

A radical alteration of thinking is needed, and certainly television programs and educational programs can go a long way towards this. For Romani activists, it is essential to be able to guard against and counteract images which promote stereotypes of the Romani population. Stepped-up police prevention of racially motivated is necessary, and this will be a difficult task, given the antagonistic history of Roma with the police, and the distrust and misapprehension on both sides. The hopes of the Roma lie in their future, in being able to communicate with the *gadje*, and the *gadje* in turn must listen with a willing ear.

1995-1996 Update

As 1996 begins to unravel, it is clear that Roma in Hungary still face severe discrimination on a daily basis. Substantiated reports of violence against Roma in villages as well as skinhead attacks in the cities continue. Istvan Tauber of Budapest University found in his doctoral research that almost 40% of nearly 800 Hungarians interviewed favored some sort of discrimination against Roma. 2.7% of this number actually favored the physical liquidation of Roma (reported in Dutch publication, O Drom).

Concerning unemployment, research conducted by Kertesi Gabor of the Hungarian Academy of Economics reveals that the average unemployed Rom is 10 times more likely to search for a job than his Hungarian counterpart! Certainly, this suggests a significant level of labor discrimination persistent in Hungary. Mr Kertesi suggests affirmative action in the form of tax breaks for companies in exchange for hiring more Roma, and a strengthening of anti-discrimination provision in Hungarian labour law.

In April of 1995, the first ever Romani Minority Council elections took place in Szolnok, where Lungo Drom, a political movement/organization emerged victorious. Despite charges of electoral fraud by its main opposition by opposition party Phralipe, the leader of Lungo Drom, Farkas Florian continues to head the new Romani Minority Council.

The Politics and Poetics of Folklore Discourse

*The Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society, 1937-1947**

Susan Lepselter

Introduction

This article, an initial exploration into folklore discourse about Gypsies, seeks to address two separate but related questions. On one level, I begin to ask how the discipline of Folklore has historically worked within the larger cultural dialogue which has constructed an essentialist notion of "Gypsies". I have chosen to examine a finite moment in the academic folklore literature: *The Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society* from 1937 to 1947.

In the years surrounding and during the holocaust, I wondered, how did the Society discuss the fatally persecuted objects of their study? What was the position of professional "Gypologists" regarding the tragedy of the Roma during the War years? Did the Folklore literature seek to *protest* the fate of the Roma -- to offer a politically engaged, indisputably alternate voice against the tide of pernicious stereotypes -- or was Folklore, even at its most sympathetic, simply a small part of an overall hegemony whose extreme forms allowed for genocide?

My second question regards a larger consideration of hegemony as it is articulated in analyses of the Roma. My exploration of JGLS will lead to broader speculations on the play of nostalgia in the general construction of "Gypsies". I want to unpack and problematize nostalgia, asking why an elite intellectual class engages in this Janus-faced practice. How does the marginal nature of Romani life in the West play into folkloristic nostalgia? And how is the essentialized description of Gypsy "wandering" related to such nostalgia?

At this point, I want to be clear that I am not attempting to document the material, historical explanations for actual Romani circumstances. I assume, as a starting point, that centuries of oppression, persecution and slavery were *a priori* social conditions that made certain practices, such as small thievery necessary to survival, in a real, material way. In addition, I assume that such practices were greatly overemphasized by the *gadze*, whose imaginations were less compelled by Gypsies who worked legally. But why, I want to ask, is this

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so? For the purposes of this paper, I focus upon the symbolic value of these practices within a gadzo discourse on Gypsies. As such, this paper views such practices among Roma in light of symbolic political resistance among the oppressed -- that is, as lived counter-discourses by which the disenfranchised may thwart the homogenizing impulses of hegemony.

Recent culture theory has looked at practices of domination in its symbolic as well as its very real material terms; indeed, "it is never possible simply to pry apart the cultural from the material in such processes" (Comaroff and Comaroff 1991 : 4). Hegemony is the process by which dominant culture "convinces" its subjects that the prevailing order is natural and good. It is articulated in subtle forms, including, perhaps, the well-intended discourse of those within the ruling classes who, while sincerely believing in their own benevolence towards "the other," are nonetheless constrained and limited by dominant discourse.

