers are underrepresented.

Whilst existing material is predominantly focused upon social issues or perceived issues of social injustice, there is arguably a disparity in the data between the authentic human narrative and that of the romanticised imaginative accounts from both Traveller and gorger sources. This often results in an augmented reality of sorts that either trivialises and/or disparages Gypsy and Traveller culture. As such, this thesis will take into account all primary factors that have formulated the current understanding and presentation of Gypsy and Traveller culture – social, political, religious, historic, and personal accounts, and in response will attempt to 'mine' for a theological narrative in these factors. This will be achieved by working on the basis of a hypothesis that suggests that such a theology exists and a research question that asks; if a Traveller theology exists, how does it exist?

To assist in answering this question and addressing the aforementioned primary concerns, this thesis will place a specific emphasis on the position of the researcher. The researcher has familial, personal and professional links with the Traveller and Gypsy community spanning over 30 years. In terms of the family link[5], the ethnic identifier is Romany Gypsy, with a large percentage of said family being more readily identified as 'Showmen', working fairs and other trades in various parts of England. By incorporating a mixed methodology (Autoethnography and Black Theology) alongside the researchers' 'insider privilege', this thesis will attempt to go some way in bridging gaps in knowledge that collectively can be understood as a 'Traveller theology'.

---

[4] "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house". All Biblical references in this thesis are taken from the NRSV Bible (National Council of Churches, 1998).

[5] This is discussed further in the Methodology chapter.

0.2 – Why 'Traveller'?

The decision to choose 'Traveller' (rather than 'Gypsy' or 'Roma') in the title of this thesis is as historian Becky Taylor suggests, 'not simply a matter of semantics, since individuals and whole communities are still routinely deported, moved on or discriminated against on the grounds that they are, or are not, Gypsies / Roma / Travellers'[6]. Whilst 'Traveller' is still a descriptive term historically ascribed by gorgers, it carries little or no offence. However, the term 'Gypsy' is considered by some to be derogatory, partially owing to its roots in discriminatory and racialised labelling following a supposed immigration at one stage from Egypt[7]. Even so, in some studies Travellers preferred to describe themselves as Gypsies. The reasoning behind this includes but is not limited to: a belief that they would always be recognised as Gypsies regardless of title given or their status in society; deciding to 'settle'; and recognising the pejorative implications and connotations that are affiliated with the title 'Gypsy'[8].

In the UK the term 'Traveller' is often used interchangeably with the term 'Gypsy', 'Romany', 'Romany Gypsy', 'Roma', or even 'Rom', – by both Travellers and gorgers alike[9]. Where appropriate this thesis will reflect that interchangeability. However, it must be noted that a percentage of Travellers and Gypsies wish to be identified and addressed by a specific term. For the most part, the term 'Roma' (or '*Rom*' – meaning 'man') will not be used; this is due to the term being predominantly associated with Gypsies living throughout Europe – particularly Eastern Europe[10]. Although many aspects of the ancestry and historical narratives of Gypsies and Travellers are shared with their European cousins, the current political and social environments can be markedly different in Europe to those in the UK. If references towards Roma and Europe are required, then it shall be included where necessary, appropriate, and contextually relevant.

In light of this, the researcher will be mostly using the parameters of the definition given by Liégeois and Gheorghe (1995) which delivers separate definitions for Gypsies and Travellers. 'Gypsy' is associated with ethnic groupings whose ancestries originate in the Indian diaspora somewhere between the 8th and 10th centuries; whereas 'Traveller'

---

[6] Taylor, 2014, p. 11.

[7] 'Gypsy' has certain racial connotations, as it derives from 'Egyptian' and was based upon the Gypsies' dark skin and colourful clothing (Okely, 1998, p. 1).

[8] Bhopal & Myers, 2008, p. 8.

[9] For example; Romany-Gypsy, Irish Traveller, Scottish Traveller, Rom, Roma, etc.

[10] Among the estimated global 11 million people identifying under the Romany banner there are numerous other collectives and 'Gypsy' identities, including but not limited to: Romanichal (England); Sinti (Central Europe); Manouche (France); Gitano (Spain); Bayesh (Croatia); Kalé (Wales and Finland); Romanlar (Turkey); and Domari (Palestine and Egypt).

commonly refers to collectives who assert a predominant and indigenous European source whose culture has been characterised by nomadism, fluidity in occupations and self-employment[11]. It must be noted that the definitions of 'Gypsy' and 'Traveller' vary between different sources, meaning that there may be some dispute as to whether Liegéois and Gheorghe's definitions are strictly applicable to English Romanies and Travellers.

In Britain, Traveller and Gypsy groups are protected by race-relations legislation and are recognised individually and collectively as ethnic minorities[12]. Defining 'ethnicity' in GRT studies is challenging because of the multiplicity of separate ethnic GRT groups (for example, Irish Travellers, Roma, and English Romanichal). To reflect this dynamic, this thesis will employ a broad application of the term 'ethnicity' when discussing GRT people, and an understanding that ethnicity is defined as being a collective identity which includes religious, national, and cultural forms[13]. In doing so, there is a conscious recognition that defining Gypsy and Traveller ethnicity involves several recognisable factors that are both variable in nature and in constant flux with other GRT groups and the outside world. These factors include among others: nomadism, language, relationship between GRT and gorger society, and self-identification[14].

0.3 – Thesis Structure

Chapters One and *Two* present the standardised elements of the thesis, namely the Methodology Chapter and the Literature Review Chapter. *Chapter One* details the following: The theological methodology (Black Liberation theology), the empirical data methodology (autoethnography), the position of the researcher, the empirical data gathering approach (research structure, field research parameters, manual thematic analysis), and the ethics committee process. *Chapter Two* details the literature and research that contextualises this study, with particular emphasis on the developing GRT religious landscape over the last century.

From there, *Chapter Three* contextually places the thesis in a social and historical framework, triangulated by a critical ecclesiology. In understanding a culture or a collective, it is important to understand the processes that shaped, developed, and

---

[11] Liégeois & Gheorghe, 1995, p. 6.
[12] Clark & Greenfields, 2006, p. 19.
[13] Clark & Greenfields, 2006, p. 297.
[14] Bhopal & Myers, 2008, pp. 13 – 18.

strengthened (and weakened) that culture during its formation[15]. With that in mind, the concept of (Christian) identity is introduced as a way of presenting the initial position of the thesis. The chapter then moves towards contextualising the thesis in the present era. The purpose of this process is to observe the Gypsy and Traveller community as it currently presents itself. This is mostly achieved by translating and reinterpreting various sources through a Traveller-Christian lens; this incorporates Anthony Pinn's (2003) methodological approach of 'complex subjectivity'[16] as it sits in Black theology's framework of critical self-examination. The chapter consists of two themes that operate synergistically. The first theme deals with Traveller and Gypsy representation in contemporary popular culture. The second theme provides the distinctly religious narrative of sin – or theodicy, providing a measurable 'plumb line' by which explicitly discussed stereotypes are both challenged and responded to through theological interpretation.

Chapter Four presents the field research, which was conducted over two phases, followed by complementary work to ensure coverage. The first phase took place at Appleby Horse Fair, whilst the second phase took place in two different residences in separate parts of the UK. These were carefully selected to ensure that a broad yet accurate representation and data collection was obtained. The research (and chapter) is approached with a greater application of the autoethnographic method. However, any elements of the researcher's voice is made explicit and therefore identifiable amongst other data. The chapter is concluded with a summary of the primary emergent themes and areas requiring immediate attention.

Chapter Five uses a particular reference and focus towards the data and themes of interest arising from the field work. In and around this sphere of exploration, there is a critical examination of aesthetic and governing frameworks such as: purity, language, space and time. Furthermore, there is an introduction of theological motifs, including: nomadism, the nomadic camp, death and the afterlife, Traveller Christology, and Traveller eschatology. The Methodological and theoretical approaches of Constructive and Black Liberation theology form the thematic and logical ordering of the chapter, whilst Bob Ekblad's (2005) hermeneutical method directs scriptural application and translation. The chapter is divided into two parts. This is done for two reasons. Firstly, the chapter is necessarily extensive, and as such the division makes for a greater ease of reading. Secondly, the division makes a clearer distinction between the first section which collates

---

[15] Anacin, 2015, pp. 40 – 41.
[16] *Methodology* chapter provides details of these approaches.

the theological themes of the fourth chapter, and the second section which operates more reflectively, building upon the developing Traveller theology by introducing a forensically-examined theological narrative. The second half of the chapter critically examines the following themes: origins of the composition and nature of the Traveller; Gypsy purity (and conversely, impurity); death; and the afterlife.

Finally, *Chapter Six* is the concluding chapter to the thesis and therefore its nature is self-explanatory. The chapter is structured and presented in a logical, reasoned and linear manner. Presenting the conclusion in this form delivers clarity to the findings, results and conclusions. Chapter Six deals with the following aspects: summary of the main findings; comparison with findings from other research; explanations for findings; implications of the findings; limitations of the research; and suggestions for future research.

0.4 – Summary

Partly owing to the oral nature and marginalisation of Traveller and Gypsy groups, historically there has and continues to be a degree of absence of Traveller and Gypsy contribution in a multiplicity of narratives, including: the political, religious, and social sphere; historical sources; and public documentation (academic sources and/or the media). This has left gaps in *current* knowledge, particularly in the UK. This thesis will attempt to establish the nature, content and presentation of a Traveller theology. The researcher's hypothesis suggests that there exists *a Christological centring to Traveller culture*. Therefore, the goal of establishing the existence of said hypothesis will partially arrive by attempting to construct the foundations of said Traveller theology. As such, this thesis will begin by first critically evaluating the suitable methods, theories and approaches necessary to achieve this goal. This will be followed by a review of the primary relevant literature in this field.

CHAPTER ONE – METHODOLOGY

1.1 – Introduction

1.1.1 – Positioning the Traveller (and the Requirement for Theology as Theory and Method)

There is an extensive history of religious engagement by Gypsies and Travellers. Furthermore, there is a niche body of literature that supports and evidences said religious engagement. However, a persistent challenge in any aspect of GRT studies is the predominance of stereotypes and prejudices about Gypsy/Travellers, including in academia and among the public agencies working with GRT communities[17]. Positively construed identifiers are thus uncommon and are often either fabrications of gorger imagination (see later references to the 'romanticised Gypsy) or deemed unworthy of serious attention due to their initial novel or unfamiliar form (Traveller spirituality and nomadism). Consequently, the resulting narratives often exclude fundamentally significant tropes in Gypsy communities and cultural monographs, such as purity, sin, family, nomadism, and the afterlife. Again, despite evidence suggesting that religion (Christianity in particular) has and is fundamentally changing the GRT landscape[18], religious discourse is normally superseded by ethnic and racial narratives. According to Liberation theologian, Alistair Kee, this dynamic is broad and commonplace among ethnic and racial minorities, commenting that 'religion is not regarded as an important research topic amongst those concerned with the majority community'[19]. Professor of Diasporic Religions, Martin Baumann, recognises an identical trend in Trinidad amongst a 'diasporic community of Hindus'. Baumann writes:

> However, in most studies of migrant groups that explore the retention of their peculiarity, the factor of religion goes unmentioned. Instead, the academically invented concept of ethnicity is given priority as the key factor responsible for a migrant group's persistence and survival in the new, socio-culturally different environment… Religion is no longer conceptualised as a possible variable… Other than in studies of contemporary terrorism, the possibility that religion can have any relevance for present-day, modern societies is not taken seriously, by most social scientists. Religion is thought of as a

---

[17] Common themes in such sources, although meant well, contribute to a negative 'social concern' narrative surrounding GRT people. These themes often include: Poor access to healthcare and educational facilities; homelessness; and ill-informed mass-media misrepresentation.

[18] The phenomena of cultural change predominantly began during the 1950's, and is detailed in the literature review chapter of this thesis.

[19] Kee, 2008, p. 151.

private affair only, not as a driving force for entire groups and a significant symbol of identification, demarcation and support. [20]

Kee identifies the counter-intuitive nature and composition of this position, citing evidence that 'amongst diasporic communities religion becomes more not less important'[21]. However, Kee includes a caveat to his proposal, stating that religion for the aforementioned communities 'is also subject to transformation in response to the new context'[22]. The secularised approaches that Kee criticises must be equalled or surpassed by its theological equivalent if culturally-specific religious monographs are to be recognised as both a valid and an authoritative voice. To achieve this, in the first instance religion must be a core concern when undertaking GRT studies. GRT self-understanding entails a religious disposition, or a set of religious dispositions and commitments, something which some prior studies have only provided scant mention of religion and Christian beliefs. For example, in *Here to Stay: The Gypsies and Travellers of Britain*[23], Colin Clark and Margaret Greenfields cover a plethora of topics and issues, including a specific section entitled 'Religious Practices'[24]. Clark and Greenfields identify Christianity as the primary religion for Travellers in the UK, and suggest that Christian religious leaders, such as Priests and Pastors, are 'able to act as a bridge'[25]. Despite this revelation, and the recognition by Clark and Greenfields that 'Religion is extremely important to Gypsies and Travellers', they go no further in their discussions on the topic, devoting just over a page to Gypsy religion in an otherwise comprehensive 382 page book. In making religion a core concern of GRT studies, one discovers a particular theology at work in GRT communal self-understanding. However, for said theology to function effectively, gorgers must reciprocate by accepting a Gypsy proposition and presentation of what is best, fair, and representative of his or her community. Beyond this, GRT theology has a place in contemporary theology, no longer as a diaspora, minority concern, but because it recovers a central pillar of the Christian gospel and therefore of Christian theology. As such, an important question must be asked: what theological method is best suited to the task of constructing a Traveller theology?

---

[20] Baumann, 2004, p. 151 – 152.
[21] Kee, 2008, p. 152.
[22] Kee, 2008, p. 152.
[23] Clark & Greenfields, 2006.
[24] Clark & Greenfields, 2006, pp. 48 – 49.
[25] Clark & Greenfields, 2006, p. 49.

Instigating a reclamation of cultural identity in and through a Christian theological process in the contemporary period has a precedent – namely, Black theology[26]. More specifically, theologians such as Professor Robert Beckford have successfully responded in demonstrating the intrinsic positioning of religion in identity (personal and communal) and community activity[27]. Additionally, they have shown (and continue to show) the progressive power and impact of (contextualised) theology upon the prosperousness of the marginalised community[28]. Beckford, using Contextual and Political theological approaches, critiques the Black church, and by proxy, Black culture (Kee citing amongst other things, a 'lack of affirmation of the disabled, [and] homophobia towards the non-heterosexual'[29]). In doing so, Beckford challenges 'anti-intellectualism'[30] in ministries and existing (sociological) approaches, thus rejecting 'surface level responses which value and/or 'interpret the Scripture like any other book'[31]. It is important to note that Beckford's rejection of anti-intellectualism is not a rejection of historical criticism but an active and intentional development of a contextual and indeed, constructive theology[32].

In this sense, religion is understood as a cultural and sociological variable, operating primarily in a navigational and functional mode. Professor of Sociology and Religion, John Milton Yinger, works from a similarly 'functional' definition of religion, proposing that religion should be defined (and thus applied) 'not in terms of what it essentially *is* but on what it *does*'[33]. For Yinger, Religion is a construct that manifests in response to human phenomena such as 'the provision of purpose in life' and 'meaning in the face of death, suffering, evil, and injustice'[34]. Furthermore, Yinger proposes that 'theological orientations become variables that may influence the rate or the direction' of a particular (social and/or minority) group or collective[35]. Importantly (and perhaps, reassuringly to the social scientists), the variability of the theological method ensures both authenticity in answers (as they come from the minority in question) and accountability to the collective of which it represents (i.e. Gypsies and Travellers). A Traveller or Gypsy theology, much like a Black theology, is no different in that it requires accountability and fair representation among

---

[26] It should be noted that it is not unusual to incorporate Black culture and Black communities into academic GRT studies as a form of comparison with Gypsies and Travellers. Examples can be found in: Richardson & Ryder, 2012, p. 80; Bhopal & Myers, 2008, p. 96.
[27] Beckford, 1998.
[28] Kee, 2008, p. 152.
[29] Kee, 2008, p. 153.
[30] Kee, 2008, p. 152.
[31] Kee, 2008, p. 152.
[32] Beckford, 2004, p. 31; Kee, 2008, p. 152.
[33] Swatos, 1998, p. 565.
[34] Yinger, 1970, p. 33.
[35] Swatos, 1998, p. 567.

those it seeks to represent. Perhaps more important at this juncture is that in addition to the theory of religion (and religious narrative) as a central tenet of empowerment and fair representation of ethnic and minority collectives, there is the dilemma and tension of what religious narrative/s is applied and *how* it is applied.

Kee and Baumann suggest that cultural and ethnic-specific theologies are reflexive, operating as variables that are separate from the corporeality of the larger religious body. This tension is not new. In *Terror and Triumph: The Nature of Black Religion*, Professor of Black Constructive Theology Anthony Pinn explores the construct and theory of Black religion, proposing a two-dimensionality to the nature of Black religion[36]. Pinn proposes that the first dimension is an understanding of religion as 'the historical manifestation of a struggle for liberation embedded in culture'[37]. When a theology that is practical, liberative, contextual, and/or constructive is the primary ethical standard (such as Black theology), then 'traditionally' the objective of struggle or social activism is one that is concerned with cultivating space 'in which we [or one] can undertake the continual process of rethinking ourselves in light of community and within the context of the world'[38]. Pursuing the 'objective of struggle' facilitates a process of deconstructing damaging 'structures' placed upon the marginalised collective. According to Pinn, such a pursuit summons the generation and creation of 'more liberative possibilities'[39]. This becomes a key element to the rationalisation of Pinn's reasoning for proposing a two-dimensionality to the positioning and relationship of religion by and in the group. By understanding that structures (including religious and theological constructs) can, in addition to their liberative possibilities, facilitate negative outcomes, a requirement to separate and understand the contradiction is created. Pinn reaches this position by utilising a method of separation based on his theory of two-dimensionality to religion. Pinn's method bridges the tension between Christian theology as an institution (Pinn's 'first dimension') and Christian theology as an action (Kee and Beckford). It achieves this by recognising the damaging possibilities of (institutional) religion and separating it from the personal positive possibilities of particular cultural expressions of theology. Pinn proposes that in this context the first (and most well-known) dimension is understood as an 'historical struggle for liberation' that operates in and from the religious institution.

---

[36] Pinn, 2003, p. 154. In Pinn's first notable text, *Why, Lord?: Suffering and Evil in Black Theology* (1995), Pinn engages with significant theological tropes but is partly limited by the boundaries of conventionalism in which he operates. *Terror and Triumph* (2003) responds to this by introducing radical methods (i.e. two-dimensionality and complex subjectivity) in which to combat limitations in personal theologies.
[37] Pinn, 2003, p. 157.
[38] Pinn, 2003, p. 157.
[39] Pinn, 2003, p. 154.

The second dimension, however, serves as 'an underlying impulse that informs religious institutions, doctrines, and practices'[40]. The religious experience that is the object of similar studies is both culturally and historically bound. Pinn recognises this element as important but advises that in the *second dimension* there resides a 'deeper and more central concern'[41]. The concern that Pinn alludes to is understood through a method of exploration which Pinn refers to as 'the quest for complex subjectivity'[42]. Pinn argues that 'complex subjectivity' is at the centre of Black religion, and rather than being a move toward an ethnic individualism, it is rather a 'process of becoming… It is religious in that it addresses the search for *ultimate* meaning, and it is black because it is shaped by and within the context of black historical realities and cultural creations'[43].

In the same manner, being distinctively shaped in the context of Gypsy historical realities and cultural creations, this thesis is attempting to initiate a similar process of 'becoming' for Gypsy and Traveller communities. The following three actions make this task more achievable: Acknowledging the centrality of Religion at the centre of Gypsy community; contextually and *constructively* exploring said religion; and implementing the framework and method of Pinn's 'complex subjectivity' and the theory of 'two dimensionality' into the method and direction of *this* research. In doing so, a Traveller and Gypsy narrative can theoretically sit in relation to its historical context whilst being theologically and objectively critical of itself in its second dimensional context. As for historical and sociological concerns, an emergent Traveller theology that is operational through the aforementioned structure and understood as a variable – as per Pinn's understanding of Black religion, is not to be considered a mode of reality that is transhistorical. Instead it should be considered as Pinn suggests; 'a creative and bold wrestling with history', with the purpose of placing Gypsy bodies in 'healthier spaces, with a greater range of possibilities'[44]. The broad reach (religious, social, historical) of factors such as Pinn's 'two dimensionality' and 'subjective reasoning' ensure they are incorporated as methodological 'scaffolding' in both the theological and empirical data methodologies required for this thesis. Therefore, the next task is to establish the specific area and form of theological method from which this research shall predominantly operate.

---

[40] Pinn, 2003, pp. 154 – 157.
[41] Pinn, 2003, p. 157.
[42] Pinn, 2003, p. 157.
[43] Pinn, 2003, p. 159.
[44] Pinn, 2003, p. 179.

1.2 – Theological Methodology: Black Constructive Theology

1.2.1 – Defining Theology

Theology is not a predetermined and readily definable thing; it is something partaken in. This is demonstrated through Liberation and Black theologies, where theology is experienced, embedded and personal. One of the founders of Liberation theology, Gustavo Gutierrez, defines theology as a 'critical reflection on praxis… worked out in light of the Word'[45]. Theologian and philosopher, Fr. Bernard Lonergan, set the foundation for Gutierrez's theology of liberation by proposing an understanding in which theology served *beyond* its original inception as a form of dialogue between God and the body of the church[46]. Theology would instead operate between a culture and a religion in the form of both mediator and mediation process; in this way, theology became 'context based'[47]. However, Lonergan's theology achieves this state of contextual localisation by intentionally presenting itself as broad and vague[48]. As such, it could be argued that whilst not specific to the Traveller's worldview, such a theological conception provides a universality that, rather than departing from the Traveller's cause, is able to accommodate it. But it is precisely because of this 'one size fits all' approach that such a position must be resisted, if a repetition of broad and detached research concerning Gypsies and Travellers is to be avoided. Both critical evaluation and (an explanatory) participation in one's culturally-specific faith are needed if an intimacy of belief is to emerge.

Catholic theologian, William Portier, encouraged but was critical of Lonergan's position, arguing that 'theology should have room for the appeal of the evocative and persuasive, the witness of the personal voice'. Portier adds that, '…believers ought not to be restricted, for the sake of academic credibility, to speaking as if they were not (believers)'[49]. Gutierrez provides a specific contextualisation to Lonergan's theology, replacing the vagueness of potential religious universalism with the specificity of Christianity, whilst also reclaiming the theological space for the poor, the oppressed and the marginalised[50]. For this thesis religion thus operates as an intangible but ever-present praxis-led structure that facilitates both the observable elements (ritual, liturgy, and clergy) and the elements of reasoning, rationale, direction, and communication (theology). As

---

[45] Gutierrez, 1973, pp. 6 & 11 (theology defined as 'critical reflection on praxis' [p. 6]…'worked out in light of the Word' [p. 11]).
[46] Lonergan, 1973.
[47] Portier, 1994, pp. 156 – 158.
[48] Portier, 1994, pp. 161 – 162.
[49] Portier, 1994, p. 162.
[50] Portier, 1994, pp. 161 – 162.

such, theology is, in the end, a lived practical endeavour, and a practice of reflection on condition and experience. Therefore, theology is fundamentally understood in this thesis in the context proposed by Gutierrez, functioning as an operational method – as mediator and mediation process between culture (Gypsies, Travellers) and religion (Christianity).

1.2.2 – Theological Pluralism?

Any theological method must be capable of delivering an adaptable and culturally intuitive, personal, and yet critical platform. This must be the baseline requirement if any advancement of academic, theological and cultural understanding surrounding Gypsy and Traveller beliefs and culture is to be obtained. As such, a degree of theological pluralism presents itself as an obvious approach in the tasks of identifying the most preferable theological method/theory and of unearthing the data that constitutes the makeup of this thesis.

Traveller and Gypsy 'religion' draws upon many historical traditions and sources in formulating its collective cultural and theological beliefs, none of which can be firmly and specifically attributed to any one single denomination or person. Therefore, in addition to any theological method consideration is the proposition that such theological pluralism must also cross over to the multiple voices that are employed in this thesis. This means that their personal denominational preference or political side-taking is not a deciding factor in their inclusion in the text. It is acknowledged that their denominational influences have a potential to create an impact in the thesis. However, the broadness of inclusion in this equation mitigates the risk of polemic or one-sided argument. Drawing again on Pinn (2006), one is able to reapply the principles of his 'nitty-gritty hermeneutics' in both the interpretation of sources and the selection of from where and *whom* those sources originate. 'Nitty gritty hermeneutics' in this sense is defined by Pinn as a rejection of theological 'fluff', and instead is a pursuit toward and deliberate attention upon the elements and aspects that matter most, particularly with consideration given to the marginalised group in focus[51]. Pinn's 'nitty-gritty' hermeneutic approach to theological reasoning is unconfined by any desire to position itself into any preconceived Christian or theological approaches; rather it is constructed with the hard actualities of human

---

[51] Pinn, 2006, p. 116.

experience[52]. In short, a 'nitty-gritty' hermeneutic favours resolution to oppression over and above the perpetuation of religious and theological traditions[53].

An engagement with Black theology and Black theologians provides a workable and replicable donor architecture. Furthermore, incorporating a Black theological architecture enables an experienced explication of other interpretative lenses such as Postcolonial theory[54]. However, despite the apparent favourability of compatibility, as already discussed, a Black theology cannot and does not answer the specifics of the Gypsy condition, and vice versa. However, through the criticality of Beckford, Kee and Pinn, Black theology in its complete inception (i.e. from historical foundation to current presentation) is arguably locatable in a pluralism of both contending and complementary theological approaches – most notably, liberation theology and constructive theology. For its self-understanding in the rapidly changing social, political and religious dynamics of personal and cultural identity, constructive theology (as a move beyond systematic theology) appears as an obvious choice. The theological element of liberation in this equation is identifiable as the praxis of the Black narrative, serving both as a catalyst for political and social action and identity, and as the measurable response to a world in and beyond its cultural borders. The combination of constructive and liberation theological method and theory manifests a prophetic[55], rationalised and *contextual* response to the complex triangulated negotiations between a culture, an outside world, and the understandings and relationship with a triune God. And whilst it is true that a Black theology consists of both liberative and constructive theological elements, it is also true to say that a Black theology is not locatable in either camp. For its identity, Black theology departs from liberation theology, and for its foundation it is accommodating of constructive theology.

The reasoning and example of Black theology's positioning amongst other theologies brings direction and firm 'borders' for this thesis. As such, this thesis will imitate the same logical direction with an emphasis towards a contextualised and reflective theological approach – maintaining the complex subjectivity of both Pinn and Muncey's approaches. This thesis does not intentionally set out to be a *liberation* theology, but like aspects of Black theology, it is an *act* of *liberating* theology. Or in other words, this thesis operates

---

[52] Pinn, 2006, p. 116.
[53] Pinn, 2006, p. 20.
[54] Postcolonial theory in this instance is being defined by the terms of relationship proposed by Edward Antonio. Antonio recognises both the separateness between Black theology and postcolonialism, and also the seriousness of recognising the colonial as 'a key moment in its self-understanding' (Antonio, 2012, pp. 299 – 302).
[55] For 'Prophetic' context, see *Section – 1.3.3*.

firstly as theological praxis and as part of an ongoing conversation and a tool for researchers and the researched alike. And again, like Black theology, given its intended themes (sin, salvation, purity, etc.), this thesis is accommodating of constructive theology. Therefore, the final elements of this methodological and theoretical analysis will be spent locating and positioning the theological core of the thesis in, among and between constructive and liberation theology.

1.2.3 – Liberation and Constructive Approaches

Important to remember at this juncture is the adoption by this thesis of Gutierrez's definition of theology – namely that which is explicitly and rightfully associated with liberation theology. Incorporating the aforementioned definition in such a pivotal and navigational role creates an inescapable relationship with liberation theology. However, due to the autoethnographical, and thus subjective, approach of this initial investigation into a Traveller and Gypsy theology, it would be misleading and too expectant to label said investigation at this stage of proceedings as an emerging element or category of liberation theology – even if that is what it may become.

Kee, who as demonstrated earlier, is in many ways an advocate of praxis-led theologising, provides a detailed exposition of liberation theology and its application (and failures) that reside in a contemporary world dominated by a global process of secularisation. He does this by drawing on its foundational relationship and development with social and political structures and theories – namely Marxism[56]. Among other methods and processes, Kee separates the European and South American narratives, which allows for separation in the varying and distinctive approaches. Kee summarises this by stating, 'European theologians have explained the world, in various ways; the point of Latin American theology is to change it'[57]. From there, Kee is able to challenge the composition of liberation theology, asking 'Is liberation theology a theology which liberates, or is it theological reflection on a liberating movement?'[58]. Undoubtedly, Kee's specific mode of criticality in his questioning originates primarily from two distinct and concurrent avenues.

These avenues are, firstly, the politicised emergence of Gutierrez's position, with its explicit interrelationship with Marxism and the historical criticism found in the tropes

---

[56] Kee, 1990.
[57] Kee, 1990, p. 193.
[58] Kee, 1990, pp. 193 – 194.

concerning colonialism and secondly, Jürgen Moltmann's theoretical and *prophetic* 'revamp' of said theology, with its arguably less reactionary and more 'spirit-led' content. Any emerging Traveller theology will undoubtedly have to contend with its (pre- and current European) origins and the subsequent response and development to its historical, current, and future contexts. At this point in the research, it is not possible to predict whether any emergent themes will propose or outline a narrative of liberation per se (in whatever guise that may take, i.e.; political, social, economic, reason and understanding, etc.), but there must and will be an inclusion of an interpretative monograph.

Drawing on Jesuit Priest and theologian Jon Sobrino, Kee explains how European (liberation) theology in a post-enlightened world offers, in the first instance, 'an explanation of the world'. However, it does so, according to Sobrino's logic, by positioning religion 'before the bar of human reason'[59]. This appears to be in contention with the claim by Sobrino that 'theology comes to liberate'[60]; his criticality proposing in essence that human reason liberates man from religion. However, such logic placed in an investigative arena (where personal Gypsy and Traveller beliefs, practices and theology are being observed and dissected) could readily and easily be understood to be an act of discreditation or belittlement of said beliefs. The purpose of the thesis is not to discredit but to critically understand. Importantly, the rejection of religion by Sobrino is not a rejection of theology; it is instead a reaction to the constraints and expectations of both social and religious structures and institutions. As Kee highlights, the narrative that understands theology as 'an obstacle to human liberation' is not a Latin American issue but a view posited by Marx[61]. The aforementioned interaction between Kee, Sobrino, the Latin American narrative and Marx serves well in producing an analogous representation of the Traveller's relationship towards the distinctive categories of religion and theology. Religious institutions and dogmatics (with specific reference to the UK) has at times served but often directed and restrained, even condemned Gypsy practices[62], whereas Gypsy theologising has often supported, liberated, and fostered communal relationships (but has typically been misunderstood or unseen by many researchers). Theology in this sense is not imposing, and not as brash or politicised as initial inceptions of Latin American liberation directives. For the Gypsy and Traveller community, the religious-theology dynamic is both reactionary, reasoning and prophetic, but perhaps more importantly for this thesis – it is translational.

---

[59] Kee, 1990, p. 190.
[60] Kee, 1990, p. 190.
[61] Kee, 1990, pp. 190 – 191.
[62] See Chapter Three.

A Traveller theology departs from Sobrino's (and Latin American theologising) failure to address the issue of Marx and the issue of reason by incorporating religious practice and theological understanding directly into worldly reasoning and explanation. This is often misunderstood by others as mere superstition. Direct reasoning on behalf of the Traveller in this sense does not liberate the Gypsy from his failures but liberates theology from its errors. Kee suggests that the failure by Sobrino to fully implement his model of theology (with regards to Marx) resulted in theology emerging as 'more specifically religious when it ceased to act as alternative science'[63]. Initial investigations by the researcher suggest that a Traveller theology would regard many theological and religious explanations as an acceptable 'alternative' (and not necessarily a mutually exclusive) scientific method of reasoning. Kee suggests that Sobrino's 'good' relationship towards favouring the scientific explanation, whilst constructive, results in a situation where at most, 'theology attempts to reconstruct a religious world view which is in large part informed by… new knowledge'[64].

This offers some explanation as to the nature of Traveller 'religion' but does not accommodate the prophetic nature of GRT people undertaking theology. Arguably, through Jürgen Moltmann with his theology of 'hope' and the mediatory nature of his significant publications such as '*The Crucified God*'[65], the bridge towards facilitating a prophetic dialogue in a developing Traveller theology may be achievable. This avenue of investigation will be developed further in the applicable aspects of this thesis. At this stage however, whilst heavily influential and structurally (and critically) informative, liberation theology does not serve to *fully* accommodate a Traveller theology. Perhaps hypothetically and analogously speaking the two are locatable in the same family tree. But for the present juncture, due to the theoretical relationship with liberation theology (rather than methodological) it is wiser to locate Traveller theology as an *autoethnographic theological act of liberation*. Critical reasoning has been drawn and established from a source of both Latin American and European liberation theology. The task of determining any remaining elements of the methodological composition thus becomes more apparent and simplified; to source a standardised theological approach to categorising themes of significance in an ordered, relevant and purposeful approach.

Typically, the process of organising major theological tropes has fallen to Systematic theology. However, to only explore standardised areas of theological construction in the instance of this thesis is to potentially blindside a complete Traveller narrative. Systematic theological processes *are* necessary and vitally important in the development of this

---

[63] Kee, 1990, p. 191.
[64] Kee, 1990, p. 191.
[65] Moltmann, 2015.

thesis, but it is the depersonalisation of said approach that is concerning, given the potential requirement for a culturally unique narrative. Constructive theology answers this dilemma by applying the thematic approach of systematic theology with contemporary-cultural and historically-critical sensitivity. A significant proponent of this approach is Jürgen Moltmann, described by Matthias Gockel as 'the first representative of Constructive theology'[66]. Moltmann is conveniently and ideally placed as both a mediator between American and European theological approaches, and between the platforms of liberation and constructive theological methods. The next task is to establish how a constructive theological methodology is compatible with and suitably accommodating of both a liberation theory and a Traveller theology.

As highlighted above, a concern that resides in a systematic approach – rather than constructive, is the potential for the adoption of an entrenched critical-dogmatic posturing. Such posturing in itself could both open a plethora of detracting questioning concerning the nature of applying (or not applying) particular creeds and denominational perspectives, and could also limit the realms of investigation. That is not to say that the application of a constructive theological method to this thesis would in any way be dismissive of the absolute necessity of including an ecumenical, Trinitarian, and pragmatic-hermeneutical criticality upon the research. But such an application does propose that a degree of fluidity is necessary if the developing text is to stand a chance of emerging through the hermeneutical process. With that in mind, it is important to establish from the outset the nature of any employed constructive approach.

Theologian Paul Hinlicky, an advocate of constructive approaches assists in this task, rightfully forwards the concept that critical dogmatics (in the aforementioned context) should be Trinitarian. Hinlicky states that 'God is to be identified as the One who is freely determined to redeem and fulfil the creation through the missions of [God's] Son and Spirit'[67]. Matthias Gockel describes Hinlicky's statement as 'the Trinitarian rule', claiming it is 'the critical standard that helps us test the aptness of all other theological statements'[68]. Gockel is supported in this perspective by Moltmann's emphasis on the Cross (and the Crucifixion event) being the standard by which everything deserves to be labelled or refuted as 'Christian' – a point borrowed from Luther, which Moltmann makes pivotal to his entire narrative[69]. Moltmann identifies a tension in the constructive process (in light of his perspective on the Cross) which, rather than seeking to overcome, he actively seeks

---

[66] Gockel, 2017, p. 238.
[67] Hinlicky, 2010, p. 113.
[68] Gockel, 2017, p. 238.
[69] Moltmann, 2015, p. 1. This was originally stated by Luther as 'Crux probat omnia' – *the Cross proves everything* (Gockel, 2017, p. 229).

to foster. The tension is 'creative' and it dwells between the themes of identity and relevance; it can be summarised as the following: The more theology attempts to become relevant, the more traditional identity is put into question. In turn, the more theology attempts to maintain its identity, the more it appears to become irrelevant to the requirements of the moment[70]. Moltmann goes on to propose that relevance and identity must challenge one another in varied applications and at differing times. Exploring this proposition, Gockel explains, '…a new understanding of the cross of Jesus Christ entails a new understanding of Christian identity and Christian relevance in critical solidarity with contemporary liberation movements'[71]. Moltmann's position is then succinctly collated by Gockel in the following; '…good constructive theology should address questions of Christian identity and be relevant to the contemporary situation'[72].

By adopting Moltmann's hermeneutical method of the Cross, issues of epistemology, tradition, and world-making (acting and becoming) are positioned as key (and arguably new – or at least revised) tropes in the new systematic approach. Given that Moltmann provides a sound, reasoned, and tested method in both the liberative and constructive formats, this thesis will therefore adopt and attempt to replicate Moltmann's method throughout the thesis. The 'Workgroup on Constructive Theology', formed over 40 years ago, provides an apt summary and working ethos of the process – something that the researcher will integrate in both the application and ethos of the emergent theology herein. The summary is as follows:

> Being aware of contemporary challenges, theology engages its own faith traditions critically and constructively. It does so out of protest against abuses in the name of Christianity and out of love for those traditions that deserve to be called Christian. In this way, it contributes to the communal effort of working for a world where racism and sexism, capitalism and poverty are overcome[73].

1.2.4 – Theological Methodology Summary

The method and theory utilised by the researcher in this thesis can be summarised as a process of complex-and-subjective theological self-explanation and self-examination in light of externally located religious and social expectations and demands. These processes of self-explanation and self-examination replicate the approaches and structures (or method) used by Black and Liberation theologians in the creation of

---

[70] Gockel, 2017, p. 229.
[71] Gockel, 2017, pp. 229 & 231.
[72] Gockel, 2017, p. 229.
[73] The Workgroup on Constructive Theology, 2016, pp. 1 – 18.

(Constructive and Liberation) theologies in their own fields. Therefore, in this section it has been reasoned that a Black Liberation theology method is the most effective and suitable methodology for this thesis and its aims. Black theology is part of the Liberation and Constructive theology 'families'. Black theology is reactive and in a constant state of flux with the world around it, meaning that it does not have one definitive form or voice but many. It is in many ways a culmination of the liberative impetus of the American Civil rights movement and a reaction to claims of historical, socio-political and religious oppression, evidenced through elements such as slavery and Jim Crow laws. Constructive theology, much like its predecessor, Systematic theology, looks at formulating coherent systems from doctrines of Christian theology, albeit with a particular and more specific focus on human experience (personal and communal). As such, Constructive theology is a method within the method; a 'doing' rather than a 'thing'. In Black theology, the Constructive element serves as the navigation for the liberation impetus. With these factors in mind, this thesis will use a Black Liberation theology method, with an emphasis on the Liberation and Constructive elements of said method.

The result is a theological model, structure and method by which a particular minority and marginalised collective may be better understood and equally, empowered. In this respect (and in the context of this thesis), Traveller theology makes public a private narrative that is situated in common cultural and religious themes. These themes include: history, foundational beliefs, collective and individual practices, and spirituality. Utilising major tropes from the community such as 'sin' and 'purity' creates an environment where key (Systematic and Constructive) theological elements (including a Christology) organically form and then *re-inform* the thesis. Replicating this 'Traveller' theological method, with its intentionally 'nomadic' characteristic of refusing settlement – even at the end of its creation, presents an apparent consequence of never truly realising a 'completion' moment. The result is an appearance of messiness. However, Muncey makes such messiness a proviso to the autoethnographic approach.

A further key benefit in such an approach is the (external) adaptability and accessibility to the text after its (*non*) completion. Simply put, this presentation of Traveller theology should not be (and is not) the final word but an opportunity for further discussion. This hoped-for and intended (though possibly not realised) outcome, is befitting of Moltmann's theology of the Cross, Pinn's second dimension in his two-dimensional Black theological plane, and of liberation theology's characteristic preference towards praxis over practice. That is, to pursue the continuing interplay between reflection and action, ensuring that a

Traveller theological application of praxis, like liberation theology, '…can never be the mere application of some abstract theory'[74].

1.3 – Empirical Data Methodology: Autoethnography

1.3.1 – The Position of the Researcher

The researcher enters this work as someone with mixed parentage – Romany and gorger. The researcher's Romany side of the family can predominantly be culturally identified as 'Showmen', operating fairground attractions, as well as other events and businesses throughout the UK. The researcher's family history and geographical positioning stretches across much of England, with a particularly high presence in the West Midlands and other places. Finally, the researcher has life experience based in both settled and non-settled environments because of family separations. It is this unique social positioning that has afforded both a greater insight and a larger degree of access to Traveller and Gypsy communities. Furthermore, this means that the researcher is also in a position to provide an understanding of how Gypsies and Travellers view gorger communities.

1.3.2 – Considering an Autoethnographic Approach

Having such a unique insight and understanding of GRT culture has meant that for the sake of research and knowledge acquisition, it seems logical that the voice of the researcher is heard in the project itself. This naturally is a move that is in opposition, or at least in contention with, the avenues of ethnographic investigation discussed so far. However, there is an argument to be found in the 'complex subjectivity' element of the researcher's developing theological method. Detailing the religious and 'testimonial' accounts of black slaves, Pinn specifically identifies the impact of the slaves' autobiographies, stating that 'whether a terrific event or subdued occasion – [the autobiography] caused a new vision of the world and a new sense of self and self-worth'[75]

In justifying an autoethnographic approach the background question of 'is this compatible/suitable for a theological/spiritual investigation' must be answered. Heewon Chang's *Spirituality in Higher Education: Autoethnographies* (2011) directly approaches this challenge. Chang claims that 'this method is suitable for spirituality studies'[76],

---

[74] Portier, 1994, p. 163.
[75] Pinn, 2003, pp. 163 – 164.
[76] Chang, 2011, p. 13.

suggesting that autoethnography is an ideal approach in studying 'the highly subjective nature'[77] of spiritual/religious 'dynamics' (such as theology) in numerous social contexts[78]. This is further evidenced by theological texts[79] outside of Chang's work, which have incorporated autoethnographic approaches, demonstrating the method's fluidity and suitability for marginalised 'non-traditional' ethnic groups, and for producing new or reimagined theological (and spiritual) narratives.

Interestingly, Tessa Muncey proposes that ethnographic and autoethnographic methods are suitable to be utilised as diverse, complimentary methods to one another and/or other methods – rather than as singular methodologies, 'dominating or even solely leading a research project'[80]. Harry Wolcott positions such methods as one of many qualitative research strategies, with the (auto) ethnographer strategically and importantly positioned to be considered both a participant in the social context and an observer of the social location and personal story in said location[81]. By giving precedence to the autoethnographer's narrative (particularly when that 'voice' is considered marginalised – such as Gypsies and Travellers), Wolcott's 'participant' approach enables otherwise unheard cultural perceptions to emerge. Entering such an approach encourages the explication of detailed and personal cultural tropes in both the researcher's account and method (in short, the autoethnographer's experience can shape the direction of research structure). Muncey notes how autoethnographies emerge from 'the iterative process of doing research', all set in the continual engagement process of 'living a life'. The emphasis here demonstrates the rarity of research that adopts autoethnography as its genesis point. Instead, Muncey suggests that researchers *necessarily incorporate autoethnography in research structure* as a means of effectively and accurately disseminating 'complex feelings and experiences' that for various reasons cannot be conveyed through conventional research processes[82]. In relating this to the theological study of GRT for example, one factor in rationalising personal narrative could be, as is alluded to here, rendering the dimension of feelings constitutive of someone's theological complex. This has previously been successfully demonstrated in James Cone's *A Black theology of Liberation*[83], where Cone draws on his personal perception and emotional

---

[77] Gregory, 2012, p. 128.
[78] Chang, 2011, pp. 13 – 14.
[79] The Literature Review (Chapter Two) details some of the key works relevant to this thesis.
[80] Muncey, 2010, p. 2.
[81] Wolcott, 2001.
[82] Muncey, 2010, pp. 2 – 3.
[83] Cone, 1986.

translation of his environment to inform his theological understanding, his hermeneutic, and his methodology.

Muncey identifies that some researchers experience a quantum leap in imparting 'lived experience'[84], whilst others can find a compulsion to deliver a controlled, as Muncey describes, 'bracket' to their personal experience[85]. This is in direct association with Edmund Husserl's initial parameters set in his 'Descriptive Phenomenology', which despite its prospective 'lifeworld' ontological preference towards 'a world filled with human meanings and values'[86], seemingly only offers a universal holistically scientific method of examination of the human condition. By incorporating an auto or semi-autoethnographic method, the subjectivity of the religious relationship and the spiritual experience found in Traveller communities can locate a translation that is both sympathetic to the academic tradition and to Gypsy culture. This is something compatible with the *proposal of compatibility* by Muncey that states 'the autoethnographer is both the researcher and the researched'[87]. In this dynamic, Muncey's method favours the personal narrative, in which the researcher/researched proposes the direction of the research. Personal narrative is revelatory of a religious and theological complex, a cultural-spiritual 'ecology' which, when analysed, reveals what is ultimately of meaning and value to persons of GRT culture, and so how they lead their lives in such distinct and (from the point of view of mainstream culture) unconventional ways. Ideally this would illuminate aspects of the Christian faith which have been otherwise neglected or obscured in contemporary, mainstream theology. This in turn could facilitate 'unconventional' Traveller theologies as something that can bring fresh insight to conventional theology, the church, and contemporary Christianity.

Muncey provides first-hand accounts of how her attempts to operate outside of the conventional 'brackets' of ethnographic practice were met with '[d]isbelief, anger and denial', due to the 'dominant discourse' in her particular field. This was partially owing to the anti-conventionalist methods she employed, and because of the revelatory nature of the material (both oral and written) that she presented[88]. Anthropologist David Hayano proposed that there is a constant in the 'number of major stumbling blocks to paradigmatic change in any science, and these relate directly to the social organisation and politics of academic scholarship and information dissemination'[89]. Muncey concurs

---

[84] Muncey, 2010, p. 3.
[85] Muncey, 2010, p. 3. Also see Husserl, 1999.
[86] Sirowy, 2014, p. 180.
[87] Muncey, 2010, p. 3.
[88] Muncey, 2010, p. 8.
[89] Hayano, 1979, p. 101.

with this point, explaining the challenges of disseminating autoethnographic studies in the academic world[90].

1.3.3 – Supporting the Autoethnographic Method: The 'Edgelands' Theory

A concern with the autoethnographic method, technique and process, is the apparent 'messiness' of the resulting research environment – i.e. the final product, thesis, or area[91]. However, if new data is to emerge, eclectic, amalgamated approaches and the creation of new methodological combinations created by way of excavating original material (i.e. the search for a Traveller theology) are necessary. Muncey argues that attempting to achieve 'internal validity in research at the expense of ecological validity', results in the loss of complex individual (and communal) experience[92]. A theory entitled 'Edgelands' has been proposed by Frances Rapport (2005) et al., in which a methodological compromise is proposed – one in which this thesis finds itself positioned. In the 'Edgelands' the boundaries of conventional and new methods are synergistically woven in metaphorical 'new territories', allowing for both new and greater levels of personal, communal, and cultural expression[93]. The 'new territories' that position themselves in the 'Edgelands' are defined as a 'transitional area between established and new methods, from which one can concentrate on the process of discovery while retaining a sense of the unknown'[94].

Occupation in the metaphorical 'Edgelands' results in a supportive environment where fringe methods such as autoethnographies can operate in relative safely whilst under the careful examination of established practices and accountable reasoning. Such an environment is ideal for the yet-to-be gathered spiritual and religious murmurings of the UK's Gypsy and Traveller populace. Rapport et al. confirms the suitability of an Edgelands environment for the specific purposes of such a task; 'This interface provides a space in which new approaches can develop. It represents a territory in which new theories can be approached and new ways of asking and answering questions can be found'[95]. Both Muncey and Rapport et al. cite British activist Marion Shoard, who utilises metaphorical imagery taken from the UK to mentally position and assist the reader in both visualising the Edgelands and to also understand its political, academic, and social value:

---

[90] Muncey, 2010, pp. 32 – 33.
[91] Muncey, 2010, p. 28.
[92] Muncey, 2010, p. 28.
[93] Muncey, 2010, p. 28. Also see Rapport, Wainwright, & Elwyn, 2005, pp. 37 – 43.
[94] Muncey, 2010, p. 28.
[95] Rapport, Wainwright, & Elwyn, 2005, p. 38.

> We are aware of the great conurbations. But not of the Edgelands… Between urban and rural stands a kind of landscape quite different from either… Often characterised by rubbish tips, superstores and *Gypsy* encampments… for most of us most of the time this mysterious no man's land passes unnoticed in our imaginations, it barely exists… But if we fail to attend to the activity of the interface we forfeit the chance not only to shape… change but also to influence the effects of it on other parts of the environment[96].

Shoard warns of the consequences of failing to be present in the interface between the metaphorical 'urban' and 'rural', resulting in the forfeiting of the opportunity to change and influence[97]. Shoard adopts the position of residence in the Edgelands, but her call to press against the 'interface' in this manner is a call for liminality, for a pressing against the borders. Beckford's criticality in Black theology is in many contexts an example of occupation in the Edgelands. Beckford chooses to move beyond the taxonomy of 'typical' Black theology, allowing for a present engagement with the Black church and community, creating a politicised and constructive theology[98]. However, it could be argued that the liberation (theology) radicalism that both formed the core narrative of Black resistance and continues to do so – albeit in numerous independent forms (passive active radicalism, reactive active radicalism, and cognitive active radicalism), is also one that is established and familiar. Thus, despite presenting itself as a theologised resistance and mode of liberative social empowerment, it *is* known and therefore resides *outside* of the Edgelands. Beckford, in a move that is isolating but arguably necessary, resists these categories as independent by essentially proposing a 'Liberation Theological Praxis' – a positive response towards the idea summarised by Kee that suggests '…theologians have interpreted the world in various ways but the point is to change it…'[99]. Beckford's theological praxis is by its own definition active and practical. Moreover, and arguably more significantly however, Beckford's persistent criticality in Black theology and culture positions his own theological praxis as prophetic; his continual engagement with musicians and artists creates an environment of reclamation for aspects of 'God-given human life'[100] such as sexuality[101].

Through recent ventures like the 'The Jamaican Bible Remix', Beckford explicitly and uncompromisingly pursues an expansion of the 'Edgelands' from which he operates, with

---

[96] Shoard, 2002, pp. 117 – 125. Also see Rapport et al, 2005, p. 37; Muncey, 2010, p. 29.
[97] Muncey, 2010, p. 29.
[98] Kee, 2008, 152 – 155.
[99] Kee, 2008, p. 155.
[100] Beckford, 1998, p. 77.
[101] Beckford, 1998, pp. 75 & 77.

tracks such as 'Incarnation: No Blacks, No Irish, No Dogs' and 'Work of the Spirit' providing both an explanation and method of social and religious challenge to and for Black culture, Black religion, and their place in and with the world[102]. Intrinsic narratives such as these are not possible without both the interaction with and the representation of the community which the particular theology represents. In this way, Beckford partially operates through a semi-autoethnographic idiom – representing his culture to an external audience via a critical and unflinching engagement with the progressive (and historical) social and religious rhizome of Black religion. Beckford achieves this by creating engagements between three parties: His own voice; dialogue with and from others; and cultural narratives whose origins can be located in *actual* experiences. An interesting dynamic is created wherein Beckford refuses to be confined to an external theoretical posturing or assumption. Instead, he opts to navigate and actively progress the ideas and positioning of those artists and musicians (including himself) tangibly operating at the borders of social action, where undertaking theology is an active force[103].

The approach utilised by Beckford successfully navigates the endangerment of limitation most notably recognisable in Friedrich Nietzsche's 'theoretical man', in which a 'Euripides'-esque preference towards theory and a collectively acquired dissolution of illusion is championed[104]. In short, Beckford eschews the theoretical in favour of reflection from experience. As such, Beckford can be considered as a 'theoretical man', employing deep criticality in order to dissolve 'illusions through analysis'[105]. However, both move beyond the limitations of said position due to their advocacy of the Dionysian position wherein the arts, and indeed cultural nuances and peculiarities (with specific reference towards religious 'performance'), are given equal footing amongst evaluative methods[106]. In short, and in the succinctness of exegetical explanation, it is an active heeding towards avoiding the absolutism found by only understanding 'the Word' in the context of the *word* – and not 'the Word made flesh'[107] (John 1:14). There is a case then – theologically, empirically, theoretically and methodologically, for concrete experience as a mode of theological reflection.

Beckford's engagement in black theology and black culture through the methods and theoretical approaches as outlined above, provide a precedent for this thesis to involve the voices central to the subject-matter as the key navigators of both subject area and

---

[102] Beckford, 2016; Beckford, 2017; Beckford, 2017a.
[103] Kee, 2008, 156 – 157.
[104] Sedgwick, 2009, pp. 8 – 9.
[105] Sedgwick, 2009, p. 9. Also see Kee, 2008, p. 156.
[106] Sedgwick, 2009, p. 9. Also see Groarke, 2010, pp. 161 – 162.
[107] Kee, 2008, p. 156.

subject analysis. In this way, the theology becomes a form of theoretical praxis[108], satisfying both the Euripides academy and the Dionysian prophetic artistry, whilst providing adequate room for subjective criticality and expression in otherwise problematic areas of social and religious discourse, such as sin and sexuality. An autoethnographic approach provides a basis upon which such a task can be accomplished. Moving therefore, towards a dialectical and theologised narrative of the Traveller's experience through an adaptive patchwork of methods and theories located in the Edgelands is arguably contentious, defiant and presents risk. However, at the very least such risk offers the potential for original data.

Critically magnifying the contentious elements of the autoethnographic method draws attention towards the interjection of the researcher's voice. Jonathan Potter (1996), whilst acknowledging the legitimacy of such an approach, is not entirely uncritical towards the researcher in this context. Potter refers to such situations as 'deviant cases' as a way of supporting more 'traditional' methods, due to the occasional occurrence of an individual not conforming or accurately representing the researched area[109]. Potter's concerns in this instance, would be that the researcher is an oddity or 'deviant', and therefore unreliable as a source[110]. However, this position of difficulty is only that – difficult, if the 'deviant' is considered in the *pejorative* sense – 'abnormal and peculiar' rather than 'individual and interesting'[111]. Potter, however, goes on to support the argument that there is a usefulness in the 'deviant' position (the researcher and/or the researched); 'Some of the most useful analytical phenomena are cases that appear to go against the pattern or are deviant in some way'[112]. This idea that the deviant account is useful and arguably necessary is further supported by Muncey. She suggests that such a position 'give[s] credence to a view that does not fit with the mainstream view and may shed some light on the other'[113]. Muncey offers further alleviation over concerns of any 'emerging' trends of deviancy that may arise during or after the work, suggesting that 'because the author and the subject are the same', that their work 'is the story itself' – rather than any account of how it can be produced (and thus adversely effected by a 'deviant' writer or researcher)[114].

---

[108] In this sense, theology is not simply theoretical cogitation but also involves reflection on practice, much like Practical and Pastoral theologies, but arguably most recognisable in Liberation texts such as Moltmann's *The Crucified God* (2015).
[109] Potter, 1996, p. 138.
[110] Muncey, 2010, p. xii.
[111] Muncey, 2010, pp. 6 – 7.
[112] Potter, 1996, p. 138.
[113] Muncey, 2010, p. 5.
[114] Muncey, 2010, pp. xii – xiii.

1.3.4 – Supporting the Autoethnographic Method: Autoethnographic Theologies

Introduction

Ethnographic and autoethnographic approaches in a theological context have the potential to deliver a critique to political, social and cultural narratives, as demonstrated by Beckford's engagement in the previous section of this chapter. So far, both theological and empirical methodological approaches have been explored. Consideration has been given as to where contextually and theoretically a Traveller theology might reside and emerge from. As such, it stands to reason that this thesis can begin to create a system by which the GRT experience is to be interpreted theologically, and that part of this entails borrowing aspects of Beckford's (et al.) critical approach and aspects of other theological methods which privilege the subjective standpoint and the interpretation of concrete experience. This is partly owing to the ability of Muncey's autoethnographic approach[115] to inform the research from which it emerges; it is self-referential and so uncritically self-affirming. More specifically for *this* thesis, an autoethnographic approach directly informs the research by placing a Christian Romany Gypsy at the centre of a *Traveller theology*. For example, an autoethnographical theology allows for 'social' subjects in this thesis, such as housing (i.e. Traveller camps), to be understood sacramentally, revealing the religious and spiritual importance of seemingly mundane, indifferent or benign concepts and structures.

Therefore, a logical progression at this stage would be to briefly examine theological works that have worked with ethnographic and/or autoethnographic approaches in a variety of settings – directly, theoretically and intermittently. In doing so, the link can be shortened between what an autoethnographic approach can deliver and what a theological approach can reveal. Utilising geographically diverse theological contributions allows for a greater criticality and exploration of tangible theological applications in the context of a traditionally sociological dynamic.

1.3.4.1 – Supporting the Autoethnographic Method: Autoethnographic Theologies

Cornel West in *Race Matters* (2001), demonstrates an achievable outcome in the pursuit of transitioning between what may be seen as 'traditionally separate' environments – i.e. the religious and the political, when he addresses the question of race and racial

---

[115] Muncey, 2010.

relevance[116]. By using theology as a method of evaluation, West is able to tackle the political reasoning that whilst seemingly positive, is ultimately destructive to Black interests. Earlier challenges in this thesis included a rationale whereby the existing academic pool were attempting to 'protect' the imagined interests of Travellers[117]. The challenges were mostly centred upon a potential unwillingness by researchers/academics to engage with Traveller religiosity – or to allow others to question unchallenged areas in Gypsy studies. Likewise, West, taking advantage of his 'insider privilege', recognises the complicity of large swathes of Black voices and authorities that attempted to support their own cause through racial reasoning[118]. Whilst race as an identifier – and indeed Black as an identity were both vital and important, it was the incorrect method of reasoning[119]. West reasons that 'racial reasoning' is counterproductive, and inadvertently serves against those whom it professes to serve. Undermining racial reasoning comes with the aim 'to replace *racial* reasoning with *moral* reasoning, to understand the black [or Traveller] freedom struggle not as an affair of skin pigmentation and racial phenotype but rather as a matter of ethical principles and wise politics'[120]. Theology in this sense, is active, political, relevant, understanding of an historical context yet sensitive and aware of the contemporary climate. Through *Race Matters*, West, along with other Black theologians, provide working examples of the Black autoethnographic theological 'donor' framework required for the constructional phase of a Traveller theology.

For Gypsies and Travellers in the UK, visual identification is negated as a factor in the question of race, with the Traveller falling into the category of 'white other'[121]. The fact that Gypsies and Travellers are not easily recognised as an ethnic 'other' results in their uniqueness being all the more easily overlooked and their social standing as 'white other', being a diminution relative to the ethnic majority population. These factors require Traveller identity to express itself through (usually two) alternate channels. Firstly, that which the Traveller undertakes (nomadic living, conservative practice, etc.); and secondly, that which the Traveller believes. Whilst the two are intrinsically linked and entirely supportive (and dependant) upon the other, without proper (theological) interpretation and understanding they are less than the sum of their parts. Brian Bantum addresses the dilemma of identity and interpretation of racial identity in an environment where visual

---

[116] West, 2001.

[117] *Introduction Chapter: 0.1.*

[118] 'Racial reasoning', in the manner in which West uses the term, can be defined as the act of using and/or claiming that one's race is the reason for a particular factor, outcome or characteristic, and therefore like race, is an undebatable or questionable factor – especially for someone outside of said race.

[119] West, 2001, pp. 35 – 40.

[120] West, 2001, p. 38.

[121] Bhopal, 2006, p. 212.

racial recognition (i.e. the colour of one's skin) serves as a negation of uniqueness and belonging[122] – much like that of the Traveller's 'condition' in the UK. *Redeeming Mulatto* (2010) collates the positioning of 'the other' and the comparison for understanding, removing it from the human form, and placing it within the body of Christ. Bantum asks not only what it means to be mulatto in Christ, but also what it means for Christ to be identified as mulatto Himself; Christ as fully human, Christ as fully divine – Christ as hybrid[123].

Bantum takes the ethnographic exploration from not only the social but also the historical, looking at the process of slave movements from Africa into the Americas[124]. He then relocates aspects of the study, and through a method of autoethnography interjects the dialogue with examples of spiritual practice (such as prayer[125]). Whilst Bantum recognises the place of the political amongst the discussion, he aligns his perceptions with West on moral reasoning over racial reasoning. Bantum's reasoning is predominantly located in his argument that the Church was complicit in the process of enslavement – both literal and implicit. Bantum states that 'Christianity became co-opted into a larger narrative of race and was performed in its service'[126]. For Bantum however, Discipleship with the 'mulatto' (or 'Traveller') Christ, becomes a method and a process of discernment (or way of living) which 'is more than political ideology or ideals of social justice'[127]. Bantum does not negate West's framework of race and identity, but 'simply' moves the location of the discussion of racial questioning and ethnic identity from the body of the disciple to the body of Jesus. He does this by propositioning Jesus as mulatto; essentially placing Christ as the central pillar of identity, rather than one's culture or community. Positioning Christ as both central and as mulatto is achieved through a dual process by Bantum. Firstly, in revisiting the accounts of the Church Fathers and the construction of Christological convictions during the Ecumenical Councils[128]. Secondly, by examining the contradictive nature of Christ (fully man and fully God) in his state of birth and of his crucifixion (much like Jürgen Moltmann's exposition of Christ's sharing in humanity's suffering at the Cross[129]).

By understanding Christ in the capacity of one's 'truest' identity, as one who partakes in an identity that is consumed by social isolation and prejudice, as one who shares in a

---

[122] Bantum, 2010.
[123] Bantum, 2010, pp. 87 – 138.
[124] Bantum, 2010, pp. 14 -24.
[125] Bantum, 2010, pp. 171 – 183.
[126] Bantum, 2010, p. 35.
[127] Bantum, 2010, p. 167.
[128] Bantum, 2010, pp. 101 – 108. Also Hardy, 2006, pp. 346 – 354.
[129] Moltmann, 2015.

collective suffering, one is able to develop the theological foundation upon which a Traveller theology must be built. Through *Redeeming Mulatto*, Bantum identifies how this process takes place with regards to the specificity of a marginalised collective. In Moltmann's *The Crucified God* (2015)[130], this process in its broad applicability and in its specific construction is then examined and developed. Moltmann provides a deeply critical – and arguably radical analysis of significant elements in his conceptions, such as his questioning that takes the situation of the Cross beyond just soteriological reasoning and asks 'What does the cross of Jesus mean for God himself?'[131]. This creates a situation in which certain inevitable questions or topics raised in this thesis can be expounded upon with a precedent already in situ. Moltmann's logic and reasoning enables the sociological limitations of the preliminary question that asks '*what* is Traveller identity?' to evolve and progress into the theological and philosophical question that asks '*why* is Traveller identity what it is?'. This is achieved through statements such as '[I]n the vicious circle of alienation [God's] presence is perceived in the experience of human identity and recognition'[132].

Moltmann's declaration is not final per se. Instead it invites responses from those in the 'vicious circle of alienation' to be accepted and recognised. How is this achieved? In this instance, through the participation of those alienated voices in the broader theological discussion. This marks an important juncture in which theological discussion and autoethnographic exploration become an internal (autoethnographic GRT-led) theologising process, as opposed to a static (non-autoethnographic gorger-led) exploration. The triangulation of race/ethnicity, political engagement, and a Christ-centred rationale and logic (made possible in many ways by West, Moltmann et al.) creates an enabling of the hermeneutical process to cross the metaphorical 'border' from observational into explanatory by positioning the researched as the researcher. With that evolution comes a sharpening of the theological narrative, in this instance, the emergence of two texts that facilitate a Traveller indigenised expression of self.

Exclusion and Embrace (1996) by Miroslav Volf, a student of Moltmann, explores the challenging issues that have arisen from situations and cultures of 'otherness' and the subsequent problem of exclusion[133]. Volf's response is one that sees an embrace of the 'other' and an examination of one's self as the theological solution to a situation that has and is creating 'cultural cleansings'. According to Volf, such cleansings demand a

---

[130] Moltmann, 2015.
[131] Moltmann, 2015, p. 207.
[132] Moltmann, 2015, p. 352.
[133] Volf, 1996.

response that 'place[s] identity and otherness at the centre of theological reflection on social realities'[134]. Volf moves the conversation from where the focus is on elements seen as cultural problems and issues of difference, to a point where uniqueness's not differences, and grounds of commonality, are celebrated. In this instance – and more specifically in the case of a Traveller theology, that ground of commonality is found in the person of Jesus Christ and in the Christian values that are inferred from Him. Volf asks if the 'medicine (inclusion) is making the patient sick with a new form of the very illness it seeks to cure'; Volf's answer – 'I think this is the case'[135]. However, the context of Volf's social positioning (in relation to the excluded people or groups that he speaks of) must be remembered; Volf is not the excluded – he is the included, the majority. This is no way diminishes or negates Volf's theology; it simply means that if Volf's theology is reliable, then it must be transferable to where it is needed and to whom it is required. In this instance, it is the UK's Gypsy and Traveller populace. Volf's theology therefore becomes something that is not used as a tool in the process of understanding Travellers for political or academic concern, but becomes a tool by which Travellers can understand themselves – minus the additional concerns of focusing on processes of inclusion and integration, or problematic matters such as housing and healthcare. As such, Volf's ethnographic theology facilitates and encourages an autoethnographic progression, providing a solid grounding for such an approach to develop.

In a culture where codes of purity are implemented and enforced segregations are not only encouraged but socially entrenched, the process of exploring Traveller identity and religiosity through a theological lens is benefitted and 'enabled' by Volf's ethnographic liberating theology. Of course, such a method of exploration that enables a 'truer' account of identity to emerge, could be seen by some as a barrier to the process of any 'programmes' of inclusion. In such a situation, Volf remarks that 'Exclusion would then be a sickness and inclusion undiluted medicine'[136]. Beyond Volf's contributions some gaps remain, such as (auto) ethnographic examples of ecclesiological, hermeneutical and exegetical explorations where the excluded voice is given precedence over the external dialogue. Examples of this (in the ethnographic and autoethnographic context) can be found in the following two texts:

In *Reading the Bible with the Damned* (2005)[137], Bob Ekblad uses his own pastoral method and theological application, and provides a workable and replicable model of

---

[134] Volf, 1996, p. 17.
[135] Volf, 1996, p. 61.
[136] Volf, 1996, p. 60 – 61.
[137] Ekblad, 2005.

Biblical exegesis. Ekblad makes the 1st person 'reader response' the basis for biblical reading. A focus is placed on liberating and empowering collectives and individuals from marginalised and alienated groups. This is achieved by Ekblad employing an established hermeneutic whereby Biblical text is interpreted in a nuanced fashion, subjectively relatable to the person/s and communities he engages. Ekblad's approach is reflective of the loose and malleable biblical imagination that feeds religious experience, by those considered in the mainstream context as both socially and religiously impoverished. In terms of method, the personal stories of those considered 'impoverished' are positioned as the guiding element in selecting Biblical text and in directing any interpretation of said text. Given the nature of this thesis it is clear that the liberative model of Biblical exegesis introduced by Ekblad is both a suitable and replicable format that could benefit a Traveller theology. It should be noted that unless otherwise stated, all Biblical references in this thesis are taken from the NRSV translation of the Bible[138].

The second example can be found in *Rescuing the Gospel from the Cowboys* (2015) by Richard Twiss[139] – a Native American. Twiss (1954 – 2013) provides a contextualised Indigenous expression of the history of Christian missions, as experienced by Native Americans. As a response, he delivers a culturally contextual autoethnographic explanation of 'Native Christian faith'. Whilst many of the accounts that Twiss presents are examples of Native American practices, the theological argumentation and logic is cross-cultural and adaptable when utilised as a method of reason in a Gypsy and Traveller context. For example, some key historical influences familiar to Native Americans (such as colonialism[140]) also emerge as factors relevant to Gypsies and Travellers (and thus GRT religion), owing to their deep-rooted natures.

With regards to the suggestion of colonialism as an historical and cultural factor, Twiss employs several methods in which social change and cultural practices (internal and external to the culture in question) can be best understood and protected. One such method relevant to this thesis is the creation of a religious narrative to represent the hermeneutical and ecclesiological (including missiological) beliefs and interpretations to an 'outside' people, on behalf of a minority or marginalised group. Another relevant method used by Twiss is the inclusion of what is described as an 'internal balance mechanism'[141]. Twiss informs the reader that this vital 'mechanism' is found in the people – more specifically, the interpreter between the differing cultures. In his 1968 report,

---

[138] National Council of Churches, 1998.
[139] Twiss, 2015.
[140] Twiss, 2015, pp. 79 – 89; Taylor, 2014, pp. 87 – 98.
[141] Twiss, 2015, p. 193.

anthropologist Malcolm McFee explained his attempts to calculate acculturation levels amongst Native Americans; a process in which the phrase '150% man' (a person of mixed ancestry) came about[142]. Twiss draws on McFee's research, in particular McFee's proposal of the '150% man', and he explains how the '150% man' is someone who can move comfortably and without restriction 'between his Native and white cultures to effectively serve as an interpreter between the two and on behalf of both'[143]. Essentially, Twiss' recommendation is that as part of the process of effectively understanding a marginalised collective, an appropriate interpreter and interpretation method must be used. Twiss suggests that *the interpreter should be someone of mixed heritage from the two cultures in question* (the marginalised group and the non-marginalised 'superior' group). The 'cross-cultural interpreter' in this instance, is necessary – not just for understanding a collective, but for evoking tangible change:

> … [For] contextual innovations and early diffusion to occur, a unique cross-cultural interpreter is required – a "cultural insider". Without this person there will not be a genuine contextualisation, only modifications or surface-level adaptions of the cultural, theological and ecclesiological status quo, or outdated paradigms of ministry and mission[144].

The contribution to developing and producing an indigenised theology by Twiss is by no means conclusive. However, it is effective in setting precedents and delivering transferable examples that can be implemented in other theological initiatives – such as the one that this thesis is attempting to discover (or refute). In addition, the suggestion by Twiss concerning the role of the translator – or 'cultural insider', is significant for multiple reasons. At the very least it answers the sociological dilemma and dispute raised earlier in this section, concerning methods of research – i.e. the legitimacy, effectiveness and suitability of employing an autoethnographic methodology. Furthermore it also holds significance because it both legitimises and actively supports the unique position of the researcher in this thesis in the creation of a Traveller theology.

---

[142] McFee, 1968.
[143] Twiss, 2015, p. 193.
[144] Twiss, 2015, p. 194.

1.4 – Empirical Data Gathering

1.4.1 – Data Gathering Approach: Method and Model

In formulating a strategy for data collection, a working model was constructed. The model took into consideration both common 'Western' qualitative approaches and post-Colonial 'Indigenous' designs. Initial findings indicated a vast difference between 'Western' approaches, which typically favoured deductive models for their scientific foundations[145], and 'Indigenous' approaches, which appeared initially to reflect elements familiar to that particular culture, such as the Aboriginal 'Cyclone' model, or the 'Métis Wheel cart' model[146]. As Travellers and Gypsies typically reside in Western nations, their *indigenous* status can be best understood as a group resident in the 'Edgelands'. Consequently, any approach used would ideally borrow from Western conventions whilst in some manner being reflective of Traveller culture. Loosely based on an inductive-reasoning framework[147] and the later modified version of the Métis Wheel cart model[148], the researcher has developed a model that meets these requirements.

The framework – or model, is designed to allow for a continual reassessment of theories and emerging themes. It begins by examining the empirical world. From there, a research design unique to the theme / problem can be developed. After gathering and analysing evidence, a theory or question can be formulated. If the theory is sound, it can then be theologically interpreted. From there the data then either 'directs' the thesis or is used to initiate the cycle again by examining the empirical world, this time with new or revised theological insight. Finally, this design (which the researcher will call the 'Inductive-Theological model') naturally encourages purposiveness at each stage, thus replicating the cultural characteristic of intentionality that the Traveller community exhibits, as evidenced multiple times in the research data.

Special attention should be drawn to 'Theological Filter' element in the 'Inductive-Theological' model. The theological filter primarily operates in two capacities. The first capacity is that of Biblical hermeneutics (discussed in both the Theological Methodology section and various junctures of the thesis); and the second capacity is that of a socio-

---

[145] Esterberg, 2002, p. 6.
[146] Evans et al, 2014, pp. 181 – 184 & 186 – 189.
[147] Esterberg, 2002, p. 7.
[148] Evans et al, 2014, pp. 188 – 189. The 'Métis Wheel Cart' model is pictorially based around the design of a simple cart – the type that would be drawn by a single horse. The cart is a relevant feature in the community from which it is taken; it is both a source of life and identity. By using the cart as a working model, the framework becomes one that is both accessible and instantly recognisable, for the community in which the research is centred.

religious dialogue facilitator. This second capacity of instigating, facilitating and progressing the socio-religious dialogue is to some extent supported by the use of a chart created by the researcher, entitled the 'Five Stations'. Essentially the 'Five Stations' chart is used to collate, summarise and identify tropes of theological interest that emerge, creating further conversations and avenues of potential questioning and investigation.

