

Slawomir Kapralski

THE ROMA (GYPSIES) OF CENTRAL/EASTERN EUROPE.

Academic Aims and Learning Outcomes.

In the course students will get acquainted with various theoretical and methodological approaches to the Roma, the history of the Roma in Europe, their traditional culture(s) and forms of social organization. However, since the perception of the Roma by their environment, including the academic attempts, has been marked by several misconceptions and stereotypes, students should become familiar with the ways in which the pictures of the Roma have been created in several European discourse, the expert and the everyday ones. This will help to understand not only the attitudes of dominant populations towards the Roma but also the defensive strategies of the latter. An overview of the situation of the Roma in Central Eastern Europe will be presented then, to familiarize students with the economic, political, cultural, and legal contexts of their existence as well as with different aspects of the process of marginalization they experience. A large part of the course will be devoted to the issues of contemporary Romani identity. The main focus will be on the one hand on the process of decomposition of the traditional Romani identities and, on the other, on the attempts by Romani elites to find new forms of self-organization and to create viable, modern forms of common Romani identity which would be able to help many otherwise very different Romani groups to produce satisfactory strategies for survival and development, together with the preservation of their group distinctiveness. An important aspect of the process of identity formation is a re-examination of the Romani history and an attempt to find a “usable past” which would foster modern identity and include the Roma into one of the most important narratives of modernity: that of the Holocaust.

From the theoretical point of view, the course will give students a chance to see and to make practical applications of different theories of ethnicity and nationalism both on the general level and in relation to specific problems of the Roma. With regard to the first group of problems, we will examine a possibility of transforming Romani ethnicity into national identity and on this occasion we will re-examine the controversy between different standpoints in theory of nationalism (primordialism/perennialism and modernism) with special emphasis being placed on Smith’s conception of ethnosymbolism, Anderson’s imagined communities, and Hobsbawm’s invented traditions. The analysis of the second group of problems will introduce students to the contemporary debates among the Romani intellectuals about the possible development of the Roma from a marginalized population, sometimes granted a status of an ethnic group, to a more respectable, nation-like status. The conceptions of politicization of ethnogenesis, minoritarian nationalism, transnational group, and legal-political nation, among others, will be analyzed here.

Syllabus.

MEETING I

1. Who are the Roma? Defining the field.

Here we focus on two main approaches to Romani identity: traditional (“primordialist”) and modern (“constructivist”). We review a list of characteristics attributed to Romani ethnicity in the traditional approach as well as modern attempts to deconstruct such a concept of ethnic identity. We also discuss various discourses which attempt to conceptualize/problematicize the Roma and, eventually, we focus on the very concept “Roma” to see different contexts of its functioning and different problems associated with it.

Literature:

Willems, Wim 1997 *In Search of the True Gypsy. From Enlightenment to Final Solution*. London—Portland, Oregon: Frank Cass. *Introduction, Conclusions*.

MEETING II

2. The Roma and history. How the history of the Roma is being written, by whom and why?

We will discuss the concept of Roma as “people without history” and we will try to place it within the European strategies of obliteration of history of the dominated or marginalized peoples. We will analyze some aspects of the attitude to time and history, which have been present in the traditional Romani cultures and we will try to answer a question to what extent that attitude may have been an “ethnographic creation.” Eventually, we will discuss the role of “invented traditions” and the role of Romani and non-Romani intellectuals and activists in the search of an alternative approach to the history of the Roma.

Literature:

Kate Trumpener, *The Time of the Gypsies. A ‘People without History’ in the Narratives of the West*. “*Critical Inquiry*” 18 (Summer 1992).

3. The history of the Roma in Europe.

Here we discuss the origins of the Roma. We examine the theory of their Indian origins. Then, chronologically we discuss the following topics: early migrations, the interactions between Roma and their environments, strategies of survival in medieval Europe, institutional persecutions (16-17 centuries), Enlightenment and Romanticism as two different approaches to the Roma within European thought, new strategies in the period of industrialization, changing social status, new migrations, different Romani groups in Central/Eastern Europe: similarities and differences.

