

the absolutists whom moderate Muslims fundamentally oppose. If a full analysis of the commitment reveals its defensive function, which has disabled Muslims from a creative and powerful opposition to the absolutists, and if, moreover, this function of the commitment is diagnosed as itself based on a deep but common philosophical fallacy, it should be possible then for moderate Muslims to think their way out of this conflict and to transform the nature of their commitment to Islam, so that it is not disabling in that way.

The question of identity—what is a Muslim?—then, will get very different answers before and after this dialectic has played itself out. The dialectic thus preserves the negotiability of the concept of identity and the methodological points I began with, at the same time as it situates and explains the urgency and fascination that such questions hold for us.

The Time of the Gypsies: A “People without History” in the Narratives of the West

Katie Trumpener

Ahead was a light cart, driven by a man, and trudging along at the side was a woman, sturdy and elderly, with a pack on her back. . . .

The road was narrow. Leo sounded the horn sharply. The man on the cart looked round, but the woman on foot only trudged steadily, rapidly forward, without turning her head.

Yvette's heart gave a jump. The man on the cart was a gipsy, one of the black, loose-bodied, handsome sort. . . . his gaze [was] insolent in its indifference. . . . Leo honked the horn again, imperiously. . . . But still [the gipsy] did not pull aside.

Leo made the horn scream, as he put the brakes on and the car slowed up near the back of the cart. . . .

“Get out o’ the way then!” yelled Leo. . . .

“Don’t the pretty young ladies want to hear their fortunes?” said the gipsy on the cart, laughing except for his dark, watchful eyes,

I owe great thanks to Ian Hancock for his encouragement and for a constant stream of primary sources; to Ronald Lee, Alaina Lemon, Loren Kruger, Nancy Glazener, Shamoon Zamir, Russell Berman, Terry Castle, David Wellbery, Norma Field, and Michael Geyer, and to the Interdisciplinary Perspectives on the Study of Europe (IPSE) Workshop at the University of Chicago for their help in articulating the thrust of these arguments; to Gary Finder, Sabine Golz, Elizabeth Heckendorn Cook, Deidre Lynch, Laura Rigal, and Elizabeth Helsing for valuable leads and sources; and finally to the Free University of Berlin, the University of Chicago Humanities Institute, the Mellon Foundation, and the University of Pittsburgh for fellowship support that made this research and writing possible.

All translations from the German are mine unless otherwise noted.

which went from face to face, and lingered on Yvette's young, tender face. . . .

"Oh yes! let's!" cried Lucille at once.

"Oh yes!" chorused the girls.

"I say! What about the time?" cried Leo.

"Oh bother the old time! Somebody's always dragging in time by the forelock," cried Lucille.

"Well, if you don't mind *when we get back, I don't!*" said Leo heroically.

—D. H. LAWRENCE, *The Virgin and the Gypsy*

"Gypsies are great thieves. They have an uncanny ability to con their way into people's homes and then to find exactly where their valuables are. It's almost like they can smell it. They're uncanny.

"One of the worst days in the police department is Good Friday. An awful lot of Gypsies steal on Good Friday. What's taught to the young Gypsy kids is that when Christ was put on the cross, they had four nails to nail him to the cross. A Gypsy kid came by and stole one of the nails. That's why, on the crucifix, Christ's feet are nailed with one nail and the other two are in the hands.

"That's passed down from generation to generation. So, according to Gypsy lore, Christ on the cross is supposed to have said, From now and forevermore, Gypsies can steal and it's not a sin.

☪ ☪ ☪ "Good Friday's a big day for them. When I was working the Gypsies, we worked them for ten years, we would never take Good Friday off because it was a day we'd have to get up early and be on the run with them because they would be everywhere."

—CONNIE FLETCHER, *What Cops Know*

During a wave of Norwegian patriotism in the 1880s, Lillehammer dentist Anders Sandvig began, on annual dental tours of duty through the surrounding region, to collect folkloric artifacts and became concerned that ancient buildings were being demolished or were falling into disrepair. By 1904, when (amidst the rising nationalism that a year later would secure Norway's independence from Sweden) the Mailhaugen Open Air Museum was opened in Lillehammer to house Sandvig's collection, it included a manor house, parish church, and six whole farm buildings rescued and reassembled from various sites throughout the area. Only the museum itself, however, gave cumulative meaning to Sandvig's isolated

Katie Trumpener is assistant professor in the Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures at the University of Chicago. She is currently writing a book on British romanticism in relation to internal colonialism and literary nationalism, and another on Central Europe as a

acts of surgical extraction and architectural restoration: traversing regional distance, freezing historical time, reconciling political and class divisions, the museum created a bounded, timeless Norwegian folk community, and a new kind of nationalist rhetoric. The official two-day opening celebrations themselves, described in Sandvig's memoirs, became an extended holiday that brought together the whole population of Lillehammer, garbed in national costume: feasting, dancing, speeches to the fatherland ("Norway, Awaken!"), repeated group singing of the national anthem, and, filling the second day, an allegorical procession welcoming the "Mailhaug people" (the costumed site interpreters) into Lillehammer, while costumed "trolls" and other "hill people" who "might protest against the new inhabitants" were seen fleeing back into the surrounding hills. As the Mailhaug people took up their new residences, spectators could watch the "farmers' families" performing chores while speaking authentic local dialect, listen to the saga recitations of Mailhaugen's resident *skald*, and see the visibly growing restlessness of Peer Gynt in his cottage, as he quarreled with Åse and flirted with female visitors. Finally, during the last hours of the festivities, a family of Gypsies arrive as well to set up their tent on the grounds of Mailhaugen:

On occasions where many people [*mennesker*] are gathered together, those sorts of people [*folk*] will usually turn up suddenly. They had a horse and wagon and were equipped the way travelling people usually are. Even the dog wasn't missing. . . . Their leader was a horsetrader and a watch-trader. . . . The wife read palms and predicted the fates of young men and women. . . . Another, who smoked a chalk pipe, was a specialist in laying the cards but her payment had to be made ahead of time. . . . A younger pair of siblings, a temperamental woman and her brother, took people by storm with their musical abilities. The fortuneteller, with baby on her back, attracted attention everywhere. She possessed brilliant powers of speech and had a pair of dangerous eyes. When she came into the rectory and noticed the empty cradle in the bedroom, she took her child and placed it without hesitating into the crib. She lit her chalk pipe and began to rock the cradle, while she crooned and sang.

At precisely that moment, Director Grosch came in with several others; appalled, he clapped his hands together and shouted indignantly:

—No, this is the most brazen thing I've ever seen.

Remarkably enough, there wasn't anyone except those in the know who realized that the whole thing was a staged feature of the evening's festivities. Everybody believed that they were genuine gypsies [but they were in fact well-known townspeople]. They were costumed so well, and everyone played his role so brilliantly that thus the masquerade was carried out.¹

At the culmination of the nationalist celebration stands a ritualized expulsion of "the Gypsies" from the consecrated folkloric space of patrimony. When a national culture stops to celebrate and take stock of itself, it is only the "Gypsies" who keep moving and who persist as interlopers. Long after the Maihaug people have settled into their rightful places, and long after other threats to community (the trolls and hill people) have been chased off, it is "Gypsies" (characteristically given, it is believed, to stealing children from their homes) who attempt to usurp the cradle—preserved on behalf of the Norwegian people as a symbol of their own origins—to fill it instead with their own offspring.

As "the Gypsies" seize center stage, furthermore, Sandvig's own account undergoes a subtle shift in perspective and tone. The procession of events comes to a halt and the other displays seem robbed of their previous interest as the spectators turn to watch performed tableaux of Gypsy life. By the time this performance reaches its climax in a side room of one building, it is as if the whole assembly is crowded in there watching, and as if only the museum director's outraged shout can break the spell that has fallen over Maihaugen. Sandvig's account stresses at once the utter legibility of the "Gypsy scene" and the seeming spectatorial passivity or paralysis that attends it until its denouement. In retrospect, of course, the performance's hypnotic predictability derives from its careful scripting and staging, and "the Gypsies'" strange yet oddly familiar exoticism comes from the fact they are actually disguised townspeople. Indeed, as the culmination and summary of the Maihaugen festivities, the episode provides a final, piquantly transgressive illustration of how the whole museum, in assembling a national heritage, blurs the boundaries between literary, historical, and "representative" figures, as it does between its self-consciously stylized staging of traditional activities and its simple distillation of everyday life with its mixture of settled routine and contained restlessness.²

Played out in the drama at Maihaugen, in effect, is much of the ideological ensemble surrounding the cultural construction of "the Gypsies" in the Western imagination.³ This essay follows several strands in succession

1943), pp. 183–84. I am indebted to Mark Sandberg for directing me to this passage and for the translation, as well as for the inspiration of his ground-breaking work on modernist institutions and relations of the visible (including a lengthier consideration of Sandvig and the open-air museum); see Mark Sandberg, "Missing Persons: Spectacle and Narrative in Late Nineteenth-Century Scandinavia" (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1991).

2. For a comparable, contemporaneous cataloging of "Gypsy life" as plot, see also A. Khanzhonkov's comments about his "Drama in a Gypsy Camp near Moscow," in *Silent Witnesses: Russian Films 1908–1919*, ed. Paolo Cherchi Usai et al. (London, 1989), p. 48. "Gypsies" are omnipresent characters in film narratives from Georges Méliès, Cecil Hepworth, and D. W. Griffith onwards.

3. The question of nomenclature for the people popularly known as Gypsies remains

(the Gypsy encounter as set piece; the conflation of the Gypsies' literary and historical status; the freezing of time at the Gypsies' approach; the unmasking of their "character" as Western projection), its recurrent motif—as the epigraphs suggest—the ascribed relationship of Gypsies to Western temporality, and its consequences for the development and non-development of Western political discourse about Gypsy life.⁴ Thus D. H. Lawrence's typical account of first contact stresses the nonsynchronicity with which the Gypsies in their cart and a carful of bored young white Europeans move through time; at first threatening to flatten whatever impedes their progress, the young people capitulate to Gypsy seductions by the very decision to abandon their usual timetables.⁵ The related invo-

vexed. The mainly pejorative associations surrounding the term (and that it is not a self-designation but a Western coinage based on false surmises about the group's race and place of origin) lead European activists to insist on its replacement with the self-given tribal names of the various postdiasporic groupings (the Sinti and Roma in Germany, the Vlax in the Balkans, and so on) or (as in Britain) with the nonracial designation of "travellers," although this, too, risks fixing as *the* defining cultural characteristic a mode of life forced on the group only by historical circumstance and economic necessity—and indeed today many Gypsies in the English-speaking world no longer "travel," but have fixed homes and jobs. For an excellent discussion of the political stake of nomenclature, the nature of ethnic diversity among the Gypsies, and the ongoing economic basis of Gypsy "nomadism," see Thomas Acton, *Gypsy Politics and Social Change: The Development of Ethnic Ideology and Pressure Politics among British Gypsies from Victorian Reformism to Romany Nationalism* (London, 1974), esp. pp. 14–23, 53–96, 189–218, 245–70.

None of these designations, for the following reasons, seem suitable for all of the situations analyzed here: given the general focus on a period antedating the modern rights movement and on repetitive Western fantasies in which individual or historical differences of experience within "the Gypsy camp" are left deliberately undifferentiated and unexplored; given the primary focus on fictitious and even dress-up "Gypsies" rather than on real members of a particular postdiasporic group; and given, finally, the piece's recurring reference to the North American situation, in which immigration from all parts of Europe and the pressures facing the ethnic group as a whole make the use of subdesignations difficult and unhelpful. The essay has been forced, therefore, into somewhat eclectic practices: where the "Gypsies" are literally only costumes with white Europeans encased in them, that fact has been signalled by quotation marks; "ordinary" cases of fictionalization appear simply as Gypsies; and in passages stressing the distinction between such projections and the actual ethnic group, the latter appear (in a somewhat homogenizing collective term) as "Romani."

4. On time and historylessness, see Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object* (New York, 1983); Hermann Bausinger et al., *Grundzüge der Volkskunde* (Darmstadt, 1978), esp. pp. 141ff.; Reinhart Koselleck, *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time*, trans. Keith Tribe (Cambridge, Mass., 1985); M. M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist, ed. Holquist (Austin, Tex., 1981); *Chronotypes: The Construction of Time*, ed. John Bender and David E. Wellbery (Stanford, Calif., 1991); and Bruce Robbins, *The Servant's Hand: English Fiction from Below* (New York, 1986), esp. the preface and chap. 1.

5. Already in George Borrow's 1857 *Romany Rye* the Gypsies are cast as spokesmen for cultural conservatism, lamenting the advent of the railroads, and the displacement of one kind of wandering with mass transportation; by 1908, when a speeding motorcar in

cation, by a resident "Gypsy expert" with the Chicago Police Department, of a mythic Gypsy time of legend, curse, and prophecy ("from now and forevermore") to justify current police procedures (by which Gypsy citizens continue, Good Friday or not, to be questioned, harassed, and even framed solely on racial grounds) suggests the continuing historical consequence of Western "Gypsy" fantasies for the actual shape of Romani lives in Europe and North America today.

