

Ethnicity without Culture

Perplexities of collective representations

19th International Lab Meeting – Winter Session 2012

of the

European Ph.D. on Social Representations and Communication

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Durkheimian dilemma

- **Bruno Latour: intermediaries vs. mediators**
 - **Analytical solution to a metaphysical question**
- **What comes first: the story or the actor?**
- **Ethnicity-culture nexus (multiculturalism)**
- **Fredrik Barth on boundaries: social interactions (mediators) and cultural resources (intermediaries)**
- **Beyond Latour: ethnic culture vs. ethnicity as a categorical difference**
- **Collective or collectivizing representations?**

Disappearing Europeans

- **Mini-ethnicities: ethnic revival and social imaginary**
- **Cultural patterns vs. Reminders**
- **Memory of descent (Moravians)**
- **Culture matters, but ...**

Social/cultural representations of the Roma?

- **lived culture of everyday practices**
- **reflexive culture of secondary frames (schemes of interpretation)**
- **codified traditions**

Stereotypes / Behavioral representations

Emotionality and directness

body language, bad language, loud “language”



Stereotypes / Behavioral representations

community style of life: living together, living out



Stereotypes / Behavioral representations

living together, living out, making troubles



Lived culture of the everyday

- **Culture of poverty and deprivation**
- **Ethnicized culture of immediacy**
 - **Norms vs. referents**
- **Recognizing or undoing ethnic culture?**

Secondary frames

- **Reflexive constructions of the Romanized world**
 - **Ethnicization of culture and Culturalization of ethnicity**
 - **Roma soul and mind**

Symbolic representations I

gypsy iconography

soap opera (*Gypsies Go to Heaven*)



Symbolic representations II

ethno-punk for intellectuals



Symbolic representations III

ethno-pop for non-intellectuals



Romantic binary coding – and its ethnization

- **Spontaneity vs. reflexivity**
- **Directness vs. calculation**
- **Sincerity vs. hypocrisy**
- **Emotionality (passion) vs. coldness**
- **Fate (good luck–bad luck) vs. goal-oriented discipline**
- **Vulnerable vs. protected**
- **Exotic vs. ordinary**
- **Colorful vs. grey**
- **Communitarian vs. individualistic**
- **Unbound vs. tied**
- **Wild (loud, expressive) vs. tranquil (quiet, introvert)**
- **Independent vs. dependent**
- **Childish innocence vs. adult corruptness**
- **Immediate vs. distant**

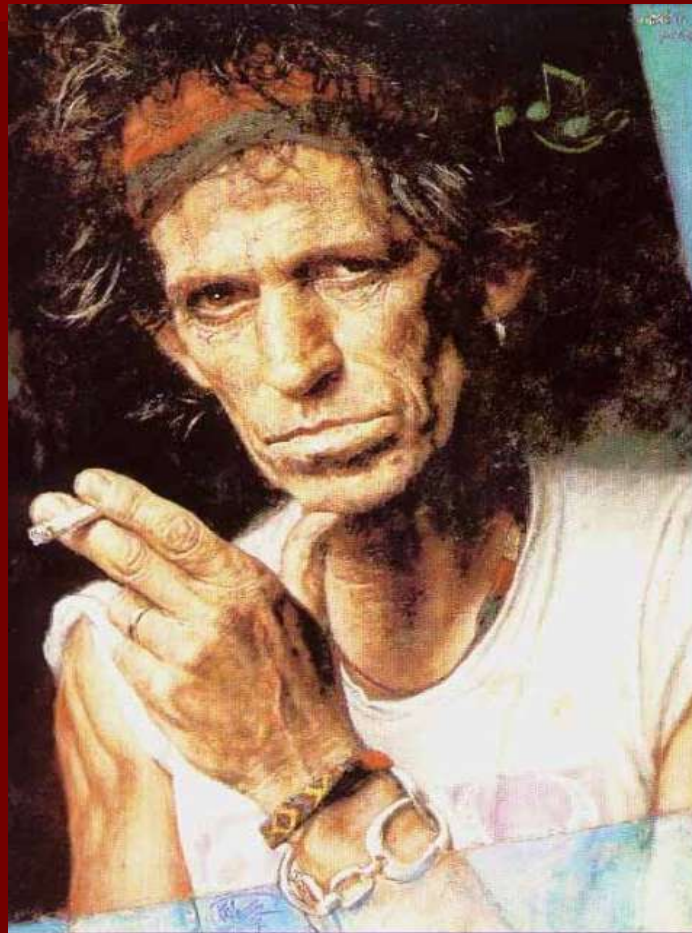
What do Roma kids have to say to this?

- **Ambivalent reactions: intuitive distance**
 - little interest in the symbolic representations
 - distance to unifications
 - analytical intuition: totalizing fictions vs. differentiation
- **What did we see on a board in a Roma class room?**

Claudia Schiffer



Keith Richards



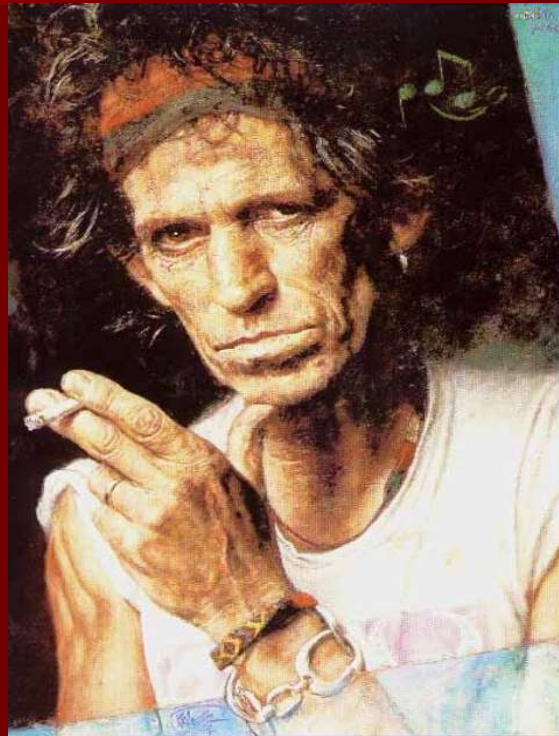
Bill Gates



passion
beauty, love



rebellion
self-destruction



easy
money



The mates

Czechoslovak Superstar 2009

Monika Bagárová



Jan Bendig



Media-~~ted~~ Romantic cultural code

■ Bodily creativity

- Art of singing and dancing as ethnically rooted (for the actors) or framed (for social scientists) dispositions**
 - “Superstars” as symbolic representations**
- Emotionality again (Monika)**
 - spontaneity**
 - sincerity**
- Exhibited religiousness (Jan)**
 - spirituality**
 - fatalism**

Codified traditions

**folk songs and dances, historical collective narratives,
legends, fairy tales, rituals, etc.**

- **The problem of the “cunning hero” model**
- **A distant source of self-esteem**
 - **Problems with cultural cure**
 - **Who can impose Roma culture on Roma?**
 - **The “ecological principle” problem (Habermas)**
- **Transformations of the cunning hero**
 - **A proximate source of self-esteem?**

Politics of recognition

- **Culture as a source of ethnic authenticity, dignity, pride**
- **Revoking traditions, codifying stereotypes**
 - **Empirical problem**
 - **Ecological problem**
 - **Ethical problem**

From cunning to outcast hero: cultural framing of crime