This is so because, as Raymond Williams puts it, hegemonic practices "effect a saturation of the whole process of living." They extend past overt violence to "a lived system of meanings and values" beyond which it "is very difficult for most members of the society to move" (Williams 1977 : 110).

I suggest that (at least in the years I consider) *The Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society*, like most other cultural forms, was "saturated" by the "lived system of meanings and values" which articulates hegemony. As such, it failed to speak out for the Roma during these crucial years.

"Gypsy Lore"

From 1937 until 1943, no mention is made in *The Journal of Gypsy Lore Society* of the extermination or systematic persecution of Gypsies. In 1937, for instance, the year after establishment of the International Center for the Fight Against the Gypsy Menace, JGLS included articles on such diverse and neutral topics as Welsh and New York Gypsy life, Hungarian Gypsy fiddlers, linguistic work on Spanish Gypsy dialect and Polish Romani vocabulary. There was a tendency towards the biographical genre -- portraits of "colorful Gypsy lives". In addition, *throughout* this ten-year span there seems to be a high premium placed on proving, to other non-Gypsies, that one's authority came from actually living with the knowing Gypsy "friends".

Why would professional "Gypsologists", as they often called themselves, produce an essentially apolitical journal at such a crucial moment in the lives of their subjects? While ignorance of Nazi plans is an immediate answer, many

of these writers were European, even German, living among the increasing chaos of the period and surrounded by the incremental strictures placed upon "Asocials". Yet the tenor of the Journals remains thoroughly placid, academic and romantic, far into the period when Gypsies began being exterminated *en masse*. How can we begin to understand such gentlemanly ignomance among those who were in the best position to know, and to critique?

In part, the JGLS was modeled on specific discursive structures, both within folklore and beyond it, which were already firmly established in intellectual forums. The attitudes towards Gypsies had long been marked by tropes so entrenched as to seem "natural" -- ways of seeing which created a tendency to veer away from the *alternatives* always posed by political critique. In the following passages, I want to explore ways in which the Journal's overall analytic structures *inhibit* the development of academic expressions of outrage or activism. These structures go well beyond Germany and even Europe; they are the bedrock of the overall Gypsy-folklore dialogue. I will therefore explore discussion of Gypsy social conditions in both Europe and North America, as they appear in the JGLS.

First of all, despite their ignomance of Nazi persecution, writers in the Journal are clearly aware of the generally difficult social conditions of their subjects. These writers consider themselves champions and connoisseurs of Gypsy culture, and often call themselves "friends". Many do assert the reality of Gypsy lives, and some do point out the crippling effects of Gadže racism. In a detailed ethnographic exploration of Albanian Gypsies in 1938, for instance, Margaret Hasluck argues that "their own traditions and the pride and prejudice of the Gadže have left no other occupations [other than unpleasant, manual labor] open to the Gypsies of Albania" (JGLS 1938 : vol. XVII, 30). But not until the war is over do a very few writers mention the systematic persecution or final fate of the Gypsies.

As a rule, the Journal in these ten years leaves little space for politically acute analysis because the difficult relationship between the Roma and state officials around the world is "folklorized" -- that is, represented as a permanent feature of *Gypsy Culture*, rather than as a complex dialectic between the powerful and powerless. For instance, an article entitled "A Gypsy Sunday in New York", by George B. Oujevolk, regards Sunday as a culturally salient day for Gypsies because :

Sunday is the one day of the week that the Gypsy really enjoys more than any other day. I doubt that there is any Gypsy who clearly

understands the full meaning of the Sabbath. However, probably because of the fact that he is least annoyed by the officers of the law on that day, or probably because on that particular day the labouring classes are not at work and therefore come to the Gypsy women to have their fortunes told, the Gypsy has realized that Sunday is a day for holidays and festivals..." (JGLS 1937 : vol. XVI, 6).