Although over the last twenty years (in conjunction with Romani lobbying for international recognition as a people without a country) a growing body of historical, anthropological, and polemical writing has addressed Romani experience, there has, to date, been little corresponding literary, cultural, or political analysis of the racism and Orientalism historically surrounding the Western construction of the "Gypsy Question," despite the allure and the obvious centrality of the topic; this essay thus represents a preliminary, tentative attempt to open up a field of theoretical and literary inquiry.⁶ The focus of its first section is on ideological forms; drawing on a range of material to illuminate the role that Germans, in the shadow of the Third Reich, assign to the Gypsies in constructing their own relationship to non-German cultures, it links the static display of "the Gypsies" as visual spectacle and a complicated, if equally static, politics of cultural memory and amnesia. The second half, centered on the post-Enlightenment literary canon and on Britain, sketches the historical

Kenneth Grahame's *The Wind in the Willows* collides with a wandering Gypsy cart, it destroys not only the cart but the whole wandering way of life it represents.

6. The most useful overviews (written by Gypsy rights activists and aimed at a broad audience) are Acton, *Gypsy Politics and Social Change; In Auschwitz vergast, bis heute verfolgt: Zur Situation der Roma (Zigeuner) in Deutschland und Europa*, ed. Tilman Zülch (Hamburg, 1979); Ian Hancock, *The Pariah Syndrome: An Account of Gypsy Slavery and Persecution* (Ann Arbor, Mich., 1987); Donald Kenrick and Grattan Puxon, *The Destiny of Europe's Gypsies* (London, 1972); Puxon, *On the Road* (London, 1967) and *Rom: Europe's Gypsies* (London, 1973). David Mayall's *Gypsy-Travellers in Nineteenth-Century Society* (Cambridge, 1988) provides the best history of the Gypsies in Britain (including an appendix listing all major legislation affecting Gypsies, 1530–1908) while Alaina Lemon's "Performance, History, and Becoming Civilized: Roma (Gypsies) in the USSR and the Moscow Teatr 'Roma'" (Ph.D. diss. in progress, University of Chicago) promises the most sophisticated account to date of Roma self-construction. On Central Europe in particular, see Joachim S. Hohmann, *Geschichte der Zigeunerverfolgung in Deutschland* (Frankfurt, 1981); Bálint Sárosi, *Gypsy Music*, trans. Fred Macnicol (Budapest, 1971); Michael Zimmermann, *Verfolgt, vertrieben, vernichtet: Die nationalsozialistische Vernichtungspolitik gegen Sinti und Roma* (Essen, 1989); Romani Rose and Walter Weiss, *Sinti und Roman im Dritten Reich: Das Programm der Vernichtung durch Arbeit* (Göttingen, 1991); Selma Steinmetz, *Österreichs Zigeuner im NS-Staat* (Vienna, 1966); Georg von Soest, *Zigeuner zwischen Verfolgung und Integration: Geschichte, Lebensbedingungen und Eingliederungsversuche* (Weinheim, 1979); Eigensinn und Hilfe: *Zigeuner in der Sozialpolitik heutiger Leistungsgesellschaften*, ed. Reimer Gronemeyer (Giessen, 1983); Luise Rinser, *Wer wirft den Stein? Zigeuner sein in Deutschland* (Stuttgart, 1965); and Rüdiger Safranski, *Die Zigeuner: Sinti und Roma in Deutschland* (Düsseldorf, 1985).

evolution of an overtly political account of the "Gypsies" into a literally autonomous literary one. This process of "literarization," the increasingly powerful Western symbolism developed around the Gypsies, and their discursive placement ever further outside of the national teleologies or cumulative time of history, leads simultaneously to a progressive dissociation and conflation of literary traditions with living people. At the Nürnberg trials, for example, an SS leader justified the Nazi persecution of the Gypsies by citing Schiller's literary descriptions of the Thirty Years War in much the same way that a legend of the Crucifixion was still being invoked in 1990 to justify the anti-Gypsy policies of American police forces.⁷

The coda, finally, centers on one of the most important pieces of Romani writing to date, Ronald Lee's *Goddam Gypsy* (1970), a militant autobiography that (setting its tale of ethnic coming-to-consciousness in the Montréal of the late sixties against rising French- and English-Canadian nationalism) poses the question of what future Gypsy representation, political or literary, can have in a West still dominated by the rhetoric and narratives of nationalism. Twenty years later, the political marginality of Gypsies in North America remains virtually unchanged: nineteenth-century bans of Gypsy immigration remain informally in place, as do police "Gypsy" experts officially; and despite the fact that it's unconstitutional, "Gypsies remain the only American ethnic minority against whom laws still operate, and who are specifically named in those laws."⁸ In the depictions of the press and of mass culture, in literature written for children and in school textbooks, Gypsies continue (long after political pressure has forced out analogous generic characterizations of African Americans, Jews, or women) to appear as stereotypical figures of magic and menace; what is involved here is not only ignorance, a failure to realize that the Gypsies are a real and sizable population living as a still-threatened minority in Europe and North America, but also a refusal to give up a powerful set of cultural myths for their sake.⁹ The steadily deter-

7. SS leader Otto Ohlendorf's testimony is cited in Bernhard Streck, "Die 'Bekämpfung des Zigeunerwesens': Ein Stück moderner Rechtsgeschichte," in *In Auschwitz vergast, bis heute verfolgt*, pp. 64–65. The Gypsies have been mythologically linked to the Nativity as well as the Crucifixion; thus we have in "The Madonna and the Gypsy" (*Roadside Songs of Tuscany*, trans. Francesca Alexander, ed. John Ruskin [London, 1885]) a Gypsy woman who grants shelter to the Holy Family on their flight to Egypt and foretells the entire course of Jesus' life. But see also the anti-Gypsy "carols" from Spain, Provence, and Greece quoted by Kenrick and Puxon, *The Destiny of Europe's Gypsies*, pp. 26–27.

8. Hancock, *The Pariah Syndrome*, p. 105. The American office of the International Romani Union (headed by Hancock in Manchaca, Texas, 78652, tel. [512] 282-1268), continues to lobby for improved civil rights for the hundreds of thousands of Romani living in the United States.

9. The pervasiveness of "casual" American racism about the Gypsies even today may be suggested by two throwaway metaphorical references recently common in American popular culture. The first is the letter "G" in the edit "Linguistics: The author of 'If-and' ed 'ov

iorating legal status of Romani across Europe as well, in the wake of rapid political and economic changes, resurgent nationalisms, and neofascisms (repeated political and physical attacks on Gypsy groups in Rumania, Poland, Yugoslavia, Germany, and Hungary, revelations of unauthorized sterilization of Gypsy women in Czechoslovakia, and increasing official indifference or hostility towards Gypsy refugees throughout Western Europe) have only made Lee's concerns more urgent than ever.¹⁰

scholar . . . in the history business" who has taught at seven schools over the last sixteen years and who reports an experiment in "sexy" dressing-up for the classroom on the last day of her most recent contract. She ends her letter by moving back from the constraining semiotics of gender to her own precarious, if freewheeling, professional standing, a transition she effects by "tying gypsy and clothing together," and reporting on a childhood "gypsy Halloween costume" her grandmother made for her. "I'm going to look in a trunk right now to see if I still have it. Once a gypsy, always a gypsy" (Elisabeth A. Weston, letter to the editor, *Lingua Franca* 1 [June 1991]:3).

The other article, the cover story in the house organ of Pittsburgh's natural history and art museums, mobilizes a long-standing vocabulary of Gypsy parasitism, in part under the subheading "Voracious Immigrants from Europe," and throughout under the implicit threat of wholesale "extermination":

A band of immigrants, taken forcefully from Europe, escapes its captors and finds freedom in America. . . . Despite the best efforts of their enemies who try to destroy them, they continue to grow and spread out across the land, leaving their mark wherever they settle. This would be a wonderful story, one we might even identify with our own forefathers, if the band of immigrants weren't the dreaded gypsy moths, and the mark they left wasn't acre after acre of barren and dying trees. . . . Considering these questions may lead to a final, effective solution to the gypsy moth problem. . . . Even the most adamant environmentalist couldn't be blamed for wishing for the total extinction of the monsters who ravaged his yard. This makes it difficult to look at the wider picture of the gypsy moth—the picture of an insect out of its natural environment. . . . "Once the gypsy moth invades an area, the forest will never be the same." [Anatole Wilson, "The Gypsy Moths Are Here," *Carnegie Magazine* 60 (May-June 1991): 12-18]

These are, of course, precisely the same metaphors used to condemn the Gypsies in eighteenth-century Europe. Joseph Addison referred to them as "this Race of Vermin . . . this idle profligate people . . . [that] infect all the Countries of Europe, and live in the Midst of Governments in a kind of Commonwealth by themselves" (Joseph Addison, *The Spectator*, no. 130, 30 July 1711, in *The Spectator*, ed. Donald F. Bond, 5 vols. [London, 1965], 2:17). And a 1787 aphorism of a Lithuanian minister claims that "Gypsies in a well-ordered state are like vermin on an animal's body" (cited in Kendrick and Puxon, *The Destiny of Europe's Gypsies*, p. 28).

10. See for instance the overview of Gypsy struggles in contemporary Europe in Bernd Dörler, "All hassen die Zigeuner," *Der Spiegel*, 3 Sept. 1990, pp. 34-57, and also the report, a year later and markedly more racist in tone, of growing tensions between Gypsy refugees and the residents of a working-class Hamburg neighborhood in Ariane Barth, "Hier steigt eine Giftsuppe auf," *Der Spiegel*, 14 Oct. 1991, pp. 118-43.

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A picture in an old family album: two Gypsy girls, standing in the yard in ragged clothing, come to the house to sell their wild strawberries. As they look into the camera they are smiling, with shyness and—if family story is to be believed—with the sheer pleasure of having their picture taken for the first time. Taken during the 1920s, in the Bukovina district of Rumania, by a German woman, my grandmother's cousin Hetti, the photograph forms part of an extensive collection of domestic and "exotic" subjects: a bourgeois interior whose decor mixes German Biedermeier and Rumanian folklore; Hetti's three daughters bathing, dressing themselves up in borrowed peasant "costume," and sightseeing at nearby pilgrimage churches; travelling Gypsies with their wagons, a nomadic culture come to rest in a well-kept German backyard. So while this particular picture conveys freshness and spontaneity—the first picture ever taken of the two girls, a first contact between trusting Gypsies and sympathetic if curious Germans—the album as a whole and the handwritten annotation under this particular picture ("lustiges Zigeunerpack"; merry pack of Gypsies) suggests that the encounter is overlaid with a tradition of projection, prejudice, longing, and suspicion. The picture itself shows no high-spirited revelry. Nor do the two girls, with their polite, half-apprehensive smiles, form a literal mob or rabble: the word *Pack*, in German as in English, describes animal rather than human groups, implying that Gypsy social organization is primitive or subhuman, perhaps inherently criminal as well. If the photograph records a rapprochement, dissolving the social space separating the photographer and her subjects, the two words of the caption reestablish ironic or contemptuous distance, insisting on Gypsy life as debased and backward in character in order to forestall its unsettling allure.¹¹

At the time the picture was taken, in fact, the notion of a carefree Gypsy existence had special appeal for someone in the photographer's particular historical and political situation, as a German colonist uneasily "occupying" part of an increasingly nationalist and xenophobic Rumania. As a young woman, Hetti had come to Bucharest during the final phase of World War I, literally part of the German occupation forces, to work in a female morale-boosting unit that ministered not only to German officers but also to German settlers just released from Rumanian

11. For the problem of "meaning" and "context" in photography, see Allan Sekula, *Photography against the Grain* (Halifax, 1984); Martha Rosler, *Three Works* (Halifax, 1981); Hans Haake, *Framing and Being Framed: 7 Works, 1970-75* (New York, 1975); John Berger, *About Looking* (New York, 1980); Berger and Jean Mohr, *Another Way of Telling* (New York, 1982); Pierre Bourdieu et al., *Eine illegitime Kunst: Die sozialen Gebrauchsweisen der Photographie* (Frankfurt, 1983); Malek Alloula, *The Colonial Harem* (Minneapolis, 1986); and Abigail Solomon, *Photography at the Dock: Essays on Photographic History, Institutions and Practices* (Minneapolis, 1991).

internment. At one of their folkloric "Heimat Evenings," Hetti fell in love with one of these newly released German prisoners, deeply moved (as she wrote home in a letter announcing her marriage) by all he had suffered during his captivity. At the end of the war, when the Rumanian government expelled the German forces, Hetti too was threatened for a time with deportation. Eventually permitted to remain, she settled with her husband in a German village in Bukovina, a former Austro-Hungarian territory newly ceded to Rumania after prolonged fighting between Rumanian and Ukrainian troops. Long a contested border region and part of the Ottoman Empire until the late eighteenth century, the area remained strikingly multiethnic, even by Austro-Hungarian standards.¹² Yet although ethnic Germans made up only one tenth of the population, Bukovina's cultural life had been dominated by Vienna since the nineteenth century, and its many German enclaves (some dating back to the thirteenth century) boasted their own schools, newspapers, and theaters. For fifteen years, Hetti's family became part of this "German" community, as her husband built up a prosperous small business exporting local wood to piano manufacturers in Germany. By the mid-thirties, however, their situation had worsened so dramatically (under the economic pressures of the worldwide depression and the political pressures of a growing, explicitly anti-German, Rumanian nationalism, which from 1922 onwards had increasingly forced the closure of German institutions and eventually began forcing Germans out of public life as well) that the family emigrated back to Berlin. Now, decades later, Hetti's daughters say they were equally dissatisfied with the fascist nationalism that awaited them in Germany. Yet when they refer today to their traumatic uprooting from Rumania, long ago, they appropriate highly charged nationalist rhetoric, still quoting the imperative phrase Adolf Hitler had used, during the same era, to justify his annexations of German-speaking territories and his forced repatriation of ethnic Germans: "Heim ins Reich"—brought back home into the Reich.