Literature:

Fraser, Angus 1992 *The Gypsies*. Oxford UK and Cambridge, Massachusetts: Blackwell. Chapter 7.

Hancock, Ian 1991 *Gypsy History in Germany and Neighboring Lands. A Chronology Leading to the Holocaust and Beyond*. In: David Crowe and John Kolsti (eds.), *The Gypsies of Eastern Europe*, Armonk, New York, and London: M.E.Sharpe, Inc.

Marushiakova, Elena and Vesselin Popov 2001 *Historical and Ethnographic Background: Gypsies, Roma, Sinti*. In: Guy, Will (ed.) *Between Past and Future. The Roma of Central and Eastern Europe*. Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire Press.

MEETING III

4. Traditional culture(s) and identity of the Roma (1).

Here we discuss the conception of the universe and the concept of pollution as the main categories of *Romanipen* (“the Romani way”). We will then analyze the hypothesis of pollution taboos as protecting ethnic distinctiveness (Okely-Stewart).

Literature:

Okely, Judith 1996 *Own or Other Culture*. London and New York: Routledge. Chapter 4.

Stewart, Michael 1997 *The Time of the Gypsies*. Boulder, Colorado (US) and Oxford (UK): Westview Press. Chapter 12.

5. Traditional culture(s) and identity of the Roma (2).

Here we discuss language and linguistic differentiation of the Roma, nomadism and the issue of territoriality, structure of the Roma communities, intergenerational and family relations, oral tradition and transmission of knowledge, attitudes to death, time and history, ceremonial aspects of life.

Literature:

Acton, Thomas 1997 *The Theory of Gypsy Law*. In: Acton, Thomas (ed.) *Gypsy Politics and Traveller Identity*. Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire Press.

Hubschmannova, Milena 2000 *To Eat is to Honour God*. In: Acton, Thomas (ed.) *Scholarship and the Gypsy Struggle. Commitment in Romani Studies*. Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire Press.

MEETING IV

6. Us and Them. How European societies misrepresented and stereotyped the Roma.

Here we deal with the conception of Roma as European “Other.” Among others, we analyze early conceptualizations of Roma “otherness” and their religious dimension, strategies of exoticization and romanticization, the attitudes of modernity to nomadism, racist ideologies, gendered stereotypes, the Roma as “social problem,” stigmatization and labeling, criminalization of the Roma. Eventually, we discuss the Roma strategies concerning stereotypes.

Literature:

Heuss, Herbert 2000 *Anti-Gypsyism Research: The Creation of a New Field of Study*. In: Acton, Thomas (ed.) *Scholarship and the Gypsy Struggle. Commitment in Romani Studies*. Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire Press.

7. Us and Them. Popular attitudes towards Roma and their image in the media.

Here we focus on the public opinion research that present changing attitudes towards Roma in different countries as well as on the way Roma are (mis)represented in the media.

Literature:

Project on Ethnic Relations 1997 *Images and Issues: Coverage of the Roma in the Mass Media in Romania*. Princeton: Project on Ethnic Relations.

MEETING V

8. From marginalization to modern self-organization. Constructing Contemporary Romani Identities.

Here we focus on the recent developments in the Romani elites to construct a modern identity, which would unite different Romani groups. We analyze different identity constructs discussed recently: the Roma as nation, as national minority, as transnational minority, and discuss different strategies of Romani elites: minority nationalism, autonomy within broader political organism, integration and preservation of difference, politicization of ethnogenesis, symbolic construction of community, inventing tradition and imagining community. We also discuss spontaneous processes of traditional identities’ adaptation to contemporary challenges and processes of hybridization of Romani identity.

Literature:

Gheorghe, Nicolae 1997 *The Social Construction of Romani Identity*. In: Acton, Thomas (ed.) *Gypsy Politics and Traveller Identity*. Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire Press.

Guy, Will 2001 *Romani Identity and Post-Communist Policy*. In: Guy, Will (ed.) *Between Past and Future. The Roma of Central and Eastern Europe*. Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire Press.