Fig. 1 – *Inductive-Theological model.*
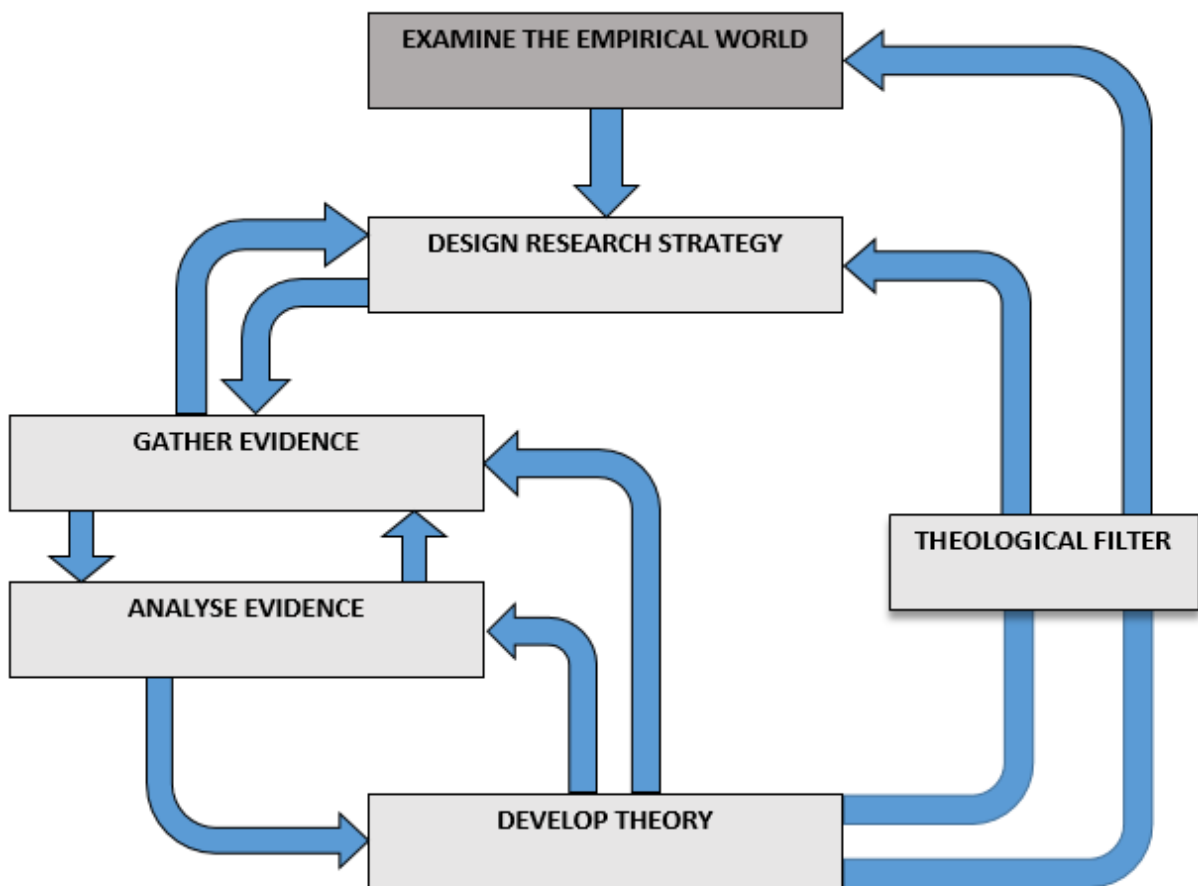
An adaption and amalgamation of existing models, this is my 'Inductive-Theological' model. See paragraphs above for explanation on usage.

Using the above model as a guide to collecting then processing data, my next task was to decide on the size of my subject 'pool', and thus determine which method of data acquisition would be best suited to the task. My options were to mine information from the broader Traveller and Gypsy population in the UK (estimated to be around 270-300,000

people) or conduct two or three case studies among communities and/or families where the subjects were of variable age and social position.

Logistically the first option would not be feasible, nor would it provide the quality, depth and personal nature of data needed for this type of research. Furthermore, obtaining the locations of the majority of Gypsies and Travellers in the UK and assessing their accessibility, suitability and willingness to participate in the study would be practically impossible. The second option – two or three case studies, along with further interviews with 'subaltern elites' was much more realistic and offered the possibility of richer content. The primary concern through this method would be the potentially limited amount of obtainable information, depending on the interviewees' openness to discussion and observations.

Any limitations and absences of information would of course be bolstered by my personal input and influence. In this way I would not opt to carry out a case study on myself (in a bid to maintain as much objectivity as possible), but I would serve as a kind of *complimentary and guiding case study* – albeit one that was operational in the 'background' so-to-speak. Utilising my 'voice' in this analytical, methodical, and interpretative way would not in any obvious way reduce the impact of what I contributed to the study. Chang (2011) supports this form of methodological variation and approach, suggesting that it contributes to (and thus creates) many autoethnographies; 'analytical and interpretive orientation is the crux of autoethnography as a qualitative research process and products because autoethnographic writings differ from other self-narrative writings'[149].

This method of using an autoethnographic approach is particular and intentional, and finds itself as an alternative (and not in contention) to 'descriptive-realistic tales' approach in autoethnography, which 'present[s] more descriptive details about [the] autoethnographer ['s] life and activities[150]. There were of course possible issues that could arise with this approach. Chang, herself an advocate for autoethnographic approaches, warns autoethnographers of three potential 'pitfall' areas to be aware of, particularly in the area of self-awareness. She lists them as: (1) 'Neglecting the context, where the self is situated…; (2) Over-relying on personal memory instead of collecting…data; and (3) ignoring ethical issues of privacy protection of self and others'[151]. To overcome the first and second issues that Chang raises, I decided that I would have to potentially alter the

---

[149] Chang, 2011, p. 15.
[150] Chang, 2011, p. 14.
[151] Chang, 2011, pp. 15 – 16.

format in which my 'voice' was portrayed in the text – at least for this chapter. This was done to ensure that the context – mine and others, was not ignored, and so that the collection of data was accurately portrayed. Rather than attempting to describe – or translate the data through purely 'Westernised conventions', I would intentionally relay the findings through a 'journalistic' style. This risked making the findings initially appear un-academic. However, such an approach was arguably more suitable for two reasons. Firstly, that a more engaged, accessible, personable and colourful report was more representative of a Traveller dialectic, and therefore more accurate as a translational document between Travellers and gorgers. This was, in itself, congruent with the approaches of both the Black Liberation theology and autoethnographic methodologies of this thesis. Secondly, whilst a journalistic style is not *traditional* in an academic research-based text, its presence was both academically reasoned and logical. As such, the semantic *styling* of the text should be considered to be another form of Traveller expression, along with some of the data contained in the text itself. Traveller and Gypsy expression is traditionally and distinctly oral and/or observable. As this is not possible through text alone, the text in this thesis is in some ways an evolution of the Traveller's 'tangible tradition'.

Progressing with two or three case studies offered the potentiality of a greater yield of *quality* answers and information. The alternative, which realistically would only be possible through a mass-distribution of questionnaires, would be limited with regards to actual person-to-person contact. The combination of a case-study scenario and questionnaires was the next logical progression. However, such a move could still limit answers and stifle free-flowing conversation. The theological complexities anticipated to emerge from the communities and families that I would work with, highlighted the necessity for freedom of speech and expression. In essence I believed I would only obtain high quality and untainted data by allowing the Travellers I worked with to have the opportunity to express themselves how *they* wanted to, rather than through limiting avenues such as questionnaires or specific questions. Whilst standard interviews as a method of data collection is popular in qualitative research, it receives criticism for edging towards 'Westernised theories and assumptions'[152]. To combat this, multiple aspects of Gypsy communication and expression need to be recognised, in order to develop a 'fuller' picture. Chilisa and Tsheko (2014) suggest that;

> …in indigenous research, conversational methods such as talking circles, storying, and yarning, derived from indigenous world views, are preferred over the typical interview

---

[152] Chilisa & Tsheko, 2014, p. 223.

methods because they reflect the ideal of equality among participants and emphasize building relationships and connectedness among people and with the environment[153].

I concluded that pursuing the case study option, with its fluidity of questioning and openness to changing data would be more beneficial, given the advantages mentioned, over mass questioning. Even for someone such as myself, who has family and friends in Gypsy and Traveller communities, access is still only achieved by merit, trust and acceptance. With that in mind, I concluded that operating through a case study scenario would provide me with the necessary opportunities to gain trust and build relationships. My plan would initially be to converse with family heads as gatekeepers – respecting the hierarchy, before then moving on to their other family members, friends and recommended contacts. This would assist in developing my interview strategies and data collection going forward. Anticipating that this approach could result in an unknown number of interviewees, the samples of interviews included in the thesis would possibly have to be reduced to those that collectively formed the most 'complete' picture. Furthermore, the structure of my questioning would revolve around themes rather than set questions in order to encourage thought-production and a more fluid engagement. In this manner I would still be able to purposively direct the conversation.

I also wanted to address any potential qualms over the broadness of the data – something that could be overcome by questioning a larger number of people. I set about achieving this by ensuring that any families or individuals that I interacted with came from differing areas and environments in the UK. Similarities in communal beliefs, Christian understandings and 'alterative behaviour' would assist in formulating a putative, if not representative profile or taxonomy of Traveller beliefs and attitudes. Employing this method of approach secured a balanced cross-section of subjects through targeted sampling. By applying this geographical strategy to my intended case studies, I was making the task of identifying consistent theological themes more achievable.

1.4.1.1 – Data Gathering Approach: 'Five Stations'

In order to 'mask' any specific areas of interrogation, questioning and interviewing were presented in a rehearsed set of themes. I then renamed the themes as 'stations', as they were representative of various lineal 'life' junctures. These 'stations' are familiar aspects to many cultures, people groups and individuals, especially in the UK; however, they hold particular prominence in Traveller culture. Muncey (2010) recognises that personal

---

[153]Chilisa & Tsheko, 2014, p. 223.

experiences can direct the researcher towards particular areas of 'knowledge', which may have been missed by previous studies – or simply not studied at all[154]. I had recognised that the 'Christian' element behind much of what I had experienced in my life was also present in those around me; our words and values were often different to the 'settled population' but our motivations were often the same. These 'stations' were tangible representations of those Christian elements. Muncey suggests that it is 'healthier to acknowledge [a] link and purposively build it into your work'[155], rather than try to remain separate from it. This decision proved to be fruitful, as it enabled me at times to discuss the areas in the 'stations' with those whom I spoke to, without any 'build-up' per se, resulting in quicker and more direct responses from interviewees. To avoid confusion, the terminology that I was introducing was not mentioned to those with whom I spoke or observed. However, the categories in each 'station' were explicitly discussed with those being interviewed.

The five stations are; birth, love, sin, marriage, and death; in each of the stations are three further areas, totalling 15 areas among the five stations. The list of 'areas' is not conclusive or necessarily 'complete', nor are the stations areas that are limited to only Travellers. But together the stations and subsequent areas present a fair and informed representation of Gypsy cultural values and practices in the current climate[156]. It is not clear from looking at the historical narrative (see Chapter One) if Traveller and Gypsy social structures, hierarchies, and values have always been constructed or valued in this way. However, it is apparent that the adoption of Christianity by Gypsies since arriving into Europe has unquestionably influenced and altered the centrality of the community's value system and communal outlook. The amalgamation of Christianity has created other dynamics that are more apparent in the modern climate. Perhaps most obvious is the locus of the current 'five stations' situating itself in a heteropatriarchal structure (which in itself could be considered to be a colonialist norm). The particular dynamic of hetero-normativity as the assumed standard in Gypsy communities must be highlighted, as many of the stations rely upon this equation as an unquestionable and foundational element to familial life.

Chris Finley (2011) suggests that '[h]eteropatriarchy and heteronormativity should be interpreted as logics of colonialism', and that by taking the issue of sexuality (and its

---

[154] Muncey, 2010, p. 1.
[155] Muncey, 2010, p. 2.
[156] The 15 areas are: Family; continuation of family blood line; Christening and rites of passage; relationships; romance and courtship; sin as necessity; sin as nature; atonement; family contracts; continuation of 'pure blood'; roles of spouses; death as taboo / unclean; funerals and 'send offs'; and the afterlife. Please note that 'Family' appears twice in the structure.

associated gender roles) seriously, a decolonisation process can begin[157]. Finley would argue that heteropatriarchy supports hierarchies, which in turn internalises and cements 'hierarchical gendered relationships and heteronormative attitudes towards sexuality'[158]. There is the suggestion that heteropatriarchy has become normalised to the point that communities considered to be native or indigenous have 'internalised and institutionalised [it] as if it were traditional', with heteropatriarchal practices being 'written into tribal law and tradition'[159]. Discussions on sexuality are often considered taboo in many Traveller communities, and can be linked with issues of pollution[160]. This includes discussing sexual health and questioning sexual preferences and identities. It is believed that to have 'balance' – or to maintain good 'karma'[161] in Traveller communities, a man must 'be married and to have children'[162]. Likewise;

> [A] Gypsy woman should be married and a mother. Celibate adults are frowned upon, as are women who do not bear children – both are seen as out of balance. Homosexuality is also taboo…Gays and lesbians…conform to the norms demanded by the group. They marry and put up the front of a heterosexual existence to remain in the [Gypsy] community or they leave and live in the non-Gypsy world[163].

In many ways this supports the position forwarded by Finley and reinforces the notion that behind the heteropatriarchal structure is some form of hierarchical control. The idea of control, power, and empowerment in Traveller communities is construed in many academic productions as tension between Travellers and gorger-led governments[164]. By understanding the intricacies of Traveller life through its belief and faith structures, the discussion of the idea of empowerment is able to relocate from an external position (that arguably creates more division), to an internal position, which facilitates a greater understanding of the Traveller community.

---

[157] Finley, 2011, p. 33
[158] Finley, 2011, pp. 33 – 34.
[159] Finley, 2011, p. 34.
[160] References throughout the thesis, with particular focus in *Chapter Five*.
[161] 'Karma' as a concept in Traveller culture is briefly discussed in the Case Studies chapter (see end of *'Traveller Christian Ministries'* section*). It is an area not explicitly referred to in many documents, but is certainly subtly alluded to in many concepts that form Gypsy and Traveller identity, such as pollution, luck, blessings and curses, and servitude to God – or the lack of. These aspects are discussed at multiple points.
[162] Lee, 2001, p. 204
[163] Lee, 2001, p. 204.
[164] Richardson & Ryder, 2012, pp. 119 – 134 (*Chapter Seven – 'Justice and Empowerment'*). Richardson et al. present a chapter which, although valid, comprehensive, and necessary, is reflective of a growing trend by some academics in the area of Gypsy/Traveller studies to politicise many aspects of the research. It is interesting to note the usage by both Richardson et al. and Finley (2011, p. 31) of quotes by Foucault to support their 'external' and 'internal' arguments about where the struggles of hierarchy and power reside.

In Gypsy and Traveller circles heteronormative systems *are* normative, as Finley suggests, but there is evidence to suggest that culturally (and thus collectively) that this is a *positive* element in Traveller communities. Individual identity and empowerment is sacrificed for communal strength and collective / family sustenance. Thus, contemporary pursuits of decolonisation that are focused on deconstructing heteronormative structures – even in the name of sexual and personal freedoms, are counterproductive in the 'larger sense'. For example, the 'stations' of birth and marriage could conceivably be interpreted as elements of control that restrict the freedoms of women through child-rearing. However, such stations are rooted in a triangulation of religious, ancestral, and preservational beliefs. Romany scholar Professor Ian Hancock (2013), in discussing the distinctiveness of Gypsy culture with its Indian roots in comparison with that of its predominantly European home, answers criticisms concerning the charge that Gypsies and Travellers have 'too many children'[165]. According to Hancock, children assist in both creating income and keeping said income in the family unit. Hancock continues by stating; 'birth control is [not] carelessly disregarded as is usually claimed, but because just as in India, our children are seen as our fortune'[166]. In his homily to a Gypsy delegation in 1991, Pope John Paul II acknowledged the importance of family in Gypsy culture and the blessed 'generosity [Gypsies] show in handing on life [i.e. having children]'[167]; 'The family constitutes for you the natural location for ethnic consciousness, as the centre of all your being, the solid and irreplaceable nucleus of the organisation of your community'[168]. Scriptures such as Genesis 1:28[169] take on greater meaning in this context. They are implemented and comprehended in a tangible manner, where visible benefits of directly interpreting and living out Biblical instruction is rewarded through family security and provision.

Literal exegetical practices and understanding of scriptures in this way is commonplace in Traveller circles; examples of this can be found in many Evangelical Gypsy environments, such as the *Light and Life* Church[170]. The theological hermeneutic behind this exegesis could be considered to be based upon a 'threefold' logic: Firstly, the past (or Old Testament narratives) provides a form of justification – hence the importance of ancestry and past lineage to Travellers. Secondly, the present (or New Testament narratives) provides sanctification and transformation – hence codes of purity and ritual[171]. Lastly, the

---

[165] Hancock, 2013, pp. 59 – 60.
[166] Hancock, 2013, pp. 59 – 60.
[167] Acton, 1997, p. 48 (*Appendix A*: 'L'Osservatore Romano: Friday 27 September 1991).
[168] Acton, 1997, p. 49.
[169] '…And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it…'. Genesis 1:28.
[170] See Chapter Two & Four.
[171] See Chapter Five.

future (the culmination of the 'past' and 'present' principles) provides consummation and continuation. As these principles are applied in a culture of lived-out religion, this threefold 'logic' or exegesis can be utilised to understand further areas such as language. Indeed, as the elements form a 'whole' it is more challenging to separate threefold principles for the purposes of analytical investigation[172]. In this sense, language, according to John Macquarrie (2003), 'cannot properly be understood in abstraction from the concrete living situation where it is in use, in this case, from the existential context of the community of faith'[173]. Literal translations of Biblical texts for Traveller communities therefore cannot simply be dismissed, even in light of larger cultural shifts in values. As such, particular caution must be applied with regards to the deconstructional process as it navigates secularised changing public perceptions of sexuality and equality and Gypsy heteropatriarchal hierarchies built upon a culturally unique Christian narrative.

Thus the 'Five Stations', much like Pinn's 'Two Dimensionality' theory, not only represent a liberative mode of being in an established (and limited) construct (larger society), but the Five Stations also serve as a method of rehumanising and resistance. This is achieved by informing both religious and social institutions and their associated doctrines and practices. This makes explicit the implementation of Pinn's 'complex subjectivity', by contextually drawing upon historical Gypsy religious and cultural creations and realities, to reject and affirm certain narratives. Consequently, the 'social' paradigm of the Five Stations, in a move of cultural reclamation, must also be considered reflective of the Christian community it represents. As such, the Five Stations is as much a *Biblical* paradigm as it is 'social'. Its dualism enables a hermeneutical process to take place, meaning that social elements are translatable as theological elements; for example, 'Birth' is also 'Creation', 'Sin' is also 'the Fall', and so on.

Below is my 'Five Stations' chart, created to assist in visualising common sacramental and liturgical junctures important to the theological narrative of the thesis. The process of dissecting Gypsy or Traveller identity (and thus discovering the necessary themes of investigation) begins with dividing identity into its most familiar presentations or elements (in this instance: Purity; Family; Work) and events (or cause of events) (Birth; Love; Sin; Marriage; Death). The Five Station chart is fluid in nature and can be used in a variety of ways. It is the researcher's recommendation that to explore an area of interest, one must combine a Station with an Element (for example: Purity and Death; Family and Love). Each aspect or station can be further expanded through an exploration of its sub-

---

[172] Macquarrie, 2003, p. 455.
[173] Macquarrie, 2003, p. 455.

categories. The central thesis behind these recommended approaches is the theological interpretation of the concepts; so, rather than 'wrong doings' or 'unlawful practice', the thematic description is 'Sin'. This enables context and definition to be applied to the term, providing the facility for crucial tropes such as atonement and Christian morality to be applied, increasing understanding and original data in comparison to existing methods. The process of turning the unfamiliar into the familiar contributes to the expected and necessary goal of the thesis – *to produce original material and data*.

Fig.2 – *Five Stations*

BIRTH	LOVE	SIN	MARRIAGE	DEATH
Family	Family	Sin as necessity	Family contracts	Death as taboo / unclean
Continuation of family blood line	Relationships	Sin as nature	Continuation of 'pure blood'	Funerals & 'send-offs'
Christening & rites of passage	Romance and courtship	Atonement	Roles of spouses	Afterlife

FIVE STATIONS

Traveller Identity

THREE ELEMENTS

Purity   Family   Work

Note that some areas are repeated under different stations. Also, this chart is not comprehensive, but should be considered a guide to key points of necessary interest. The chart continues, showing the links that have been made thus far from the study. Note that 'Work' (one of the three primary elements) can also be understood as 'Sojourn' (see 'Person – Vocation – Location' *Figure 16* for a practical explanation of the social perspective of the Sojourner aspect).

1.4.1.2 – Data Gathering Approach: Thematic Analysis

The thematic analysis for this thesis would need to take one of two approaches or a combination of both. The first approach would be a 'traditional' manual thematic analysis where coding was undertaken by hand. The second approach would consist of a digital thematic analysis, whereby coding would be processed through qualitative software, sometimes referred to as Computer-Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis (CAQDAS)[174]. Given the potential for limitations in personal interpretation through CAQDAS, the researcher opted to code and sort data and data patterns manually. During the initial coding process, journals, books and interviews were almost exclusively coded by hand. However, NVivo (a qualitative software programme) served a minor role to provide further accountability and as a secondary method of collating information. This was predominantly through the storage of some of the interview summaries/transcripts, which helped in creating a degree of raw data redundancy. However, several issues arose with the implementation of NVivo (it should be noted that it is the researcher's understanding that such issues were likely regardless of the CAQDAS platform used).

Firstly, much of the initial data imported into NVivo provided little if any revelatory information such as new or unexpected dominant themes. Perhaps typically and unsurprisingly the current or traditional dominant narratives and themes emerged. Consequently, low frequency and missing themes failed to be identified. In *Incorporating Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Worldviews through Innovative Text Analysis*, Vanessa Lee et al. (2018) conducted extensive research, covering a number of external studies where a marginalised and/or indigenous voice formed part or all of the research. Again, heavily researched and high frequency data was most prevalent. This meant that new research was only identified when *manually* coded and said manual coding was undertaken by individuals from that marginalised or indigenous collective[175]. As such, for

---

[174] Fielding & Lee, 2002, p. 197.
[175] Lee et al, 2018, 1 – 2 & 9.

this research inputting and coding said data into NVivo with the initial data was arguably unfruitful, given the significant usage of time needed to code and create themes / subfolders and so forth, and the potential for having to re-examine the same data manually afterwards. The issue of having to re-examine the data highlights the second issue with opting for a digital coding process; it would still require human intervention to deliver a contextual (i.e. Gypsy/Traveller) interpretation of the data. Contextual interpretation was crucial, given both the subject nature and the methodological approaches in the thesis. Again, these concerns were supported by the aforementioned study (Lee. V. et al., 2018) as concerns raised indicate the limitations of CAQDAS systems to contextualise data effectively (particularly from an indigenous / marginalised position)[176] and the overall reluctance by ethnographers / ethnographic studies to fully engage with these systems for the same reasons[177]. As a result, a manual key thematic analysis was undertaken with all data.

Once the data had been manually coded and examined, it was broadly divided into three areas to assist in the writing of the thesis. The areas could be broadly classified as sociological and historical, religious and theological, and fieldwork data. Given an option between manual or automated data input and processing, the former allowed a measure of control over key factors and avoided the potential for limitations in personal interpretation through CAQDAS. As such, important elements such as the 'Five Stations' and 'Purity' were able to emerge; elements that would otherwise have gone undetected or remained a low priority. Controlling these pivotal factors meant that data could be organised into themes more beneficial to the specific aims and direction of the thesis – namely autoethnographic Traveller theology.

Whilst the 'reassuring' of the data through a secondary analysis is not essential nor a requirement, it does provide a degree of transparency. There is a specific method of examination whereby an indigenous or marginalised-led manual coding is followed by a smaller secondary digital coding process. The method is referred to as the 'two-eyed seeing' approach[178]. Secondary supporting of data in this manner is favoured and recommended by various academics, including Dr Mary Ryan, who states that 'Computer assisted data analysis software can be used to make the research process more transparent, without sacrificing rich, interpretive analysis by the researcher'[179]. With this in mind, some of the interview summaries/transcripts were inputted into NVivo. In doing so,

---

[176] Lee et al, 2018, p. 10.
[177] Fielding & Lee, 2002, p. 209.
[178] Lee et al, 2018, 2 – 3.
[179] Ryan, 2009, p. 142.

religious and theological themes (or 'Codes' and 'Nodes') were categorised. This helped by enabling the production of word frequency reports, which took the form of a Word Cloud, a Tree Map, a Coding Structure report, a Coding Summary Report and a brief snapshot of the metric (and non-metric) data from the main interviews[180]. As a result, a certain 'backbone' was given to both the rationale behind the inclusion of many of the themes present in the thesis, in addition to marrying up both the social-scientific and theological reasoning. Below (in order) is the Coding Structure Report; the theological Word Cloud; and the selected metric and non-metric data from the interviews with lay persons in the GRT community. Please note that the data presented is minimal, owing to the reasons explained above.

---

[180] The Coding Summary Report and the Tree Map can be found in the Appendix.

Fig. 3 [181]

Code Structure

TRAVELLER THEOLOGY

Hierarchical Name	Nickname	Aggregate	User Assigned Color
Node			
Nodes			
Nodes\\datasets raw data		No	None
Nodes\\datasets raw data\Religious Status		No	None
Nodes\\datasets raw data\What does Religion mean for GRT people		No	None
Nodes\\Ethnicity and Race		No	None
Nodes\\Five Stations		No	Pink
Nodes\\Five Stations\Birth		No	None
Nodes\\Five Stations\Death		No	None
Nodes\\Five Stations\Family		No	None
Nodes\\Five Stations\Marriage		No	None
Nodes\\Five Stations\Sin		No	None
Nodes\\Geography of Gypsies and Travellers		No	None
Nodes\\Media representation and coverage		No	Red
Nodes\\Personal Accounts from interviews and excerpts		No	Blue
Nodes\\Theology articles		No	Yellow
Nodes\\Theology articles\Sacraments		No	Blue
Nodes\\Traveller activity and behaviours		No	None
Nodes\\Traveller activity and behaviours\Criminality and sin		No	None
Nodes\\Traveller activity and behaviours\Education		No	None
Nodes\\Traveller activity and behaviours\Horse dealing and fairs		No	Green
Nodes\\Traveller activity and behaviours\Nomadicy		No	None
Nodes\\Traveller activity and behaviours\Story telling and Camp life		No	None
Nodes\\Traveller activity and behaviours\Work and Employment		No	None
Nodes\\datasets raw data			
Nodes\\datasets raw data\\Religious Status		No	None
Nodes\\datasets raw data\\What does Religion mean for GRT people		No	None

---

[181] In NVivo, codes or themes are called 'Nodes'. This is a complete list of the Nodes created by the researcher. Note that there are 'parent' nodes (e.g. 'Five Stations') and 'infant' or sub nodes (e.g. 'Five Stations\Birth).

Fig. 4 [182]

---

[182] The Word Cloud highlights the most frequently appearing terms in the inputted data. The higher ranked words appear larger and more central. For example, 'Jesus' is the most mentioned / used word in the research data, whilst 'weddings' is noticeably smaller and thus less frequent.

Fig. 5 [183]

Interviewee	Age	Gender	Religious Status	What does Religion mean for GRT people
I1	31	F	Y	"GODS GRACE"
I2	28	F	Y	"JESUS IS FOR US ALL"
I3	29	M	Y	"HE FORGIVES"
I4	35	M	AG	"HOPE"
I5	48	M	Y	"JESUS IS KING"
I6	40	M	N	"ALL GOING TO HELL"
I7	42	F	US	"RELIGION IS TRADITION FOR GYPSIES"
I8	22	F	Y	"JESUS"
I9	18	M	Y	"LOVE"
I10	19	F	Y	"GRACE OF GOD"
I11	21	F	Y	"JESUS"
I12	25	M	AG	"TRADITION"
I13	26	M	Y	"GOD IS FATHER"
I14	24	F	AG	"CHURCH IS OUR CULTURE"
I15	37	F	Y	"CHURCH"
I16	31	F	Y	"LOVE"
I17	52	F	Y	"JESUS IS LOVE"
I18	49	M	Y	"HOLY SPIRIT FOR EVERYONE"
I19	33	M	Y	"JESUS CHRIST IS KING AND LORD OF US ALL"
I20	28	M	Y	"JESUS DIED FOR ALL TRAVELLERS"
I21	27	F	Y	"WE ARE THE CHURCH"
I22	23	M	Y	"LOVE"
I23	30	F	Y	"SAVED AND FORGIVEN"
I24	25	M	N	"WEDDINGS AND FUNERALS"
I25	41	F	Y	"GOD'S OUR FATHER"
I26	20	F	Y	"TRADITION AND HAPPINESS"
I27	44	F	Y	"COMMUNITY"
I28	24	F	Y	"A WAY TO SAVE US FROM SIN"
I29	29	F	AG	"SECURITY AND IDENTITY"
I30	29	F	Y	"PEACE"
I31	41	M	Y	"COMMUNITY AND TOGETHERNESS"
I32	24	M	Y	"CHURCH"
I33	21	F	Y	"SOMETHING THAT BONDS US"
I34	39	M	Y	"OUR IDENTITY AND VALUES"
I35	40	M	US	"CEREMONIES"
I36	25	F	Y	"THE LOVE OF JESUS"
I37	21	M	N	"SOMETHING WE DO"
I38	30	M	Y	"FATHER GOD AND HIS PROTECTION"
I39	26	F	Y	"JESUS AND COMMUNITY"
I40	29	F	Y	"EVERYTHING"

[183] The brief summary of the metric and non-metric data from lay interviewees is sectioned into five columns. The columns are: Interviewee ID number (e.g. I22); Participant's age; Participant's gender; Religious Status (Y = Religious; N = Non-religious; AG = Agnostic; US = Unsure). The final column represents one or two words that summarises their response to the question, 'What does Religion mean for GRT people'.

1.4.2 – Research Parameters

The field research has taken place over two phases, followed by complementary work to ensure coverage. The initial phase of the field research is located at Appleby fair. Appleby has the largest attendance figures (both Traveller and gorger people) and is considered by many Gypsies and Travellers to be a prestigious and historical event[184]. Logically, Appleby would be an ideal source of primary data, owing to the clear advantages of having a large volume of potential interviewees in a singular geographical location.

The second phase of the field research is situated over two different locations. The locations are the primary dwellings of two families who agreed to partake in the studies and met both the researcher's set criterion: adequate family-pool size; and geographical distance from other participants. For the purposes of anonymity, all names of individuals and locations that are mentioned in the field research section/chapter are fictitious, except for interactions with two 'subaltern elites' – namely, Billy Welch and Pastor Jackie Boyd. Due to the relatively small Traveller populace (in comparison to the larger gorger population), simply mentioning a city or town could be an identifier. As such, only County names are used as geographical identifiers. The decision to display the actual county names is intentional, as this shows that there is still an element of broadness in the specific nature of the method of data collection. Given the testable characteristic of tight-knit family networks amongst Traveller communities, implementing this method is justifiable. Below is an example of how using specific city or even large town names could identify individuals in the Traveller community.

Family 'X' come from the County of Suffolk, they live across two Trailers which are located on a local Council-endorsed or Council-run Traveller site. If this were narrowed down to a specific and large town or city in Suffolk such as Ipswich, then identification would still be possible – arguably very likely. Ipswich has a population of 133,384[185], whilst Ipswich Borough Council records that only 41 officially recognised pitches are provided in its town[186]. In a report commissioned by Ipswich Council, they define a pitch as 'an area which is large enough for one household to occupy and typically contains enough space for one or two caravans, but can vary in size'. They go on to define a site as 'a collection of pitches which form a development exclusively for Gypsies & Travellers'[187]. If the total number of Travellers living on each pitch was an average of five

---

[184] Further details concerning Appleby Fair can be found in *Chapter Four*.

[185] Data is correct as of the 'National Census of 2011' and can be found through the 'Office of National Statistics' website under Table 2 (O.N.S., 2011).

[186] Opinion Research Services, 2013, p. 12.

[187] Opinion Research Services, 2013, p. 10.

people, for example, then the total number of Travellers living in Ipswich on officially recognised Traveller sites would be as low as 205. Added into this are the particulars of the family makeup, which would include such things as: number of children; level of religious practice; knowledge or affiliation; and possible peculiarities of their home. Potentially this information could be made known via the research. Given the physical proximity of the families on the sites and the closeness of personal relations, there is a strong chance that identifying said Travellers of Family 'X' would be likely.

In the instance of naming participants, this again is a challenging area when attempting to maintain anonymity for the Travellers involved. The primary identifier is the surname, which for Travellers, serves more than simply a method of identification. A surname can be understood as a 'badge of honour', providing an instant connection to the legacy of ancestors and the reputation of past and present relatives. Whilst first names are to some degree incidental and based on personal choice, they still have elements of cultural significance and can identify an individual once it is attached to the surname. For example, a common surname in both Traveller and gorger cultures in the UK is Smith. There may be a high number of 'Danny Smith's', but if one were to refine the surname to a predominantly Traveller-esque surname such as Boswell, then the chances of a 'Danny Boswell' being identified as *the* Danny Boswell in a study are high[188].

1.5 – Ethics Committee Process

The Ethics Committee process consisted of several stages. Both the Research department and the Graduate School of Canterbury Christ Church University (CCCU) advise and guide postgraduate students and staff before, during and after the process, ensuring that all stages are completed to the standards required by CCCU. After a period of consultation and assessment, an application was made to the ethics committee to undertake the field research and interviews. The application had to be broad enough to ensure that adequate quality and quantity of data was obtained. However, the application also had to be specific enough to ensure it constituted a duty of care at all times towards those being researched, namely through carefully considered elements such as participant consent forms and the ethics review checklist.

---

[188] The name 'Danny Boswell' was created by me to highlight a potential scenario. Again, any names mentioned in this chapter are pseudonyms; this includes 'Danny Smith' and 'Danny Boswell'.

The stages of application follow a set procedure. The procedure followed by the researcher (in line with CCCU instruction), is detailed below.

1) *Ethics Review Checklist.* Checklist submitted for proposed field research, outlining potential hazards, persons at risk, and control measures.
2) *Ethical Review Submission and Permission Application.* Detailed application form for ethical clearance, including a summary of the project.
3) *Consent Form and Information Sheet for participants.* Forms to be completed / given to each active participant – interviewed or otherwise. These were created by the researcher and then ratified by the ethics panel.
4) *Confirmation of Ethics Compliance.* Essentially, a letter giving permission to undertake the proposed research.

Please note that copies of these documents can be found in the Appendix of this thesis.

1.6 – Conclusion and Summary

This chapter began by providing an overview of the need for methodologies to consider with greater weight the religious motifs and narratives amongst certain (often marginalised/indigenous) collectives – in particular, Gypsy and Traveller communities. The result is an argument that proposes a reflexive/mixed-method approach is necessary. In adopting said approach it is hoped that the researcher's question of '*How does a Traveller Theology exist?*' can be answered.

The approach chosen consists of two primary methods. They are a theological methodology and an empirical data methodology. The theological methodology chosen for this thesis is based on Black Liberation Theology – a 'member' of the Liberation and Constructive Theology families. The empirical data methodology chosen for this thesis is autoethnography – a method that allows the researcher's voice, experience and knowledge to form and inform both the direction and content of the research. The two methods are supportive of, and complimentary to each other. Theology allows for a penetrating exploration of the personal, 'spiritual' and religious life of individuals and communities, whilst autoethnography facilitates the expression and discussion of those personal and intimate narratives to emerge.

The theological method utilises a Black Constructive / Liberation framework, incorporating Moltmann's 'theology of the Cross' and Pinn's 'Two Dimensionality' and 'Complex

Subjectivity' theories. The empirical method utilises an autoethnography framework, incorporating Shoard's 'Edgelands' theory (with working examples of its application by Kee and Beckford), providing contextualisation to the autoethnography and data. The theories and approaches that underpin the theological and empirical methodologies help to ensure a degree of control and direction, in addition to providing 'frameworks' upon which a Traveller theology can be constructed.

The empirical data gathering method began by implementing a model created by the researcher named the 'Inductive-theological model'. From there, relevant data is interpreted and contextualised via a secondary theological chart entitled 'Five Stations'. The Five Stations chart helps to facilitate a bridging between social and religious concepts, such as marriage and funerals. This proved valuable during the coding process when looking for theological themes amongst data such as interviews and articles. The empirical data has been coded almost entirely through 'traditional' manual efforts (as opposed to digital data collection and analysis). NVivo, a computer-based data analysis software package was used in a minor capacity during the coding process. However, manual analysis has in this instance enabled a greater degree of qualitative interpretation, proving more valuable than a primarily quantitative and/or digital method of interpretation.

Before conducting the field work element, the researcher began the University's Ethics Committee process, ensuring that all elements were undertaken as required by CCCU. In conducting the field research, the researcher opted for an interview and observation-led approach rather than questionnaires and theoretical postulation. All participants – formal and informal – had both their personal identity and geographical location altered or simply not mentioned. This was done in the interests of the participants, the Ethics Committee board, and to ensure data protection was upheld. The field research parameters have been structured around three settings: Appleby Horse fair; a family environment in fixed (house) accommodation; and a family environment in non-fixed or site accommodation (caravan / trailer / vardo). Beyond this, there were a number of conversations and interviews – formal and informal in differing locations.

In summary, the methodology employed to undertake the research is an autoethnographic theology. Empirical data has been gathered and assessed by utilising models and charts developed by the researcher, whilst coding data has been primarily undertaken manually. This data has then informed the development of questions and areas of interest that the researcher wanted to observe. The field research process was initiated by entering the University's (CCCU) ethics committee process. And from there, field research parameters were set; in this instance, those parameters were three

geographical locations (as detailed in a previous section) and a series of interviews and conversations. The next chapter of this thesis is the literature review, whereupon the hypothesis, methodology, and proposals of research shall find their place.

CHAPTER TWO – CHRISTIANITY AND THE GYPSY CHURCH: A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

2.1 – Introduction

This thesis is concerned with uncovering and understanding theological thought and practice from a Gypsy and Traveller perspective into a coherent theology. The context of this thesis is set in the current time period (21st Century) and is geographically located in the UK. The (autoethnographic) theology in this thesis is set against lived experience and can be considered as reflective and personal. As a Christian Gypsy/Traveller theology, it emerges from a comparatively recent cultural adherence to Christianity.

The purpose of this chapter is to identify key existing works, theories and approaches relevant to this study. In doing so, a specific history and summary of GRT religious / theological / ecclesiological ideas, practices and beliefs can be established. This will allow for any emerging 'Traveller theology' in this thesis to be contextualised among the existing literature. Furthermore, this literature review will identify some works that are not GRT focused but are specifically applicable to this niche area. These non-GRT works will be theological and/or sociological in nature, and will demonstrate the prioritisation, encouragement and/or enablement of marginalised voices.

This chapter will, for the most part, follow a linear narrative covering an approximate period of one century, with a particular focus on the past 50 years. Tackling the literature chronologically unveils particular developments in GRT religion and sociological/academic understanding of the same. It must be noted that given the nature of religious and theology studies, there are some inevitable instances in this chapter of cross-over and repetitive themes, such as the distinctly religious nature of Gypsies (as a collective) and the influence of Gypsy Christianity on behaviour and practice among GRT people. Finally, there are a large number of studies covering contemporary Roma religiosity (and associated areas) in Europe and other areas. However, since the focus of this research is on Gypsy/Traveller theology in the UK, only studies contributing and/or relating to the development and/or establishment of British Gypsy Christianity will be included.

2.2 – The Literature

2.2.1 – Salvation and Cultural Redemption

During the 20th century an Evangelical movement amongst Gypsies began in France, initiating a Christian-Gypsy revival that would eventually become global in its reach. Prior to this there had been a history of Gypsy / Traveller engagement with Christianity going back centuries. However, factors such as the Evangelical development point towards a collective cultural shift among Gypsies from mostly animistic and primal expressions of religion and faith, to an adherence and cultural adoption of organised religion. With this cultural religious realignment comes many new relational and operational factors between Gypsies and the world around them, the communities among them, and the God above them. The relationship between God and Gypsy – or a *Gypsy / Traveller theology*, is expressed through various avenues. For one of the earliest proponents of the Evangelical movement – Rodney 'Gipsy' Smith, this expression came by way of a lifetime in ministry and an autobiography. In *From the Forest I Came: The Story of Gipsy Rodney Smith*[189], David Lazell delivers a succinct biography about Rodney Smith, based heavily upon Smith's original autobiography *Gipsy Smith: His Life and Work*[190]. Both books are primarily based in the early years of the 20th century – some time before the predominantly French revival began.

For Gypsies and gorgers the texts potentially offer different meanings. For Gypsies, (particularly of its time) a clear message is delivered of the need for repentance and salvation. For gorgers, there is a rejection of the social narrative that says *all* GRT people are sinful and corrupt, and instead it is an opportunity to see an example of Gypsies serving as an example for a 'lost' majority. However, there is an overarching point that the authors (particularly, Lazell) possibly did not intend. And that is, beyond the extraordinary and miraculous tales, and beyond Smith's oratorical and evangelical skills, is an almost ordinary engagement with Christianity. For this review of the literature, and indeed this thesis, that is a key point: Gypsy Christianity, whilst not always conventional, is present, is familiar, and is largely devoid of non-orthodox belief and practice; it is not the exotic curiosity that outsiders may perceive it as being. Mapping GRT religion from that standpoint demonstrates key features that may otherwise be missed. These features are theological in nature, hence detail a 'Traveller Theology'.

---

[189] Lazell, 1970.
[190] Smith, 1905.

The story of Gipsy Smith is mostly comprised of first and second-hand accounts. Given the nature of some of the evidence present, it is reasonable to believe that a degree of 'poetic license' has formed parts of the evidence. In spite of this, the message and its impact is not lost nor is it diluted. Lazell systematically incorporates key elements about Gypsy society / culture amongst the reoccurring themes – all of which are supported by the evidence he provides. Whilst contextually set in the late 19th century, these elements are still familiar today – hence their inclusion in this review. Some of the elements include:[191]

- A preoccupation with cleanliness, purity, and polluting things / practice.
- A love and affiliation with nature.
- The existence of an innate religious sense.
- Family as a central part of community and identity.
- Horses as a symbol of the wandering life.
- State-led Education and religious acceptance considered 'dire'[192].

Lazell's writing style is both contentious and essential. It is contentious because the language used is overtly assertive, dramatic, confident and at times defiant. And it is essential, in that it will hold a certain 'familiarity' for some in the GRT community owing to its style of presentation. These reasons can of course open the text to differing interpretations. Lazell, with some persistence, presents Smith as someone almost divine, using Christ-like comparisons and Biblical parallels throughout the account. This is partially balanced out by his recognition of some of the public scandals and poor press that Smith received during his life. However, the imbalance is still relatively clear. As such, it easy to interpret the overall text as an attempt to reimagine Gypsy culture with the same romanticist perception so prevalent in the late 19th and early 20th century.

The strength of Lazell's text is its ability to convey the centrality and significance of religious conviction in Gypsy circles. And whilst Smith's personal theology could be criticised for being somewhat elementary[193], his (and Lazell's) message is clear: What is desirable and good is a wholesome Christian life; there is almost a nobility to converting others or being converted; and that a rejection of sin is a step closer to God. For Smith and Lazell, these elements trump the essential 'Gypsy' elements mentioned earlier in this text. There is no indication that Christianity replaces these cultural elements, but it does suggest that Smith's personal theology is Christological in character. The urgency for

---

[191] Lazell, 1970, p. 19.
[192] Lazell, 1970, p. 39.
[193] 'He preached for conversions; he believed that was his ministry. He believed he could do little in the way of building up the church through the teaching of doctrine – and that was not his job!' (Lazell, 1970, p. 96).

salvation, repentance and cultural evolution from Gypsy communities that Smith relentlessly pursued would later be replicated in Europe, and then across other parts of the world. The first significant text documenting this process was written by Matéo Maximoff.

In *The Evangelical Gypsies in France* (1965)[194], Maximoff delivers a first-hand account of the early stages of the European Gypsy Evangelical and Pentecostal revival. Given the time, context and location of his work, Maximoff delivers an account that is bold and unflinching. Whilst he spends much of the article explaining how various Gypsy 'tribes' have taken it upon themselves to minister and evangelise amongst their own, his message (and the point of the article) is ultimately prophetic. Maximoff proposes that Gypsies are moving towards a position whereby they are trying to wake up 'the slumbering conscience of the [gorger] Christians'[195]. In holding such beliefs, Maximoff demonstrates that Gypsy Christianity is no longer limited to the evangelisms of one man – namely, Gipsy Smith, but that a collective new identity – or a Gypsy Church, is being birthed.

Maximoff operates from a position that assumes a degree of both individual and collective theological thought, evidenced through a concise and 'outward facing' account. As such, Maximoff's article contributes to the research in this thesis by establishing that any potential Gypsy or Traveller-led theology is both complex and multifaceted – in this instance, missionary. This in itself creates a space in which multiple reflective and systematic theologies can emerge and exist, including the account in this thesis. Maximoff operates from a reflective stance, drawing on personal experiences and a certain degree of historical referencing to support the bulk of the article. His conclusion is evidenced by his theological and ecclesiological analysis of the 'lay of the land'. There are some points of contention, such as his suggestion that gorgers potentially hold a fear that Gypsies might steal the gospel from them. However, it is worth remembering the context from which Maximoff presents his findings and theories; namely, a position of unrest, exclusion and mistrust (owing to his Romani Kalderash ethnicity).

The evidence places a particular emphasis on each event essentially being a 'spiritual' act of some sort. This slight detachment from material reality undermines what is otherwise a concise demonstration of prophetic and theological thought. Maximoff achieves his aims by partially incorporating an autoethnographic approach, demonstrated by the interjection of his personal experience. Given the aims of this thesis, Maximoff's example of pursuing

---

[194] Maximoff, 1965, pp. 151 – 153.
[195] Maximoff, 1965, p. 152.

a theological outcome through a subjective methodology is revelatory. Maximoff does not go so far as to produce a complete and distinct theology through his chosen method. However, through the text he perhaps unknowingly demonstrates how this method has the potential to adequately create such a narrative. For Maximoff, the relationship between theory and practice is almost impossible to differentiate. This is unsurprising given his role in ministry, and more specifically for the article, the passionate nature in which he writes. This radical approach is balanced by the theological rationale used by Maximoff, which is in the main representative of orthodox thinking.

However, there a couple of gaps in the data (as identified in the above text). The autoethnographic approach favours a subjective stance, and as such it often requires greater explanation to satisfy academic convention. In proposing that gorgers fear the gospel being stolen from them by Gypsies, and that Christians have withheld the Bible and its message, highlights (among other things) the need for continual discussion between Gypsy and gorger. In the instance of this thesis, that discussion takes the form of academic reflection and the engagement in theological reasoning and speculation. And whilst that discussion has taken place over many years, as Maximoff et al. have demonstrated, its unearthing and re-examination in light of an ever-changing world is essential and must continue.

2.2.2 – Ecclesiology, Particular Beliefs and the Early Gypsy Church

Elwood Trigg, an academic and Episcopalian Vicar, follows Maximoff's example by presenting an historical critical analysis of the Gypsy / Traveller religious reform; this time beginning shortly after the turn of the 20th century[196]. Importantly for the larger contextual picture of this review, Trigg primarily commentates on the British religious and ecclesiological landscape (as opposed to the French and European developments). Trigg proposes that there has been a series of failures in the process of evangelising and providing lasting social reform to Gypsies. These failures are due to a number of factors, including but not limited to: ineffectual evangelism; questionable integrity of certain Missionaries (both Gypsies and gorgers); poor understanding of unique cultural characteristics; lack of commitment from larger church bodies; and problems with elements of Gypsy culture itself. Trigg concludes with some irony that the Evangelical movement which once sought to destroy essential elements of Gypsy culture, could now be the very thing to save it. Trigg's article is in many ways contentious and troublesome,

---

[196] Trigg, 1968, pp. 82 – 109.

mostly owing to its frequent use of stereotypes and its 'conversion' narrative. However, the article is telling of historical positions on Gypsies, and it completes the overall narrative thus far, and as such it is a necessary inclusion in this analysis of the literature.

Trigg uses a combination of approaches to reach his conclusions. Primarily these take the form of analysing historical records and witness / interviewee statements. Given the chosen sources of data, the reasoning and logic employed by Trigg makes for a convincing position. Even so, certain elements in the article undermine the 'ally' status that Trigg positions himself as having. Examples of these elements include Trigg's detached 'concern' over the effective and ineffective methods of Gypsy conversion and his indifference shown when he uses sweeping stereotypes[197]. As such, Trigg's article could (unsurprisingly, given his role as a Vicar) be interpreted as ecclesiologically orientated, with the integrity of leadership and ministerial strategies being the priority.

Despite these concerns, Trigg shows his commitment to engaging multiple voices and sources in the field by displaying awareness and insight into the religious dynamic of Gypsy-Christianity, certain cultural taboos and practices, and the area of Gypsy superstition and magic. As indicated thus far, there exists a distinct Gypsy religiosity, and that distinctiveness is primarily expressed through the body of Christianity. Whilst Trigg gives some attention to the theology that *may* form such religiosity, his primary concern is with the relationship between that theology and the outside church.

Trigg's overall argument is that the evangelism that once sought to eradicate core elements of Gypsy culture is now the very thing that might save it. However, this line of argument is partially based on evangelism emerging from a gorger source. As such, the dominant narrative unintentionally appears at times as paternalistic, insisting that Gypsies are in need of conversion. Although at one stage issues of conversion are placed at the feet of the Church and not the Gypsies themselves[198], this point is quickly undermined by accounts of questionable and dismissible activity by Romany ministers[199]. Trigg, with some significance for this thesis, does go some way in rectifying this point by concluding that the IEGM (International Evangelical Gypsy Mission) could be the avenue in which Gypsy culture can be 'saved'. In doing so, Trigg is acknowledging that Gypsy 'progress' might be in the hands of Gypsies themselves; this thesis is sympathetic to such logic, hence this being a '*Traveller*' theology – and not a theology *of* Travellers. Even so, the

---

[197] Trigg, 1968, pp. 94 & 98 – 105.
[198] Trigg, 1968, p. 87.
[199] Trigg, 1968, p. 89.

dilemma of whether Gypsies and Gypsy culture actually require conversion or salvation, is another question.

Trigg's understanding of the thematic elements of Gypsy culture strengthens the article and delivers key information in understanding Gypsy religiosity. And whilst there are important discussions elsewhere about key British Romany religious figures, such as Rodney 'Gipsy' Smith, Trigg instead focuses on the changing ecclesiological dynamic and its relation to Gypsy theologising and Gypsy/European evangelism and Pentecostalism. Indeed, by understanding the thought process of conversion by all means, Trigg provides some contextualisation as to the social and religious environment from which figures such as Gipsy Smith emerged, and from which the subsequent Gypsy evangelical movement has had to reclaim and reimagine.

In *Gypsy Demons and Divinities: The Magical and Supernatural Practices of the Gypsies*[200]*,* Trigg offers a comprehensive work on Gypsy beliefs and practices. In doing so, he contributes to the process of reclaiming, redressing and reimagining the religious landscape of Gypsies. Trigg achieves this by establishing that Gypsies were for a long time considered so primal and devoid of morality and wherewithal that it was inconceivable they could hold any spiritual and/or religious beliefs; the Christianity they professed to hold in their early European history (approximately 1400 CE onwards) was merely a cover. The result was a combination of demonization, accusations of occultism and paganism, and extensive missionary work by gorgers to 'convert' Gypsies. Trigg categorically and emphatically refutes the 'old' question of whether Gypsies had any beliefs – religious, magical or otherwise. In doing so, Trigg helps lay the foundations for an important milestone in understanding Gypsy beliefs and religion. '*Gypsy Demons and Divinities*' is thus an essential element in the Gypsy religious narrative. By eradicating older false narratives, it establishes a new juncture from which new GRT religious understanding and narratives can and have emerged.

The implementation of mixed-method and theoretical approaches by Trigg are effective, and his application of said approaches are, for the most part, observational, theoretical, and reliant on historical evidence. His pursuit for clear explication of his subject matter is consistent. And it is through said pursuits that themes of note are identified by Trigg. These themes include but are not limited to: birth; death; marriage; and purity. At an early juncture, Trigg provides clear definitions of 'magic' and 'religion'. In doing so, he is able to precisely separate areas of beliefs into definitive sections. This assists the reader in being able to see the rationale behind certain practices and beliefs. However, at one stage he

---

[200] Trigg, 1973.

proposes that the nature of Gypsy beliefs (ghost life, omens, taboos, myths and superstitions) is more suggestive of 'a magical emphasis than of a religious one'[201]. Such a position is contestable, given the rapidly changing locale of Gypsy beliefs over the 19th and 20th centuries from tribal-esque to definitively religious and denominational. As for the current period (21st century), the researcher would propose that given the immense development and change in Gypsy beliefs over the past 50 years or so, such beliefs are now more suggestive of a theological emphasis over and above a 'detached' religious – or indeed a magical prominence.

The weight of Trigg's book is found in the breadth of subject matter covered and the depth in which said subjects are approached. Perhaps more important is that Trigg proves beyond any doubt that comprehensive and unique religious practices have existed amongst Gypsy and Traveller collectives for centuries. He also evidences how (Christian) religious practice among Gypsy communities is not only still undertaken, but that Gypsies have 'assumed leadership in the evangelical movement'[202] (with reference to the growing movement at the time in France).

Trigg's work represents a transition from one period of GRT religiosity to another; from syncretic superstition and magical practice to collective religiosity, most commonly framed by Christian practices and doctrines. Other writers included in this review chapter (Maximoff, Acton et al.) have effectively 'picked up the baton' and assisted greatly in said transition. So, whilst it is highly improbable that there are Gypsies or Travellers in the UK partaking in the worship of vampire gods, or holding fears of grave robbers, it is essential that Trigg's work be included if the present is to be accurately contextualised. *Travelling Home*[203] by Joe Ridholls moves the contextualisation process into a contemporary form by progressing the narrative to the latter half of the 20th century.

Ridholls comprehensively and succinctly covers the global progress of Gypsy ecclesiological engagement and initiatives over a period of around 30 years. The account by Ridholls is unique, in that it seeks to discuss and better comprehend events and pivotal moments of the movement by interlacing scriptural reference with theological and ecclesiological interpretation. In short, Ridholls looks for the movement of the Holy Spirit in what has been a frantic and compelling period of Gypsy religious history. The text adds to the current narrative of Gypsy revivalism by firstly describing in detail its inception – an act of healing; and secondly by getting to the crux of the theological precedent behind the

---

[201] Trigg, 1973, p. 27.
[202] Trigg, 1973, p. 216.
[203] Ridholls, 1986.

movement's success; '…its specifically Gypsy nature'[204]. This latter point suggests that a Gypsy-led theological narrative could also find success in contextualising and reflecting upon its own religious, spiritual and social position.

As a 'sympathetic outsider', Ridholls utilises an autoethnographic methodology for the first half of his text. In doing so, Gypsy engagement with gorger-led ministry is revealed to be, in the first instance, an exchange of sorts. This of course is not unfamiliar. Evangelical Pentecostalism in any construct offers a transactional account of salvation: Forgiveness in exchange for repentance, and eternal life as a reward for replacing oneself with Christ as Lord over one's life. However, Ridholls concludes with the belief that the increasingly literate Gypsies will bring a combination of two differing 'camps' of Christian Gypsies; those who 'will find it impossible to accept many of the tenets and practices of the present movement', and those that will 'bring freshness and revitalisation to the non-Gypsy Church'[205]. The prospect of Gypsies delivering 'freshness and revitalisation' to the church is both prophetic and exciting. But its logical base assumes that 'Church' in its current guise is something that is both attractive to Gypsies and is a 'best fit' in which Gypsy and Traveller Christian expression can operate. Persistent cultural nomadism coupled with other historic traits, such as high illiteracy rates and self-governance, suggest that 'true' unbridled Gypsy Christianity could be something vastly different to the unbending near on 2000 year old model of institutionalised worship currently offered.

The potential blind sightedness of the ecclesiological assumptions in Ridholls' book becomes its strength. By incorporating such ideas in the historical narration, Ridholls forces reflection by the reader. Indeed, Ridholls participates in such reflection himself. This is most notable in his account of leading and being involved in a Gypsy funeral, whereby his practical and pastoral theological approaches serve as examples of best practice, over and above concerns of conversions and statistics. Ridholls provides a reminder of the very human element of seeking love and connectedness as part of the religious experience. So, whilst some of the information presented in the book appears in other texts reviewed in this chapter, the criticality, compassion and comprehensive coverage present in Ridholls' work makes it an essential inclusion in what is, above all things, a theological thesis.

---

[204] Ridholls, 1986, p. 36.
[205] Ridholls, 1986, p. 126.

2.2.3 – Growth of Gypsy Christianity and the Gypsy Church

In *The Gypsy Evangelical Church*[206], Thomas Acton places a greater academic scrutiny on the developing conversation covering the history, development, and theology behind the Gypsy-led church movement. Acton seeks to prove that there exists a distinct and growing Gypsy church body, and that it is autonomous in its nature, unifying in its construct and an important element of Gypsy culture. In identifying these key elements, the article serves as a watershed moment in the study of GRT religion and as such is a foundational text in the documentation of important events and developments in modern Gypsy religious history. Furthermore, key characteristics and details are discussed that contribute directly to this thesis, namely references towards a theological identity and information detailing the nature of Gypsy evangelism.

Acton incorporates statements from some of those directly involved with the creation of the Gypsy evangelical church. Alongside this, Acton draws upon a series of intertwining narratives to develop his position. These narratives vary in their construct, with some being historical, others being quantitative, whilst some emerge from what appears to be first-hand experience. Common Romani cultural elements such as nomadic freedom, music, and (religious) inheritance are linked to Christian practice. This is then set against an historic backdrop, adding a necessary contextualisation. Acton does not limit himself to the initial implementation of an historical critical method. Instead he chooses to utilise other varying approaches, allowing for a pluralistic and diverse narrative to develop. In a way this facilitates the change in framework from theoretical to conceptual and finally to reflective. For Acton, theory and practice are intertwined and synergistic. This is perhaps made more obvious in his assessment of Pastor Clement Le Cossac[207], an instrumental figure in the Gypsy Evangelical Church.

The strength of this article resides predominantly in its concise yet comprehensive narrative, detailing the historical, theological and ecclesiological development of the Gypsy Evangelical Church. These elements provide essential evidence that supports the initial theoretical stance of this thesis. The study identifies several core factors that are still contextually relevant in the present era but whose nature or direction may have evolved (the article was published in 1979). These factors are: the 'mushrooming' phenomenon of Gypsy Church growth; the social, political, educational and religious situations; and as identified in the opening part of the study, the historical changing nature of religious affiliation. All of these factors have at various stages been documented, discussed and

---

[206] Acton, 1979, pp. 11 – 17.
[207] Acton, 1979, p. 17.

analysed. However, as Acton identifies in a later article[208], there exists in European institutions a kind of 'forgettory'; a structured and intentional 'amnesia' that allows Roma historical and religious narratives to be reversed, altered, or forgotten, with little or no consequence for gorger people. As such, there is an argument to make for continuing the reflective, investigative and contributory process that has been undertaken by key academics such as Acton.

Ellen Sato builds upon the core factors identified by Acton[209] (including the 'mushrooming expansion into North America) by discussing how the mass adoption of Christianity by Gypsies is fundamentally challenging and changing existing belief and behaviour systems[210]. Sato draws specific attention to the Pentecostal evangelical movement's impact in northern Virginia, near Washington, DC[211]. Focusing on the 'trickster' (or, 'gypped') motif, Sato offers both sociological and theological hypotheses on the benefits and indeed the consequences of Gypsy engagement with Christianity. Importantly, Sato concludes by asking if the new 'born again' phenomena is a genuine 'great awakening'. And if so, and it lasts, will it replace and end much of what is identified as 'Gypsy tradition'? The critical nature of these questions are crucial elements in progressing the current dialogue into theological territory.

To reach these conclusions, Sato conducted a case study, upon which a critical reflective analysis is developed. Overall Sato's analysis is thorough and exact. Several common cultural and belief traits are identified, which are subsequently examined using a mixed methodological approach. However, despite the quality of Sato's research, the research project itself is limited in its reach. As such, the evidence is arguably not strong enough to create a precedent by itself and could thus be read as an isolated phenomenon. Even still, placed amongst the larger body of literature, the research is strengthened, becoming indicative of the global trend towards Pentecostal Evangelism by GRT people.

The article does much in supporting the concept that understanding Christianity as central and core to Gypsy culture is vital. Of theological and ecclesiological interest is Sato's focus upon redemptive exchange and the presence of persistent mass engagement in deception by Gypsies. As a topic, the admission of 'sinful' (or 'unlawful') practice among GRT communities is for the most part avoided in many academic texts – or at least excused in some manner. Sato initially indicates that Gypsies have apparently been 'deserting their age old beliefs, centring on ritual cleanliness, contagion, luck, and Saint

---

[208] Acton, 2017.
[209] Acton, 1979.
[210] Sato, 1988, p. 92.
[211] Sato, 1988, p. 92.

worship to become 'born again' Pentecostal Christians'[212]. Sato – a gorger, who later remains mildly sceptical as to the degree of sincerity of Gypsies with regards to their conversion, introduces the concepts of the 'trickster' and of 'gyp'[213]. Unfortunately, this inclusion partly derails the developing theologically based argument, as Sato is challenged by the participation of Gypsies in a faith system that condemns their alleged anchoring to an historical association with deception. However, the article remains strong, as its 'Gypsy theologising' develops *around a* religious Gypsy community. This approach provides unique insights into community rationale and evolving belief patterns. The approach also highlights the potential of what Gypsy theology could look like when emerging from a Gypsy community.

In *Travelling Light*[214], Sue Locke, a Christian 'ally' and journalist presents an inspirational account, albeit somewhat similar to Sato's article. Locke places her focus on the formation of 'Light and Life'[215] during the 1980s and early 90s, and the story of its founder, Davey Jones. The book utilises an ethnographic 'field diary' approach, and as such, any overarching key point is at times difficult to define. However, on the whole, Locke seeks to demonstrate the apostolic phenomena of Gypsy revival and its power to transform an entire culture through everyday actions of faith. Furthermore, Locke's process of documenting the formation of a Gypsy-led British Church is both ecclesiologically and theologically important – especially if an understanding and contextualisation of any emerging theology is to be achieved. As such, it becomes an important Christian text among the existing narrative and therefore a necessary inclusion in the review of literature.

The figure of Romany Gypsy Davey Jones, pivotal to the UK Gypsy revival, is spoken of in much the same way as Lazell (1970) speaks of Rodney 'Gipsy' Smith. Lazell paints Smith as a Christ-like figure, owing to his actions and words. In much the same way, Locke presents Jones as someone gathering and instructing his disciples. Numerous stories of conversions and repentance are present in both accounts, along with miraculous events that initiate ministry and the excusal of questionable activity. As such, Locke's account could be misinterpreted as a form of cultural romanticism. However, this apparent imbalance in objectivity is arguably levelled and contextualised when put

---

[212] Sato, 1988, p. 69.
[213] To 'gyp' is to intentionally and knowingly deceive or take from someone (outside of the Gypsy community) to make some kind of gain – usually financial. As such, a 'gorger' can be 'gypped'. Although an uncommon term in the present era, the concept of gyp is understood to be an acceptable and sometimes necessary wrong-doing of sorts, in the eyes of other Gypsies.
[214] Locke, 1997.
[215] *Light and Life* is a large UK-based Gypsy-led Pentecostal Evangelical movement and Church body.

alongside other complementary narratives that offer a greater degree of cultural criticality, such as Trigg (1968) and Acton (1979).

The absence of a deep cultural criticality is, for the most part, not damaging. The frequent inclusion of first-hand testimonies ensures that at the very least an authenticity pervades any poetic license used. Ethnographically speaking the many testimonies and interviews provide valuable and rich data. Unfortunately, the same broadness is not afforded to any theological examination, which leaves some gaps in the theological development of the movement. There is some discussion from Locke concerning how certain explicit theological presentations are understood and/or interpreted (for example, there are several instances of women covering heads whilst in prayer). Even so, factors that determine where doctrinally and denominationally any Gypsy church would reside, seem to be for the most part based on the personal experiences and preferences of Davey Jones. Locke posits Jones' theology as the '[G]ypsies own doctrine'[216]. However, this statement sits amongst a reminder of Jones' unwillingness to 'allow women to enter ministry'[217]. Other than emerging from a 'traditional' Pentecostalism, there is little explanation as to why Jones would believe that a gorger-originated exegesis should direct a newly birthed Gypsy church.

One of the strengths of *Travelling Light* is the way Locke conveys movement – more specifically, nomadism. This is achieved through seemingly constant impermanence in her own location as she follows key figures from conventions to Churches to prayer meetings to numerous sites. The text itself thus becomes an indicator and example of an aspect of Gypsy culture. Another strength in the text (given the objective of the book) is the accountability and reliability of the data. By engaging senior figures from the movement, Locke provides details of personable specifics – details that are often lost in the process of ensuring confidentiality in ethnographic research. Though arguably, if one only hears from prominent individuals, a broader narrative may be unheard; for example, the average family in the community may have perspectives of their own. However, Locke's approach ensures the identification of key figures in the beginnings of British Gypsy Pentecostalism (for example; Pastor Jackie Boyd, Rev. Bernard Mends et al.), enabling a continuity in the overall narrative as the Gypsy revival moves from Europe to the Americas and into the UK.

There also exists an important body of independent texts which have contributed to the narrative of Gypsy religion and Gypsy Evangelism – namely in the form of newsletters,

---

[216] Locke, 1997, p. 91.
[217] Locke, 1997, p. 91.

reports and pamphlets. This dynamic may be a similar case for other gorger communities and denominations; however, such writings must receive mention in this review because of the unique paradigm of Gypsy culture. Among other elements, Gypsy culture has traditionally had a strong affiliation with nomadic living and, perhaps as a consequence of nomadism, the community has historically presented as a distinctly 'oral' culture. Therefore, the nature of passing on new and non-centralised data among and from the community, such as information concerning church-related activity, fairs and Christian teachings, has at times taken the form of ephemeral writings.

'Gypsies for Christ'[218] is a registered charitable body and British representative of the International Gypsy Evangelical Mission. First meeting in May 1975[219], they have produced numerous ephemeral materials since the mid 1970s, mostly in the form of regular newsletters detailing church and mission related activity in the UK and abroad. They have also (infrequently) published a magazine (often only a couple of pages in length) entitled *Romani Kongeri*, which is arguably a more ministerial and less formal production than the *Romani Gospel Waggon* newsletters. The purpose of the magazines was to develop the evangelical movement in which 'Gypsies themselves will preach the Gospel to their own people'[220]. There is a redemptive theological narrative operating through the magazines, mostly by way of scriptures which focus primarily on salvation. These are interlaced with awareness over certain cultural issues in the community, such as poor health care and difficulty in education. Other key writings include newsletters sent from 'United Bible Studies'[221], who initiated an exchange of information concerning translating the Bible into different Romani languages, and pamphlets from David Lazell, who wrote shorter 'souvenir' editions of his work on the life and ministry of Rodney 'Gipsy' Smith[222].

Collectively these various writings form an important part of the British Gypsy revival dialogue. They serve as first-hand evidence of Gypsy Christianity in practice, and demonstrate both Gypsy-to-Gypsy evangelism and Gypsy-led foreign missions. Furthermore, the inclusion and discussion of 'everyday' Gypsy elements in both the newsletters and magazines is further evidence of a pervading Christianity among Gypsies and Travellers. Finally, whilst these materials are arguably simply a form of proselytising,

---

[218] The full title used in correspondence is *Gypsies for Christ travelling with the Romani Gospel Waggon*. There does not appear to be many materials produced since late 2010. At the time of writing, *Gypsies for Christ* have a website domain, but it is inactive. However, they are still a registered charity.
[219] Woolford, 1976.
[220] Woolford, 1977, p. 1.
[221] United Bible Societies, 1981.
[222] Lazell, 1995.

they do reveal an engaged and committed Christian collective, devoid of the prejudices that would question the Gypsies' sincerity of faith.

2.2.4 – Reaffirming the new Gypsy Christianity

In *Mediterranean Religions and Romani People*[223], Acton emphatically stands against historic arguments that infer Gypsies are opposed to / not engaged in religion. Acton, much like Locke and Sato, suggests that it is quite the opposite, and that Gypsies are religious and spiritual as much as anyone else. Again, much like *The Gypsy Evangelical Church*[224], Acton's work is crucial in the progression of GRT religious discourse. Acton proposes that religious marginalisation towards Gypsies (summarised by the aforementioned historic arguments) is inherently racist in its construct. Acton confirms the existence of several key ideas in his study that are fundamental to this thesis. These include the suggestions that:

- Gypsies are religious.
- There exist particular 'Gypsy' expressions and/or appropriations of Christianity.
- Those modes of Christianity have been challenged, questioned and often refuted by Non-Gypsy Church bodies.

Acton primarily evidences his theory by critically analysing an official letter / statement issued by Pope John II in 1991 and placing it contextually amongst other historical perspectives. The reasoning and evidence given by Acton to support his point of view is convincing, given the gravitas of the Pope's statement – particularly on the explication of the neologism 'transnational'. However, the Papal evidence could be interpreted as recognition of Gypsy religion being something special and beyond a normative expression of spirituality. In short, the evidence allows for an arguably more radical response.

In formulating and delivering his argument, Acton utilises a Political theology stance and a Globalisation theoretical approach. There appears to be some assumption between the theoretical positioning and the practice in the article, namely that of a seemingly collective yet unconnected racist stance against Gypsies. However, Acton bolsters his argument by critically evaluating other texts. Oppositional evidence is carefully selected to reveal a sometimes subtle but troublesome counter argument, which only goes to support Acton's claims of racism towards Gypsies. Contextualising the claims of racism in Acton's study

---

[223] Acton, 1997, pp. 37 – 51.
[224] Acton, 1979.

77

logically concludes that said racism is *institutional* – rather than falling at the feet of any one individual.

Acton evidences his position by giving examples of a history of gorger scholarship refuting Gypsy religion. He goes on to argue that some scholars suggest that religion is used as a form of protection by Gypsies, undermining any authentic or sincere interaction with religion and spirituality. To support this claim, Acton reveals contemporary anthropological ideas, created by leading voices in the field, as inherently racist. It should be noted that Acton does not believe that many of these people are 'anti-Gypsy', but are perhaps a 'product of their time', repeating or creating romanticised imagery and ideas about Gypsies.

This in itself forms two distinct types of anthropology: 'romantic' ideas about Gypsies and Gypsy culture; and disdain for innovative Gypsy religious and political initiatives towards improvement. Both anthropological types require a process of dismantling. One method in which to achieve this is by re-examining and repositioning Gypsy identity. In *Globalisation, the Pope and the Gypsies*[225], Acton addresses this by engaging with Gypsy identity and asking how Gypsies should be defined in a world that has (academically speaking) rediscovered globalisation[226]. In the parameters of Internationalism and nation-states, Gypsies and others (such as Jews) become victims of racism in the States they occupy. This is partially because the State in question will often incorporate that people group and their folklore into its own body, essentially removing the unique identity of those people and replacing with its own 'national' identity[227]. Acton's argument is universally located, in that he uses the Papal statement (Acton, 1997; 1999; 2017) to assert that those under the Romani banner should be considered and treated as 'transnational'. The article enables the collective narrative to assert amongst other things that:

- Gypsy culture and religion is unique.
- In nation-state led narratives, GRT identity can be lost.
- Normalising relations between world religions and Gypsies (for example, through an action like creating Gypsy and Traveller theologies) as demonstrated in the Pope's statement, can represent a new paradigm.

Acton extensively evidences his position by drawing on multiple sources from a range of disciplines, theories and key individuals. The reasoning given for Acton's position is

---

[225] Acton, 1999.
[226] Acton, 1999. Also see Acton's comments throughout the article regarding the Reformation and the effects of Colonialism.
[227] Acton, 1999, p. 147.

convincing. This is owing to the readily available plethora of evidence proving the existence of racist and exclusionary treatment of GRT people around the world on a historic, social and personable basis. Acton's universalistic theoretical framework appears to reflect that which is present in the Papal statement (referenced above) which, grounded in a 'universal theoretical and spiritual approach', specifically utilises globalisation theory in its description of Gypsies as 'a transnational minority'. Here, Acton proposes that '[t]he Pope has been brought to assert that nation-states do not have the right to deal with Gypsies – and by implication, any ethnic minority – as though they were purely an internal problem'[228]. In the same way, Globalisation theory is used by Acton to essentially 'deconstruct' itself, enabling a greater degree of criticality in achieving the aims of the book in which Acton's article resides. He achieves this by bringing in the Gypsy case study, which in turn provides a tangibility to the relationship between theory and practice, and by drawing on key proponents of globalisation theory.