Here as everywhere, family stories intersect continually with political history. Yet the family mythology rests on elegiac nostalgia and historical forgetfulness, a cult presided over by the photograph of the Gypsy girls and by Hetti's handwritten caption. In the wake of military, colonial, and cultural defeat, as borders are being redrawn and identities officially redesigned, a dislodged bourgeoisie that sees itself as the recurrent victim

12. See Amy Colin, *Paul Celan: Holograms of Darkness* (Bloomington, Ind., 1991), introduction and chap. 1; Sophie A. Welisch, "The Bukovina-Germans in the Interwar Period," *East European Quarterly* 14 (Winter 1980): 423-37; Wolfgang Miede, *Das Dritte Reich und die Deutsche Volksgruppe in Rumänien 1933-38: Beitrag zur nationalsozialistischen Volkstumspolitik* (Bern, 1972); and Gregor von Rezzori, *Memoirs of an Anti-Semite* (New York, 1991), an autobiography concerned with German life in interwar Bukovina.

of history longs for the loss of time, converting the historical, political, and ethnic complexities of their own situation into an idealizing envy of a Gypsy life seemingly outside of history and beyond the reach of the authorities. The dream of historylessness, the longing for historical oblivion, takes historical forms and has historical ramifications, however, in its very attempt to banish history from a world it recreates as idyllic. Now far away and lost from sight, the Gypsies are remembered as insouciantly happy. Nomadic and illiterate, they wander down an endless road, without a social contract or country to bind them, carrying their home with them, crossing borders at will. Hetti's daughters still remember vividly how afraid they were, as children, of their mother's threats that Gypsies would come and steal them away. When they reminisce today about Bukovina, however, quoting their mother's phrase, such fears no longer seem present to them in the moment of quotation. Left in their place is a generalized memory of well-being, homage to their long-dead mother and to the aptness of her phrase to encapsulate aspects of their own experience of Rumania, as small children allowed to swim naked and play in the mud and dress up in the costume of peasants.

The daughters seem, in other words, to remember themselves as that *lustiges Zigeunerpack*, still half-animal, half-savage, dirty, and happy. The function of nostalgia is to restore innocence, by covering over other memories, harsher realities of tension and hostility and fear: the mother's fear of expulsion, the father's memories of prison, the children's terror of being stolen away, never to be returned, their identity, memory, language lost forever. The picture, the caption, and the quotation turn that terror around and turn the viewer into a happy Gypsy. But to do so they must erase both the identities of the girls being photographed and the historical reality of Gypsy life, a story over the last millennium of persecution, expulsion, and prison sentences as much as carefree wandering. In much of present-day Rumania, in fact, Gypsies were held as slaves and serfs for several centuries, officially emancipated only in the 1850s. In Weimar Germany, during the decade in which the photograph itself was taken, a 1929 law made it a punishable offense for Gypsies to travel or live "as a horde"—that is, in any group larger than a nuclear family. And during the late 1930s, while Hetti's family struggled in a Berlin suburb to adjust to their new life in Germany (reminiscing over their old photograph albums), the Nazi government organized the large-scale internment, sterilization, deportation, and finally "extermination" of Gypsies throughout Central, Eastern, and Southeastern Europe, resulting by 1945 in at least six hundred thousand deaths, nearly one-third of all the Gypsies in Europe. Beginning in 1939, all the Gypsies in Germany were interned in regional labor and concentration camps, and in 1943 moved on to Auschwitz-Birkenau, where a special, separate "Gypsy family camp" housed Gypsies from eleven countries; by 1944, when the camp was dissolved at the approach of the Russian army, only a few

inmates had already died of hunger, exhaustion, and disease, and most of those who remained were sent to the gas chambers.¹³

During the initial roundup of German Sinti and Roma, no attempt seems to have been made to keep the fact or the purpose of the internment camps secret from anyone; they were reported on, editorialized, even joked about in local newspapers. One major internment camp, Marzahn, was established only twenty kilometers from Hetti's new home, on the outskirts of the capital city itself, its convenient location facilitating visits from psychologists and social workers who not only "studied" Gypsy life at close range, but even filmed emaciated Gypsy children at play on the grounds of the camp.¹⁴ Gypsy faces preserved forever as images and icons, although their actual bodies may soon be starved, sterilized, or gassed: in an idyllic interlude in Traugott Müller's 1942 film *Friedemann Bach* (loosely based on Albert Emil Brachvogel's mid-nineteenth-century novel of the same name, and shot simultaneously with the building of the special Gypsy camp at Auschwitz), the genial eighteenth-century composer who cannot find a place for his music in the courtly and ecclesiastical institutions of his time discovers solacing, if irresponsible freedom among a group of itinerant Gypsies as the last refuge of genius. Like Orpheus playing for the wild animals, Friedemann Bach even performs the music of his father, Johann Sebastian, to a spellbound Gypsy audience appreciative of the music's sheer brilliance at a time in which the rest of Germany has forgotten Bach's greatness. In its utopian invocation of a carefree and genial Gypsy existence circulating outside of history and transcending political and institutional constraints, the movie itself attempted to move its own war-worn German audience temporarily outside of their increasingly demoralized historical moment, during which, as it happens, the Nazis themselves were actively engaged in eliminating Gypsy freedom of movement. In a careful division of labor and an equally careful synchronization between the Third Reich's linked apparatuses of repression and representation, the two halves of the post-Enlightenment ideology of Gypsy alterity—feared as deviance, idealized as autonomy—are played out simultaneously but separately, making visible all its internal contradictions.

For if "the primitive person does not change and does not allow himself to be changed," as Robert Ritter argued in 1940 in favor of Gypsy sterilization, Nazi racialists were at once fascinated and threatened by

13. See Zimmermann, *Verfolgt, vertrieben, vernichtet*, pp. 18–39.

14. I owe much of this information to *Ich bin kein Berliner: Minderheiten in der Schule*, an excellent 1987 exhibit at the West Berlin Arbeitsgruppe Pädagogisches Museum. The Gypsies of Berlin had already been interned in Marzahn once before, for the entire duration of the 1936 Olympic Games. See Kenrick and Puxon, *The Destiny of Europe's Gypsies*, p. 71. See also Zimmermann, *Verfolgt, vertrieben, vernichtet*, pp. 18–39.

such "essentialism."¹⁵ "In contrast to the case of the Jews, mixed-blooded Gypsies were seen as socially 'inferior' to those of 'pure race'"; while the "mixed" group (some ninety percent of German Gypsies) were believed inherently criminal, beyond any social integration, the intact endogenous kinship organization of the "pure" nomadic Gypsies was held up as a *völkisch* ideal of cultural autonomy and racial segregation.¹⁶ The Nürnberg Racial Laws, and the first German wildlife protection laws, both enacted in 1935, were imbued with related thinking, as Himmler's initial plans for the Gypsies make clear, for they involved the simultaneous incarceration and sterilization of "mixed" Gypsies and the group resettlement and species preservation of "pure" Gypsies on special protected preserves.¹⁷ While most of these plans were never implemented (and different "categories" of Gypsies merged during the course of incarceration), the separate Gypsy camp within Auschwitz deliberately assigned the "work-dodging" Gypsy prisoners to the most debilitating labor details, while at the same time maintaining somewhat protected living conditions for them. Unlike any other prisoner group, they were not forced to have their heads shaved or to wear prison uniforms; they were allowed to remain in family groups and to keep their possessions—in short, to live, until 1944, some very distant semblance of their ordinary lives. In genocidal captivity, in the midst of a death camp, subject at will to medical experimentation, and prior to their own mass execution, Gypsies thus found themselves compelled to live out German fantasies of autonomy in ways only more concrete, more perverse, and much more painful than usual.¹⁸

Both in underlying premises and specific tactics, Nazi Gypsy policies show unmistakable continuities, up to the mouth of the gas chambers, with the "ordinary" persecutions of pre- and postwar European police procedures. Proposals for mass Gypsy internment, deportation, and eugenics were developed already in the late nineteenth century—as were

15. "The further birth of primitive asocials and members of criminal families should be stopped by the separation of the sexes or sterilization" (Robert Ritter, "Primitivität und Kriminalität," *Monatsschrift für Kriminalbiologie und Strafrechtsreform* 9 [1940]; quoted in Kenrick and Puxon, *The Destiny of Europe's Gypsies*, p. 66).

16. Streck, "Die 'Bekämpfung des Zigeunerunwesens,'" p. 77. See also Jerzy Ficowski, "Die Vernichtung," in *In Auschwitz vergast, bis heute verfolgt*, pp. 91–112, and Zimmermann, *Verfolgt, vertrieben, vernichtet*, esp. pp. 40–42. Kenrick and Puxon discuss related 1937 German proposals for Gypsy deportations to Abyssinia or Polynesia (*The Destiny of Europe's Gypsies*, p. 64).

17. For the parallels between the Nürnberg laws and the Nature Protection Laws (*Naturschutzgesetze*) see Streck, "Die 'Bekämpfung des Zigeunerunwesens,'" pp. 83, 87. Zimmermann points out, however, that the Nature Protection Laws simultaneously criminalized parts of the traditional Gypsy economy, since the raw materials for Gypsy basket-making, for instance, formerly had been taken from now-protected trees (Zimmermann, *Verfolgt, vertrieben, vernichtet*, p. 19).

18. On the complicated considerations behind the special conditions of the Gypsy family camp, see Zimmermann, *Verfolgt, vertrieben, vernichtet*, pp. 75–81.

various criminological specialties and institutions for "fighting the Gypsy pestilence," which (unlike many of their objects of study) survived in many cases, until well into the postwar period, virtually unchanged in method or in personnel. (Established in 1898, the Central Office for Combatting the Gypsy Menace, for instance, continued to function under that name until 1970. A number of German Gypsies who survived the camps of the Third Reich but whose identity papers were lost or impounded there, were ruled officially "stateless" by the *postwar* West German government, while a 1956 decision of the West German Supreme Court, declaring the Sinti Gypsies to be a criminal organization rather than an ethnic minority, implicitly justified the initial Nazi-era internments on criminological grounds.)¹⁹ Romani organizations are still fighting for official recognition of the Nazi persecution itself, whether in Germany for the same war crimes reparations long extended to members of other affected groups or, in the United States, for inclusion in the U.S. Holocaust Memorial.²⁰ If the initial Nazi roundups of the Gypsies met with indifference or approval from the public at large, the postwar revelation of their mistreatment, starvation, and massacre has still had remarkably little impact either on public attitudes or even on public policy.

During the Third Reich itself, while the Nazis had the power to stage their cultural fantasies quite literally, as living tableaux and as macabre theme parks, those without such means, officially on the "other side" of the war, or even caught themselves within the Nazi penal system, still could and did frame their own rhetorical equivalents. German-Jewish poet Gertrud Kolmar, assigned to forced labor in a factory along with Gypsies and other prisoners (and later to die in Auschwitz herself) thus writes in a 1941 letter of an uplifting "encounter" with a Gypsy coworker:

19. See Sozialdienst Katholischer Männer, "Bei Hitler waren wir wenigstens noch Deutsche," in *In Auschwitz vergast, bis heute verfolgt*, pp. 237-40; Rosh, *Das lustige Zigeunerleben*; Hancock, *The Pariah Syndrome*; and, more generally, Rainer Hagemann, *Die Bekämpfung des Zigeunerunwesens im Wilhelminischen Deutschland und in der Weimarer Republik, 1871-1933* (Frankfurt, 1987). In Switzerland, the Protestant organization Pro Juventute carried out the forcible "socialization" of Romani children from the 1920s to the mid-1970s. The children were literally kidnapped from the parents, impressed with the information that their parents had died or abandoned them, and raised as orphans. See Mariella Mehr, "Jene, die auf nirgends verbriefte Rechte pochen: Zigeuner in der Schweiz," in *In Auschwitz vergast, bis heute verfolgt*, pp. 274-78.