Mirga, Andrzej and Nicolae Gheorghe 1997 *The Roma in the Twenty-first Century: A Policy Paper*. Princeton: Project on Ethnic Relations.

9. In search of a usable past: the Roma and the Holocaust.

Here we explore the attempts to develop within the Roma a conception of their history in which the crucial point would be the Holocaust. We discuss the history of the Nazi persecutions of the Roma and then we focus on the ways in which this history is used as the stuff of the collective memory and modern Romani identity. We also explore the practical functions of such a conception of Romani history (de-legitimation of violence, acceptance of the Romani presence in the symbolic and political space of the Holocaust) as well as the practical actions and “rituals of memory” which foster the conception of Romani history based on the Holocaust.

Literature:

Hancock, Ian 2002 *We Are the Romani people/Ame sam e Rromane dzene*. Hatfield: Centre de Recherches Tsiganes. University of Hertfordshire Press. Chapter 4: O Baro Porrajmos—The Holocaust.

Kapralski, Slawomir 1997 Identity Building and the Holocaust: Roma Political Nationalism. “*Nationalities Papers*” Vol. 25, No. 2.

10. The Problems of the Roma in contemporary societies: students presentations.

Suggested topics:

Communist strategies towards the Roma. The Roma in the economies in transition. Political mobilization of the Roma in CEE. Human rights and violence. Assimilation and marginalization. Open borders and new migrations. Governmental strategies towards the Roma. Changing attitudes to the Roma in CEE societies. Legal situation of the Roma in particular countries. The consequences the collapse of communism had for the Roma. Poverty and unemployment among Roma. The problems of education of Romani children. Development of Romani media.

Essential literature:

Barany, Zoltan 2002 *The East European Gypsies. Regime Change, Marginality, and Ethnopolitics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Crowe, David M. 1996 *A History of the Gypsies of Eastern Europe and Russia*. New York: St. Martin's Griffin.

Guy, Will (ed.) 2001 *Between Past and Future. The Roma of Central and Eastern Europe*. Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire Press.

Hancock, Ian 2002 *We Are the Romani people/Ame sam e Rromane dzene*. Hatfield: Centre de Recherches Tsiganes. University of Hertfordshire Press.

Mayall, David 2004 *Gypsy Identities 1500-2000. From Egypcyans and Moon-men to the Ethnic Romany*. London and New York: Routledge.

Willems, Wim 1997 *In Search of the True Gypsy. From Enlightenment to Final Solution*. London—Portland, Oregon: Frank Cass.

Recommended literature:

Acton, Thomas 1998 Using the Gypsies' Own Language: Two Contrasting Approaches in Hungarian Schools. In: Tong, Diane (ed.) *Gypsies. An Interdisciplinary Reader*. New York and London: Garland Publishing, Inc.

Acton, Thomas and Ilona Klimova 2001 *The International Romani Union: An East European Answer to West European Questions?* In: Guy, Will (ed.) *Between Past and Future. The Roma of Central and Eastern Europe*. Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire Press.

Beck, Julie A. 1994 *Citizens and Criminals: Notions of Citizenship in the Czech State in Transition*. (CEU M.A. Dissertation, Sociology Department, Prague)

Crowe, David and John Kolsti (eds.) 1991 *The Gypsies of Eastern Europe*. Armonk, New York and London, England: M. E. Sharpe, Inc.

Folkeryd, Fredrik and Ingvar Svanberg 1995 *Gypsies (Roma) in the Post-Totalitarian States*. Stockholm: Olof Palme International Center.

Fraser, Angus 1992 *The Gypsies*. Oxford UK and Cambridge, Massachusetts: Blackwell. Chapter 9.

Gheorghe, Nicolae and Jennifer Tanaka 1998 *Public Policies Concerning Roma and Sinti in the OSCE Region*. Warsaw: OSCE/ODIHR.

Gheorghe, Nicolae and Thomas Acton 2001 *Citizens of the World and Nowhere: Minority, Ethnic and Human Rights for Roma during the last Hurrah of the Nation-State*. In: Guy, Will (ed.) *Between Past and Future. The Roma of Central and Eastern Europe*. Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire Press.