The premise of Acton's argument resides in the notion that internationalism and nation-states are, in their construction, racist by default. However, it could be argued that there exists a degree of protection towards minorities in the system of the nation-state that is not afforded by being part of a universalistic / transnational global body. This is dependent upon the nation in question, and of course, any nation can change its political and social direction and agenda at any time because of multiple factors such as immigration, populism and political unrest. Even so, it is arguably unfair to write-off the nation-states' capacity to learn, develop, listen and become better environments for those in its borders considered marginalised. Theologically, this latter perspective would allow a pathway to redemption, facilitated to an extent by the forgiving intervention of the nation's victims. For this thesis, that forgiveness and redemptive pathway can take place via the sharing of theological and spiritual reflection.

Acton's article highlights an important paradoxical dynamic and is therefore a necessary inclusion in this literature review. The nature of that dynamic is that Gypsies – under whatever banner they identify, are unique and universal; 'a single cultural community people… diverse in race, language and religion'[229]. According to Acton, this diversity is a strength and not a weakness. Indeed, Acton goes so far as to suggest that God is 'choosing' the despised and oppressed to 'transform our general understanding of reality'[230]. This in itself would confirm that beyond this article Gypsy-led theological

---

[228] Acton, 1999, p. 150.
[229] Acton, 1999, p. 152.
[230] Acton, 1999, p. 152.

responses exist, and that said responses can potentially be quantifiable through a liberation theology model.

In *New Religious Movements among Roma, Gypsies and Travellers: Placing Romani Pentecostalism in an Historical and Social Context*[231], Acton begins by reiterating that there exists not only a unique Gypsy Christianity but also a distinct form of Romani Pentecostalism. He goes on to suggest that this Christianity can also be measured denominationally (and thus, quantifiably), and that its existence is only possible because it challenged existing Church authority structures. Furthermore, Acton says that Pentecostalism is capable of being a vehicle of Romani ethnic identity. According to Acton, current studies are often localised and assumptive, resulting in the creation of mass generalisations. Failing to place such studies historically and socially allows for the normalisation of racism towards GRT people to continue.

Acton presents various historical accounts to evidence the theoretical position of his argument. However, the evidence could be interpreted in other ways. Historically GRT people have been understood / presented in text, media and public consciousness as deviant – even criminal. Although cynically positioned, there is room (going along with the dominant public narrative) to suggest that the Pentecostal 'non-conformity' shown by Romani congregations is a rebellion rather than an ecclesiological resistance. Indeed there are some academics who having spent time with Gypsy groups have arrived at a similar logical position, whereby the sincerity of conversion is doubted[232]. The researcher would propose that to understand this dynamic further could require a theological explanation.

Importantly for this thesis, Acton confirms several distinctive traits amongst Romani congregations (although the time period of the study must be contextually understood). These include aspects such as: In North America, Roma were more likely to join gorger-led congregations, whereas this is not the case in Europe; Roma have become self-led, training their own Pastors etc.; and the (Holy) Spirit as a source of religious truth, favoured over Biblical or written truth. According to Acton, it was among the 'Gypsies and Travellers of north western Europe and their migrant cousins in north America that the Pentecostal revival began'. This revival then spread to other Roma populations globally. Acton says that this warrants investigation – something the researcher of this thesis agrees with. Unfortunately, the data does not readily indicate what that Pentecostalism

---

231 Acton, 2014.
232 Sato, 1988.

looks like or how theologically and religiously it is understood and practiced in communities in a contemporary UK context.

However, Acton posits Romani Pentecostalism as a strong vehicle of ethnic mobilisation, suggesting that (Romani) Christianity has been a method of engagement with mass society. This supports and contributes to the researcher's hypothesis that says Christianity can serve as a bridge between GRT and gorger society. Acton concludes by saying that despite the many differences (of which Romani leaders are aware), different Romani religious groups are reaching out to each other across Europe, indicating in many ways a connectedness of Gypsy ethnicities via the body of Christ. *Romani Pentecostalism: Gypsies and Charismatic Christianity* (edited by David Thurfjell and Andrew Marsh)[233] provides a broad contextualisation of the present day impact and breadth of Romani Pentecostalism, discussing in depth the 'reaching out' and 'relational' element highlighted by Acton.

2.2.5 – Resisting Oppression through Religious and Autoethnographic Discourse

Thurfjell and Marsh set out to deliver a comparative and cohesive narrative about one of the foremost religious orientations amongst GRT communities. Whilst many subjects are covered, an argument could be made that the primary message of *Romani Pentecostalism: Gypsies and Charismatic Christianity* is that Christianity (more specifically in this instance – Pentecostalism) plays a significant role in the political, social and cultural elements, both *in* GRT communities and *between* GRT and gorger communities. And that that role is multifaceted; hence the comprehensive and broad selection of chapter topics in the book. By establishing the premise that Pentecostalism is not only a significant element in Romani Christian expression, but that it is also arguably the fastest growing orientation of Romani Christianity, Thurfjell and Marsh's text becomes an essential inclusion in this review of literature.

Thurfjell and Marsh include a large number of senior academic voices who provide evidence from a number of methodological and theoretical approaches, occupying both qualitative and quantitative camps. The evidence includes but is not limited to: primary data from interviews, statistical analysis, historical analysis, reports, field work, and of course expert experience and opinion built on the foundations of other extensive research. Narratives of difference and uniqueness in the evidence given to the researchers by 'everyday' Romani folk, help to further bolster claims that there exists a

---

[233] Thurfjell & Marsh, 2014.

particular form of Pentecostalism that, in the words of Acton (Chapter Two), is 'distinctively Romani'.

On account of the focus of the book, it remains a challenge to interpret the overall evidence of the (entire) text in a different manner to that which the editors have sought to portray. For the purposes of the research in this thesis, this is positive for at least two primary reasons. Firstly, the evidence and claims for the existence of a distinct Romani expression of Christianity is clear. Secondly (and following on from the first reason), that a Romani Christianity is not limited to only a Pentecostal form but occupies and expresses itself through many denominations and structures. Both reasons call for further theological and ecclesiological investigation, ideally built upon a GRT originated narrative. Thurfjell and Marsh provide a necessary platform from which this leap is achievable and indeed warranted.

Pentecostalism can be considered one of many connective threads in modern Christianity (albeit an optional thread); this interconnectedness is multidenominational, and therefore universal. Thurfjell and Marsh attempt to present a universal picture of this ecclesiological phenomena by bringing together vastly different approaches. This is a challenging task owing to the paradoxical nature of universal constructs, in that such constructs are often made up of many diverse elements, rather than just one collective narrative. The researcher acknowledges this dynamic, and the subsequent important and necessary task of understanding the 'why' (or, the theology) behind the 'what' (in this instance, a GRT Christian Universalism). The researcher also recognises Thurfjell and Marsh's approach, which essentially suggests that there exists multiple narratives and perspectives; that each is as unique as the other; and that each is essential in formulating a complete picture, so to speak. Therefore, and in the same respect, it is essential to have a contemporary and autoethnographic Gypsy theology amongst the existing body of GRT religious material and history. It is there, among the gaps of explicit and implicit Romani theological expression, that this thesis seeks to reside; a Traveller theology among many.

Rodney 'Gipsy' Smith's *His Life and Works*[234] provided an early and pivotal example of Gypsy autoethnographic discourse. Smith's 'insider' status afforded him the privilege of being able to present a personable and distinctly 'Gypsy' account, making his book a central document in Gypsy religious literature, not only because of its theological and ecclesiological contribution, but also because of its revelatory nature. In seeking to produce authentic yet objective data, this thesis borrows from Smith's inspiration but chooses to operate through an established autoethnographic method. Tessa Muncey

---

[234] Smith, 1905.

provides the contemporary benchmark on how to construct autoethnographies[235], but it is Jomo Kenyatta who provides one of the earliest and most comprehensive autoethnographic examples.

Kenyatta's *Facing Mount Kenya*[236] is a landmark text in the field of autoethnography. Kenyatta writes from an African perspective, studying his tribe, the Gikuyu[237]. He was born into the tribe, but owing to several factors, he joined a Christian mission and earned a Western education. During all of that, Kenyatta remained actively engaged and involved with his tribe. The result is an ethnographic account of the innermost workings of a tribe, contextually placed among British rule and Colonial law. Kenyatta occupies a unique role whereby he is both colonised and tribal. *Facing Mount Kenya* thus demonstrates how ethnographies that emerge from a cultural translator (such as this thesis and the researcher) can deliver narratives that are reflective, original and conducive to facilitating further dialogue.

It is important to note that Kenyatta's positioning in relation to the text is abstract. Unlike his Western social science counterparts whose discipline is permanently positioned *in* the 'metropolitan', Kenyatta's encounter with ethnography is a result of his engagement *with* the metropolitan. For Kenyatta the social sciences are a method of exchange, whereby knowledge is exchanged for formative support. Indeed, Kenyatta went on to senior political leadership. In this same respect, the researcher of this thesis has stepped out from one world and into the realm of academia. Much like Kenyatta, one foot remains in each domain. As such, *Facing Mount Kenya* is a necessary sociological inclusion in this review of literature because it represents landmarks in both the autoethnographic and autoethnographer landscapes.

If Kenyatta has set the benchmark in the 20th century for autoethnography and the category of the 'other', then it is fair to suggest that through the creation of Black theology, James Cone has set an equal standard for ethnographic theologising and the category of the marginalised; a category in which Gypsy and Traveller theologies must occupy. *A Black Theology of Liberation* by James Cone (1970)[238] is essentially the foundational text of Black / Black Liberation theology, building upon Cone's previous work[239]. In many ways it sets the ground for revisionist texts of Gustavo Gutierrez' initial 'Liberation Theology',

---

[235] Muncey, 2014. Also see *Methodology Chapter*.
[236] Kenyatta, 1938.
[237] The tribe is commonly known as 'Kikuyu. However, Kenyatta highlights the misunderstanding of Westerners in regards to the phonetics of the name; it should read 'Gekoyo', but Kenyatta compromises and settles with 'Gikuyu' for the sake of the text.
[238] Cone, 1986.
[239] Cone, 1969.

namely in the form of Jurgen Moltmann's *The Crucified God*[240]. Cone speaks in reaction to an American theology and society which he perceived to be inherently racist. For Cone, his Black theology of liberation seeks to liberate Black people (and non-whites) from the numerous racist constructs of religious, social, economic, and political oppression. Importantly for this thesis, Cone understands his black theology as emerging from the background of the black experience. In the same respect, a Traveller theology should emerge primarily from Gypsy and Traveller experience. As such, Cone contributes to this thesis methodologically and theoretically, demonstrating that theology enacted through personal narration is possible, necessary and revelatory.

The theological method used by Cone is primarily based in a Liberation theology model. As with this thesis, *A Black Theology of Liberation* incorporates a pluralistic approach (with regards to the varying voices and theoretical positions it takes) whilst adopting a reflective and Systematic theological construct. Cone's systematic engagement in theological reasoning provides this thesis with a contextually replicable and applicable model. Cone's core theological theory is twofold: Firstly, it is only the oppressed that know the God of the oppressed. Secondly, God fundamentally aligns Himself and identifies with the oppressed, as demonstrated through the biblical, prophetic tradition. Material elevation and social liberation become indicators of salvation, as God through the person of Jesus Christ identifies with the oppressed. Cone's claim of oppression is made on historical and socio-political grounds (slavery, Jim Crow), and not ontologically on inherent inability to know God. Rhetorically, his claim is that those responsible for oppression are unable to know the God of liberation, which is to say, the God of Exodus liberation and of human freedom in Christ. There remains a tension in Cone's liberation theory; ceasing to remain in a condition of oppression (the goal of liberation) would result in a separation of sorts from God in both identity and knowledge for whatever group is oppressed. In adopting a Black liberation theology framework, this thesis will attempt to theoretically resolve this tension between any Gypsy liberation and the subsequent eschatological scenario that would inevitably unfold.

Cone adopts an eschatological approach, but unlike other prominent theologians such as Rudolph Bultmann, who circumvent such 'events' as finite, Cone chooses to engage material and historic realities. By understanding Christ's crucifixion and sacrifice as both an unfolding and eternal event (rather than ahistorical), continual participation in them is possible. For Cone, participation in this sense means residing with the oppressed. Cone makes his case based on Moses (the liberator), Isaiah's vision of reconciliation with God,

---

[240] Moltmann, 2015.

Amos' judgement of power, St Paul's emphasis on God in weakness, in addition to his citing Jesus on the same score. It could be argued that Cone's personal application of scripture sees it used as a manual for social restructuring. Cone's exegesis can be justified given the circumstances in which Cone is writing, however, his approach may lack an element of accountability to those it professes to represent. This thesis, whilst seeking to implement many of the successful strategies born through Black and Black Liberation theology, will attempt to mitigate the potential issue of accountability through the inclusion of a field research element and by clearly defining the parameters and execution of all and any methodologies employed.

In returning to the GRT equation, Acton inverts the aforementioned 'accountability' dynamic back to the institutions and larger bodies that have oppressed, controlled and influenced both historic and contemporary Gypsy and Traveller communities. In *The European Forgettory: The Deconstruction of Forgetfulness. The Historian's Contribution to Breaking the Cycles of History*[241], Acton argues that there exists a structured and intentional 'amnesia' in powerful institutions and bodies, such as the EU and the Vatican. This amnesia serves the powerful at the disadvantage of Roma. Thus, Roma historical, religious and theological narratives can be altered, reversed or entirely forgotten, with seemingly little or no consequence for gorger people. Acton's article contributes to this thesis in at least two key areas. Firstly, it provides some contextualisation to the GRT ecclesiological and political landscape, both historically and in the modern era. Secondly, as with other sources in this literature review, an evidenced (and contextualised) space has been created that invites and foundationally supports a theological response.

In supporting his central idea of a collective and institutional 'amnesia', Acton uses multiple forms of evidence, ranging from academic documentation, reports, interviews / conversations with key figures, to historical records and pivotal statements (such as the address to Roma given by Pope John Paul II in 1991). The reasoning given for Acton's understanding and interpretation of the data is convincing and unsettling given the potential consequences of his proposals. However, it is reasonable to suggest that the evidence provided could be interpreted in other ways. This is primarily owing to Acton's approach being theoretical and contextually difficult to locate; his central term 'forgettory' originates from one of his childhood experiences. This does not invalidate the evidence; indeed, its inclusion promotes essential dialogue and debate. But it does leave it open for scrutiny.

---

[241] Acton, 2017.

Additionally – and importantly for this thesis, Acton's evidence promotes a dichotomous premise. Such a premise suggests racism faced by GRT people is caused by either: A generalised historical racism and discrimination against Roma; or the actions of Roma themselves, and thus racism towards GRT people is an expected (but never justified) racist response. Acton favours the former, suggesting GRT people are victims of racism and not the cause of said racism. Acton promotes the enablement of minority (and GRT) voices by incorporating Standpoint theory into both his methodological and theoretical approaches. Standpoint theory can greatly assist in analysing inter-subjective discourses, working from a position that proposes authority is rooted in the knowledge of individuals and the power that such authority exerts. Adopting such a position requires an informed response – either from insiders or 'outside-insiders', whereby narratives about Romani history and the like begin from a standpoint that makes sense to 'human beings like themselves'.

Acton's theory concerning the existence of a 'forgettory' amongst major institutions such as the EU and the Church (with specific reference to the Vatican) is related to practice via a logical exposé of damning evidence that indicates a pattern amongst these institutions of remembering their own narratives, rather than those of the collective in question (in this instance, Roma). The introduction of Papal statements initially appears to contradict Acton's understanding that Roma people, under whatever banner they identify as, have been forgotten – intentionally or otherwise. However, it is by the very inclusion of seemingly repetitive events such as the Papal interventions by Pope John Paul II (1991) and Pope Francis (2015) that the systemic 'forgetfulness' is exposed. Acton identifies institutions that he claims are guilty of partaking in the theoretical 'forgettory', owing to potentially racist intentions and/or a degree of ignorance. Whilst this could be partially or fully true, it could also be true that said institutions are simply incompetent or perhaps their priority of concern/s lie elsewhere. Perhaps there are misunderstandings concerning GRT people among the officials and leaders of these institutions, and that one possible response is to continue and indeed progress with the essential metaphorical door knocking and banner waving that Acton et al have undertaken for so long. In this instance, Acton's article, through the contextualisation of the GRT ecclesiological and political landscape creates a space that invites among other things a theological response to any potential gaps in the data.

2.3 – Summary

The body of Gypsy religious literature reviewed in this chapter has a number of important aspects, which are listed below:

- The literature clearly establishes that Gypsies, as a collective, are distinctly religious (Maximoff 1965; Trigg 1973; Acton 1979 & 1997) and predominantly Christian.
- The Gypsy Church, whose genesis came from the Christian Evangelical revival, is autonomous, unifying and culturally important (Acton 1979).
- Out of the Gypsy church has come a particular and identifiably 'Gypsy' Christianity (Acton 1997).
- Gypsy Christianity is unique yet in many ways orthodox; it is ecumenical in its nature, having the potential to offer something to gorger people and gorger culture; and it has changed and continues to change personal and cultural behaviour and practice among GRT people (Maximoff 1965; Trigg 1973; Acton 1979 & 1997; Ridholls 1986; Sato 1988; Locke 1997).
- Theologically speaking, the need for salvation, redemption and cultural change (particularly the rejection of 'sinful' practices) has been identified by both Gypsy and gorger Christian leaders. As a result of such beliefs, Christianity is considered by a rising number of people to be a central part of Gypsy life (Smith 1905; Lazell 1970). These factors combined demonstrate that Christianity (and proving to others that true redemption has taken place) is important (Smith 1905; Lazell 1970; Trigg 1968).

These important aspects are contextualised when placed in the overarching historical narrative operating through all the sources in this review. The historical narrative begins in both instances with the motif of a God-given miracle. This is significant for several reasons; not least because it represents the inter-subjective relationship between social and religious experience, but its 'full of grace' conception gives further validation to its pursuit of charismatic characteristics. This then leads on to a series of personal, collective and cultural salvation and redemption narratives through the well-documented Gypsy revival, starting in France during the 1950's, spreading across Europe and as far as America. The movement, which operated through many denominations, fundamentally changed Gypsy participation in Christianity, leading to cultural changes and the creation of Gypsy Churches and Gypsy church bodies. There have been statements of support issued by Popes, and there has been (and perhaps still is) a collective social 'amnesia' among key institutions such as the EU – the latter of which has possibly inadvertently

resulted in a contribution to the historic narrative of racism against GRT people. The current state of the literature is summarised by the key elements and the historic evidence, which combined, make it evidentiary that one or more theologies are in operation. There are many examples through these texts of theological thoughts, ideas and actions. The thematic emphasis of a Pauline ecclesiological 'go out and convert' narrative is further evidence of an emergent theology that is (or is attempting to be) synchronised with the values of its (GRT) host culture. However, in this respect there are two primary flaws or potential gaps.

Firstly, there is a pervading emphasis on conversion in many of the texts. This emphasis and indeed *how* a conversion is achieved, is not an issue. What is problematic is that the benchmark, so to speak, of *what* constitutes full and proper conversion is often set against a gorger originated interpretation. This means that standards of right and wrong, and what is permissible and non-permissible finds its premise built upon a gorger narrative. As such, any distinctions between gorger social, political and religious ideas and the Christianity that has emerged from those arenas is difficult and at times impossible to distinguish. Consequently, existing Gypsy theologies appear to operate in the theological parameters and orthodoxical standards of a different culture; a culture that has historically oppressed, suppressed and repressed GRT people for a millennium.

Secondly, the literature makes it clear that Christianity is impacting issues of theological concern, such as the encouraged rejection of 'crafty behaviours' like clairvoyance and 'necessary' theft. However, the theological narration is often limited to particular religious, ecclesiological and missionary concerns, such as mass conversion. For this reason, any theological interpretation concerning 'everyday' practice and belief over things such as camp life, surroundings and employment is often fragmented and vague. This thinning of theological interpretation thus impacts theological explication of elements perhaps considered to be more profound by those in the Gypsy and Traveller community. These profound elements include but are not limited to: extensive narration on the afterlife (given the weighting placed behind death-related sacramental practice in the GRT community), awareness of Christ and the crucifixion (beyond the initial evangelical conversion plea), purity and pollution as it relates to the *Christian*-Gypsy dynamic, and the motif of Gypsy nomadism and nomadic impermanence and lived, Christian experience.

These factors combined indicate the need for reflective, radical, explicit and systematic theologising – particularly theology that, in this instance, emerges from Gypsy experience and Gypsy people. The multifaceted challenges that gave rise to Cone's Black theology[242]

---

[242] Cone, 1986.

and to Twiss' Native American theology[243], demonstrate the essential need for pluralism in theological expression when marginalised groups and ethnicities encounter Christianity through a larger, dominant culture. Key works discussed in this chapter (such as Acton's *The Gypsy Evangelical Church*[244] and *Mediterranean Religions and Romani People*[245]) combined with the ecumenical nature of Gypsy-religious expression, provide space for the emergence of Traveller and Gypsy theologies. Recognising this dynamic, the research in this thesis will aim to position itself in such a space and contribute to the body of literature concerning Gypsy and Traveller religiosity.

---

[243] Twiss, 2015.
[244] Acton, 1979.
[245] Acton, 1997.

CHAPTER THREE – CHRISTIAN IDENTITY AND CONTEMPORARY PERSPECTIVES: SIN AND OTHERNESS

'A less resilient culture might have succumbed completely; the Gypsies did not.'[246]

3.1 – Introduction to (Christian) Identity

This thesis is concerned with how Gypsy and Traveller identity can be understood and/or formulated in a theological, religious and ecclesiological context. As such, any historical narratives (without a religious context) that are included in this chapter are intentionally brief, as there are many studies already in existence that cover this particular area in great depth and detail[247]. Even so, there remains a tension of sorts. Identity is sometimes viewed as necessary only if it evokes change and response from external agencies[248]; otherwise the discussion and examination of identity is a practice that merely serves academic curiosity[249]. To add to Gypsy and Traveller frustration, the pursuit for clarification on identification is often decided by those from *outside* of the Travelling community. Romany Gypsy artist and litterateur Damian Le Bas addresses a collective GRT frustration over this method of external identification, suggesting that, 'The cyclic-oxymoronic situation is that the Gypsy speaking to you cannot be trusted to tell the truth, even about the fact that they are a Gypsy, yet the only reason for this lack of trust is that they are a Gypsy'[250].

In recent years discussing Gypsy and Traveller identity in the aforementioned manner has at times produced damaging results. This is perhaps most notable in the Channel 4 television series *My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding* (MBFGW) and its associated spin-off

---

[246] Fraser, 1995, p. 222.

[247] Fraser (1995) presents a thorough history of Gypsies, with the notion of 'survival against the odds' as its thematic approach. '*The Traveller-Gypsies*' by Judith Okely (1998) primarily focuses on Gypsies in the UK. Becky Taylor (2008; 2014) provides comprehensive global and UK-orientated historical accounts, at times using rare primary and secondary sources. Taylor provides objective reasoning and explanation, avoiding any form of 'ally' approach.

[248] For example, discussing nomadic characteristics among some Travellers in order to encourage Councils to provide additional stopping pitches and camps.

[249] Richardson & Ryder, 2012, p. 13.

[250] Le Bas & Acton, 2010, p. 6.

programmes[251]. Annabel Tremlett suggests that the identity of Travellers portrayed in MBFGW demonises the Gypsy community by cementing stereotypes and misconceptions that are ingrained in the British perceptions[252]. In this sense, some 'outsider' media outlets have used their agency to replicate the aforementioned 'academic curiosity'. They have done this by using GRT persons to perpetuate negative GRT perceptions in the general public, and doing so in the name of entertainment. However, the 'shock' aspect of such television programmes cannot be entirely negated. Through the extraordinary lives and 'performances' exhibited in MBFGW the pre-conceived limits of minorities and 'normal' behaviour are challenged[253]. Limitations to what popular culture deems acceptable or not acceptable further necessitates this study: To identify and explore personhood from in the 'improper', and to view Traveller culture through its pluralistic Christian-Spiritualist core. Reasoning for a failure to apply existing social theories in the exploration of Gypsy identity and 'proper personhood' potentially resides in several avenues. These could include an inability by researchers, given their methods, to offer adequate examination[254]; the failure to recognise the significance of spirituality and spiritual morality in GRT communities; and inadequate *religious* reasoning and theological interpretation[255]. This thesis will now attempt to address these issues by further examining Gypsy and Traveller Christian identity.

3.1.1 – Christian Plurality

Moving towards a Christian-Traveller identity, the issue of plurality *in Christianity* is raised. The presence of multiple Christian denominations (Roman Catholic, Baptist, etc.) and distinct people groups with Christian beliefs (for example, Amish) is both evidence of pluralism in Christianity and of the difficulties in defining firm, Christian identities. Plurality in Christianity, as Stephen Sykes highlights, is the reason why there is no one particular set identity in Christianity but instead many identities; 'if there were no plurality, there would be no problem of Christian identity'[256]. Sykes goes on to explain that there is a diversity of forms of Christianity and that there will never likely be a total agreement when it comes to establishing a single Christian identity. However, it is in the boundaries and

---

[251] Barnett, 2013, p. 126. 'My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding' derives its name from the comedy movie 'My Big Fat Greek Wedding' (Universal Pictures, 2002). The television series broadcast in the UK on Channel 4 uses controversial and racialized stereotypes.
[252] Tremlett, 2014.
[253] Skeggs, 2011, p. 509.
[254] Clarke, 2013, pp. 229 – 230.
[255] Scolnicov, 2011, p. 55.
[256] Sykes, 1984, p. 11.

under the banner of Christianity that diversity is enabled and ultimately unified; as 'contained diversity is, in fact, what unity amounts to'[257]. Perhaps even more significantly for the development of Traveller theology is Sykes' application of the word 'Christianity'. Sykes is insistent on a distancing from any specificity or precision when it comes to defining Christianity, preferring instead to view it as 'the Christian movement'. The 'Christian movement' is thus something that allows varying expressions and begins to move away from the Greco-Roman name of 'Christian' and of 'the process of differentiation from the movement's Jewish matrix'[258]. Using this approach enables the diversity and uniqueness of Traveller identity to merge in the 'Christian movement's' parameters whilst still maintaining a Christian identity. This is perhaps most clear through the sacrament of Christian baptism and the subsequent rearrangement of priorities; where '[t]here is no longer Jew nor Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus' (Galatians 3:28). As a result, the UK's Traveller and Gypsy communities' predisposition towards Christian ritual and sacrament is given a platform upon which a new perception of an age-old identity can develop and emerge. This is a substantial factor, not least because Christianity is understood to be present as a shared commonality among the UK's Travellers[259].

The Christian-Traveller identity expands beyond the two-dimensional stance of Traveller and gorger, and perhaps even beyond Christian (or believer of some description) and non-believer – atheistic, agnostic or otherwise. It does so by initially negating the predictable questioning of whether God actually exists, and instead starts from a position that evidences the divine through human activity. This activity often takes the form of the observance of rituals (sacramental and/or superstitious practices), prioritising family and cultural honour, and elements of ritual purity[260], and is supported by an ever-growing Gypsy-led Christian discourse. As theologian Dr James Lawson indicates, '[t]he ability of Christian discourse to give men and women a sense of their identity sustains the concrete church'[261]. Lawson goes on to warn the reader that 'secularisation happens when Christian discourse ceases to be a means by which they [men and women] can construct their identities and their sense of self'[262]. As a result, the church benefits by the renewed

---

[257] Sykes, 1984, p. 11.
[258] Sykes, 1984, pp. 11 – 12.
[259] Research by Rev. Bernard Mends (1997) revealed that 93.64% of Travellers believed in the existence of some form of overarching spiritual power or being (p. 161). Even for the 6.36% of Travellers interviewed who did not express a particular belief in God or otherwise, there was a belief held by more than half (3.63%) that suggested 'there was both a need and use for the church within their daily lives' (p. 162). For further examples, see: Clark & Greenfields, 2006, pp. 48 – 49 & Lewis, 1991.
[260] *Chapter Four* provides practical examples of said evidence.
[261] Lawson, 2008, p. 418.
[262] Lawson, 2008, p. 419.

ascription to its tenets by the Traveller, but only in the holistic sense that the overall body of the church is able to participate in another extension of Christian understanding. Or, from an ecclesiological standpoint, the particular form of Christian expression among GRT people is an addition to known historical expressions of the Christian faith. The process of secularisation to which Lawson refers (which in the most basic sense can be understood as the absence of religious influence) can be seen as the dangerous ground in which identity, at least in the Christian sense, is lost. As such, without a Christian identity, the ability to formulate a complete Traveller identity is also lost. Lawson addresses any confusion in the matter by building upon Professor of Religion, Callum Brown's[263] proposed constitution of Christian identity. Brown defines Christian identity as 'a subscription to protocols of personal identity derived from Christian discourse'[264]. Lawson continues:

> Protocols are rituals, customs or behaviour collectively promulgated by clergy, the media, communities, families and individuals as necessary for Christian identity. Behaviour such as going to church on a Sunday or saying grace before meals manifests subscription to these protocols…People draw on Christian discourse to tell their own life stories[265].

It does not escape Lawson's attention that Brown's ideas are influenced or derived in some way from Michel Foucault. Foucault proposed that the 'self' is governed by religious discourses by way of a collection of techniques. These techniques give permission for people to alter their conduct and thoughts as well as their souls and bodies. This results in an attainment of purity and happiness[266]. Expression of self with regards to the Traveller is one that is rarely articulated through anything other than tangible activity, and thus identity is often witnessed in the 'doing'. There are a number of distinctly public 'Christian' expressions that are observed through sacramental practices[267] from all parts of the Traveller community. However, as previously mentioned, traditions, dissemination of values, recollection of ancestry, and preservation of cultural history in Traveller communities are almost entirely oral in their construct[268]. By forensically unearthing the theological meanings and interpretations of behaviours, practices, history and reasoning in the Traveller community, a narrative and dialogue is facilitated. This enables the necessary transition from the oral and tangible to that of written form.

---

[263] Brown, 2001.
[264] Lawson, 2008, p. 419.
[265] Lawson, 2008, p. 419.
[266] Lawson, 2008, p. 419. Also see Carrette, 2013.
[267] These include: Christenings; Baptisms; Funerals; and Weddings.
[268] See Introduction Chapter: 0.1.

With this in mind, the following sections will directly and explicitly examine areas of potential contention. Priority is given to addressing common stereotypes, exploring the subject of purposeful and intentional social division/barriers, and initiating a discussion on issues of ethnicity[269]. This is not undertaken with the intention of producing an apologetics of any sort, but to establish what, if any, culturally-specific theological narratives exist in or beyond media, government and 'settled' cultural-led narratives of Gypsy and Traveller society.

3.2 – Introduction to Traveller Sin and Otherness

> *'And I will make justice the line, and righteousness the plumb line; and hail will sweep away the refuge of lies, and waters will overwhelm the shelter' (Isaiah 28:17).*

'"When one Romani is guilty, all Romanies are guilty". It shouldn't have to be that way'[270].

This section will introduce sin as a key theme in GRT spiritual and cultural understanding. Examining modern populist Gypsy imagery – both imagined and factual (but very often discriminatory and stereotyped), directly confronts what is sometimes a 'taboo' area in academic GRT sources/studies. In this respect, understanding – rather than apologetics, is the intention; a more complete, rather than selective, theological monograph, is the intended outcome.

By contextually and theologically understanding relevant behaviours, traditions and practices, a process of exploring the 'Edgelands'[271] of Traveller activity can begin. It is important to note that the process of positioning the culture and community in a greater state of exposure is not synonymous with a dismantling of borders and divisions between Gypsies and gorgers. Such boundaries are necessary; their tangibility – evidenced by the necessity of the creation of this thesis, does not serve as a tool of division but as a method of cultural and religious preservation for Gypsies and Travellers. Liberation theologian, Miroslav Volf, questions the benefits of radical inclusion which 'seeks to level all the boundaries that divide…'[272]. Volf's comments come as a reaction to Michel Foucault's secularised attempt to unravel 'binary divisions' and 'broaden the space of the

---

[269] Ethnicity is discussed in greater depth in 4.3.1.2 (*The Mulatto and the Didikais*) and 5.11 (*Origins*).
[270] Hancock, 2013, p. 104.
[271] *Section 1.3.3 – Supporting the Autoethnographic Method: The 'Edgelands' Theory*.
[272] Volf, 1996, p. 62.

"inside" by storming the walls that protect it'[273]. Volf's imagery of the protective walls is succinctly expanded upon when he next suggests that '[w]ithout boundaries we will be able to know only what we are fighting against but not what we are fighting for'[274]. If objective examinations and explanations are to remain objective (even in the face of the researcher's 'complex subjectivity'), cultural examinations must resist cultural appropriation.

3.3 – Traveller Perceptions of Sin

Since their emergence into Europe, Travellers have been associated with criminality; associations that are both popularist and unjust[275]. Some experts suggest this association is caused by a privation of rootedness in a given settled locality, and because of 'the perceived threat to the sedentary identity that has been adopted by every non-nomadic community regardless of residents' ethnic or social background'[276]. The majority of Travellers believe in their own superiority despite their subordination, marginalisation, and the internalisation of anti-Traveller racist comments and stereotypes[277]. In reaction to this, the implementation of descriptors such as 'country folk' and 'gorger' are mild demonstrations[278] of the Traveller's sense of authority vis-à-vis the majority of non-nomadic people. However, the use of pejorative words is not what is of concern here. Instead it is the asymmetry of social control and the subsequent distinction between accusing one or the other of sin, and the subsequent committal of said sin. In recognising this balance, Robbie McVeigh would suggest that 'we must contrast the capacity of the overwhelmingly dominant settled population to racialise, marginalise and discriminate against the nomad with the incapacity of the nomad to operationalise any anti-sedentary prejudice he or she may hold'[279]. This then, is the tension between response and responsibility; between accusation and necessary action; between sedentary life and nomadism. At this juncture, it is important to define how sin is being understood and implemented.

Interpreting and defining a Christian understanding of sin can be challenging and contentious. In its simple form, sin can be understood as 'the purposeful disobedience of

---

[273] Volf, 1996, p. 63.
[274] Volf, 1996, p. 63.
[275] Clark & Greenfields, 2006, p. 134.
[276] Clark & Greenfields, 2006, p. 134.
[277] McVeigh, 1997, p. 12.
[278] In terms of their (*words) actual tangible and measurable impact.
[279] McVeigh, 1997, p. 12.

a creature to the known will of God'[280]. The nature of this definition may include the notion that sin is not only action, but also inaction (sins of omission), and most profoundly, a state of being (i.e., of being born into a condition defined by 'the fall', alluded in the notion of 'original' sin[281]). From there, sin can be broadly divided into two categories[282]. The first category is concerned with the *source* and *nature* of sin. The second category is concerned with how the differing doctrines of sin *function* in certain religious communities and theological systems where the language of sin is incorporated[283]. Early discussions from Augustine helped to establish the primary positions on sin, in regard to a person's relationship with God and the intrinsically linked tropes of grace and salvation[284]. These tropes require a greater attention to be placed upon where sin originates (for example, generational) and where sin resides (either the individual is responsible for their sin or something external to them caused them to sin). However, this must be undertaken with the knowledge that sin as inborn corruption, whether in Augustine or Calvin's understanding, is the very target in Christ's saving grace; and that only Christ, through a process of grace (resulting in salvation) can accomplish this task.

Theologian Darlene Weaver explores the tension of the ownership of sin (and thus responsibility of said sin) and whether it is either placed *in* the person or *external* to the person. Weaver concludes that certain individual 'sins' should not be ignored and re-categorised[285]. This creates a situation whereby sin, regardless of its origin or current locale, requires a degree of personable ownership. However, personal ownership of sin in some Gypsy and Roma communities can be culturally unfamiliar. For example, passing blame for discrepancies to the object, the catalyst, or another individual is a normative process among Kalderash Roma. Lee (2001) provides examples of this phenomena:

> [A] Gypsy man falling into a river and drowning – it will be said that 'the water killed him'; if by accident he is electrocuted – it will be said that 'the electricity killed him'; if he commits an act that wouldn't take place if he were sober – it will be said that 'the whisky (or other drink) takes control of him[286].

This method of logical explanation is deemed as valid reasoning, since 'the [Gypsies] believe that visible or invisible forces can act on their own to influence actions of

---

[280] 'The purposeful disobedience of a creature to the known will of God' (Livingstone, 2006, p. 545); essentially an intentional transgression of some sort.
[281] Genesis 3.
[282] McGrath, 2011.
[283] Weaver, 2001.
[284] Weaver, 2001, pp. 473 – 474.
[285] Weaver, 2001, p. 498.
[286] Lee, 2001, p. 205.

people'[287]. In English Romanichal circles, the dynamic of blame attribution is often less consensual than that of the Kalderash 'tribunal kris' method of justice. 'Justice' in the English Gypsy sense is more contested, personal, and vengeance-based, being described by Acton as a 'feud'[288].

Fig. 6 – *Appleby: Sin and Crime*

The researcher took this photo at the 2015 Appleby Horse Fair (see *Chapter Four*). Note the Evangelical marquee to the left of the picture, warning against sinning, whilst directly to the right is the Police mobile CCTV 'Crime Prevention unit'.

Common areas of contention or 'sin' in Gypsy and Traveller communities, as noted above, will sometimes have a particular rationale and explanation. These areas have been grouped and addressed below. These chosen areas are broadly entitled as: '*Conflict: People'*; '*Conflict: Animals'*; and '*Thieving and Deception*'. It should be noted that another key theme which was considered was 'Illegal Settlements'. The theme of settlements / camps proved pivotal for a number of factors, and as such, it is discussed in

---

[287] Lee, 2001, p. 205.
[288] Acton, Caffrey & Mundy, 1997.

great detail in *Chapter Five*. In the following sub-sections, each area will be briefly addressed with one or more examples given. Each section will examine the aforementioned areas with a dialectical critiquing, using both sociological and orthodox approaches.

3.4 – Responses to Contemporary Stereotypes

3.4.1 – Conflict: People and Animals

In recent years there has developed a substantial on-line presence of readily available material that sensationalises and even promotes a particular area of Traveller culture that has to some extent become synonymous with Gypsies and Travellers in both reputation and perception – fighting and aggression. There appears to be no evidence or research that suggests that *violent behaviour* in the Traveller community has increased since videos of Traveller, cock, and dog fights began emerging on social media websites[289]. However, it could be argued that *awareness* of such matters has increased in the public sphere. As such, morality in Traveller communities has come under further scrutiny and criticism. Defending violent pursuits such as the ones mentioned above is challenging when moralistic, ethical and lawful boundaries are crossed.

In 2012, a documentary by film-maker Leo Maguire entitled *Gypsy Blood* (2013)[290] attracted hundreds of complaints from the British public, who voiced their concern over alleged issues of animal and child abuse. The documentary follows two Traveller families over a period and documented violence in the Travelling community. Although the programme primarily focuses on arranged fights, it also includes scenes of hare coursing, cock fighting, lamping, group fighting and physical discipline towards children. In response to complaints and concerns, a spokesperson from the broadcasting channel of the documentary, Channel 4, stated, 'To accurately reflect the experiences of the film-maker who spent years documenting the culture of two gypsy families, including hunting and fighting, some scenes were included that viewers may have found difficult to watch but were justified in context'[291].

---

[289] Facebook and YouTube are the primary websites on which such videos are most commonly posted, with the former showing all the mentioned versions of fighting (i.e. Dog fights), and the latter being the most comprehensive and commonly used platform for showcasing Traveller fights.
[290] Gypsy Blood, 2013.
[291] BBC, 2012.

Throughout the documentary, narratives of honour, values and tradition provide instances of valuable insight, but are arguably dampened amongst the intentionally shocking scenes. Indeed, seemingly contradictory and powerful images are present, such as a split-second scene of Hughie Doherty, an Irish Traveller and one of the lead subjects in the film, making the sign of the cross on himself alongside others in a Church. Tranquil periods of reflection contrast moments before and after violent conflict. There appears to be no obvious separation in the contradictory images, promoting the possibility that the premeditated process of preparation, sacrifice and eventual (and inevitable) pain, is in fact one single liturgical process – rather than several separate events. Violence, in this premeditated and partially controlled composition, becomes sacramental. The scene is placed between clips of preparation for the fight and the fight itself[292]. In a bid to provide some positive logic for fighting, another lead subject in the film, Fred Butcher, states that 'We don't take each other to court. We don't sue each other. [If] [w]e have a problem with each other, we go out and fight'[293]. The documentary in its final and edited form is ultimately sensationalist and fails to grasp and unpack the complexity and variety of 'violent' expressions. However, it does effectively raise questions of the legitimacy of such behaviours, and expose what is an often unknown and misunderstood area of Traveller life.

A 2015 UK Parliamentary debate aired outsider concerns over Traveller violence and discussed the nature of said violence. Fighting, conflict and intimidation were not confined to the borders of Traveller communities but appeared to arise as both a form of cultural and territorial defence, as a reaction to abuse and intimidation, and as a means to obtain material and contractual benefits. Statements taken from a number of gorger public were presented by senior politicians that supported this claim. Comments include: 'We are wary of putting our name to a list of our problems with these people as they know where we live and farm and can be very intimidating, both verbally and physically'[294]. Such comments did not reflect the position of individuals like Fred Butcher (see paragraph above) who understood the decision to fight as an occasional necessity and a reflection of a traditional and 'honourable' method of conflict resolution. These oppositional 'truths' highlight not just individual conflict but also cultural incompatibility in regard to particular (and differing) applications of values and beliefs. In this sense, returning to Volf's petition for retaining and maintaining boundaries brings with it the dilemma of how those boundaries function in such cases[295]; and the question of how some Travellers interpret biblical injunction

---

[292] Gypsy Blood, 2013.
[293] Gypsy Blood, 2013. The lead subject in this instance is Fred Butcher, an English Traveller.
[294] Parliament, 2015.
[295] Volf, 1996, p. 63.

against gaining advantage through violence, specifically violence against the poor or the weaker other.

Biblical instruction is insistent on avoiding quarrels in processes of resolution, opting instead for methods favouring both holistic and legal practices, such as talking and entering processes involving courts or panels (Deuteronomy 1:16 & 17:9; Exodus 18: 21 – 22). Opting for resolution to emerge via oral discussion is given precedence, with the decision to enter into confrontation seen in some instances as the result of sin, rather than the action of fighting itself being the actual sin; 'Only by pride cometh contention: but with the well advised *is* wisdom' (Proverbs 13:10). Exegetically, it is tempting to mine and present any aspect of virtue (rather than pride) in the physical acts; something which speaks of self-sacrifice and provides evidence of an altruistic motive. However, in this sense pride can covertly infiltrate into acts of Christian behaviour and even into God-focused motives[296]. C. S. Lewis describes this pride as 'spiritual cancer: it eats up the very possibility of love, or contentment, or even common sense'[297].

In *Gypsy Blood* (2013), there are also numerous scenes involving animals being used in sports or being hunted. These scenes were subject to both public criticism and investigation by the RSPCA[298] after the film was screened. The footage effectively demonstrates the two primary positions of animals in Traveller society – hunter (e.g. dogs, ferrets) and hunted (e.g. rabbits, pheasants). Both can be interpreted as an acceptable (although contentious) and Biblically permissible form of past time and meat acquisition in parts of the community[299] (Genesis 1:26). Less attention is given in the documentary to the intimate and historical relationship between Gypsies and their horses and dogs; a relationship of both cultural business and personal pride. Consequently, excluding this particular element results in a distancing from the natural-theological metanarrative in Gypsy and Traveller culture whereby God as both Creator and Father is revealed and understood through His creation (the animals and the natural environment), and is imitated through the raising, reverence, and remembrance towards one's horse or dog. It would be more accurate to propose that this 'natural' dynamic is conflictual, as it resides fluidly between 'permissible killing' and the consummation of creation[300]. Complaints that

---

[296] Lewis, 2012, p. 125.

[297] Lewis, 2012, p. 125.

[298] BBC, 2012.

[299] 'Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth'. In regards to the general acceptability of the 'hunter hunted' dynamic, it is worth noting that during my time with Family A (*Chapter 4*) I was invited along to watch some Hare Coursing.

[300] McIntosh, 2009.

the treatment of animals by Gypsies is a cruel or neglectful one is thus contrasted with an alternative reality of an intimate affinity with said animals. As such, romanticist stereotypes that suggest Gypsies and Travellers are close or 'at one' with nature is both accurate[301] *and* contentious, and in many perhaps another indication as to how GRT people experience and know God.

For a collective that has always experienced high illiteracy rates combined with social marginalisation, the option to know God through conventional methods – such as reading Biblical text or attending regular church services, is not necessarily a viable option[302]. However, 'knowing' God through a process of natural and general revelation, and developing identity and tradition upon that, is thus an important theological source for Gypsy communities. Hence when examining the Traveller's relationship with God, the partaking in raising animals beyond conventional livestock traditions to a point where the practice has become part of one's identity, is something that must be properly considered.

Natural theology, according to traditional Catholic thought, is in some ways a preparation for revealed theology, revealing the characteristics and indeed the existence of God without revealing the mystical complexities of the incarnation or the complete picture of the Trinity[303]. A number of interviews conducted during the field research[304] reflect this somewhat relational aspect between Traveller and God. For large swathes of the Traveller community, relationship sits somewhere between a lived-out understanding of God (made possible by elements described in Natural theology) and the initial stages of revelation, as introduced by John Calvin[305]. It is not to suggest that there are not members of the Traveller community that are not engaged with more conventional and/or academic theological expressions and understanding, but that for the most part there appears to be a collective satisfaction with the natural(ly) theological as an adequate demonstration of the existence and characteristics of God. The fundamental element of Revelation, which makes the interpretation *Christian* rather than something else, is surprisingly readily accepted by Gypsies but not necessarily engaged with. It would be fair therefore to hypothesise that the source of the Revelation as part of the Gypsy-Christian narrative is most likely owing to the atypical process of Christian evangelism and tradition. This would offer some explanation as to the success enjoyed by the European Evangelical

---

[301] Bhopal & Myers, 2008, pp. 79, 211, & 217.
[302] Examples of this in practice could include Church of England services and the book of *Common Worship*, whereby participation in the service requires the ability to both read and understand sometimes complex Christian terminology.
[303] McGrath, 2011, p. 158.
[304] See Chapter Four.
[305] McGrath, 2011, p. 160.

movement and its key figures (Clement Le Cossec, Mateo Maximoff, Davey Jones, et al.)[306].

In a way, the participatory nature in the Traveller's expression of religion is something that cements religious identity in something both tangible and unconventional, acting as a visible reaction to the invisible Revelation. Consequently, this determines that the characteristically intrinsic (and/or assumed) Gypsy behaviours of movement and dis-settlement, of conflict and resolution, and of antagonism and explicitness, could be indicative of acts of faith – or conversely, acts of sinful disobedience. This is regardless of whether such behaviours are physically enacted or metaphorically understood.

If indeed there are elements of Gypsy and Traveller theology that are closer to a natural theological revelation than a revealed revelation, then it is not in any way an exclusion from normative constructs and indeed consequences of sin. The Calvinist position stresses that the enormous gulf between man and God has been increased because of sin, and that the natural in-built knowledge or awareness of God actually 'serves to deprive humanity of any excuse for ignoring the divine will'[307]. A natural theological element may be present in Traveller engagement with theological speculation. However, it is insufficient to operate independently as a standalone mode of operation in a Traveller/Gypsy theology. Calvin's solution is to introduce revelation in the form of Scripture. Through the scriptures one is provided with both the final word and the initial position on these and any sinful matters.

3.4.2 – Thieving and Deception

The narrative that proposes Gypsies, Roma and Travellers are thieves and commit deception is arguably the most dominant and historical accusation held against GRT people. It is historical, comprehensive, and troublesome and has defined public perception for centuries. As such, this section will look at evidence for the existence of theft in GRT communities, an example of 'traditional' Gypsy theft, and the historical association narrative between Gypsies and theft.

There remains an argument to acknowledge some element of theft in Traveller culture. To deny that there are issues in Traveller communities with theft, disorder or other issues is unsatisfactory, given the evidential statistics that reveal a significant percentage of

---

[306] See Chapter Two.
[307] McGrath, 2011, p. 161.

Travellers and Gypsies in the Prison system[308]. A findings paper by HM Inspectorate of Prisons, specifically investigating the situation of Travellers in prison, concluded their investigation with the following statement:

> Even on the lowest estimates (which are accepted to be underestimates) it is clear that prisoners of Gypsy, Romany and Traveller backgrounds are significantly overrepresented in the prison population. Our survey findings suggest that the proportion might be as high as 5% (the same proportion as women prisoners) and much higher than this in some establishments, particularly those holding children. The reasons for this overrepresentation lie outside the prison service and more needs to be done to understand and address this[309].

A particular form of 'theft' that has been historically linked to Travellers and Gypsies is that of child or baby theft. The notion of Travellers stealing children has been played out in films, stories and academic studies[310], but as Romani scholar Ian Hancock states, with regards to actual recordings or official documentation, 'there is no evidence for this'[311]. 'Traditional' conservative Traveller thought views having a child outside the institution of Christian marriage as a 'great disgrace'. As Hancock identifies, there are cases on record of gorger women leaving their babies in the care of Gypsies[312], in order to avoid extramarital shame. Interestingly, this is potential evidence of the social boundaries of Gypsy purity codes extending beyond a Traveller environment. However, it is unclear as to where and when the idea of child theft by Travellers emerged. As such, the rationale behind the historical accounts of Travellers taking in gorger children in order to help others avoid shame is contestable as a broadly encompassing theory. This does not suggest such contractual arrangements of this nature did not take place, but that to infer that in all cases it was an act of care is to enter into romanticism and apologetics.

Child theft has in recent years continued to receive attention from newspaper and press sources, in spite of a lack of clear evidence. Naturally therefore, the sources themselves are often of a questionable nature and quality. One source in particular is an editorial piece from an Australian newspaper called '*The Truth*', which would later go on to become '*The Sunday* (and '*Daily*') *Mirror*' – a tabloid production[313]. The author of the article in question, which was simply and unhelpfully entitled '*Gypsies*', was written by

---

[308] Press Association, 2014.
[309] HM Inspectorate of Prisons, 2014.
[310] Meyers, 1987; Shields, 1993.
[311] Hancock, 2013, p. 94.
[312] Hancock, 2013, p. 94.
[313] Lawson, 2000.

John Norton. He gave 'warning' to the readers about the probability of kidnapping in relation to their children:

> For centuries, the wandering Gypsy folk have frightened parents all over the world… adult Gypsies should not, on any account, be allowed to associate with white children in such a restricted area as a schoolroom or a playground. The confined spaces lend themselves too well to eventualities that might well cause fear [of their being kidnapped] in the heart of any parent[314].

In more recent years, there have been high profile cases of alleged child abduction that have gained global attention. The case of 'mystery girl Maria' initiated public outrage across Europe towards Gypsies in 2013, when a six year old girl was taken by Police from a Gypsy settlement in the Greek town of Farsala during what was described as 'a routine raid on the Roma settlement'[315]. The sensationalist account was scrutinised by Dimitris Zachos, a Greek academic and lecturer who was reported by the BBC[316] as saying:

> …the issue took international dimensions but the way it was covered raises questions regarding how the state addresses the phenomena of racism and xenophobia. It is striking that the suspected culprits were not presented as persons accused of the actual deed - what was highlighted was their ethnic background[317].

Investigative journalist Mike Doherty highlighted the inflammatory and spurious links created by the press to other missing child cases, drawing attention to the uncomfortably familiarity of such allegations; 'In the UK, the press falsely linked Maria to the missing child Maddie McCann in what became a text book moral panic about Gypsy child stealing'[318]. Ethnic profiling and stereotyping were significant factors in the Greek Maria case. In deciding the Travellers' guilt, the Police and the media assumed guilt rather than pursuing explanation. As the reports reveal, the arbitrary use of influence and power was not new or unfamiliar for the Gypsies in question. Such measures have, according to historical records, been practiced for centuries. Furthermore, these historical measures do not appear to stand alone; instead they have been intertwined with religious authority and rationale, and thus carry with them potential ecclesiological implications.

By the year 1400 CE a growing number of records indicated Gypsies were residing in many fringe nations to the west of mainland Europe. Of particular significance is a place

---

[314] Hancock, 2013, p. 94.
[315] Doherty, 2015. For further information, see Robson, 2013.
[316] The British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC).
[317] BBC, 2013.
[318] Doherty, 2015.

called Modon in southern Greece, just before the 15th century. Modon, a key stopping-place for the pilgrimage to the Holy Land, was part of the Byzantine Empire and is described as having a large Gypsy presence on the outskirts of the city walls. The Gypsy settlement was in-affectionately known by some as 'Little Egypt' due to the dense Gypsy population[319]. After continued persecution and the advance of Byzantine Empire[320] (and its Islamic demands) the Gypsies prepared to enter central and eastern Europe; a journey that would culminate in their arrival in England and Scotland and would establish Christianity as the primary religion of Gypsies and Travellers.

The Gypsies' time in Modon would prove to be significant to their identity (self-conceptualisation and in how others perceived them), and pivotal to both their interactions with external groups and their passage across Europe. The harbour city of Modon was a major passageway for Christian pilgrims and attracted numerous people from multiple nationalities, resulting in an enrichment of Christian understanding and development for the Gypsies. At some point it was realised that acceptance in Europe's foreign lands was possible if the overruling authority (the Church) provided its blessing. The Gypsy groups were allegedly granted an audience with Pope Martin V in 1422 CE and obtained papal letters granting them safe passage wherever they went, but ordering them to seven years of penance for their alleged adoption of pagan (Islamic[321]) practices; a period in which they were not allowed to settle – 'for seven years they should go to and fro about the world without ever sleeping in a bed'[322]. It would seem that this supposed papal decision would in some ways hold a permanent curse; a foretelling of the Gypsy's nomadic condition in a permanence of wandering with no land to call their own. Their passages were noted, and as the Gypsies made their way across the continent they entered Bavaria in 1424 CE, their entrance was documented in a diary by a Priest named Andreas of Ratisbon:

> They were near to Ratisbon, and were succeeding each other, sometimes to the number of 30, men, women and children, sometimes less. They pitched their tents in the fields, because they were not allowed to stay in towns; for they cunningly took what did not belong to them. These people were from Hungary, and they said that they had

---

[319] Fraser, 1995, pp. 51 – 55.
[320] Fraser, 1995, p. 55. By 1500 CE Turkish forces had taken control of the area and captured Modon.
[321] Whilst in France, Andrew 'Duke of Little Egypt' presented letters that carried the signature of the pope. The letter gave details of the conquering and subsequent conversion of the Gypsies by Christians; it was followed shortly by an attack from the 'Saracens'. Following no attempt to defend the land or resist conversion, the Gypsies converted to Islam and then reverted back to Christianity once they had left the land (Taylor, 2014, pp. 43 – 44).
[322] Shirley, 1968, pp. 217 – 218.

been exiled as a sign or remembrance of the flight of Our Lord into Egypt when he was fleeing from Herod, who sought to slay him[323].

The 'cover story' of a blessed papal passage that was being echoed and utilised by the multitude of sporadic Gypsy groups was an example of necessary tenacity. Furthermore, knowingly or unknowingly it was a significant step towards a theological identification; the association they had made with the Biblical account of Joseph and Mary fleeing Egypt with the infant Jesus would produce lasting cultural implications. Unbeknown to Andreas of Ratisbon, his diary entry may be the earliest example of the way in which this biblical narrative and subsequent imagery has framed nomadic narrative and self-understanding among GRT people.

Further examination of the statement made by Andreas of Ratisbon brings to attention two important aspects. Firstly, the Gypsies were cultured and demonstrated the ability to adapt behaviours and language, enabling conversation and interaction with many different types and nationalities of people. Secondly, they were adequately versed in religious and scriptural knowledge, enabling them to compare specific Biblical narratives to their own situation and cause – demonstrating (practical) theological understanding. Many of the reports emerging at the same time as the account made by Andreas of Ratisbon, which spoke of crimes committed by Gypsies – spoke particularly of theft. Indeed, Andreas reports 'they cunningly took what did not belong to them'[324]. Consequently, the protection that the papal letters had afforded them began to wane during the 15th century as varying nations became hostile towards the Gypsies. By 1497 CE the Imperial Diet of the Holy Roman Empire intervened, accusing the Gypsies of espionage and ordering them to be expelled from all German territories. With the expulsion came a broad permission to enforce violent actions upon them if they returned. The Gypsies were entering a process of becoming outlawed from multiple states[325]. Further, with that expulsion came the historical link with theft.

Hancock acknowledges that this 'necessary' crime is a legacy from a time when it was one mechanism for subsistence and survival'[326]. However, to consider or continue theft as a cultural identifier or definitive characteristic of Gypsies and Travellers is a failure to contextualise the social and historic factors against the possible moral standing of the accused. As Hancock summarises, 'crime is not an ethnic problem, but a social one, and

---

[323] Fraser (1995, p. 75) records this particular excerpt from Andreas of Ratisbon's diary in a translation from the original Latin of Oefelius (1763, p. 21).
[324] Fraser, 1995, p. 75.
[325] Fraser, 1995, pp. 88 – 89.
[326] Hancock, 2013, p. 97.

any group that is socially excluded from enjoying all the benefits of a society is more likely to resort to crime than one that does'[327].

There are indications among some GRT communities of a collective sense of injustice concerning the unconventional dynamic of 'justifiable' theft. Evidence for this can be found in some of the many Romani maxims and proverbs that have passed through generations of Traveller families and societies. Because of the lack of apparent meaning, the Romani name for these sayings is '*garade lava*', translated as 'hidden words'[328]. An example of one of these 'hidden words' is '"The non-Romani steals a horse, the Romani steals a horseshoe" (like the differences in society, Romani theft is correspondingly minor when compared with non-Romani theft)'[329]. Such a phrase does not remove responsibility for said actions but provides perspective on the potential rationale behind acts of theft that may occur. A variant of the above phrase is the following; 'The Romani steals a chicken, the non-Romani steals the farm'[330]. Again, issues of necessity versus greed and the inter-relationship between Travellers, the larger society and survival play out through this direct, simple, yet loaded phrase. In 1905, Alfred Dillmann emphasised the 'collective guilt' of Gypsies his *Gypsy-Book* (*Zigeuner-Buch*)[331]. The book listed common 'Gypsy crimes', including among other allegations: trespassing, poaching, stealing fruit and vegetables. Common reasons for arrest and prosecution in the current climate include public nuisance, trespassing, and most commonly – theft[332]. Hancock sides with the aforementioned sayings when he proposes a defence for the rationale and severity behind such crimes, stating that Traveller crimes are 'hardly ever embezzlement, or murder, or rape, or extortion, which are much more highly represented offences among non-Romanies'[333]. Whilst theft and deception are rarely justifiable, it can at times be subjective and, as the child theft stories reveal – it is sometimes fabricated.

However, explanatory factors such as these could be seen by outsiders as a matter of self-justification and as an attempt by Gypsies to remove theft from its relationship with sin. Nonetheless, in the face of Christ's redemption, there is a distinction between sinner and sin. This struggle is seen with St Paul, as he battles with the sin that resides in him (Romans 7:14 – 25). Paul's sin, much like the accusations he received of being a murderer (Acts 28:4), is based on actions from his flesh and not on his identity in Christ;

---

[327] Hancock, 2013, p. 97.
[328] Hancock, 2013, p. 145.
[329] Hancock, 2013, p. 148.
[330] Hancock, 2013, p. 148.
[331] Bársony, 2013, p. 24. For the original book, see Dillmann, 1905.
[332] Hancock, 2013, p. 94.
[333] Hancock, 2013, p. 94.

he may or may not have committed murder, but either way his spirit will not be condemned as a murderer by God. Historically, Gypsies and Travellers have been collectively condemned; their 'spirit' (community) receiving the same accusation and treatment as their 'flesh' (individuals). In this way, 'a Gypsy and a theft' has evolved to become 'Gypsies are thieves'.

3.5 – Associating Sin with Traveller's 'Otherness'

The previous section demonstrates that a certain public discourse has resulted in Gypsies and Travellers being synonymous with theft. The evidence and argumentation presented suggests that whilst there remains a proportionally higher representation of GRT people in the current judicial system, the historical record (social, political, religious and theological) that has created such a scenario may be flawed, biased and discriminatory. The Biblical plumb line determines that 'all have sinned and fallen short' (Romans 3:23). In spite of this, historical and cultural stereotyping and expectations (or lack thereof) by the settled populace towards Gypsies and Travellers suggests that GRT people may be seen as 'falling shorter' than other ethnicities and races. In this respect, Gypsy sin is unsurprising to the gorger; it is merely a consequence of Gypsy inadequacies. It would appear that the ethos behind this contentious social narrative is applicable to any group of people, with the greatest consequences often falling upon those existing in some form of social and/or historical separation. Philosopher and Black Liberation theologian, Cornel West, identifies the relationship between sin or 'flaws' and differences of race and ethnicity through a comparison involving North America and Black people;

> To engage in a serious discussion of race in America, we must begin not with the problems of black people but with the flaws of American society – flaws rooted in historic inequalities and longstanding cultural stereotypes…As long as black people are viewed as "them", the burden falls on blacks to do all the "cultural" and "moral" work necessary for healthy race relations. The implication is that only certain Americans can define what it means to be American – and the rest must simply "fit in"[334].

Negative portrayals of ethnic and racial 'others' in America has created patterns of low confidence and self-destructive behaviours amongst black youths and communities[335]. A similar effect operates among those identifying as Travellers and Gypsies in the UK, resulting in an impoverishment of self-belief, self-realisation and spirituality – collectively

---

[334] West, 2001, p. 6 – 7.
[335] Martin, 2008. Also; Howitt, 1986, pp. 60 – 61; Donaldson, 2015.

and individually. Again, West recognises this dynamic; 'There is no escape from our interracial interdependence, yet enforced racial hierarchy dooms us as a nation to collective paranoia and hysteria – the unmaking of any democratic order'[336]. This in turn has positioned suspicion as a default response from Gypsies to both gorger society as a whole and to a non-nomadic Church. Such a response has produced a necessity for movements such as the *Light and Life*[337] Church and the European Evangelical revival. Richard Twiss, a Native American theologian and author, provides an interesting parallel to this situation, presented through his Native American indigenous perspective:

> However, suspicion and fear run both ways. Indigenous people have a lot to fear about the "white man's religion"! Conquest, racism, hatred, prejudice, exclusion, forced assimilation and ongoing institutional injustices are just a few of the fears that come to mind[338].

Martin Luther King Jr.'s statement concerning 'one garment of destiny'[339], highlights an aspect of the fear held by Gypsies and Travellers when expectations of assimilation and amalgamation arise, and reveals the complexity in the ethnic and racial equation. If Travellers are expected to be locked into King's single garment with the white majority, then the chances of their social and religious freedom are reduced to nil[340]. Anti-assimilation for the Traveller therefore, is not a rejection of white culture but an intentional act of preservation for one's own culture and faith. Furthermore, a vacuum is created by the discourse of positivity towards 'whiteness' and conversely the negatively debased historical and contemporary ideas of blackness and Gypsiness[341]. In this vacuum Travellers and Gypsies are subject to marginalisation and exclusion by whites *and* blacks. This situation is identified by Malcolm X as a form of 'social death', where the 'hybrid' or 'mulatto' become symbols of 'weakness and confusion'[342]. One form of evidence which demonstrates this dynamic in operation is the Church's drive towards converting the 'savage' Gypsies during the 18th and 19th centuries.

The action of associating the Travellers' ethnicity with a sinful existence, often without merit or warrant, has shaped and directed how Travellers have been proselytised by a gorger Church. The result is centuries of evangelistic teachings and drives, focused on

---

[336] West, 2001, p. 8.
[337] Ridley, 2014.
[338] Twiss, 2015, p. 20.
[339] West, 2001, pp. 146 – 147.
[340] West, 2001, p. 147.
[341] 'Gypsiness' is loosely defined as Gypsies expressing 'the Gypsy worldview, enact[ing] appropriate Gypsy behaviour, and maintain[ing] the Gypsy/Non-Gypsy boundary'; Silverman, 1988, p. 274.
[342] Silverman, 1988, pp. 147 – 148.

saving and redeeming the uneducated 'heathen Gypsies'[343]. However, whilst such evangelical drives have evidently had some successes[344], the collective modus operandi of Gypsy and Traveller communities suggests the existence of a persistent construct of *pre-existing* and continuous Traveller theological identity. This identity, often overlooked for its apparent 'sinfulness', operates both as a response to anti-Traveller and Gypsy political, social and religious agendas, and as a form of deliberate separation.

A tenacious spiritual resistance and resilience has taken place whereby the Traveller, confident in his or her security in Christ (or as a Traveller), has retreated to the Cross (or camp[345]). It is by the Cross and in the process of crucifixion where suffering is shared with Christ and Creator; liberation has not happened for the Traveller by pursuing a 'Promised land' of integration but by clinging – even embracing the Cross. The Crucifixion therefore is more than an active moment of reflection. It is the entirely intentional and purposeful decision to remain firmly in the Cross event, forsaking an assured existence of social acceptance and societal norms for the chance to live a life at the margins. In these Edgelands is Christ. It is at this point, with the Cross, that the contradictory nature of the Christ's absence is matched in full measure with His unrestricted, unlimited and unrequited love[346]; the Traveller's grief is also *His* grief[347]. Furthermore, the Traveller's 'sin' has created a scenario whereby one is both close to Christ in one's suffering, but also in spiritual peril because of the sin itself[348] (Romans 6:23). However, the Traveller's gospel is a gospel of continual grace that unlike their European masters, meets the Traveller where they are – in the margins and on the edges – literally, figuratively, and spiritually.

This section has shown that issues of identity and 'otherness' (particularly in regard to ethnicity) are central in much of the rationale behind understanding Gypsy and Traveller behaviour as different, wrong, sinful and flawed. There are processes that are designed to incorporate, engage and support Travellers, such as the offer of fixed housing and educational solutions. However, these processes are often driven by an agenda of assimilation; the Traveller usually being required to submit in some way to another's

---

[343] Keet-Black, 2013, pp. 38 – 45.
[344] See Chapter Two.
[345] See Chapter Five: Part One – Nomadism as Impermanent Permanence – Introducing the Camp.
[346] Bauckham, 2006, pp. 50 – 59.
[347] Bauckham, 2006, p. 67.
[348] With reference to being in state of 'spiritual peril' due to sin. Also; Burns & Newman, 2012.

'ideal'[349]. In the presence and persistence of such a dynamic, GRT people appear to be perpetually judged as flawed and bound by accusations of sinfulness.

3.6 – Summary

3.6.1 – Gypsy and Traveller (Christian) Identity

Gypsy and Traveller communities in the UK predominantly identify as Christian and operate and adhere to a particular 'Christian' way of living. Existing approaches have often been ill-equipped to recognise the significance and impact of this 'Christian core', possibly owing to an increase in secularism in the academy and wider culture. The particularities of Gypsy beliefs, cosmology, folklore, taboos, cultural artefacts, and usage of language locate their meanings and contextualisation in theological and ecclesiological foundations. The same can be said for the incorporation and re-appropriation of traditional Christian symbols, texts, doctrines and practices that sustain and affirm the culture and community life.

Establishing the central position of Christianity in the identity make-up of the majority of Travellers[350] reveals a need for pluralism, as Traveller and Gypsy cultural oddities merge with orthodox practice. With this comes an unfamiliar Christianity in a community often misunderstood and ineffectively researched. Conversation with Sykes exposes the reasoning and necessity for allowing differing perspectives and approaches to the Christian faith to take place, explaining that diversity under the banner of Christianity amounts to unity[351]. A Traveller-Christian identity is simply an extension of that dialogue.

An interlacing between a combination of Christian non/liturgical practice and conservative values has been excavated, along with the proposal of a cultural unwritten 'code of conduct'; a set of laws pertaining to purity that appeared in various forms, covering issues as diverse as sexual conduct, to the organisation and placement of trailers on sites.

---

[349] 'Wherever Gypsies and Travellers are subjected to strongly developed social action policies, they complain of the burden these impose. They feel they are being forced into dependence, herded into a system set up to help them, but which attaches to the benefits on offer an unacceptable price-tag of conditions incompatible with their wishes and lifestyle…In addition, the social services may be employed as the prime agents of assimilation, and their inaccurate analyses may form the basis of entirely inappropriate action. The bottom line is that Gypsies and Travellers are living more and more under the constant shadow of social assistance in its various forms' (Liégeois, 1994). Also see DfES, 2003, p. 7.

[350] In *Chapter Four* this principle is also found to be present amongst Travellers not identifying as Christian or holding religious beliefs.

[351] Sykes, 1984, p. 11.

Furthermore, the discussion formed between Lawson[352] and Brown[353] supports the notion of religious practice – in particular, Christianity, as a form of identity. In essence, Christianity serves as a 'vehicle' through which an 'unwritten code' can work. With this in mind, *Christianity in the Gypsy and Traveller environment* should be understood not just as an indication or suggestion of a collective cultural 'piety', but also as a distinct and indicative marker of identification.

Nevertheless, concerns remain despite the emergence of this 'fuller picture'. An historical collective identity that has been mostly formed through misinformation, presumed history, gorger sources, and a radical external social influence (the Church, Governments, colonialism) creates a fragile and parasitic foundational monograph. In some ways the existing cultural narrative has been or is starting to be reclaimed through methods such as the traditional Gypsy and Traveller activity of 'story telling'[354]. As such, translating the Traveller's historical and Christian foundation – from a traditionally *oral* outlet to an *academic medium*, becomes both an act of academic translation and an attempt towards cultural salvation.

3.6.2 – Gypsy and Traveller Sin and Otherness

This chapter has directly addressed common stereotypes, accusations and misunderstandings held by some gorger people towards Gypsies and Travellers; areas that are often excluded from academic studies[355]. The result is a dialogue between Traveller and gorger perspectives, revealing a depth of explanation that to some extent is both unknown and unfamiliar. Importantly, it has facilitated a preliminary and necessary conversation between societal expectations, institutional constructs, and Christian narratives.

'Sin' is a moral, theological category, and therefore a necessity in the formulation of a Gypsy and Traveller theology. Looking at sin is arguably more considered, objective and less damaging (socially speaking) when undertaken through a theological process rather

---

[352] Lawson, 2008, p. 418.

[353] Brown, 2001.

[354] Keet-Black, 2013, pp. 37 & 52.

[355] The area of Traveller criminality or immoral and questionable behaviour is absent in a large number of texts used for reference in this thesis. There are exceptions; Becky Taylor (2008, 2014) at times addresses challenges, accusations and certain (alleged) characteristics. Ian Hancock (2013) provides a small section specifically on 'Crime', which opens with the statement, 'Certainly some of us break the law. So do some of you' (pp. 94 – 97). Whilst the piece briefly addresses some common criminal activities associated with Travellers, it does so from an entirely defensive position, attacking gorger perception rather than critically examining the Traveller element (albeit a minor one) that undertakes such behaviours.

than through a secular method. This could be because the political and polemical attitudes and values that can typically arise during such a process are separated and measured in and through a platform independent of Eurocentric and secularised debate. The platform in this instance is Christianity. Examples in this chapter such as 'Greek Maria' highlight how cultural mistruths caused by incomplete cultural examinations (i.e. without theological context and examination) can affect media portrayal, public perception, Police activity, and policy. Christianity provides a greater explanation for particular GRT behaviours and activities ('positive' or otherwise). Furthermore, Christianity serves as a point of commonality, enabling critical dialogue on sensitive subjects between and among Gypsy and Traveller communities and gorger people.

By entering into a process of self-examination through a theological platform, a more complete picture of GRT identity emerges. For gorgers however, issues of possible prejudices emerge. These prejudices are exposed by a failure to recognise or even acknowledge the ethnic identity and cultural uniqueness' of GRT people, and by a ready conflation between the tropes of sin and criminality. In the same way that Twiss and West raise the issue of a need for racial and spiritual recognition among certain behaviours in marginalised groups[356], the same needs and issues appear to be raised in regard to the Traveller community. As such, the following chapter examines the religio-cultural world of contemporary Gypsies and Travellers by way of a field research investigation. In doing so, the theological themes that formulate Gypsy and Traveller beliefs and 'sacramental' practice (or performance) are excavated further and enter a process of contextualisation.

---

[356] West, 2001; Twiss, 2015.