Besides the more overt paternalism in the wording of this passage ("I doubt that any Gypsy understands the full meaning of the Sabbath", which suggests that Gypsies are either heathens or children), more covertly damaging is the author's matter-of-fact acceptance of tensions between Gypsies and police. The assertion that Gypsies enjoy Sunday because on that day they are "least annoyed by the officers of the law" in effect naturalizes the "annoyance" that regularly occurs. The author treats the harassment as an essentializing feature of Gypsy culture, not as a politically significant relationship with historical and economic vectors.

Similarly well intentioned is "Lazy Smith in Egglestone's Note-Book", which describes the portrait of an elderly Welsh "Romano Rai" whose

deep set grey eyes had that rather wild look not uncommonly to be found in the Gypsies of mixed stock, and this peculiarity did not belie his character, for he was 'queer' and at times unbalanced. At our first meeting his hand-shake was made with a flourish as through to seal a bargain, and his right hand... was permanently contracted by reason of damaged sinews; this, he explained, had been caused by his own refusal to allow an unbroken colt to beat him. Since then I have shamefully wondered if the injury might not have been an example of Gypsy self-mutilation to avoid military service and evade the press-gang... during differences [with his daughter Alice] Lazy would jump wildly from one grievance to another, then end by giving vent to that blind racial hatred of the gajo from which probably no Gypsy is entirely free" (JGLS 1937 : vol. XVI, 2).

There is clearly much that merits discussion here -- from the pure speculation of Smith's draft evasion to the fear of miscegenation, expressed in Myers' assumption that intermarriage between Gypsies and non-Gypsies produces "queer" offspring. However, of importance to our discussion is the portrayal of Smith's "blind racial hatred of the gajo." Myers neutralizes Romani expressions of political anger by first, stressing Smith's "unbalanced" personality -- suggesting that he is "naturally" angry -- and second, by treating "racial hatred" as an essential feature of "Gypsiness" rather than as a serious response to specific social conditions, one which would therefore require real attention. Much like the "flashing eyes" which also form a recurring image in JGLS prose, Romani anger is presented as a static cultural trait, not as a dynamic reaction to

specific injustices. There is no room for either Romani or non-Romani anger or critique.

While the articles above discussed Gypsy life in relatively benevolent countries, the 1938 and 1939 Journals also includes articles on "Gypsy Life in central Germany." The first reveals a sincere sympathy with the Gypsies. However, although the author, Hanns Welzel, discusses the economic hardships of "the Sinti," his text offers no hint in the article of any systematic persecution - even though he was writing during the year when the Final Solution went into effect. Here is Welzel's overall portrayal of Gypsies as "happy" people :

in spite of their burdens... [they] are gay creatures who display all the splendid qualities of a people living in a state of nature... no cares make them doubt the value of simplicity in their lives -- if they can smoke their clay pipes. They ask for nothing else in the world" (JGLS 1938 : vol. XVII, 33).

While still romantic and essentializing, Welzel's portrayal of Gypsies as "affectionate" and "normal" does constitute a direct countervoice to the prevailing rhetoric of Nazi Germany. Even when Welzel asserts that the Gypsies are like "children", he is voicing opposition to

the great misunderstanding [which] renders the life of the Gypsies very difficult : viz. the imputation that they are an inferior class of human beings (*ibid.*).

He goes on to say :

The Gypsy is the very reverse of a criminal or a human wild beast... he is a big child... It is also an erroneous idea that the Gypsy feels himself attracted by the malefactors of the towns, or that he mixes with them. On the contrary, he is the first to avoid a bad *Gatschu*, for he recognizes by instinct the character of a person. It would be, therefore, much to be regretted if... the Sinti... were made to settle in the large towns, where at best they would be cheated or corrupted by the lower classess... (*ibid.*).

However, despite his good intentions, Hanns Welzel is unable to see the reality of the Gypsy's situation, and his stab at opposition to the dominant rhetoric is severely weakened. Unable to see the fatal events unfolding before his eyes, he ends with on this chillingly ironic note of optimism :

The existence of such conditions [ie, the movement of Gypsies to cities] is luckily being brought to an end by the present German Government.