Gronfors, Martii 1998 *Police Perception of Gypsies in Finland*. In: Tong, Diane (ed.) *Gypsies. An Interdisciplinary Reader*. New York and London: Garland Publishing, Inc.

Guy, Will 1998 *Ways of Looking at Roma: The Case of Czechoslovakia*. In: Tong, Diane (ed.) *Gypsies. An Interdisciplinary Reader*. New York and London: Garland Publishing, Inc.

Hancock, Ian 1987 *The Pariah Syndrome. An Account of Gypsy Slavery and Persecution*. Ann Arbor: Karoma Publishers, Inc.

Hubschmannova, Milena 1998 *Economic Stratification and Interaction: Roma, an Ethnic Jati in East Slovakia*. In: Tong, Diane (ed.) *Gypsies. An Interdisciplinary Reader*. New York and London: Garland Publishing, Inc.

Kanerova-Castle, Mit'á 2001 *Roma Refugees: The EU Dimension*. In: Guy, Will (ed.) *Between Past and Future. The Roma of Central and Eastern Europe*. Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire Press.

Kovats, Martin 2001 *The emergence of European Roma Policy*. In: Guy, Will (ed.) *Between Past and Future. The Roma of Central and Eastern Europe*. Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire Press.

Marushiakova, Elena and Vesselin Popov 2001 *Historical and Ethnographic Background: Gypsies, Roma, Sinti*. In: Guy, Will (ed.) *Between Past and Future. The Roma of Central and Eastern Europe*. Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire Press.

Project on Ethnic Relations 1992 *The Romanies in Central and Eastern Europe: Illusions and Reality*. Princeton: Project on Ethnic Relations.

Project on ethnic Relations 1994 *Countering Anti-Roma Violence in Eastern Europe*. Princeton: Project on Ethnic Relations.

Project on Ethnic Relations 1998 *Self-Government in Hungary: The Gypsy/Romani Experience and the Prospects for the Future*. Princeton: Project on Ethnic Relations.

Project on Ethnic Relations 1999 *Political Participation and the Roma in Hungary and Slovakia*. Princeton: Project on Ethnic Relations.

Ringold, Dena 2000 *Roma and the Transition in Central and Eastern Europe: Trends and Challenges*. Washington, D.C.: The World Bank.

Stewart, Michael 1997 *The Time of the Gypsies*. Boulder, Colorado (US) and Oxford (UK): Westview Press.

Stewart, Michael 2001 Communist Roma Policy 1945-89 as Seen Through the Hungarian Case. In: Guy, Will (ed.) *Between Past and Future. The Roma of Central and Eastern Europe*. Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire Press.

The Education of Gypsy and Traveller Children. Action Research and Co-ordination. 1993 Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire Press.

Waterson, Mary 1997 "I Want More Than Green Leaves for My Children." Some Developments in Gypsy/Traveller Education 1970-96. In: Acton Thomas and Gary Mundy (eds.) *Romani Culture and Gypsy Identity*. Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire Press.

Zoon, Ina 1994 *The Effect of the Citizenship Law on the Czech Republic's Roma Community*. Prague: Tolerance Foundation.

Additional literature.

Acton, Thomas 1974 *Gypsy Politics and Social Change*. London and Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Anderson, Benedict 1991 *Imagined Communities. Reflection on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. 2nd revised. edition. London: Verso.

Armstrong, John A. 1982 *Nations before Nationalism*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press.

Barany, Zoltan 1998a *Explaining Marginality: Portrayals of East European Gypsies*. Budapest: Central European University.

Barany, Zoltan 1998b Memory and Experience: Anti-Roma Prejudice in Eastern Europe. "East European Studies" No 50. Occasional paper.

Boszormenyi, Jenő and Marta Józsa (eds.) 2000 *Caught in the Trap of Integration: Roma Problems and Prospects in Hungary*. Budapest: Bureau for European Comparative Minority Research.