CHAPTER FOUR – THE CASE STUDIES

'In the early days of science, it was believed that the truth lay all around us . . . was there for the taking… waiting, like a crop of corn, only to be harvested and gathered in. The truth would make itself known to us if only we would observe nature with that wide-eyed and innocent perceptiveness that mankind is thought to have possessed in those Arcadian days before the Fall… before our senses became dulled by prejudice and sin. Thus the truth is there for the taking only if we can part the veil of prejudice and preconception and observe things as they really are. . .'[357].

4.1 – Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to expand upon themes that have arisen thus far in the thesis, and to provide a contextualisation to the preceding and proceeding chapters. The case studies contain data that was primarily acquired over a three-month period, with the bulk of the information being obtained during and shortly after the annual Gypsy and Traveller gathering, 'Appleby Fair'[358]. As the field research is undertaken and presented, the autoethnographic approach is more explicitly applied. This chapter is structured into two distinct areas: Travellers in a public setting, and Travellers in a home setting. This is followed by a summary of key themes, conclusions and questions to emerge from the field work.

4.2 – Case Study 1: Travellers in a Public Setting: Appleby Fair

At the end of 2014 I began to approach numerous parties with regard to potential research that I intended to undertake during the later stages of 2015. Explaining the project as 'an investigation into Traveller spirituality and religious life', the project invitation was met with a mixed reaction. 'You know not everyone's' (Travellers) a Christian? I don't even believe in a God', was the reaction by a participant at the *2014 Traveller Movement Conference*. When I responded by asking him if he or any of his family partake in certain

---

[357] Medawar, 1979, p. 70.

[358] Appleby Fair is an annual gathering of Travellers and Gypsies held during the month of June that lasts for 7-10 days, and is situated in the village of Appleby-in-Westmorland, Cumbria, UK. Historically, its primary purpose was to provide a central gathering in which Horses could be traded. Secondary to this, the fair is used as a social event, in which an average of 10-15,000 Travellers and Gypsies gather. See; Richardson & Ryder, 2012, p. 6; Clark & Greenfields, 2006, p. 37; Taylor, 2008, p. 30.

Christian traditions, he replied with, 'Of course, tradition ain't it… I don't think there's any God – most Travellers do though…Christianity is important. I don't follow it or go to Church each Sunday, 'cos I don't believe. But it's important'. 'Why is that?' I asked. 'Because you can't take it away from Travellers'. His answer was a typical example of the responses I received during the field research from the small number of Travellers who did not identify as Christian. There was an acknowledgment of both a common position – that is, to identify as Christian, and of the participation in ritualistic and sacramental practice (both Christian sacrament and 'traditional' superstitions). Despite these factors, it was apparent from the outset that any indication of an applied religious faith was implicit. Instead, religion appeared to be serving as a form of Foucauldian governmentality and uniform traditionalism. However, the theological factor behind the rationalisation that I was witnessing appeared to be moderately fluid. This fluidity of application and understanding would become more apparent during the field work, whereby certain spiritualist practices (clairvoyance, palm reading, etc.) and physical fighting would sit alongside Baptisms and careers. The lived-out element of Traveller Christianity and the internal structuring of cultural norms clearly met, but to what degree was as yet unclear. However, it was apparent that such a 'meeting point' was not static but, as historical accounts have proven, it is a complex, evolving, adaptive, and responsive system; a form of panarchy, perhaps. The most suitable definition of a panarchy in this sense is made by C. S. Holling, who describes a panarchy as the following:

> "Panarchy" is the term we use to describe a concept that explains the evolving nature of complex adaptive systems. Panarchy is the hierarchical structure in which systems of nature…and humans…as well as combined human-nature systems…are interlinked in never-ending adaptive cycles of growth, accumulation, restructuring, and renewal[359].

In this way, orthodox 'Westernised' and typically Eurocentric Christianity had and was providing sustenance for GRT religious expression and application of faith. The adaptive restructuring and accumulation of traditions (in this instance, non-conformist adherence to Christian ritual) had seemingly been cultivated from traditional Christianity and was presenting itself in a way that Indigenous theologian Richard Twiss (2015) would describe as a 'new adaption of Christian faith'[360]. However, it would take the field research and subsequent analysis to accurately evaluate if these new adaptive 'building blocks' of a

---

[359] Holling, 2001, p. 392.
[360] Twiss, 2015, p. 236.

Traveller theology were, as Twiss would suggest – 'part of the constant re-emergence of Christ and the Kingdom'[361].

The man I had met at the Traveller Movement conference had not identified as Christian, but he participated in certain sacraments and spoke with a degree of understanding with regards to the meaning and significance of the intrinsic religious aspect of his community. My experience, along with statistics such as those provided by Mends(1997)[362], led me to question not so much whether the majority of Gypsies and Travellers *identified* as Christian, but what *being* Christian actually meant when proposed by a Gypsy or Traveller; in short, what was a Traveller theology? Twiss explains that Indigenous theologising 'maintains [an] embrace of mystery and spirituality', resisting the 'rigidity of Western systemisation of theology as science'[363]. I began to make further plans for my field work, with the confidence of knowing that I was effectively challenging my own preconceptions about the overall religious makeup of Gypsy and Traveller communities outside of those that I was familiar with. The encounters with GRT not identifying as Christian (such as the individual from the Traveller Movement conference) allowed for a more encompassing picture that I might not have otherwise seen; one of both a universalistic theology and an emerging Christian 'cosmology'.

I initially contacted *Family A* and then *Family B* in May 2015 via social media. I began speaking to a man named Mike (aged 38) who had seen a public request I made for volunteers. Within a short time, I was also contacted by a man named Billy; this was my first contact with *Family B*. It was not coincidental. Billy was related to Mike's brother by way of his wife. It transpired that the two families lived in opposite ends of England and were living under very different conditions. Mike and *Family A* mostly lived in fixed accommodation whilst Billy and *Family B* lived in an officially recognised Traveller site. Both families agreed to allow time for some research, but the practicalities of living in vastly different areas meant there were difficulties in arranging a suitable period in which an investigation could take place. On several occasions Mike mentioned Appleby Fair as a potential location. He spoke of a 'wonderful freedom' that Appleby afforded; 'Travellers are *seen* as Travellers rather than being *judged* as Travellers'. He made it known that he had not been for a couple of years but that some of his family and friends were planning on going to that year's fair. It transpired that both families were going to be visiting Appleby, and so I arranged to meet them there to undertake the first stage of the field research. Unfortunately my initial contact, Mike, would not be available for the study for

---

[361] Twiss, 2015, p. 236.
[362] See Chapter Three (Section 3.1.1).
[363] Twiss, 2015, p. 236.

personal and work-related reasons. Instead, I would be meeting up with Mike's brother and sister-in-law from *Family A*.

For the duration of the fair I resided in accommodation away from Appleby. This was primarily for two reasons. Firstly, most accommodation within an approximate 10-mile radius is often booked a year in advance[364], mostly by Travellers who normally reside in fixed accommodation. Secondly, I wanted to approach Appleby in a way that allowed me to maintain a certain objectivity in my research whilst temporarily positioning myself in the non-representative autoethnographer category (see *Methodology Chapter*). With these elements in place I was ready to conduct the field research, beginning with Appleby Horse Fair.

4.2.1 – Traveller Christian Ministries

Through the centre of Appleby village runs 'Sands Road', where horses are ridden and shown, in a place normally reserved for motor vehicles. Directly opposite Sands Road is the River Eden, where many young Travellers – male and female, ride their horses into the water and wash them. This is a particularly famous element of Appleby horse fair, and was necessary in its original inception, when traders who had brought their horses from all over the country to sell and needed to clean them after long journeys. The hundreds of tourists lining each side of this small section of river along with the many hundreds of horse boxes and trailers being kept elsewhere in Appleby indicated that this particular aspect of the fair was now mostly for 'show' purposes only.

I made my way north towards the larger campsites and the makeshift marketplace that was near the flashing lane (a stretch of road where Travellers ride their horses at speed to show them off to potential buyers). As I approached the 'main' entrance I was greeted with a carnival-esque scene where the fair begins and horses and their riders emerge, ready to head back down the hill towards the river. Everyone has to pass through this large section to get to virtually any part of the Appleby celebrations. In the entrance way there are a small number of stands and stalls. The majority of stands (numbering the hundreds) selling a diversity of goods (clothing; house decorations and ornaments; books and media; equine and horse riding equipment; and much more) are hidden away beyond the large gated field where the temporary marketplace had been erected.

---

[364] Appleby Town Online, (No date).

Appleby is technically a gathering and not an 'event' per se, meaning that no single individual or group is responsible for its running and organisation. Therefore, technically anyone can simply set up and either sell their wares or promote their business. However, this is a Gypsy and Traveller fair that is self-governing and self-regulating; if it is not 'Gypsy' it will not be permitted. The tradition and purpose of the fair meant that any of the stands in the small key entrance way area should be considered beneficial or at least highly approved in regard to GRT culture. There were seven stands in the entrance way area, varying in size from two men with a rack that held some literature, to a marquee being used as a Chapel. One of the stands was from Macmillan; a specialist charity that provides support and advice (often through the provision of nurses) for people affected by cancer. The team running the 'stand' – a large custom painted trailer, were not Travellers but were there to help and provide advice and literature in the form of handouts. Although the Macmillan stand was not a Christian ministry or outreach, its presence in the area was fitting; an underlying yet apparent motif of 'helper' was in keeping with the Christian stands, where themes of salvation and concern over healing and restoration – both spiritually and physically, was key. The presence and the physical location of the Macmillan nurses alongside the Christian ministries was an indicator as to how Travellers view health. Health is not compartmentalised into physical aspects on one side and spiritual aspects on another, but gathered as one. However, the 6:1 ratio of Christian outlets to conventional 'Health' outlets, combined with the historic poor health outcomes for Travellers[365], is a possible indication of where prioritisation for one's personal condition resides. This is not to say that the elements of physical and spiritual health are understood to be one and the same but more that the two factors operate synergistically, with the afterlife and spiritual purity being a priority for many.

The other six stands were all from varying Christian ministries and denominations[366]. There was something profound about the intentionality of a large Christian presence at the entrance and exit of the fair. This was exacerbated by the predominant messages of salvation and repentance of sins on numerous posters and billboards. Upon speaking to all the varying groups, it became apparent that there were two distinct approaches. The factoring of these approaches was dependent upon whether the Christian group were comprised of Travellers or gorgers. The gorger groups were primarily concerned with sharing a gospel message of hope, and ministering where the need arose. The ministry took the form of talking, praying for healing, providing explanations of God and offering

---

[365] Richardson & Ryder, 2012, p. 17.
[366] This number changed over the course of the fair and at some points throughout the day, as the weather altered or as the various teams went off into the fair itself to carry out further ministry.

somewhere to stop for a tea or coffee (with no charge or expectation of payment). The ministries operated by Gypsies and Travellers were markedly different in both their approach and their practice. After speaking to the Traveller-Christian teams, it became clear that the element of self-governance that had been apparent with the geographical positioning and broad acceptability of the Christian teams, was also applicable to their communiqué. The message was clear: you have sinned, you must repent. There was no softening in the delivery. The unflinching and unapologetic nature of how it was presented highlighted one of many differences in culture compared to the larger settled populace. There was a certain Victorian-esque tone present in what was said to passers-by and those curious enough to step up to the tents and stands; a scolding reprimand reminiscent of a Dickensian mother disciplining her young. A strange paradox existed at this juncture. The atmosphere and engagement would perhaps have been more common place and acceptable two or three (perhaps more) generations previously, yet it was very much acceptable amongst the Travellers and Gypsies. Furthermore, it appeared to be familiar to those who stopped to look and listen. Whilst this perspective is of course speculative and not analytical, it is indicative of particular attitudes and trends in the Gypsy and Traveller community, and as such should be noted.

The first team that I spent time with were two men identifying as Jehovah's Witnesses (JW). They had a simple and small display in comparison to other outlets; a small foldable rack containing a selection of reading materials (with particular reference to the well-known JW outreach pamphlet, *The Watchtower*). Initially observing them from a distance, I noticed that their static ministry was relatively ineffective in engaging the public, as more often than not people appeared oblivious to their presence. I would later find more Jehovah Witnesses in various other places of the fair and marketplace, mostly working in pairs and with identical mobile ministry stands. I spoke to Michael, a man in his late forties who had been active in this method of outreach for just over 20 years. I asked him directly about the relative success of his work thus far at Appleby; 'People (Travellers) are receptive to the gospel – they're very religious people. It's been quiet here (by the road); the young people don't seem to be interested'. Michael was not a Traveller but had been working with various Traveller and Gypsy communities for many years. 'It's important that we can speak about God to everyone, and not just the people who are like us [generally speaking]. My experience tells me that Gypsies and Travellers and Show People[367] are different in many ways, but they're still part of say, 'British culture' right? So the message I

---

[367] 'Show People' is a specific cultural (and arguably, ethnic) term under the Romany banner. It is usually ascribed to those who operate and/or run fairground and circus businesses.

share with them is the same I'd share with anyone else'. I asked Michael if, to accommodate GRT culture, his approach was any different. He replied:

> I never try to be something I'm not with them; they can see right through it. But they do something different with what I say…Other people (gorgers) go through the motions, the faces (*pulls an expression indicating thought, looking skywards), "what can this do for me?", "what are the implications?" etc., etc. It's different here (pointing out towards the camping area). They want to figure out how they can *use* it. It's rather special.

The gospel appeared to have a specific and important purpose for Gypsies and Travellers at Appleby, and therefore it was given a particular respect and prominence – hence the physical positioning of the Christian area at the fair. Christianity in this sense was a functional tool of mediation, providing specific instruction, governance and opportunity for physical and spiritual restoration. It was also a tangible concept that was being enacted through ritual, superstitious behaviour and practice, and prayerful petition to God through spiritual guardians (Priests, Pastors, Mediums, Clairvoyants). Parallels were becoming evident between the distinctly 'familiar' Christian elements and that of Primal Religious practices and beliefs, albeit in conceptual form[368]. In this instance, I was talking to someone serving as a 'Shaman' to the community. Michael and the various other Priests and Pastors that I would speak to would offer healing, a path to salvation and forgiveness, understanding of the next life and revelation of purpose in this life. It would fall to the Spiritualists, Clairvoyants, and Mediums to communicate with ancestors, ward off bad spirits and bring in 'good luck'. It was this second aspect to the spiritual dynamic – the Clairvoyants and others, that suggests the existence of a syncretism in *traditional* Gypsy religiosity.

Miles Richardson (2012) alludes to this syncretistic formulation in comparative studies made on particular South Asian communities, where an amalgamation of Christianity or Islam and local indigenous practices occurs. These amalgamations often create and subsequently reveal a contrast between a micro and a macro cosmic perspective. The microcosmic views the tribe (or in this instance, Gypsies), as 'the village'. The macrocosmic perspective views the 'wider world' (or the gorger) as something that 'sooner or later impinges' on the 'village'[369]. These differing layers – the village and the

---

[368] Armin Geertz (1998, pp. 518 – 523 & 541) discusses the inner-workings of Native North American religions (and their Primal religiosity), and systematically unravels numerous elements behind the Native's religious practices and their spiritual repercussions. These elements can be found in Traveller religiosity by simply exchanging or finding each aspect's cultural equivalent. For example, a Shaman becomes a Priest, and the sacred animal is the horse – rather than an eagle or wolf etc.
[369] Richardson & Lindenfeld, 2012, pp. 12 – 13.

wider world, are used again. They become metaphoric arenas; in the village 'lesser deities', bad spirits, or spirits of ancestors are found; whereas in the wider world, the 'supreme being' or 'God' is found[370]. During the field research, these 'Primal' and indigenous syncretistic elements were consistently present.

Michael noted that he had multiple invites into people's Trailers for a coffee; 'they've been very welcoming when they see you as a man of God', he said. His longstanding involvement with Travellers had afforded him a provisional understanding of Gypsy and Traveller culture. However, his affiliation to a church body had afforded him unprecedented access. Michael was readily accepted by the Travellers that he was speaking to, yet he was not a Traveller or Gypsy himself. This was in stark contradiction to 'standard' conceptions. Traveller circles were more often than not perceived to be wary of or entirely separate from outsiders (at least, outside of trade-based relationships). By meeting the Travellers through the centrality of *their* identity and *their* root belief system (i.e. Christianity), Michael, with very little resistance, became an element in the genetic body of the Traveller cosmology.

There was a distinct 'market' feel to the Christian area of the fair, with multiple denominations situated within feet of each other, each offering their own unique narrative on the Christian message. Each marquee or stand had literature and materials that introduced what they had on offer. In addition, each stand also had posters or large signs with short messages – mostly in the form of scriptures. It was clear after discussions with various people managing the stands that there was a general understanding that any individuals approaching the stands had both a Christian faith and/or belief, and had some understanding of sacramental procedures. These understandings were reciprocated by displays of affiliation to Christianity (rather than any other religion) by the organisers and the Travellers in attendance. Further evidence was observable through means (other than the distinct location of the stands), such as a high volume of crucifixes being worn, and numerous ornaments and depictions of the Virgin Mary and various Saints on display in Trailer/Vardo windows. Conversely, religious imagery was at times subtle; presenting itself in a piece of jewellery, a car air-freshener or a collection of small ornaments and paintings[371].

As I approached the Catholic area, there were clear details on their service times and service types. I was instructed that for non-Catholics there was a Baptist tent further

---

[370] Richardson & Lindenfeld, 2012, p. 12.
[371] The social significance of Gypsy visual culture is examined by Romani Gypsy artist, Dr Daniel Baker (2011). Baker proposes that 'Gypsy visuality is both a reflection and a representation Gypsy culture' (p. 137).

along, and just beyond that an Evangelical tent. The Catholic area was the largest 'stand' in comparison to the other predominantly protestant offerings. It was situated in a substantially sized marquee that was described as 'the Chapel'. It was unmistakably Catholic, with large colourful pictures of Jesus, Mary, various Saints, as well as other religious imagery. There appeared to be only one message on display, and it was noticeably instructional in nature; a small 'pro-life' display with a photo of a baby and the words in bold-type stating, '*I'm a child, not a choice…Let me live*'. I entered conversation with a lady named 'Kat', who was one of the Catholic team. I was informed that the team were from Ireland and comprised mostly of Travellers but with some assistance from the gorger community; 'all are here to serve' said Kat. The team offered a comprehensive range of services that would be available in any fixed chapel – from baptisms to daily Mass and 'blessings from the Father'. However, it appeared that their 'outreach' facility would serve as the primary interaction point with those attending the fair. Traditional services were conducted according to a timetable and were between 15 and 30 minutes in length. As the services were being conducted for the whole week, it is not possible to say definitively how many people attended each service or if those attending did so regularly throughout the week. However, whilst I was there, I noted that approximately between 6 and 15 people attended each service. The conversation moved towards understanding Kat's relationship to her work here and her everyday life:

> I do the same here (gesturing towards the marquee) as I does back home (Republic of Ireland). It's no different, it really ain't. But you see, I don't do this all the time. But it still goes with me you know, in everything. I'm not perfect but you see, none of us are. All Travellers have this same belief. They don't all go to Church you know, but they've all got something, something here (points to chest). It goes with them. Everywhere.

Shortly after this I was handed a blue plastic rosary; I was told it is free. At this point, a small crowd of adults gathered, all asking for a rosary. I felt uncomfortable as the men and women started to demand particular colours instead of the one they have been handed. 'I thought they would just be happy with getting one', I said. 'No' replied Kat, with a wry grin. 'They don't hear 'free' very often. If it's free they'll have it'. At this point, Kat seemed to change demeanour and she returned to a formal state. She briskly reminded me of the service times and then she left me.

Fig. 7 – *Appleby: Catholic Marquee*

This photo was taken earlier in the day before any services were taking place. The blue folding display stand has pictures of Travellers in various settings, primarily in shots of them interacting with the Priest and various other church staff. The small folding stand is displaying a 'pro-life' pamphlet – its central image that of a new-born baby. The lady with the fluorescent waistcoat exiting the marquee is carrying more plastic rosaries to distribute to people.

Kat had spent time describing to me aspects of a familiar Christian approach that did not appear to be exclusively 'Traveller'; a prayer life revolved around daily situations, occasional Biblical reflections (along with a certain guilt from 'not doing it often enough'), and a strong connection to her local church. However, Kat had spoken of a common spirit that operated through and in all Gypsies and Travellers. The 'common spirit' that Kat spoke of was hard to refute; even people who had told me they did not believe in God (such as the man from the Traveller Movement conference[372]) confessed that Christianity in various forms was something present and operational in much of the community. For the Traveller, having a 'knowing' of God's existence was enough. It did not require a weekly practice of attendance or compelling and/or voluminous evidence and proofs. Instead, this collective spirit operated through an assumed knowledge and almost blind acceptance. This enabled Kat and the rest of her team to operate seemingly

---

[372] See Section 4.2.

inconsequentially, and to display a distinct level of authority – in much the same way as Michael (JW) had done. There was no avoidance of uncomfortable issues nor any overt attempts at proselytising; seemingly because there did not need to be. The Travellers that Kat engaged with apparently already 'knew Christ', and as such, any evangelical exegetical interpretations or messages were minimal. Instead, Kat and her team provided the practical functionality that was required for the many Travellers and Gypsies attending the fair to meet at the point of comfortability and familiarity – the church; *their* Church.

Ecclesiastically speaking, the Traveller representation of church was one that was operating through a dualistic narrative. There were many similarities between it and the larger, gorger establishment, yet it was markedly distinctive. Furthermore, there were no apparent public concerns or criticisms towards other Churches or Christian bodies from the Traveller 'body'. Instead, a pluralistic attitude which, whilst not liberalistic in nature or tradition, was accommodating of other gorger traditions. Gorger traditions appeared to be accepted with the proviso and understanding that they are separate from Traveller Christianity – and therefore unable to 'pollute' Traveller communities. It is highly probable that such acceptance has emerged off the back of the Evangelical revival and the subsequent establishment of Gypsy churches. Daniel Izuzquiza (2009) predicts that an ecclesiology that facilitates radical counter politics and true plurality could potentially result in 'recognition and acceptance' for European Gypsies, and facilitate an enablement for diverse voices to operate with relative freedom[373]. Gypsies and Travellers have already taken this leap of radical ecclesiology, and are allowing the diverse voices of the gorger contingent to operate with relative freedom, albeit in controlled environments. Indeed, initial impressions suggest that a Traveller theology has a radical ecclesiology based upon a paradox of neoconservative, Christian-right values, and a liberalistic curiosity and suspicion of the 'outside world'. Belief or 'levels of faith' were not an essential requirement to prove belief or association; being Gypsy or Traveller was enough. Gypsies were, as Michael (JW) had alluded to, 'operating in Christianity'. It was not an overtly familiar Christianity, but it was still Christianity.

For myself (theologically, spiritually, and socially speaking) I found the area in question challenging, as I observed a distinct lack of critical engagement with key concepts by lay Travellers and Gypsies, particularly in moments of evangelism. This was primarily owing to the substantial degree of trust operating in the spiritual 'transactions' taking place. Consequently, this meant that there was a great deal of vulnerability on behalf of the Gypsies and Travellers themselves. However, depth of comprehension came not from

---

[373] Izuzquiza, 2009, pp. 271 – 273.

words or interaction but with what was done with the information. The open and explicit messages of condemnation towards the Travellers' and Gypsies' sins were being acknowledged through the partaking of sacraments and the shedding of tears by both women and men. The sanctity of the off-white tarpaulin clad chapel space was acknowledged by the Travellers who partook in its services, as well as the tourists and Press who, when passing by did so with a degree of hesitancy. One lady I spoke to who was visiting to 'see the Gypsies' commented; 'it's very interesting, looks a little peculiar. I've not seen a Church in a tent before! They're a very religious people, aren't they?'. Christianity at the Catholic stand was not explicitly 'Christian', despite all of the paraphernalia to suggest otherwise. It was however 'Traveller', in its language, in its operation and in its accessibility.

Fig. 8 – *Appleby: Blue plastic rosary, given as a gift*
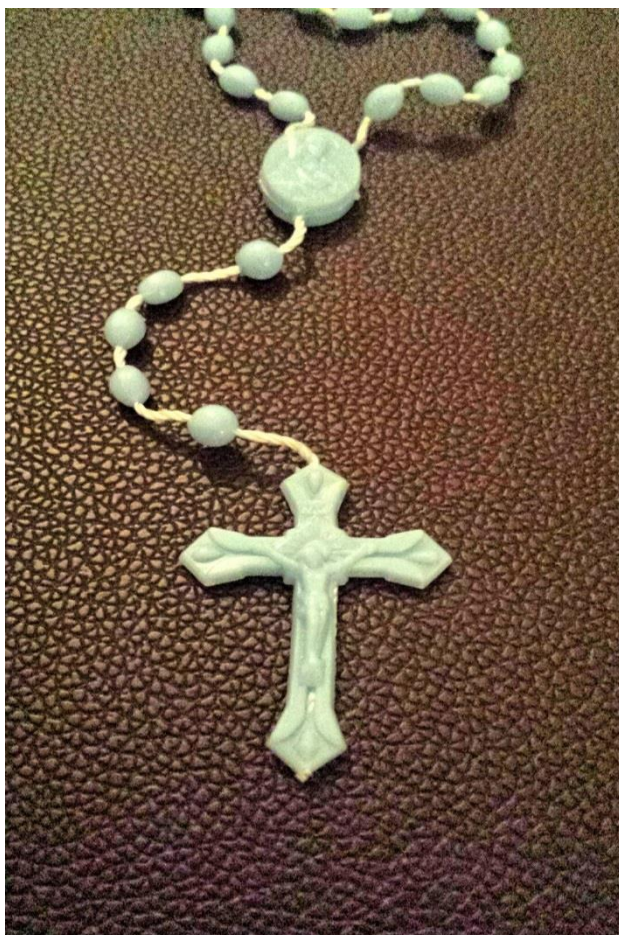
There were a number of Pentecostal, Evangelical and Free Church groups present throughout Appleby. This served as a reflection of the increasing number of Gypsies and Travellers practising the ecclesiological aspect of their faith through 'non-traditional' or

'free' Churches. The *Light and Life* church is such a movement. *Light and Life*, a Pentecostal Evangelical 'mission' collective, are arguably the most established specifically Gypsy-orientated Church in the UK and have been operational since the late 1980s[374]. *Light and Life* enjoyed a significant presence (in comparison to other groups and denominations) at Appleby, with many volunteers and staff in attendance and located throughout the grounds of the fair. It was interesting to observe the other groups that were staffed by Travellers who were operating on behalf of larger gorger-led churches. Most of these smaller groups were without the luxury of chapel facilities or large marquees. Instead, they performed their work from small gazebos or tables. One group, in particular, stuck out. They had no materials to identify their church affiliation but informed me that they had come from an Evangelical Church in Liverpool. I found engaging with them to be difficult as I introduced myself and began conversing. I was asked directly 'what is theology?'. Despite them operating as representatives for a Church, this was not some abstract rhetorical challenge but a genuine absence of knowledge on their behalf. I was then informed in no uncertain terms that:

> You don't need none of that Old Testament bullshit. What cha' need is a Bible. Do you have a Bible? You just need to read these three books you see; (*pointing to his left hand) Matthew, Mark and Luke. They're called the Gospels. There's another but don't worry about that one. You know Jesus right? You know you're a sinner right? When you do wrong you got to say sorry to him. Otherwise it's (makes a non-linguistic verbalisation and slicing-throat motion with thumb across neck).

Shortly after what had felt like an aggressive encounter, I left and proceeded to observe from a distance, recognising that my presence could affect his interaction with other people. His expression of spiritual concern was contestable and I felt uncomfortable. In a culture where words are contractual and are almost always met with appropriate and accompanying actions, authority expressed in a differing manner is arguably necessary. However, what that manner should look like is subjective. Spirituality and moral enforcement were being exercised in a way that is perhaps unfamiliar to a contemporary gorger Church-goer in the UK. Its application was not geared to appeal but to expose; an aspect which gave the impression of a collective concern. The underlying Salvation narrative that positioned Christ as the central pivot was becoming clear. Familiar messages of the unmerited and freely given grace of God that I may have heard in my own (predominantly gorger-led) Church life, was now being challenged by a contractual (and therefore, contradictory) grace. For me, 'grace' meant the bestowal of blessings and

---

[374] See Chapter Two. Also: Ridley, 2014.

unwarranted access to Christ's forgiveness, regardless of my efforts to draw near or distance myself from God. It was difficult to see others putting a 'price' on something I inherently considered free to everyone.

The team were handing out flyers with their message to car drivers passing by. Most of the drivers appeared to take the small tracts. Christianity in this form was convicting and felt devoid of compassion. However, it was readily consumed by those visiting the tent, as if it were a vital necessity. Spiritual 'maintenance' in this respect was for the most part a subconscious activity, but it was still an active and accepted part of the Gypsy religious 'experience'. The eschatological messages that were displayed on and around the tent had had their 'end-time' meaning altered into a present-time message, as those who operated from the stand delivered a case for urgency in the now. Interestingly, the concept of time (with particular reference to future) was persistently mentioned and supported with loud proclamations of relevant scriptures. The message again was clear – *the future was now and the end was imminent*. There appeared to be a readiness among those around to absorb the message being preached. Such readiness presented itself in an almost transactional manner, whereby there was both a *need* for spiritual identity and a *recognition* of such a need. The reason, perhaps, was because the spiritual was an essential aspect of the Traveller; and like most aspects of Gypsy and Traveller identity, it was more than just an abstract element – it constituted tangible and conscious action.

Fig. 9 – *Appleby: Independent Outreach Ministry*

In the picture above, there are two operatives in view; the first is dispersing literature to cars passing by, whilst the other is inside the black tent speaking to a man with a walking stick (his right arm is just visible). The signs are not all clear in the picture. From left to right read the following: 'Whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire' (Revelation 20:15); 'Be sure your sin will find you out' (Numbers 32:23); 'Repent and believe the Gospel' (Mark 1:15); 'I know that my redeemer liveth' (Job 19:25); 'Awake to righteousness and sin not' (1 Corinthians 15:34); 'Repent, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out' (Acts 3:19).

Later that day I was made aware of an Evangelical Christian group that had set up a reasonable sized marquee amongst the trailers and a considerable distance from the central fair. The group consisted mostly of members from a *Light and Life* fellowship, as well as another large gorger-led Church. The location of the marquee was in a favourable position, in terms of access to and from the site. The group operating the ministry would later inform me that they had received a blessing of sorts from Billy Welch. Welch is a senior figure in the British Gypsy community who essentially had taken responsibility for the running of the fair over the previous few years. After a long introductory conversation with each other, I was informed that two years prior, the group had spent time with Welch, and that he had 'given his life to Christ'. This was a key factor in obtaining their favourable geographical positioning at the fair. As with the other Christian elements present at the fair, the favour given to them was measurable in both respect and their location. For example, Welch had allowed the group's marquee to be based just a few trailers away from his own trailer. Some Gypsies and Travellers referred to Welch as a/the 'King of the Gypsies' (an old Gypsy term which now, in a contemporary setting, meant a significant leader or representative of either a small or generalised grouping of Travellers or Gypsies).

For some reason this rule of ascription has not readily been applied to religious leaders, despite reverence for their positions often transcending beyond smaller GRT groups. I managed to speak to one such respected religious leader outside of Appleby at a later date. Jackie Boyd, a Senior Pastor and Elder of *Light and Life* is part of a board that covers 35 churches in the UK and around 30 churches in the rest of the world. Jackie was warm and friendly, and spoke with a certain firmness and reassurance. Telling me about his own faith, he told me that 'since I became a Christian in 1993 as a 22-year-old my Christian faith is just to please the Lord. My theology affects my whole life and it should do. And if it doesn't affect my life, then there's a problem'. Jackie went on to say that allowing a personal theology to bring about changes in his life 'will help the non gypsy community see that we're human'. We discussed Jackie's theology some more, this time

looking more towards the theology of *Light and Life*. Looking over the past two to three years, Jackie stated:

> …our theology has turned against us. A lot more people have been going against Christians because of what they believe. People have turned against fundamental Christianity. And a lot more people are going against Christians for what they believe rather than for what they don't. People's perception of what theology is has changed.

The other Christian groups at Appleby made their theological positions relatively clear, placing their outreach positions into either one which focused on Salvation and eschatological concerns, or one which prioritised present day ministry such as deliverance and healing. I asked Jackie his thoughts on this.

> I think there are two ends of a spectrum. I think both ends of the spectrum can be dangerous. I think there has to be a balance. If my life doesn't reflect what I believe about the future then there's something wrong. I need God in my life to get me through my everyday problems. I suppose our theology grows and changes as we grow older. For the first few years you think, 'oh God I need to be perfect'. But you can never be perfect. So, theology doesn't change, just our perception of it.

I asked Jackie if his perception of certain cultural practices (particularly those concerning purity and pollution) had changed. His response reflected the cultural shift that had been predicted by Trigg (1973) et al. many years earlier, whereby older Gypsy customs and religious practice would have to evolve into its new Christian mould.

> The good traditions are good and the bad traditions are bad. In our culture showing respect for parents, giving up a seat for an elder – these are all good things. But there are some bad things in our culture as well. There are things that we need to change as Christians. Our nature has to bend to our God; not the other way around. We have to take God into our traditions. Our life has to become centred on what Christ would want – not what we've inherited and not what we are. We're not better or worse because we're Gypsies. Gypsy or gorger, it doesn't make any difference; we worship the same God.

Returning to Appleby, the *Light and Life* group consisted primarily of a core collective numbering 12 members, but there were others affiliated with them which increased this number considerably higher. Members of the group were keen to give testimonies about how God was working through the Traveller community in a 'new way'. More questioning revealed as much about some of the members of the group as it did their ministry. One member named "Ryan" spoke of how his marriage had ended nearly three years

previously. Ryan was dealing with the process of divorce – something that in many parts of Gypsy and Traveller culture remains taboo. Ryan went on to explain how the absence of his wife, minimal access to his children, and the subsequent end to his family run building firm had stripped away the elements of his identity. This process – whilst painful, caused Ryan to rely on the last remnant of his Traveller roots – his Christian faith. He told me how he would touch his crucifix by his front door as he left for work each day, praying for provision in finances, health and more work. He explained how he would touch his dashboard as he got into his work van each morning and pray, 'Holy Spirit keep me safe and get me home, God be praised, Amen'. I quizzed him as to whether he saw such consistent behaviour as superstitious; 'there's nothing wrong with a bit of superstition, if it works,' he replied. Further conversation revealed developments to Ryan's faith and personal circumstances as a result of the changes implemented in his life:

> My faith had not ended but changed. I'd had to move on many times on the road. The gavvers (police) would be there in hours, telling us we couldn't stay there. When my wife left me and took the kids, I had to 'move on' again. Before I used to just listen to the Priest, because I couldn't read. I needed to know the Lord better, didn't I? The Father (Priest) got me one of them CD's that has the Bible on it. I started listening to it and following the words in the Bible that John (his Priest) got me as well.

Ryan directly and explicitly adjoined the process of change and bereavement to his own faith, in a process that saw the tenacity of adaption and survival (a now familiar personal and cultural trait in Traveller culture) make itself known through spiritual belief and religious practice. At forty years old Ryan had been unable to read and write, yet with an evolution of his faith-based grounding, he had begun the process of becoming literate. He was now in a position where he had started to attend training courses through his local 'Job Centre Plus'[375] in order to obtain qualifications which would hopefully lead to work. Ryan was unable to return to the building trade at this time as he did not have the legal documentation to work for a public company. However, through his continued methods of self-instruction he was on course to obtaining his first academic certification and to restoring his personal life as well. Furthermore, his perspective on his culture was being challenged, as he described 'getting closer to the Lord'. Ryan had always worked and did what was necessary to provide for his family. He never doubted that his Christian identity was intrinsic to his Traveller identity. This prompted him to state that he 'always kept his nose clean', suggesting his lack of involvement in criminal activities. The actions of certain pockets of Gypsies and Travellers were beginning to bother him and it had caused him

---

[375] A *Job Centre Plus* is a local Government facility where unemployed persons can seek advice concerning employment, apply for jobs via a job bank, and apply for financial benefits and support.

some issues, as he was seen to be challenging their behaviour. The most recent incident had taken place two days previously, where despite the favour the group enjoyed with senior members of the Traveller community, there had been attempts to steal from the mission's marquee. Ryan described how several men were moved on twice that day after 'eyeing up' their power generator, whilst later on someone had been caught inside the marquee trying to take some of the PA equipment. Ryan and another man had decided to sleep inside the marquee to deter any further incidents. To their surprise and anger, they had awoken the following morning to find that all the large ground anchors and pegs holding the marquee in position had been stolen. I was also shocked that other Travellers would steal from a Church facility. I presented the proposition that such behaviour could challenge the notion that a truly Christian element was part of the make-up of Traveller identity. The response I received was one that was filled with a security in grace:

> We don't always act like the person we really are. God killed all those Egyptians didn't he? And all the people in the world died when he sent the flood, didn't they? But he made us. And loves us. And the Bible says He is Love.

As conversations developed with the group, a theme of a spiritual nature emerged. I had initially passed it off as simple references to the Holy Spirit, as there were many similarities with conventional and orthodox understandings of Holy Spirit-related phenomena and teachings that can be witnessed in many contemporary western Christian environments. In an attempt to seek clarification, I questioned whether they believed as a group they had an extra 'edge' over the other Christian groups present, as earlier they had implied 'we have a greater connection'. There were a few chuckles as it was explained that the references to 'we' was in relation to Gypsies and Travellers as a collective ethnicity and not them as an individual Church group; 'you know, *proper* Gypsies, like us', replied an older lady. I turned towards the lady and began a conversation away from the others.

> I don't need to think about the Spirit all the time…He's always working regardless. I can tell you what's wrong without you saying nothing. Do you understand? All Gypsies can do that, but a lot don't know how to anymore. They've forgotten the ways.

Being careful in my approach, I sat with the older lady and respectfully remarked how this sounded similar to the fortune tellers down in the fair.

> Don't worry son, I don't take no offence'. It is a bit like them ain't it? Cept' we are helping people for Jesus and they is helping themselves. Still, you got to make a penny and

they need money like the rest of us… The Spirit goes through everyone (i.e. Travellers and Gypsies). It's cos' we're all one blood.

At this point, she simply looked down and started knitting. I attempted to carry on the interview, but was unsuccessful. The silence between us was broken as a party of men returned from an outreach venture that they had been on for several hours. They had been handing out flyers and Christian-themed bookmarks to people in the fair and campsite. One particular individual was keen to show me the hand-sewn banners that one of the team had made, suggesting that 'this is how you get souls'. At this point his friend raised the double-sided banner into my face. They seemed oblivious to the intrusive nature of this. In many ways it was characteristic of many of the outreach teams I had met thus far; an overwhelming emphasis on salvation and the need for repentance, delivered in a manner that was reminiscent of Christian terminology and expression from some past era.

Fig. 10 – *Appleby: Evangelistic outreach team based in campsite (image 1)*

'Tony' – the man who had started talking to me, had been involved in Traveller-focused ministries through his Church for the last few years. Tony gave an account of his background, which included numerous prison stints and periods of drug addiction. His reformation came via an encounter with God during a particularly desperate phase of his life and he was keen to share his story with me. His testimony had become his own personal ministry. Tony said he felt a particular calling to work with Travellers in this way but felt his message was best received by gorgers. 'I want to see Travellers changed and saved, of course I do. But when people (gorgers) find out you're a Traveller, they get interested, curious like. It's a great way of showing we all ain't that bad (laughs)'. 'Why do you think people outside of the Traveller community are more interested in what you've got to say, more so than the Travellers?' I asked. 'I don't think they are. I think they think it's just a show. They listen because they're wondering what I'll say next. Makes no odds to me, it's the same gospel for everyone ain't it?' (chuckles and makes 'Jazz hands' gesture with his hands).

Tony was a pleasant person and could be considered in many ways to be a showman of sorts. His over-the-top personality and gesticulation commanded attention and he was enjoyable to be around. It seemed that certain elements of Gypsy and Traveller culture were still very much alive and had simply evolved from their romanticised or stereotypical forms. For example, the old lady in the traditional garb had spoken of the deep-rooted and

historical spiritual connection that she believed all Gypsies had – knowingly or otherwise. It was this same connection that had somewhat enabled (not caused) the implementation of the palmistry trade in Gypsy communities. Whether there were actually any phenomenological powers present or it was simply a case of suggestion and persuasion was not in question. However, it was evident that there were cultural and alternative reasons as to why Palmistry and Clairvoyance may have been one of the options for unqualified financial gain, and as such, why skills such as Tony's 'showman' abilities meant certain stereotypes persisted.

Tony was an example that showmanship, flamboyance, and storytelling were still present in Gypsy culture. It was not the same as romanticised images and accounts from past times, but had been adapted for the present day. He himself had realised that the gorgers who came to hear him speak in churches around Europe were probably there for the draw of the show. This was remarkably similar to the accounts of Rodney 'Gipsy' Smith[376], and a staunch reminder that Gypsies are still often seen as 'otherly' and 'exotic'. Nevertheless, he was still happy to continue, standing content in the belief that they were being subjected to a cross-cultural Christian message. Then there was Ryan with his daily rituals that were rationalised by his Christian beliefs but exercised in a manner that can be considered superstitious; his routine of touching his crucifix for luck as he left his house each day providing a clear example. This specific practice is not an anomaly but potentially a common occurrence; Billy from 'Family B' (4.3.1) undertook an identical routine.

Superstitions were still very much part of Traveller culture; some were explicit whilst many were implicit, hidden among 'everyday' life. Of significance was that all superstitions were centralised on the notion that the 'luck' or 'blessing' that would come from such practices, based around a protection or provision from God (more specifically the Holy Spirit), and an obscure, unrelated, or distant force. It was evident through conversations that there was a subconscious (or at least an unspoken) fear that contributed to the persistence in practising superstitious behaviours. Hancock (2013) discusses the concept of 'consequence' (*prikaza*[377]). He presents the notion as an almost karmic reaction resulting from a failure to maintain purity codes[378], to give due respect to elders and, in this instance, partaking in luck rituals. Hancock suggests that the 'consequences of prikaza underlie the universal Romani belief that nothing is an accident – that nothing happens

---

[376] Smith, 1905; Lazell, 1970.
[377] Kalderash Romani translation.
[378] See Chapter Five.

simply by chance'[379]. Superstition therefore becomes an equation of consequence, where 'good luck' (*Kushti bok*[380]) and blessings are not merely standalone concepts. They are best understood as the 'thesis' element of an Hegelian proposition, where 'bad luck' (*bok*) and curses form the alternative – the antithesis. The synthesis in this instance being determined by the decision to observe 'best practice' – or not, as the case may be. These actions are voluntary but their potential outcomes are hoped for, and conversely – wished or prayed against. In experiencing a prolonged series of misfortune, one of two things may be assumed by the Traveller. Firstly, they have unwittingly broken a 'law' or 'rule' in what essentially is a Traveller cosmology, and thus attracted a consequence – 'prikaza' or 'bok'. Alternatively, they have become the victim of a curse or consequence – or 'jinx' as Ronald Lee suggests, by somebody else[381]. Understanding the reasoning in these exchanges presents the opportunity to appreciate the often subtle or confusing presentation of such beliefs. Furthermore, it provides a platform from which further conversation can be made about how these beliefs both interplay with and repurpose traditional concepts of orthodox Christianity.

4.2.2 – Talismans and Spiritualist Practice at Appleby Fair

Sporadically located throughout Appleby (primarily in the fair area) were middle to older-aged women selling 'lucky' gems; small glass objects in various colours, slightly larger than a sugar cube and egg shaped. These were being sold for £2 – £3 each and came with the promise of good luck for the purchaser, all the time that he or she had it on their person. It was an adaptation of a traditional and common practice where Gypsies (mostly female) sell 'lucky' heather[382]. The sellers, unlike the stall traders, approached people and 'offered' the gems by putting them in people's hands, followed by a demand for payment. Most obliged as they were 'persuaded' with guarantees of luck and blessings. The sale of heather as a lucky charm is an old practice that still takes place in the town centres and high streets/areas of trade of many UK towns. This was the first time I had observed the selling of a different item in this avenue of spiritual commerce. Those selling the gems avoided an engagement in conversation, so I asked my hosts Mark and Natalie if they had any thoughts on the practice. They saw nothing wrong with the practice itself but

---

[379] Hancock, 2013, pp. 75 – 76.

[380] British Romani translation. '*Kushti bok*' translates as 'good luck/fortune'; however, '*bok*' on its own means 'bad luck'.

[381] Lee, 2001, pp. 206 – 207.

[382] 'Lucky Heather' is heather cut to about 10 cm in length, wrapped in silver foil at the opposite end to the flower, and usually sold as one or two stems/twigs or a small bundle.

were dismissive with regards to receiving luck from the gem; 'the only thing lucky about that is the money going in their pockets'. Natalie told me how her grandmother used to sell heather in the same manner and how the women had an element of belief in the luck aspect but did not understand the intricacies behind how the luck operated, or how it influenced good and bad spirits.

I asked for their thoughts on why the sellers at Appleby were selling gems, rather than heather. There were two underlying driving factors to this change; one was a religious aspect, the other cultural. Beliefs and religious practice were evolving into a service of some sorts, where the user was able to select what they needed for that moment or situation. Certain aspects of the Christian element at the fair had confirmed this (with particular reference to the Catholic engagement). The gems were primarily being purchased by gorgers, but for the few Travellers who stopped (or were stopped) and purchased a gem, they appeared to be grateful for the potential 'gift' of luck. To some extent it was a persuasive act by the seller. Importantly however, it was a voluntary act by the purchaser, for whom the item's *meaning* was the primary concern. Natalie indicated that the belief in luck, so to speak, by a sizable portion of the younger generations was still very much alive, but that a simple 'dead-looking plant' (the traditional sprig of Heather or Lavender wrapped in foil) was not appealing to them. They still believed that in some way the blessing or grace could be transferred through the object, but the younger Travellers were not interested unless 'it's been blinged-up'. 'It's all since Big Fat Gypsy Wedding came on. Loads of the young'uns want to copy the kids they saw on there and have all the bling. Don't get me wrong, our kids have all the labels (designer clothing), but it got more of an issue for most of our friends (financially) after that programme'. The reappropriation of 'lucky heather' to that of 'lucky gems' was a clear indication of how media influence can penetrate and even alter cultural norms.

Through further conversation it became clear that the selling of lucky objects and items (primarily, heather) was widely accepted as a legitimate method of earning money. In addition to the lucky gem/heather sellers, there were several palmists and clairvoyants in and around the fair and marketplace. Some were actively seeking business, displaying signage and advertising boards outside their caravans and trailers. However, there were at least two that I discovered that gave little or no indication of any activities (spiritual or otherwise) taking place inside them. The proprietors were 'known' by certain people and were found by word of mouth. The advertising and notices on the other trailers were bold in colour and design and perhaps more befitting of a carnival environment. One trailer, in particular (pictured below) had a board with a list of former clients who are (or were) considered to be celebrities. These advertising boards were used as a way of enticing

more trade and to provide credibility and grandeur to their claims of psychic abilities. Much like the Pentecostal outreach ministry's signage, the psychic's advertising appeared outdated and potentially misleading. The names of celebrities on the boards were mostly 'character' names rather than the actual actor or performer's name – many of whom were only considered 'famous' from the 1970s to the early 1990s.

There was an apparent tension between what could be deemed as culturally appealing (i.e. the celebrity names on the Palmist's trailer) and the authentically religious (i.e. Biblically endorsed practices). Theologically, the prominent collective approach towards Christianity was conservative in nature and was characterised by a literal interpretation of the Bible (Leviticus 19:31; 20:6; & 20:27). Consequently, this meant that any form of spiritual activity other than that which involved 'the Holy Spirit' was deemed to be heretical. Undoubtedly there were reservations held by many I spoke with. However, aside from the *Light and Life* members I engaged with, there was minimal vocal resistance. I suspected any silence on the matter was more reflective of their disapproval rather than any indifference.

Fig. 12 – *Palmist offering psychic-related services; Appleby Horse Fair*

The majority of palmists and psychics that I attempted to engage with were not prepared to talk because 'wasted time' for them was eating into potential profits. One lady was

prepared to 'have a little chat' whilst she waited for her next customer. However, she immediately proceeded to begin to tell me things about myself (with some accuracy). She tried to hold my hand to conduct a reading, which I politely refused. This immediately resulted in a man approaching me, insisting that I pay her the £20 fee for a reading. I attempted to explain the situation to him but the lady insisted 'we had done business', and I was threatened with physical violence unless I paid. The threat felt genuine but was soon diffused as two Police Officers who were patrolling alongside the market stalls came closer. As the man relinquished his grip, I left the vicinity of that particular area of the fair. The incident did not deter further research attempts to seek out other people to interview but was a reminder of the challenges sometimes experienced by those researching or working with Gypsy and Traveller communities – regardless of one's background.

Fig. 13 – *Appleby: Advertising board for psychic services*
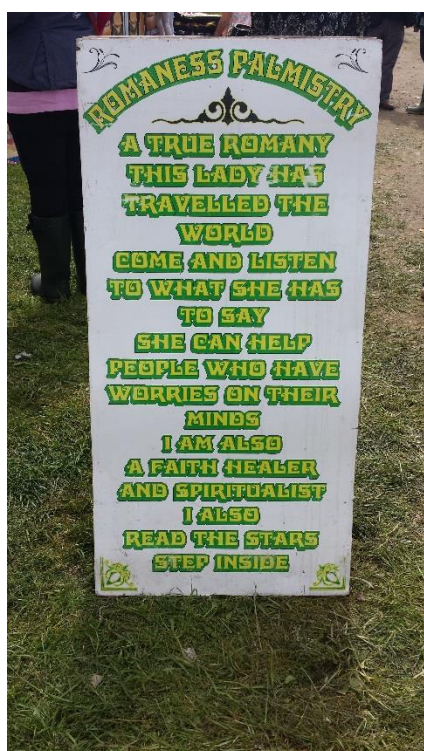
The marketplace (at the top end of the fair) was quieter and the trade areas and pitches had a greater distance between them. The atmosphere was noticeably different due to the absence of loud sound systems and brightly coloured stands and stalls. In their place people were selling bric-a-brac and second-hand equestrian equipment. I engaged in conversation with several people who were seated outside traditional caravans (Vardo). Conversation with a mature couple turned to the incident involving the palmist and the threatening man. The man and lady who I was talking to seemed to be upset and

frustrated over my claim, and I was offered a cup of tea to 'settle my nerves'. I felt okay but decided to accept their offer nonetheless; we joked about whether I would be charged £20 for the privilege. As we talked, they mentioned an old lady who was alleged to be a genuine and effective psychic. The psychic had been undertaking her practice of palm reading, crystal ball using and spiritualist activity for many years. The couple said they would take me to see her after our tea. I explained the nature of my research and my reasoning for being there, to which they were both positive and encouraging. When asked if I could take their picture or record an interview, I was met with a polite by firm 'no'. Their reasoning was based around the maintenance of their traditionalism and the belief that because they had always kept themselves to themselves their lifestyle had been able to continue. When asked, they confirmed quite affirmatively that they were Christians; they appeared shocked that I had asked them. We conversed for a while longer before I left to speak with the old lady they had previously mentioned. It was challenging to dispute the romanticised nature of the environment I was currently standing in; the bow-top vardos (caravans) and the older generations sitting around fires – it was the postcard picture that some outside of the community envision when thinking about 'proper' Gypsy culture. However, it was equally difficult to acknowledge this as representative of contemporary Gypsy society. Of course, it was *still* Gypsy culture, but seeing the old caravans and folk singers confined to the far corner of this large fair was perhaps symbolic of a new culture replacing the old.

Fig. 14 – *Appleby: Highly-decorated 'traditional' Gypsy caravan*[383]

I was introduced to the psychic and we shook hands. "Mary" was around 65 to 70 years old; she wore a long detailed skirt that came to her feet, a light coloured cardigan and large gold earrings – several in each ear. Her trailer stood out from many of the others nearby; not because it was ornate or colourful but because it was quite the opposite. Mary owned a conventional modern caravan – albeit an older model (around 20 to 30 years old), and it was showing excessive signs of wear and tear. Appleby was in some ways an opportunity for Gypsies and Travellers young and old to show off their horses, traps, trailers and vehicles. Mary appeared to intentionally buck this trend. She invited me into her trailer, asked me to take my shoes off, and then offered me a drink. I wanted to refuse as I had just had a drink but I did not want to appear rude and so I accepted her offer. I noticed that Mary chose the mugs for our drinks in the same manner as the couple with whom I had just had a conversation. She took her own cup first from a cupboard full of fine china, then took my mug from a cupboard to the side that had a few 'plain' plates and

---

[383] This caravan or 'Trailer' / 'Vardo' is particularly ornate. Most 'traditional' trailers are also decorated with many patterns and colours, but usually have a canvas roof (often green in colour) stretching down to around the mid-way point (just below the window on the caravan pictured). Note the 'trap', which is in the right-hand corner of the photo; this would be used for small journeys and business. Modern traps are often used in road racing.

mugs. This was not an uncommon practice by Gypsies towards gorgers in the past[384], but I had not seen the usage of separate cutlery and crockery in this way since I was a child. Mary had not asked whether I was a Gypsy or not. Regardless, the selection of different crockery would not necessarily be noticeable to the uninitiated and I was not bothered by it. It was at that stage I felt I needed to mention my 'insider' status. Mary clearly had not realised – hence being given the 'plain' crockery.

As I sat listening to her talk about the weather and the 'bloody noisy kids', I took in my surroundings. Mary's caravan was fairly dark, with little by way of lighting, and drawn curtains. There were small trinkets and ornaments everywhere; many were of the Virgin Mary and some were of Christ as an infant. On the walls were pictures of Jesus (mostly profile shots), numerous crucifixes, and several mirrors – all with ornate dark cloths over them. On the table in front of me was two sets of cards, two boxes (one about the size of a matchbox and the other big enough to fit a watch inside), and in the centre of the table was a crystal ball, perched on a black flat stand.

As we began to talk, Mary, like almost everyone else I had spoken to, refused any pictures and recordings to be taken but she was more than happy for me to take notes and sketches. We started by talking about what she did (or had done) for a living. Mary explained that she no longer actively promoted her business of giving psychic readings and reading palms, but still provided the service for a charge when required. 'I got the gift from my mum. She used to read palms when my father was working away on the farms. She taught me what to see and how to listen'. 'How to listen?' I asked. 'To the dead. They talk back, you know,' she replied. Trying to be as respectful as possible, I asked if she thought such practices contradicted her Christian beliefs. Pointing over her shoulder at an ornament of the Virgin Mary, she said, 'I've prayed to Mary my whole life, and the Saints – they're dead ain't they? Praying is just talking son, it's no different with other people'. Mary explained how her late husband had always insisted that when she worked that she did so outside of the home. 'He'd say to me "I don't want none of those ghosts in here I say", and then he'd get all bothered and go out for a while' (*Mary chuckles). Staying on the subject of family, Mary went on to say that her husband had been absent on and off for many years, before dying in a road accident.

> He was a loyal man in some ways. I know he was seeing other lasses when he was on
> the road, but we wouldn't talk about it. I got angry one day and we had a row. I

---

[384] This was an element of 'Mokhhadi' – the practice and belief system of ritual purity in Traveller culture. On the next aspect of my field research (away from Appleby), I would witness Mokhhadi being practiced in this way on a consistent basis. Mokhhadi – or the 'Purity code' is discussed multiple times in this thesis.

mentioned it and he answered with his fists. It happened a lot but I didn't say anything. I couldn't, could I? – I wasn't able to have children. He stuck with me cos' we were married and he believed there was a chance one day it might happen and he might carry on his name. It never did.

Mary's honesty surprised me. In my naivety I was expecting a spiritual show of some sort, but instead I was told about her experience of domestic abuse, married life, and the hope and disappointment in the desire to continue the family line. The old dishevelled caravan and simple furnishings began to make sense. Mary was a widow, but she was also a Gypsy without children. She had lived alone for many years with very little family around her and as such she did not have adequate financial stability. Mary had experienced difficulty securing accommodation on officially recognised sites due to her lack of family ties, and she was too old to travel and maintain a vehicle to tow her trailer. As a result, she had been forced to settle 15 years previously and was living in social accommodation. 'My neighbours don't like me, I know they don't, because I'm a Gypsy. And I can't get onto a site. For a start there's no plots. And even if there was, unless you're known or family, you've got no chance'. 'Does anyone take care of you? Meet with you etc.?' I asked. 'My Church does. They're wonderful people. They've been my family for a long time now. But they ain't blood. Are they? So it's not the same'.

Mary's conservative Christian core had been the basis to her social and relational presentation, and had shaped her approach and conduct through her entire life. She was able to mentally separate Church and Gypsy but not Christian and Gypsy. Her dedication to her husband was reflective of her character and beliefs. Conversely and contextually, it must be remembered that the option to leave an abusive relationship in the era when Mary was married was not as straightforward as it is currently. Additionally, there is a fundamental belief amongst many Gypsies and Travellers to honour the contract of marriage by refusing divorce at any cost. As Mary revealed, to leave a marriage is to be ostracised from the community; 'you either put up with it or leave – you might as well commit suicide'. Regarding her actual faith, Mary had found no contradiction between her Christian outlook and that of others. Her practice of consulting spirits was to her no different than when she prayed to Mary or the Saints. When I questioned her about aspects of reading the future through her preferred methods of the crystal ball and tarot cards, she responded by likening it to how a weatherman gives the forecast; he or she uses tools, devices or items and couples it with experience of working with probability, and then gives a prediction based upon the combination or results. Mary insisted that she was operating in the same way, albeit with assistance from 'the spirit'. 'If it was science-

like, like the weatherman and his computer, then the church wouldn't have a problem would they'.

4.2.2.1 – Death and Funerals

Mary and I discussed the nature of her trailer's decoration and her understanding of how it related to deaths and funerals in Gypsy communities. The significance of such events for GRT people cannot be overstated. Gypsy funerals draw upon a number of unique cultural sacraments, involve many symbolic elements – Christian and otherwise, and often draw relatives and friends from many parts of the country to the family in question. Knowing my own understanding and experience of Gypsy funerals, I was keen to see if Mary shared similar traditions. Our discussion (and further, external research), revealed that in the main there was a 'traditional' method of practice and course of actions[385]. At the news of a death a fire is often lit – known as a 'pit'. This fire will be tended to continuously by family members until the body is buried. Stories about the dead person will be told around the pit, informally starting the (often lengthy) 'Wake', which itself will continue until a day or two after the funeral. The purpose of the pit is to simultaneously provide a light and a comfort to the spirit of the dead individual whilst also serving as a method of purifying or 'cleansing' the spirit, to make it 'clean' to enter the next life.

Meanwhile, candles will be lit in the vardo (trailer, caravan) of the deceased, initially for the same purpose as the pit. The 'wake' element serves as a facility by which family and friends can gather to honour the dead, and pass on their respects (and sometimes gifts) to the family of the deceased. In a move that is sometimes deemed to be contentious by local health authorities, the body of the deceased is expected to be kept in his or her living quarters during the evening and night before the funeral. In a ritual known as a 'sitting', the deceased will be dressed in their finest clothes and jewellery, and kept in an open casket. The room in which they are kept will be dressed in white sheets, with lit candles surrounding the body. Any mirrors will be covered, and photos of the deceased will be turned away from the dead person. All family will be expected to spend some time with the deceased (even if it is only for a short moment) to pay their respects and say a few words. The purpose of the candles is both to guide the spirit of the dead person into the next life and to act as a method of purification for the spirit. The covering of mirrors and photos is a preventative tool, used to keep spirits (dead persons, malevolent spirits) from

---

[385] Dawson, 2000, pp. 14 – 22; Clark & Greenfields, 2006, pp. 45 – 48; Horne, 2014, pp. 9 – 10; Bhopal & Myers, 2008, p. 36.

entering the physical realm. As with the pit outside, family will stay with the deceased continuously until the funeral process begins.

The funeral service usually sees otherwise conservative and 'private' members of the community express their grief in a public display of loud wailing and seemingly uncontrolled crying. This is perhaps more striking because such grief is also displayed by the men in attendance, who would otherwise find it dishonourable to cry in public. At the funeral (which is usually marked by a large procession of people and vehicles, including vans and lorries), the deceased is often buried with their valuable possessions. Traditionally their vardo would have been burnt along with their remaining possessions, but in the current era, these items are usually sold by the family. It should be noted that the deceased's items are never sold to Travellers or Gypsies, as in many instances they are considered to be both polluted and a possible conduit between the dead and the living. Keeping the dead content is a priority after the funeral, and this is marked by having elaborate and decorative gravestones and grave sites. The graves will be visited by family on a regular basis, with emphasis placed on Easter, Christmas, the deceased's birthday, and the anniversary of the death. Additionally, to prevent an arousal of the spirit (which could cause the spirit to become malevolent), often the name of the deceased will not be mentioned anymore after a day or two of the funeral; they will thusly only ever be referred to indirectly and with a prefixed condition of their name; for example, 'my poor blessed mum', or 'blessed Tony', followed by 'God love him/her'.

4.2.3 – Summary of Appleby Fair

The 'spiritualist' element of Appleby was less prominent than that of the traditionally understood 'Christian' element (in its various forms and denominations). Aside from one particular group, there were no vocalised conflicts of interest between the two camps; although such a tension almost certainly existed[386]. Suggestions that tarot card predictions and palm reading were still a key identifier of Traveller life and a primary source of income was for the most part an outdated stereotype. However, belief in the *power* of such practices and the associated effects of superstitions was prominent and seemingly ingrained in many people of all ages. Subscribing to a belief in the power of the

---

[386] Theologically, the prominent collective approach towards Christianity was conservative in nature and was characterised by a literal interpretation of the Bible. Consequently this meant that any form of spiritual activity other than that which involved 'the Holy Spirit' was deemed to be heretical. Undoubtedly there were reservations held by many I spoke with. However, aside from the *Light and Life* members I engaged with, there was minimal vocal resistance.

spiritual – regardless of origin, was deeply rooted in nearly every Traveller and Gypsy that I engaged with.

Behind every aspect of clairvoyance and talismanic belief at Appleby was the concept of purpose. For the palmists and clairvoyants, the purpose was financial gain and impartation of gifts, and for their clients – acquirement of advice and direction. For the Christian ministries and health advisors, the purpose was the implementation and provision of care, support and service. For the Travellers in attendance, the purpose was the facilitation for forgiveness of sins, participation in the sacraments, and a safe environment to affirm their beliefs. In a way, this pattern was indicative of something greater than the individual and present amongst each person – a 'universal' of sorts amongst Travellers.

The quo animo or intent was the first juncture in the mental process, and suddenly became evident in most Gypsy and Traveller activity at Appleby. Consequently, because of the overall emphasis on 'purpose', the 'intention' element of the mental process also becomes the terminus, forming a perpetual contractual state whereby there is no 'crossing the finishing line' moment. Instead, the eschatological event transpires to be more recognisable as a 'Kingdom of God' event, in which *purpose is located in the present moment*. This purpose is governed by a moral compass constructed by generations of culture, founded and grounded upon relationship with God through the vehicle of Christianity, and facilitated by a primal and natural spirituality. Of course, a dispute could be raised on the grounds that some Travellers, as evidenced, do not believe in God. This does not negate their positioning in terms of the aforementioned process, but highlights that the process works in a 'top down', communal, vertical spectrum, rather than a position of independent outlook. In other words, one is either closer to God or further away, nearer an 'enlightened state' or concerned with 'fleshly matters'. This is supported by the testimonies given by some of the people previously mentioned who claim to have no belief in a God but subscribe knowingly or unknowingly to all or most of the other attributes. Ulrich Koertner (2013) would support the logic of this hypothesis, stating that it is right to assume that religiosity and spirituality are anthropological *constants*, even for people who do not consider themselves to be religious or spiritual; 'thus constructs such as "religio-potentialis" emerge, which one then attributes even to those to whom religious praxis cannot…be attested'[387].

A spiritual and religious cosmology begins to emerge, demanding a recognition or validation of its own uniqueness and thus imposing a state of pluralism inside a border of

---

[387] Koertner, 2013, p. 301.

Christianity. Inside this border runs a syncretistic approach, engaging and integrating both 'traditional' conservative Christianity and a form of primitive spirituality. This seemingly contradictory dynamic creates a situation where it appears that by drawing a 'definitive line', a formula in which to create an understanding of Traveller and Gypsy beliefs may be achieved. This 'line' would have an exclusivist approach on one side, versus a pluralistic approach on the other. Indeed, both could be argued to be the correct stance, given the unique and arguably relativist approach in Gypsy and Traveller religion. John Hick, in his discussions with Alvin Plantinga, debates the intricacies of the application of these ideas – exclusivism and pluralism, in a bid to move forward with their own favoured approaches. Despite their vast differences in philosophical ideas and their conflicting ideas on what it truly means to be religious, they both agree that neither of them 'see exclusivist belief as a theory to explain the facts of religious diversity'[388]. Whilst Hick concedes that Plantinga is justified to hold an exclusivist worldview in relation to his Christianity[389], Hick criticises the analytically philosophical 'highly intellectual understanding of religion'[390] that Plantinga uses, where religions (and their associated worldviews) are viewed only as a body of beliefs. Hick refutes this position, suggesting that 'in some traditions…beliefs have a secondary place, orthopraxis being more important than orthodoxy'[391]. From the observations made during the field research of this thesis, the same can be said of the nature of the amalgamated religious life in Traveller communities. In formulating a structure for Traveller theology, *orthopraxis takes a primary position over orthodoxy.*

Of course, if one were to go further with Hick's rationale, then it would be fair to suggest that Hick would endorse the Traveller perspective on both Christianity and on relationship with God – or 'the Real', as Hick would say[392], based on his overall universalistic narrative. Hick's narrative essentially suggests that all religions are right in themselves, in that they are all valid human expressions that seek the Real[393]. Hick interprets the Real as being presented through two primary methods of relationship: one that is experienced – the 'Real *an sich*'; and another where God is humanly conceived[394]. The development of Hick's theory is an extension and development of Immanuel Kant's distinction between God – or the Real as it is experienced, and God 'as it is in itself'[395]. This distinction is helpful in developing an understanding of how God is perceived and thus interacted and

---

[388] Hick, 2006, p. 208.
[389] Hick, 2006, p. 207.
[390] Hick, 2006, p. 209.
[391] Hick, 2006, p. 209.
[392] Hick, 1995, p. 59.
[393] Hick, 1995, pp. 207 – 210. Also; Macdonald, 2009, p. 27.
[394] Hosseini, 2010, pp. 95 – 96.
[395] Hosseini, 2010, pp. 95 – 96. Also; Hick, 1989, pp. 241 – 245.

interrelated with by Travellers and Gypsies. God is present wholly in the moment. It is in the moment, the interaction and the tangible that 'the Real' is present. God is in the experience and *is* the experience; it is only in the experience that God is 'as it is in itself'[396]. In this sense, God is as Friedrich Schelling would describe as 'heautonomous', that is, 'self-enclosed and self-sufficient'[397].

With God as an element in and through all actions, and with each action being something that is done with purpose, a logical situation arises where all action has a consequence. This 'consequence' is not so much a case of bad versus good, but more of a 'moving towards' or 'moving away' from God. There is a degree of fluidity and freedom in such a narrative, allowing GRT culture to operate by its own standards and moral positioning, guided of course by its Christian blueprint. In this way, a Traveller and Gypsy 'ethic' manifests, in which rules, cultural norms and patterns are compartmentalised. A Traveller theology, in a way, acts as a guide in deciphering these rules and informing the 'ethic' accordingly. Of course, this supposed syncretism that is occurring is in many ways an illusion. Whilst Travellers may enjoy particular freedoms in social norms and religious expression, legal boundaries and Christian denominational affiliation limits any true syncretism. Using speculative reasoning, it may be fair to suggest that at one juncture, most likely in the pro-Romani era, that there was indeed an unrestricted syncretistic cultural expression, facilitated by the afforded freedoms found in the Hindu foundations of Gypsy ethnicity. However, in the Christian context there are absolutes, namely the soteriological confessional element that is Jesus Christ. And whilst a Gypsy and Traveller expression of faith may have a cosmology or ethic marginally akin to a Greco-Platonic system (and as such contestable in light of the progress of historical orthodoxy), it still retains Christ at its centre. Retaining and elevating Christ as the 'ultimate saving principle' is, as Koertner suggests, the criterion which must be applied to both contemporary and historical transformations[398]. Koertner qualifies this position by stating that 'only when… [this]…is the case are syncretistic processes theologically legitimate, and thus capable of expanding the horizon of Christian faith'[399]. If a Traveller cosmology – or 'Traveller ethic' is to be viewed as a vertically-orientated spectrum with God at the bottom (as the source) and the self at the top (as the position of no family input, tradition, beliefs etc.), then intention can always eventually be drawn back to God[400]. It is personal action that

---

[396] Hosseini, 2010, p. 96.

[397] Whistler, 2013, pp. 157 – 158. Also; Seeman, 2003, pp. 164 – 166.

[398] Koertner, 2013, p. 298.

[399] Koertner, 2013, p. 298.

[400] The reasoning behind God being at the bottom of the vertical spectrum and carnal intention being at the top is based upon the idea that God as servant (through the incarnation) finds Himself at the bottom of the metaphorical hierarchy or pyramid, rather than at the peak. It is pride and selfish intention that positions

determines where the individual resides upon the spectrum. Positioning is created by ascription to particular family values and practices, which are subsequently based upon tradition, history and practice, which are then based upon the relationship with and understanding of God.

These traditions and practices are categorised in the 'Five Stations' chart[401]. The exploration of the 'Five stations' proved to be fruitful; the topics of discussion and investigation not only served as 'icebreakers' but effective doorways to personal accounts and revelations. Accessing Traveller and Gypsy communities as a researcher is notoriously difficult, particularly when neither side know each other. This is partly owing to common societal impressions and media constructs, that have served to create, or at least support the notion of 'us' and 'them'. However, by meeting on common ground – i.e. Christianity, these barriers are gradually reduced, removed, or temporarily opened. There are marked differences between gorger and Traveller gatherings and festivals, and this is indicative of the cultural and ethnic differences; however, there is also a significant degree of commonality between the two.

Appleby Fair witnessed two distinctive groupings; the Travellers and the gorgers (consisting of the press, tourists and local residents). The distinctions between the two was apparent and neither appeared to fully engage or interact with the other, except for in the Christian area. Here the unity found in common humanity celebrated uniqueness' and cultural differences, confident in the celebration of the source of both – *God,* namely Christ. Travellers and gorgers celebrated, shared and worshipped together in the intimate expression of personal faith, and at this point they were united. The Christianity expressed by both 'sides' was in many ways markedly different to the other, but was Christianity nonetheless. The spiritual undertone to both the secular and the religious became a syncretistic and pluralistic point of access that allowed both cultures to fully engage. By it being a point of access, both sides kept their identities and celebrated their uniqueness whilst coming together at a point of commonality. My investigations at Appleby revealed a depth of thought and spiritual grounding, based in centuries of tradition, heritage, and cultural evolution. The brief snapshot that I took of Appleby allowed me to witness remnants of the past and emerging trends of the present, where God and/or spirituality was a constant presence in a syncretistic Euro-Indigenous people.

---

the Godless person at the top. However, due to being 'of' God and 'from' God, even the 'selfish person' cannot escape the spectrum of their source.

[401] See Methodology Chapter (1.4.1.1).