20. Hancock chronicles the long struggles of Gypsy representatives with the governing board of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council both over "whether Gypsies really did constitute a distinct ethnic population" and over whether, as Elie Wiesel claimed, the Holocaust was "essentially a Jewish event . . . the Jewish people alone were destined to be totally annihilated, they alone were totally alone" (Hancock, *The Pariah Syndrome*, pp. 81, 80). While in absolute terms, a much smaller number of Gypsies than Jews were killed in Nazi camps, Hancock points out that the relative proportion of each population killed was

A brief little incident was recently of help to me. In the locker room during the breakfast break . . . I sat all alone on a bench with a young Gypsy woman, who did nothing, said nothing, only gazed unmoving out into the desolate factory yard. . . . I watched her, she didn't have that sharp Gypsy face with the restless, gleaming eyes; her features were soft, more Slavic, she was also relatively light skinned. . . . And on her face lay not just the apathy, the acquiescence of animals, of old draught-horses, that certainly, but also much more: an impenetrable closedness, a silence, a distance, which could not be reached by any word, any glance from the outside world. . . . And I recognized that this is the thing I always wanted to have, and yet didn't quite, because if I did, nothing and no one besides me could affect me.²¹

The effect of this description is to transform a fellow prisoner into a living allegory of an alterity both resistant and subhuman. Kolmar represents the Gypsy's mode of suffering as simultaneously stolid and stoical, a full, uncomprehending surrender to the crushing conditions of captivity ("did nothing, said nothing, only gazed unmoving . . . the apathy, the acquiescence of animals") and a complete mastery of them, a deliberate and unbreakable dignity ("an impenetrable closedness, a silence, a distance, which could not be reached by any word"). In the meantime, of course, Kolmar's process of idealization excludes any reciprocity as well as any expression of solidarity; the rhetorical framing of this encounter prevents it precisely from becoming an actual encounter at all. The still of the locker room cannot be broken; the Gypsy woman "could not be reached by any word," even if one were to be uttered. Kolmar's description transforms the Gypsy woman into a dumb animal, whose strength lies in her oblivion and in her silence. And it isolates her and removes her from a common captivity, in order to put her into a separate Gypsy camp, where the spectacle of her exemplary fortitude under suffering becomes a source of strength and inner liberation for the spectator. Like the caption of Hetti's picture, Kolmar's description makes visible a microracism; the fact that its process of objectification is bound up in simultaneous idealization does little to obviate the immediate or enduring consequences of the distance it reinforces.

Idealization, objectification; sympathetic picture, denigrating caption; exemplary autonomy, feared alterity: what constitutes the mythology of Gypsy life is the tension between two simultaneous, mutually contradictory yet continually coexisting moments—memory and amnesia. Even the most comprehensive postwar attempt to come to terms with the legacy of German racism, East German writer Franz Fühmann's 1962 autobiography, *Das Judenauto: Vierzehn Tage aus zwei Jahrzehnten* [*The Jew Car: Fourteen Days from Two Decades*], proves to be built on a displacement

21. Gertrud Kolmar, letter of 23 Oct. 1941, *Weibliches-Bildnis: Sämtliche Briefe* (Frankfurt, 1977), p. 75.

and specularization of Gypsy life. In every other respect the book is without precedent in German letters for its intense, precise attention to German history as colonial domination, to the micropolitics of historical consciousness and historical denial, and to the political and historical supports of the *Bildungsroman* as genre. His life story begins by linking the rise of anti-Semitic mythologizing among schoolchildren in 1929 to the effects of the worldwide depression, and goes on to analyze the German "liberation" of the Sudetenland (*Heim ins Reich*), the invasion of the Soviet Union, and the German occupation of the Ukraine. Held in 1945 as Soviet prisoners of war and confronted with the defeat of a German imperialism that has become the ground of their identity, Fühmann and his fellow prisoners declare their intention to retreat from all politics completely and forever, "with great radicalness jumping out of history itself."²² Yet the book ends by describing a political reeducation through which Fühmann embraces a Marxist conception of history, the book itself becoming, in retrospect, a model for this process as it works through and discards a series of static, racist myths to embrace a new, teleological model of development from the first memories of infancy towards political consciousness.

Fühmann's own earliest memories, which opened the book, are of the Gypsies—or rather almost of them, for he strains to remember:

How far back does remembering go? A warm green, that must be the earliest picture in my memory: the green of a tile stove, around whose upper rim the relief of a Gypsy camp is supposed to have run; but I only know that from my mother's tales, no effort of the brain will bring this picture back to me. But I have retained the green, a warm bottle green with a dull gloss. Whenever I summon this green before my eyes I can feel myself hanging in the air high above the floor: I could, Mother has told me, only see the Gypsies when Father lifted me, a two year old boy, up into the air.²³

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22. Franz Fühmann, *Das Judenauto: Vierzehn Tage aus zwei Jahrzehnten* [*The Jew Car: Fourteen Days from Two Decades*] (1962; Leipzig, 1987), p. 138.

23. *Ibid.*, p. 5. Although a famous contemporary East German novel, Johannes Bobrowski's 1964 *Levins Mühle* [*Levin's Mill*], makes more satisfactory use of Gypsy material in developing new ways to analyze racist formations in general and German imperialism in particular, the rhetorical opposition between teleological progression and the anarchic isolationism of Gypsy society continued to be a commonplace of political discourse in the GDR as in the West. Thus in the most famous East German socialist realist "production novel," Erik Neutsch's *Spur der Steine* [*Path of Stones*] (Halle, 1964), a key argument between the Party secretary and a resisting farmer about the need for agricultural collectivization turns on a metaphorical opposition between Gypsies and Communists; those isolated by their own animal regressiveness and those who advance material progress for all (pp. 346–47). The contrast between those who circulate endlessly and those who through their own labor create a lasting place for themselves is in many ways the structuring opposition of the book as a whole. The *Bildungsroman* of an itinerant construction worker whose pride in his craft and anarchic political attitudes yield to socialist goals and activist accomplishments, *Spur*

In a book otherwise so self-consciously and panoramically about the history and the psychology of political persecution, this is the sole mention of the Gypsies. Fühmann's placement of the Gypsies as the limit case of psychopolitical working-through, as the point at which political memory continually fails and is continually grasped at, is both highly poignant and highly problematic: his own book has both given them pride of place and almost forgotten their inclusion. Given the chronological, cumulative structure of the book, Fühmann's opening passage (with its Gypsies glimpsed travelling along the stove's border) represents the primal scene of European historical memory and the foundational moment in the history of European racism as well. But the memory of the Gypsies also marks for Fühmann the beginning and the end of the earliest phase of psychological and social development, which must be strained at to be remembered at all: the earliest blurred phase of undifferentiation ("a warm green") and the first ontological awareness of separation and autonomy, as the infant is lifted up above the family, suspended above the familiar room. Bukovina is here lost and found all over again, as the Gypsy frieze reflects one's own face and as an autonomy gained through displacement is conflated with the historical origins of human memory in an inchoate animal existence. Lifted up and out of history, the Gypsies themselves are reinstated only as a memory problem: the strength of forgetfulness, the struggle to remember.

2

Among the peoples of Europe there is one which rose up quite suddenly one day, without anyone being able to say exactly where it had sprung from. It descended upon our continent without evincing the slightest desire of conquest; and without even demanding any right of permanent residence. It had evidently no desire to appropri-

der Steine takes its metaphorical title phrase from its hero's realization that his years as a peripatetic journeyman working on construction sites across the country in fact add up to a commitment and contribution to the rebuilding of East Germany. Random wanderings become in retrospect a teleological path towards political engagement; worthless Gypsy becomes value-producing Red.

Even as late as Christoph Hein's 1985 novel *Horns Ende* (in which the yearly arrival of a band of Gypsies to winter in a small East German town, the yearly attempts of local officials to make them move on, and their eventual permanent departure become the means of reconstructing a sketchy but implicitly critical account of postwar social and political dynamics) the Gypsies serve a mainly metaphorical function, both as place markers in the town's political chronicle and as catalysts for the town's plots and self-examinations. Indeed although the book repeatedly draws attention to the fact that the Gypsies suspended their visits to the town during the war years, the fact of their persecution and internment under the Nazis is never made explicit; instead, the novel's "official" victims of the Third Reich are a family affected by its euthanasia laws.

ate one single inch of land; but, on the other hand, it set its face completely against the grant of an hour's service to anyone. Without any idea of subjugating others, it would not itself be subjugated. . . . It neither looked back to any remembrance, nor forward to any hope. It refused all possible benefits which might attach to colonisation; and was apparently too vain of its sad race to condescend to mingle with any other.

It seems only to continue to exist because it absolutely refuses to cease to do so; refusing also to be anything but what it is actually, and permitting no influence, no prescription, no persecution, and no instruction either to modify, dissolve or extirpate it.

To our eyes this people seems to lead what is practically an animal existence; in the sense that it has neither any knowledge nor interest in anything beyond itself. Ages may come and go, the world may travel on, the countries which shelter it may be either at war or at peace, they may change their masters or transform their customs; but to all these events it remains impassible and indifferent.

It is one which does not itself know either whence it came or whither it is going . . . preserving no tradition and registering no annals. A race having neither any religion nor any law, any definite belief or any rule of conduct; holding together only by gross superstition, vague custom, constant misery and profound abasement; yet obstinately persisting, in spite of all degradations and deprivations, in keeping its tents and its rags, its hunger and its liberty.

It is a people which exercises on civilised nations a fascination as hard to describe as to destroy; passing, as it does, like some mysterious legacy, from age to age; and one which, though of ill-repute, appeals to our greatest poets by the energy and charm of its types.

—FRANZ LISZT, *The Gipsy in Music* (1859)

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Decades after the persecution of the Gypsies under the Third Reich, Gypsy life remains in the popular imagination as a carefree, defiant, disruptive alternative to a Western culture at once humanized by its history and restrained by the discipline of its own civilization. Moving through civil society, the Gypsies apparently remain beyond reach of everything that constitutes Western identity, as Franz Liszt's influential mid-nineteenth-century summary suggests: outside of historical record and historical time, outside of Western law, the Western nation state, and Western economic orders, outside of writing and discursivity itself. All the Gypsies have, all they need, all they know is their own collectivity, which survives all odds and persecutions, as if their identity inheres in their very blood. Despite their self-containment, paradoxically, the Gypsies' wildness is highly contagious, as their arrival in a new place initiates and figures a crisis for Enlightenment definitions of civilization and nationalist definitions of culture. Here, in the Gypsy camp, is a culture without "culture," transmission without "tradition"—self-knowledge and collective amnesia side by side. And yet the Gypsies, in their very presence, are a self-continuity

that transcends context and time, they seem able to remove and replace the memory of others at will. Those who join them—whether as stolen children, "scholar-gypsies," or willing or resistant fellow travellers—seem not only to forget who they are but to lose all sense of time; indeed what literary characters who meet the Gypsies seem to notice first is that time immediately slows down or stands still.

Compact, transportable, self-perpetuating, the tropes of racism express the same essentializing beliefs again and again in widely diverging situations and for a whole range of reasons; they are historically charged and fraught even as they enact a denial of history. The specifics of the Gypsy ideology in post-Enlightenment Europe both problematize and reinforce traditional theorizations of ideology itself. The static resting point suggested by Marx's camera obscura does not capture the diffuse location of the ideology in Hetti's picture, at once utopian photograph, cynical caption, and a practice of citation both historically inflected and resistant to all historical pressures. At the same time, Western thinking about the Gypsies manifests itself quite literally as false consciousness: an obsession with memory is visible mainly as amnesia, a need for continuity staged as moments of frozen suspension. The difficulty is to give an account that addresses both the stasis and fluidity of an ideology, the obviousness and subtlety of its logic, its monolithic instantiations and its quotidian performance, its continuities and transformations over time.

"He who wants to enslave you," a Romani proverb runs, "will never tell you the truth about your forefathers."²⁴ One of the far-reaching consequences of the European myth of the Gypsies—on several levels about the erasure of history and the struggle to preserve memory—has been the obliteration of a people's actual and tragic history. Its reconstruction now remains daunting, both from factual and formal points of view. As Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari remind us, "History is always written from a sedentary point of view and in the name of a unitary State apparatus, at least a possible one, even when the topic is nomads. What is lacking is a Nomadology, the opposite of a history."²⁵ But while in many ways the point is admirably appropriate for the Gypsies, theirs is also a case in which an articulated unitary history remains largely missing, while all too many nomadologies have already been attempted. If the account that follows—assembling and piecing together dispersed materials on the one hand, and on the other retelling familiar political and literary histories from the perspective of the Gypsy ideology—aims only at characterizing generalizations, it is framed in the hope that such basic work may make possible far more adequate accounts and perhaps, finally, true nomadologies as well.