Throughout the war years, JGLS never acknowledges the situation in

Europe; in tenor it remained a repository of neutral gentility, as it somehow untouched by the chaos of world events. From 1941-1943, the only hints that the world was in upheaval were: firstly, the decreasing bulk of the Journal; and secondly, its contents were suddenly dominated by studies of British, rather than continental, Roma. During these years, the only discussion of continental European Roma are non-ethnographic collections of vocabulary and folk-tales from Bosnia and Serbia.

In 1944, however, there are some subtle changes in the Journal. In previous issues, the perspective of Romani was largely filtered through collected tales and letters; these were presented as collected folklore items which were categorically separate from the analysis that surrounded them. While the overall tenor of articles remained unchanged, the 1944 JGLS includes articles written by -- not just "collected" from -- Roma, including 17 year old Antonin Daniel, a "Gypsy youth" from South Moravia. The editor, Gypsologist Stuart E. Mann, calls him a "Collaborator", not just an informant, who was helping in an unfinished translation project. Although published in the 1944 JGLS, Daniel's piece was written in 1933; it is unclear what became of the youth. His piece, a vivid portrait of his own life in a Moravian Romani village, asks,

Why do the gentiles regard [the Roma] so evilly? Are they not people like themselves? We could ask ourselves many and many a question as to why they are so much behind the gentiles. Rather let us turn back two hundred years and see what has happened to them since then. We know they came from Hither India... (JGLS 1944: vol. XXIII, 73).

Although Daniel does not know much more about the history of the Roma, his article represents one of the rare impulses to contextualize and historicize Romani social conditions. And in following years, more analyses by Roma are represented in the pages of the Journal; for instance, Mateo Maximoff presented articles through 1947, and -- although he himself did not write the article -- the ideas of Steve Kaslov are faithfully relayed (1945 vol. XXIV).

In addition, in direct acknowledgement of the Romani Holocaust, 1947's Journal included an article by Jan Molitor on "The Fate of a German Gypsy". Molitor records his conversation with an old Rom:

'Have you intercourse with many Gypsies?' 'No, that was so once. But most of the Gypsies I knew are dead: gassed, burnt, lost' (JGLS 1947 vol. XXVI, 49).'

In fact, it seems to be the genocidal losses which, ironically enough,

create the space for new voices and interpretations in the Journal. After the Holocaust, the Gypsies are remembered as an emblem of a wholeness, representing a vanished Europe from a more innocent time. As such, the Gypsy voice is suddenly valued in a new way; it becomes the nostalgic heart of a lost world:

As I sit down at my desk I am overwhelmed by nostalgia for the Hungary I knew. I remember, as in a dream, the bright lights along the Danube, the wide expanses of the puszta, the charm of little villages... and the ever-present, ever-insistent music of the Gypsy violins. We do not know how much of the beauty of old Hungary remains... (JGLS 1947: Vol XXVI, 42).

Nostalgia

But Gadže nostalgia regarding the Roma did not arise with the end of the war. Nostalgia over the disappearance of Gypsies, however deeply felt, was related to older forms of nostalgia which had long predated it.

Nostalgia is a key trope in the JGLS entries both before and after the war. In the years before 1944, this nostalgia is largely articulated as a general romantic construction of the wandering, carefree "tribe" free of civilization's constraints.

Gypsies were seen as part of "the past" both historically (cf. Hancock 1987) and biologically. That is, when Welzel termed the Gypsy "a big child", he drew upon the common romantic metaphor which conflated "childhood" with "the primitive" as lost stages in the life of "mature" and "civilized" man. Similarly, in a 1942 article on "the art of communication among the Gypsies," F.H. Arnold asserted that

it... involves more than the actual matter of communication: it raises the question as to what powers man has lost in his progress towards civilization, and how far the Gypsies may be regarded as possessing the powers once common to all man" (1942: XX I, p. 18).