4.3 – Case Study 2: Travellers in a Home Setting

After Appleby, I continued my research into Suffolk[402] to spend some time with Family B. My initial contact for this phase of the research was Mike. Mike had introduced me to Family A, through whom I would come into contact with Family B. Mike was informative and helpful in bringing the initial practical elements of the research together but unfortunately was not able to participate any further in the research for personal reasons. As such, my new 'lead' was Mark – Mike's brother. For clarity on the family structures, I have included a 'family tree' below:

Fig. 15 – *Case Study: Family tree*[403]

FAMILY A

Mike (Mark's brother)	Mark	Natalie
Son: 21	Daughter: 18
Son: 11	Daughter: 16

Cousins

FAMILY B

| Patrick (Billy's uncle) | Billy | Charlotte |
| Son: 17 | Daughter: 11 |
| Daughter: 6 |
| Daughter: 4 |

---
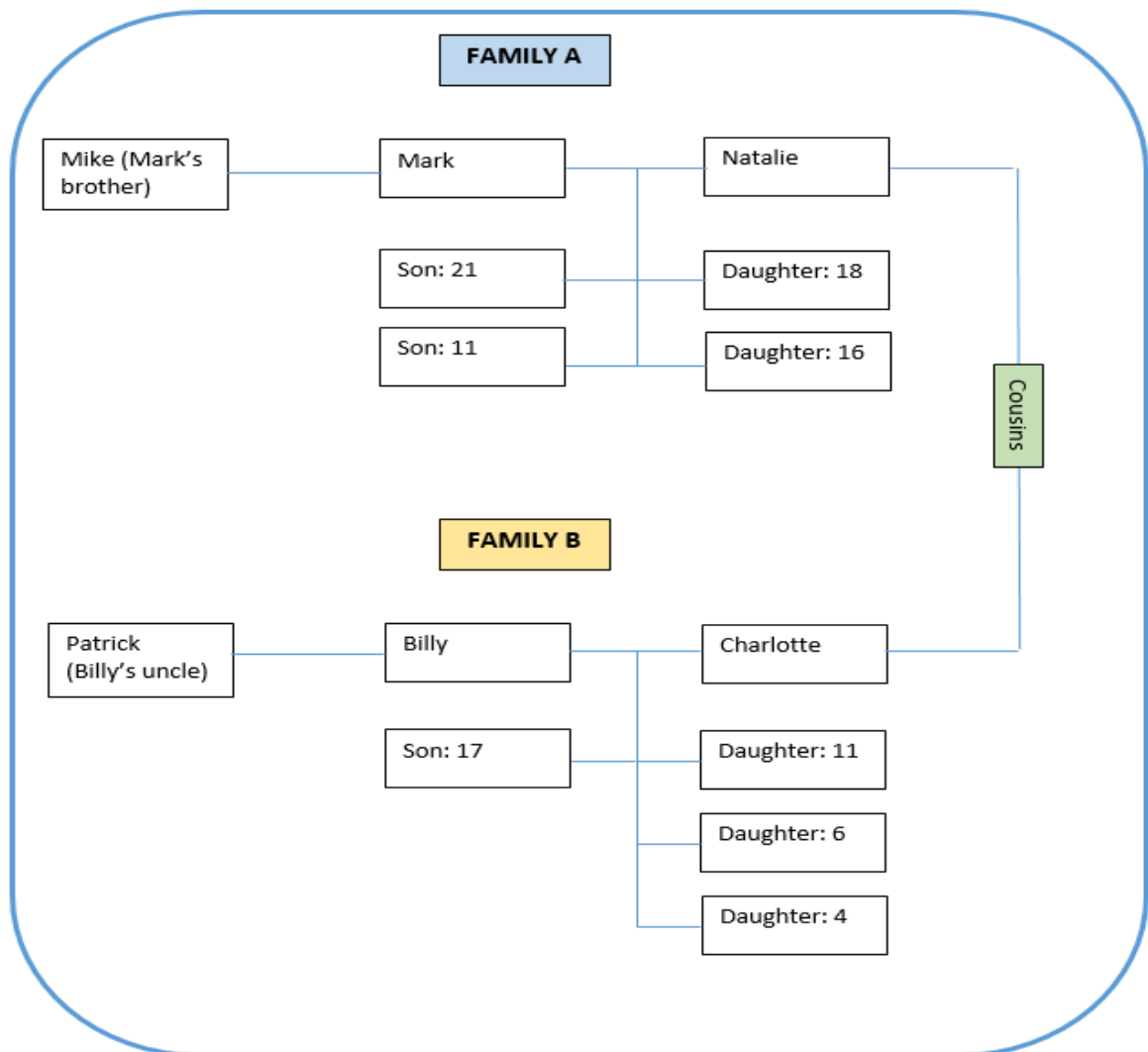
[402] A reminder that all names and locations (except for counties) are pseudonyms.
[403] Family 'Tree', indicating the individual family compositions, including the link between the families via 'Natalie' and 'Charlotte' (cousins).

I would be spending a few days with Family B, before heading further south to spend time with Family A. Please note that Family B are presented first, rather than Family A; this is due to the geographical locations of the families. The administering of letters A and B is due to the order of initial contact.

4.3.1 – Family B: Living in a Trailer

Billy and Charlotte are married and have four children between the ages of 4 and 17 years. They live next door to Patrick (Billy's uncle) on an officially registered Traveller's site in the county of Suffolk. They identify as Catholic and could be considered 'traditional' in their approach and understanding of Traveller life. Billy is a builder and a landscape gardener; however, he also has various other sources of income including logging and selling second-hand vehicles. Charlotte primarily works as a housewife but also supplements the family's income by doing haircuts for some of her friends and family and by customising baby accessories with lace and sequins (such as bibs, clothing and prams). Billy and Charlotte's children were not interviewed during the research because of the potentially sensitive nature of results and answers that may have been given. However, I was with the family as a whole for a considerable amount of time during my stay, and so their contributions in terms of activities and presence, are included where relevant[404].

Approaching the site, one's initial indication of entering a different environment was the stark difference between the new housing development and the unkempt local-authority owned country lane, leading to where Billy and Charlotte reside. The road ran for a mile or so before reaching the site. Nearer the approach, rubbish including general waste, rubble and appliances filled the sides of the small lane, forming yet higher mounds around both sides of the entrance to the site. Two large brick-built pillars marked the entrance, whereupon the waste was no longer present. Instead, the space was filled with an immaculately kept private road situated in an ordered and structured development. Initially no adults were visible, just a few children playing on bikes in the distance. The cleanliness of the place would continue into the individual trailers and caravans filling each plot. This was not unusual in terms of typical Traveller sites that I had been to, but was in stark contradiction with negative stereotypes of Travellers and Gypsies as 'dirty people'[405]. Cleanliness, and indeed 'ritual' cleanliness was a consistent trait that I witnessed during

---

[404] The same rules and principles are also applied to Family A, in terms of data inclusion and collection where minors are concerned.
[405] Hancock, 2013, p. 100.

all stages of the research. In regard to the camp, inferences could again be drawn from early Jewish history. For as much as this was a settlement, it was still a 'camp'. The parallels that were drawn with the Sojourner from the Hebrew Bible (see *Chapter Five*) could now also be made between the next phase of the Mosaic narrative – the Exodus; and more specifically, Moses' time wandering the wilderness and the subsequent establishment of the camp, with its divinely-inspired rules and conditions[406] (Deuteronomy 23:12–14). Observations of and dialogue with the Travellers living on the site revealed that there were technically no specific rules for camp 'hygiene', but that there were 'rules' in operation. These rules, as with all Traveller conventions are transmitted through imitation and tradition and recorded through oral transmission, rather than through documentation. I noted some physical comparative parallels to the 'luck' and 'spirit' elements that were present at Appleby, most notably in the form of a 'missing' trailer. On site I would later discover that there was no trailer number 13, in between trailer's 12 and 14. This was explicitly owing to the belief in the unlucky or cursed nature of the number 13.

In respect to the cleanliness of the site, Billy and Charlotte's plot was no different; the yard in which the primary trailer and the secondary caravan (which housed their 17 year old son) were located was immaculate. Several times a day, Charlotte or her eldest daughter (aged 11 years) would sweep the yard, often, it would seem, when it was arguably unnecessary. The theme of cleanliness was unsurprisingly apparent in the trailer and among the family themselves. In spite of a continuous cleaning regime, Charlotte was always well turned out; her hair, make-up and clothing spotless. She would change her clothing once or twice a day, and always before Billy arrived home on the days that I was there. It is not to say that the changing of clothes throughout the day is a common trend, but it was indicative of the trend towards personal and external hygiene.

4.3.1.1 – Introducing Mokhhadi: Pollution and Purity in the Home

As I arrived on the first day I was welcomed by Charlotte. She invited me into her trailer, we conversed for a short period, and then I was offered a drink (a cup of tea). It was not until later that day when other family members had arrived and I was once again offered a

---

[406] This passage is an example of God's instruction to keep the camp clean; in this instance, to ensure human waste is kept outside of the encampment. The reasoning is located in verse 14; 'For the Lord your God walks in the midst of your camp, to deliver you and give your enemies over to you; therefore your camp shall be holy, that He may see no unclean thing among you, and turn away from you'. This particular aspect is explored further in *Chapter 4*.

tea that I noticed the distinction and separation in how I was treated compared to those who were either family or 'full-blooded' Traveller/Gypsy – not a didikais such as me[407]. As the mugs were taken from one of the cupboards above the cooker area, Charlotte took another mug from a cupboard below the sink. It was all done very smoothly and quickly and would not have even been apparent as having any significance, had it not been for the fact that there were still several mugs in the 'main' cupboard. The same practice occurred in relation to crockery during the serving of meals; again, my plate or bowl was taken from the lower cupboard whereas the rest of the family's crockery was taken from the other cupboard. The plates, bowls and mugs were virtually identical barring one or two details. I raised the subject with Billy and Charlotte at a later stage of my visit. I was informed that as a guest they were using 'the best china' for me. This clearly was not the case. I was extremely grateful that I had been offered food and drink whilst visiting, however, there was a marked difference between the matching fine plates and cups being used by the family and of that being used by myself. In addition to the crockery situation, there were other peculiarities, such as where I could and could not sit whilst in the caravan. Again, whilst there was no mention of any explicit rules or instructions, I was always encouraged to sit in the same place, or leave my shoes in the same spot. Such practices have not been uncommon in the past, but I was surprised to see aspects of Mokhhadi implemented in the current era.

Mokhhadi (or 'chikli'[408]) is the Romany term (with Indian roots) denoting 'ritually unclean'. Robert Dawson states that '[Mokhhadi] is one of the linking beliefs amongst Gypsies all over Britain and throughout the world… [U]nder the Mokhhadi system, certain matters are considered unclean' (such as where men and women wash and aspects of childbirth)[409]. Although not explicit, elements of ritual purity (more specifically, the separation of the 'pure blooded' Gypsy and of the gorger and 'didikais') were being implemented in the camp towards myself. Maintaining standards of purity and cleanliness in both the physical realm (personal and property) and the mental realm (spirituality and logic) was presenting itself as a syncretistic amalgamation of tradition and religious conviction. The synthesis of the family's inherent Christianity and their traditional practice was subtle but apparent. It manifested through many avenues, including conversations and 'normal' daily activities.

Reflecting historically, it is clear that at some juncture there was a transition between Proto-Gypsy ritual purity (that was formulated in its Indian and Hindu roots) into a

---

[407] 'Didikais' is a half-blood Traveller or Gypsy. For example, someone who has a Traveller father and a 'gorger' mother, is a didikais. Didikais is a Romany word and not broadly used nowadays, although its meaning is still relevant in Traveller society (Taylor, 2014, p. 17).
[408] 'Chikli' is a synonym of 'Mokhhadi'. Saying Mokhhadi out loud can be considered impure.
[409] Dawson, 2000, pp. 9 – 11.

common practice that positioned its convictions in a Christian-Judeo framework. It is uncertain at this stage as to whether these 'convictions' pre-existed in a similar form prior to securing Christianity as its host. However, what is certain is the clear influence and appearance of certain 'traditional' church practices and teachings. With the rise of Christian support for Travellers and Gypsies in the 19th century by way of accommodation, food and educational provision, the researcher proposes that the final remnants of any explicitly Indian elements would have been lost during the Victorian period, potentially earlier, with the Christian (and thus the Church instruction) taking its complete grasp by the end of the 19th century. The rise of influential Victorian preachers in Britain and their messages of instruction were the first attempts by an outside body towards a formal and positive outreach for Gypsies. Certain messages would have been complimentary to the practices endorsed and implemented and indeed considered necessary by the Gypsy communities. These messages related to aspects such as hygiene, ritual purity, cleanliness and separateness – both physically and mentally (as described above). Charles Spurgeon, speaking on the 14th December 1890, delivered a sermon entitled *Camp Law and Camp Life.* In his opening statements (with the Deuteronomic accounts as his backdrop), Spurgeon had the following to say with regards to personal and spiritual cleanliness:

> What I admire in it is that God the Glorious, the All-Holy, should stoop to legislate about such things. Such attention was very necessary for health and even for life, and the Lord, in condescending to it, conveys a severe rebuke to Christian people who have been careless in matters respecting health and cleanliness. Saintly souls should not be lodged in filthy bodies. God takes note of matters which persons who are falsely spiritual speak of as beneath their observation. If the Lord cares for such things, we must not neglect them…Dear Friends, the great thing that I would bring out at this time is the *spiritual* lesson of the text—*how the Lord would have His people clean in all things.* The God of Holiness commands and loves purity—purity of all kinds…Filth may be expected in persons of unclean hearts, but those who have been purified in spirit should do their utmost to be pure in flesh, clothes and dwelling[410].

The use of the term 'Camp' in Spurgeon's message refers to aspects such as any home dwelling, person or Christian spiritual walk. However, in spite of the universal application of this sermon (i.e. it is not explicitly aimed towards Gypsies), applying strands of this teaching to the traditions of cultural purity in Traveller culture facilitates a clear (albeit muted) dialectic between seemingly mundane behaviour and intrinsic reasoning. The hermeneutical properties of that reasoning are made possible by the imperceptibly

---

[410] Spurgeon, 1890, p. 1.

congenital nature of the activity. This of course is in *comparison* to the greater, settled populace. Consideration (for the purposes of contextualisation) should therefore be given to not just the differences between Traveller and gorger communities, but also the similarities; in this instance – cleanliness and hygiene. The similarities in the Traveller's situation is not an attempted assimilation but an expression of uniqueness in the common human experience. Exploring this dynamic of investigation produces two key outcomes. Firstly, a greater understanding of the rationale behind particular actions is achieved. Secondly, further evidence emerges of a purposeful reappropriation of Christian concepts in everyday non-religious Gypsy practices.

4.3.1.2 – The Mulatto and the Didikais

During my visit I was challenged by a few people on the site as to who I was and whom I was representing. Upon establishing that I was from a University but primarily 'a man of God…doing the Lord's work[411]', I was greeted with a handshake on most occasions, and after a brief chat I was often left alone. However, very few people were willing to speak to me, even for general conversation. Billy had informed the majority of people living on the site of my imminent arrival, and despite being told that 'his dad's a Gypsy', many were clearly hesitant to engage in any way with me. I was concerned that this would have some impact on how effectively Billy, Charlotte and Patrick would participate in questions and conversations. However, they were for the most part engaging and always welcoming. The aspects of Mokhhadi that I had witnessed were a significant element in Traveller cultural practice. During my stay there was no doubt that the undercurrent of Mokhhadi influenced how those around me treated and presented themselves and how they interacted with others.

As a researcher I constantly assessed my own place in the environment and the impact and effect (or, lack of effect) that my presence may be incurring in the setting. My reflections drew me towards the way I had been subject to what was essentially an 'outsider's' treatment, in terms of where I could sit and what crockery I was presented with. This led me to question the perception of Traveller ethnicity *in* the community and what connotations this held – if any, in relation to a developing Traveller cosmological framework. It transpired that rather than ethnicity as an identifier in this context operating as a method of inclusivity, it was used as a tool to establish to what degree one was a

---

[411] A comment from one of Charlotte's family members.

'pure blooded' Gypsy or Traveller. I reflected upon the concept of the 'mulatto' in Black culture, which offered a reflective precedent to the ethnic situation I found myself resident.

The mulatto is the in-between, the answer and the problem, the 'bastard black son of the white slave owner'[412]. In my own personal circumstance, I was neither fully accepted by my hosts nor was I entirely rejected; I was like them but not of them. I was, as David Mayall described, 'of diluted blood'. And from the differing treatment I was receiving it appeared that, as Mayall would suggest, I was also partially responsible for much of the injustice 'directed towards the clean-living Romany' who were 'superior in manners, morals and occupations' in comparison to 'their degenerate and impoverished mumply-brothers'[413]. This opinion had originally been formed and developed during the 19th century. Undertaking a particular and intentional process, self-appointed 'Gypsiologists' introduced the idea of race, ethnicity, and nature into their works[414]. Through their work a 'racial hierarchy' was developed. This could initially be viewed as a positive move towards firm, racial identification for Gypsies and Travellers. However, as historian Becky Taylor reveals, it was 'Detractors of [the] Gypsies' lifestyle as much as supporters [who] deployed ideas of 'race' and 'nature' in their writings'[415]. Racialising Traveller and Gypsy people in this way allowed for the introduction of the concept that 'racial purity' and 'true' Gypsy blood was declining. This declining process took place through various methods, including intermarriage with 'degenerate members' – or gorgers[416]. The result was the Gypsy equivalent of the mulatto – the 'didikais', or 'half-breed'[417].

Inside the trailer of Billy and Charlotte, the usage of language (both verbal and unspoken communication) highlighted our differences. This was gradually emphasised with increased frequency by my hosts as my stay progressed. I acknowledged in my notes that this was a subjective perception and possibly the result of my unnatural presence in their natural environment. However, I had noticed a reflective dynamic in my own 'mulatto' situation that played out in Billy and Charlotte's situation. As Travellers and Gypsies standing amongst the larger, settled population, *they* were the mulatto – or didikais. In the setting of (particularly Eastern) Europe, there were definitive physical identifiers that separated Gypsy from gorger. As mentioned elsewhere, in the UK, Travellers and Gypsies can be considered as 'the white other'; often physically similar to the larger host – however, always culturally different and/or segregated. Derek Walcott (1974) identifies a

---

[412] Bantum, 2010, pp. 14 – 19.
[413] Mayall, 1988, p. 78.
[414] Taylor, 2008, pp. 8 – 10.
[415] Taylor, 2008, p. 8.
[416] Taylor, 2008, pp. 8 – 9.
[417] Taylor, 2008, p. 8.

similar situation among individuals from the Caribbean islands, where ancestry and history – and thus identity, is and will become 'increasingly exotic hybrids, broken bridges between two ancestries, Europe and the Third World of Africa and Asia'[418]. The transition and movement of Gypsies from India to Europe and beyond, and subsequent integrations and inter-ethnic and racial relationships has indeed created a situation whereby Gypsies and Travellers are as Walcott suggests, 'broken bridges', or as Chris Bongie (1998) would describe – 'islands'[419]. Bongie presents the mulatto as an island – and conversely, the island as mulatto. His 'island theory' suggests that an island in this sense must be viewed as a 'place both of "defined boundaries" and "dangerous isolation". Islands are figures that must be viewed in a double light'[420]. Bongie continues:

> On the one hand, as the absolutely particular, a space complete unto itself and thus an ideal metaphor for the traditionally conceived, unified and unitary, identity; on the other, as a fragment, a part of some greater whole from which it is in exile and to which it must be related – in an act of (never completed) completion that is always also, as it were, an ex-isle, a loss of the particular. The island is thus the site of a double identity – closed and open…[421].

The 'island' metaphor as identity 'begs to be figured as either positive or negative exile'[422]. Indeed, on its own standing, *Gypsy as mulatto* will always be unique and will dichotomously exist through the physical, the mental and the spiritual, in a state of 'belonging with' and 'separated from' the larger space in which it resides.

As such, despite its uniqueness, 'Traveller' or 'Gypsy' in itself can only ever be 'less than' – not in a detrimental way, but in a state of always just falling short, of just 'missing the mark'. However, the foundation of the Traveller equation is completed – and thus made whole (and 'equal to', rather than 'less than'), when its core is taken into account and applied – its Christ centrality. Again, the investigation is forced to return to its hypothesis of an inner 'Christian' core, to bring comprehension and completion to what is otherwise an incomplete equation. For whilst 'Traveller' or 'Gypsy' in the modern context can be considered to be a mulattic creation, consisting of 'a synthesis of ideas, a mixture of parts that mitigate two contrary poles'; it is 'Jesus' body…that renders the idea of dichotomous poles incoherent'[423]. Christ becomes the vehicle through which the mulattic position is both legitimised and made complete, whilst any negative forms of separation are made

---

[418] Walcott, 1974, p. 20.
[419] Enz, 2006, p. 383.
[420] Enz, 2006, p. 384.
[421] Bongie, 1998, p. 18.
[422] Enz, 2006, p. 384.
[423] Bantum, 2010, p. 112.

null and void[424]. Christ in this way does not cause any detraction from the Traveller-mulatto equation, but rather He adds to it. In this way, Christ, as Bantum proposes, *is* mulatto[425]; Christ is Traveller, Christ is Gypsy. Bantum continues to explain the importance of this revelation in regard to the specificity of the racial / ethnic question:

> Christ's identity as mulatto becomes essential at this point not for his identity, but for ours. To confess Christ's identity as mulatto is to begin to perceive the reality of racial and ethnic formation constitutive of our lives together and of our lives as Disciples of Christ. Confessing Christ as mulatto is to faithfully confess our location in a world made by racial logic[426].

There are examples of this 'racial logic' in situations where religious reasoning is absent. Cyriaco Lopes provides a comprehensive investigation of the 'Cão Mulato' (mulatto dog) art project in Brazil. The art project is provocative and conceptual and has continued since 1998. It seeks to engage with Brazil's art culture through 'conversations' with Brazil's racial past and presence – most notably its concept of mixed-race and the idea of mulatto[427]. The Cão Mulato project went some way in exposing the false homogeneity that was being touted by Brazilian authorities, which all but made the mulatto presence an invisible entity amongst the art scene and the social classes[428]. For what exposure the Brazilian mulatto did receive, it was done so in a contradictory situation whereby the mulatto was simultaneously romanticised and demonised. The mulatto were identified as 'indigenous people' who 'were seen as exemplars of Rousseau's "noble savage" and were often entangled in an impossible but reciprocal love with white Brazilians who romanticized the natives' alleged innocence and purity – a Romeo-and-Juliet scenario in which the divide was racial and cultural'[429]. Through his revelation that Christ is also mulatto, Bantum addresses this problematic situation whereby the mulatto is essentially trivialised and made to be 'less than'[430]. With Christ as the platform of mediation, a Traveller theology – with its underlying conation towards authentic ethnicity, is able to locate Travellers in a position where the culture and the people can be understood for what it is and who they are, rather than what is imagined or presumed.

---

[424] Bantum, 2010, p. 112.
[425] Bantum, 2010, p. 112.
[426] Bantum, 2010, p. 113.
[427] Lopes, 2012, pp. 43 – 45.
[428] Lopes, 2012, p. 43.
[429] Lopes, 2012, pp. 46 – 47.
[430] Bantum, 2010, p. 113.

Jürgen Moltmann demonstrates the applicability of the principle of this 'Christ equation', when he challenges and explores the issue of theodicy[431]. Moltmann proposes that the godforsakenness of the cross, combined with the contradictory outpouring of love demonstrated at the same event, provides a dialectical situation through Jesus' identification with the suffering, with the abandoned, with the outcasts and with all who suffer[432]. The contradiction is the facilitation of the unification of suffering (the Cross event) and love (Christ's sacrifice). In a similar fashion, Billy and Charlotte were legitimised in their desire to have a unique identity that was different to the larger culture around them, because the existence of their opposite – a settled society, meant a non-settled society – or nomads, must also legitimately exist. Whether viewed as an Hegelian proposition of the thesis requiring the antithesis for its own existence, or whether analogised as a Newtonian 'third law' equation whereupon the reaction of the masses produces an unwanted opposition that is equally as opposed to the other, the contradiction remains. Charlotte proposed that her differences (compared to settled society) were owed to a tradition and culture whose roots and branches were being maintained by their centrality in Christ. Her legitimation of her existence and differences were for her made possible by her relationship with God. Below is an excerpt from one of our conversations in which 'difference' was discussed:

S = Steven (myself)   C = Charlotte

S: So, what you're saying is, Jesus is more than just a 'comforter' to you?

C: And my family

S: And your family, of course

C: Yeah you see, Jesus, he's an example isn't he. He's what we should be like. We shouldn't be like them out there (*points out of window – non-specific direction). We're meant to be different.

S: Am I right in saying then, that you see Jesus as different?

C: That's the truth.

S: So do you see yourself like Jesus then?

C: No, no, but different, like him (*use of hand gestures). Does that make any sense?

---

[431] See Chapter 3.
[432] Bauckham, 2006, pp. 47 – 48; 53 – 55; & 56 – 58.

S: Yeah, I think so. Let me make sure. Jesus was different, in what he did and said etc. As a Traveller, you see yourself as different compared to gorgers. So, you and Jesus are the same because you're 'different'?

C: Except we ain't as good as him are we? (*chuckles). But we should try to be though.

S: Definitely! (*laughs back). What helps you be like him? Any particular Bible passages, or things you do?

C: Well, Jesus did say something about us being like him, and because of that, we'd get grief an all.

S: Yes, you're right – it's in John I think. Not sure what verse (*gets Bible from backpack to look for verse etc.).

C: It helps because we are who we are, and we shouldn't have to change for nobody or nothing. And we won't. But see, if Jesus said we'd get grief for being like him, then we must be doing something right, right?

S: (*nods in agreement, leans forward whilst looking for verse previously alluded to (hoping for more answering)).

C: We're all loved by God, and accepted. We don't have to pretend or be different. I wouldn't expect me kids to be different now would I? And he's our heavenly Father ain't he, so we don't have to be different for him. When these (*points at two of her smaller children) are playing I don't tell them no, unless they're being little sods of course. And why should I? They're just being themselves.

Charlotte's verbalisation of her relationship with God was at times hampered by her ability to effectively express what she wanted to convey. Often her use of hand and body movement would take over her words. The conversation above perhaps loses its impact due to the inability to convey tone and expression through text alone. Charlotte's contribution came across in her whole being, through physical animation and not just her words. Disappointingly, Billy spoke very little throughout my stay. He would occupy himself by spending time with other men on the site, sometimes disappearing for a few hours at a time. 'Work was quiet' he told me, whilst cutting logs in his yard one afternoon, 'but we keep going'. 'What do you do when there's no work at all'? I asked. 'I pray for the good Lord to help me, so I can look after the babies he's given me'. With that he continued to chop and cut the large pile of timber. Occasionally his uncle Patrick would wander over to his plot. Patrick walked with a limp and had a walking stick. He had suffered a stroke three years previously, leaving him with poor muscle function down the majority of one side of his body and a severe speech impediment. As such, he said very

little and consistently held a small cloth or handkerchief to his mouth. Charlotte had told me that she took him to Mass every Sunday and once during the week, and that occasionally he would get a visit from the local Priest. Patrick's wife had left him and taken their two sons around seven years ago, and hadn't been seen or made contact since. According to Charlotte, Patrick was a man 'in need of God's mercy, for his health and his sins'. A little over a week from arriving, I felt my stay at the site was over. I was never asked to leave but I could sense a tension between Billy and Charlotte, and an awkwardness and uncomfortableness from Billy towards me. Not wanting to outstay my welcome, I thanked them for their time and for having me.

4.3.2 – Family A: Living in a House

Shortly after leaving Billy and Charlotte, I headed southwards to the county of Dorset and made my way to Mark and Natalie's accommodation. Their semi-detached house sits in an unassuming 'ordinary' street, comprising of 1960/70s former local authority housing. The only indications that the residents of the house in question could be different in any way was their unique taste in front garden decoration (in comparison to the rest of the street). I was greeted with large brick-built pillars holding 6-foot high black metal railings and a large black gate; these were vastly different to the neighbouring properties' small fencing and walls. Additionally, there was a caravan on the drive, a relatively new high-end German sports car, and large brass fittings on the gates and front door. The obvious display of material wealth was noticeably different to the site I had left a few days previously.

I would later ask Mark about his rationale to present his apparent financial standing in such a way. I explained that I was not intending to be cynical or insensitive, but wanted to make a fair enquiry of what I had witnessed at the camp. Mark was quite clear about his choices, claiming that it was several aspects that shaped his choices and that this was *his* 'camp'. Additionally, he stated that he wanted other people (gorgers) to know that he was wealthy, and as such, 'not just a dirty Gypsy'. His wealth was his badge of honour, and as some of the Travellers at Appleby had done, he wore his financial success in public and made a point of showing it to others. As with many Travellers that I had encountered who had appeared to be financially solvent, Mark's supposed position of opulence was not quite as it seemed. Mark was clear that he invested and stored his money with him and about his person, as Gypsies and Travellers had done so over many generations. Whereas in the past Travellers may have owned many horses or worn lots of gold around their necks and on their fingers, nowadays their money was often put into desirable cars,

properties and other goods. Horse trading for some was still an important method of business and investment. The message from Mark was clear though: Wealth would stay in the hands of the Travellers and not in the vaults of banks nor the coffers of the Government. Mark did not take his money for granted; like Billy he also had to work many hours to provide for his family. And like Billy, he also maintained a thankfulness and indebtedness to God for his provision.

> God provides you see: We thank him at our weddings; we thank him at our funerals; we thank him when we've got a new bubba in the family. Everything, we thank him for. We're grateful cos' we know without him we'd have nothing. Other people might have fancy stuff, cars and the like. But it don't mean nothing cause' they got it by greed. We got's what we got because we chose him – not because we chose nice things.

The central tenet to Mark's actions and determination was based on his relationship with God. Again, as with many of the other Travellers I had spoken to, faith operated as both a tool and a vehicle. Through faith they were validated. Often this validation adopted tangible and/or measurable manifestations through blood ties, celebrations and in unity as a community.

Mark and Natalie were very welcoming and seemed to be grateful for my being there. There had been a recent death in the family and the pair were keen to share stories and memories about the relative who had passed. In talking, both parties benefited. For them, the sharing of how they were feeling clearly had an emotional impact, particularly with Natalie, who at the end of one conversation was smiling and appeared 'relieved'. For myself, it meant that I gained valuable insights into how death was being treated in a family environment. The family member who had died was a young male, and the topic that received the most attention was not so much on the lost relative himself surprisingly, but on how many children he would have had, who he was about to marry, and whether his brothers and sisters would use his name for one or more of their children. Continuing his legacy in one form or another was now their primary concern: 'God gave him to this world, but the Devil took him away. It wouldn't be right to God if we didn't remember him properly'. At the site where Billy and Charlotte lived, the strong family bond was quite apparent – not just in Billy's family, but in others on the site as well. In Mark and Natalie's home, the focus on the family was inescapable. Nearly every conversation involved discussions about various family members, events happening currently or in the future, and about past relatives and their legacies and influences.

Mark and Natalie were welcoming and made me feel at home. Their openness to discussion was invaluable and insightful, as was the times when I was simply left to

quietly observe. However, their insistence on privacy was at times frustrating, simply because I believe they were, according to my own experience, an excellent 'typical' representation of modern-day Travellers in the UK. After a period of time, I left and made my way home to document my findings and compile the data. The difficulties faced by many other researchers in the field (of not being allowed to record information by way of recording equipment and photos) were no different to me in any of the environments that I found myself. However, my unique social position and my 'Christian' focus in my study allowed me access that I may have otherwise not enjoyed.

Mark and I spoke on many of the issues that I had already discussed with other Travellers and Gypsies from other sites, Appleby Fair and in other environments. Whilst I intended for certain areas to be raised in discussion, I was open and receptive to any new or emerging areas that I may have not known about or not considered previously. Some areas were more explicit than others, warranting specific sections, whilst others were more implicit and were better suited to being positioned in certain themes and narratives. These areas, themes, and narratives comprise of elements that include among other things: aesthetic dimensions[433] (which includes topics such as language, time and physical space), and Sojourning (with the Gypsy as Sojourner).

4.4 – Summary

Overall, the fieldwork was successful, in that it provided excellent data and that it revealed evidence of themes supportive of the thesis' hypothesis (a consistent religious thread of Christian belief and practice in UK-based Gypsy and Traveller communities). The two phases of primary research were conducted at Appleby Fair, and with Families' 'A' and 'B'. The research produced some unexpected results, in addition to particular challenges, such as the recording of data. Appleby Fair was a fruitful source of primary data and delivered more avenues of investigation than I had previously anticipated. I believe this was due to the high volume of attendees and the broadness of the demographic that I was able to interact with during the fair.

My time with Family A (Mark and Natalie) who lived in fixed accommodation was challenging, in terms of obtaining quality and usable data through the methods I had employed thus far. Whilst Mark and Natalie had been open to conversation through electronic messaging and telephone calls, there were breakdowns in communication and interaction when I arrived at their home. They displayed an occasional unwillingness to

---

[433] See Chapter Five.

engage, and my position as 'hidden researcher' was compromised at times when they insisted on showing me aspects of their lives that *they felt* I should witness. Any data that I retrieved or interpreted during my stay there was predominantly from when the atmosphere was more 'normalised'. Family B (Billy and Charlotte) were, as research subjects, ideal and accommodating. For the most part I was fully enabled to research and observe where I deemed necessary. With Family B I experienced the same limitations that I had encountered during the majority of my fieldwork (a reluctance by participants to have interviews and encounters videotaped or recorded, or have photos taken). However, I still enjoyed a relative degree of freedom and an openness from my interviewees.

As a result of the combination of the varying and adaptive approaches used during the field research, new themes of interest and of theological relevance emerged. Such themes included but were not limited to: An evolving pluralistic and syncretistic cosmology – or 'Traveller ethic'; significance of purity and moral codes (physical and spiritual); death and the afterlife; and the concept of Traveller as mulatto. All of these themes or concepts were investigated as they emerged. Where relevant and where it is deemed applicable (if at all) these themes will be explored further in *Chapter Five*. It is my belief however, that these themes *will* require attention beyond this thesis. In this respect, it is the role of this thesis to establish these themes as vital principles and elements in the foundation of Traveller theology – rather than create the theology itself at this juncture.

In terms of emerging themes, potential research paths, and data collected, the fieldwork was successful. Additionally, in terms of the potential scope for further research and for ideas requiring greater exploration – at this stage the fieldwork was overwhelming. However, for now there is a gradual contraction of the broadness of the thesis. As such, the next phase of the thesis will introduce a forensic analysis of both the theological nature and application of the areas and themes uncovered thus far.

CHAPTER FIVE – TRAVELLER COSMOLOGY: AESTHETIC DIMENSIONS

'Yes, just as you can identify a tree by its fruit, so you can identify people by their actions'
(Matthew 7:20).

5.1 – Introduction

Chapter Four – The Case Studies raised multiple avenues of (potential) investigation. However, the tangible application and theological dissection of these areas was yet to be explored. *Chapter Five* will be presented as a reaction to the case studies (and in light of the chapters previous to the case studies), serving as an explanatory component of the 'performance'[434] of Traveller *culture*. Any performative elements will together form a provisional structure that in some ways could be considered as representative of a Traveller 'cosmology' or 'religion'. Such a cosmology with its theological narration and navigation will in the first instance primarily draw upon four areas of questioning: Language, Space and symbolism, Nomadism, and Time. From there a more 'intimate' theological portrayal will be developed and explored, whereby the following themes will form the discourse: Gypsy and Traveller origins, Lineage, Death and the afterlife. Collectively the thematic questions and elements will inform the final stages of the chapter, assisting in the development of a Traveller Christology and a Traveller Eschatology. These areas of questioning are rooted in both the aim of the thesis (to identify and thread cultural strands from Gypsy and Traveller culture into a coherent theology[435]) and the hypothesis that a uniquely Traveller or Gypsy worldview – or 'religion' is fundamental in forming a complete understanding of Traveller culture and identity.

---

[434] 'Performance' is to be defined using an amalgamation and fluid application of the following propositions: Firstly, a 'performance may be defined as all the activity of a given participant on a given occasion which serves to influence in any way any of the other participants' (Schechner, 2006, p. 29; Goffman, 1959, pp. 15 – 16). Secondly, 'Performances mark identities, bend time, reshape and adorn the body, and tell stories… (including but not limited to) performances of art, rituals, or ordinary life' (Schechner, 2006, p. 28). Thirdly, 'ordinary' – or 'everyday' life, in relation to performance, shall be understood as something that 'involves years of training and practice, of learning appropriate culturally specific bits of behaviour, of adjusting and performing one's life roles in relation to social and personal circumstances' (Schechner, 2006, 28 – 29). Finally, 'ritual', in relation to ritual as performance, shall be defined and understood as the following; 'Ritual is to the symbols it dramatizes as action is to thought… [R]itual integrates thought and action… [A] focus on ritual performances integrates our thought and their actions' (Bell, 1992, p. 32).

[435] These aims are originally mentioned in the *Abstract* section of this thesis.

5.1.1 – Formulating a Gypsy Religion

It has historically been understood that the religion of a people group forms 'part and parcel of their identity'[436]. In examining the area of Gypsy religion, Hancock draws upon the assumption that religion is often understood as a 'physical place of worship, a clergy and a set of written scriptures'[437]. Hancock states that 'since we [Gypsies] have none of these, we must therefore have no religion of our own'[438]. He proceeds to suggest that a more accurate description of what constitutes a Gypsy religion is a belief in a superior spiritual entity, force or power, 'and the maintenance of a daily way of life dedicated to serving and pleasing that power. From this perspective, not only do we have a religion, but living it is so much a part of our lives that we don't even think of it as such; it isn't only saved for the weekends'[439].

Hancock's perspective on the foundations of a 'Gypsy' religion are predicated upon looking for a religion *in* or *of* the Travellers themselves. This creates a situation where there is no God but simply a 'way of life' or an affiliation to a 'greater ideal'. Hancock's summary of the Traveller religious work/life ethic and balance is evidentially accurate[440]. However, Hancock's resistance to engage with the latter stages of the Gypsy cultural evolution in favour of an approach grounded in historic Romani foundations prevents him from applying a fully Christian understanding to the (contemporary) Traveller narrative[441]. Even so, engaging in an absolute Christian position does not subject the partaker to blind acceptance of a Christian Gypsy 'gospel'. Doing so would negate the value of theology, which in this instance stands as the objective mediator in understanding Gypsy and Traveller culture. Instead, theology enables safe participation in Gypsy religion and culture by pursuing truth through detachment of preconceptions. In this way, the very thing that Hancock seemingly avoids may be the thing needed to unlock both the religious and social understandings he seeks to explain. Still, the foundational roots of the Gypsy belief structure are crucial in making sense of the present. They are, however, limited in application or impact when they fail to embrace what Gypsies and Travellers have

---

[436] Hancock, 2013, p. 74.
[437] Hancock, 2013, p. 74.
[438] Hancock, 2013, p. 75.
[439] Hancock, 2013, p. 75.
[440] See Chapter Three.
[441] This may be because Hancock's understanding is not directed to any one particular religion and therefore, much like his 'Buddhist' approach, he deliberately avoids attachment to a god. Nonetheless, the point seems to be that Hancock appears to limit GRT religion as anything other than a cultural value or set of practices.

embraced or chosen as their own[442]. Therefore, the logical solution to forming an understanding of the 'Traveller religion' is to meet that lived-out religion[443] where it stands, and to interpret it in the manner that that specific religion requires. In this instance that religion is Christianity, and therefore that response must be a theological one.

The earliest examples of this lived-out religion are found in the methods employed by the early Gypsies making their passage through Europe by way of Papal letters[444]. This trend of religious observance through intentional lived-out practices continues in the contemporary era, as suggested by Hancock (see above). As such, the aesthetic elements of the Travellers' life become elements in which God is both honoured and witnessed – or conversely, elements in which God is dishonoured and made absent. In the previous chapter elements outside of the person were explored in relation to this 'inner aspect' of a lived-out religious expression.

Now the exploration moves steadily towards the core of the Travellers' theological expression by looking at the person and that which they are identified with (or that which they use to identify themselves). In the first instance, common elements and aspects shall form the areas of investigation[445]. This allows for a more encompassing narrative to develop that is reflective of Travellers in the UK as a *whole*, rather than regional or 'tribal' peculiarities. There is a precedent behind the process of recognising 'tribal' peculiarities that occur between extensive extended Traveller families and then uniting them through their indigenous commonalities. It can be found in the organised 'sweats' that have occurred since 2004 in North America amongst Native-Christian leaders from various tribes, such as the Cherokee, Apaches, and the Navajo[446]. These commonalities become symbols of a shared cultural identity and heritage and a channel or 'stage' through which Traveller-Christianity is performed. Indeed, it is *through* and *on* this communal Traveller-Christian stage that 'social solidarity' is sustained and created, and where social rituals and ideas are not so much expressed but embodied; they are 'thought in/as-action'[447].

---

[442] This point is specifically pointing towards the (intentional and historically consistent) decision by Gypsies to align and ground themselves culturally and spiritually in Christianity (see *Chapter Three* for this developmental process), and more recently, the European Evangelical Pentecostal revival (with particular reference to the British revival (see Acton et al, 1979; 1997; 1999; 2014).

[443] Hancock, 2013, p. 75.

[444] Taylor, 2014, pp. 43 – 44; Shirley, 1968, pp. 217 – 218.

[445] These 'general aspects and common elements' have been decided through a combination of the data that has been presented thus far and through the relevant approaches detailed in the methodology chapter. Therefore any topics chosen are culturally, theologically and statistically relevant.

[446] Twiss, 2015, pp. 144 – 146.

[447] Schechner, 2006, p. 57.

5.2 – Language

This section is focused upon the *use* and presentation of Traveller language in a theological context, exploring the indication of a Christological centring in the language's rationale. This section is *no*t an investigation into Romani linguistics – a subject which has been discussed and examined in great length by a number of academics. The primary narrative emerging from the researchers of such research suggests that the dialect evolved over several centuries from its Indian origins into something unique (partly owing to the transition into Europe by Travellers)[448]; and that during the 20th century there were numerous investigations into the original 'Gypsy' language of Romani.

However, many aspects of Romani have been lost or become obsolete in the UK over time, and the language itself is seldom used as a complete dialect. Rather, certain words or phrases are utilised in a complimentary or slang context in amongst a 'normal' use of English. The Romani term 'poggerdi jib' is a direct reference to the language of British Travellers and can be translated as 'broken tongue/language'. Clark suggests that the term – whilst commonly recognised, can be 'regarded as offensive as it (broken') implies that Anglo-Romani is somehow not a 'proper' language', despite many commentators on the matter proposing the contrary[449].

In writing about Gypsy identity, Brian Belton suggests that even when an entire mode of verbal communication is clearly present, it is not necessarily synonymous with 'a separate language, ancient origins, or a distinct heritage'[450]. Furthermore, Okely argues that 'language moves and changes separately from groups of people', suggesting that language, rather than being a fixed determinate (such as the construct proposed by Clark), is instead an indicator of a past relational dynamic, such as colonialism[451]. However, Acton highlights the perpetual and universal application of Gypsy languages, indicating a distinct and *current* homogenising dynamic in Gypsy language[452]. So, whilst the origins and identifying nature of Gypsy language is contestable, it can be argued that at a minimum Gypsy language is functional, universally present, and related to a wider discourse.

Functionality in British Gypsy language appears to take several modes of operation. These functions include among others: A consistent theme of preservation for the cultural

---

[448] Richardson & Ryder, 2012, p. 143.
[449] Clark & Greenfields, 2006, 361.
[450] Belton, 2005, pp. 27 – 28.
[451] Okely, 1992, p. 7.
[452] Acton, 1974, pp. 55 – 57.

lineage of the society (i.e. maintaining a 'pure' Traveller blood); an intentional separation between Gypsy and gorger cultures and peoples[453]; and a form of identity – in that, there are particular terms that are only used (and possibly only understood) in Gypsy and Traveller circles[454]. This can also extend to certain dialects which can make accessing or relating to Gypsy and Traveller communities challenging. Furthermore, the directness, intentionality and occasionally explicit nature of the language and dialect is sometimes interpreted as an act of aggression or inappropriateness[455]. Importantly, it is through the functional and shared (or universal) structure of Gypsy language that a particular and wider discourse of Christological centring is revealed.

The structure of Gypsy language appears to be, among other things, a twofold construct. Firstly, the 'direct' nature of Gypsy language is characterised by a contractual intentionality consisting of definitive borders and unassuming positions where a yes is a yes and a no is a no[456] ('Let what you say be simply 'Yes' or 'No'; anything more than this comes from the evil one' Matthew 5:37). Secondly, the language indicates a knowing and intentional sacrificial action of choosing to remain in a personal position of suffering for others in the cultural collective. This avenue of vulnerability acknowledges that the language used is necessary in order to preserve one's identity and culture but can at times can be detrimental, drawing unwanted external opinions and perceptions. The directness of the speech is wholly encompassing and is not only used for interactions with gorgers but also between Gypsies and Travellers. Furthermore, it appears that as well as being Christologically orientated, a contradiction intentionally exists. That contradiction is found in the rigidness of the speech and in the fluidity of the vulnerability that that speech creates. In an Hegelian approach, the 'thesis' of the rigidity is met with the 'antithesis' of the fluidness. The resulting synthesis is a Christ-centred stability in the uncertainty of the Gypsy and Traveller's environment.

---

[453] Hancock, 2013, p. 139.

[454] Hancock, 2013, p. 139.

[455] A common characteristic of Travellers (as suggested in other parts of this thesis) is the undertaking of everything with intentionality. This includes the use of speech / language (Wood, 1973, p. 45; Horne, 2014, p. 11). However, the perception that Travellers are showing aggression or hostility through language often emerges from other sources such as media representation and historic narratives. For examples see the following: Liégeois, 1994, p. 244; Mayall, 1988, pp. 79 – 82; Knapton, 2015.

[456] Scripturally this approach is explicitly dealt with in Matthew 5:37. However, the rationale and theological underpinning is primarily located in the Deuteronomic instruction (Deuteronomy 23: 21 – 23) pertaining to making good on one's word, so that any statement made is integral and contractual (v.23). A refrainment from such an agreement would be shameful – and therefore polluting (v. 21).

5.2.1 – Traveller Language as Christian Expression

Traveller and Gypsy language can thus be recognised beyond its *basic* context of communication, and is understood to be a reflection of the Traveller's permanent unsettlement. In the process of drawing clarity from a situation in which gorger societal norms and interpretations can offer no reasonable explanations or support, keeping Christ at the centre and as the foundation behind the perpetual discomfort of a defended and (arguably) self-imposed suffering, is a logical alternative. Often this intentional separateness serves both as a form of empowerment by the excluded and/or minority group in question, and as a 'continual expression and validation' of identity and social-group membership. Key to this principle is a shared 'centrality' or point of belief. In this instance that 'centrality' is Christ[457]

In Christ, Gypsy language and the application of it is neither condoned nor condemned, but is given opportunity to exist. This dynamic can also be understood as the contradiction of the Traveller's language finding solace in the contradiction of Christ's own language and proposition – to have life in abundance but to also pick up the Cross daily (Matthew 10:38; Matthew 16:24; Mark 8:34; Luke 9:23; Luke 14:27). By embracing this state of limbo that avoids the comforts of acceptance and the conveniences of assimilation, a state of 'joint (liberative) suffering' is made with Christ – in both His comfort and His moment of suffering. Pursuing this avenue draws the Traveller – knowingly or unknowingly into what Jürgen Moltmann would present as a 'theology of the cross'. This 'human way of life and practice chosen by this congregation of weak, lowly and despised persons' becomes a 'way of life which takes away the power of social circumstances which bring about the aggression of dehumanised man, and endeavours to overcome it'[458]. Miroslav Volf confirms the absolute centrality and functionality of Christ in this 'being of otherness' where Christ is enabled. The 'centre of the self is not a timeless "essence"…underneath the sediment of culture and history…' states Volf, '[T]he centre is Jesus Christ crucified and resurrected who has become part and parcel of the very structure of the self'[459].

Understanding language in this manner is helpful and progressive but it is not without its difficulties. As mentioned, Gypsy and Traveller language is at times challenging because of its directness. Consequently, certain established approaches that attempt to differentiate and compartmentalise 'norms' must be reimagined. Theologically speaking,

---

[457] Barth, 1969, pp. 14 – 15. Also see Bhopal & Myers 2008, pp. 104 – 108.
[458] Moltmann, 2015, pp. 66 – 67.
[459] Volf, 1996, p. 70.

this is directed towards elements of syncretism, whereby contrasting perceptions, i.e. 'good and evil', are sometimes unhelpful. Richard Twiss explores this dynamic and calls for a relocation for any discourse of syncretism, from its 'Western epistemological hegemony to an Indigenous worldview framework'[460]. This suggestion by Twiss is understandable given Twiss' personal struggle[461]. However, its application is arguably unrealistic given the magnitude of the request, and is perhaps dismissive of the validity of an established Western perspective and worldview. However, with regard to his perspective on relocating a discourse on syncretism, Twiss highlights the danger that syncretism holds for marginalised groups:

> [T]his hegemony is understood as biblically rooted in the concern for "converting the lost". Thus syncretism is threatening because it encroaches on the gospel message as *the* saving message by differentiating good from evil, sacred from profane, heaven from hell, and, in our instance, Native from non-Native[462].

Twiss recognises that this understanding of language and recognition of position cannot be rehabilitated – 'because of its theologically political nature'. However, he believes that by acknowledging and 'widening the context of the conversation' of these theological parameters, that the 'culturally demonising power' towards and in the marginalised communities can be reduced[463]. By widening the context, as Twiss suggests, gorgers can both grasp the subtleties and cultural expressions in Traveller speech. Thus, what was once dismissed as alien, in both secular and religious circles, becomes humanised and worthy of acknowledgement. Volf examines and explores the concept of 'self' in this expanding and widening context where those whose identities are found or drawn from a state of 'otherness' can be better understood. Volf explains how Paul presumes a 'centred self, more precisely a wrongly centred self' that requires Christ[464]. In this way, Christ acts as a balance or a permanent contradictory tension, allowing the options of free will and salvation to operate freely and in a syncretistic fashion. As such, the Traveller is able to 'produce and reconfigure themselves by a process of identifying with others and rejecting them…by fabricating enemies and suffering animosities…by loving and hating' – a process that is also recognised by psychologists[465]. This element of contradictory

---

[460] Twiss, 2015, pp. 30 – 31.
[461] Twiss, 2015, p. 31.
[462] Twiss, 2015, p. 31.
[463] Twiss, 2015, p. 31.
[464] Volf, 1996, p. 69. Volf is speaking of the 'wrongly centred self', and the need for it to be crucified with Christ, in order to de-centre the self from its 'human' centre – into its 'Christ' centre. Volf references Paul's words "I have been crucified with Christ", which would have been taken from Galatians 2:20.
[465] Volf, 1996, p. 69.

presentation in the application and perceived application of Traveller speech transcends beyond just the element of language. Examples can be found both in external presentations and in certain internal moralistic applications[466].

Whilst the idea of a contradictory nature (in the sense stated above) is not by any means exclusive to Gypsies and Travellers, it is *consistent* in Gypsy and Traveller communities. Traveller dialect (and not the structure / grammar of language) therefore, is something that once acknowledged as something much more than speech or an accent, can reveal a greater depth – a history even, of a people-group that have suffered oppression and embraced Christian grace.

5.3 – Space and Symbolism

During the field research element of this project there were many implicit demonstrations of practices in the physical environment that suggested a larger, collective narrative of beliefs. These practices – whilst valid and important in their own right, were working in a synergistic fashion, becoming as Aristotle once famously theorised, 'greater than the sum of its parts'[467]. The research was indicating the existence of a 'religious holism' in operation. However, the definition and the subsequent usage of the term 'holism' is arguably too broad and subjective, as demonstrated by Don Marietta in his attempted implementation of holism as a theory in the investigation of humanism and environmental ethics[468]. But still, the on-going cross-narrative of purity / pollution, and of the supernatural / superstitious were present. This narrative was creating 'spaces' in which the community would operate in differing manners – yet all ultimately with final 'unfinished' goals, or end-points. The space in which the Travellers dwelt held different connotations, depending on where that space was located. It is the intention of this section to provide clarity, insight and forensic exploration of those spaces and the symbolism and motifs found in them. The 'Purity / Pollution' motif, as demonstrated through much of this thesis thus far, is arguably the most dominant element in the Traveller theology narrative and underpins many aspects in the peculiar practices and beliefs present in the aforementioned 'spaces'. Therefore, pollution and purity is investigated as a concept in its own right (with explicit relation to Gypsy and Traveller cultures) before further dissection of the 'Space and Symbolism' exploration is conducted.

---

[466] See Chapter Three.
[467] Hanson, 2014, p. 84.
[468] Marietta, 1994, p. 5.

5.4 – Space and Symbolism: Pollution and Purity

5.4.1 – Defining Mokhhadi (Pollution)

The idea of 'pollution' or 'mokhhadi' is purported to stem from the Indian ancestry of Gypsies and was originally drawn from Hindu traditions[469], although its manner of application in Gypsy and Traveller households has been likened to that found in orthodox Jewish homes[470]. This suggests that in the first instance, Gypsy mokhhadi traditions and beliefs are not entirely unique or unfamiliar – even in a modern context, particularly when positioned among Central Asian and East Mediterranean regions where other world views and systems of pollution, purity, and 'contagion' exist and operate[471].

The *Romani* term 'mokhhadi' essentially means 'ritual purity'[472] and remains an element of Gypsy identity in the contemporary environment. However, adherence to particular practices that have commonly formed part of traditional ideas on pollution (such as males and females washing in separate basins) is undertaken by fewer and fewer Travellers as new generations emerge[473]. Rather than a trend of forgetting 'the old ways' through a process of assimilation, it would appear instead that there is a gradual cultural leaning favouring towards a greater degree of integration[474]. As with other areas, there is a degree of absolutes and dichotomies present that continue the trend of contradictory (or opposing) positions in Gypsy culture. These stand alongside each other – each dependent upon the other for their existence. In this instance, it is the elements of pollution and purity, of acceptable and sub-standard, of Traveller and gorger. Whilst these dichotomies are disruptive in some areas, such as understanding the centring and motivations behind Traveller language[475], they are useful in establishing and maintaining borders between Traveller and gorger culture. The area of 'pollution', as with language, thus becomes both an identifier and a preserver of Traveller culture[476].

---

[469] Dawson, 2000, pp. 3 & 9; Hancock, 2013, p. 75.
[470] Clark & Greenfields, 2006, p. 41.
[471] Douglas, 1966.
[472] Dawson, 2000, p. 9.
[473] Clark & Greenfields, 2006, p. 41.
[474] Dawson, 2000, pp. 9 – 10. Dawson briefly touches upon this cultural change. For myself however, this perspective was mostly shaped and informed from interaction with Traveller communities, both formally (Chapter Five) and informally (interactions with educational providers, family and friends).
[475] See Twiss' position on syncretism, in Chapter Five – *Language*.
[476] Clark & Greenfields, 2006, p. 42.

5.4.2 – How Mokhhadi Functions: Methodical Application

The manner in which pollution works is twofold. It is a methodical practice that is intended to maintain health (physical, mental, spiritual) and order (social, familial, religious). Also, it is a spiritual practice that incorporates superstitious beliefs and practices, liturgical actions (Christian, and others), and particular exegeses. There is an understanding that time spent in gorger environments has a draining effect upon spiritual energy. Conversely, one's 'spiritual batteries' are recharged and 're-purified' by spending time in an all-Traveller environment[477]. It is in this environment and context of 'spiritual and physical wellbeing that the Indian origin of… [Gypsy] people is most clearly seen'[478]. The physical aspect requires the observance of rules that take many forms and that deal with elements of daily life. Typically these include but are not limited to: Water and waste separation; the cleaning of clothes and bed linen / towels; preparation of food and drinks; washing and hygiene / appearance; menstruating and childbirth; interaction with animals; cleanliness of the home environment; and separation of males and females at particular times (such as at weddings and social environments)[479]. Everyday cleanliness is of paramount importance when the living quarters for an entire family is sometimes permanently located in a trailer. Therefore, ideas on pollution can initially adopt a practical appearance. For example, concerns over hygiene mean that the toilet that is found in most caravans are almost always never used by Travellers, who often will remove them or simply use the space for additional storage. Robert Dawson, who undertook extensive field research into the practical application of Mokhhadi refutes the derogatory stereotype that suggests 'Travellers are dirty', instead suggesting that in almost every instance the trailers and their immediate surroundings were 'spotless'[480]. Research by the Cardiff Law School would support Dawson's claims, suggesting that less than 3% of Travellers are responsible for excessive waste and rubbish being left on the outskirts of camps and on illegal settlements[481].

5.4.3 – How Mokhhadi Functions: Ideological Application

Beyond the purely *practical* application of Mokhhadi, is the *ideological* application. It is at this stage where two significant elements are found: The element of separation between

---

[477] Hancock, 2013, p. 75.
[478] Hancock, 2013, p. 75.
[479] Clark & Greenfields, 2006, pp. 23 & 41 – 42; Keet-Black, 2013, p. 20.
[480] Dawson, 2000, p. 12.
[481] Dawson, 2000, p. 12.

Traveller and gorger; and the element of separation between males and females. Breaking taboos such as sexual intercourse before marriage is seen as both polluting and as something akin to a gorger lifestyle choice. Dawson reminds the reader that these approaches to daily living are not in retaliation to gorger people, but are relevant and legitimate to the Gypsy in maintaining respectability and separateness between Gypsy and gorger. Dawson comments:

> Even in these days of far more sexual equality, many of these taboos still occur, though the details differ slightly from family to family. Gorgers should understand that such practices, whilst not according with some modern ideas of gender correctness, are legitimate to the people who undertake them. The Gypsy sees the lack of such standards amongst gorgers as something quite shocking, and certainly illustrative of the gorger's degenerative state. This extends into the whole range of moral issues too, where gorgers are often seen as people who have low standards, care little for their elderly, break marriage commitments, are of easy virtue and corrupt[482].

Whilst the implementation is still practical, the reasoning is different. Mokhhadi thus develops from being a form of reasoning with just physical consequences, to something that invokes moral corruptibility from questionable actions. Pollution beliefs thus appear to present themselves on three different planes: the physical; the ideological; and the spiritual. It is at this stage that Mokhhadi is perhaps better understood as being a pyramidal structure, based upon an understanding of relationship between the human and the divine. In something akin to Abraham Maslow's 'Hierarchy of Needs'[483], there are certain stages in which the implementation of Mokhhadi evolves – from a purely *physical* construct to a purely *spiritual* construct. In this instance, the evolution 'upwards' produces a 'Neoplatonic' layering[484], whereby any progression towards the top of this 'Mokhhadi pyramid' results in a greater degree of spiritual self-actualisation. However, pollution can occur at any level, and will undermine the other layers wherever it occurs. Therefore, it is important for the Gypsy or Traveller to maintain purity at all levels. There is a greater chance of achieving this when the Traveller maintains a separation between gorger and Traveller (see Hancock's reference to 'spiritual batteries'[485]).

---

[482] Dawson, 2000, p. 10.
[483] Maslow, 1943.
[484] Slaveva-Griffin & Remes, 2014, p. 163.
[485] Hancock, 2013, p. 75.

5.4.4 – The Pollution Narrative in Christian Terms

It is at this stage that it is more beneficial, relevant and arguably more understandable to modify and translate the terms 'pollution' and 'purity' to the contemporary Christian context in which they are used. Doing so does not negate or ignore the culturally historic roots of the terms ('Mokhhadi', or 'ritual purity' still remain); it simply makes the terms accessible and more reflective of how they are understood in the present era. As such, the term 'pollution' can also be referred to as 'sin'. Meanwhile the term 'purity' may at times also be referred to in a more relevant and context-specific state rather than a generalised application; so, 'purity' still exists, but is also understood as 'forgiven', 'clean', 'pure', 'grace', and 'love'.

The Biblical precedent for the application of these concepts in a 'real world' scenario can be found in the book of Leviticus, where instructions on communal and personal holiness (in the 'Camp' model) are developed. Rules for living are presented that deal explicitly with purity, going beyond the universalistic applicability of the Ten Commandments whilst remaining in the specificity of the intended audience – the tribe of Levi (the Priestly order). Theologian David Pawson provides an exegetical evaluation, suggesting that many people interpret the moralistic standing of the Levitical rules for living 'in terms of good and bad'. However, as Pawson suggests, they should instead be understood in terms of the distinctions they make between what is unclean and clean, and between what is common and holy[486]. It is not that to do one or the other will make one 'good' or categorise the other as 'bad', but that all actions are either holy or common – clean or unclean. For the most part, the Gypsy narrative subscribes to this perspective, which has ramifications for the outcome of seemingly innocent or well-intended actions. Take, for example, the school teacher who delivers a sex education class to a class consisting of both Travellers and gorgers. Although the motive for delivering the class resides in a desire to educate and inform, for the majority of the Traveller children present it will be shameful and inappropriate to engage in discussions concerning sexuality and sexual health[487]. So, whilst the act itself may be 'innocent', the partaking of the class is considered an unclean act, which creates a 'common' – rather than 'holy' action, as no holy act can be unclean[488]. In this way, one of the arguments for separateness by the Traveller from gorger society is presented more clearly, through a process of ideological

---

[486] Pawson, 2007, pp. 142 – 143.
[487] Bhopal & Myers, 2008, pp. 107 – 108.
[488] Pawson, 2007, p. 144.

and spiritual reasoning, providing further insight into both the perceived relationship between Traveller and gorger, and between Traveller and God.

From a purely textual description, the application of Mokhhadi-based practices and beliefs can appear to be draconian and socially restrictive. However, the honouring of such traditions is drawn from an embracing of one's cultural heritage, where a unified security and freedom can be found[489]. The honouring of purity traditions thus becomes a source of freedom, where 'superstitious' acts and Hinduistic practices amalgamate to form a collection of conservative ideas, presented in an open and vibrant context. Consequently, for an external audience such acts and beliefs can potentially challenge and / or threaten certain societal conceptions and the hegemony of 'traditional' British Christianity.

5.5 – Space and Symbolism: Nomadism, the Sojourner, and the 'Camp'

In this section, key cultural (and stereotypical) identifiers are addressed, namely as motifs in the form of 'nomadism' and the 'camp'. These fundamental and *empirical* elements are theologically examined in the *metaphysical* platforms of Space and Symbolism. This is undertaken by using exegetical processes and philosophical, Christological, and interpretive reasoning. This process draws out a distinct 'progression' of argument, and presents several key terms requiring (re)definition. This redefinition process is important – not just for academic convention but also for academic and theological progression. Redefining these terms as 'Traveller' serves to liberate Traveller and Gypsy understandings from settled society's explanations, in an act of rejection towards subservient (and inherently Colonialist) bondage.

The concept of nomadism has direct connotations with the proposed 'Camp' motif, and therefore it is necessary to investigate what 'camp' entails. For the purposes of a Traveller theology, the term 'camp' has two primary applications: one being empirically observable; the other being of metaphysical construction. In the first instance, the camp should be understood to be the Gypsy's location or immediate area of dwelling; not the form of accommodation – i.e. a trailer, caravan, vardo, or house, but the vicinity in which one or more families dwell – a place readily identifiable as 'Gypsy' or 'Traveller'. From there, the term 'camp' should be understood to be a performative space[490] in which Traveller and Gypsy society functions – socially, spiritually, and religiously. The Camp motif is

---

[489] Such a phenomenon is not unique to Traveller groups. Many collectives of people are united and strengthened in their unique shared beliefs and world views. See previous comments by F. Barth (1969, pp. 14 – 15).

[490] For the definition of 'Performative' in this sense, see *Section 5.1 – Introduction* (Schechner, 2006, p. 29).

exegetically examined, drawing heavily on comparisons with the Israelite / Mosaic (Moses) camp model. This method enables a logical deconstruction of the camp structure (and aforementioned Traveller-society functions), which in turn creates a greater transparency in what is essentially a complex and layered rhizome.

A significant 'consequence' of this original investigation are the many avenues of theological, ecclesiological, and Christological interest that arise, including: Traveller understandings of the person(hood) of God; purity and pollution practices in contemporary Christianity; nomadism as a mode of Christianity; and the emergence of a Traveller soteriology. The researcher wishes to make the reader aware that given the allotted constraints of a thesis, these areas, although explored to some degree, require and indeed warrant further investigation. The aforementioned avenues of investigation were not intentionally sought out, but rather were unearthed as the research progressed. As such their appearance and their interaction with the process is organic in nature; however, despite their indeterminate emergence, there remains a high degree of (theo)logical reasoning, shape, and structure.

5.5.1 – Decoding Traveller Nomadism

It is a commonplace practice among media outlets, general public perception and Governmental offices to assume that all Gypsies and Travellers are somewhat nomadic[491]. Such assumptions present a dichotomy where 'traditional Gypsies' and 'Gypsies of yore' travel in bow-topped, horse-pulled vardos (wagons)[492], whilst 'modern Travellers' move from place to place in off-road vehicles and vans, pulling trailers (caravans)[493]. Beyond this there are further associations that serve to unify current and historical nomadic traditions of Gypsies and Travellers with a predominantly work-related narrative[494]. There is a rich historical tradition of nomadism in Gypsy communities extending back into a proto-Romani era and into the Gypsy's emergence into Europe. However, it is incorrect and potentially harmful to suggest that one *must* demonstrate tangible nomadic tendencies – i.e. travelling, in order to identify as a Traveller / Gypsy. This is primarily owing to data suggesting that only a minority of Travellers continue to

---

[491] Nicolae Gheorghe, along with Jean-Pierre Liégeois, suggest that Gypsies and Travellers who '*no longer live in the traditional conditions which are documented by ethnographers and anthropologists*' – such as in the context mentioned, are suspected by differing establishments (political, academic, media etc.) of not being '*true Gypsies*' (Gheorghe, 1999, pp. 157 – 158). Also see Taylor, 2008, p. 5.
[492] Taylor, 2008, pp. 7 – 9.
[493] Taylor, 2008, pp. 109 – 111.
[494] Clark & Greenfields, 2006, p. 17.

travel regularly, and that the majority of the UK's Gypsy population are predominantly settled[495]. Additionally, the presence of a perceived social action or trend cannot logically be considered to be wholly conducive to processes of ethnic and racial identification; doing so becomes a form of racial *profiling* – something vastly different and socially damaging[496].

Although tangible nomadic trends are evident, these are mostly understood to be for the purposes of soliciting work and maintaining employment. It is misguided to readily use permanent physical travelling as a definitive identifier of Travellers. Instead, it is more productive and accurate to understand and identify nomadism as a *spiritualised* practice and communal mind-set that operates as a constant in all 'Gypsy' culture and peoples i.e. Pavees (Irish Travellers), Romanichals (English Romany Gypsies), Kalé (Welsh Gypsies), Nawkins (Scottish Gypsy / Travellers), Roma, Show people, and New Travellers[497]. Liégeois and Gheorghe recognise that Travellers / Gypsies are indeed members of Europe's 'indigenous' ethnic group, whose '*culture* is characterised by…occupational fluidity, and nomadism'[498]. To operate in this mode of indigenous occupational fluidity and nomadism, for the purposes of employment, is perhaps better understood by the collective term 'sojourner' – or 'stranger in the land', which is explored below. Operating in indigenous nomadism (for the purposes of self-actualisation and collective identity) requires further dissemination, and shall be discussed *following* an exploration of the Traveller as 'sojourner'.

5.6 – Nomadism as Identity: Introducing the Sojourner

"Hear my prayer, O LORD, and give ear to my cry; hold not your peace at my tears! For I am a sojourner with you, a guest, like all my fathers" (Psalm 39:12).

---

[495] Crawley, 2004, pp. 6 & 8.
[496] Atkin, 2014, p. 156.
[497] Clark & Greenfields, 2006, pp. 12 – 19.
[498] Liégeois & Gheorghe, 1995, p. 6.

5.6.1 – Finding the Traveller in the Scriptures

Jorge Bernal, founder of AICRA[499] and an Argentinian-Russian Kalderash[500], presents an argument proposing that the church (with particular reference to the Pentecostal movement) 'constitutes a good alternative to the gorger society because it offers the means for a positive redefinition of Romani/Gypsy identifications…by including the communities in the biblical genealogy'[501]. Bernal identifies attempts at assimilation by the gorger society towards Gypsy culture as debilitating, highlighting the specific dangers in parts of South America as an act of 'seduction'[502]. Although Bernal believes that the problem of 'seduction' is less for Europe, with Europe's issues centred on assimilation, there is evidence to suggest that based on cultural changes in UK Gypsy culture (as evidenced through UK media sources[503]), that 'seduction' is merely developing through non-traditional means.

Bernal's belief that the Bible has the facility in which Gypsies may perhaps redefine their identity is not so much radical, 'evangelical', or even original, but is supported by a historical cultural precedent of engagement with Christianity. Bernal only goes so far as to suggest the possibility of this; this chapter takes this possibility and tests the viability – and indeed the potential applicability of a Biblical hermeneutic in the process of understanding Gypsy and Traveller identity.

The Traveller's cultural history and social-structure development has been as much a reaction to an ever-evolving set of external circumstances, as it has to an intentional, culturally collective decision making process in which its members have formed and established its rules. Central to this developmental process has been a primarily Christian narrative[504]. Whilst its value and purity systems can largely be attributed to, and legitimised by, a number of traceable and historical sources, certain core 'identity' narratives that are indicative of modern (and historical) Traveller culture are not so readily attributable to religious bodies. Such narratives include the interrelationships between nomadism, work/career choices and approaches, and intentional separateness from the

---

[499] The *Association Identidad Cultural Romani de la Argentina* (AICRA) is potentially the only organisation in Argentina whose specific purpose is to raise awareness of the Gitano (Romani/Gypsy/Traveller) cultures.
[500] Kalderash are a subgroup of the Romani people; their distinctiveness comes from a tendency to be involved in and around the metal trade and their strict regulations on hygiene.
[501] Carrizo-Reimann, 2011, p. 172.
[502] Carrizo-Reimann, 2011, p. 172.
[503] See earlier references to 'My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding'. The context I am attempting to exemplify is the aspect of portrayals that show Travellers to be living in a modern context, which is perhaps different to some conceptions that Travellers are primitive people who are disengaged with modernity.
[504] 'Primarily', as the concepts and practices are not exclusively Christian. For example, Gypsy practices in the area of cultural and community purity are based in what is considered to be typically Hindu-influenced behaviour, whereas ideas surrounding moral codes can be found in Jewish texts (the Pentateuch).

larger gorger culture. These inter-relational factors are conducive to both the unity of the Traveller collective and to the disunity with the 'outside world' by proxy of numerous factors. These factors include a mistrust between the two cultures and perceived opposition to certain laws and customs. Participation in and the maintenance of these factors by Travellers is intentional, despite the proven social and physical repercussions. However, the core element is not one of defiance but ultimately one of religious and spiritual pursuit. In this sense, traits of nomadism and intentional segregation can be understood as a form of discipleship.

Annette Merz and Gerd Theissen describe the characteristics of discipleship as self-stigmatisation, as participation in the charisma[505] of Christ, and participation in the promise of position[506]. 'Disciples, both men and women, share in Jesus' role as an *outsider*, i.e. their discipleship is *voluntary self-stigmatization*'[507]. Whilst a conversion from gorger to Traveller and vice versa is not a possibility, it could be argued that the *tangible* activities commonly associated with being a Gypsy or Traveller, such as patterns of nomadism and particular customs, are voluntary.

Either way, it would seem that very often the physical activities of Travellers serve as an identifier, rather than their own testimony. Therefore, whether the actions of Travellers are voluntary or not, they are indeed characteristics of an association towards being a Traveller. In much the same way, the process of being a disciple is distinguishable from that of being a sojourner, despite carrying many similar traits. The sojourner is such because of their position and activities in relation *to* a society; their counter-cultural presence is the primary factor in their *exclusion* from the mainstream. The position of disciple comes not as an escape from persecution but the conscious decision to *enter* into otherness; to become a disciple is to make a statement of difference and separation. This is not done in order to foster unity and anger towards the larger society but to reposition oneself to be able to produce changing dialogue *in* that culture. The Traveller thus occupies the contradictive and non-fixed state of 'sojourning disciple'. To operate in such a capacity is, in a Traveller cosmology, a 'true' expression of Christian and Traveller living.

---

[505] Merz and Thiessen describe the 'charisma' of Jesus as something that can be passed on, and that Jesus owes his own charisma to John the Baptist. However, the central theme to their understanding of Jesus' charisma is that it is something that is participated in by other people; it is not a level of personality but a level of authority (Merz & Theissen, 1999, pp. 213 & 215).

[506] The promise of position primarily refers specifically to the 12 disciples and their place upon thrones, whereupon they will judge the 12 tribes of Israel (1 Corinthians 15:5). Essentially in the context of the sojourner, and indeed the Traveller, the promise of position could be understood to mean an eventual elevation to 'a lofty position… with Jesus' (Merz & Theissen, 1999, pp. 215 – 216).

[507] Merz & Theissen, 1999, p. 215.

5.6.2 – The Traveller as Sojourner

> The "sojourner" is treated as a deviant type of the sociological form of the "stranger,"
> one who clings to the cultural heritage of his own ethnic group and tends to live in
> isolation, hindering his assimilation to the society in which he resides, often for many
> years. The sojourn is conceived by the sojourner as a "job" which is to be finished in
> the shortest possible time. As an alternative to that end he travels back to his homeland
> every few years[508].

Assimilation has, to a certain degree, a dependency upon a mainstream society providing
an acceptance of minorities in its parameters in order to gain approval and trust from the
minority in question. For many Travellers the chance to disprove stereotypes and
negative perceptions is an impossibility that begins from childhood encounters with gorger
society. The following statement was made by a Traveller looking back to when he was a
seven year-old boy. It indicates typical issues encountered by Traveller children:

> What did I want to go to school for? School was for gorgers. Why should I learn to read
> and write? No other person I mixed with could… Don't ask me the name of the school…
> I hated it. Sit still. Sit up straight. Single file. Fold your arms. It was like being in a fucking
> cage. All silly rules and saying prayers…I couldn't understand why them calling 'Gypsy'
> or 'Gypo' across the playground was meant to annoy me. After all, that's what I
> was…Gorger kids seemed to think we didn't like being Travellers for some reason[509].

In the metaphorical sense Travellers seek to be absent of the social Anthropocene in
which the dominant society effects everything and all others by its actions and intent.
Instead, the Traveller's target is to be part of a 'proto-Anthropocenic' construct in which
humanity is operating in its God-given position of freedom and choice yet withheld in the
constraints of a divinely inspired moral conscience. However, as seen in the above
example, differences in relation to the majority are emphasised and thus criticised *by* the
majority. This 'social exegesis' is given context when applied through a Biblical
hermeneutic, revealing the character of the 'sojourner', primarily (but not exclusively)
through the Pentateuch.