24. Cited by Hancock, *The Pariah Syndrome*, p. 2.

25. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis, 1987), p. 23.

The Romani left northern India, Ian Hancock has argued, between 800 and 950, probably as soldiers, camp followers, or prisoners of war; moving through Byzantium, they settled in the Balkans after 1100. In the fourteenth century, Gypsy slavery was instituted in Moldavia and Wallachia, and at least half the Romani were enslaved. Behind the much-metaphorized phenomenon of Gypsy nomadism lies this history of Gypsy slavery, for the rest escaped bondage only by entering into a repeated diaspora and an increasingly nomadic existence throughout northern, central, and southern Europe.²⁶ Continually held to be marauding Tartars, Muslims, or Turkish spies, and feared for their skin color, unfamiliar language, and customs, they encountered persecution and pogroms virtually wherever they travelled or tried to settle. Officially banished from Spain at the end of the fifteenth century (as they were repeatedly from England, France, and a host of Italian and German states up through the sixteenth century), transported Romani were among early settlers of the European colonies in North and South America, the West Indies, Africa, and even India itself. As late as 1802, French authorities in the Basque region organized a mass expulsion of Romani to the coast of Africa. If the racial and cultural alterity of the Gypsies continued, for white Europeans, to embody the threat of the non-West, it also helped to provide a practical rationale for imperialist expansion as well, as new colonies immediately became dumping grounds for undesired peoples.²⁷

In many parts of Germany, the Romani continued to stand under automatic sentence of death until well into the eighteenth century, and they were, in isolated instances, still being hunted for sport as late as the 1830s. In Hungary a group of forty Gypsies, groundlessly accused of murdering and cannibalizing several dozen peasants, were tortured and executed in 1782, only to be exonerated posthumously by Joseph II himself. By the 1760s and 1770s, indeed, the enlightened despotism of Austria-Hungary's rulers included attempts to mandate the forced settlement and assimilation of Gypsies into the empire and its labor force through laws forbidding traditional language, dress, diet, and occupations, and mandating conscription, religious training, settlement in permanent dwellings, and the removal of Romani children from their parents to be raised as "New Hungarian" agricultural workers. Underfunded and meeting with sustained resistance, both from the Gypsies themselves and from the people they were to settle among, the program (like parallel attempts in Germany and Spain) failed almost completely.²⁸

26. See Hancock, *The Pariah Syndrome*, pp. 7-36.

27. See Hancock, *The Pariah Syndrome*; Hohmann, *Geschichte der Zigeunerverfolgung in Deutschland*; and Sárosi, *Gypsy Music*, pp. 11-22.

28. See Sárosi, *Gypsy Music*, pp. 18ff. Kenrick and Puxon report similar cannibalism charges brought in 1927 against a group of Slovakian Gypsies and eventually, after the group had been brought to trial, dismissed as without foundation. See Kenrick and Puxon, *The Destiny of Europe's Gypsies*, p. 33. See also Hohmann, *Geschichte der Zigeunerverfolgung in*

In Britain, similarly, judiciary and constabulary worked systematically until the late eighteenth century to "eradicate Gypsies from [the] country by transportation, banishment and execution," with a collective public hanging in 1780 serving as a "symbolic watermark that signalled the end of the excessively severe persecution."²⁹ Thereafter, David Mayall argues, state and church began more pragmatic attempts to contain, reform, or assimilate a population increasingly accepted as an inevitable social burden. As late eighteenth-century literature records with almost seismographic precision, it is at this historical and political juncture—as overt hunting-down gave way to less lethal forms of social control—that the social "meaning" of the Gypsies rapidly acquired new contours and density, attracting increased attention with every decade.

In the prior literary depictions of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, Gypsies appear as good-hearted if ingenious thieves, as "band[s] of lawless vagrants" and a "race of vermin," as Joseph Addison put it, and as fortunetellers delivering messages of questionable import and motive.³⁰ In the world of the picaresque, of course, the Gypsies are only one among many groups of travellers, most similarly dependant on various forms of petty crime. Through the mid-eighteenth century (when the narrator of the "autobiographical" *Apology for the Life of Bamfylde-Moore Carew, King of the Gypsies* [1745] claims not only to have joined the Gypsies but to have been chosen as their leader) they are seen as a racially and culturally cohesive group that nonetheless welcomes all seeking initiation; indeed, they are of particular interest to Carew as to Henry Fielding (in *Tom Jones* [1749]) for their democratic social organization, led by elected, not hereditary, leaders.

Deutschland, pp. 52ff. for the eighteenth-century settlement attempts in Austria-Hungary and Germany.

29. Mayall, *Gypsy-Travellers in Nineteenth-Century Society*, p. 97. Hohmann makes a similar point about early nineteenth-century German policy, which shifted, he argues, from *Verfolgung* [persecution] to *Fürsorge* [social programs]. See Hohmann, *Geschichte der Zigeunerverfolgung in Deutschland*, p. 52.

30. Addison, *The Spectator*, no. 130, 2:17. See Gil Vicente, *Auto das Ciganas* (1521); Miguel Cervantes, "La Gitanilla," in *Novelas Exemplares* (1613); Ben Jonson, *The Gypsies Metamorphos'd* (1621); Thomas Middleton and Nicolas Rowley, *The Spanish Gypsy* (1623); Samuel Pepys's diaries of the 1660s; Molière, *Le Mariage forcé* (1664); Johann (Hans) Jakob Christoffel von Grimmelshausen, *The Runagate Courage* (1670); John Gay, *The Shepherd's Week* (1714); Daniel Defoe, *The Life, Adventures, and Piracies of the Famous Captain Singleton* (1720); Samuel Richardson, *Pamela; or, Virtue Rewarded* (1740); Voltaire, *Essai sur les moeurs et l'esprit des nations* (1756); and Oliver Goldsmith, *The Vicar of Wakefield* (1766). For overviews of the literature on the Gypsies in Eastern and Western Europe, see Sárosi, *Gypsy Music*; Marilyn Brown, *Gypsies and Other Bohemians: The Myth of the Artist in Nineteenth-Century France* (Ann Arbor, Mich., 1985); Hohmann, *Geschichte und Geschichten der Zigeuner* (Darmstadt, 1981); and *The Wind on the Heath: A Gypsy Anthology*, ed. John Sampson (London, 1930).

Already in Fielding's "Inquiry into the Causes of the Late Increase of Robbers" (1751), however, the free movement of Gypsies and other itinerants has come to seem irreconcilable with their legal accountability; in his capacity as magistrate, Fielding ends his discussion "Of Laws Relating to Vagabonds" with the ambivalent recommendation that the poor be forced to remain in place, compelled "to starve or beg at home; for there it will be impossible for them to steal or rob without being presently hanged or transported out of the way."³¹ If the subsequent rise of European nationalisms, in identifying peoples in historical relationship to place, would redefine civil society to exclude Gypsies from being part of the nation or forming a distinct nation themselves, already these earlier reconsiderations of the poor laws, reacting to the large-scale social displacements of enclosure, gave renewed stress to the indigent's place of origin. As the poor were thus forcibly reanchored, the anomalous social position of the Gypsies began to seem to be the result both of their mysterious collective origin in the non-West and of the birth of individual Gypsies in transit, where they remained uncounted by parish records. From the standpoint of an emerging bureaucracy, the Gypsies' perennial "homelessness" thus became at once an innate failing and a virtually irreparable state.

In the wake of Enlightenment policing and *grandes enfermements*, the Gypsies were left one of the few groups still travelling, and they struck settled men-of-letters with increasing, confused distaste as willfully deviant. William Cowper's account in *The Task* (1785) of the "vagabond and useless tribe" thus moves from the opacity of their origins ("a tawny skin / The vellum of the pedigree they claim") to moralize what he sees as their choice of a fundamentally unproductive life:

Strange! that a creature rational, and cast
In human mould, should brutalize by choice
His nature; and, though capable of arts
By which the world might profit, and himself,
Self-banish'd from society, prefer
Such squalid sloth to honourable toil!³²

The 1775 letter on the periodic visits of "two gangs or hordes of gypsies which infest the south and west of England" in Gilbert White's *The Natu-*

31. Henry Fielding, "Inquiry into the Causes of the Late Increase of Robbers," sec. 6, "Of Laws Relating to Vagabonds," *Works*, ed. Leslie Stephen, 10 vols. (London, 1882), 7:241. This new view of the Gypsies does not immediately displace the previous one, of course. Thus while Charles Johnstone's *Chrysal, or the Adventures of a Guinea* (1760) initiates a new phase in the picaresque's obsession with circulation (here juxtaposing monetary, social, and sexual circuits), the Gypsies still appear quite neutrally and nonethnically, merely part of the vast throng of travellers and transmitters.

32. William Cowper, "The Task," bk. 1, ll. 559, 568-69, 574-79, *The Poetical Works of William Cowper*, ed. H. S. Milford (Oxford, 1905), 141.

ral History of Selbourne is similarly preoccupied by the place "those peculiar people" occupy between the categories of history and of nature, then undergoing mutual revision in White's hands as in European culture at large. The Gypsies' "harsh gibberish" seems to bear "amidst their cant and corrupted dialect many mutilated remains" of an Egyptian or possibly Greek origin. Yet if they may, amazingly enough, be descended from the classical civilizations of the Mediterranean, "these sturdy savages" insist on leading an existence as close as possible to that of the animals, as proven by the young girl who horrifies White by giving birth out-of-doors, in his own rain-drenched garden.³³

Until the mid-eighteenth century, the Gypsies presented not only a social policy problem for European magistrates but also (like the "Persians" or "Chinese" beloved of the period's utopian satire) an interesting alternative form of political and social organization. For a late eighteenth century that ranked cultures by hierarchized developmental stages, the Gypsies were, instead, a people who insisted, inexplicably, on remaining "nature" rather than entering "history." Agreed in reading the Gypsies as more deliberate agents and their acts as self-conscious refusals of state authority, the romantics and other early nineteenth-century authors bifurcate, along predictable political lines, between those who still seem to harbor eighteenth-century fears for the forces of civilization—contact creating contagion—and those who celebrate in the Gypsies a community united by a love of liberty and a tradition of political resistance.³⁴ In

33. Gilbert White, *The Natural History of Selbourne*, ed. Richard Mabey (1788; Harmondsworth, 1977), p. 179.

34. For early nineteenth-century anxieties about Gypsies as a social force, see for instance William Wordsworth, "Beggars" (1802), Hannah More, "Tawney Rachel, or the Fortune Teller" (1797), Achim (Ludwig Joachim) von Arnim, *Isabella von Ägypten: Kaiser Karl des Fünften erste Jugendliebe* (1812), and George Crabbe, "The Lover's Journey" (1812). For parallel idealization or political championing of the Gypsies, see Washington Irving, *Bracebridge Hall* (1822); John Galt, *Sir Andrew Wylie of That Ilk* (1822); Mary Russell Mitford, *Our Village: Sketches of Rural Character and Scenery*, 5 vols. (1824-32); William Hazlitt, "On Manner" (1815), "On Going on a Journey" (1822), and "On Personal Identity" (1828); Nicolaus Lenau, "Die Drei Zigeuner" (1838), and John Clare's numerous Gypsy poems, which span his writing life, from "The Gipsies Evening Breeze" in the 1810s, "The Gipseys Camp" and "The Gipsy" of 1820, and "The Gipsy Camp" (1840) to the late poems ("The Camp," "The Gipsy Lass," and "The Bonney Gipsy") written from Northampton Asylum, from whose captivity, as Clare reports in a journal of 1841, some Gypsies offer to help him escape. If a Gypsy chorus, singing a Christopher Marlowe song, forms the idyllic background to Clare's most self-consciously literary work, the Elizabethan pastoral "Excursion with 'the Angler,'" with its cameo appearances by Isaak Walton, Sir Walter Raleigh, John Donne, George Herbert, Richard Hooker, et al., ethnographic passages in Clare's *Autobiography* also record sustained friendships with Gypsy travellers, observations about their cultural values, and a stinging condemnation of their treatment at the hands of the British judiciary. Percy Bysshe Shelley's equally sympathetic personal encounters with Gypsies are recorded in Thomas Jefferson Hogg, *Life of Shelley*, 2 vols. (1855; London, 1933), 1:144-47. See also Thomas Moore's drama, *The Gypsy Prince* (1801); Ruskin, "The Gypsies" (1840); and John W. Galt, "The Gypsies" (1853).