Thus the Gypsy is not entirely foreign; he is constructed as the vestigial remnant of the civilized self, an embryonic form still buried within the post-lapsarian "adult" culture.

In regarding the Gypsy as their own "inner child" these folklorists were continuing a romantic literary tradition whose roots extend into the 18th century. For example, emblems of pastoral nostalgia for life before the industrial revolution, when man was un-self conscious and lived in harmony with "nature", abounded in works of Romantic influentials like Wordsworth, who, while

idealizing the language of "the common man", implicitly asserted that (English) rustic speech was "incomplete" until it was framed, published or otherwise articulated (ie. appropriated) by a literate elite.

And the oral articulations of Gypsies were similarly regarded. In the 1937 article on "Sundays" among New York Gypsies, for example, the writer includes the texts of several songs. Although the songs express a range of feelings, not just the "joyful" mood he ascribes to all Gypsies on all Sundays, the author does not let the complex, perhaps sorrowful lyrics' cramp his analysis. He makes no mention of the lyrical mood, but ends with the following exchange between a Gypsy and himself:

'Pete, I sad... I must have the worlds to those two songs'... 'Very well,' he agreed... So, feeling content that at last I would be able to record some complete Romani Songs, I continued enjoying the party with the rest of the Gypsies" (1937:8).

The complex tenor of Romani life, artistically expressed in the lyrics he is permitted to record, are obscured by both the author's *a priori* notion of "joyful" Gypsiness -- and by his own delight in managing to affix the fleeting words.

A similar, but more disturbing appropriation appears in John Myers' article on Lazy Smith:

Among [Smith's] many obsessions was the belief that people were exploiting his knowledge and experience in order to make money. Thus, when Scott Macfie sent him a copy of his 'own book', *Incidents in a Gypsy Life*...he... went to a Newport lawyer to 'have the law agen us both'. The solicitor kindly informed me of the facts and afterwards procrastinated so successfully that in time the fires of Lazy's wrath died down and I was again admittd to his friendship..." (JGLS 1937 : vol. XVI p. 5).

Here, Smith's anger at being "exploited" by the appropriation of his life's experiences by Myers and Macfie is regarded as completely unproblematic -- a childish Gypsy whim. Like Oujevolk in the preceding New York fragment, who

These are the lyrics to one of the songs : The guitars play/All night I did not sleep./Oh what a great pain I have/Oh what a great pain I have/In my head, in my head !/Where am I to go ! Along the high road ? Oh that I might go/To my old mother !/May I perish, may I die !/For in God's name I have nowhere to go. It is difficult to interpret the mood without more context; one could possibly read this as either a sardonic day-after-drinking song, or else an expression of longing. The point is that the author makes no attempt to understand the song's meaning to his Romani hosts; he simply decides it is carefree, like all Gypsy Sunday things.

overtly glorifies in possessing the fleeting Gypsy songs, Myers considers the details of Smith's life to be a free collector's item, fodder for his own academic and material success. Most poignant in this episode is Smith's attempt to work within legal channels to secure some revenue or credit from the book. Not surprisingly, the white solicitor is not interested in the rights of his Gypsy client; he betrays his legal trust by informing Myers "of the facts", then "procrastinates" until Smith drops the case. Smith's whimsical nature is proved, here, by his attempt at penetrating the exclusive club of legal discourse. Myers takes no responsibility for Smith's anger; it is in all sincerity that he regards himself "a friend".

Nostalgia, then, which placed the Roma outside of time and progress, also pushed them to the margins of social life, past the "natural" rights of citizens.

Incorporating the other

The Gypsy, then, was seen both as the "heart" of Europe and radically "other" to it. Just as Gypsy words were appropriated and incorporated into the Journal and other academic forums, the construction of "the Gypsy" was incorporated into the identity of the European. As Edward Said has written, "European culture gained in strength and identity by setting itself against the Orient as a sort of... underground self" (Said 1979; quoted in Stallybrass and White 1985.) In an ironically unintentional mirror of the Romani distinction between pure "top" and impure "bottom" regarding the body, an elite European "top" regarded its "underground self" with both desire and fear: "The 'top' attempts to reject and eliminate 'the bottom' for reasons of prestige and status, only to discover that it is in some way frequently dependent upon that low other... the top includes the low symbolically, as a primary eroticized constituent of its own fantasy life" (Stallybrass and White 1985 : 1). As "low other", the Gypsy was to do such menial work as sewer maintenance and street sweeping -- activities thought to belong to the bodily and social realm of "the low".