There are varying accounts of sojourners and sojourning in the Old Testament, but not all
should be viewed equally due to the context and the time-period in which they are
presented. Essentially the idea of the sojourner takes two[510] approaches: subjective and

---

[508] Siu, 1952.

[509] Taylor, 2014, p. 215.

[510] Harold Wiener suggests that there are actually four ways in which 'sojourner' can be understood, rather
than two. He does this by breaking down the Hebrew text into finer detail. However, he concedes that two
of the explanations (The 'Toshabh' and the 'Zar') are either too specific and applicable for only one or two

personal; or objective and *relational*. These are derived from the Hebrew words – 'ger' and 'ben nekhar', that manifest over three time periods. The first time period is pre-exodus. The second – post-exodus, is transitional and Biblically can be measured by the formation of the Deuteronomic reformation. The third time period is when Israel was established as a land where the Israelites were in the majority and in control of the land via the implementation of rules, statutes etc. Although both understandings remain valid, they cannot be retrospectively interpreted with the text[511]. For example, 1 Kings 11:7-8 describes Solomon's wives as foreign – rather than 'alien' or 'sojourner' because of the changed context in which the authority is now placed.

During and shortly after the period of exile, the Hebrew people's conception of the term 'sojourner' changed, in line with their subjugation of 'The Promised Land'. During the Covenant Code and the proceeding Decalogue (Exodus 20:1-17; Exodus 20:22 – 23:33), 'sojourner' or 'ger' designates the conquered *indigenous* population of Palestine rather than the immigrant Hebrew. At this stage the Israelite position towards the sojourner is one that could be considered favourable, given the context and period in which it was set. The Hebrew people are reminded that they were once 'strangers in the land' of Egypt, and as such they are to accommodate the sojourner, to help with food and supplies, and are to do the sojourner no harm (Deuteronomy 10:18; Leviticus 19:33); special care to do the 'ger' no judicial detriment was also to be taken (Deuteronomy 1:16; Deuteronomy 27:19). With this taken into consideration, the most significant element of this Deuteronomic reformation was that the criminal legal system was to be applied equally to both native citizen and 'the alien who resides among you' (Leviticus 18:26). Although both, or indeed all the many cultures were enabled and encouraged to co-exist, they did so with the law holding the final word. Participation in the Hebrew religion meant that the sojourner was able to participate in honouring the Sabbath as well as other celebrations and feasts. However, it also meant that the sojourner was bound and restricted in exactly the same manner as the Israelites[512]. What begins to form in the Biblical text is a clear picture of a multicultural society effectively working in the boundaries of a dominant culture. Harold Weiner comments, 'The historical circumstances were such as to render the position of the resident alien important from the first. A "mixed multitude" went up with the Israelites from Egypt, and after the conquest we find Israelites and the races of

---

situations at the most, or that virtually nothing is known of the description and therefore the primary usages (r.e. the usages I have used) are sufficient (Wiener, no date).

[511] Mauch, 1999, p. 397.

[512] Sabbath day instructions - Exodus 20:10 & Exodus 23:12; Rejoicing on Tabernacles and Weeks - Deuteronomy 16; Observing the Day of Atonement - Leviticus 16:29; Festival of Unleavened Bread - Exodus 12:19; Rules on Passover and Circumcision - Exodus 12:48; Dietary requirements - Leviticus 17:10 – 12 & 17:15.

Palestine living side by side throughout the country'[513]. There are many accounts around this time of specifically identified aliens resident in the land, such as Uriah the Hittite. There was also a census conducted by Solomon which revealed a significant number of non-Hebrews living amongst the people (2 Chronicles 2:17). Of course, implementing an actualised environment of hospitality was a religious requirement that saw the host protect his 'guest' at any lengths (Genesis 19; Judges 19:24).

The next interpretation of sojourner produces the Hebrew words 'ben nekhar' or 'nokhri' and was brought about in the postexilic period[514]. The application of these terms is far greater in its reach than 'ger', in that it removes the specificity of location (i.e. Israel) and thus covers everything that may be considered of foreign character or alien, regardless of the place of residence[515]. The positioning of the ben nekhar meant that the larger society (the Israelites) was now also recognised as the dominant part, whilst the foreigner was now subject to the rules, beliefs and culture of the Israelites. The ben nekhar still enjoyed many of the same privileges as before; however, there were now further restrictions on who the Israelites could marry and who could be part of the assembly of the Lord[516]. Despite these factors, the foreigner was still encouraged to worship the Hebrew God. This aspect of availability and inclusion is taken further when the account of Naaman reveals that the ben nekhar was able to worship God in a foreign land[517].

In spite of the many legal and practical elements actioned toward the sojourner, it is interesting to note that the reasoning behind the concern and integration towards the foreigner in the Hebrew's land is ultimately born out of a desire to shape identity through relationship. Theodor Mauch suggests that there are three perspectives that informed and shaped the laws concerned with the sojourner. The first perspective is a requirement by Israel to remember that she too was once a sojourner in Egypt; God observed her oppression, provided deliverance, 'and established her in a bounteous land'[518]. The second perspective is reflective of one of God's characteristics; the same God who rescued Israel from bondage is also the God who provides protection for the disinherited, the weak and the poor. As such, the economy of Israel's primary purpose is to meet need, with particular attention being delivered to the welfare of people requiring help[519]. Finally,

---

[513] Wiener, no date, p. 5.
[514] Mauch, 1999, p. 398.
[515] Wiener, no date, pp. 5 – 6.
[516] In regards to marriage, see Ezra 10; Nehemiah 13:23 – 31. In regards to the Assembly of the Lord, see Deuteronomy 23:3 – 8; Nehemiah 13:1; Lamentations 1:10.
[517] See 1 Kings 8:41 – 43; Isaiah 2:2; Isaiah 56:3, 6. Specifically concerning Naaman, see 2 Kings 5:17.
[518] Mauch, 1999, p. 397. Also, Exodus 22:21; Deuteronomy 5:14 – 15, 10:17 – 22, and 16:10 – 12.
[519] Mauch, 1999, pp. 397 – 398. Also, Exodus 23:9 which reads "You shall not oppress a sojourner. You know the heart of a sojourner, for you were sojourners in the land of Egypt".

Mauch identifies that the covenant between God and Israel is dependent on all members participating in not only the advantageous aspects but also in all the requirements. The sojourner is 'almost an Israelite, is entitled to equal justice, is to be judged as the Israelite is judged, but 'must conform as far as possible to the covenant regulations'[520].

To summarise, the dominant society is required to recognise that it too has required deliverance and assistance at points but is now in a position of relative favour and control. It is therefore the responsibility of this society to provide this level of assistance and protection for those in its borders who cannot do as such for themselves. The sojourners amongst the dominant society are therefore entitled to the same justice, rights and privileges as the larger society, but only on the conditions that they participate *in* said society, that they contribute *to* that society and that they *conform* 'as far as possible' to be able to meet said requirements. Instructing that conformity must be done to the level of 'as far as possible' is significant in that it does not require the sojourner to change, but to conform in behaviour as much as is deemed reasonable and achievable by the sojourner. This appears to be done purely in order to appease the requirements of the larger society. The question of unique and separate identity is not challenged through this structure but rather appears to be given a divine approval of sorts; the many cultures with their unique identities are thus incorporated to assemble *one* collective[521]. All that is required on the part of God, so to speak, is a 'meeting in the middle', where identity is validated through participation.

When applied to Gypsy culture, conformity in this sense is not a dispensation of Gypsy and Traveller life as it has been known, but a necessary adaption to secure its future. This cultural trend can be witnessed in the evolution and adoption of trades in Gypsy communities. From 'hawking' onto other careers such as landscaping and tarmacking, and in changing attitudes in the community towards the otherwise 'historic' rejection of mainstream education practices. The logic of this 'moving towards' (in both physical and cognitive environments) persists throughout the Biblical text, and is summarised to some effect in the book of James (4:8); 'Draw near to God and He will draw near to you' (James 4:8). The relational establishment of how the sojourner is to interact with the larger collective and how the larger collective is to support the sojourner, is made apparent in the Biblical text. However, contextually the concept of sojourner is with some irony and rather unsurprisingly, not static. Terms and definitions, as presented Biblically, often

---

[520] Mauch, 1999, p. 398.
[521] The idea of the incorporation of multiple identities into one collective is inspired and taken from Isaiah 44:5 which reads 'This one will say, 'I am the LORD's,' another will call on the name of Jacob, and another will write on his hand, 'The LORD's,' and name himself by the name of Israel'.

require a synchronicity between the divine and the mortal standard – between religion and politics (Mark 12:16 – 17). The timescale between the Old Testament and the New Testament created yet another development in this dynamic.

Burton Scott Easton identifies that the use of the term 'sojourner' changes, as the original Hebrew terms of understanding are no longer present in the Greek words that are translated as 'sojourner' and 'stranger'. 'Stranger' is certainly the closest understanding that can be drawn from the translation; the Greek word 'xenos' with its primary meaning of 'guest' being applied for the majority of the text in the New Testament[522]. So the sojourner is gradually separated further until they are eventually categorised as the *stranger*. William Smith goes into greater depth with his explanation of the stranger and the context in which it relates to its previous incarnation of sojourner. Smith captures the essence of the change between the approaches mentioned in the previous section and that of the distancing Jewish approach that is in place around the time of the New Testament. Smith says 'The liberal spirit of the Mosaic regulations respecting strangers presents a strong contrast to the rigid exclusiveness of the Jews at the commencement of the Christian era. The growth of this spirit dates from the time of the Babylonish captivity'[523]. This change in approach towards the sojourner could be a natural evolution due to the changing power structure in Israel over that period, or it could be down to political factors such as the Roman influence. Either way, the change could serve as an important factor in determining and interpreting social and political relationships with the 'stranger', with the 'sojourner, with the Traveller and refugee.

5.6.3 – Sojourning as (Self) Affliction

The first indication that to be a sojourner or wanderer was to occupy a position of negativity, comes by way of Cain – the first-born of Adam and Eve (Genesis 4:1). As punishment by God for killing his brother, Cain is cursed by God; "You will be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth" (Genesis 4:10 – 12). This issue of displacement had already affected Cain's parents when they were banished form the Garden of Eden, and now a similar but arguably more explicit punishment had been administered to Cain. To be a sojourner in this aspect was by no means a 'proud' or pleasurable thing; Cain replied to God, "My punishment is more than I can bear" (Genesis 4:13). An important aspect to note from the development of this passage is the subsequent account of the lineage of Cain, and that of Seth (Adam's 'replacement' for his murdered son Abel, who died at the

---

[522] Easton, 1893.
[523] Smith, 1884, p. 991.

hands of Cain) (Genesis 4:25). Seth is included in the line of Adam to Noah; a lineage which would see a blessing to extend territory (Genesis 9:26 – 27) and would result in Abraham – the father of Judaism, Christianity and Islam (Genesis 11:10 – 26). However, Cain's lineage ends after a few short verses with a significant linkage between Cain's curse to be a 'restless wanderer' and that of a specifically mentioned descendant named Jabal, who was dubbed as 'the father of those who live in tents and raise livestock' (Genesis 4:20). The parallel with Gypsies and Travellers – whose genesis emerges from a diaspora spanning centuries, is evident.

The temptation is to view the text with a degree of scepticism and negativity, given that it is the line of the accursed Cain. But as with all exegetical positions, a process of contextualisation in the full narrative must be considered. The following verses speak of Jubal, 'the father of all who play the harp and flute', and Tubal-Cain, 'who forged all kinds of tools out of bronze and iron' (Genesis 4:21 – 22). These are recognised as qualities in the theology of John Calvin. Calvin proposed that these abilities and facilities are not simply superfluous and therefore ready to be condemned, but are in fact creations by which God may be worshipped, and can be 'adapted to the offices of religion'[524]. Although Cain had been cursed, Calvin is supportive of the notion that Moses wished to present Cain in a way that showed he was still within the grasp of grace. Further, that although Cain's 'regeneration' or lineage was to be cut short, the Lord would 'still scatter some excellent gifts among his posterity'[525]. Calvin summarises this point by saying 'Let us then know, that the sons of Cain, though deprived of the spirit of regeneration were yet endued with gifts of no despicable kind'[526]. In his assessment of what Moses was attempting to convey, Calvin concludes that this application of grace to those in a seemingly unreachable state creates a tension whereby the initial actions and subsequent 'pre-eminent endowments' would 'render it inexcusable, and would [also] prove most evident testimonies of the divine goodness'[527]. For Calvin, the punishment of being made a sojourner for the sin of murder simply did not make sense. 'But this seems to some by no means a suitable punishment for a murderer, since it is rather the destined condition of the sons of God; for they, more than all others, feel themselves to be strangers in the world'[528]. The overall impression given for Cain's punishment is that the wandering aspect is implemented to create a sense and state of unsettlement; a point that Calvin would agree with. Likewise, the purgatory-like nature of this 'home' of unsettlement is also a

---

[524] Calvin, 1848, p. 218.
[525] Calvin, 1848, pp. 217 – 218.
[526] Calvin, 1848, p. 218.
[527] Calvin, 1848, pp. 218 – 219.
[528] Calvin, 1848, p. 210.

favoured place in which God is able to demonstrate grace and providence, or as a previously mentioned quote by Calvin would suggest – 'prove most evident testimonies of the divine goodness'[529].

The place of punishment is therefore a place where restoration and relationship are offered, rather than a place of exclusion. The sin of whatever kind is met with a judgement that seeks reconciliation rather than exclusion, and what the world deems as separation, God deems as a chance for union. The place of unsettlement, of the sojourner, of the wanderer, is thusly revealed as a favourable and preferable place for the Christian believer. The Gypsy is presented with the opportunity to demonstrate a position of divine favour and grace by way of cultural representation, external engagement and collective advancement. Of course, the Gypsy or Traveller is equally entitled to reject the grace offered, but this option logically offers no obvious or immediate benefit. This dynamic is recognisable in a statement made by Calvin, who, in his exegesis of the Genesis passages previously mentioned, summarises his perspective on the 'wanderer' or 'sojourner':

> The faithful are strangers upon the earth, yet, nevertheless, they enjoy a temporal tranquil abode. Often, constrained by necessity, they wander from place to place, but wheresoever the tempest bears them, they carry with them a sedate mind; till finally, by perpetual change of place, they so run their course, and pass through the world, that they are everywhere sustained by the supporting hand of God. Such security is denied to the wicked...[530].

Of course, this was the path laid out for Cain and his descendants whose regeneration was to be cut short[531], but what for Seth, whose lineage was to eventually produce Abraham? This particular pathway is clearly indicated as the favourable path due to its eventual unlimited regeneration by way of Abraham (Genesis 26:4), and the inclusion of Noah – a figure upon whom God showed favour and trust by using him as the continuation of the human species after the great flood (Genesis 5:32 – 10:1). The purpose behind pursuing this path is to see if the position of sojourner is still a place of 'blessed suffering' when one arrives at it from a position of favour, where sojourner and native are presented in equal measure.

'Now the Lord said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you…" (Genesis 12:1). Before this verse, Abram is

---

[529] Calvin, 1848, p. 218.
[530] Calvin, 1848, p. 211.
[531] Calvin, 1848, p. 210.

briefly introduced, as is his barren wife Sarai. From here, Abram is spoken to by God in the aforementioned verse in what is entitled 'The Call of Abram'; it is at this point that the account of Abram starts. The land that God spoke of was Canaan, however, even when there, the now-called Abraham is referred to as 'an alien' (Genesis 17:8). A consistent theme in Abraham's account is that of movement, travel and unsettlement. Abraham from the outset is truly a sojourner, however, the word 'alien' used by God is as a descriptor and not a pejorative accusation. Abraham is in the process of receiving a positive prophecy that is concerned with his procreation and the multitudes of generations that will stem from him; there is no aspect that indicates negative connotations whatsoever. However, despite being described as an alien (and not being condemned as one), Abraham is told that he and his offspring will receive the land as a perpetual holding. The challenge that arises here is that God's blessing for a sojourner is that they may eventually be able to settle and inherit the land in which they are a stranger. This clearly is not the case for everyone; the prophecy given is specifically for Abraham, but it raises the dilemma of where suffering, if any, is actually located. For Abraham the context of settlement means security for his future descendants, and this is enforced by the author's explicit accounts of blessings that concern the future[532]. Suffering, in the sojourning sense, thus becomes synonymous with the concept of inheritance.

5.6.3.1 – Sojourning as (Self) Affliction: Inheritance, Keturah and Keturah's Sons

Inheritance is defined as 'the acquisition of a possession, condition, or trait from past generations'; it can also be understood to be an indicator of tradition[533]. A basic exegesis of both the New and Old Testaments, reveals that in multiple instances inheritance is directed or given via the giving or changing of names. Abraham's name was changed from 'Abram' via an experience with the divine, and Abraham's wife Sarah, in a similar instance had her name changed from 'Sarai'. The reason for this was intrinsically linked to the realisation of Abraham's inheritance. Common readings of the Bible portray Isaac as Abraham's favourite son – the one upon whom the nation of Israel is believed to have been built. Incidentally, Isaac was not the first-born; Ishmael was the first-born and logically therefore entitled to rewards that such a position entails. However, owing to the context of the familial relationships, Ishmael was denied this privilege. Ishmael is still blessed by God because of who his father is, but he is simultaneously cursed as well. From Ishmael certain nomadic groups are ascribed, one of which is the Kedar; 'a

---

[532] Specific to Abraham: Genesis 12:3, 13:14-17, 21:10, 25:29-34, 31:14.
[533] Merriam-Webster Inc. (no date / author / page).

wandering shepherd tribe of the desert to the east of ancient Damascus. They are said to be descended from Ishmael, the outcast son of Abraham and Hagar'[534]. It is interesting to note the unique tension that arises again in this ascription of Ishmael. He is blessed yet cursed; he is given the promise of land yet his descendants wander; he is looked after by God, yet placed in contention with all mankind *because* of God. The parallels that can be made in the modern sojourner's incarnation i.e. the Traveller, is apparent. To be a Traveller and to live as such is both a blessing and a curse, where Godforsakenness and the presence of God seemingly occupy an equal space. In this metaphorical space, however, is an inheritance of *personal and cultural identity* that is passed from one generation to the other. The act of travelling for Abraham and his descendants is normative. Indeed, from after the great fall a nomadic existence *is* the norm. The notion that to be in the position of the wanderer is a curse could not be further from the truth; to be settled is the reward for the many and the inheritance of the few. In a spiritual sense, for the settled, God leads or guides the way; for the sojourner He walks beside.

Abraham's third marriage is of particular interest in this dynamic. There are aspects that via a literal exegesis develop the picture of identity in nomadic and unsettled existence; and with that a symbolical ancestral link between Gypsies and Abraham the sojourner emerges. 'Abraham took another wife, whose name was Keturah. She bore him Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak and Shuah' (Genesis 25:1). After Hagar (his second wife and mother to his first son Ishmael) had been banished and Sarah had died, Abraham took Keturah to be his new (and third) wife, with whom he had six sons. The account proceeds to reveal that Abraham presented them with gifts and eventually sent them away, 'eastward to the east country' (Genesis 25:6). The link is not found in the context but in the detail – more specifically, their names. Recalling the previously mentioned detail concerning names as a form of inheritance reveals a family that obtained their names by way of a nomadic life.

Research suggests that the names of Keturah and her family is representative of the incense trade route which started from various Mediterranean ports across Egypt and the Levant, moving through Arabia, before finally ending (with some significance) in India. Keturah's name is a descriptive term that means 'incense'; it is not to be understood as suggesting a particular characteristic but rather an item, such as Frankincense[535]. It is

---

[534] McFarlan, 2003, p. 153. The black Bedouin tents and the flocks of Kedar are referred to several times in the Old Testament. See Genesis 25:13; Psalm 120:5; Song of Solomon 1:5; Isaiah 42:11 & 60:7; and Jerimiah 49:28–9.

[535] An example of how Keturah's name should be applied can be found in Deuteronomy 33:10 which reads, 'They shall teach Jacob your rules and Israel your law; they shall put incense before you and whole burnt offerings on your altar'.

thought that her name would have been given because of her family's association with or location on the route. This would then be consistent with the naming of her sons who are identified by the names of various clans and places of significance along the breadth of the road, and who had been sent eastwards by their father. Furthermore, it is also consistent with traditions of applying names in the context of a setting. As such, it becomes a Biblical 'evidence' of sorts of a recognised nomadic culture stemming from Abraham himself. In this way it also acts as a 'completion' of the Gypsy's genesis[536]. In Argentina there are some Gypsy communities that have started to identify themselves with the family line of Keturah, thanks in part to the teachings of an Argentinian and Gypsy Pastor named Ricardo Papadopulos. For Papadopulos, Keturah is 'the mother of the Roma'[537]. In December 2008 Papadopulos was interviewed in Buenos Aires by Agustina Carrizo-Reimann who later published his findings in the journal 'Romani Studies'; Papadopulos was recorded as saying:

> You know, now the Lord wants to reach His forgotten children. We are the descendants of Abraham's third wife and therefore the children of Abraham…We are changing the Romani culture. The Pentecostal belief offers us new possibilities, a new self-image and way of living…the marginalised are becoming proud believers[538].

There is consistency in the historical data and therefore a legitimate claim in suggesting the Roma may have found their Biblical ancestry. However, the identification by Papadopulos that such a discovery is an opening to 'a new self-image and way of believing' is perhaps a short-sighted evaluation, as it is suggestive that Gypsies are not acceptable in their *present* condition. It indicates that Papadopulos could be sympathetic towards the consensus of the general population. Thus, it could be argued that he presents his theological stance in accordance to gorger ideals. The final remark that 'the marginalised are becoming proud believers' also suggests that Gypsies are in need of changing from their current state – a sentiment that is reminiscent of the 19th century attempts at conversion by the church.

By identifying with Keturah, Gypsies and Travellers can overcome the familiar and unwelcome sentiment that Gypsies are not good enough in their present condition. Furthermore, particular GRT ethnic and cultural identities (in this instance, sojourning) become powerfully located in Biblical narratives. This serves to converse directly with Gypsy and Traveller communities, performing in the dualistic theological narratives of

---

[536] Knauf, 2007.
[537] Carrizo-Reimann, 2011, p. 171.
[538] Carrizo-Reimann, 2011, p. 171.

evangelism and liberation. The sojourner, the stranger, the 'impoverished' subject of political whim and historically misguided ecclesiological 'conversion' practice[539], thus makes a theologically political stance, through a process of gospel (re)appropriation.

The Reverend Coenraad Boerma in his book '*The Poor Side of Europe*' writes about the triangulated relationship between the church, the gospel message and those considered to occupy the category of impoverished (the outsider, the stranger, the sojourner). Boerma reiterates and emphasises the directness and simplicity of the relationship between the 'poor' and the message of Christ:

> When the poor…read the Bible. They don't arrive at the meaning via a complicated hermeneutical detour. They already have the key that opens the door to the texts; an immediate recognition of their situation, their struggle, their despair, sickness and poverty. Miracles for them are not a complicated intellectual problem which must be "de-mythologised"; they offer the one possibility to see some prospect for their lives. The story is *their* story, the gospel *their* gospel. They are the best exegesis, because for them the exercise of reading the Bible is not intellectual but existential[540].

Importantly, Boerma identifies that '[t]hey [the poor] *did not have to leave their social stratum*. They could recognise the story immediately'[541]. In this sense, sojourning does not have to be synonymous with social and religious poverty. For the Traveller, the 'crutches' of sojourning are not an indicator of something broken but a representation of something supportive.

5.6.4 – Sojourning as Vocation

The concept of nomadism as a characteristic of Gypsies and Travellers is both a tangible (historically, and to a certain degree, in contemporary settings), and an imagined element, based upon a value system with its routes geographically locatable to the Gypsy diaspora from India through Europe. However, the dynamic of the sojourner (rather than just nomadism) is based upon an equation of 'person and identity', as opposed to 'person and location'. It is the removal of attachment to a location that separates those identified as sojourner and those who are not. For example, Abraham is understood as being a nomadic figure whose *settlement* per se was arguably found in his relationship with God and his occupation, rather than any particular geographic location. In that example the

---

[539] See Chapter Three.
[540] Boerma, 1989, p. 52.
[541] Boerma, 1989, p. 51.

dynamic of person and vocation rather than person and location is made explicit. As such, the sojourner (Traveller), as with Abraham, cannot be defined simply by their choice to travel or not; the Traveller may with equal reasoning and justification be nomadic, settled, or both[542]. What is common however is the relationship between working and/or deliberate purpose, and the settlement of the person in question. An example can be found in the sojourn (work of the sojourner) of Abraham in Egypt, which is intrinsically linked with his economic settlement as a herdsman rather than an actual location. Likewise, the physical settlement of Isaac in Canaan is partly determined by his seasonal planting of crops and not because of any permanent emotional or trade-related attachment to the area. This is not to suggest that any of aforementioned people do not have an affiliation with any specific place, but that any concept of a fixed geographical location known as 'home' is located on the periphery of the afore-mentioned dynamic. Please see the image below (Fig.16) for a visual representation of this concept and the linked footnote for an explanation behind the image.

Fig.16 – *Person / Vocation / Location*[543]
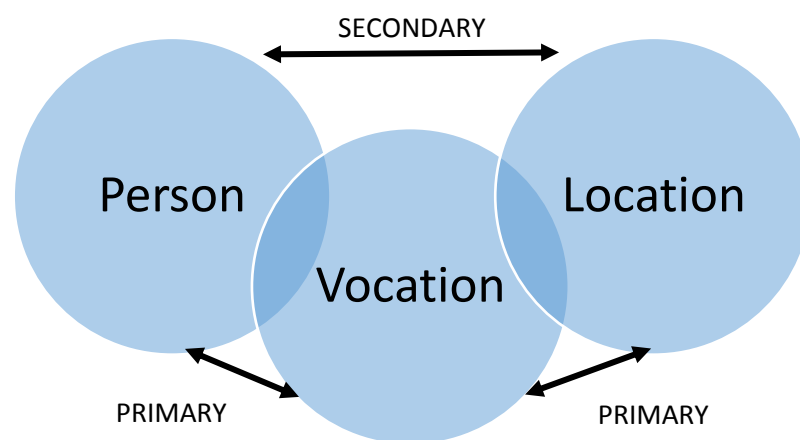
[542] A contemporary example of this can be found in the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 Part 3 Section 108 (accessible at: http://www.legislation.gov.uk/anaw/2014/7/section/108/enacted). The significant point that has been recognised in this segment of legislation is the understanding that the Traveller cannot be defined by whether he or she is Travelling but by their own choice of identity. Part A (i) of section 108 specifically mentions that the person(s) may have stopped travelling for work, education or health needs, and that these reasons are therefore not reason enough to exclude the Traveller from such an identity. Understanding Isaac in the example given as a sojourner (or Traveller) is possible when positioning the concept of location as secondary to vocation. The notion that to be a Traveller requires travelling is therefore negated. Travelling merely becomes a reliable indicator of a Traveller, and not the benchmark of assessment.
[543] The link between 'Person' and 'Vocation' is representative of an individual and their work or calling – the predominant consumer of their time. This link is primary and holds more immediate value to the person

Formulating this direct link between Traveller identity and sojourner rationality provides a provisional insight into the operation of the primary relationship between person and vocation. This reveals how such an equation is dependent not only on the resources and offerings of the location, but more importantly, a dynamic relationship with God. Abraham's venture into Egypt is one such account of this formula in action. Many observations about actual location can be raised from this positioning, such as the significance of Israel as a holy and designated land for God's chosen people, and the idea of Heaven or 'Paradise' as a destination. Abraham's sojourn is initiated by him leaving his homeland with family members. Shortly afterwards he is instructed by the Lord to 'Go from your country and your father's house to the land that I will show you' (Genesis 12:1). Home as a concept at this point for Abraham changes. Any attachment he may have held to his nation state is replaced by an instruction requiring faith and the positioning of one's centrality in something other than a known and tangible physical space.

5.7 – Nomadism as Impermanent Permanence: Introducing the Camp

The Case Studies revealed two families (A and B) to be living in markedly differing settings. One dwelling was in an officially registered 'camp', comprising of plots or 'pitches' where mobile homes and trailers were (mostly) permanently positioned. The other dwelling was a brick-built house, located in a predominantly gorger-occupied street. The unifying factor between the two properties was that both were fixed and stationary and thus incapable of inclusion in a nomadic mode of being. Their unique presentations suggested otherwise. External decorations of large wagon / cart wheels, an unused trap (small carriage) and various 'horse' ornaments and accessories inside the windows provided an indication of remembrance of and/or a longing for past-generational 'traditional' Gypsy living. More importantly, their appearance suggested that in many ways these *fixed* abodes were *impermanent*. The examination of the external space reveals two primary themes. Firstly, a theme of performance; a demonstration of a performative nature in which the Traveller can exhibit cultural and familial identity. Secondly, there is a

---

than the location. The link between 'Vocation' and 'Location' is also a primary link. This is due to the dependency of the existence of the work upon the location. The link between 'Person' and 'Location' is secondary because the person is only dependent on location by way of vocation. The Traveller is primarily mobile because of work (and thus, sojourning), i.e. one travels where the work is possible. Although there is almost always a fixed 'home' location, it is the Traveller's trailer/vardo that is to be considered home. For the settled Traveller, the formula is still the same; however, work is local and there may be varying factors that require settlement.

theme of time, where permanence and the temporal coexist in a contradictory rhizome, with the eschatological 'hoped for' and the redemptive 'past' residing in an unstable present. However, it is in the theme of performance that Christian-Traveller symbolism and the motif of nomadism are, at least in their contemporary guise, best found.

The embodiment of nomadism as a performative identifier has, as suggested previously, been the measurement by which *gorger* culture has assessed or imagined Gypsy and Traveller culture. Therefore, having external decorations that are representative of a nomadic or itinerant nature on display, as mentioned above, could suggest that Travellers are in some way appeasing the expectations of gorgers, or attempting to reimagine the past. However, viewing the Traveller's usage of space – and even dress, in such a way as this, is at best informatively limiting, and at worst culturally insensitive. The meanings and significance of such space and 'performances' are esoteric, privy to Travellers and Gypsies, and are not for 'external' examination and interpretation. This 'performance ground' is sacred and clean (and therefore capable of becoming polluted) to the Traveller. In reference to Indigenous Australians, Schechner describes such a relationship between the person (in this instance, the Traveller) and the performative space, suggesting that '[o]nly the initiated know the relationship between the ordinary geography and the sacred geography'[544]. Indeed, Schechner reiterates the positioning of Bagele Chilisa and Gaelebale Tsheko (2014)[545], proposing that behaviour in this manner is both 'symbolic and reflexive. Its meanings need to be decoded by those in the know'[546]. Therefore, at this juncture it is fitting to state that traditional nomadism in Traveller communities is not always a readily observable activity – and thus is not always an identifier of Travellers and Gypsies. However, nomadism *is* an institution in Traveller and Gypsy culture and a motif in the performative realm of a Traveller theology. The nomadic camp setting creates a platform whereby the indigenous nature of Traveller culture is most explicitly revealed. The following comment from an Irish Traveller named Martin, gives an insight into when his camp received a visiting party:

> What was actually cool was around this time some Native Americans were travelling through Ireland and they came to visit our camp. They told us how we shared traditions such as building and lighting fires and everyone gathers around the campfire to chat and share stories. Like the Romany travellers the elders drank and also chatted with each other around the fire. I loved that day with the Native Americans, we had so much

---

[544] Schechner, 2006, p. 36.
[545] See Chapter One.
[546] Schechner, 2006, p. 35. Also see Geertz, 1973, pp. 10 & 17.

fun. It was great being around people who understood our ways of life. I don't recall their names but I do remember dressing up in their traditional dress[547].

The dwelling place for the Traveller becomes the performative area whereby nomadism is played out. Whether in honour of historical cultural traditions, in remembrance of ancestors or for affiliation to the community as a whole, Traveller art and presentation of publicised space is sacred and honourable. It is not a 'trend' or a 'statement' to those outside of the community. Travelling or nomadism, as spiritual and cultural practice, takes a form. In the instance of the *dwelling place*, the 'travelling space' can be seen as the 'Mosaic camp', with the Trailer or house (the Tabernacle) at the centre – an honorary and sacred nomadic form that is both fixed and impermanent. Its theological rationale is based on the logical evaluation that God is Lord of both His creation (the property) and His people. Both are open to defilement or 'pollution' and must therefore be separate from that which can defile (gorgers and gorger culture). As Creation belongs to God, its occupiers are temporal – as is everything else; therefore, the pattern of movement – or nomadism (physical, mental, or spiritual) is divinely sanctioned. This is exegetically supported through numerous examples in the Biblical text (with particular reference to Abraham, Sarah, Hagar, and their sons and daughters), where nomadism is not exceptional but is the normative mode of being[548].

James Mays highlights an almost mirrored theological underpinning utilised in the Levitical 'idealistic institutions', such as the 'Sabbatical Year' – or 'Land's Sabbath', and 'The Jubilee'. Mays states that 'the land belonged to God; the Israelites were only his tenants. The landowner set the terms of tenancy…'[549]; 'The land shall not be sold permanently, for the land is Mine'[550]. Intriguingly, this instruction is issued by God, with the following rationale; '…for you are strangers and sojourners with me' (Leviticus 25:23). Additionally – and arguably complementarily, the Amplified Bible replaces 'sojourner' with 'temporary residents with Me'. The idea of this intentional separateness is to maintain purity. Mays interprets the Levitical instruction on revering God (Leviticus 26:1-2), suggesting that 'human life must be lived so as to avoid the impure, the unclean, and the sinful and their resulting contaminating pollutions'[551]. Doing so enables an inner-cultural demonstration of reverence for what can be considered the 'divine sanctuary' or 'sacred space'[552] of the presence of God. Joseph Benson concurs with this approach, providing

---

547 G4S / HMPS, 2016, p. 9.
548 McLean, 2012, p. 312.
549 Mays, 1988, p. 178.
550 Mays, 1988, p. 178. Also see Leviticus 25:23.
551 Mays, 1988, p. 179.
552 Mays, 1988, p. 179.

the conclusion to his evaluation of revering the sacred space (from the same passage) with the recommendation of '…purging and preserving it from all uncleanness, by approaching it, and managing all the services of it with reverence, and in such manner only as God hath appointed'[553].

5.7.1 – The Camp – Stage One: Maintaining Separation

Outside of the (actual and metaphorical) camp are those considered polluted (gorgers) and physical waste. On occasions this divisional area is tangibly recognisable upon approaching some camps and Traveller houses (large collections of dumped refuge; tall metal gates and walls). See the following images:

Fig. 17 – *Dale Farm Site, England*[554]

[553] Benson, 1846.
[554] Note that the border of the camp is marked by barbed wire on fence (Fagge, 2011).

Fig. 18 – *St Syrus Site, Scotland*[555]

---

[555] Note the tall border fence surrounding the camp, and individual plots with high walls and gates (Dingwall, 2015).

Fig. 19 – *Cardiff: House Gates*[556]

The space is often divided into three areas (or two for fixed accommodation, such as a
house), with the first area reserved for bodily waste, cleaning – both personal and
clothing, and general waste. These are kept outside of the primary dwelling area[557] to
avoid contamination in the actual home / house. This also serves as an explanatory factor
(among others) as to why waste is often left after Travellers have left a temporary
stopping place; to take waste back into the residence (trailer / vardo) would cause
pollution. Modern residences – mobile or otherwise, are capable of accommodating these
'normal' pollutants, and the fear of spreading disease or disposing of the dead is not a
ready concern in UK homes. As such, the practice of maintaining these stringent and
deeply ritualistic and spiritual boundaries is thus withdrawn from an enigmatic state, and
placed firmly in one in which the usage of space for the Traveller secures two synergistic
patterns: that of maintaining purity, and that of removing pollution. This understanding of
Traveller space provides a significant development and statement that is both logically-

---

[556] Formidable gates and brick columns mark the border between 'gorger' and 'Traveller' space. Also, note
the decorative stone horses (on pathway to house) (Tomlinson, 2012).
[557] On a camp or mobile home park, the washing and toilet facilities are kept separate to the living quarters,
in an external building or structure. The 'dwelling area' should be considered anywhere inside the fenced or
walled areas. As such, it may contain vehicles, other trailers, vardos, caravans and possibly animals.

sound and supportive of the researcher's suggestion that Traveller Christianity is indeed a 'lived religion'. The usage of tangible space in Traveller and Gypsy environments is a key component in the salvific process of Traveller faith.

Consequently, this suggests that Traveller salvation, in much the same way as contemporary African Christianity, has a 'solid, material context'[558]. Its success is thus partially dependent upon the physical, social, and metaphorical separateness of the Traveller and their property from pollutants – both physical and spiritual. During critical periods of their development, both Eastern and Western Christianity were dramatically affected by processes of thought originating from indigenous elements, in which the material – including the body, were equated with evil[559]. This perspective has been challenged through theologies that find their roots in the liberal institution of the Enlightenment. These liberal approaches include (but are not limited to) certain feminist branches of theology and queer theology[560]. Queer theologian Patrick Cheng (2011) adopts an ecclesiological narrative when it comes to situations of (un)intentional social, spiritual, and theological boundaries and divisions. Cheng proposes that symbolism in the LGBT space such as the 'pride marches' and the rainbow flag, act to 'dissolve boundaries based on traditional identity markers'[561]. Compare these to the divisional walls of the Traveller camps and the images of nomadic culture such as the stone horses (see *Fig. 19*), which operate conversely in an identical framework function to *maintain* boundaries. Cheng continues by using the example of his experience in the Episcopal Church, explaining how it is 'fundamentally "queer" to the extent that it dissolves the boundaries between Roman Catholicism and Protestantism'[562]. Cheng asserts the direct correlation between non-determined space (and its usage), such as the rainbow flag – or the Traveller's 'waste area', and that of a theological agenda.

However, Roman Catholic theologian Francis Martin proposes that the liberal tradition that has spawned such theologies as those mentioned above (feminist and queer), 'asserts the independence of human beings from God'[563]. As such, Martin suggests that these theologies question 'not only the order of creation but also sets human understanding above divine inspiration'[564]. Martin's rationale is located in Barthian argumentation, using the criticality of neo-orthodoxy to dismiss the resurgence in social

---

[558] Walls, 1998, p. 148.
[559] Walls, 1998, p. 157.
[560] Watson, 2003, p. 59.
[561] Cheng, 2011, p. 106.
[562] Cheng, 2011, pp. 106 – 107.
[563] Watson, 2003, p. 59.
[564] Watson, 2003, p. 59.

and religious liberalism in the UK during the 20th and early 21st centuries[565]. Additionally, then, despite its abstruse and esoteric composition, the simple act of keeping pollution outside of the 'camp' (unknowingly and unwittingly) becomes both a political act and a theological standpoint. In neo-orthodoxical style, the Travellers' theology becomes less of a response to human questions and more of a response to God (and his Word)[566]. This tension is not a new one. As Theologian Andrew Walls identifies, there has always been an observable and constant tension between 'the forces which localise and indigenise it'. Those that streamline Christianity to a relationship between God and man, between act and response, and 'those which universalise it' – that is to say, those who liberalise Christianity with an emphasis on a human-centred story[567]. However, the dichotomy presented by Walls can be unified to some extent when applied to the instance of the Traveller and the salvific properties or pathways found in the use of space. This is achieved by implementing Paul Tillich's analytical proposal of the human condition, that the individual must 'draw upon interpretive material from *all* realms of culture' – unifying both the Christian theological and philosophical tasks, thus establishing a 'conversation' between Christian faith and human culture[568]. Despite the broadness and diverseness of such a statement, Tillich gives a specific focus to his proposition by asking one primary question: 'what does it mean to exist?'[569]. In applying the existential motif provided by Tillich, the Traveller is able to solidify and theologically legitimise their reasoning for operating a Mosaic camp model, owing to its soteriological value.

5.7.2 – The Camp – Stage Two: Within the Camp Walls

Located in the Levitical text is the inception of the Deuteronomic model of instruction, given by Moses to and for the benefit of the Camp. The model maintains a theme of purity, intentionally presenting it as divinely preferable to its oppositional narrative – pollution. However, the focus is realigned from one that draws a response towards polluting and sinful activities (and peoples), to one that in an idealistic manoeuvre seeks 'traditional' concepts of purity[570].

---

[565] The liberal movement has continued to develop its presence in policy and in social trends. However as of 2016 there has been a steady rise in conservative resistance. See Ekins, 2015; Wright, 2016.
[566] McGrath, 2011, p. 86.
[567] Walls, 1998, pp. 156 – 157.
[568] Hammond, 1964, p. 248. Also see McGrath, 2011, p. 83.
[569] McGrath, 2011, p. 248.
[570] Mays, 1988, p. 229. Also see Deuteronomy 23:1 – 14.

Martin Sicker introduces a translational exposition of the Deuteronomic camp model, by presenting a concept which he refers to as the 'principle of purity for arms'[571]. In the 'principle of purity for arms' are two key concepts that further dissect the inevitable tensions between contestable acts (or pollution) and principles of worship (or purity). Importantly, these oppositional concepts identified by Sicker as the 'war camp' and the 'worship assembly'[572] are *integrated as one area*. This integrated area is an environment that is a permanent fluidity in the impermanence of the camp as a whole. The cross-tensions of permanence and impermanence, and of war and worship, are symbolised via a transition from the impurity of the camp walls and beyond; to the purity of the camp home, the trailer, the house – the 'tent of meeting'.

In this area 'war' or fights for honour and settling disputes[573] are not considered polluting but are 'honourable' methods, or at the very least *acceptable* in which to settle issues and conflict[574] (Deuteronomy 23:14). Conversely, this 'middle ground' is also considered to be a 'safe' ground where the Traveller is essentially a free citizen in his own land – even if that land is not his or her own (i.e. an illegal or temporary stopping ground). Unless under a specific and particular invitation, gorgers who are unknown may be considered to be unwelcome or even prevented from gaining entry[575]. This is not an intentionally conflictual mode of operation but simply a method in which potential pollution is prevented from entering a 'pure' area. The religious nature and spiritual value of this temporal, 'undecided' middle-ground, operates between the poles of impure and pure. It initially appears to be related to some form of reductive theism, which according to Charles Taylor is in itself reflective of the contemporary sense of a vague spirituality expressed by some in the modern era[576]. This 'sense' according to Dean McBride, arises from 'living in a vast, expanding, "disenchanted" universe that mocks not only public religion but private belief in a sublime Divine Being who is both transcendent and immanent'[577]. Critically then, it would appear that given the established reasoning behind such practices, the evaluation given by McBride of Taylor's description of a 'vague spirituality', is in fact contrary to the Biblically based impermanence of the Traveller camp. The camp is where

---

[571] Sicker, 2009, pp. 44 – 46.
[572] Mays, 1988, p. 229.
[573] See Chapter Two.
[574] 'For the Lord your God walks in the midst of your camp to deliver you and to give up your enemies before you. Therefore shall your camp be holy, that He may see nothing indecent among you and turn away from you'.
[575] This cultural trend – whilst not universal, is documented as happening through varying means, and often with varying reasons being given for such exclusions. See Hancock, 2013, pp. 58 – 59; Cullen et al, 2008, p. 11.
[576] Taylor, 2007, pp. 1 – 54.
[577] McBride, 2012, p. 434.

Traveller and Gypsy Christian spirituality is representative of an 'ordered universe in which the theological baseline is deliberate, discriminating divine providence'[578].

Whilst the question of the sovereignty of God or 'Creator' over the nomadic camp is unchallenged, it remains unclear as to how those in the camp relate to the nature of God. The evidence shows that there exists a subscription to values and worldviews that are based on narratives clearly originating from Pentateuchal sources. Consequently, this would suggest that the Creator who dwells in the midst of the Traveller's 'Mosaic' camp is the same Creator that was personally revealed as 'the LORD' (YHWH) to the nation of Israel, and 'whose judicious, responsive patronage of humankind is often expressed in the New Testament with the metaphor "Father"'[579]. As such, scriptural propositions that can offer explanation as to how such a relationship operates, must also be concerned with the attributes, purposes, activities, and accessibility of this providential celestial being.

As stated above, the sovereignty and governance of God over the Traveller's cosmos (or camp) and the Travellers themselves is certain. However, does God dispense benefactions and justice in relation to the maintenance (and conversely the neglect) of pollution related practices, *primarily* or *exclusively* from a transcendental distance[580]? Or, as circumstances may support, does God also choose to draw near to Gypsies in an impendent capacity, responding to human needs 'in our midst[581]? Witnesses from Biblical text often attest to such impendence. This forces a shift in the criticality towards the Traveller's 'works'[582] for the pursuit of purity. In turn this seeks to open up the relational dynamic between the Gypsy and God, asking how God's closeness is perceived and manifested. Additionally, given the fragility and sinful state of the human condition, are there any assurances of the divine presence being reliably efficacious, especially given the often attested to historically tormentous existence of the Gypsy? Such questions are perhaps ineffectually answered through observation and critical engagement with the 'perimeters' and 'inner boundaries' of the camp. However, progressing towards the centre of the camp – the living quarters, facilitates more engagement with the 'pure', as the impure is left firmly behind. This developing 'Traveller doctrine of God', in the face of intentional but purposeful isolation / separation by Travellers (by proxy of an enforced

---

[578] McBride, 2012, p. 434.
[579] McBride, 2012, pp. 434 – 435.
[580] Exodus 2:25; 1 Kings 8:27–30; Psalm 93; Matthew 6:9–10; Revelation 4.
[581] Zephaniah 3:17; Hebrew 13:2.
[582] 'Works' in this sense, should be understood as being as being one half of a dichotomy, with its Biblical opposite being 'grace'. It should be noted that the researcher interprets the 'works versus grace' equation to be markers at opposite ends of a spectrum, rather than opposing binary propositions.

'barrier' between cultures), begins to raise further questions about the impassibility of God and the Traveller's participation in what appears to be an voluntary mode of suffering.

5.7.3 – The Camp – Stage Three: The Centre of the Camp

In the centre of the camp (the home) the manifestation of God is made apparent through abstract forms, which among other things include: art works; ornaments; and in some instances a sterner, more illiberal and puritanical application of the Mokhhadi code[583]. The Biblical precedent for this philosophical dualism of mind and matter remains in the Pentateuchal-Israelite narrative. On several occasions in Scripture, God appears in and through various forms[584]. In the Gypsy home (and sometimes, vehicles), the power of the 'Spirit' or 'divine presence' can be invoked in several ways, including through the touching of crucifixes, ornaments of Christ and Mary[585], rosaries, and images of Saints.

The influence of common and 'recommended' Catholic practices are evident[586], demonstrating the powerful influence of Anglo-Catholic Christian missionaries, governmental policies, assimilation, acculturalisation and education, dating back to the mid-19th century onwards[587]. Given the monumental rise of Pentecostal-led and non-specific denominational Evangelism among the UK Gypsy and Traveller community over the past 30 to 40 years, the application of Catholic style Spirit invocation seems relatively out of place. This is not to suggest that Travellers are not identifying as Catholic in the UK. But it does suggest that Gypsies and Travellers are practicing another mode of Christianity – albeit a syncretistic Christian practice that, as many other (former) Indigenous collectives have experienced, is heavily tainted with the effects of colonialism[588]. For clarity, Catholicism in this sense is not synonymous with Colonialism, nor is Catholicism underrepresented. However, the misinterpretation of the Traveller's nomadic 'trailer' or 'home' and the practical application of a Gypsy Christianity undertaken therein as any form of Christianity other than a Gypsy Christianity, is simply a continuation of Colonialist practice and evidence of the appropriation of Gypsy religious practice by

---

[583] Clark & Greenfields, 2006, pp. 40 – 45.
[584] 'The Angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush…' – Exodus 3:2. Also see; Exodus 13:21 – Pillar of cloud; Exodus 13:21 – Pillar of fire; Exodus 19:16-19 & Exodus 20:18-22 – Thunder, lighting and a thick darkness; Exodus 24:9-11, Deuteronomy 4: 11,12 & 15, & John 5:37 – Unclear form, with a voice, hands and feet; Job 38:1 – Whirlwind; Genesis 3:8 – Possibly the form of a man.
[585] Ian Hancock remarks on how Romani-Indian heritage has maintained elements of Hinduism in its spiritual and religious practice – including instances of recognising spiritual power in objects / items (Hancock, 2013, p. 74).
[586] Catholic Online, 2014.
[587] Martin, 2010, pp. 2 – 3.
[588] Martin, 2010, pp. xvi – xviii.

dominant Western denominations. It is also a gross devaluing of the sanctity and relevance of the Gypsy or Traveller's dwelling place, ignoring the spiritual, historical, and cultural value and significance of artwork and decoration.

Surprisingly it appears that this 'devaluing' emerges by way of 'constructive' agendas from Catholic clergy and Scholars who enter into a process of making comparisons regarding differences and similarities by observing and evaluating Catholic and 'Native' (or Indigenous) traditions and symbols[589]. This process is undertaken at a macro level. It is achieved by ignoring the greater contexts of Gypsy culture, abstract influences in Traveller communities and the specific 'cultural conditions and impositions that frame complex social dynamics'. In this instance, the ignorance is directed towards the Traveller and Gypsy camps and housing areas. The consequence of these actions is the squashing of or an entire dismissal of the voices (of Gypsies) that oppose this 'pan-Indian'-esque mythology[590].

The reappropriation of what is typically understood to be Catholic imagery and symbolism in Traveller homes enables a new hermeneutic to emerge; one that removes unhelpful, disparaging narratives (both religious and social). Thus, Gypsy Christian 'performance', including its many examples of 'sub' nuances (purity; nomadism; use of space, etc.) is authentically understood by placing Gypsies in the exegetical process[591]. This process of contextualisation is reflective of the Gypsy's Biblical hermeneutic, which is widely based upon a literal interpretation of Scripture. In this method, Gypsies and Travellers are then able to reappropriate Christian denominations for and through their own individual or family preferences. This goes some way to explain the intense unity on display at Appleby Fair between the varying denominations. The denominations who, whilst having vastly differing modes of operation, also had an evident shared 'missional' and cultural bond that went beyond its 'Christian' baseline, making any distinctions between the groups onerous.

This is important, as it reveals a nomadic nature in Gypsy and Traveller culture that is present in not only the social sense, but also the religious sense. This provides some evidence of a certain 'fluidity' of Christian positioning (i.e. denominational preference). However, there remains a lack of transparency as to what orthodoxical and theological consequences (if any) such a fluidity may entail. A micro example of this could be explored with regards to the aforementioned symbolic objects and pictures in the Traveller home that go beyond basic familial representations, as is customary in traditional

---

[589] Martin, 2010, pp. 2 – 3.
[590] Martin, 2010, p. 2.
[591] As has been undertaken through this section; an example being the direct comparisons of the Traveller and the nomadic camp with the Israelite camp and the Pentateuchal motif of purity.

interpretations of Catholic imagery and iconography. There appears to be no explicit indications that such items are considered to be tangible *representations* (rather than *manifestations*) of the divine presence. An example of this contextual difference is marginally seen in the Israelite camp motif when Moses is confronted with the cult of the golden bull-calf (created in some ways as a consequence of a desire for the substantiation of the Lord, but undertaken in violation of the covenantal agreement between the people and God[592] [Exodus 32:1 – 35]). And whilst there is an acknowledgment that spiritual power can reside (or manifest) in certain objects[593], there is no clarification or certainty as to what degree these objects go beyond their symbolistic properties and blessed status, and are thus treated as the 'golden calf'. Arguably, and in defence of the Traveller position, these 'concerns' may be more symbolistic of a colonial indoctrination. Such indoctrination affects both those *outside* and *in* the Gypsy community. Those outside aim to ensure orthodoxy in the Christian faith and subsequent presentation of that faith, whilst those operating *in* the Gypsy community (such as the researcher) seek to achieve a critical self-awareness in an environment that has been consumed by its colonial masters of past and present.

In conclusion, there remains a tension of sorts, residing somewhere between the nature of the religious experience happening in the entire camp system (boundaries, inner realm, home or 'tabernacle'), and that of theological and ecclesiological reasoning. Even so, this experience could still be stripped of any and all theological value and simply reclassified as a phenomenological experience – or to give it more credence, suggest that the Traveller's religious experience is a 'religious one' (in the sense that Durkheim suggests that 'religion is a well-founded illusion'[594]). However, one would still be presented with a tangible and measurable effect and outcome as a direct result of the 'lived religion' being exercised in and beyond the camp borders. This deconstructive reasoning creates a process whereby social physics moves into social phenomenology, resulting in what Pierre Bourdieu describes as 'social reality'[595]. In this social reality, perceived or tangible 'folk' narratives and perceptions acquire a 'truly real power of construction'[596]. For the Gypsy, this 'social reality' consists of a performative – or 'lived out' Christian narrative, in which an interplay of ethnic identity and a language of discipleship is formed[597]. Bourdieu would describe this as a 'habitus', enabling 'the institution to attain full realisation'

---

[592] Mays, 1988, pp. 153 – 154.
[593] Examples include Moses' (serpent) staff – Exodus 4:2; and Paul's cloth or handkerchief – Acts 19:12.
[594] Pickering, 2009, pp. 336 – 338.
[595] Bourdieu, 1989, p. 18.
[596] Bourdieu, 1989, pp. 18 – 19.
[597] Bantum, 2010, p. 19.

whereby the property (the camp) with all its features and modes of operation, 'appropriates its owner, embodying itself in the forms of structure generating practices perfectly conforming with its logic'[598]. In short, the nomadic camp model proposed and thus utilised by the researcher is not simply an act of cultural practice. As a motif of Gypsy ethnic and religious identity and as an act of intentional discipleship, the 'Mosaic' camp model of nomadism and dwelling is at the least a measurable and observable act of politicised theology.

5.8 – Time

In the camp motif, codes of purity and performance are enacted through the careful utilisation of space, personal and communal conduct, and through a culturally determined 'roster' of ritual and sacramental performativity. (Theo)logically and collectively, these 'performances' are indicative of the relationship between Traveller and Creator. This highlights the consequential yet salvific nature of Traveller Christianity on the personal level, transcending the rhizome of the camp and extending to the individual Traveller. Possessing an understanding for these elements is helpful, in that they are explanatory in the theological process of proposing and constructing a foundation upon which a Traveller theology can be developed. However, there remains a nondeterministic nature to the elements, suggesting that in spite of appearances, a rationale of sorts is in operation. The coexisting nature of permanence and temporal that typifies the nomadic nature of the Gypsy (and the Gypsy camp) indicates that any rationale present must be of a regimented complexion, in order that its components function as they do. Of course, the primary distinction between the Gypsies' 'Mosaic' camp and that of a non-nomadic people's 'settlement' is not just the impermanent nature of the camp but the specific and intentional design for the camp to move at a designated time.

A particular purpose is thus alluded to, by the simple nature of permanently dwelling in the temporal form – both physically and spiritually. This subconscious but important narrative of time and purpose is seen perhaps most poignantly in the book of Numbers (Numbers 10:11 – 36), as the climatic movement from Sinai and the Wilderness toward the 'promised land' begins (Numbers 10:13). Mays (1988) draws attention to the meticulous and elaborate maintenance of 'the purity and holiness of the camp' in the preparation phase of journey. May suggests that this process of deconstructing and reconstructing the camp is 'almost liturgical', as the 'march' – or movement from camp to the next

---

[598] Bourdieu, 1990, p. 57.

destination, becomes a 'liturgical procession with the holy God at the centre leading the faithful people through the wilderness'[599].

Two developing factors emerge at this juncture for the Gypsy or Traveller. Firstly, that the phase between one settlement and another can be both an act of faith and a culturally liturgical moment – in essence, a pilgrimage. And secondly (and subsequently), that the faith posited in the liturgical process of nomadism is drawn from a particular perception and engagement with time. In this understanding of time the eschatological 'hoped for' and the redemptive (past) 'Cross event' dwell simultaneously in an unstable and often contradictory 'lived out' present. Crudely elucidating, in a social sense this could be understood as 'living in/for the moment'. Exegetically speaking, it is an application and amalgamation of both the Proverb(ial) warning to refrain from dwelling in the future (or being in an anxious state) (Proverbs 27:1), and the assertion made by Jesus of His alternative purpose for humanity to 'have life and have it abundantly' (John 10:10).

5.8.1 – Where and what is Time?

This brings into question how a Traveller 'cosmology' deals with or positions time. Initial presentations suggest a linear narrative is in operation. There is an emphasis on the time narrative starting with a recounting of the past, as evidenced through 'storytelling' (a consistently occurring event in many Gypsy and Traveller settings, often for a variety of purposes)[600]. The past recounted in this manner, placed in conjunction with the inferable 'temporal' that exhibits the nature and qualities of something moving 'towards' (perhaps a 'promised land' or otherwise), would appear evidential enough to support linearity. Indeed, the nomadic proposition in the aforementioned equation, of a past combined with a seemingly determined future, would be consistent with Barth's 'linear' propositions in the themes of 'formative economy', and in particular – 'limitation'[601], whose focus is upon the condition of human temporality[602]. Barth's suggests an 'allotted time' – a 'temporal limitation as the given shape or form… in which human life finds its determinateness', with God being 'the One in relation to whom our life has its limit and our time is allotted'[603]. Such a theory is certainly compatible with a God whose activity amongst and relationship to His people (the Gypsies and amongst the Camp), is based upon consequential and

---

[599] Mays, 1988, pp. 189 – 190.
[600] Keet-Black, 2013, pp. 37 & 52 – 53.
[601] For a critique of these propositions by Barth, see Roberts, 1992, pp. 1 – 58.
[602] Webster, 1995, pp. 72 – 73.
[603] Webster, 1995, p. 73.

measurable outcomes in relation to eschatological and salvific beliefs. Of course, Barth does not limit God in this linear narrative. Instead he chooses to emphasise the unknowability and magnitude of God, by proposing that chronological time is no binder for 'the eternality of the divine perspective'[604]:

> But now directs our attention to time which is beyond time, a space which has no locality, to impossible possibility, to the gospel of transformation, to the imminent Coming of the Kingdom, to affirmation in negation, to salvation in the world, to acquittal in condemnation, to eternity in time, to life in death – *I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth are passed away*[605].

Barth's narration of the nature of how he perceives time and the interrelatedness of the Divine and humanity, and of humanity's place in the temporal and eternity, provides a framework. Upon this framework the unstable and indeterminate nature of the Travellers 'condition' (Camp and personal) develops permanence. Indeed, it is in the uncertainty (and therefore the instability) of time that God is known; Barth highlights his rejection of the contemporary narrative that suggests 'time as an absolute reality…not subject to any conditions'[606]. 'Modern time', for Barth, 'is a concept of time without God', and as such it receives Barth's criticism, as it is posited as '*absolute* time without God'[607]. This is helpful, as it establishes as a minimum, an explanation and an understanding of the 'permeability' and transcendent nature of the Gypsy's God, of *Creator*. Barth's negation of 'modern time' functions as an apophatic translator when applied to the Gypsy time narrative, which is productive in its mechanical development. The progression of this theorem can be developed further by investigating Moltmann's critique of Barth's eschatological interests. Moltmann, whose liberation (theology) concerns encompass the 'social, political, and ecological' spheres, challenges his disquietude that Barth undermines the 'yet-to-be-realised work of Christ'. Barth in this instance opts instead to highlight 'the not-yet-concluded character of revelation'[608]. Moltmann seeks to make explicit the activity and involvement of Christ through transcendental processes, and thus changes (and challenges) the structure of Barth's linear propositions:

> If eschaton means eternity and not End-time, then eschatology has no longer anything to do with the future either. Its tension is not the tension between present and future, the "now already" and "not yet"; it is the tension between eternity and time in past,

---

[604] Althouse, 2014, pp. 258 – 259. Also see; Romans 3:21.
[605] Althouse, 2014, p. 259.
[606] Althouse, 2014, p. 259.
[607] Althouse, 2014, p. 259.
[608] Althouse, 2014, p. 258.

present and future. When Jesus proclaims that the kingdom of God is "at hand", he is not looking into the future in the temporal sense; he is looking into the heaven of the present. The kingdom does not "come" out of the future into the present. It comes from heaven to earth…[609].

That is not to say that Moltmann dismisses Barth's narrative on time – rather, it is the opposite – Moltmann is in agreement with the principles of Barth's proposition. However, it is the manner in which Barth's permeable and unstable time narrative operates which is in dispute. Whilst Moltmann agrees with Barth's linearity, it appears that Moltmann's approach is more intensive and more reflective of a Jewish engagement with a one-dimensional narrative[610]. This is arguably a 'best fit' for the nuances of the axial nomadic '*cause and effect*'; of purity in relation to salvation, and remembrance of the past in relation to a Traveller eschaton moment. The lack of certainty (or assured salvific grace) in the Traveller's *eschatological* moment is reflected in the continual application of Mokhhadi. Furthermore, such a dynamic perhaps goes some way in explaining what appears to be an apparent affiliation to *Catholic* traditions, in which continual and public sacramental 'removal of sins' is arguably a key narrative in the process of liturgical worship. The challenge that arises in these details is the process of decoding the true Gypsy voice amongst the (historical) appropriating denominational influence and from the voices of the theologians. For whilst Christianity is complete (in the sense that it offers both 'promise' and 'fulfilment' by way of the messianic covenant), the perpetual unsettlement of a Gypsy Christianity suggests one of the following: There is a collective absence of salvific faith in Gypsy and Traveller Christian congregations. Alternatively, in light of Christianity's Jewish roots, there has been a response by Christian theologians to charges of triumphalism by a shuffling of 'the all too accommodating categories of "already" and "not yet" in which Christianity perennially couches its eschatology'[611].

Given the logically deductive process and the resulting presentation of the data thus far, the two challenges mentioned above are reasonable conclusions. However, it is also fair to suggest that such conclusions do not go far enough in their exploration and thus create a false dichotomy of sorts. In the instance of the second charge – yes, there has been a 'shuffling' of categories by Christian theologians, but only in the limited scope of eschatological conclusions. Could it be that the rawness and inherent social disadvantage

---

[609] Moltmann, 2004, p. 15.
[610] Lowe, 2006, pp. 693 & 695
[611] Lowe, 2006, p. 695.

of Gypsy society, with its embrace of explicit expression[612], warrants an escalation of the time narrative that is more reflective of the Gypsy's 'dramatised' norm? In conversation with Jewish theologian Michael Wyschogrod, Barth proposes that '[Y]ou Jews have the promise but not the fulfilment; we Christians have both promise and fulfilment'. Wyschogrod responds; 'With human promises one can have the promise but not the fulfilment… But a promise of God is like money in the bank. If we have [God's] promise, we have its fulfilment…'[613]. Wyschogrod's Jewish understanding of linearity is one that places an intensity upon the dialogue of eschatological narratives, bringing an actualisation to the 'hoped for'. In this way, Wyschogrod is able to propose a lived-in 'density' or 'certain darkness', 'from which Christians might well learn'[614]. This is an escalation which Walter Lowe suggests should be understood as apocalyptic rather than eschatological, based upon its more 'radical' connotations and on its historical development in 'pre-rabbinic Judaism and early Christian history'[615]. This escalation in terms is not without precedent. A quick exegesis of John reveals the simultaneous glorification and fleshly crucifixion (John 3:14 & 12:32) – the moment of permeability between the spiritual and the physical; the moment of simultaneous purity and pollution; a process which Edwyn Hoskyns sets in linearity but above conventional proleptic Christian understandings[616]. Hoskyns suggests that human beings, through Jesus, are 'immediately confronted by the last things; by Life and by Judgement, by the Love of God and by [God's] condemnation'[617]. Furthermore, John's dissatisfaction with the linear eschatology of the Christologies in the synoptic Gospels, as Hoskyns reveals, sets about this shared 'apocalyptical' experience with Christ. This creates a return as such to the contemporary theological rejection (or ignorance) of 'particularity'[618]; hence:

> In the fourth Gospel…past, present, and future all play a part, but not in order to trace out any sequence of chronological evolution of which the ultimate goal, still future, is the final realisation of the Kingdom of God. All these are used, rather, to show that in Jesus men [sic] are *immediately* confronted by the last things…[619].

---

612 One example of this 'explicit expression' is highlighted by Bhopal & Myers (2008, pp. 32 – 33), who present the situation of Gypsy weddings and the potential for such an occasion to be an arena where 'long-standing rivalries may resurface and be resolved through fighting' (p.32). Also see Chapter 4 – *Language*.
613 Lowe, 2006, p. 693.
614 Lowe, 2006, pp. 694 – 696.
615 Lowe, 2006, pp. 695 – 696.
616 Lowe, 2006, p. 696.
617 Hoskyns, 1947, p. 119.
618 Lowe, 2006, p. 696.
619 Hoskyns, 1947, pp. 118 – 119.

The Traveller's engagement with and interpretation of time is undertaken through and with Christ. This is done in such a way that the present becomes an escalation of the eschatological via a conscious engagement with the present chaotic revelation of the past and future. The juxtaposition of the nomadic camp narrative and all it entails provides a clear example. Christ therefore rightfully (at least with regards to orthodox belief) assumes His position as mediator and enabler. For Gypsies, Christ operates in what Jacques Derrida describes as a 'phenomenologically delineated khôra'[620], as a mode by which all rules – including those of time, are not applicable, for the simple understanding that, as John Yoder proposes – Christ *is* the rule[621]. To live 'in the now' is to live in Christ; to live 'in the now' is to live as a Gypsy.

5.9 – A Summary Thus Far

The field research revealed a complexity of data, resulting in a quandary for the researcher in how and what to include in any subsequent translation. There were several encompassing themes that could accommodate these, albeit in a limited capacity. This was owing to the vast number of avenues of investigation that were possible. It was decided by the researcher that a narrowing of a 'cosmological' approach would be most effective; one in which a piece of the Traveller's 'world' could be forensically and theologically dissected. The themes that would most readily allow a Traveller Christianity to emerge were: language; space and symbolism[622]; and 'time'.

5.9.1 – Language

The theme of language revealed that beyond the immediacy of being a cultural identifier, language in Gypsy and Traveller communities exposed an unsettlement – a characteristic that would present itself in the other encompassing themes. Cross-examination with indigenous theological approaches towards language (used by Twiss (2015)) enabled and facilitated a centralisation of Christ in the Traveller's otherwise 'unfamiliar' speech. Whilst arguably more culturally protective than theologically engaging, language, for Gypsy culture, presented an indication of an underlying Christian experience.

---

[620] Derrida, 1999, p. 73.
[621] Barber, 2007, pp. 63 – 65.
[622] This included sub-sections of: pollution and purity; nomadism; and the camp.

5.9.2 – Space and Symbolism

The exploration of space and symbolism was investigated via a synchronistic approach, as the parameters of both 'areas' required an accommodation by the other. Space in itself was seen and utilised as both symbolic and capable of accommodating symbols – be they liturgical, tangible, or otherwise. Symbolism however was dependent upon the space in which it occupied for meaning, impact, and significance. The potentially immaterialness of such concepts (and thus the implicit danger for open interpretation) was given a tangible grounding and in many ways a corporeality. This was achieved via an exegetical engagement with the comparative 'Mosaic Camp'. As a result, the purity narrative that has emerged at every juncture of the thesis thus far was given a platform of contextualisation, in which its almost pyramidal structural could be observed in operation[623]. Doing so revealed a primary (and historical) cultural element of Gypsy society whose core retained an autonomy of identity, purpose and belief. This was in spite of the evolution of external conditions in which it resided. These include: Social evolutions (both Gypsy and gorger); accommodation and settlement issues (tent-based encampments, wagon-based encampments, trailer and house-based 'encampments'); and theological evolutions (reformation, enlightenment period, modern period). With the contribution of David Pawson's Levitical exegesis[624], the distinction was made between understanding the pollution code simply as a matter of 'pure' and 'impure', and instead expanding both its translation and conceptual applications to include the *physical* 'impurity' elements and its *immaterial* theological equivalents of 'sin' and 'forgiveness', 'grace' and 'judgement'. With this rationale in position, the progression of the investigation into 'nomadism and the camp' was in place.

Several factors emerged as the nomadic nature of Gypsy and Traveller identity was explored, starting with a dialectical examination and interrogation of commonly held beliefs and practices regarding nomadism in the Gypsy and Traveller community. This deconstructive process facilitated a reimagining (and thus a new narrative) of nomadism as an element of 'being' Christian, or at least as a mode of *spirituality*. In the contextual operation of being, the nomadic narrative undertakes its modus operandi as 'sojourner'. This facilitates a politically theological intentionality and a method of servitude; appeasing both the Creator and the cultural values of the collective. When given a platform on which

---

[623] The researcher proposes that in some ways the purity narrative could be understood as pyramidal; with physical elements (for example, menstruation and child birth) making up the broad base; ideological elements ('normative' or 'Gypsy cultural' beliefs and values) forming the middle layer, and spiritual elements (blessings, pardoning of sins) creating the pinnacle to the 'pyramid'.

[624] Pawson, 2007, pp. 142 – 143.

to operate (in this instance, the 'Camp' model), nomadism, in addition to now being understood as a spiritual process, also becomes a sacramental undertaking directed by an oral and socially inherited liturgy. Again, this process of development proved significant and consequential, as the parameters of the seemingly *free* nomadic tradition revealed a *definitive* and *intentional* system that is constructed with the following properties: It functions around an inherent purity code; it is ecologically sensitive; and it is theologically interwoven with a cultural narrative and perception on time, finality, and cosmological positioning (both personal and that of the divine / God / 'Creator'). This hermeneutic of nomadism, whilst significant in its own right, is both synergistic with the 'Camp' motif (another prominent element in the eclectic make-up of Gypsy and Traveller identity) and is a *key component* of the Camp narrative.

The exegetical interaction between the Traveller's camp and that of the Mosaic camp sets about a working framework upon which the 'performative' elements of language, nomadism, and Traveller sacraments are given a tangible functionality. It is noted that the combination of these cultural aspects, whilst independently explainable, are at first glance collectively indeterminate. However, it is the synthesis and the contradictory nature of both the chaotic resistance of Gypsy culture in light of its position in the larger gorger society, and of the specificity of the performative elements, that produce what is a very particular, measurable and observable system of thought and practice. The result is an ontological structure predicated upon a systemic relationship with God and a collective understanding of the communities' metaphysical alignment. What is unclear at this stage (and arguably warrants further investigation) is whether the developing Traveller 'cosmology' (which is best understood through theological interpretation) has developed or is developing exclusively through metaphysical means or by Traveller Christian performance (sacramental or otherwise). Or in other terms, is the Traveller's ontology one that has evolved by environmental engagement and influence (from an external Church), or by intentional acquisition (and thus development) by Gypsy and Traveller communities? Of course, these are not definitive dichotomies. However, it is apparent that these questions suggest that any answers must at some stage include investigations into historic ecclesiological practices. This is partially due to the direct association with issues of colonialist influence and appropriating practices experienced by the early Traveller and Gypsy collectives. Meanwhile, the existing Traveller structure, which is bound by its purity narrative, creates an environment where 'salvation' is both a *lived-out* and *hoped-for* reality. This is most commonly achieved by maintaining a separateness from various gorger 'environments', such as personal relationship arrangements. The Camp also

serves to allow a freedom of Gypsy expression – whether 'Christian' or otherwise, often observable through symbolism and varying activities.

5.9.3 – Time

Such symbolism and activities are understood and given both meaning and context because of their positioning in relation to the Gypsy's application and interpretation of time[625]. Time in this instance is both measurable and a theological construct in which ontological and eschatological narratives (personal and collective) dwell. The rich Gypsy tradition of storytelling serves as a method of intentionally relocating the past into an immediate setting. Meanwhile, the eschatological narrative with its dissatisfaction of a 'next life' resolution (conversely witnessed through a 'joy' in confronting suffering in the present)[626], is violently implemented into the present. This produces an escalation and urgency of the Gypsy's eschaton. The result of this 'apocalyptic' scenario is the introduction of a linear time narrative in the Gypsy and Traveller setting that is of a dualistic nature – human and supernatural. The permeability and relationship between the two natures receives its context and grounding by way of a triangulated discourse from Barth, Moltmann and Wyschogrod. In a necessary and supporting role, the triangulated discourse is then exegetically contextualised by introducing Hoskyns' (1947) examination of the book of John[627]. Whilst Derrida's proposed 'phenomenologically delineated khôra'[628] is arguably an accurate and succinct summarisation of the Gypsy's narrative of time, it is Yoder's conclusion that 'Christ is the rule'[629] which theologically grounds the time motif.

Independently the differing themes (language, purity, space, symbolism, and time) produce specific outcomes. Meanwhile, the amalgamation and synchronisation of the varying aforementioned factors produce a more directed, intentional, and coherent landscape of the theological positioning of Gypsies and Travellers as a collective. This in turn serves to bring about a reassessment and realignment of how elements such as the field research are understood. Of important note is the continual and overriding theme of purity. It is present in *all* elements of the Traveller cosmology, performing a significant role

---

[625] Section *5.8 / 5.8.1*.