Wordsworth's 1807 "Gypsies," the narrator (passing at evening the same encampment as at morning) thus anxiously moralizes a now-familiar contrast between the static, "torpid life" of the "outcasts of society" and his own productive use of time.³⁵ John Clare's 1825 "The Gipsy's Song," in contrast, presents "gipsy liberty" both as a spontaneous *Jacquerie* opposing the disciplining mechanisms of the modern state and as insistence on a traditional liberty still inhering in the English landscape despite all attempts at enclosure:

We pay to none or rent or tax,
And live untithed and free. . . .

Bad luck to tyrant magistrates,
And the gipsies' camp still free

And while the ass that bears our camp
Can find a common free,
Around old England's heaths we'll tramp
In gipsy liberty.³⁶

If until now the Gypsies have been used to allegorize alternative state forms, archaic stages of society, or specific political struggles, Walter Scott and Jane Austen's contrasting approaches to Gypsy material together inaugurate new kinds of social allegory, with wide-ranging political and aesthetic implications. In Scott's *Guy Mannering* (1815), incidents of violence perpetrated on and then by Gypsies generate a parable of tradition and modernity, in whose course concrete political anxieties about enclosure and the expansion of state authority are displaced into a myth of lost

35. On Wordsworth's "Gypsies" see David Simpson, *Wordsworth's Historical Imagination: The Poetry of Displacement* (New York, 1987), esp. pp. 44–47, but also Hazlitt's comical invective against the poem's hypocrisy, by linking Gypsy and poetic license:

Mr Wordsworth, who has written a sonnet to the King on the good that he has done in the last fifty years, has made an attack on a set of gypsies for having done nothing in four and twenty hours. . . . We did not expect this turn from Mr Wordsworth, whom we had considered as the prince of poetical idlers, and patron of the philosophy of indolence, who formerly insisted on our spending our time 'in a wise passiveness. . . .' [T]he gypsies are the only living monuments of the first ages of society. They are an everlasting source of thought and reflection on the advantages and disadvantages of the progress of civilisation: they are a better answer to the cotton manufactories than Mr. W. has given in the *Excursion*. [Hazlitt, "On Manner" (1815), *Complete Works of William Hazlitt* (New York, 1967), 4:45–46 n. 2]

36. Clare, "The Gipsy's Song," *Selected Poems* (London, 1975), pp. 208–10. Clare's *Autobiography* is equally explicit in linking enclosure and the fate of Gypsy life: "There [are] not so many of them with us as there used to be. The Enclosure has left nothing but narrow lands where they are ill-provided with a lodging" (*The Prose of John Clare*, ed. J. W. and Anne Tibble [London, 1951], p. 38). On Clare's relationship to enclosure more generally, see John Barrell, *The Ideal of Landscape and the Sense of Place 1730–1840: An Approach to the Poetry of John Clare* (Cambridge, 1972).

social origins, imagined contradictorily as consisting both in a state of free circulation and in the sustaining bonds of feudal alliances. In Austen's *Emma* (1816), in contrast, a violent incident perpetrated by Gypsies inaugurates a meditation on authorial and literary memory in whose course social anxieties about Gypsy alterity are displaced into a textual register where they linger as problems of transmission and narration. Between these two poles, social fable and textual trace, the Gypsies turn into their own memory problem.

Guy Mannering announces the derivation of its Gypsy plot from a "true" historical incident at the threshold of the Enlightenment: Adam Smith's near-kidnapping in infancy by strolling tinkers, before a rescuing uncle proved himself "the happy instrument" (as Smith's late eighteenth-century biographer Dugald Stewart formulates it) "of preserving to the world a genius, which was destined, not only to extend the boundaries of science, but to enlighten and reform the commercial policy of Europe."³⁷ In Stewart's 1795 account, the Gypsies are still simply a force of social regression that can barely be prevented from carrying off, in the person of Smith, the future history and progress of Europe. In Scott's novel, however, Gypsies kidnap a young lord only in revenge for his father's "improvements" and enclosures which (synchronous and parallel, as the subplot makes clear, with the consolidation of British conquest in India) have intensified the gap between property holders and the propertyless, and effected the eviction or *enfremement* of the whole folk community. Thus the subsequent attempts of the Gypsy captors to erase the identity and memory of their aristocratic hostage are depicted as a reaction to a prior aristocratic loss of memory, a deliberate, cynical amnesia about feudal obligations that made drastic repressions possible. In *Guy Mannering*, the forced wandering and antisocial behavior of the Gypsies thus comes to figure as the original displacement, and first price, of modernity. As Peter Garside argues, it figures simultaneously as the original dislocation of imperialism, since the novel's Indian subplot brings together linguists' dawning realization of the Gypsies' Indian origin, and contemporary political debate over the deleterious social and economic consequences of the Western property laws forcibly introduced into British-ruled Bengal.³⁸ If for Smith and Stewart, the Gypsies represent a force of histor-

37. Dugald Stewart, "Account of the Life and Writings of Adam Smith, LL. D." (1795), ed. J. S. Ross, in Adam Smith, *Essays on Philosophical Subjects*, ed. W. P. D. Wightman and J. C. Bryce, vol. 3 of *The Glasgow Edition of the Works and Correspondence of Adam Smith*, ed. D. D. Raphael and A. S. Skinner, 6 vols. (Oxford, 1980), p. 270. A comparable French legend reports that seventeenth-century engraver Jacques Callot ("Bohemians on the March," ca. 1622) had briefly lived with the Gypsies as a child. See *The Wind on the Heath*, p. 340 n. 100.

38. See Peter Garside, "Meg Merilees, India and the Gypsies," paper delivered at the International Sir Walter Scott Conference, Edinburgh, 16 Aug. 1991. Sárosi (*Gypsy Music*, p. 12) gives a summary history of the scholarly investigation, from the 1770s onwards, into the links between Gypsy and Indian cultures, a link that Hazlitt also suggests in "On Man-

ical regression, for Scott they come to represent both the traditional and the colonial unconscious of an industrializing, imperialist Europe—the trace memory of the traumatic cost of improvement and expansion.³⁹

Austen glosses and reworks a different facet of late eighteenth-century Gypsy reception: its almost hysterical moralism in the face of Gypsy intransigence. In the brief but famous episode in *Emma*, a group of Gypsy children, on a lonely stretch of road, harass a young “gentlewoman,” herself made socially vulnerable by her somewhat mysterious provenance. The actual danger presented by contact with the Gypsies passes almost immediately; the woman is rescued by an acquaintance who happens to be passing, his timing at once “a most fortunate chance” and anchored in a myriad of everyday habits and errands. But the episode continues to color everyday perception long after it is over, lingering obsessively in the memory of a few characters until it threatens their trust in memory itself:

The gipsies did not wait for the operations of justice; they took themselves off in a hurry. The young ladies of Highbury might have walked again in safety before their panic began, and the whole history dwindled soon into a matter of little importance but to Emma and her nephews:—in her imagination it maintained its ground; and Henry and John were still asking every day for the story of Harriet and the gipsies, and still tenaciously setting her right if she varied in the slightest particular from the original recital.⁴⁰

In the wake of the Gypsies’ disruptive passage, special care must be taken to hold on to a history that exists only as an oral tradition: the psychic trauma of social violence is subsumed into a narratological compulsion to repeat. And the movement here from Gypsies who appear as actual (if threatening) characters to a lingering narrative anxiety about the Gypsies as shadowy, haunting discursive figures parallels the main shift of “Gypsy” literature in the nineteenth century from political allegory into memory problem and from self-contained social group into self-contained literary

ner” through his juxtaposition of Gypsies and “Hindoos.” See *Complete Works of William Hazlitt*, 4:45–46.

39. For nineteenth-century reaction to and rewriting of Scott’s Gypsy plot, see the intense discussion of Gypsy origins, life-style, and crimes throughout the first year of *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine* (Apr. 1817–Apr. 1818); see also John Keats, “Old Meg She Was a Gypsy” (1818), and Ruskin, “Notes upon Gipsy Character” (1885).

40. Jane Austen, *Emma* (1816; Harmondsworth, 1966), p. 333. See also the related passages from the 1836–37 diaries of the future Queen Victoria, in which she details her sentimental encounters with “such a nice set of Gipsies, so quiet, so affectionate to one another . . . so discreet, not at all forward or importunate . . . and so grateful,” and concludes with a vow that “the place and spot may be forgotten, but the Gipsy family Cooper will never be

chronotope, as overt meditations on progress give way to ever more oblique reflections on literary form and literary autonomy.

From the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Gypsies are, for instance, a mainstay of the new genre of the fantastic, with its pivotal tension between enlightened and superstitious worldviews and its own habitual specularization of political anxieties into epistemological ones. In Jan Potocki’s 1803 *The Saragossa Manuscript* (which for Tzvetan Todorov is the “book which magisterially inaugurates the period of the fantastic narrative” and the genre’s quintessential example),⁴¹ detailed encounters with Spanish Gypsies, like parallel encounters with Jews and Arabs, will prove literally phantasmagoric; the specters of three cultures long since expelled as infidel return not as political ghosts but as epistemological uncertainty, the vehicles—or mirages—of diabolical forces. And if, in 1773, Goethe’s *Götz von Berlichingen* already seeks in the Gypsy camp a temporary respite from the world-historical clashes and transformations that the rest of this ground-breaking “historical drama” is intent on mapping, the appearance of the Gypsy fortune-teller in Heinrich von Kleist’s *Michael Kohlhaas* (1808) interrupts the historical chronicling of a populist campaign against despotic civil authority to shift *the tale itself* into the different generic mode of the fairy tale. The illusion of progression through historical time is broken by a figure who lives outside of history, and who brings magical timelessness with her into the narrative.⁴²

So if the Gypsies are increasingly reduced to a textual effect, their chronotope increasingly exerts a decisive power over the temporal cohesion of the text itself. Everywhere the Gypsies appear in nineteenth-century narratives, they begin to hold up ordinary life, inducing local amnesias or retrievals of cultural memory, and causing blackouts or flashbacks in textual, historical, and genre memory as well. Such “time-banditry” will find one terminus, at the end of the century, in Hanns Gross’s foundational text of central European criminology. Gypsies plan-

41. Tzvetan Todorov, *The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre*, trans. Richard Howard (1970; Ithaca, N.Y., 1975), p. 27; Potocki is also the book’s most frequently cited example.

42. For the later literary descendants of Kleist’s fortune-teller—Gypsy figures whose prophecies break through historical time into myth, or conversely, who bring historical perspectives or innovations with them into the mythic time of a closed community—see Joseph Roth, *Tarabas, A Guest on Earth* (1934); Gabriel García Márquez, *A Hundred Years of Solitude* (1967); Robertson Davies, *The Manticore* (1972) and *World of Wonders* (1975). It could be argued that such tensions also structure Ronald Florence’s 1985 page-turner, *The Gypsy Man*: a driven, glamorous American woman lawyer is derailed from her high-powered career path by the erotic and mystical allure of a Gypsy man she meets on vacation. He is accused—and finally, with her assistance, cleared—of the long-premeditated murder of a Gypsy-philé ethnographer who, it emerges, played an auxiliary role in the Nazi internment and extermination of the Gypsies at Auschwitz. It is the book’s increasingly documentary structure that finally undoes its own opening romanticization of Gypsy life: at the same time, it mobilizes

ning to burglarize unsuspecting households begin with a kind of time surgery, breaking through the ordinary laws of time encasing household routines:

Things never noticed by the servant after years of residence in the house, or by the neighbor after decades of living adjacent to it, the old Gypsy woman who comes begging, fortunetelling or selling potions has noticed and figured out so precisely within a few minutes that the most complicated thefts can be conducted on the basis of her perceptions.⁴³

Items detached from their usual temporality by the mere fact and perspicacity of the Gypsy gaze will soon vanish from the household altogether. Gross's description both makes visible, in slow motion, the process of Gypsy "autonomization" and underscores the poignant fragility of "normal life"; the Gypsies are imagined dogging the steps of bourgeois order and its realist epistemology, reconstructing the detailed property inventories that are its stock-in-trade to turn them against their proper owners.

But the antagonistic relationship between the Gypsy life and bourgeois life can also be given the opposite emphasis in the nineteenth century, as a self-consciously embattled authorship seeks in the Gypsy camp a last refuge from the political and social pressures of bourgeois norms, and the only remaining site of cultural autonomy.⁴⁴ In Pushkin's *Tsygany* (1824), ethnographic detailing merges with timeless intertextuality as the Gypsy tribe harboring the poem's nineteenth-century hero proves also to have sheltered Ovid long ago in his political exile, and received his Orphic songs in return; parallel to and as metaphor for art itself in the post-Enlightenment period, the Gypsies come to embody the simultaneity of internal cohesion within a tradition and separation from the social and historical world. At the same time, a whole succession of Central European composers use Gypsy music to theorize the relationship of genial invention to musical tradition, taking the repertoire of wandering Gypsy musicians either to cosmopolitanize and contaminate the pure source of national folk music or, conversely, to function as a kind of time capsule, removing currently unfashionable parts of the national heritage from the currents of historical change and storing them intact for future retrieval.⁴⁵

43. Hanns Gross, *Handbuch für Untersuchungsrichter als System der Kriminalistik*, 3d ed. (Graz, 1899), p. 338; my translation; trans. and ed. J. Collyer Adam, under the title *Criminal Investigation: A Practical Handbook for Magistrates, Police Officers and Lawyers* (London, 1924), p. 247.