The Gypsy is also the forbidden, underground sexual aspect sublimated by the elite. Here is a description of "A True Gypsy" apparently dancing Flamenco, although the writer describing her clearly has other things in mind:

She pauses. Her back aches. Her torso expands upward out of her hips... her face welled with frowns, her hips eddying. Suddenly she cries out (JGLS 1945 : Vol. XXIII. 69).

But Gadže desires extends beyond the sexual realm. One writer, who

presents himself as "the adopted son of a Gypsy Chief", tells of his almost primal longing to run off with the Gypsies, stoked by his innate feelings of "homesickness" for a land he has never visited and his preoccupation with "an imaginary world":

I was perhaps six years old when for the first time I heard somebody speak about the gitanos... I perceived oriental princesses draped in riches and colour. They were covered with jewels precious and rare. I closed my eyes, my heart beating..." (JGLS 1945: vol. XXIV p. 9).

Such longing articulate what Stallybrass and White call "a psychological dependence upon precisely those others which are being rigorously opposed and excluded at the social level. The low other is despised and denied at the level of political organization and social being whilst it is instrumentally constitutive of the shared imaginary repertoires of the dominant culture" (Stallybrass and White 1985: 5-6).

From this paradoxical position, central to the elite imagination yet marginal to its social and political life, oppressed groups acquire the irrational status of taboo objects. Mary Douglas has written that "the idea of society is a powerful image... it has external boundaries, margins... There is energy in the margins and unstructured areas" (1967: 114) The "margins" of culture are seen as irrationally dangerous, charged with "energy" that cannot be channelled into the structured center. And the Roma, who occupied the margins of society, were socially dangerous in part because of their marginality. This marginality was perpetuated by the dominant imagination; a center cannot exist without a margin to frame it.

At the same time, I believe, Gypsies were seen as doubly dangerous because gadže perceived them as *proud* to occupy their marginal realm. The idea that the margins of society could sustain contented life threatened social assumptions which for the most part remain unquestioned.

Tactics

In other words, Romani cultural practices seemed to threaten the what Bourdieu has called the "doxa" of European social structure: that is, those taken-for-granted structures so thoroughly embedded in social life that they are commonly regarded as "Natural". These structures, while dominated by hegemonic interests, are never completely stable; they are always at risk of deconstruction from oppressed peoples, who might, at any moment, construct alternate social forms.

"The relativity of any hegemony", as Raymond Williams has written, "is that while by definition it is always dominant, it is never either total or exclusive... oppositional culture exists as significant elements in the society" (1977: 113). In other words, the lived practices from what Douglas calls society's "margins", and what Stallybrass and White call its "bottom", appear "unconvinced" by the ruling discourse. Even when they are silent, then, the margins "talk back" to the central elite through practices.²

One way that the Roma threatened dominant structures was through *travelling*. I suggest this because the accepted, nonthreatening European image of the "low other" is traditionally the peasant -- the economically oppressed, equally folklorized emblem of society's bottom half. The key romantic image of peasantry is sedentary life; the peasant remains in one place, tilling the soil in an image of pastoral tranquility. But the Gypsy (like the Jew) "wandered"

At this point, I want to be clear that there were historical reasons for Romani movement, including the history of being driven away, and of disenfranchisement from land on which they were forced to reside. Nor do I mean to suggest that Roma today are in fact normally mobile -- or that, even at the time of JGLS, all of them were. Rather, I am interested, here, in the symbolic values that Gypsy movement came to embody. Why for instance, was "nomadism" so symbolically charged for sedentary Europeans? Why was it recognized as a symbol of rebellion by non-Gypsies, who used it (often foolishly, from the Romani perspective) to resist their own culture on a fundamental level?