[626] This specific approach of confronting suffering in and through what Gustavo Gutiérrez describes as 'joy' (Farmer, 2013, p. 179), locates its precedent in the Liberation Theology narrative. Also see Moschella, 2016, p. 213.

[627] With particular reference to John 3:14 & 12:32.

[628] Derrida, 1999, p. 73.

[629] Barber, 2007, pp. 63 – 65.

in the reimagining of such narratives through its contractual and salvific connotations. Consequentially this 'reimagining' has potential significance beyond what has thus been examined. This places a need for a forensic critique that narrows the *collective* approach of this chapter, sharpening the focus upon how the Gypsy or Traveller as an *individual* is positioned in the contextual dialogues of salvific performance, and eschatological expectations and approaches. This chapter will now attempt to address these concerns by examining the origins of the person, in addition to dissecting their antagonistic and dichotomous alternatives of death and the afterlife. In doing so, it is hoped that a more complete image will emerge that will in many ways determine whether Yoder's proposition of Christ being 'the rule' is applicable only to the Traveller's environment and the external, or as the hypothesis of this thesis moves towards, Christ is also at the epicentre of the Traveller's condition.

5.10 – A Traveller Cosmology: A Traveller-Christian Theological Portrayal

The first half of this chapter began a process of interpreting the primary themes that had emerged during the field research chapter (Chapter Four), which in turn had been shaped (i.e. choices of question themes, approach to research, methodology etc.) by the research in the previous chapters. What emerged was a presentation of a predominantly 'Christian' cosmology – a 'Traveller religion' of sorts. An exploration into a possible theological narrative in Traveller culture was facilitated by categorising phenomena, patterns of behaviour and modes of operation into areas (language, space and symbolism, and time) that made any subsequent interpretations more achievable. This process revealed that there was indeed a particular theological hermeneutic emerging; one that was built upon a 'purity and pollution' narrative. From this narrative, further questions and themes of soteriology and eschatology developed, resulting in the metaphorical framework of the aforementioned 'Traveller religion'. The mid-chapter summary of this chapter concluded by introducing the investigative query of whether Yoder's proposition of Christ being 'the rule' applies only to the Traveller's environment and external elements, or as the hypothesis of this thesis gravitates towards, Christ also occupies the epicentre of the Traveller's condition.

The remainder of this chapter will now attempt to forensically examine and develop this understanding, allowing the primary 'building blocks' of a Traveller theology to emerge. This approach continues the process of 'sharpening' the lens of the thesis, moving from a broad social and historical narrative to a particular (and current) Traveller narrative; from a *presentation* of the culture to an *examination* of the culture. It is then only logical for the

research to move towards an exploration of the theological context of the person, rather than simply halting the process at the collective stance. To achieve this, the following areas will be explored: Origins; Death; and the Afterlife. The repudiation of other Christian anthropological elements, such as 'Components' (body, soul, spirit, flesh)[630] and the 'nature of the person' (e.g. 'Dichotomism')[631], is due to factors including an absence of relevance in the current developing argument and an unavailability of concrete and broad data. The reasoning for pursuing the chosen areas lay in the broadly encompassing nature of said themes, meaning that whilst the research progresses towards a more personal and particular investigation, it still remains communally critical, objective and relevant.

To summarise; the remainder of this chapter will attempt to formulate a provisional Traveller-Christian theological portrayal. It will do this by examining a logical series of necessary and predetermined components, as discussed above. This will all be undertaken in light of the aforementioned hypothesis statement that proposes '*Christ is also at the epicentre of the Traveller's condition*'. To initiate this process, the theme of 'Origins' (and a series of necessary questions) will be explored. The questioning at this juncture is both logical in its progression and sequential in its nature, and is formulated via the culmination of the thesis thus far and of the anticipated required information.

5.11 – Origins

The current primary questions are of a cultural, theological, and potentially ecclesiological nature. They ask: What is the formulation of and location of a Traveller purity or Traveller bloodline – in the flesh, as a soul, both, or neither? At what juncture does 'purity' or a 'pure bloodline / pure Traveller/Gypsy' begin? Finally, what element (body and/or soul) is the subject of salvation?

Questions of this nature are on one hand the produce of a theological crux, resulting from a naturally occurring investigative path. However, more significantly for the thesis as a whole, they potentially represent what Professor Charles Taylor describes as a 'semantic innovation'. This is where the complexity of an originally existing set of ideas, often expressed through Christian text, practice, and philosophy, are initially introduced as simplistic (academically speaking) and then redefined through a process and combination

---

[630] Andrews, 2016, p. 35.
[631] Bolyki, 1994, p. 72.

of *semantic* logic and *enacted* logic[632]. In this way, the purity narrative and the formally addressed 'language' element are revisited as an ongoing and developing theme, and as a method of unearthing and presenting data and concepts. The precedent for this is drawn from Taylor's explanation of his 'antiphonal relation chain' concept, in which the enigmatic symbolism and ideas of a particular collective (in this instance, Traveller beliefs) is positioned alongside attempts to explain and decode it[633]. Taylor's method and the aforementioned series of questions will now be applied, beginning with a forensic dissection of 'purity' and the subsequent ideologically based 'inherent' condition of Traveller lineage or 'pure bloodline'.

5.11.1 – Traveller Purity: Pure Traveller

The application of the purity (or Mokhhadi) code, as evidenced in previous chapters[634], is by its very nature exclusionary. As such, in the logical process of dialectical reasoning (in the Hegelian sense), a series of antithetical stipulations emerge. For example, to maintain purity, pollution must be either dealt with or avoided. Likewise, to achieve holiness, godlessness must be eliminated. And finally, to maintain Traveller lineage, gorger lineage is not an option. This raises a plethora of issues, both in a sociological and theological sense. However, in the first instance the Traveller's concern for 'separateness' can be summarised in two elements: firstly, there is a fear of (sinful) contamination; secondly, there is a desire to maintain (sinless) purity. Consequences of a cultural and soteriological nature are both directly and *inherently* attached to the observance of these elements. In the *immanent* Traveller setting, social acceptance and standing amongst the community, peers, and family is at stake. This directly correlates with the *transcendent* Traveller setting, where the ramifications are extended to including and maintaining an exclusively Traveller or Gypsy lineage[635].

The concept of the *literal* 'pure blooded' Gypsy or Traveller is troublesome. This is partly because of the origins of the concept, but also because of the subsequent fallibility of Traveller and Gypsy collectives in subscribing to the concept of a literal 'pure bloodline'. The historical racialisation of Gypsies and Travellers by Gypsiologists and social scientists[636] created two primary issues. The first was a scenario in which the proposal of

---

[632] University of Nottingham (2014).
[633] University of Nottingham (2014).
[634] With particular reference to the Camp model (Chapter Five – Part One*).
[635] Bhopal & Myers, 2008, pp. 13 – 21; Clark & Greenfields, 2006, pp. 36 – 38.
[636] Taylor, 2008, pp. 8 – 9.

a 'pure Gypsy bloodline' meant that by default there existed the possibility for an impure bloodline. 'Pure' Romany Gypsies / Travellers were situated at the top of this racial hierarchy, followed by 'didikais' (half-Travellers), and then by those of 'questionable Gypsy blood' – also known as 'Pikeys'[637]. The rhetoric emanating from the Gypsiologists stated that the 'half-breeds' (or, those less than 'pure' Gypsy) had 'inherited all the vices of the Romany and the Gaujo (gorgers) but none of their virtues'[638]. The second issue was that stereotypes and 'popular imagination' created by the Gypsiologists now formed part of the Traveller's own narrative[639]. The purity code which had for centuries formed the inherent core of Gypsy culture had been 'repackaged' by the Gypsiologists and social scientists and 'sold' to Travellers, replacing a Christian value with 'fleshly' connotations that held a secularised *social* value, formulated on a created and artificial concept of race. This allowed for an undermining of Traveller culture through a gorger-led process of relocating the inception point and genesis of Traveller purity, which in turn created 'an ideological tool' for the state to 'justify oppression'[640]. Acton notes that whilst Gypsiologists were 'fortunate in almost never meeting a Gypsy who is not "true", "the authorities" tend to claim they never meet one who is'[641]. It is the researcher's proposal that for a *critical* Traveller theology to emerge, elements beyond that of a physical purity bloodline must also be considered. This is owing to the combination of an explicit appropriation of the purity bloodline narrative by a gorger contingent, and of an immersive Gypsy acquisition of the gorger-created eugenically orientated narrative. Furthermore, Acton's comments (1974) highlight the undermining and troublesome nature of clinging to physical genetics as the benchmark of being Gypsy or Traveller.

To restart the discussion at a location that is situated before the colonial interception of Traveller culture would at best be a speculative process, and is also disjointed from the spiritual and social struggle of the *contemporary* Traveller. Conversely, Edward Antonio suggests that in the instance of the Black struggle any *post*colonial discussion can 'only speak through its parasitic relationship on the colonial'[642]. Traveller 'blood' must therefore remain in the present but be refashioned in the mould of its precolonial Christian experience, taking on a form of theological postcoloniality, in what Antonio would refer to as a 'practice of resistance'[643]. Therefore, to negate the composition of the gorger interjection in the bloodline narrative would, by Antonio's logic, be to steal from the

[637] Taylor, 2008, p. 8.
[638] Taylor, 2008, p. 9.
[639] Taylor, 2008, p. 9.
[640] Taylor, 2008, p. 9.
[641] Acton, 1974, p. 84.
[642] Antonio, 2012, p. 299.
[643] Antonio, 2012, pp. 299 – 302.

Traveller hermeneutic itself. Following on then, the premise of the question at hand ceases to ask *if* a 'pure' Gypsy bloodline exists, instead challenging the concept of *how* a Gypsy bloodline exists.

5.11.2 – The Construct of a Pure Traveller Lineage: How, When, and Why?

Exegetically speaking[644], the colonialist element becomes an internal *phase* rather than being observed as an external *force*, thus taking its place in the Mosaic narrative as what could be interpreted as a series of intentional dehumanising and 'othering' actions by the 'Egyptian political authorities' (Exodus 1:11; 1:13; 1:16: 1:22). Pharaoh's intentionality in the systematic and methodical eradication of the Israelites (Exodus 1:16 – 22) originates from his (and his people's) anxieties over elements pertaining to the physicality of another ethnicity and race to his own. This is enacted through a policy of increased labour and servitude[645]; 'He said to his people, behold, the Israelites are too many and too mighty for us. Come, let us deal shrewdly with them, lest they multiply more…' (Exodus 1:9 – 10). The response by the Hebrew midwives to the external pressures is to enact a tangible manifestation of their faith, and is explicitly and directly linked to their confessed reverence and fear of God (Exodus 1:17 & 21).

This raises two key comparable factors with the Gypsy and Traveller response to both historical and present-day manifestations of societal oppression. Firstly, the spiritual response is one and the same with the physical response – an active, measurable, and intentional demonstration of a 'lived-out' religion. Secondly, that by employing a systematic exegetical methodology (with a specific focus upon ethnic and nationalistic divides), the locale of the Israelites' identity is in the religious ideology of being a chosen and separated people that belong to God (Deuteronomy 7:6). The bloodline (or collective identity) obtained its value through an identity grounded in God, and was not determined by geographical locations or societal expectations.

In comparison with the nomadic nature of the Traveller condition, along with further specifics such as the Sojourner narrative, it is evident that Traveller and Gypsy 'blood' is firstly a spiritual concept, synergistically located in and operating through the purity code. Indeed, it is possible that the ideological centring of the purity narrative is null and void without the inclusion of the 'pure blood' aspect. Secondly, the 'bloodline' is evidenced

---

[644] As with other areas of this thesis, this particular method of Biblical interpretation is modelled on Ekblad's *Reading the Bible with the Damned* (2005) approach.
[645] Mays, 1988, pp. 132 – 133.

through *ethnic* means and not necessarily by racial and genetic markers. In short, Traveller and Gypsy 'blood' is located in the ideological, supported and constructed by its relation with God, and evidenced through practical means. This second definition, sociologically speaking, warrants further investigation beyond the parameters of this thesis.

However, for now, such definitions invoke theological challenges and require attention as questions pertaining to the origin and makeup of this quasi-Christian ethnicity emerge. For as with the Israelites, the Traveller's identity – their 'Gypsy' blood, is not always one that is focused *towards* Creator (Exodus 32.1 – 35; Nehemiah 9:16 – 21) but is permanently hopeful *in* said Creator (Jerimiah 14:8; 17:13; & Psalm 33:20 – 22); spiritual permanence anchors physical and ideological nomadism. The seemingly contradictive state of 'permanent impermanence' that both the Traveller and Israelite occupy reveals in great detail the suffering, the history and the reasoning of a people group (as detailed in the Pentateuch and indeed this thesis thus far). This challenges the contextual positioning of the 'story', from a people in *relation to* their God to that of the relationship *between* Creator and his people.

Such a dynamic (i.e. dependence *upon* God rather than being independent *of* God) suggests that divine justice (present in the process of adhering – or not adhering, to the purity code) or 'grace'[646] is a significant factor in the enablement, existence and thus the genesis of any Gypsy bloodline (again, the emphasis is a withdrawal from a subscription to a racial element, and instead a move towards an ethnic-religio construct). The determining factor of maintaining said Traveller identity lies not in the physical reproduction of the human form but in the provision of grace originating from the divine.

5.11.3 – Grace as Lineage Enabler

It would appear that grace, not Blood, serves as a lineage enabler. Grace in this context is characterised by 'the God of the biblical traditions' and is described with some proviso by Miroslav Volf as 'a profound injustice'[647]. This highlights two aspects of the involvement of God in the arrangement (or relationship) that should be considered – God's interest and God's partiality. Volf's description of the justice administered by God as 'profoundly [unjust]', originates from a comparison to the judicial motif and image of Justitia, 'the

---

[646] 'Grace' is primarily being defined using Aquinas' proposal of 'Actual grace' (*gratia gratis data* – "grace which is freely given"), meaning 'a series of divine actions or influences upon human nature' (McGrath, 2011, pp. 356 – 357).
[647] Volf, 1996, p. 221.

angelic woman with a blindfold, sword in her right hand and scales in the left'[648]. This legal representation and administration of justice operates outside of any personal relationship. It is applied without any pursuit of personal *interest*, and does so from behind what John Rawls describes as a 'veil of ignorance'[649] – something wholly opposite to God's vested interest and concern for the personal, or a particular collective (in this instance, the Israelites). In evidencing this stance, one must recount the Biblical record of the history of Israel which presents itself in the form of a continual theme or pattern. Broadly speaking the pattern is as follows: A collective suffering; a petition to the Lord; a hearing by God of said petition or 'crying out'; and finally, a response of deliverance by God. Volf proposes that the repetition of suffering (as a result of sinful actions [Judges 4:1]) is not the focal point of God's interest; instead it is the 'good of the Israelites'[650] that is the cynosure of God. Such attention that never seeks detached objectivity and constantly pursues the salvific option for its intended target is 'part of God's justice'[651]. As such, there is an interweaving between the salvation and righteousness of God (Isaiah 45:21) and the kindness and justice of God (Psalm 145:17); 'When God saves, God does justice; when God does justice, God saves...'[652]

In comparison to the objective motif of Justitia, the subjective presentation of justice that God delivers is, in the judicial sense, unjust. By considering the partiality shown by God towards those marginalised, ostracised and oppressed (both individually and collectively), the perspicacity of God's 'unjust justice' is facilitated[653]. In the instance of the Biblical representation of the *Traveller* – the *Sojourner*, Volf proposes that:

> [w]hen God looks at a sojourner, God does not see simply a human being, but a stranger...subject to prejudice and scapegoating. How does the God who executes justice for the oppressed act toward widows and strangers? Just as God acts toward any other human being? No. God is partial to them. God watches over the strangers...[654].

The divine partiality shown towards Travellers forms not only a statement of faith from inside 'the camp' itself, but operates as a supporting narrative from God (alongside God's 'interest') in the functionality of grace in the formation and continuation of Traveller identity (or 'Traveller blood'). Read alone, Romans 2:11 would appear to contradict this

---

[648] Volf, 1996, p. 220.
[649] Rawls, 1971, p. 136.
[650] Volf, 1996, p. 221.
[651] Volf, 1996, p. 221.
[652] Volf, 1996, p. 221.
[653] Volf, 1996, pp. 220 – 222.
[654] Volf, 1996, pp. 221 – 222. Also see Psalm 146:7 – 9.

statement, as Paul claims that there is no partiality shown by God. However, impartiality presents itself in verses 9-10 as a characteristic[655]. As Paul understands, the priority of the Jewish people entails God's impartiality. Volf identifies this aspect, stating that '[f]ormulated paradoxically, God is impartially partial'[656]. Indeed, impartiality, according to Helen Oppenheimer, 'is not a divine virtue, but a human expedient to make up for the limits of our concern on the one hand and the corruptibility of our affections on the other'[657]. Conversely then, the paradox of the divine's impartial partialness towards Traveller blood indicates that God must and does show partiality to those *beyond* those whom he has indicated favour towards (the widow, the stranger, the Israelites, the Travellers etc.). 'God is partial to everyone… [treating] different people differently so that *all* will be treated justly'[658]. Partiality (or grace) would appear to challenge the necessity of the purity code in the pursuit of maintaining and continuing a true Traveller lineage. As such, a rationale is required to explain the logic of persisting in producing 'works' (James 2:17, 24, & 26) and purposively remaining in the consequences of intentional marginalisation[659] when the reassurance of grace and the subsequent 'destination' of salvation are already assured[660]. Additionally, as lineage – or 'Traveller blood' is arguably an ideal and an ethnic construct, there remains the eschatological question of what element/s (body, spirit) are the recipients of any such salvific covenant. Such a question with its Christological centring is more effectively dealt with by examining a triangulated dynamic of Traveller, salvation, and the afterlife.

5.11.4 – Towards a Traveller Christology

It is the Traveller's application of the purity code (or righteous acts) that goes some way in attempting to 'secure' such grace, such lineage, and such salvation. However, in the process of doing so, there is an acknowledgment (consciously or subconsciously) of the dynamic that one is intentionally partaking in sacrificial efforts in spite of the acceptance of

---

[655] 'There will be tribulation and distress for every human being who does evil, the Jew first and also the Greek, but glory and honour and peace for everyone who does good, the Jew first and also the Greek' (Romans 2:9 – 10).
[656] Volf, 1996, p. 222.
[657] Oppenheimer, 1983, p. 131.
[658] Volf, 1996, pp. 221 – 222 (emphasis added).
[659] To clarify, 'consequences' – or suffering, in this sense, primarily relates to the Traveller's relationship with the gorger world in practical scenarios i.e. access to healthcare and educational provision. Additionally, it refers to subjective portrayals i.e. negative media reports, and hostilities shown by gorgers towards Travellers. The 'intentional marginalisation' element refers to the choice to act, live, and interact in a way that is known to be contrary to the larger 'settled' population, society, and culture.
[660] Pannenberg, 1998, p. 162.

an all-embracing and invitational grace. On such terms, one as an individual or collective is forced to contend with the apparent irrationality of a purposeful decision to remain positioned in what appears to be unnecessary suffering. In assuming the presence of a considered logic amongst those who adopt said position, it is right then to consider that efforts made in such circumstances are not simply 'works' but instead are *sacramental* acts, made willingly, consciously, and possibly lovingly. Jesus, in the Gospel according to Luke, makes a charge to His followers, stating that; 'If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me' (Luke 9: 23). Reimagining Luke 9:23 not as a march towards inevitable suffering but instead as an action of voluntary sacramental living enables two important distinctions. Firstly, the unavoidable *absence* of said comforts becomes the voluntary *denial* of comforts. Secondly, the affirmative move towards that which is sacrificial (i.e. the taking-up of one's cross) becomes something understood as a move towards the source of divine love and grace. Indeed, the statement by Jesus to his followers that '…my yoke is easy, and my burden is light' (Matthew 11:30) suggests that whilst Jesus is aware that the charge to follow him is burdensome (John 15: 20 – 21; 2 Corinthians 4: 17), it is cushioned somewhat with the same grace that enables one to 'take up [their] cross' in the first instance.

However, the participation in salvation and the 'giving' of atonement in this context assumes both a giver of salvation (Christ) and a location from which salvation and thus atonement (again, Christ) draws humanity. Participation in Christian sacraments is widely adopted by Travellers but is not always consistently extended to that of an application of faith or belief[661] in the atonement – or the 'Cross event'[662] or even Jesus himself (as the Christ; as God). Whilst this appears troublesome, participation in a predominantly sacramental Christianity which extends beyond human 'good will and intentions' and ventures into liturgical and ceremonial expressions (including Christian weddings and funerals etc.) is not without a theological precedent. Indeed, Rudolf Bultmann's logical reasoning (much like that of Moltmann) finds Christ and the Cross to be the genesis and the cornerstone of experiencing God (and all that that entails)[663]. Bultmann suggests that experience and/or a kerygmatic declaration (including by physical means, i.e. sacrament) precedes faith in the outcome[664]. In this way, the driving cyclical dynamic of experience

---

[661] See Chapter Four.

[662] Bultmann & Ogden, 1989, p. 39.

[663] In support of his position, Moltmann also draws on Hans Urs von Balthasar who 'derives knowledge of God and receiving salvation from the crucified Christ' and understanding the church as 'the church from under the cross and from the cross' (Moltmann, 2015, p. 208).

[664] Bultmann applies this principle in a process of logical progression, when he forensically examines the 'Salvation event' and the ownership and positioning of Christ's Cross in relation to how belief is obtained, faith is accessed, and partaking in Salvation is achieved (Bultmann, 1989, pp. 38 – 40).

informing faith, faith informing experience (and so on), supersedes both doctrinal understanding and denominational commitments. Even so, this does not dismiss the necessity of faith in the divinity and crucifixion/resurrection of Christ. It does however allow for a *spectrum* of Christianity (rather than a fixed denominational narrative) to be implemented – a fluidity of faith and works; not stretching as far as to be considered Pelagian, where arguably salvation is achieved through the imitation of Christ, and not settling for a purely Augustinian position of justification by grace[665]. Instead, there is an adoption of a position of flexible negotiation between both the imitation of Christ and having life made possible through Christ (including the continuation of lineage).

For the Gypsy and the Traveller the nature of this Christological centring, or more precisely – the Cross event, is and must be greater than a theoretical and abstract presentation. There exists a timeless and perpetual framework of justification, sanctification and salvation, along with the eschatological question of a revelatory end. Among those elements is a willingness of participation in a 'suffering' context. Such a dynamic suggests that for the marginalised collective, Christian and cultural identity (and the continuation of said identity) is not only present in the affectionate character of grace and salvation but is also participating in the brutality of the crucifixion and the process of atonement. The violent nature of the salvific process through the image of the crucified Christ is paradoxical in that it becomes the beneficial means of the community's transformation via a refocusing of the community's violence. Christ, as well as the *means* of salvation, also serves as the *scapegoat* for the price of said salvation. Anthropologist René Girard views this 'violent' and sacrificial process as integral and sacred[666], proposing that '[Christ's] sacrifice serves to protect the entire community from its own violence…'[667]. Karl Rahner interprets Christ's eventual sacrifice (i.e. the crucifixion of Jesus, and thus the 'death' of God and of (the old) (Ephesians 4:17- 24; Acts 17:11; Romans 6: 1 – 23) human life) as 'the death of the immortal God himself'[668], in a move that invites consideration of Jesus' death both in its salvific efficacy, but more strikingly, in the very nature of the event[669]. Violence, more specifically – redemptive violence, becomes necessary. Barth also focused upon this specific dynamic in the narrative of the hypostatic union. However, Barth chooses to place even greater attention upon the person of Christ in the crucifixion event with particular attention upon the two states of Christ – the *humiliation* and *exaltation* of Jesus, drawing the severity of the cross into his

---

[665] Quash & Ward, 2007, pp. 96 – 98. Also see McGrath, 2011, pp. 354 – 355.
[666] McGrath, 2011, pp. 335 – 336.
[667] Girard, 2001, pp. 154 – 156.
[668] Rahner, 1966, p. 113.
[669] Moltmann, 2015, pp. 207 – 208.

idea of God[670]. Moltmann suggests that there remains a precarious limitation in Barth, in that he 'thinks too *theo*logically…his approach is not sufficiently Trinitarian'[671]. Moltmann's concern with Bath's approach is that as a concept God it is too simplified. In response Moltmann offers a resolution by way of a primarily semantical intervention whereby the differing bodies of the Godhead are utilised in the crucifixion narrative. This relatively elementary (and successful) solution is rather ironic given Moltmann's concerns, but its Trinitarian contextualisation is necessary in formulating a complete understanding of the cross event. By refocusing the narrative upon the tangible event of the crucifixion, a more particular and complex presentation of God is forced to emerge. It is one that begins to assemble the Traveller's moderately disjointed narratives of the Godhead into a Trinitarian image, with the person of Christ and the Cross event being the method by which any understanding of God, the triune complex, and the culture is to be interpreted[672].

5.12 – Death and the Afterlife: Towards a Traveller Eschatology

The partaking in Christ's *suffering* appears to only be existent in the present and temporal (human) form (2 Timothy 2:8 – 9; 1 John 5:13 – 14; John 3:16). The ending of said suffering and what follows next, according to Norman Perrin, draws in two themes; 'God's decisive intervention in history and human experience, and the final state of the redeemed to which the intervention leads'[673]. Logically speaking, the intervention (or 'death') represents both a new destination and the execution and realisation of the covenantal promise. The eschatological process is however rather uncertain and the subject of much debate. Established theologians such as C.H. Dodd, R. Bultmann, and Barth propose an immediacy to any apocalyptical utterings, essentially suggesting that Christ's kingdom – the Kingdom of God, must have all futuristic elements (and thus any futuristic scope) eliminated. Barth opts to take biblical eschatology and reinterpret it in the scope of *eternity*, whilst Bultmann reinterprets Biblical eschatology in the scope of *humanity*. In a move towards Biblical historicity, Dodd proposes that the Kingdom of God had arrived with Christ's ministry and thus should be considered as 'realised eschatology'[674]. For the Traveller, the nomadic transition continues in this equation of human finality and realised eschatology. It does this by drawing through a series of specific and culturally unique

---

[670] Klappert, 1971, p. 180.
[671] Klappert, 1971, p. 182; Moltmann, 2015, p. 209.
[672] Moltmann, 2015, p. 209.
[673] Mercer, 1986, p. 76.
[674] Livingstone, 2006, pp. 177 & 200.

sacraments[675]; an actualisation – or a 'conclusion' of the passion and crucifixion elements of the Cross event. This 'movement' towards another settlement (in this instance: death; eternity; 'heaven'; a resting place) is reminiscent of the collective procession from camp to camp[676].

Drawing on the previous section's metaphysical 'embrace' of the suffering of Christ, the death of the Traveller (or the moment when the crucifixion is complete per se) is not the beginning of a transition into a locale devoid of the Cross but rather a development and progression of the Traveller's Cross event metanarrative. In this way, remaining with the crucified but now resurrected Christ, the deceased partakes in all that Christ has to offer – through life and death, with the liberation 'prize' so to speak the partaking in the spiritual, the physical and the metaphysical resurrection. The significance being (both theologically and ecclesiologically) that the Christological centring of the Traveller and Gypsy faith becomes an example of a lived-out, revised liberation[677] narrative; 'looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God' (Hebrews 12:2). In this context the mirroring and witness-bearing of Christ's suffering should not be confused as an extension of Christ's suffering. It is instead a liberative action by virtue of its fostering towards intimacy with Christ as opposed to an embracing of 'the world' (John 17:14; Romans 12:2).

In this space it appears that the eschatological aspect of the Kingdom of God can be both realised (as posited by Dodd, Barth et al) *and* hope-filled, as demonstrated in Moltmann's 'recovery' of eschatology through the development of his liberation narrative[678]. Bultmann's demythologisation narrative places eschatology in 'the history of the world' and as a current event in 'contemporary Christian proclamation' – all situated in an individualistic setting. Whist Moltmann, in rebuttal of Bultmann's narrative, draws upon Ernest Bloch's understanding of eschatology in light of the 'prophetic vision of social transformation'[679]. Pinn's principle of complex subjectivity enables one to grant the same subjective and logical reasoning to a new powerful metaphorical motif of the Gypsy clinging to the foot of the Cross. Such a motif (as witnessed through the field research) provides a demonstration of the continual and corporate power of the Cross to alleviate human suffering through divine suffering in *this* life, whilst serving as a hope and a promise for the next life through the power of the resurrection. 'To return to the theology

---

[675] The particular sacraments in question are discussed in Chapter 4.2.2.1 – Death and Funerals.
[676] Mays, 1988, pp. 189 – 190. Also see Chapter Five: Time.
[677] 'Liberation' in the sense of, a liberation theology.
[678] Livingstone, 2006, pp. 200 & 391 – 392.
[679] McGrath, 2011, pp. 453 – 454.

of the cross means…comprehending the crucified Christ in the light and context of his resurrection, and therefore of freedom and hope'[680].

5.12.1 – Nomadism continued: Journey through to the Resurrection

The nature of a hoped-for resurrection draws attention to the Traveller's continual nomadic state, which in turn forces a metanarrative to emerge. It is one that is concerned with the nature and composition of what the resurrection may look like, and which defines what structure said resurrection may dwell in / emerge from (i.e. Heaven). The specifically Christological question of when and how a resurrection will occur, is with some fortune, catechised when interpreted through a lens of nomadism. This is partially owing to the perceived temporal and accessible composition of the first stage of the afterlife (1 Samuel 28:1 – 25; 1 Chronicles 10:13 – 14). In this sense, language that speaks of a '*final* resting place' becomes unhelpful and possibly obsolete. Indeed, the centrality of the Cross event in a Traveller theology implies that the *resurrectional* element is the conclusion – not the Paschal Triduum (Matthew 12:40; Jonah 1:17; Luke 23:54 – 56; Luke 24:1) nor any conceptions of an immediate 'Heaven'. This corresponds with N.T. Wright's exposition of the intertestamental Jewish (including Jesus') thought on death and that of the early church, where the resurrectional element is the return or a new replacement of the body 'some time after death'; 'It is, in fact, life *after* life after death'[681]. Death, by virtue of the life *before* it and the resurrected existence *after* it, becomes a process and existence of its own. The process of ascertaining the conditions and the makeup of the temporal sphere of death is open to many interpretations. However, there are some certainties concerned with the state of those in death and the conditional terms of their placement as 'dead beings'. Wright draws on the book of Wisdom[682] as a development in revealing how 'the souls of the righteous [are] in God's hand'[683]. And whilst 'souls' in the text of Wisdom neither denies nor affirms a bodily resurrection, it does however affirm a continuity of a personal existence and a definitive and direct correlation and connection between spiritual life and conscious activity[684]. 1 Samuel 28:1 – 25 describes the forbidden interaction with those in a state of death, which, for the Traveller, both affirms the hope-filled continual process of life after the moment of death, and the taboo-nature surrounding death in the

---

[680] Moltmann, 2015, p. xx.
[681] Wright, 2002, p. 619.
[682] Wright, 2002, p. 619. Also; Wisdom of Solomon 3:1.
[683] Wright, 2002, pp. 618 – 619. Also; Wisdom of Solomon 3:7 – 8.
[684] Mays, 1988, p. 823.

community. Death becomes a process of completion, whereby the process of purification is satisfied, made possible by the purgatorial-esque life journey with the Cross.

5.13 – Summary

The second half of this chapter sought to address the concerns of the first half, in which the emergence of a particular 'Traveller religion' was developing. The chapter began by emphasising the requirement for a greater depth in the theological narrative; 'a sharpening of the focus upon how the Traveller as an individual is positioned in the contextual dialogues of salvific performance and eschatological expectations and approaches'. These concerns were addressed in the second half of this chapter through the implementation of a theological 'skeletal' framework which, through a forensic examination of the origins of the person (in addition to a dissection of their antagonistic and dichotomous alternatives of death and the afterlife), a broad yet specific theological narrative developed.

5.13.1 – Origins

After deconstructing existing myths and narratives concerned with the purity of a Gypsy race, the proposition was altered accordingly, from 'if a Gypsy bloodline exists' to 'how a Gypsy bloodline exists'. This progression revealed the co-dependant and synergistic nature of the purity code along with the concept a pure Gypsy lineage. An exegetical exploration and comparison of these concepts with the Biblical text supported the researcher's proposition that *any* Gypsy bloodline in the first instance should be understood primarily as a spiritual and ideological construct. The reasoning centred on the notion that an aspect of divine grace facilitated the participation (or conversely, the abstention) in the purity code whilst simultaneously being the subject of that purity. Therefore, that same grace could remove itself from this 'grace-filled' equation at any moment. Paradoxically, it is because of the very nature of this 'grace' that the removal never happens, lest God denies God's own self. This places grace – *not blood*, as the foundation of any Traveller 'bloodline', and thus the emphasis is and must be a withdrawal from a subscription to a racial element, and instead a move towards an ethnic-religio construct.

An investigation of propositions forwarded by Volf et al.[685] reveals that such grace is wholly unwarranted, in the sense that it is based upon what is essentially a perversion of the human standard of justice. Divine justice therefore is understood as the (ir)rational process in and behind the operation of divine grace. In short, if Gypsy blood, purity, and spiritual certainty (i.e. salvation) is dependent upon divine grace, then it stands to reason that it must also be wholly subject to divine justice. It is the continual sacramental life that sees the Traveller actively participate in the equation of divine grace and justice. Such an equation results in the judicial decision of salvation: Participation in salvation and the 'giving' of atonement (in this context) assumes both a giver of salvation (Christ) and a location from which salvation – and thus atonement (again, Christ) draws humanity.

This development inadvertently (but thankfully) answers both the opening question of the latter half of this chapter (*determine the nature of Yoder's proposition of Christ being 'the rule'*) and directly responds to the developing hypothesis of this thesis, which sought to understand if indeed there is a Christology at the centre of the Traveller's condition.

5.13.2 – Death and the Afterlife

With the inception of the foundational elements of a Traveller Christology, and with the continued focus on formulating a personal (yet broadly encompassing) Traveller-Christian portrayal, the next logical and lineal development took the form of an examination into death and the afterlife. The focus remained with the Cross event, seeing the continual suffering of the Traveller transformed through the hope of the resurrection into an event of liberation. The significance is, of course, that unlike conventional liberation theology narratives, any liberation in the Traveller's present 'living' condition appears to be resisted. This is seemingly because of the continual sacramental observance of the purity code, and for the nomadic nature of how death is treated in Gypsy communities.

Death becomes a *process* rather than an event or moment in time. This process, which is better understood as a 'journey' due to its nomadic nature, sees its temporal composition given precedence. This is partly achieved by examining the interrelated dynamic of personable liberation and the nature of any subsequent eschatological event (as proposed by Moltmann and Barth et al. respectively). This was developed further by way of a dialectical exchange between N.T. Wright's propositions of 'life *after* life after death'[686] and a culturally specific exegesis focusing on engagement with the dead by the living.

---

[685] Oppenheimer, 1983; Rawls, 1971; Volf, 1996.
[686] Wright, 2002, p. 619.

Whilst the investigation at this juncture does not determine the exact nature or composition of this 'death phase' (which Wright speculates as perhaps some form of restorative garden, and which could be seen as a form of purgatory), it does however provide further insight as to why there has been an historic gorger assumption of affiliation between Gypsies and Travellers and the Roman Catholic church. This element possesses a potential consequentiality, ecclesiologically speaking, and thus warrants (and indeed, requires) further investigation. Ultimately however, the Traveller's eschatological hope is placed beyond this phase of temporality and is located in the paradoxical permanence of promised continuity, found in the hope of a new (remade, restored and redeemed) Earth and a new Heaven, and manifested in the resurrection of a new body; immortal, pure, and with Christ.

These findings and persistent and/or emerging themes of significance from the thesis as a whole shall now be summarised, assessed, and contextualised in the form of a conclusion chapter and in the parameters of both their theological and social values.

CHAPTER SIX – CONCLUSION

6.1 – Summary of the Primary Findings

6.1.1 – Methodology

The methodology for this research needed to be able to operate in at least two capacities. Firstly, as a tool for unearthing and formulating the data for the construction of the thesis. Secondly, as method of communicating and translating the complexities of the subject matter from a personable stance – in this instance, the 'voice' of Travellers and Gypsies. To achieve these aims, a mixed-methodology approach was chosen. The methods selected were a Black Liberation theological methodology and an autoethnographic methodology. These methods were initially situated in a donor framework of Black Constructive and Black Liberation theology, incorporating theoretical 'scaffolding' (such as Moltmann's 'theology of the Cross' and Pinn's 'Complex Subjectivity' and 'Edgelands' theory) that had made similar research possible. Collectively these produced a customisable framework, from which an original and personal narrative was able to develop. As such, it presented the most viable option for what was an organically developing, fluid and challenging process. It was important to define how theology would be defined and understood. However, the nature of theology means that it is neither readily definable nor predetermined. Liberation and Black theologies offer a solution to this challenge by demonstrating theology to be something partaken in. As such, a working understanding of theology was employed, using Liberation Theology founder Gustavo Gutierrez's explanation of theology; a 'critical reflection on praxis… worked out in light of the Word'[687].

The analytical methodological approach began by incorporating a bespoke 'Inductive Theological model'[688]. The model determined the process of selecting, rejecting and analysing data, in addition to assisting in formulating research questions. From there it was decided that the most effective method of external study (i.e. field research) would be to conduct a series of smaller case studies. Questions and interviews in the field study were presented in a rehearsed set of themes. The themes were renamed as 'stations', as they were representative of various lineal 'life' junctures. The five stations are; birth, love,

---

[687] Gutierrez, 1973, pp. 6 & 11
[688] *Figure 1.*

sin, marriage, and death; in each of the stations are three further areas, totalling 15 areas among the five stations. To organise and collate the data, a manual thematic analysis was chosen, where coding was almost exclusively done by hand. NVivo served a minor role as a secondary method of collating information, predominantly through the storage of articles with a theological interest and some elements of the interview transcripts.

Before conducting the field research, a detailed application was made to the University's Ethics Committee[689]. The Ethics Committee process consisted of several stages, through which the researcher was advised and guided by the CCCU research department and the Graduate School. All stages were completed to the standards required by CCCU. Finally, the field research was conducted through two primary phases, with an additional component of complementary and informative interviewing with both lay and subaltern elite members of the community. The initial phase of the field research took place at Appleby Fair, whilst the second phase, conducted primarily with two families, was situated over two different locations. The field research was for the most part fruitful. Issues of note were in the actual collection and recording of data, with the majority of participants declining to have photos taken or interviews recorded with electronic devices.

6.1.2 – Literature Review

The literature review element of this thesis established a number of important elements. Firstly, that Gypsies, as a collective, are distinctly religious and predominantly Christian. Moreover, Christianity is considered by a rising number of people to be a central part of Gypsy life. Secondly, the Gypsy Church (which emerged as a result of the European Evangelical revival) is autonomous, unifying and culturally important. Thirdly, the Gypsy church has produced a particular 'Gypsy' Christianity. That Christianity is in many ways orthodox, yet it remains unique. Furthermore, it is ecumenical in its nature, and it has changed and continues to change personal and cultural behaviour and practice among GRT people. Contextually, these elements emerge from and sit in an overarching historical narrative of Gypsy revival, starting in France during the 1950s and spreading across Europe and as far as America. The revival became multi-denominational and fundamentally changed Gypsy participation in Christianity. This led to the creation of Gypsy Churches, Gypsy church bodies and fundamental cultural changes. The Evangelical revival account tangibly and mythically begins with the motif of a God-given miracle, and from there it thematically proceeds with a Pauline ecclesiological 'go out and

---

[689] *Appendices: APPENDIX A – Ethical Clearance & Permissions*.

convert' narrative. The literature can be summarised by the key elements and the historic evidence, which, combined, make it evidentiary that one or more theologies are in operation that are (or are attempting to be) synchronised with the values of its (GRT) host culture.

There were two primary issues or gaps in the literature reviewed. Firstly, the benchmark of what constitutes full and proper conversion is often set against a gorger originated interpretation, meaning that standards of what is permissible and non-permissible finds its premise built upon a gorger narrative. Consequently, existing Gypsy theological ideas appear to operate in the theological parameters and orthodoxical standards of a different culture; a culture that has historically oppressed, suppressed and repressed GRT people for a millennia. Secondly, theological interpretation is often fragmented and implicit. This can affect theological understanding and explication in many different realms; from 'everyday' practice and belief (for example, camp life and employment) to increasingly profound elements (such as eschatology, the afterlife and the crucifixion). These factors indicate a requirement for reflective, radical, explicit and systematic engagement with theology that emerges from Gypsy experience and Gypsy people. The texts reviewed and the ecumenical nature of Gypsy-religious expression provide space for such Traveller and Gypsy theologies to emerge and occupy.

6.1.3 – Christian Identity

This thesis established at an early juncture that Christianity should be considered as a common, diverse and widely practised central element in the composition of many individual and communal Traveller and Gypsy identities. Among multiple possible and necessary channels of investigation that would need to be explored as a result of this revelation, the initial pathway chosen was one that would question what *kind* of Christianity was at the core of Traveller and Gypsy culture. How did Christianity initially present in GRT culture and communities? A preliminary exploration revealed an interlacing between a combination of Christian non/liturgical practice and conservative values, and the application of a cultural unwritten 'code of conduct'; a set of laws pertaining to purity that appeared in various guises, covering issues as diverse as sexual conduct, to the organisation and placement of trailers on sites. These results present two key findings (amongst others) that are pivotal to the foundational understanding and formulation of a Traveller theology. Firstly, Traveller (Christian and secular) identity is conservative in its presentation (social, as well as religious), and it is purposeful,

deliberate, and considered in its application. Secondly, that Traveller identity (as outlined above) is both explicitly and implicitly governed by a purity code.

6.1.4 – Contemporary Perspectives

The process of exploring religious identity requires the discussion of morality and cultural values at some juncture. In this instance, (un)popular and recurring (stereotypical) perspectives on and in the Gypsy and Traveller community were brought to the fore. The emergent narratives primarily focused around issues of a hamartiological nature, which by proxy invited a theological and Christological response to develop. The originality of this approach in dealing with 'Traveller sins' meant that a refreshed and politically neutral standpoint could be adopted. This allowed for a 'safe space' in which to critically evaluate often undiscussed aspects of Traveller and Gypsy community life, whilst also (conversely) dismissing existing stereotypes. Using this approach revealed two prominent themes which would directly contribute to the direction of the thesis.

The first of the two themes is that of the continually revelatory concept of Mokhhadi – or 'purity'. Purity in this sense (which is discussed at multiple junctures in this thesis) is revealed as a multifaceted ideology, grounded in Christian beliefs, which is operated and enacted through physical, social, and spiritual channels. The second theme of theological significance is that of an intentional participation in 'suffering'[690] for spiritual gain, often by way of a physical enactment of the purity code. This aspect, which is discussed at greater length in later chapters, positions the contemporary inception of the purity code as something distinctly religious, rather than as a method of community survival, as seen in the original purposing of the code[691]. A significant implication of this 'repurposing' of the code is that many aspects of its application in the contemporary social set-up can no longer be adequately justified or explained purely through sociological means. Due to the prominence of distinctly Christian liturgical and sacramental practice in the culture through the purity code, this thesis proposes that Christianity is best positioned to serve as a mediation and translational platform in and between Traveller and gorger communities.

---

[690] See Chapter Five for a contextualisation and specifying of the term 'suffering'.
[691] The period of this 'original purposing' is directly correlated with the nomadic nature of Gypsy culture, and as such, it can be attributed to Gypsy collectives from as early as the Proto-Romani period (approx. 1500 years ago) (Taylor, 2014, pp. 20 – 22), with many remnants still in practice in the current period.

6.1.5 – Field Research

The field research element of this thesis was primarily conducted over two parts. The first phase took place at Appleby Horse Fair – an annual gathering of (approximately 15000) Travellers and Gypsies in the north of England. The second phase took place in two separate dwellings (with two families), one in a fixed abode, and the other in mobile accommodation on an authorised 'camp'. All three locations provided valuable data, and were broad enough to enable testing and retesting of suspected or emerging themes and findings. Emergent themes had distinct narratives, and were consistent with previous data and concepts proposed by the researcher in the thesis thus far.

The themes that presented themselves were expansive, in the sense that (as per the recommendation of the Field Research chapter) they warranted further in-depth examination. However, given the word-count restrictions and the specific nature of a thesis, they could not be comprehensively explored in the confines of a single thesis. Despite these limitations, the foundational construction of a Traveller theology has been enabled through the information mined at this juncture. Certain data in the themes has revealed insights that extend beyond simply their theological parameters, providing possible sociological and cultural interest (such as the confirmation of the presence of explicit and implicit structures of heteropatriarchy and heteronormativity). Once again the research position of the thesis means that such findings are not theologically redundant nor are they best suited to sociological interpretation. Rather, themes of gender, ethnicity and historic injustice are, in the Traveller sense, best understood in the Christian space that they occupy (and gravitate towards); forcing questions of ecclesiology and theology to contend with the pluralistic and syncretistic landscape of the Traveller-Christian society.

6.1.6 – Aesthetics: Nomadism and the Camp

The theological narratives that were cultivated during the forensic examination of the field research data, has enabled the researcher to begin construction of a metaphorical location (or, 'Traveller cosmology') in which a Traveller theology can be both positioned and drawn from. Such a 'cosmology' serves more as a functional model or tool, facilitating a syncretistic dialogue between the areas of language, space and symbolism, and time.

The research shows that the purity narrative, and the concept of movement – i.e. nomadism[692], are the primary movers behind all four of the aforementioned areas, and are key in effectively understanding Gypsy and Traveller culture and identity. By implementing a systematic exegetical examination of Biblical accounts relevant to both an application of any form of Mokhhadi (pure and impure, cleanliness and defilement etc.) and of spiritualised and personalised movement (i.e. the sojourner, and the Mosaic camp), these concepts become directly translatable to Travelling communities. In turn, this facilitates a reimagining of Gypsy culture for gorgers and the Travelling / Gypsy community. Central to these key findings of purity and nomadism, is the conclusive finding that a relational Christology is the core component and facilitator of this emerging 'Traveller theology'.

6.1.7 – A Traveller-Christian Portrayal

The importance of separation from the external culture is partially founded upon the concept of a 'pure' Gypsy / Traveller lineage or bloodline. In developing an objective Traveller-Christian portrayal, the research highlighted the importance and necessity of including cultural beliefs concerning lineage, whilst simultaneously excluding externally created conceptions (such as the concept of the 'pure Gypsy'). In doing so, unhelpful and scientifically indefensible propositions, such as the idea of an actual pure Gypsy race that has seen no other racial interaction, are dismissed.

Working on this development, this thesis proposes that existing academic dialogue should no longer be concerned with the question of '*if* a Traveller bloodline exists', but '*how* a Traveller bloodline exists'. This is followed by the researcher's proposition that 'any Gypsy bloodline in the first instance should be understood primarily as a spiritual and ideological construct'[693]. This argument has been developed by way of supportive and logically constructed theological reasoning, and proposes a Gypsy bloodline is one that exists first and foremost through divine grace. One benefit (or perhaps, consequence) of this finding, is that the contentious gravitation towards the concept of undiluted racial identity, is replaced with the more helpful (and accurate) redirection towards understanding Gypsy and Traveller origins (and thus all concepts of a 'pure bloodline') as an ethnic-religio construct, with Christ at its core.

---

[692] Nomadism in this context, should be understood as follows: nomadism as a collective (i.e. all Gypsies and Travellers – essentially the community, the sojourners); nomadism as singular (i.e. the sojourner); and nomadism as conceptual (i.e. time; ideas of an eschaton, etc.).
[693] See Chapter 5: Summary.

The final element of the lineal and exploratory portrayal is concerned with death and the afterlife. The amalgamation of nomadic patterns of behaviour (physically and conceptually) with a continual narrative of intentional suffering (in the presence of an offer of divine grace), creates a situation of continual hope. This hope is built upon a particular and understated relationship with Christ and the Cross event, and results in a 'Traveller liberation'. Theologically and socially significant is the finding of this thesis that proposes 'that unlike conventional liberation theology narratives, any liberation in the Traveller's present "living" condition appears to be resisted, seemingly because of the continual sacramental observance of the purity code, and for the nomadic nature of how death is treated in Gypsy communities'[694]. In short, social and ecclesiological pressures to conform to 'outsider' standards or values is futile, due to an inherent and core application to living in a particular way so that the nomadic journey may continue from this life into the next. The next life observes death as a process, rather than an event or moment in time. This process, which is better understood as a 'journey' due to its nomadic nature, sees its temporal composition given precedent, and thus creates room for a form of yet to be clarified 'purgatory', potentially giving explanation as to why Travellers and Gypsies are proportionally more likely to be affiliated with the Roman Catholic church.

6.2 – Comparison with Findings from Other Research

As discussed in the opening phases of this thesis, there exists a substantial global body of literature that approaches GRT religion from varying perspectives. However, broadly speaking the decision to approach the investigation purely through a *contemporary theological* lens is, in terms of UK-based GRT studies, a relatively unique strategy. Incorporating an autoethnographic methodology, this thesis found itself occupying a niche placement amongst texts that were for the most part authored by gorger people. This has created a symbiosis of sorts, as personal theological reflection sits side by side collective ecclesiological and other religiously orientated narratives. In comparison to the findings of important contributors such as Rodney 'Gipsy' Smith, Maximoff and Trigg et al., the religious and social landscape looks markedly different (as one would expect, given when their respective contributions were made). However, as with the accounts made by Lazell and Locke, there remains a similar religious zeal among those proselytising to fellow Gypsies and Travellers, as demonstrated from the field research at Appleby Fair. Even so, the ecclesiological dynamic has altered considerably in what is essentially a post-

---

[694] See Chapter 5: Summary.

revival period where many Gypsy churches have been established. The extensive and substantial contributions (of varying subject areas and over several decades) by Acton demonstrates that ecclesiological progression. Collectively, Acton presents a case for 'remembering', as he draws upon important themes (Mokhhadi; Gypsy law; religion; etc.) and important events (public address by Pope John Paul II; the Evangelical revival). Acton warns of the intentional forgetting of these tropes and cultural landmarks[695]. Comparatively, this thesis, coming from a place of Gypsy heritage and experience, utilises the trope of remembering. It does this by stamping the present situation as an event, and by positioning theological reflection as a method of thematic interpretation.

In addition to the existing material (as discussed in the Literature Review chapter), there exists theological and ecclesiological studies outside of GRT studies which provide complimentary and supportive hermeneutics in the creation (and inspiration) of a Gypsy and Traveller theological narrative. Of particular note is Richard Twiss' *Rescuing the Gospel from the Cowboys*[696]. Twiss' findings have political, theological, and ecclesiological connotations, as a direct result of colonialism and historical misrepresentation. Whilst the indigenous collectives of Native Americans and Gypsies are different in many avenues, the comparative findings between Twiss' research and the data that is presented in this thesis, are markedly similar. There is reasonable scope in the data to suggest that an autoethnographic theological approach to cultural presentations from minority collectives is an effective and strategic method of research. As such, theological approaches and interpretations should be considered when exploring Gypsy and Traveller religion.

The historical findings in this thesis compare favourably with almost all known sources to date, with little in the way of conflicting data. Research by historians such as Becky Taylor[697] and Angus Fraser[698] provide much of the historical sources mentioned, due to their extensive and testable provision of data. There are contentions with other historical accounts in narratives concerning proto-Romani (or 'pre-Traveller diaspora') dates. However, given the contemporary context and setting of this thesis, this a negligible factor at this juncture. Interjections from academics such as Acton, Clark and Greenfields[699], Hancock[700], and Taylor[701] provide further substance to the historic connection between

---

[695] Acton, 2017.

[696] Twiss, 2015.

[697] Taylor, 2008; 2014.

[698] Fraser, 1995.

[699] Clark & Greenfields, 2006, p. 49.

[700] Hancock, 2013, pp. 72 – 76.

[701] Taylor, 2008, pp. 95 – 96 & 100 – 101.

GRT people groups and religion. This thesis tenders a progression to that historic connection by proposing that Gypsy-led religion should be considered a fundamental element in the process of both *understanding* Gypsy and Traveller communities and *interpreting* Gypsy and Traveller culture. Synergistically these principles of understanding and interpretation should ideally (and can) also be applied from an internal method of self-examination (or, autoethnography), in a similar manner to that of Hancock's[702] and Dawson's[703] presentations of Gypsy and Traveller culture from an insider's perspective.

Despite primarily operating from a sociological context, Hancock's research at times also explores the connective religious narrative, documenting the Hindu origins and subsequent Christian evolution of Gypsy collective beliefs. Whilst Hancock's account is almost exclusively an historical account, there are moments of insight in his writings that confirm both the initial hypothesis of this thesis – that there is a religious (more specifically, Christian) core to Gypsy identity, and that the logic of this thesis to unearth, examine, and develop the details of said core, is warranted. Hancock states, 'A truer definition of religion is that it is the belief in a higher spiritual power, and the maintenance of a daily way of life dedicated to serving and pleasing that power… not only do we [Gypsies and Travellers] have a religion, but living it is so much a part of our lives that we don't even think of it as such; it isn't only saved for the weekends'[704].

This 'lived-out' Christianity is explored through various dynamics, including language; symbolism; space; and time. In each dynamic, several themes emerge. However, all the themes are interrelated with a core notion of purity and suffering. It is in the idea of suffering that the emerging Traveller theology facilitates its most significant comparative conception, and that is with Moltmann's 'theology of the Cross'[705]. Theologically the link is a clear, logical and explanatory development; indeed, it is through such a comparison that the emergence of a Traveller Christology is later able to develop. This is, in itself, entirely antithetical to many other sociological explorations and approaches of GRT 'suffering' mentioned in this thesis, which typically focus upon the symptomatic aspects of Gypsy and Traveller suffering, such as housing, education and healthcare issues.

By introducing a Traveller Christology to both the reasoning and response to the suffering equation, further progression and comparative concepts emerge between Moltmann's liberation narrative and the researcher's Traveller theology. This subsequently results in an introduction of a politicised theological layer to the equation. A distinctive differentiation

---

[702] Hancock, 2013.
[703] Dawson, 2000.
[704] Hancock, 2013, p. 75.
[705] Moltmann, 2015, pp. 66 – 67.

must be made between the intended outcome (and thus, the pursuit) of 'traditional' liberation theology, and that of a Traveller liberation narrative. An intended liberation outcome is just that – liberation whereas a *Traveller liberation theology* only seeks to understand its suffering and its position therein – the 'blessing' is located in the journey of suffering and *not beyond it*. Thus, Moltmann's re-evaluation of liberation theology through the reimagining of the Cross event is key in both understanding and positioning a Traveller theology and Christology.

6.3 – Implications for Findings

'Traveller Christianity' has attempted to locate itself in conventional Western Christianity. The revelation of this 'fitment' (considering an historical colonialist and denominational processes of subduing) requires gorger-led churches to engage both in an ecclesiological fluidity *and* a pluralistic understanding and embrace of a Traveller Christianity. This must be undertaken whilst remembering that any form of Traveller Christian expression is not a representative of a denominational affiliation but of a cultural presentation. Issues of correction and discernment are not in question here, nor is the authority of the Church, but simply the manner in which Christian reception is conducted and delivered towards Gypsies, Travellers, and Roma. Sykes goes some way in forwarding a reasoned defence of this argument, which is summarised by his conclusion that 'diversity under the banner of Christianity amounts to unity'[706]. And whilst denominational preference for some Gypsy groups (particularly Eastern Europe) has been recognised and discussed[707], it has been done so under the historically false dichotomy of 'the Christian way' (whoever or whatever that may be at any given time) and of 'the Traveller's way'. It is the researcher's suggestion that these are not mutually exclusive terms but simply *another way*, found somewhere in Sykes' proposal of diversity under the Christian banner. Indeed, for the established church to welcome Gypsies and Travellers as equals (as opposed to the historical narrative of GRT people as a group who are in immediate need of salvation because of 'their ways'[708]) under these terms, is to some extent a required response to the researcher's proposition of understanding the Traveller as sojourner (Deuteronomy 10:19; Leviticus 19:34; Romans 12:13).

---

[706] Sykes, 1984, p. 11.
[707] Ries, 2010, pp. 274 – 277.
[708] See Chapter Three.

6.4 – Limitations of the Research

Whilst perhaps indeterminable in nature at this stage, the researcher has recognised that there are / may be certain limitations to this thesis emerging from the academic conventions and expectations in which this thesis is required to operate. This is said with specific reference to how Gypsy and Traveller culture has historically expressed itself and communicated among its own people. As mentioned in multiple parts of this thesis, Traveller communities traditionally operate as an oral culture, meaning that more often than not, cultural elements[709] are acquired, demonstrated, and passed on, via methods *other* than text. As such, the cross-cultural translational mode in which this thesis operates means that interpretations by outsider parties (i.e. gorgers) may possess a degree of subjectivity on behalf of 'the academy'. In short, this thesis has attempted to translate a significant element of an oral culture into an unfamiliar form and construct, for the primary satisfaction of a different non-oral culture, with the added dynamic of academic convention. The limitations of traditionally formatted theses are recognised, with some academics questioning the convention of the existing format[710]; indeed, the concerns of the researcher are not without precedent. But it is the importance of this research that warrants an attempt at its creation. Therefore, the initial limitation of this research is found in the format that it is externally required to emerge from.

In the research itself there are some limitations of a theological nature, with a duality of causations. Firstly, due to the vast scope of the thesis' intention to formulate a Traveller theology, there are themes and areas that are either limited in their exploration or untouched. This is not a negative reflection of the research already undertaken, nor is it adequate reasoning to have not undertaken the research in the first instance; it is however an honest appraisal which should be interpreted constructively. An original area of theological and social exploration has been unearthed – therefore more research can and should emerge after this thesis. Secondly, the necessary process of uncovering and constructing the foundational elements of a Traveller theology, results in an incomplete formulation of the Traveller theology picture. Simply put, there is not an adequate facilitation and scope in the parameters of just one thesis.

For the theology that is present in this thesis however, there is a distinctive explanatory feel; logic and careful explanation underpin the emergent themes that present themselves through both historical and contemporary narratives. The benefits of this in regard to

---

[709] Including among other things: general customs; religious and spiritual practices and beliefs; and the purity code.
[710] Watson & Nehls, 2016, p. 47. Also see Duke & Beck, 1999, p. 31.

future practical and political theological investigations and applications, and indeed 'everyday' societal processes (schools, local councils, healthcare procedures) is reasonably evident. However, it is this 'explanatory' approach (which was entirely appropriate at this stage) that reveals the limitations of the research in its current form, in terms of its capacity to function as a reactionary or 'advisory' theology. This should be considered to be a temporal limitation, rectified by further development of a Traveller theology (see '*Suggestions for Future Research*' – 6.5).

6.5 – Suggestions for Future Research

As already stated, due to the scale of the thesis, there exists the potential for numerous avenues of further investigation. As such, any compilation of suggestions for further research herein should not be considered as fully comprehensive in the specificity of its recommendations, but serving more as a signposting of themes. Progressing in a lineal presentation of the thesis, any suggestions for further research are as follows:

- As a result of certain revelations, there emerges a requirement for further expansion into the historical narratives of colonialism and colonialist influence upon *GRT religion and theology*. From the moment of introduction into Europe, GRT people have been subject to the dualistic relationship of the political establishment and the Church. As demonstrated in this thesis, colonialism has irrevocably affected and shaped GRT religion, and the response to GRT communities from gorgers – historically and presently. It is clear that there are political, social, historical, and ecclesiological narratives that either require alterations and/or recomposing, as a result of any such further investigation.

- One aspect in the foundational composition of Traveller theology is the understanding that Christianity to some extent – practically, morally, and spiritually, operates as a nomadic entity. This is evidenced throughout the thesis, but it primarily presents itself through the exegetically drawn 'sojourner' narrative, the 'Mosaic Camp' narrative, and the narrative concerned with 'pure blood' and 'death and the afterlife'. Aside from developing this concept further in its own right and also in explicit relation with Traveller theology, the researcher recommends that further research is undertaken to explore how this concept is operational (if at all) in other modes and elements of Christian practice and understanding *external* to Travelling communities. By doing so, several new avenues of research may develop, which among other things includes: a process of Traveller-Christian

demystification; initiating a repurposing (and reimagining) of the historical understanding of Traveller beliefs as something *Christian* (rather than 'superstitious', 'magical, or 'of the devil'); the potential for further engagement and exploration with liberation theology, with particular focus on its contemporary application and development (the researcher recommends Gypsies and Travellers as an ideal case study).

- The Traveller-Christian portrayal (see 'Summary of the Primary Findings') provides among other things a hermeneutic on death and the afterlife. A magnification upon these areas can provide valuable insights upon spiritual motivation, theological reasoning and religious belief. However, it can also assist in revealing the reasoning behind particular denominational affiliations, which, in Gypsy and Traveller communities, are often the same over many generations. The researcher recommends that further explorations are made into *why* and *how* these choices are made. The field research at Appleby Fair highlighted the 'competition' from church collectives in reaching and 'saving' the Travellers and Gypsies in attendance. Both the theological reasoning and the ecclesiological methods and impact in these dynamics must be researched further, to achieve two primary objectives: Firstly, to differentiate and establish between elements of belief and practice from that which can be considered to be part of the patchwork 'Traveller theology', to that which originates from external indoctrination. And secondly (and as a result of the first), to begin the process of effectively engaging and incorporating GRT people into congregations and communities. As an example, one Traveller who was interviewed by the researcher revealed how upon entering an Anglican Church in the village they had recently moved to, they were immediately isolated and made to feel 'dumb', after being handed the 'Common Book of Prayer'. The interviewee (who was semi-illiterate) could not partake in the service and was unsure when to join in, to sit, and to stand. They did not return to the Church, and instead, joined an Evangelical congregation elsewhere.

6.6 – A Traveller Theology: Summary

This research emerges from personal experience, a diverse body of literature and a hypothesis proposing that the most effective method in fully accessing Gypsy and Traveller culture and community is via the 'vehicle' of Christianity and Christian theological interpretation. 'Traveller theology' is, in this current inception, a calculated and informed theological ethnography, attempting to unearth and establish the foundational

piers of a Traveller and Gypsy belief system. In this capacity Traveller theology operates as a Christian narrative, reflecting the overwhelming historical and current affiliation to Christianity by Gypsies and Travellers, primarily in the UK. Moreover, and more specifically, Traveller theology as a written document radically opens its very premises to scrutiny, debate and critique.

Historical mistrust and disdain for GRT people, strengthened and emboldened by political institutions, the media and misinformation, has inspired and facilitated prejudicial narratives concerning Gypsies and Travellers. There has been a response to these narratives by several academics and social bodies (GRT and gorger) who have made movements towards social, political and religious reformation. This thesis has attempted to sit among these responses, with a specific occupation in the religious dynamic. This has been achieved through two processes: By methodologically placing Gypsy voices at the forefront of the research, and by identifying and threading cultural strands (beliefs and customs, narratives and histories, and rituals and traditions) from Gypsy and Traveller culture into a coherent theology.

A process began that consisted of a critical analysis of the contemporary period, exegetical comparisons; and a forensic theological assessment. The result is the foundational emergence of a culturally specific theology, encompassing its own cosmology and Christology. Ultimately, it was the uncovering of the Christological element which facilitated a response to the initial hypothesis of this thesis, and from which the unearthed themes of the purity code, the sojourner exegesis, the camp motif, and concepts of time, space, and symbolism, all draw their validation and explanation.

If social, political, and religious enquires concerning GRT communities are to be made complete and properly informed, then Traveller and Gypsy theological narratives must be included. Furthermore, the need for accurate, informed and culturally led research (in this instance, from Gypsies and Travellers), highlights both the multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary nature and necessity of a Traveller theology. In short this means that educational providers (teachers, tutors, lecturers), health professionals, local authority figures (Police, social workers, etc.), and Councils, who interact on a daily basis with the Travelling community could hold a vested interest in understanding and negotiating principles of Traveller theology in their own professional situations. The interdisciplinary element means that this same interest can be applied in a practical, pastoral, and political theological context. Additionally, there is scope to develop the emergent theological principles beyond just the application of a Traveller and Gypsy context, transitioning the dialogue to other diverse environments, such as liberation theology and ecclesiology.

This thesis has attempted to exegetically excavate and translate the complexities of foundational elements of Gypsy and Traveller beliefs and practices. Combined, these elements position Christ at its heart, centrifugally emanating God's love, justice and forgiveness, whilst centripetally drawing humanity through a process of servitude, grace and acceptance. In doing so, 'Traveller theology' provides both an original contribution *to* Gypsy and Traveller knowledge, and an original contribution to knowledge *about* Gypsies and Travellers. Knowledge that although often presented orally and without a contextual form, has existed to some degree in Gypsy and Traveller communities for hundreds of years.

---

*TOTAL WORD COUNT = <u>95472</u>

(*Abstract; Introduction; Chapter 1; Chapter 2; Chapter 3; Chapter 4; Chapter 5; Chapter 6*).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Works Cited

Acton, T. (1974) *Gypsy Politics and Social Change: The Development of Ethnic Ideology and Pressure Politics among British Gypsies from Victorian Reformism to Romany Nationalism*. London: Routledge.

Acton, T. (Ed. S. Cranford) (1979) 'The Gypsy Evangelical Church', in *The Ecumenical Review (Journal of The World Council of Churches),* Vol. 31 (No. 3), pp. 11 – 17.

Acton, T. (1997) 'Mediterranean Religions and Romani People', in *Journal of Mediterranean Studies*, Vol. 7 (No. 1), pp. 37 – 51.

Acton, T.; Caffrey, S.; Mundy, G. (1997) 'Theorizing Gypsy Law', in *The American Journal of Comparative Law*, Vol. 45 (No. 2), pp. 237 – 249 (Accessed 10/10/19). Available at: https://www.jstor.org/stable/840848

Acton, T. (1999) 'Globalisation, the Pope and the Gypsies', in Brah. A., Hickman, M., and Ghaill, M. (Eds.) *Global Futures: Migration, Environment and Globalisation*. London: Macmillan Press.

Acton, T. (2014) 'New Religious Movements among Roma, Gypsies and Travellers: Placing Romani Pentecostalism in an Historical and Social Context', in Thurfjell, D. & Marsh, A. (Eds.) *Romani Pentecostalism: Gypsies and Charismatic Christianity*. Frankfurt: Peter Lang.

Acton, T. (2017) 'The European Forgettory: The Deconstruction of Forgetfulness. The Historian's Contribution to Breaking the Cycles of History', in Buchsbaum. T and Kapralski. S, (Eds.) '*Beyond the Roma Holocaust: From Resistance to Mobilisation*'. Krakow, Poland: The Universitas Society of Scientific Papers Authors and Publishers.

Althouse, P. (2014) 'Eschatology from Basel to Azusa Street', in Winn, C. & Drury, J. (Eds.) *Karl Barth and the Future of Evangelical Theology*. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers.

Anacin, C. (2015) 'Syncretism in Rituals and Performance in a Culturally Pluralistic Society in the Philippines', in *The Social Science Journal*, Vol. 52 (No. 1), pp. 40 – 45 (Accessed 23/06/16). Available at:
http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0362331914000901.

Andrews, E. (2016) *Christian Theology: The Evangelism Study Tool*. Cambridge, Ohio: Christian Publishing House.

Antonio, E. (2012) 'Black Theology and Liberation Theologies', in Antonio, E. & Hopkins, D. (Eds.) *The Cambridge Companion to Black theology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Atkin, A. (2014) *The Philosophy of Race.* Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.

Balmer, R. (2002) *Encyclopedia of Evangelism.* Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press.

Bantum, B. (2010) *Redeeming Mulatto: A Theology of Race and Hybridity*. Waco, Texas: Baylor University Press.

Barber, D. (2007) 'The Particularity of Jesus and the Time of the Kingdom: Philosophy and Theology in Yoder', in *Modern Theology*, Vol. 23 (No. 1), pp. 63 – 89 (Accessed 04/02/17). Available at: http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1468-0025.2007.00353.x/pdf.

Barnett, R. (2013) *Jews and Gypsies: Myths and Reality.* Ridgmont: Amazon.co.uk Press.

Bársony, J. (2013) '20th Century Roma History and the Pharrajimos', in Bársony, J. & Daróczi, Á. (Eds.) *Pharrajimos: The Fate of the Roma*. New York: International Debate Education Association.

Barth, F. (1969) 'Introduction', in Barth, F. (Ed.) *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organisation of Cultural Difference*. Boston: Waveland Press.

Barth, K. (1933) *The Epistle to the Romans*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Bauckham, R. (2006) *The Theology of Jürgen Moltmann*. London: T&T Clark.

Baumann, M. (2004) 'A Diachronic View of Diaspora, the Significance of Religion and Hindu Trinidadians', in Kokot, W., Tölölyan, K., & Alfonso, A. (Eds.) *Diaspora, Identity and Religion: New Directions in Theory and Research*. London: Routledge.

BBC. (2012) 'C4 gypsy film prompts complaints', in *BBC News Online* (Accessed 23/10/15). Available at: http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/entertainment-arts-16740278.

BBC. (2013) 'Mystery girl Maria's parents found in Bulgaria by DNA', in *BBC News Online* (Accessed 10/12/15). Available at: http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-24673804.

Beckford, R. (1998) *Jesus is Dread: Black Theology and Black Culture in Britain*. London: Darton, Longman and Todd.

Beckford, R. (2004) *God and the Gangs: An Urban Toolkit for Those who Won't be Sold Out, Bought Out or Scared Out*. London: Darton, Longman and Todd.

Beckford, R. (2016) 'The Jamaican Bible: Incarnation: No Blacks, No Irish, No Dogs', in *YouTube* (Accessed 01/10/17). Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aF2TNt0E9oA.

Beckford, R. (2017) 'Jamaican Bible Remix', in *Canterbury Christ Church University Online* (Accessed 01/10/17). Available at: http://www.canterbury.ac.uk/arts-and-humanities/school-of-humanities/religion-philosophy-and-ethics/research/jamaican-bible-remix.aspx.

Beckford, R. (2017a) 'The Jamaican Bible: Work of the Spirit', in *YouTube* (Accessed 01/10/17). Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mSS7mQ4PPAo.

Bell, C. (1992) *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Belton, B. (2005) *Questioning Gypsy Identity: Ethnic Narratives in Britain and America*. Oxford: Altamira Press.

Benson, J. (1846) 'The Holy Bible, Containing the Old and New Testaments (According to the Present Authorized Version) with Critical, Explanatory, and Practical Notes: The Marginal Readings of the Most Approved Printed Copies of the Scriptures…' in *BibleHub Online* (Accessed 04/01/17). Available at: http://biblehub.com/commentaries/benson/leviticus/26.htm.

Berger, J. (2002) *The Shape of a Pocket*. London: Bloomsbury.

Beveridge, H. (2002) *'The Institutes of the Christian Religion' by John Calvin*. Grand Rapids, MI, USA: Christian Classics Ethereal Library.

Bhopal, K. (2006) 'Issues of Rurality and Good Practice: Gypsy Traveller Pupils in School', in Neal, S. & Agyeman, J. (Eds.) *The New Countryside? Ethnicity, Nation and Exclusion in Contemporary Rural Britain*. Bristol: Policy Press.

Bhopal, K. & Myers, M. (2008) *Insiders, Outsiders and Others: Gypsies and Identity*. Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire.

Bloch, M. (1954) *The Historian's Craft*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Blumer, H. (1969) *Symbolic Interactionism: Perspective and Method*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Boerma, C. (1989*) The Poor Side of Europe: The Church and the (New) Poor of Western Europe.* Geneva: WCC Publications.

Bohlen, C. (1997) 'Spanish Gypsy is First Gypsy Beatified by Catholic Church', in *The New York Times Online* (Accessed 03/08/16). Available at: http://www.nytimes.com/1997/05/05/world/spanish-martyr-is-first-gypsy-beatified-by-catholic-church.html.

Bolyki, J. (1994) 'The Role of Elements in the World', in Coyne, G. & Schmitz-moormann, K. (Eds.) *Studies in Science and Theology (Volume Two, Part Two): Origins, Time and Complexity.* Geneva, Switzerland: Labor and Fides.

Bongie, C. (1998) *Islands and Exiles: The Creole Identities of Post/Colonial Literature.* Stanford, CA: Stanford UP.

Bourdieu, P. (1989) 'Social Space and Symbolic Power', in *Sociological Theory*, Vol. 7 (No. 1), pp. 14 – 25 (Accessed 24/01/17). Available at: http://www.soc.ucsb.edu/ct/pages/JWM/Syllabi/Bourdieu/SocSpaceSPowr.pdf.

Bourdieu, P. (1990) *The Logic of Practice.* Stanford, US: Stanford University Press.

Brinkmann, S.; Jacobsen, M.; & Kristiansen, S. (2014) 'Historical Overview of Qualitative Research in the Social Sciences', in Leavy, P. (Ed.) *The Oxford Handbook of Qualitative Research.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Brown, C. (2001) *The Death of Christian Britain: Understanding Secularisation 1800-2000.* London: Routledge.