44. See for instance Robert Browning, *The Flight of the Duchess* (1845); Matthew Arnold, "The Scholar-Gipsy" (1853); George Meredith, *The Adventures of Harry Richmond* (1871); and Leo Tolstoy, *The Live Corpse* (1900).

45. See for instance Robert Schumann, "Zigeunerleben" (1840); Richard Wagner,

The contradictions between these various memory functions (and their subterranean relationship to anxieties about cultural transmission and the maintenance of class and imperial power) are particularly evident in the contrast of two famous midcentury novels, written during the same year and in the same household. Before Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847) confronts the specter of an imprisoned colonial and then the prospect of missionary work in British India, a "Gypsy" fortune-teller (Mr. Rochester in disguise) appears as a recording angel and the cumulative memory of the narrative up to that point, holding up for Jane Eyre's inspection the past and present as they reveal the outlines of her own character.⁴⁶ The Gypsy in Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* appears in contrast as a demonic figure for the countercolonization of memory and the erosion of Western identity under "native" influence. Appearing out of nowhere, without a name, age, or history, Heathcliff is given the name of a dead son, but goes on to become the "usurper of his father's affections and his privileges," a mistreated foundling who turns changeling, an "incarnate goblin," "not a human being." A "mad dog . . . [not] a creature of my own species," he swallows the family inheritance with "sharp cannibal teeth," "poisoning" the family's existence and (keeping its descendants in a state of dependence and almost animal ignorance) nearly succeeds in erasing their humanity as well as their family identity.⁴⁷

In their efforts to stave off such Gypsy threats of primeval violence

"Eine Pilgerfahrt zu Beethoven" ["On the Way to Beethoven"] (1840); Franz Liszt, *The Gypsies and Their Music in Hungary* (1859); Johannes Brahms, *Zigeunerlieder* (1887); Albert Emil Brachvogel, *Friedemann Bach* (ca. 1858); and the ethnomusicological writings of Béla Bartók and Zoltán Kodály. On the nationalist controversies surrounding Liszt's book, see Sárosi, *Gypsy Music*, pp. 141–50; on the replaying of the Liszt debate in the work of Bartók and Kodály, see my "The Voice of the Past: Anxieties of Cultural Transmission in Post-Enlightenment Europe" (Ph.D. diss., Stanford University, 1990), chap. 3.

46. One unexpected sentence came from her lips after another, till I got involved in a web of mystification; and wondered what unseen spirit had been sitting for weeks by my heart, watching its workings and taking record of every pulse. . . . Where was I? Did I wake or sleep? Had I been dreaming? Did I dream still? The old woman's voice had changed: her accent, her gesture, and all, were as familiar to me as my own face in a glass—as the speech of my own tongue. [Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre* (1847; Harmondsworth, 1966), pp. 228, 231]

On the colonial framework of Brontë's novel, see Susan Meyer, "Colonialism and the Figurative Strategy of *Jane Eyre*," in *Macropolitics of Nineteenth-Century Literature: Nationalism, Exoticism, Imperialism*, ed. Jonathan Arac and Harriet Ritvo (Philadelphia, 1991), pp. 159–83.

47. Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights* (1847; New York, 1981), pp. 34, 156–57, 147, 162, 157; for a twentieth-century recasting, see Margery Sharp, *The Gipsy in the Parlour* (1953). Elizabeth Helsinger has suggested in conversation that the imperialist subtext in *Wuthering Heights* is supported by a conflation of Gypsy and Irish cultural markings, amnesia, and cannibalisms in the way Heathcliff is drawn (and in the fact that his only traceable point of origin is Liverpool, the debarkation port for the Irish ferry).

and cultural cannibalism, the protagonists of the most famous nineteenth-century fictional encounters with Gypsy life—George Borrow's *Lavengro* (1851) and *Romany Rye* (1857), and George Eliot's *The Mill on the Floss* (1860)—invoke previous accounts of colonial conquest and the civilizing force of literature itself. Borrow's influential, semiautobiographical novel (based on repeated contact, as Bible translator and proselytizer, with Gypsies in Spain, in England, and in Wales) sparked renewed ethnographic interest in "Gypsy lore" throughout Europe, and still offer an unusually panoramic survey of nineteenth-century Britain's heterogeneous subcultures. Yet the novels habitually frame their examinations of present-day cultural forms as a quest for lost linguistic and literary origins. In plot and narrational style, the novels search for the lost picaresque forms, Newgates, and ramblings of the eighteenth-century novel. And their linguist narrator ("Lavengro," master of words, as the Gypsies name him) searches at once for the key to all languages and the linked key to the Gypsies' historical origin, finally hypothesizing their descent from the founders of ancient Rome, and thus their unwitting embodiment of the whole history of the West, just as he finds their language to contain traces of all Western languages. Lavengro's encounters with these unlikely repositories of Western culture are therefore heavily overlaid with intertextual and imperial echoes: when he meets Gypsies for the first time, and they threaten him with physical violence, he calms them by reading them a passage from *Robinson Crusoe* in which Crusoe hears mysterious noises and fears the approach of the cannibalistic savages who haunt his island, only to find that the sounds emanate, instead, from a dying animal. The logic of Borrow's passage—with its taming movement from violence to literature, cannibals to animals, threatening noise to interpretable sound—is that of the imperial encounter, the first of many efforts in studying Gypsy culture to assimilate it to the narrative of Western civilization.⁴⁸

During Maggie Tulliver's comparable encounter in *The Mill on the Floss* with the Gypsies (whom she had planned to run away with, tell stories to, educate, and eventually rule as their queen), the reality of their distressing poverty, strangeness, and diffuse hostility makes her cling to her meager stock of book knowledge, an imperfectly recollected *Catechism of Geography* and the exemplary history of Columbus serving as temporary barrier against more primeval fears of cannibals, devils, and monsters. In Eliot's ironic rewriting of Borrow, putative masters of words find themselves taking refuge behind the ineffectual bulwark of textual and intertextual memory against an overwhelming yet mundane strangeness that both exceeds and does not fill its exoticizing descriptive tradition (a tradi-

48. See for instance Michael de Certeau, "Ethno-graphy, Speech, or, the Space of the Other: Jean de Léry," *The Writing of History*, trans. Tom Conley (New York, 1988), pp. 20

tion to which Eliot herself would subsequently contribute with the publication in 1867 of "The Spanish Gypsy," an ill-fated long poem obsessed with the question of cultural identity).

If in the course of the nineteenth century the Gypsies became increasingly stylized, exoticized, "generic" figures of mystery, adventure, and romance, they also become intimately identified, on several different levels, with the formation of literary tradition itself, acting as figurative keys to an array of literary genres and to the relations between them.⁴⁹ By the fin de siècle, the Gypsies thus figure prominently in a whole series of new genres derived from earlier aestheticist, pastoralist, and fantastic forms. In detective stories and in sensation fiction, the Gypsies play their old chronotopically anachronistic parts, as figures of magic and malevolence, in order precisely to measure their new genres' derivation and distance from older, more straightforwardly "magical," genres.⁵⁰ At the same time, a symbolism and aestheticism fascinated with the mysterious origins of art claims the mystery and magic of the Gypsies as an emblem for their own bohemianism, aesthetic autonomy, and artistic alchemy.⁵¹ Finally, both simultaneously and in contrast to the growing folkloric study of Gypsy life, the Gypsies become central to a new writing of racial essentialism, including both Celtic twilight mysticism and new forms of nationalist idyll rooted in natural history (culminating, finally, in the pastoral reportage of

49. In France alone, see Victor Hugo, *Notre-Dame de Paris* (1831); Eugène Sue, *Plik et Plok* (1831); Théophile Gautier, *Voyage en Espagne* (1845); Prosper Mérimée, *Carmen* (1847); George Sand, *La Filleule* (1853); and Edmond de Goncourt, *The Zenganno Brothers* (1879), as well as related uses of Gypsy material by authors from Flaubert to Nerval and Zola. Brown's *Gypsies and Other Bohemians* also discusses the fascination with Gypsy life by French painters from Daumier and Courbet to Manet, Renoir, Van Gogh, and Henri Rousseau (as indeed for European painters from Joseph Turner to Otto Muller).

50. See for instance Charles Dickens, *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* (1870); Arthur Conan Doyle, "The Adventure of the Speckled Band" (1892); and George du Maurier, *Trilby* (1894), all picking up on the tradition of Gypsy Gothic established by William Harrison Ainsworth, *Rookwood* (1834). During the 1850s, anxious articles on the recent emancipation of the Vlach Gypsies in the Balkans began appearing in Victorian periodicals. See for instance "The Gypsy Slaves of Wallachia," in Dickens's magazine *Household Words* 7 (1854): 139–42. It might be argued, indeed, that renewed Western European fears of Gypsy "invasion" and "parasitism," following reports of extreme poverty among the freed slaves and the migration of some away from the site of their captivity, inform not only the wave of literary and ethnographic writing about the Gypsies in the 1860s and 1870s, but also remain latently present in the vampire story, with its Balkan setting; Bram Stoker's *Dracula* itself, which relaunches the genre in 1897, thus portrays Gypsy life as part of the sinister ambiance of Transylvania. On the concurrent waves of anti-Gypsy agitation and the rise of Gypsy nationalism and political organization in Britain, see Acton, *Gypsy Politics and Social Change*, p. 101, and Mayall, *Gypsy-Travellers in Nineteenth-Century Society*, chaps. 6 and 7.

51. See, for instance, Charles Baudelaire, "Bohemiens en voyage," *Les Fleurs du mal* (1852); the numerous "Gypsy" writings of Arthur Symons and Sacheverell Sitwell; Aleksandr Blok, "The Camp Moved" (1898) and "Lower the Faded Curtain" (1908); Thomas Mann, *Tonio Kröger* (1903); and Ezra Pound, "The Gypsy" (1912), as well as the

W. H. Hudson's 1910 *A Shepherd's Life*, in which Gypsies appear literally as wild animals).⁵²

If at the end of the nineteenth century, apparently disparate branches of literary production are thus peculiarly connected by their common fascination with Gypsies' "primitive magic," the longer list of authors and literary forms preoccupied with Gypsy life is, as the preceding pages have suggested, virtually synonymous with the modern European literary canon—and is synonymous as well, if the many thousands of popular novels, poems, songs, operettas, paintings, and films featuring Gypsies are added to it, with European (and North American) cultural literacy more generally. Over the last two hundred years, European literary and cultural mythology has repeatedly posed the Gypsy question as the key to the origin, the nature, the strength of cultural tradition itself. It could be argued, indeed, that as the Gypsies become bearers, par excellence, of the European memory problem in its many manifestations, they simultaneously become a major epistemological testing ground for the European imaginary, black box, or limit case for successive literary styles, genres, and intellectual moments. Thus for neoclassicism they are there to symbolize a primitive democracy; for the late Enlightenment, an obstruction to the progress of civilization; for romanticism, resistance and the utopia of autonomy; for realism, a threat that throws the order and detail of everyday life into relief; for aestheticism and modernism, a primitive energy still left beneath the modern that drives art itself; and for socialist and postcolonial fiction, finally, a reactionary or resistant cultural force that lingers outside of the welfare state or the imperial order.⁵³

52. For the new Gypsy "folklore," see Charles G. Leland, *The English Gipsies and Their Language* (1873); Francis Hindes Groome, *In Gypsy Tents* (1880); and the *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society*, founded in 1888. For the multiplicity, political context, and address of these studies, see Mayall, *Gypsy Travellers in Nineteenth-Century Society*, esp. pp. 97–149, and Acton, *Gypsy Politics and Social Change*, esp. pp. 104–18. For a Gypsy-inflected Kailyard that sentimentalizes Ainsworth, see James Barrie, *The Little Minister* (1891); for a more grandiose and sensationalist Gypsy Celticism, see Theodore Watts-Dunton, *Aylwin; or, The Renaissance of Wonder* (1898) and *The Coming of Love* (1898), which juxtapose "Cymric" and Gypsy "ancestral voices of the blood" and explore in parallel plots Gypsy prophecy and nervous hysteria treated by magnetism. For Edwardian Gypsy pastoralism, see John Masefield, "Vagabond" (1902) and "At Heaven's Gate" (1911); Grahame, *The Wind in the Willows*; W. H. Hudson, *A Shepherd's Life* (1910); Edward Thomas, "The Gypsy" (1915); and Edmund Blunden, "The Idlers" (1922).