The refusal of the oppressed to "stay put" has often confounded the elite imagination; for example, Native Americans, who similarly defined the image of the European peasant "other", were placed on reservations and made to till infertile land, partially in order to fulfill that peasant image (Kehoe 1977: 15). And like Native Americans⁴, the Gypsy's movement through space created a felt rupture that filled in with a rush of loss and desire for the Gadže who were

²Although I cannot go into a detailed analysis here, practices of small theft and of mysticism, including fortune-telling, may be considered oppositional tactics. Both construct alternative structures which threaten the dominant order. In the case of theft, hierarchies of power are symbolically overturned; in the case of fortune-telling, the dominant, rational epistemology is questioned by the "believer" or "customer".

³Some articles did acknowledge "sedentary Gypsies", but for the most part, caravans, wagons and travel dominated the folklorist's imagination.

⁴The similarities in constructions of the two groups are striking. Both were said to kidnap children as part of their "wandering ways", for example.

wedded to one place :

How great was my sorrow when I discovered that the [gypsy camp] was empty. The Roms had departed as mysteriously as they had come a few days before. A little heap of ashes... was the only thing to remind me of them... a homesick nightingale was singing his complaint of infinite sadness (JGLS 1945 : XXIV p. 10).

Romani "nomadism" is obsessively discussed by Gadže analysts. One writer, who suggested that Gypsies should be studied not as a culture but as "a unit in the nomadic world", saw "nomadism" as "an intangible quality; the inward and spiritual essence of being a nomad... no nomad can be judged by the normal standards of society because their mental outlook is inverse, with no sense of values" (JGLS 1945 XXIV, 47-53). Because of their travelling, as well as what he called "cosmic forces", he saw the Gypsy "becoming more Gypsyish than ever. He has gone back spiritually to the outlook of his grandfather, and possibly to... the fantastic quality of the Gypsies of a century ago" (JGLS 1944 vol. XXIII, 46).

Nomadism was "dangerous" because "the nomad does not, and cannot, envisage any man superior to himself, no matter what his achievement or position" (53). In other words, the danger of wandering is the seeming threat to notions of stability and hierarchy. This is not to say that Roma do not have their own hierarchies and orders. Rather, their practices call into question *the univocality* of dominant structures. The wanderer "messes up" the dominant categories of high and low; unlike the sedentary peasant, he keeps slipping out of place. In an attempt to "anchor" nomadism, for instance, the above scholar constructed an elaborately codified analysis of dozens of nomadic "types", from "vagabond" to "drone".

Furthermore, "place" is a powerful image in the discourse of domination. It is through the ownership of places -- from land to factories -- that dominance is, after all, established. My final point is that the Roma seemed to present an alternative practice to "owning" land. They passed through without possessing it.

Dominated peoples do not simply succumb to the structures which oppress them, but instead can employ what de Certeau calls "calculated actions determined by the absence of a proper locus" (1984 : 36). In other words, their actions of symbolic resistance always occur "in a terrain imposed... and organized by the law of a foreign power" (De Certeau 1984 : 37). Like factory workers, who appropriate the owners' tools to construct their own furniture, the

powerless "poach" on the others' places, subverting the symbolic structures which seek to contain them. Their tactics "denaturalize" the dominant order, exposing it as a construction. In the case of the Roma, it seems, the elite imagination "worked overtime", as it were, exhaustively weaving and re-weaving the discourse that would naturalize and re-naturalize the structures of hegemony.

This essay is not meant to lambast the Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society. The Journal contains many detailed and important studies of culture and language. In addition, the Journal was a far more benevolent voice than the prevailing rhetoric of the time.

However, the fact remains that scholars of Romani culture did not, or could not, vigorously protest the fate of those they studied and befriended. They did not engage in political critique which might have led to action. In this essay, I have tried to understand why their well-intended discourse never radically broke with or interrupted the dominant dialogue of the time.

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