Bultmann, R. & Ogden, S. (Ed) (1989) *New Testament Mythology and Other Basic Writings.* Philadelphia, US: Fortress Press.

Burns, J. & Newman, C. (2012) *Romans: Interpreted by Early Christian Commentators.* Cambridge: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.

Calvin, J. (1848) *Commentaries on the First Book of Moses called Genesis: By John Calvin.* Edinburgh: The Edinburgh Printing Company.

Cameron, J. (2014) *Racism and Hate: An American Reality.* Bloomington, IN: AuthorHouse LLC.

Carrette, J. (2013) *Religion and Culture: Michel Foucault.* London: Routledge.

Carrizo-Reimann, A. (2011) 'The Forgotten Children of Abraham: Iglesia Evangelica Misionera Biblica Rom of Buenos Aires', in *Romani Studies*, Vol. 21 (No. 2), pp. 161 – 176. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press.

Catholic Online. (2014) 'Three Things that should be in Every Catholic Home', in *Catholic Online* (Accessed 19/01/17). Available at: http://www.catholic.org/news/hf/home/story.php?id=55911.

Chadwick, H. (1993) *The Early Church.* London: Penguin Books.

Chang, H. (2011) *Spirituality in Higher Education: Autoethnographies.* Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press.

Cheng, P. (2011) *An Introduction to Queer Theology: Radical Love.* New York: Seabury Books.

Clark, C. & Greenfields, M. (2006) *Here to Stay: The Gypsies and Travellers of Britain.* Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire Press.

Clarke, M. (2013) *Handbook of Research on Development and Religion.* Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.

Cone, J. (1986) *A Black Theology of Liberation.* New York: Orbis Books.

Crawley, H. (2004) *Moving Forward: The provision of accommodation for Travellers and Gypsies.* London: IPPR.

Cribb, A. & Gewirtz, S. (2009) *Understanding Education: A Sociological Perspective.* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Cullen, S., Hayes, P., & Hughes, L. (2008) 'Good practice guide: Working with Housed Gypsies and Travellers', in *Shelter Online* (Accessed 10/02/17). Available at: http://england.shelter.org.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0010/57772/Working_with_housed_Gypsies_and_Travellers.pdf.

Dawson, R. (2000) *Gypsy Codes and Taboo.* Derbyshire: Blackwell Publishing.

Dennis, N. (2001) *The Uncertain Trumpet: A History of Church of England School Education to AD 2001.* London: Civitas.

Derrida, J. (1999) 'On the Gift', in Caputo, J. & Scanlon, M. (Eds.) *God, the Gift, and Postmodernism.* Indianapolis, IN: Indiana University Press.

DfES. (2003) *Aiming High: Raising the Achievement of Gypsy Traveller Pupils.* Nottingham: DfES Publications.

Dillmann, A. (1905) *Gypsy book: Issued for Official Gebrauche on behalf of KB Ministry of the Interior by the Security Bureau of the Police Directorate K. München*. Munich: Munich Wild.

Dingwall, B. (2015) '*Travellers Fight Back at Council*' [Image] (Accessed 02/01/17). Available at: https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/news/aberdeen/714510/travellers-fight-back-at-council-bid-to-kick-them-off-aberdeenshire-camp/.

Doherty, M. (2015) 'Greek Maria's Adoptive Parents Cleared of Kidnap Charges Two Years after Arrest', in *Travellers' Times online* (Accessed 11/12/15). Available at: http://travellerstimes.org.uk/News/Greek-Marias-adoptive-parents-cleared-of-kidnap-.aspx.

Donaldson, L. (2015) 'When the Media Misrepresents Black Men, the Effects are Felt in the Real World', in *The Guardian* (Accessed 10/02/16). Available at: http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/aug/12/media-misrepresents-black-men-effects-felt-real-world.

Duggan, C. (2006) 'Lombroso, Cesare (1835-1909)', in Claeys, G. (Ed.) *Encyclopaedia of Nineteenth Century Thought*. Abingdon, Oxen: Routledge.

Duke, N. & Beck, S. (1999) 'Education Should Consider Alternative Formats for the Dissertation', in *Educational Researcher*, Vol. 28 (No. 3), pp. 31 – 36 (Accessed 05/01/17). Available at: http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.3102/0013189X028003031?journalCode=edra.

Easton, B. (1893) 'Stranger and Sojourner (In the Apocrypha and the New Testament)', in *Bible Hub* (Accessed 02/04/15). Available at: http://biblehub.com/topical/s/stranger.htm.

Ekblad, B. (2005) *Reading the Bible with the Damned*. London: Westminster John Knox Press.

Ekins, E. (2015) 'Social Liberalism in the U.S. on the Rise: Fiscal Conservatism Remains Strong', in *CATO Institute Online* (Accessed 04/02/17). Available at: https://www.cato.org/blog/social-liberalism-us-rise-fiscal-conservatism-remains-strong.

Emory, J. (1839) *The Works of the Reverend John Wesley, A. M*. New York: T. Mason & G. Lane.

Enz, M. (2006) 'The Mulatto as Island and the Island as Mulatto in Alexandre Dumas's Georges', in *The French Review*, Vol. 80 (No. 2), pp. 383 – 394 (Accessed 08/07/16). Available at: http://www.jstor.org/stable/25480659.

Esterberg, K. (2002) *Qualitative Methods of Social Research*. London: McGraw Hill.

Fagge, N. (2011) '*Travellers' Real Homes are Back in Ireland*' [Image] (Accessed 02/01/17). Available at: http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2038299/Dale-Farm-eviction-Travellers-homes-Ireland-NOT-homeless.html.

Farmer, P. (2013) *In the Company of the Poor: Conversations between Dr Paul Farmer and Father Gustavo Gutiérrez*. New York: Orbis Books.

Fielding, G. & Lee, R. (2002) 'New Patterns in the Adoption and Use of Qualitative Software', in *Field Methods*, Vol. 14 (No. 2), pp. 197–216.

Finley, C. (2011) 'Decolonising the Native Body (and Recovering the Naked Bull-Dyke)', in Driskill, Q; Finley, C.; Gilley, B.; Morgensen, S. (Eds.) *Queer Indigenous Studies: Critical Interventions in Theory, Politics and Literature*. Tucson, AZ: University of Arizona Press.

Fraser, A. (1995) *The Gypsies (2nd Edition)*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

Geertz, A. (1998) 'Native North American Religions', in Hinnells, J. (Ed.) *Handbook of Living Religions*. London: Penguin Books.

Geertz, C. (1973) *The Interpretation of Cultures*. New York: Basic Books.

G4S / HMPS. (2016) '*On Road: A Celebration of GRT writing From HMP/YOI Parc*' (Accessed 25/01/17). No publisher. Available at: http://www.g4s.uk.com/~/media/Files/United%20Kingdom/CSR%20content/On%20Road%20-%20A%20Celebration%20of%20GRT%20writing.pdf.

Gheorghe, N. (1999) 'The Social Construction of Romani Identity', in Acton, T. (Ed.) *Gypsy Politics and Traveller Identity.* Hertfordshire: University of Hertfordshire Press.

Giddings, L. (2006) 'Mixed Methods Research: Positivism Dressed in Drag?', in *Journal of Research in Nursing*, Vol. 11 (No. 3), pp. 195 – 203. London: SAGE Publications.

Girard, R. (2001) *I See Satan Fall Like Lightning*. New York: Orbis Books.

Gockel, M. (2017) 'Constructive Theology, the Cross of Christ, and the Praxis of Liberation', in *Dialog: A Journal of Theology*, Vol. 56 (No. 3), pp. 238 – 232 (Accessed 01/08/17). Available at: http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/dial.12333/pdf.

Goffman, E. (1959) *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. London: Penguin Books.

Graves, D. (2007) 'Church History: 'Rodney Smith, Gypsy Evangelist', in *Christianity.com* (Accessed 29/10/14). Available at: http://www.christianity.com/church/church-history/timeline/1801-1900/rodney-smith-gypsy-evangelist-11630515.html.

Gregory, D. (2012) 'Spirituality in Higher Education: A Review', in *The Review of Higher Education*, Vol. 36 (No. 1), pp. 128 – 129 (Accessed 05/05/16). Available at: https://muse.jhu.edu/article/486196.

Groarke, L. (2010) 'Why Nietzsche Tries to Kill Socrates in The Birth of Tragedy', in Lavery, J. & Groarke, L. (Eds.) *Literary Form, Philosophical Content: Historical Studies of Philosophical Genres*. Cranbury, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press.

Gutierrez, G. (1973) *A Theology of Liberation*. New York: Orbis Books.

Gypsy Blood. (2013) Directed by Maguire, L. [DVD]. London: Kaleidoscope Home Entertainment.

Haigh, C. (2006). 'The King's Reformation: Henry VIII and the Remaking of the English Church'. *The English Historical Review,* Vol. CXXI (No. 494), pp. 1455 – 1457. Oxford Journals On-Line (Accessed 20/10/14). Available at: http://ehr.oxfordjournals.org/content/CXXI/494/1455.full.pdf+html.

Hammersley, M. & Atkinson, P. (1983) *Ethnography: Principles in Practice*. London: Tavistock Publications.

Hammond, G. (1964) 'An Examination of Tillich's Method of Correlation', in *Journal of Bible and Religion*, Vol. 32 (No. 3), pp. 248 – 251 (Accessed 06/01/17). Available at: http://www.jstor.org/stable/1460502?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents.

Hancock, I. (2000) 'Standardisation and Ethnic Defence in Emergent Non-Literate Societies: The Gypsy and Caribbean Cases', in Acton, T. & Dalphinis, M. (Eds.) *Language, Blacks and Gypsies*. London: Whiting and Birch.

Hancock, I. (2001) 'The Romani Element in Non-Standard Speech by Yaron Matras. Review by: Ian Hancock'. *Anthropological Linguistics*, Vol. 43 (No. 4), pp. 515 – 519. JSTOR On-Line (Accessed 08/10/14). Available at: http://www.jstor.org/stable/30028817.

Hancock, I. (2013) *We are the Romani People*. Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire Press.

Hanson, B. (2014) *What Holism Can Do for Social Theory*. Abingdon: Routledge.

Hardy, E. (Ed.) (2006) *Christology of the Later Fathers*. London: Westminster John Knox Press.

Hayano, D. (1979) 'Auto-Ethnography: Paradigms, Problems, and Prospects', in *Human Organization*, Vol. 38 (No. 1), pp. 99 – 104 (Accessed 01/10/17). Available at: https://doi.org/10.17730/humo.38.1.u761n5601t4g318v (p. 101).

Hick, J. (1989) *An Interpretation of Religion: Human Responses to the Transcendent*. London: Macmillan.

Hick, J. (1995) *The Rainbow of Faiths*. London: SCM Press.

Hick, J. (2006) 'Exclusivism versus Pluralism in Religion: A Response to Kevin Meeker', in *Religious Studies*, Vol. 42 (No. 2), pp. 207 – 212 (Accessed 27/06/16). Available at: http://www.jstor.org/stable/20008645?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents.

Hinlicky, P. (2010) *Luther and the Beloved Community: A Path for Christian Theology after Christendom*. Grand Rapids, US: Eerdmans Publishing.

HM Inspectorate of Prisons. (2014) *People in Prisons: Gypsies, Romany and Travellers* (Accessed 28/01/16). Available at: http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/prisons/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2014/04/gypsies-romany-travellers-findings.pdf.

Holling, C.S. (2001) 'Understanding the Complexity of Economic, Ecological, and Social Systems', in *Ecosystems*, Vol. 4 (No. 5), pp. 390 – 405 (Accessed 30/05/16). Available at: http://www.esf.edu/cue/documents/Holling_Complexity-EconEcol-SocialSys_2001.pdf.

Hope, C. (2015) 'Travellers must Prove they are 'Travelling' to get Planning Concessions under New Eric Pickles Crackdown', in *The Telegraph Online* (Accessed 05/08/16). Available at: http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/politics/11363601/Travellers-must-prove-they-are-travelling-to-get-planning-concessions-under-new-Eric-Pickles-crackdown.html.

Horne, S. (2014) '*What Travellers Believe and Why it Matters to the Church and Educational Providers*', BA (Hons), Unpublished: Canterbury Christ Church University.

Horne, S. (2019) 'Cerefino Giminéz Malla: Gypsy Saint – Christian Martyr', in Prentis, S. (Ed.) *Every Tribe: Stories of Diverse Saints Serving a Diverse World*. London: SPCK Publishing.

Hoskyns, E. (1947) *The Fourth Gospel*. London: Faber & Faber.

Hosseini, S. (2010) 'Religious Pluralism and Pluralistic Religion: John Hick's Epistemological Foundation of Religious Pluralism and an Explanation of Islamic Epistemology toward Diversity of Unique Religion', in *The Pluralist*, Vol. 5 (No. 1), pp. 94 – 109 (Accessed 28/06/16). Available at: https://muse.jhu.edu/article/381530.

Howitt, D. (1986) *The Mass Media and Social Problems*. Oxford: Pergamon Press.

Husserl, E. (1999) *The Idea of Phenomenology*. New York: Springer Publishing.

Izuzquiza, D. (2009) *Rooted in Jesus Christ: Toward a Radical Ecclesiology*. Cambridge: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing.

Johnson, R. & Onwuegbuzie, A. (2014) 'Mixed Methods Research: A Research Paradigm Whose Time has Come', in *Educational Researcher*, Vol. 33 (No. 7), pp. 14 – 26. London: SAGE Publications.

Kee, A. (1990) *Marx and the Failure of Liberation Theology*. London: SCM Press.

Kee, A. (2008) *The Rise and Demise of Black Theology*. London: SCM Press.

Keet-Black, J. (2013) *Gypsies of Britain*. Oxford: Shire Publications.

Kenrick, D. & Puxon, G. (2009) *Gypsies under the Swastika*. Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire Press.

Kenyatta, J. (1938) *Facing Mount Kenya*. London: Secker and Warburg.

Klappert, B. (1971) *The Resurrection of the Crucified*. Neukirchen-Vluyn, Germany: Neukirchen Publishing House.

Knapton, S. (2015) 'My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding was Accurate Portrayal of Gypsy Life, High Court Rules', in *The Telegraph Online* (Accessed 04/03/17). Available at: http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/law-and-order/11425292/My-Big-Fat-Gypsy-Wedding-was-accurate-portrayal-of-gypsy-life-High-Court-rules.html.

Knauf, E. (2007) 'Keturah', in *The Bible Encyclopedia On-Line (bibelwissenschaft.de)* (Accessed 17/03/15). Available at: http://www.bibelwissenschaft.de/stichwort/23448/.

Koertner, U. (2013) 'Syncretism and the Construction of a Personal Spirituality', in *Theology Today*, Vol. 70 (No. 3), pp. 295 – 310 (Accessed 23/06/16). Available at: http://ttj.sagepub.com/content/70/3/295.full.pdf+html.

Lawson, J. (2008) 'Secularisation and Human Identity in Christ', in *New Blackfriars*, Vol. 89 (No. 1022), pp. 418 – 430 (Accessed 26/01/15). Available at: http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1741-2005.2007.00205.x/abstract.

Lawson, V. (2000) 'Norton, Ezra (1897–1967)', in *Australian Dictionary of Biography: National Centre of Biography - Australian National University* (Accessed 11/12/15). Available at: http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/norton-ezra-11260/text20085.

Lazell, D. (1970) *From the Forest I Came: The Story of Gipsy Rodney Smith M.B.E.* London: Concordia Press.

Lazell, D. (1995) *A Gipsy Smith Souvenir*. Loughborough: East Leake Publishing Corner.

Le Bas, D. & Acton, T. (2010) *All Change! Romani Studies through Romani Eyes: The Possible Implications of Diasporic Consciousness for Romani Identity*. Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire Press.

Lee, R. (2001) 'The Rom-Vlach Gypsies and the Kris-Romani', in Weyrauch, W. (Ed.) *Gypsy Law: Romani Legal Traditions and Culture*. London: University of California Press.

Lee, V.; Coombe, L.; Mahoney, R.; Allen, C.; Robinson, P. (2018) 'Incorporating Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Worldviews through Innovative Text Analysis: An Evaluation of Indigenous Public Health Curricula', in *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, Vol. 17 (No. 1), pp. 1 – 11.

Lewis, C.S. (2012) *Mere Christianity*. London: Collins.

Liégeois, J-P. (1994) *Roma, Gypsies, Travellers*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe Press.

Liégeois, J-P. & Gheorghe, N (1995) *Roma / Gypsies: A European Minority.* London: Minority Rights Group.

Livingstone, E. (2006) *Oxford Concise Dictionary of the Christian Church.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Lonergan, B. (1973) *Method in Theology*. London: Darton Longman & Todd.

Lopes, C. (2012) 'The "Cão Mulato" in Context: Concept and Presence of the Mulatto in Brazilian Art', in *Notes in the History of Art*, Vol. 31 (No. 3), pp. 43 – 52 (Accessed 01/07/16). Available at: http://www.jstor.org/stable/23208594.

Lowe, W. (2006) 'The Intensification of Time: Michael Wyschogrod and the Task of Christian Theology', in *Modern Theology*, Vol. 22 (No. 4), pp. 693 – 699 (Accessed 24/01/17). Available at: http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1468-0025.2006.00342.x/pdf.

Macdonald, P. (2009) *Knowledge and the Transcendent: An Inquiry into the Mind's Relationship to God*. Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press.

Macquarrie, J. (2003) *Principles of Christian Theology*. London: SCM Press.

Marietta, D. (1994) *For People and the Planet: Holism and Humanism in Environmental Ethics*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Martin, C. (2008) 'Television Media as a Potential Negative Factor in the Racial Identity Development of African American Youth', in *Academic Psychiatry*, Vol. 32 (No. 4), pp. 338

– 342. Psychiatry On-Line (Accessed 09/02/16). Available at:
http://search.proquest.com/openview/2074515cbbc80b67ff79891271096f07/1?pq-origsite=gscholar.

Martin, K. (2010) *Indigenous Symbols and Practices in the Catholic Church: Visual Culture, Missionisation, and Appropriation*. Farnham: Ashgate Publishing.

Maslow, A. (1943) 'A Theory of Human Motivation', in *Psychological Review*, Vol. 50 (No. 4), pp. 370 – 396 (Accessed 01/04/16). Available at:
http://www.researchhistory.org/2012/06/16/maslows-hierarchy-of-needs/.

Mauch, T. (1999) 'Sojourner', in *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, Vol. 4 (pp. 397 – 398). Nashville: Abingdon Press.

Mayall, D. (1988) *Gypsy-travellers in Nineteenth-century Society.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Mays, J. (Ed.) (1988) *Harper's Bible Commentary*. London: Harper & Row Publishers.

Maximoff, M. (1965) 'The Evangelical Gypsies in France', in *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society*, 3rd Series (XLIV).

McBride, D. (2012) 'Between Text and Sermon: Exodus 33', in *Interpretation: A Journal of Bible and Theology*, Vol. 66 (No. 4), pp. 434 – 436 (Accessed 10/01/17). Available at:
http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0020964312450834.

McCormack, D. (2012) 'Creating Autoethnographies', in *British Journal of Guidance and Counselling*, Vol. 40 (No. 2), pp. 182 – 184 (Accessed 01/05/16). Available at:
http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/03069885.2012.653186.

McDowell, B. (1970) *Gypsies, Wanderers of the World*. Washington, DC: National Geographic Society.

McFarlan, D. (2003) *Dictionary of the Bible*. New Lanark: Geddes & Grosset.

McFee, M. (1968) 'The 150% Man, A Product of Blackfeet Acculturation', in *American Anthropologist: New Series,* Vol. 70 (No. 6), pp. 1096 – 1107 (Accessed 15/10/16). Available at: http://www.jstor.org/stable/669511?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents.

McGrath, A. (2011) *Christian Theology: An Introduction 5th edition*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.

McLean, B. (2012) *Biblical Interpretation and Philosophical Hermeneutics*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

McVeigh, R. (1997) 'Theorising Sedentarism: The Roots of Anti-Nomadism', in Acton, T. (Ed.) *Gypsy Politics and Traveller Identity*. Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire Press.

Medawar, P. (1979) *Advice to a Young Scientist*. New York: Basic Books.

Mends, B. (1997) 'Researching the Religious Affiliations of Travellers and their Beliefs', in Acton, T. & Mundy, G. (Eds.) *Romani Culture and Gypsy Identity*. Hatfield, Hertfordshire: University of Hertfordshire Press.

Mercer, C. (1986) *Norman Perrin's Interpretation of the New Testament: From "Exegetical Method" to "Hermeneutical Process"*. Macon, G.A.: Mercer University Press.

Merz, A. & Theissen, G. (1999) *The Historical Jesus: A Comprehensive Guide*. London: SCM Press.

Meyers, A. (1987) *The Gypsy as Child Stealer: Stereotype in American Folklore*. Masters thesis. Berkeley, CA: The University of California Press.

Moltmann, J. (2004) *The Coming of God: Christian Eschatology*. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress.

Moltmann, J. (2015). *The Crucified God (2nd Edition)*. London: SCM Press.

Moore, G. (2004) *Nietzsche, Biology and Metaphor*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Moschella, M. (2016) *Caring for Joy: Narrative, Theology, and Practice*. Boston, US: Brill Publishers.

Muncey, T. (2010) *Creating Autoethnographies*. London: SAGE Publications.

National Council of Churches (1998) *The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version (Cross-Referenced Edition)*. Collins, London.

Okely, J. (1992) *Anthropology and Autobiography*. London: Routledge.

Okely, J. (1998) *The Traveller-Gypsies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Oliver, C. (2012) 'The Relationship between Symbolic Interactionism and Interpretive Description', in *Qualitative Health Research*, Vol. 22 (No. 3), pp. 409 – 415.

O.N.S. (2011) '2011 Census, Population and Household Estimates for the United Kingdom', in *Office for National Statistics On-Line* (Accessed on 22/06/15). Available at: http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/publications/re-reference-tables.html?edition=tcm%3A77-270247.

Opinion Research Services. (2013) 'Gypsy, Traveller & Travelling Show-people Accommodation Assessment', in *Ipswich Borough Council.org* (Accessed on 22/06/15). Available at: https://www.ipswich.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Suffolk%20GTAA.pdf.

Oppenheimer, H. (1983) *The Hope of Happiness.* London: SCM.

Pannenberg, W. (1998) *Systematic Theology: Volume Three.* Edinburgh: T&T Clark.

Parliament. (2015) 'Gypsies and Travellers (Local Communities)', in *House of Commons Hansard Debates On-Line* (Accessed on 08/10/15). Available at: http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201516/cmhansrd/cm150610/halltext/150610h0002.htm.

Pawson, D. (2007) *Unlocking the Bible.* London: HarperCollins Publishers.

Pickering, W. (2009) *Durkheim's Sociology of Religion: Themes and Theories.* Cambridge: James Clarke and Co Ltd.

Pinn, A. (2003) *Terror and Triumph: The Nature of Black Religion.* Minneapolis, US: Fortress Press.

Pinn, A. (2006) *Why Lord?: Suffering and Evil in Black Theology.* London: The Continuum International Publishing Group.

Pobee, J. (1987) *Who are the Poor? The Beatitudes as a Call to Community.* Geneva: WCC Publications.

Portier, W. (1994) *Tradition and Incarnation: Foundations of Christian Theology.* New York: Paulist Press.

Postan, M. (1971) *Fact and Relevance: Essays on Historical Method.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Potter, J. (1996) *Representing Reality: Discourse, Rhetoric and Social Construction.* Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publishing.

Press Association. (2014) 'One in Twenty Prisoners of Gypsy, Romany or Traveller Background, says HMIP', in *The Guardian* (Accessed 28/01/16). Available at: http://www.theguardian.com/society/2014/mar/11/gypsies-roma-travellers-over-represented-jails-england-wales-prisons.

Pym, R. (2014) 'The Pariah Within: Early Modern Spain's Gypsies', in *The Journal of Romance Studies*, Vol. 4 (No. 2), pp. 21 – 35. Oxford: Berghahn Journals.

Quash, B. & Ward, M. (2007) *Heresies and How to Avoid Them.* London: SPCK.

Rahner, K. (1966) *Theological Investigations: Volume Four*. London: Darton, Longman and Todd.

Raines, J. (2002) *Marx on Religion.* Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Rapport, F., Wainwright, P., & Elwyn, G. (2005) 'Of the Edgelands: Broadening the Scope of Qualitative Methodology', in *Medical Humanities*, Vol. 31 (No. 1), pp. 37 – 43 (Accessed 01/10/17). Available at: http://mh.bmj.com/content/31/1/37.long.

Rawls, J. (1971) *A Theory of Justice*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Reid, W. (1997) 'Scottish Gypsies / Travellers and the Folklorists', in Acton, T. & Mundy, G. (Eds.) *Romani Culture and Gypsy Identity*. Hatfield, Herts: University of Hertfordshire Press.

Reilly, K., Kaufman, S. & Bodino, A. (2003) *Racism: A Global Reader.* New York: M. E. Sharpe.

Richardson, J. & Ryder, A. (2012) *Gypsies and Travellers: Empowerment and Inclusion in British Society.* Bristol: The Policy Press.

Richardson, M. & Lindenfeld, D. (2012) *Beyond Conversion and Syncretism: Encounters with Missionary Christianity*. Oxford: Berghahn Books.

Ridley, L. (2014) 'Meet the Born-Again Christian Gypsy Leading a Cultural Revolution', in *The Huffington Post UK Edition* (Accessed on 01/11/15). Available at: http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/2014/10/30/gypsy-church-light-and-life-jackie-boyd_n_6075434.html.

Ridholls, J. (1986) *Travelling Home: God's Work of Revival among Gypsy Folk*. Basingstoke: Marshall Pickering.

Ries, J. (2010) 'Romany / Gypsy Church or People of God', in Stewart, M. & Rövid, M. (Eds.) *Multidisciplinary Approaches to Romany Studies*. Budapest: CEU.

Roberts, R. (1992) *A Theology on its Way: Essays on Karl Barth*. London: T. & T. Clark.

Robson, S. (2013) 'Greece Girl 'Maria' found at Gypsy Camp is Older than Originally Thought, Dental Records Reveal', in *The Mirror Online* (Accessed 10/12/15). Available at: http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/world-news/greece-girl-maria-found-gypsy-2476166.

Runzo, J. (1992) *Ethics, Religion, and the Good Society: New Directions in a Pluralistic Society*. Louisville, KY: John Knox Press.

Ryan, M (2009) 'Making Visible the Coding Process: Using Qualitative Data', in *Issues in Educational Research*, Vol. 19 (No. 2), pp 142 – 161.

Sato, E. (1988) 'The Social Impact of the Rise of Pentecostal Evangelicalism among American Rom', in De Silva, C. et al (Eds.) *Papers from the Eighth and Ninth Annual Meetings of the Gypsy Lore Society, North American Chapter*.

Schechner, R. (2006) *Performance Studies: An Introduction (2nd Edition)*. London: Routledge.

Scolnicov, A. (2011) *The Right to Religious Freedom in International Law: Between Group Rights and Individual Rights*. Abingdon, Oxford: Routledge.

Sedgwick, P. (2009) *Nietzsche: The Key Concepts*. London: Routledge.

Seeman, B. (2003) 'What if the Elephant Speaks? Kant's Critique of Judgement and an Übergang Problem in John Hick's Philosophy of Religious Pluralism', in *International Journey for Philosophy of Religion*, Vol. 54 (No. 3), pp. 157 – 174 (Accessed 16/06/16). Available at: http://www.jstor.org/stable/40025683?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents.

Shepard, K.; Jensen, G.; Schmoll, B.; Hack, L.; Gwyer, J. (1993) 'Alternative Approaches to Research in Physical Therapy: Positivism and Phenomenology', in *Physical Therapy*, Vol. 73 (No. 2), pp. 88 – 101 (Accessed 04/05/16). Available at: http://ptjournal.apta.org/content/ptjournal/73/2/88.full.pdf.

Shields, A. (1993) *Gypsy Stereotypes in Victorian Literature*. Doctoral dissertation. New York: New York University Press.

Shirley, J. (1968) *A Parisian Journal, 1405 – 1449*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Shoard, M. (2002) 'Edgelands', in Jenkins, J. (Ed.) *Remaking the Landscape: The Changing Face of Britain*. London: Profile Books.

Sicker, M. (2009) *The Theopolitical Discourses of Moses: The Book of Deuteronomy in Political Perspective – Part 2*. New York: iUniverse.

Silverman, C. (1988) 'Negotiating "Gypsiness": Strategy in Context', in *The Journal of American Folklore*, Vol. 101 (No. 401), pp. 261 – 275. JSTOR (Accessed 04/03/20). Available at: https://www.jstor.org/stable/540467?seq=14#metadata_info_tab_contents.

Sirowy, B. (2014) 'Architectural Ethics: A Phenomenological Perspective', in Fløistad, G. (Ed.) *Ethics or Moral Philosophy*. London: Springer Publishing.

Siu, P. (1952) 'The Sojourner', in *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 58 (No. 1), pp. 34 – 44. JSTOR (Accessed 16/02/15). Available at: http://www.jstor.org/stable/2771791?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents.

Skeggs, B. (2011) 'Imagining Personhood Differently: Person Value and Autonomist Working-Class Value Practices', in *The Sociological Review*, Vol. 59 (No.3), pp. 496 – 513. Wiley On-line Library (Accessed 06/10/14). Available at: http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1467-954X.2011.02018.x/pdf.

Slaveva-Griffin, S. & Remes, P. (2014) *The Routledge Handbook of Neoplatonism*. London: Routledge.

Smith, R. (1905) *Gipsy Smith: His Life and Work*. London: National Council of the Evangelical Free Churches.

Smith, W. (1884) *Smith's Bible Dictionary*. Grand Rapids, MI: Christian Classics Ethereal Library.

Spurgeon, C. (1890) 'Camp Law and Camp Life', in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, Vol. 36 (No. 2177). Spurgeon Gems (Accessed 25/08/15). Available at: http://www.spurgeongems.org/vols34-36/chs2177.pdf.

Stephenson, M. (2003) *Battlegrounds: Geography and the History of Warfare*. Washington: National Geographic Books.

Stewart, M. (1997) *The Time of the Gypsies*. Oxford: Westview Press.

Swatos, W. (Ed.) (1998) 'John Milton Yinger', in *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Society*. London: SAGE Publications.

Sykes, S. (1984) *The Identity of Christianity: Theologians and the Essence of Christianity from Schleiermacher to Barth*. London: SPCK.

Taylor, B. (2008) *A Minority and the State: Travellers in Britain in the Twentieth Century*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Taylor, B. (2014) *Another Darkness, Another Dawn: A History of Gypsies, Roma and Travellers*. London: Reaktion Books.

Taylor, C. (2007) *A Secular Age*. London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

The Workgroup on Constructive Theology. (2016) *Awake to the Moment: An Introduction to Theology*, by Schneider, L. & Ray, Jr. S (Eds.). Louisville, KC: Westminster John Knox Press.

Thurfjell, D. & Marsh, A. (Eds.) (2014) *Romani Pentecostalism: Gypsies and Charismatic Christianity*. Frankfurt: Peter Lang.

Tomlinson, S. (2012) '*The Gipsy Family who Made £2million*' [Image] (Accessed 02/01/17). Available at: http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2153331/Ringleader-traveller-gang-600-000-tax-benefits-scam-jailed-years.html.

Tremlett, A. (2014) 'Demotic or Demonic? Race, Class and Gender in 'Gypsy' Reality TV', in *The Sociological Review*, Vol. 62 (No. 2), pp. 316 – 334. Wiley On-line Library (Accessed 06/10/14). Available at: http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/1467-954X.12134/pdf;jsessionid=4E7E0880C55DD9ECE1A12AA822B2C869.f04t01.

Trigg, E. B. (1968) 'Religion and Social Reform among the Gypsies of Britain', in *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society*, Volume XLVII (Third Series, No. 3 – 4), pp. 82 – 109.

Trigg, E. B. (1973) *Gypsy Demons and Divinities: The Magical and Supernatural Practices of the Gypsies*. London: Sheldon Press.

Turner, H. (1963) *Historicity and the Gospels*. London: A.R. Mowbray and Co.

Twiss, R. (2015) *Rescuing the Gospel from the Cowboys*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

United Bible Societies (1981) 'Bibliosko Nevipe', in *Romani Newsletter* (No.1).

University of Nottingham. (2014) *Philosophical and Theological Anthropology in the 21st Century – with Professor Charles Taylor (Part One)* (Accessed 03/02/17). Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fd9434IaYno.

University of Nottingham. (2014) *Philosophical and Theological Anthropology in the 21st Century – with Professor Charles Taylor (Part Two)* (Accessed 03/02/17). Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xXyqMb0ocXI.

Viña, G. (2017) 'UK Steps in to Plug Science Funding Gap', in *Financial Times Online* (Accessed 10/09/17). Available at: https://www.ft.com/content/740f5f8c-f24c-11e6-95ee-f14e55513608?mhq5j=e6.

Volf, M. (1996) *Exclusion and Embrace*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press.

Walcott, D. (1974) 'The Muse is History', in Coombs, O. (Ed.) *Is Massa Dead? Black Moods in the Caribbean*. New York: Doubleday and Company.

Walls, A. (1998) 'Christianity', in Hinnells, J. (Ed.) *The New Penguin Handbook of Living Religions*. London: Penguin Books.

Watson, D. & Nehls, K. (2016) 'Alternative Dissertation Formats', in Storey, V. & Hesbol, K. (Eds.) *Contemporary Approaches to Dissertation Development and Research Methods*. Hershey PA, USA: Information Science Reference Publishers.

Watson, N. (2003) *Feminist Theology*. Cambridge: Eerdmans.

Weaver, D. (2001) 'How Sin Works', in *Journal of Religious Ethics*, Vol. 29 (No. 3), pp. 473 – 501. JSTOR (Accessed 30/09/15). Available at: http://goo.gl/m587Zy.

Webster, J. (1995) *Barth's Ethics of Reconciliation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Wells, D. (1907) 'Social Darwinism'. *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 12 (No. 5), pp. 695 – 716. JSTOR On-line (Accessed 03/11/14). Available at: http://www.jstor.org/stable/2762378.

West, C. (2001) *Race Matters*. New York: Vintage Books.

Whistler, D. (2013) *Schelling's Theory of Symbolic Language: Forming the System of Identity*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

White, J. (2003) *Campbell Bunk: The Worst Street in North London between the Wars*. London: Pimlico.

Wiener, H. (no date) 'Stranger and Sojourner (In the Old Testament)', in *Bible Hub* (Accessed 23/03/15). Available at: http://biblehub.com/dictionary/s/sojourner.htm.

Wilmore, G. (2012) 'Historical Perspective', in Antonio, E. & Hopkins, D. (Eds.) *The Cambridge Companion to Black theology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Wolcott, H. (2001) *Writing up Qualitative Research (2nd Edition)*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

Wood, M. (1973) *In the Life of a Romani Gypsy.* London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Books.

Woolford, P. (1977) 'Gypsies for Christ', in *Romani Kongeri* (No. 3), pp. 1 – 4.

Wright, B. (2016) 'Does Trump win mark the end for liberal democracy?', in *BBC News Online* (Accessed 04/02/17). Available at: http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/37949669.

Wright, N.T. (2002) 'Jesus' Resurrection and Christian Origins', in *Gregorianum*, Vol. 83 (No. 4), pp. 615 – 635. JSTOR (Accessed 20/05/17). Available at: http://www.jstor.org/stable/23581348?seq=5#page_scan_tab_contents.

Yinger, J. (1970) *The Scientific Study of Religion*. London: Collier Macmillan.

Works Consulted

Acton, T. (1971) 'The Functions of the Avoidance of Moxadi Kovels (amongst Gypsies in South Essex)', in *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society*, Series III, Vol. 50 (No. 3), pp. 108 – 136.

Acton, T. & Mundy, G. (1999) *Romani Culture and Gypsy Identity*. Hertfordshire: University of Hertfordshire Press.

Acton, T.; Caffrey, S.; Dunn, S.; Vinson, P. (1999) 'Gender Issues in Accounts of Gypsy Health and Hygiene as Discourse of Social Control', in Acton, T. & Mundy, G. (Eds.) *Romani Culture and Gypsy Identity*. Hertfordshire: University of Hertfordshire Press.

Appleby Town Online (No date) 'Appleby Horse Fair General Information', in *Appleby Online* (Accessed 04/04/15). Available at:
http://www.applebytown.org.uk/uploads/TIC/FAQ.pdf.

Baker, D. (2011) '*Gypsy Visuality: Gell's Art Nexus and its Potential for Artists'*, PhD (Thesis), Unpublished, London: Royal College of Art.

Bantum, B. (2016) *The Death of Race: Building a New Christianity in a Racial World*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press.

Blasco, G. (1999) *Gypsies in Madrid: Sex, Gender and the Performance of Identity*. Oxford: Berg.

Braaten, C. (1976) 'The Crucified God: The Cross of Christ as the Foundation and Criticism of Christian Theology by Jürgen Moltmann', in *The Journal of Religion*, Vol. 56 (No. 1), pp. 113 – 121. JSTOR Online (Accessed 01/06/16). Available at:
https://www.jstor.org/stable/1201511?read-now=1&seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents.

Case-Winters, A. (2016) 'The End? Christian Eschatology and the End of the World', in *Interpretation: A Journal of Bible and Theology*, Vol. 70 (No. 1), pp. 61 – 74. SAGE (Accessed 04/03/17). Available at:
http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0020964315603351.

Chilisa, B. & Tsheko, G. (2014) 'Mixed Methods in Indigenous Research: Building Relationships for Sustainable Intervention Outcomes', in *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, Vol. 8 (No. 3), pp. 222 – 233.

Cone, J. (1969) *Black Theology and Black Power*. New York: Harper & Row.

Coward, H. (2003) *Sin and Salvation in the World Religions*. Oxford: Oneworld Publications.

Denzin, N.; Lincoln, Y.; Smith, L. (Eds.) (2008) *Handbook of Critical Indigenous Methodologies*. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.

Douglas, M. (1966) Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo. London: Routledge.

Duschinsky, R. & Lampitt, S. (2012) 'Managing the Tensions of Essentialism: Purity and Impurity', in *Sociology*, Vol. 46 (No. 6), pp. 1194 – 1207. JSTOR (Accessed 19/10/16). Available at: https://www.jstor.org/stable/43497347?read-now=1&seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents.

Ekblad, B. (2011) 'Reading Scripture for Good News that Crosses Barriers of Race/Ethnicity, Class, and Culture', in *Interpretation: A Journal of Bible and Theology*, Vol. 65 (No. 3), pp. 229 – 248. SAGE (Accessed 10/12/15). Available at: http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/002096431106500302.

Ellis, C.; Adams, T.; & Bochner, A. (2010) 'Autoethnography: An Overview', in *Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, Vol. 12 (No. 1). FQS (Accessed 04/01/15). Available at: http://www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs/article/view/1589/3095.

Evans, M.; Miller, A.; Hutchinson, P.; Dingwall, C. (2014) 'Decolonising Research Practice: Indigenous Methodologies, Aboriginal Methods, and Knowledge/Knowing', in Leavy, P. (Ed.) *The Oxford Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Geertz, C. (2005) 'Shifting Aims, Moving Targets: On the Anthropology of Religion', in *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, Vol. 11 (No. 1), pp. 1 – 15. Wiley Online Library (Accessed 15/01/15). Available at: https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/j.1467-9655.2005.00223.x.

Hall, S. (2005) *Doctrine and Practice in the Early Church (2ND Edition)*. London: SPCK.

Hancock, I. (2010) *Danger! Educated Gypsy: Selected Essays*. Hertfordshire: University of Hertfordshire Press.

Hyde, L. (2008) *Trickster Makes This World: How Disruptive Imagination Creates Culture*. Edinburgh: Canongate Books.

Ings, W. (2014) 'Narcissus and the Muse: Supervisory Implications of Autobiographical, Practice-Led PhD Design Theses', in *Qualitative Research*, 2014, Vol. 14 (No. 6), pp. 675

– 693 (Accessed 22/12/14). Available at:
http://qrj.sagepub.com/content/14/6/675.full.pdf+html.

Jones, S. & Lakeland, P. (2005) *Constructive Theology: A Contemporary Approach to Classical Themes*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press.

LaNave, G. (2010) 'Why Holiness is Necessary for Theology: Some Thomistic Distinctions', in *The Thomist: A Speculative Quarterly Review*, Vol. 74 (No. 3), pp. 437 – 459. MUSE (Accessed 09/06/17). Available at: https://muse.jhu.edu/article/636238/pdf.

Lewis, G. (1991), '"ČINGĀNE", The Encyclopaedia of Islam, 2 (2nd ed.)', in *Brill Online Reference Works* (Accessed 10/02/15). Available at: https://goo.gl/WsozTJ.

Lloyd, J. (2016) 'New directions in Eschatology: The Day of the Lord in Time and Space', in *Theology*, Vol. 119 (No. 1), pp. 3 – 10. SAGE (Accessed 10/03/17). Available at: http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/0040571X15603043.

MacCulloch, D. (2004) *Reformation: Europe's House Divided (1490 – 1700).* London: Penguin Books.

Martin, J. (2008) 'Spirit, Apocalypse and Ethics: Reading Catholic Moral Theology as Pentecostal', in *Journal of Pentecostal Theology*, Vol. 17 (No. 2), pp. 238 – 255. Brill Online (Accessed 15/05/16). Available at: http://booksandjournals.brillonline.com/content/journals/10.1163/174552508x377501?showFullText=pdf.

Mathewes, C. (2008) *A Theology of Public Life*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

McGinn, B. (Ed.) (2006) *The Essential Writings of Christian Mysticism*. New York: The Modern Library.

McIntosh, A. (2009) 'Human and Animal Relations in the Theology of Karl Barth', in *Pacifica: Australasian Theological Studies*, Vol. 22 (No. 1), pp. 20 – 35. SAGE (Accessed 08/07/15). Available at: http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/1030570X0902200102.

McIntosh, M. (2008) *Divine Teaching: An Introduction to Christian Theology*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

Meacock, H. (2000) *An Anthropological Approach to Theology: A Study of John Hick's Theology of Religious Pluralism, towards Ethical Criteria for a Global Theology of Religions*. London: University Press of America.

Merriam-Webster (No date / Author) "Inheritance." *The Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary*, Merriam-Webster Inc., (Accessed 16/03/15). Available at: https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/inheritance.

Moltmann, J. (2000) *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God: The Doctrine of God*. London: SCM Press.

Moltmann, J. (2002) *Theology of Hope*. London: SCM Press.

Nouwen, H. (2010) *The Wounded Healer*. London: Darton, Longman and Todd.

Oefelius, A. F. (1763) 'Andreas, Presbyter Ratisbonensis, Diarium sexenale' in *Rerum Boicarum Scriptores*. Vol. 1 (1763), p. 21.

Okely, J. (1994) 'Constructing Difference: Gypsies as Other', in *Anthropological Journal on European Cultures*, Vol. 3 (No. 2), pp. 55 – 73 (Accessed 08/09/19). Available at: https://www.jstor.org/stable/43235361?seq=13#metadata_info_tab_contents.

Okely, J (1999) 'Afterword', in Acton, T. & Mundy, G. (Eds.) *Romani Culture and Gypsy Identity*. Hertfordshire: University of Hertfordshire Press.

Pannenberg, W. (2004) *Anthropology in Theological Perspective*. London: T & T Clark International.

Pinn, A. (1995) *Why, Lord?: Suffering and Evil in Black Theology*. New York: Continuum International Publishing Group.

Pinn, A. & Valentin, B. (Eds.) (2009) *Creating Ourselves: African Americans and Hispanic Americans on Popular Culture and Religious Expression*. London: Duke University Press.

Rahner, K. (1982) *Foundations of Christian Faith: An Introduction to the Idea of Christianity*. New York: Crossroad Publishing.

Simonds, V. & Christopher, S. (2013) 'Adapting Western Research Methods to Indigenous Ways of Knowing', in *American Journal of Public Health*, Vol. 103 (No. 12), pp. 2185 – 2192 (Accessed 05/05/16). Available at: http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/23678897.

Spence, A. (2008) *Christology: A Guide for the Perplexed*. London: T & T Clark.

Sutherland, A. (1986) *Gypsies: The Hidden Americans*. Illinois: Waveland Press.

Thompson, T. (1922) 'The Uncleanness of Women among English Gypsies', in *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society*, Series III, Vol. 1 (No. 1), pp. 15 – 43.

Viljoen, F. (2014) 'External Cultic Tradition and Internal Ethical Purity in Matthew 15', in *In die Skriflig*, Vol. 48 (No. 1), pp. 1 – 12. AOSIS Publishing (Accessed 04/06/17). Available at: https://indieskriflig.org.za/index.php/skriflig/article/view/1818/2668.

Volf, M. (1990) 'On Loving with Hope: Eschatology and Social Responsibility', in *Transformation*, Vol. 7 (No. 3), pp. 28 – 31. JSTOR Online (Accessed 19/03/17). Available at: https://www.jstor.org/stable/43052319?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents.

Wall, S. (2006) 'An Autoethnography on Learning About Autoethnography', in The International Journal of Qualitative Methods, Vol. 5 (No. 2), pp. 146 – 160. SAGE (Accessed 04/04/16). Available at: http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/160940690600500205.

West, C. (2000) 'A Grand Tradition of Struggle', in *The English Journal*, Vol. 89 (No. 6), pp. 39 – 44. JSTOR Online (Accessed 01/12/16). Available at: https://www.jstor.org/stable/821261?origin=crossref&seq=2#metadata_info_tab_contents.

West, C. & Mendieta, E. (2017) 'What it means to be Human!' in *Critical Philosophy of Race*, Vol. 5 (No. 2), pp. 137 – 170. Project MUSE (Accessed 20/07/18). Available at: https://muse.jhu.edu/article/665089.

Weyrauch, W. (2001) *Gypsy Law: Romani Legal Traditions and Culture*. London: University of California Press.

Wilken, R. (2003) *The Spirit of Early Christian Thought*. London: Yale University Press.

Woolford, P. (1976) 'The Gypsies for Christ Movement', in *Romani Kongeri* (No. 1), pp. 1 – 4.

United Bible Societies (1981) 'Bibliosko Nevipe', in Romani Newsletter (No.1).

Wright, N. T. (2016) *The Day the Revolution Began: Rethinking the Meaning of Jesus' Resurrection*. London: SPCK.

Zimmerman, E. (2007) *Practicing the Politics of Jesus: The Origin and Significance of John Howard Yoder's Social Ethics*. Telford, PA: Cascadia Publishing House.

<u>APPENDICES</u>

The following elements have been included to support certain aspects of the thesis, most notably the field work and the subsequent observations and interviews that have taken place. For ease of identification, each element has its own subtitle which is referenced both in the *Contents* pages and the relevant part of the thesis, i.e. '*Methodology*'. This chapter is a requirement by the examining board; therefore its word count has not been included in the final and total word count for the thesis.

APPENDIX A – Ethical Clearance & Permissions

This section contains the official documentation submitted and received as part of the ethical clearance and interview process. There are certain confidential details (phone numbers, email addresses, locations of sites, etc.) that have been removed/hidden, in order that both confidentiality and data protection procedures are adhered to.

A.1 – Ethics Review Checklist

HEALTH AND SAFETY – RISK

DATE of Assessment:		ASSESSMENT NO:	
Assessed by (Name):	STEVEN HORNE	DEPARTMENT code:	
NATURE OF ACTIVITY:	INTERVIEWS	DATE OF ACTIVITY:	04–26/06/15
LOCATION:	VARIOUS	REVIEW DATE:	

Hazard	Persons at Risk	Current Control Measures	Severity (S)	Likelihood (L)	Risk Rating (S x L)	Additional Control Measures Required	Revised Risk Rating	Action Sign Off Date/ Responsible Person
In the unlikely event that information disclosed during the session indicates that a participant is at risk of / or likely to cause significant harm to themselves or to others this information would need to be passed on to the appropriate authorities.	Family members and possible others	To ensure all participants are sent a participant information sheet giving details of the study and what is expected of them, alongside a consent form. To inform the participants at the start of the interviews / meetings / conversations of the procedures in place.	1	2	Low	None		

Severity (S):				Likelihood of Harm (L):			Risk Rating: (S x L)	Risk Evaluation:	Action to follow:
Minor injury or illness	1			Very unlikely	1		1 to 4	Low / Acceptable	No further actions but ensure controls are maintained.
Moderate injury or illness	2			Unlikely	2		5 to 9	Medium / Adequate	Look to improve at next review.
"3 day injury" or illness	3			50 / 50 likelihood	3		10 to 16	Medium / Tolerable	Look to improve within specified timescale.
Major injury or illness	4			Likely	4		17 to 25	High / Unacceptable	Stop activity immediately and make appropriate improvements.
Fatality	5			Very likely / certainty	5				

For Health and Safety advice, go to www.canterbury.ac.uk/support/health.safety or contact health.safety@canterbury.ac.uk

271

Hazard	Persons at Risk	Current Control Measures	Severity (S)	Likelihood (L)	Risk Rating (S x L)	Additional Control Measures Required	Revised Risk Rating	Action Sign Off Date/ Responsible Person
Being on Gypsy and Traveller sites poses various hazards including but not-limited-to; un-familiar surroundings, loose animals (dogs, sometimes horses), potential for physical conflict and verbal abuse, hazardous areas (due to some illegal encampments).	Researcher	Relationships with most of the potential interviewees has been developed, and reassurance of site and personal safety has been verbally assured from reputable sources. Please note, the researcher is from a Traveller background, and although not immune to the potential hazards listed, is much more aware of them and thus better prepared than most. A third-party contact has been arranged by the researcher, in order to make them aware of where the researcher is at all times.	1	2	Low	None		
Confidentiality and anonymity	All participants	Confidentiality and data protection requirements will be discussed during initial meetings and before interviews. On completion of the study all data will be made anonymous (personal information will be removed) and participants will be able to choose an alias. All data will be stored securely at the researcher's premises in accordance with the data protection act 1998.	1	2	Low	None		

Severity (S):

		Likelihood of Harm	Risk Rating: (S x L)	Risk Evaluation:	Action to follow:
Minor injury or illness	1	Very unlikely 1			
Moderate injury or illness	2	Unlikely 2	1 to 4	Low / Acceptable	No further actions but ensure controls are maintained.
"3 day injury" or illness	3	50 / 50 likelihood 3	5 to 9	Medium / Adequate	Look to improve at next review.
Major injury or illness	4	Likely 4	10 to 16	Medium / Tolerable	Look to improve within specified timescale.
Fatality	5	Very likely / certainty 5	17 to 25	High / Unacceptable	Stop activity immediately and make appropriate improvements.

Likelihood of Harm (L):

For Health and Safety advice, go to www.canterbury.ac.uk/support/health.safety or contact health.safety@canterbury.ac.uk

272

Canterbury
Christ Church
University

For Research Office Use
Checklist No:
Date Received:

PROPORTIONATE ETHICAL REVIEW

ETHICS REVIEW CHECKLIST

Sections A and B of this checklist must be completed for <u>every</u> research or knowledge transfer project that involves human or animal[1] participants. These sections serve as a toolkit that will identify whether a full application for ethics approval needs to be submitted.

If the toolkit shows that there is **no need for a full ethical review**, Sections D, E and F should be completed and the checklist forwarded to the Research Governance Manager as described in Section C.

If the toolkit shows that **a full application is required**, this checklist should be set aside and an *Application for Faculty Research Ethics Committee Approval Form* - or an appropriate external application form - should be completed and submitted. **There is no need to complete both documents.**

> **Before completing this checklist, please refer to** *Ethics Policy for Research Involving Human Participants* **in the University Research Governance Handbook.**

The principal researcher/project leader (or, where the principal researcher/project leader is a student, their supervisor) is responsible for exercising appropriate professional judgement in this review.

N.B. This checklist must be completed – and any resulting follow-up action taken - before potential participants are approached to take part in any study.

Type of Project - please mark (x) as appropriate

Research	X	Knowledge Exchange	

Section A: Applicant Details

A1. Name of applicant:	STEVEN HORNE
A2. Status (please underline):	Postgraduate Student
A3. Email address:	*********************
A4. Contact address:	c/o Canterbury Christ Church University, **.

Section B: Ethics Checklist

Please answer each question by marking (X) in the appropriate box:

		Yes	No
1.	Does the study involve participants who are particularly <u>vulnerable</u> or unable to give informed consent (e.g. children, people with learning disabilities), or in unequal relationships (e.g. people in prison, your own staff or students)?		X
2.	Will the study require the co-operation of a gatekeeper for initial access to any <u>vulnerable</u> groups or individuals to be recruited (e.g. students at school, members of self-help groups, residents of nursing home)?		X
3.	Will it be necessary for participants to take part in the study without usual informed consent procedures having been implemented in advance (e.g. covert observation, certain ethnographic studies)?		X
4.	Will the study use deliberate deception (this does ***not*** include randomly assigning participants to groups in an experimental design)?		X
5.	Will the study involve discussion of, or collection of information on, topics of a sensitive nature (e.g. sexual activity, drug use) <u>personal to the participants</u>?		X
6.	Are drugs, placebos or other substances (e.g. food substances, vitamins) to be administered to human or animal participants?		X
			X

7.	Does the study involve invasive or intrusive procedures such as blood taking or muscle biopsy from human or animal participants?		
8.	Is physiological stress, pain, or more than mild discomfort to humans or animals likely to result from the study?		X
9.	Could the study induce psychological stress or anxiety or cause harm or negative consequences in humans (including the researcher) or animals beyond the risks encountered in normal life?		X
10.	Will the study involve **interaction** with animals? (If you are simply observing them - e.g. in a zoo or in their natural habitat - without having any contact at all, you can answer "No")		X
11.	Will the study involve prolonged or repetitive testing?		X
12.	Will financial inducements (other than reasonable expenses and compensation for time) be offered to participants?		X
13.	Is the study a survey that involves University-wide recruitment of students from Canterbury Christ Church University?		X
14.	Will the study involve recruitment of adult participants (aged 16 and over) who are unable to make decisions for themselves, i.e. lack capacity, and come under the jurisdiction of the Mental Capacity Act (2005)?		X
15.	Will the study involve recruitment of participants (**excluding staff**) through the **NHS**?		X
16.	Will the study involve recruitment of participants through the **Department of Social Services** of a Local Authority (e.g. Kent County Council)?		X

Now please assess outcomes and actions by referring to Section C ➲

Section C: How to Proceed

C1. If you have answered '**NO**' to *all* the questions in Section B, you should complete Sections D–F as appropriate and send the completed and signed Checklist to the Research Governance Manager

in the Research and Enterprise Development Centre for the record. **That is all you need to do. You will receive a letter confirming compliance with University Research Governance procedures.**

[*Master's students should retain copies of the form and letter; the letter should be bound into their research report or dissertation. Work that is submitted without this document will be returned un-assessed.*]

C2. If you have answered **'YES'** to *any* of the questions in Section B, you will need to describe more fully how you plan to deal with the ethical issues raised by your project. This does not mean that you cannot do the study, only that your proposal will need to be approved by a Research Ethics Committee. **Depending upon which questions you answered 'YES' to, you should proceed as follows**

(a) If you answered '**YES**' to any of *questions 1 – 12 ONLY* (i.e. not questions 13,14, 15 or 16), you will have to submit an application to your Faculty Research Ethics Committee (FREC) using your Faculty's version of the *Application for Faculty Research Ethics Committee Approval Form*. This should be submitted as directed on the form. The *Application for Faculty Research Ethics Committee Approval Form* can be obtained from the Governance and Ethics pages of the Research and Enterprise Development Centre on the University web site.

(b) If you answered '**YES**' to *question 13* you have two options:

    (i) If you answered '**YES**' to *question 13 ONLY* you must send copies of this checklist to the Student Survey Unit. Subject to their approval you may then proceed as at C1 above.

    (ii) If you answered '**YES**' to *question 13 PLUS any other of questions 1 – 12*, you must proceed as at C2(b)(i) above and then submit an application to your Faculty Research Ethics Committee (FREC) as at C2(a).

(c) If you answered '**YES**' to *question 14* you do <u>not</u> need to submit an application to your Faculty Research Ethics Committee. *INSTEAD*, you **<u>must</u>** submit an application to the appropriate external NHS or Social Care Research Ethics Committee [see C2(d) below].

(d) If you answered '**YES**' to *question 15* you do <u>not</u> need to submit an application to your Faculty Research Ethics Committee. *INSTEAD*, you must submit an application to the appropriate external NHS or Social Care Research Ethics Committee (REC), *after* your proposal has received a satisfactory Peer Review (see *Research Governance Handbook*). Applications to an NHS or Social Care REC <u>must</u> be signed by the appropriate Faculty Director of Research or other authorised Faculty signatory before they are submitted.

(e) If you answered '**YES**' to *question 16* you do <u>not</u> need to submit an application to your Faculty Research Ethics Committee. *INSTEAD*, you must submit an application to the appropriate external Local Authority REC, *after* your proposal has received a satisfactory Peer Review (see *Research Governance Handbook*). Applications to a Local Authority REC <u>must</u> be signed by the appropriate Faculty Director of Research or other authorised Faculty signatory before they are submitted.

IMPORTANT

Please note that it is your responsibility in the conduct of your study to follow the policies and procedures set out in the University's Research Governance Handbook, and any relevant academic or professional guidelines. This includes providing appropriate information sheets and consent forms, and ensuring confidentiality in the storage and use of data. Any significant change in the question, design or conduct over the course of the study should be notified to the **Faculty and/or other Research Ethics Committee** that received your original proposal. Depending on the nature of the changes, a new application for ethics approval may be required.

Section D: Project Details

D1. Project title:	TRAVELLER THEOLOGY
D2. Start date	Thursday 4th June 2015
D3. End date	Friday 26th June 2015
D4. Lay summary (max 300 words which **must** include a brief description of the methodology to be used for gathering your data)	I intend to interview people and observe 'everyday' behaviour and practices (mostly of a religious / belief-orientated nature), and take a series of photographs amongst an undefined number of individuals, primarily from two families and other people (academics, religious leaders, etc.). There is a good chance the observations will go beyond the two families and potentially beyond the 'End date'. But the bulk of the potential data will be sourced from the aforementioned families within the allotted time frame. To record the data, I will almost entirely be writing in note form. Early contact with potential interviewees suggests that no recording equipment will be permitted. The interviews will be informal in their nature, and may be impromptu – in that at times they may start through general conversation. I will be spending some time with the families separately at their own residences (***** in *************** & ********* in *****). I have also arranged to meet both families and some members of the '*Light and Life*' Church at the 2015 Appleby Horse Fayre, which takes place between 04/06/15 and 07/06/15. I will only be speaking to 'competent' adults (aged 18 upwards) and will not need special

	access or permissions, such as entering / accessing a school or being left alone with children or vulnerable adults.
	The interviews will not have any definitive questions, however, they will be structured. As Webster's Dictionary states, '[t]*he qualitative research interview seeks to describe and understand the meanings of central themes in the life world of the subjects*'. My research intends to understand the reasoning and theology behind and in Gypsy and Traveller life. As such, my themes of questioning revolve around what I will call 'stations of religious significance'. There are five stations and they are; birth, love, sin, marriage, and death (including the afterlife).
	(*299 words).

Section E1: For Students Only

E1. Module name and number or course and Department:	PhD – Theology. Religious Studies & Theology (School of Humanities).
E2. Name of Supervisor or module leader	Ivan Khovacs (Revd. Dr)
E3. Email address of Supervisor or Module leader	***********@canterbury.ac.uk
E4. Contact address:	c/o Canterbury Christ Church University.

Section E2: For Supervisors

Please tick the appropriate boxes. The study should not begin until all boxes are ticked:

The student has read the relevant sections of the University's Research Governance Handbook, available on the University web pages at: http://www.canterbury.ac.uk/centres/red/ethics-governance/governance-and-ethics.asp	X
The topic merits further investigation	X
The student has the skills to carry out the study	X
The participant information sheet or leaflet is appropriate	X
The procedures for recruitment and obtaining informed consent are appropriate	X
If a Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) check is required, this has been carried out	X

Comments from supervisor:

This is a central component of the research project, and one which was discussed in detail at the last panel review. We therefore support in principle the research value and methods subject to the proportionate ethical review.

Section F: Signatures

- I certify that the information in this form is accurate to the best of my knowledge and belief and I take full responsibility for it.
- I certify that a risk assessment for this study has been carried out in compliance with the University's Health and Safety policy.
- I certify that any required Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) check has been carried out.
- I undertake to carry out this project under the terms specified in the Canterbury Christ Church University Research Governance Handbook.
- I undertake to inform the relevant Faculty Research Ethics Committee of any significant change in the question, design or conduct of the study over the course of the study. I understand that such changes may require a new application for ethics approval.
- I undertake to inform the Research Governance Manager in the Research and Enterprise Development Centre when the proposed study has been completed.

- I am aware of my responsibility to comply with the requirements of the law and appropriate University guidelines relating to the security and confidentiality of participant or other personal data.

- I understand that project records/data may be subject to inspection for audit purposes if required in future and that project records should be kept securely for five years or other specified period.

- I understand that the personal data about me contained in this application will be held by the Research and Enterprise Development Centre and that this will be managed according to the principles established in the Data Protection Act.

As the Principal Investigator for this study, I confirm that this application has been shared with all other members of the study team	√

Principal Investigator	Supervisor or module leader (as appropriate)
Name: Steven Horne Date: 12/05/15	Name: Ivan Khovacs Date: 12/05/15

Section G: Submission

This form should be returned, as an attachment to a covering email, to the Research Governance Manager at **********@canterbury.ac.uk

N.B. YOU MUST include copies of the Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form that you will be using in your study (Model versions on which to base these are appended below for your convenience). Also copies of any data gathering tools such as questionnaires, and a COMPLETED RISK ASSESSMENT FORM.

Providing the covering email is from a verifiable address, there is no longer a need to submit a signed hard copy version.

** END OF ETHICS REVIEWS CHECKLIST **

CONSENT FORM

Title of Project: TRAVELLER THEOLOGY

Name of Researcher: STEVEN HORNE

Contact details:

Address:	C/O Canterbury Christ Church University, Graduate School, North Holmes Road, Canterbury, Kent. CT1 1QU.

Tel:	***** ******

Email:	**********@canterbury.ac.uk

Please initial box

1.	I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.	
2.	I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason.	
3.	I understand that any personal information that I provide to the researchers will be kept strictly confidential.	

4.	I give full permission for any photos that are taken, to be used for the above study and any other use that the researcher (Steven Horne) sees as acceptable, including but not limited to presentations, seminars, books, journals, media and the press.	
5.	I agree to take part in the above study.	

_____   _____   _____

Name of Participant   Date   Signature

_____   _____   _____

Name of Person taking consent   Date   Signature

(if different from researcher)

_____   _____   _____

Researcher   Date   Signature

Copies: 1 for participant

               1 for researcher

** END OF CONSENT FORM **

TRAVELLER THEOLOGY

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

A research study is being conducted at Canterbury Christ Church University (CCCU) by Steven Horne.

Background

Hello, my name is Steven. I am doing some research about Christianity, beliefs and superstitions in Gypsy and Traveller communities in the UK. I would like to get some important information that I hope one day would help other Gypsies and Travellers talk more about what they believe and why. This could help the Gypsy and Traveller communities to be stronger, and be able to get better treatment by Country folk and Gorgers.

The information that I collect might be written in the book I am writing for my University. This is called a thesis, and will have the title, '*Traveller Theology*'. The book will talk about 'What I Think God is Saying and Doing through Travellers'. In the future, the same information might be in other books or magazines, called journals. It might also be on TV and the radio, in the papers, or maybe at big meetings with other people from Universities. That means that lots of people will get to hear about how special the Traveller and Gypsy communities really are.

It's very important that you know that anything you tell me or show me will never reveal your name or exactly where you live. I will do my very best to make sure that no one will ever know what you told me came from you.

What will you be required to do?

Participants in this study will be required to give some interviews. These interviews will probably seem like normal every-day chats.

The only thing I ask is that you give your own opinion and not somebody else's: what you have to say is important and valued.

I also need you to keep our conversation confidential. You must not tell anyone else (that might be interviewed) what you said. Otherwise it might influence what they say.

To participate in this research you must:

- **You must be 18 years old or over.**
- You must not be drunk or under the influence of drugs / strong medication (that affect the way you think).
- You must normally identify yourself as a Gypsy, Traveller or Roma. You may also consider yourself as 'half-Gypsy' (Didicoy / Didikais) – this is fine.

Procedures

You will be asked to have some formal and informal conversations. In some instances you may be asked if a photo can be taken – either of yourself or something in your home perhaps. You can refuse any photos at any stage, and this will not stop you taking part in the rest of the study.

Confidentiality

All data and personal information will be stored securely within CCCU premises in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and the University's own data protection requirements. Data can only be accessed by myself the researcher – Steven Horne. After completion of the study, all data will be made anonymous (i.e. all personal information associated with the data will be removed).

Dissemination of results

The results of this study may be added, in part or in full, to the final thesis that is being made by the researcher. The results may be entered word-for-word, just as you would have said them, or they may be interpreted in a way that is reflective of the nature of the thesis.

Results may also be used in other studies or presentations by the researcher, such as conferences, journals, books or media.

Deciding whether to participate

If you have any questions or concerns about the nature, procedures or requirements for participation do not hesitate to contact me. Should you decide to participate, you will be free to withdraw at any time without having to give a reason.

Any questions?

Please contact Steven Horne on ***** ****** or *********@canterbury.ac.uk. For mailing, send letters to: Canterbury Christ Church University, Graduate School, North Holmes Road, Canterbury, Kent. CT1 1QU.

** END OF PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET **

A.4 – Confirmation of Ethics Compliance letter

Canterbury
Christ Church
University

26 May 2015   Ref: 15/A&H/125C

Mr Steven Horne c/o School
of Humanities Faculty of
Arts and Humanities

Dear Steven

Confirmation of ethics compliance for your study *"Traveller Theology."*

I have received an Ethics Review Checklist and appropriate supporting documentation for proportionate review of the above project. I confirm that no further ethical review will be required under the terms of this University's Research Ethics and Governance Procedures.

In confirming compliance for your study, I must remind you that it is your responsibility to follow, as appropriate, the policies and procedures set out in the *Research Governance Handbook* (http://www.canterbury.ac.uk/centres/red/ethics-governance/governance-and-ethics.asp) and any relevant academic or professional guidelines. This includes providing, if appropriate, information sheets and consent forms, and ensuring confidentiality in the storage and use of data. Any significant change in the question, design or conduct of the study over its course should be notified to the **Research Office**, and may require a new application for ethics approval. It is a condition of compliance that you **must** inform me once your research has been completed.

Wishing you every success with your research.

Yours sincerely

***** ****
Research Governance Manager
Tel: +44 (*)**** ****** ext ****

Email: **********@canterbury.ac.uk

cc: Dr Ivan Khovacs

Research Office

Research and Enterprise Development Centre

Canterbury Christ Church University

North Holmes Campus, Canterbury, Kent, CT1 1QU Tel +44 (0)1227 767700   Fax +44 (0)1227 470442 www.canterbury.ac.uk

Professor Rama Thirunamachandran, Vice Chancellor and Principal

Registered Company No: 4793659

  A Company limited by guarantee

Registered Charity No: 1098136

** END OF ETHICS COMPLIANCE LETTER **

APPENDIX B – Thematic Analysis: Further documents

This section contains both the 'Tree Map' and the 'Code Summary Report', as mentioned in the Methodology Chapter (Section 1.4.1.2). The Code Summary Report is an extension of the Code Structure report, albeit with further insights and breakdowns of the data in each node. Please note that the Tree Map contains the same words as the Word Cloud in the aforementioned chapter and section.

B.1 – Tree Map

jesus								
love								
church	god		community					
father	tradition		grace		identity			
king	died	everyone	everything	forgiven	forgives			
	funerals	hell	holy	hope	lord			
bonds	gods	peace	save	saved	security			
ceremonies	gypsies	protection	sin	togetherness	travellers			
christ		religion	spirit	values	weddings			
culture	happiness							

Code Summary

TRAVELLER THEOLOGY

File Type		Number of Files	Number of Coding References	Number of Words Coded	Number of Paragraphs Coded	Duration Coded
Node						

Nickname: Nodes\\datasets raw data

Classification:

Aggregated: No

		0	0			

Nickname: Nodes\\datasets raw data\\Religious Status

Classification:

Aggregated: No

Dataset		1	1			

Nickname: Nodes\\datasets raw data\\What does Religion mean for GRT people

Classification:

Aggregated: No

Dataset		1	1			

Nickname: Nodes\\datasets raw data\Religious Status

Classification:

Aggregated: No

Dataset		1	1			

File Type	Number of Files	Number of Coding References	Number of Words Coded	Number of Paragraphs Coded	Duration Coded
Nickname:	**Nodes\\datasets raw data\What does Religion mean for GRT people**				
Classification:					
Aggregated:	**No**				
Dataset	1	1			
Nickname:	**Nodes\\Ethnicity and Race**				
Classification:					
Aggregated:	**No**				
PDF	9	215	70,877	1,748	
Nickname:	**Nodes\\Five Stations**				
Classification:					
Aggregated:	**No**				
Dataset	1	6	24	6	
PDF	8	209	70,498	1,741	
Nickname:	**Nodes\\Five Stations\Birth**				
Classification:					
Aggregated:	**No**				
PDF	2	4	128	4	
Nickname:	**Nodes\\Five Stations\Death**				
Classification:					
Aggregated:	**No**				
Dataset	1	2	5	2	
PDF	1	26	1,523	26	

File Type		Number of Files	Number of Coding References	Number of Words Coded	Number of Paragraphs Coded	Duration Coded
Nickname:	**Nodes\\Five Stations\Family**					
Classification:						
Aggregated:	**No**					
Dataset		1	1	3	1	
PDF		2	16	1,109	16	

File Type		Number of Files	Number of Coding References	Number of Words Coded	Number of Paragraphs Coded	Duration Coded
Nickname:	**Nodes\\Five Stations\Marriage**					
Classification:						
Aggregated:	**No**					
Dataset		1	1	3	1	
PDF		2	5	599	6	

File Type		Number of Files	Number of Coding References	Number of Words Coded	Number of Paragraphs Coded	Duration Coded
Nickname:	**Nodes\\Five Stations\Sin**					
Classification:						
Aggregated:	**No**					
Dataset		1	2	9	2	
PDF		1	8	572	8	

File Type		Number of Files	Number of Coding References	Number of Words Coded	Number of Paragraphs Coded	Duration Coded
Nickname:	**Nodes\\Geography of Gypsies and Travellers**					
Classification:						
Aggregated:	**No**					
PDF		10	217	70,844	1,749	

File Type		Number of Files	Number of Coding References	Number of Words Coded	Number of Paragraphs Coded	Duration Coded
Nickname:	**Nodes\\Media representation and coverage**					
Classification:						
Aggregated:	**No**					
PDF		10	219	71,026	1,751	

File Type	Number of Files	Number of Coding References	Number of Words Coded	Number of Paragraphs Coded	Duration Coded
Nickname:	**Nodes\\Personal Accounts from interviews and excerpts**				
Classification:					
Aggregated:	**No**				
PDF	9	216	78,221	1,772	
Nickname:	**Nodes\\Theology articles**				
Classification:					
Aggregated:	**No**				
PDF	8	209	70,498	1,741	
Nickname:	**Nodes\\Theology articles\Sacraments**				
Classification:					
Aggregated:	**No**				
PDF	1	22	1,261	22	
Nickname:	**Nodes\\Traveller activity and behaviours**				
Classification:					
Aggregated:	**No**				
Dataset	1	10	26	10	
PDF	9	213	70,672	1,745	
Nickname:	**Nodes\\Traveller activity and behaviours\Criminality and sin**				
Classification:					
Aggregated:	**No**				
Dataset	1	4	11	4	
PDF	1	9	797	9	

File Type		Number of Files	Number of Coding References	Number of Words Coded	Number of Paragraphs Coded	Duration Coded
Nickname:	Nodes\\Traveller activity and behaviours\Education					
Classification:						
Aggregated:	**No**					
Dataset		1	1	5	1	
PDF		2	4	192	4	

Nickname:	Nodes\\Traveller activity and behaviours\Horse dealing and fairs					
Classification:						
Aggregated:	**No**					
PDF		1	3	141	3	

Nickname:	Nodes\\Traveller activity and behaviours\Nomadicy					
Classification:						
Aggregated:	**No**					
Dataset		1	1	1	1	
PDF		1	2	126	3	

Nickname:	Nodes\\Traveller activity and behaviours\Story telling and Camp life					
Classification:						
Aggregated:	**No**					
Dataset		1	3	13	3	
PDF		2	13	774	13	

File Type		Number of Files	Number of Coding References	Number of Words Coded	Number of Paragraphs Coded	Duration Coded
Nickname:	Nodes\\Traveller activity and behaviours\Work and Employment					
Classification:						
Aggregated:	**No**					
PDF		1	5	237	5	

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY BLANK