Cohen, Anthony P. 1992 (1985) *The Symbolic Construction of Community*. London-New York: Routledge.

Cotton (Gropper), Rena M. 1998 Sex Dichotomy Among the American Kalderas Gypsies. In: Tong, Diane (ed.) *Gypsies. An Interdisciplinary Reader*. New York and London: Garland Publishing, Inc.

Fentress, James and Wickham, Chris 1992 *Social Memory*. Oxford, UK and Cambridge USA: Blackwell.

Gans, Herbert J. 1979 *Symbolic Ethnicity: The Future of Ethnic Groups and Cultures in America*. In: *On the Making of Americans: Essays in Honor of Alfred Riesman*. Ed. by Herbert J. Gans et al. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Gheorghe, Nicolae 1991 Roma-Gypsy Ethnicity in Eastern Europe "Social Research" Vol. 58, No. 4.

Gillis, John R. 1994. Memory and Identity: The History of a Relationship. In: John R. Gillis ed. *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Grosby, Steven 1995 Territoriality: The Transcendental Primordial Feature of Modern Societies. "Nations and Nationalism" 1 (2).

- Helsinki Watch 1991 *Destroying Ethnic Identity: The Persecution of Gypsies in Romania*. New York-Washington: Human Rights Watch.
- Hobsbawm, Eric 1983 Introduction: Inventing Traditions. In: Eric Hobsbawm, Terence Ranger (eds.), *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kenrick, Donald and Puxon, Grattan 1972 *The Destiny of Europe's Gypsies*, London: Chatto-Heinemann for Sussex University Press.
- Kenrick, Donald (ed.) 1997 *From "Race Science" to the Camps: The Gypsies during the Second World War*. Vol. 1 Hatfield: Centre de recherches tsiganes and University of Hertfordshire Press.
- Kenrick, Donald (ed.) 1999 *In the Shadow of the Swastika: The Gypsies during the Second World War*. Vol. 2. Hatfield: Centre de recherches tsiganes and University of Hertfordshire Press.
- Lackova, Ilona 1999 *A False Dawn. My Life as a Gypsy Woman in Slovakia*. Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire Press.
- Lucassen, Leo 1991 The Power of Definition. Stigmatization, Minorization and Ethnicity Illustrated by the History of Gypsies in the Netherlands. "*The Netherlands Journal of Social Sciences*" vol. 27.
- Marushiakova, Elena and Vesselin Popov 2000 Myth as Process. In: Acton, Thomas (ed.) *Scholarship and the Gypsy Struggle. Commitment in Romani Studies*. Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire Press.
- McVeigh, Robbie 1997 Theorizing Sedentarism: The Roots of Anti-Nomadism. In: *Gypsy Politics and Traveller Identity*. Edited by Thomas Acton. Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire Press.
- Miller, Carol 1998 American Roma and the Ideology of Defilement. In: Tong, Diane (ed.) *Gypsies. An Interdisciplinary Reader*. New York and London: Garland Publishing, Inc.
- Nagel, Joane (1991) The Political Construction of Ethnicity. In: *Majority and Minority. The Dynamics of Race and Ethnicity in American Life*. Ed. by Norman. R. Yetman. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- PER (Project on Ethnic Relations) Report 1998 *The Roma in Bulgaria: Collaborative Efforts between Local Authorities and Nongovernmental Organizations*. Princeton: Project on Ethnic Relations.
- Powell, Chris 1997 Razor Blades amidst the Velvet? Changes and Continuities in the Gypsy Experience of the Czech and Slovak Lands. In: *Gypsy Politics and Traveller Identity*. Edited by Thomas Acton. Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire Press
- Sibley, David 1995 *Geographies of Exclusion. Society and Difference in the West*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Smith, Anthony 1999 *Myths and Memories of the Nation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Tyrnauer, Gabrielle 1991 *Gypsies and the Holocaust. A Bibliography and Introductory Essay*, Montreal: Montreal Institute for Genocide Studies.
- Yoors, Jan 1967 *The Gypsies*. New York: Simon and Schuster.