53. For socialist attempts to come to terms with Gypsy culture, see John Arden's controversial *Live Like Pigs* (1958); the East German literature (both socialist-realist and intending in its own way to be postcolonial) mentioned above in n. 23; Puxon, "Roma heute: Zur Situation der europäischen Zigeuner," in *In Auschwitz vergast, bis heute verfolgt*, pp. 29–63, which is a dossier on the spectrum of pro- and anti-Gypsy policies implemented by the former Communist governments in Eastern Europe, and by the non-Communist European countries as well; and, on their political legacy, Nicolae Gheorghe, "Roma-Gypsy Ethnicity in Eastern Europe," *Social Research* 58 (Winter 1991): 829–44. In the West, the traditional

Commissioned in October 1939, Virginia Woolf's "Gypsy, the Mongrel" represents a quintessentially modernist resorting of a long tradition of "Gypsy literature" as well as an ambivalent historical document preoccupied with yet occluding Gypsy sufferings. As the story begins, two couples sit talking late one night about old friends:

"She had such a lovely smile," said Mary Bridger, reflectively. . . . Helen Folliot, the girl with the lovely smile, had vanished. None of them knew what had happened to her. She had come to grief somehow, they had heard, and, they agreed, each of them had always

Gypsies have been seen either as migrant "non-workers" existing outside of political, economic, and class struggles altogether, or else as embodying the wrong kind of reaction to political oppression. In *Die Gefährten* [*The Comrades of the Road*], Anna Seghers's 1932 novel about the political persecution and diaspora of the left following the defeat of the Hungarian and German revolutions, the struggles of the "politicals" in a Polish prison to be put into a cell of their own is concretized by the fact that they are placed, initially, with Gypsies (who are accused of murder) and other common criminals. The contrast here is precisely between a politically motivated diaspora and an ethnically motivated one, between political "crimes" and the real crimes of the Gypsies. On the final page of Antonio Gramsci's "The Modern Prince" (1930–34), the metaphors of "gypsy bands or nomads" appears repeatedly and pejoratively to describe voluntarist or opportunistic "mass" parties (Antonio Gramsci, "The Modern Prince," *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, trans. and ed. Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith [New York, 1971], pp. 204–5). And when Alfred Döblin, a German-Jewish and leftist novelist, visits Poland in 1925 and is informed in Vilnius (Wilno) that Gypsy refugees, fleeing the Bolsheviks, have been arriving there from Russia, he contradicts the report out of hand, on two different grounds: "'They're not fleeing the Bolsheviks, my son. When poor people come to power, they strike only at the rich. The gypsies always flee, or rather, they do not flee, they wander.' I impress the word 'wander' on my companion" (Alfred Döblin, *Journey to Poland*, trans. Joachim Neugroschel, ed. Heinz Graber [1925; New York, 1991], p. 96). Although he has spent most of his trip reflecting on the intricate relationships in Eastern Europe between nationalism, fundamentalism, Zionism, and anti-Semitism, Döblin clearly disbelieves the possibility of a Bolshevik threat to ethnic minorities, while the fact that Gypsies are always "wandering" anyway, putting themselves completely outside of the political process, makes it equally impossible that they can ever be seen as refugees.

Michael Denning's sympathetic discussion of Frederick Whittaker's 1881 *Nemo, King of the Tramps; or, The Romany Girl's Vengeance: A Story of the Great Railroad Riots*, however, implies that in popular political culture, at least, "Gypsies" (in this case, he argues, "a synecdoche for immigrant workers") can at moments become rallying figures for many disenfranchised groups simultaneously (Michael Denning, *Mechanic Accents: Dime Novels and Working-Class Culture in America* [New York, 1987], p. 152). There seems to be some evidence for this in European working-class and mass culture as well: the strong identification of many French proletarian cigarette smokers, for instance, with the Gitane brand—including homemade tattoos based on its trademark Gypsy dancer—imply identification as well with notions of political defiance and utopian strivings for freedom (chosen in lieu of the more straightforwardly patriotic connotations of Gallois, the other inexpensive brand). See, relatedly, Acton's account both of the traditional indifference of the British Labour party to the persecution of Gypsies, and of grass-roots support for the tactics of the Gypsy civil rights movement there (Acton, *Gypsy Politics and Social Change*, chaps. 11–14).

known that she would, and, what was odd, none of them had ever forgotten her.

"She had such a lovely smile," Lucy Bagot repeated.

And so they began to discuss the oddities of human affairs—what a toss up it seems whether you sink or swim, why one remembers and forgets, what a difference trifles make, and how people, who used to meet every day, suddenly part and never see each other again.

Then they were silent. That was why they heard a whistle—was it a train or a siren?—a faint far whistle that sounded over the flat Suffolk fields and dwindled away. The sound must have suggested something. . . . for Lucy said, looking at her husband, "*She* had such a lovely smile." He nodded. "You couldn't drown a puppy who grinned in the face of death," he said. It sounded like a quotation. The Bridgers looked puzzled. "Our dog," said Lucy.⁵⁴

A dog story follows, about a mongrel of "remarkable character" and "indescribable charm" ("GM," p. 274). Hearing a Gypsy whistle one night, a farmer arms himself with a dog whip and sets off into the snow to whip the Gypsies off his property. They have already broken camp but have left behind them a puppy. Intending to drown this unwanted dog, the farmer is won over by a grin on her face, and spares her. But she proves "a regular gypsies' dog" and makes "his life a burden to him," chasing hens, worrying sheep, killing the cat:

"A dozen times he was on the point of killing her. Yet he couldn't bring himself to do it—not until she'd killed the cat, his wife's favourite. It was the wife who insisted. So once more he took her out into the yard, stood her against the wall, and was about to pull the trigger. And again—she grinned; grinned right into the face of death, and he hadn't the heart to do it." ["GM," p. 274]

Adopted by the Bagots, Gypsy gradually "'convert[s] the old Tory'" Hector (their well-behaved purebred dog "with a pedigree as long as your arm") to her own "vagabond," misbehaving ways, and although the fond Bagots know "'it was all her doing,'" they are so attached to her that they give Hector away instead ("GM," pp. 278, 275, 278). Now Gypsy herself goes into a decline, remorseful at having "done a good dog out of a home." Her owners anxiously sense that something is wrong but cannot find a means of reassuring her.

"Dogs can't talk. But dogs . . . remember."

"If only she could have spoken! Then we could have reasoned with her, tried to persuade her. . . . There was something she tried to

resist, but couldn't, something in her blood so to speak that was too strong for her." ["GM," p. 279]

Finally, the couple sit with Gypsy on a snowy night like the one when the story began:

"One could hear footsteps retreating. Everything seemed to be vanishing away, lost in the falling snow. And then—we only heard it because we were listening—a whistle sounded—a long low whistle—dwindling away. Gypsy heard it. She looked up. She trembled all over. Then she grinned. . . . Next morning she was gone."

There was dead silence. They had a sense of vast empty space round them, of friends vanishing for ever, summoned by some mysterious voice away into the snow.

"You never found her?" Mary Bridger asked at length.

Tom Bagot shook his head.

"We did what we could. Offered a reward. Consulted the police. There was a rumour—someone had seen gypsies passing."

"What do you think she heard? What was she grinning at?" Lucy Bagot asked. "Oh I still pray," she exclaimed, "that it wasn't the end." ["GM," p. 280]

That is the end of the narrative. Gypsy vanishes as she came, leaving only the memory of her grin and the pieces of her story. Except that in the course of its telling, Mary Bridger realizes it is a love story, that Tom Bagot has been in love with Helen Folliot, "the girl with the lovely smile," whom he associates with his grinning dog, also lost, also missed, also come to a preordained bad end. "Aren't all stories connected?" she asked herself ("GM," p. 275).

"There is nothing like a dog story for bringing out people's characters" (ibid.). In Woolf's hands, the brief tale not only reveals the characters of tellers and listeners but meditates on loss and retrieval, the "race memory" in Gypsy's mongrel blood and the mediated recollection of lost loves, the way their brave smiles and "inexplicable charms" linger on, linked forever to everyday sights, sounds, and stories. A lost woman cannot be talked about except indirectly, as a silence, as an inability to keep narrating, as a story about something else. Vast empty space, friends vanishing forever, summoned away into the snow by a police whistle, a siren, the whistle of a train: written a month into the war, "Gypsy" is centrally concerned with disappearances and absences. To the modern reader, the story's mood and imagery, its evocation of the inchoateness of memory in the face of loss, seem to inaugurate both the thematics and the techniques of a "poetry after Auschwitz." But the story's historical prescience is matched by its historical oblivion. At a moment when Gypsies are being subjected, on racial grounds, to a mass

like animals, Woolf writes "Gipsy, the Mongrel" as a dog story. Displacing the supposedly characteristic features of "Gypsies" themselves (barnyard thefts and vagabond habits, the call of the open road in their blood, and their famous insouciance, even in the face of deserved execution) onto a dog, human fates onto those of animals, the story implicitly moralizes disappearance as an inexorable destiny to which the fallen woman and the mongrel are called alike by their own blood under the false promise of freedom.

Along with its historical circumstances, of course, what shapes the story's logic is its pedigree as a Gypsy story, a literary inheritance that it at once reiterates, ridicules, and reanchors. In a simultaneous process of literalization and allegorization, the tale plays out the Gypsy mythology as tragicomic low style in the central narrative (in a parodic replay of *Wuthering Heights*, *Carmen*, and *A Shepherd's Life*, a Gypsy foundling of "enormous charm" tempts a pedigreed companion to join her in a life of animal abandon and ends up doing "a good dog out of a home") while its underlying concerns about identity, causality, and memory, shifted into both the framing narrative and the narrative form itself, are elevated to the status of philosophical questions. "It sounded like a quotation": what joins the frame narrative to the dog story, Woolf's story to the long tradition of paranoid and often racist narratives about Gypsy life, is not only its intertextual plot and obsession with narrative memory but (for all its explorations of the boundaries and infinities of recollection) the textualist limits of its consciousness. For Woolf as for Liszt, what "Gypsy" represents is a "fascination as hard to describe as to destroy." But in an era that actually threatens the genocidal destruction of Gypsy life (a destruction echoed within Woolf's tale in the repeated threat of execution) the story's real interest remains why and how a Gypsy should be so hard to describe. The story's intense focus on one set of literary problems—the vicissitudes of memory; the interrelationship of narration, silence, and interpretation; the impossibilities of conveying character except through indirection—occludes its own reliance on politically brisant materials, its own procedures of allegorization, its own blurring of the boundaries between the animal and the human, its own internal need for silence and ambiguity at the heart of the Gypsy story:

"I don't believe in stories. A dog has a character just as we have, and it shows itself just as ours do, by what we say, by all sorts of little things."

"Yes . . . she taught us a lesson. I've often wondered . . . what she was thinking of us—down there among all the boots and old matches on the hearthrug? What was her world? Do dogs see what we see or is it something different?"

They too looked down at the boots and old matches, tried for a moment to lie nose on paws gazing into the red caverns and yellow

flames with a dog's eyes. But they couldn't answer that question. ["GM," pp. 277-78]

Far from constituting a trivial genre, the dog story (like the "Gypsy narrative") proves a testing ground for human epistemology, a limit case of narration itself, but only when it stops its momentary gazing from the hearthrug, ceases to be centrally about dogs at all, and becomes instead a medium "for bringing out people's characters," for narrators who lose themselves in memory or betray their most hidden emotions, for listeners who make stray connections across levels of narration. The dog ostensibly at the story's center in fact figures mainly as a site of investment and interpretation, displacement and paradigm sorting. Unable to speak for herself, her own actions and motivations remain uninterestingly mysterious, irrecoverable even as the tellers and listeners around her accumulate psychological complexity. While the other, human characters reveal layer after layer of developmental history, she remains within a compass of emotion so small it appears as strength of character—she smiles even in the face of death. While they mourn and guess and remember, she continues to be steered, silently and enigmatically, by older, simpler, deeper things: a whistle barely perceptible even in the silence, the conflicting voices of a mongrel blood. "Dogs can't talk. But dogs remember": race memory is re-invented here as a foil for a psychology that can manifest itself only in and as narrative.

"For as long as I could remember," writes Andrea Lee in "Gypsies," the fourth chapter of her 1984 novel, *Sarah Phillips*, "the civil rights movement had been unrolling like a dim frieze behind the small pleasures and defeats of my childhood: it seemed dull, a necessary burden on my conscience, like good grades or hungry people in India."⁵⁵ Periodically, Sarah Phillips's father ventures forth from Franklin Place, a street through a peaceful, middle-class, black Philadelphia suburb "with the constrained slightly unreal atmosphere of a colony or a foreign enclave" (*SP*, p. 39), to join dangerous civil rights marches through a hostile South. For his seven-year-old daughter that outside world remains distant, until one day a family of Gypsies drives into the neighborhood to sell handmade, rickety lawn furniture from the back of their rusty truck:

The man behind the wheel had dark skin but was not a Negro; he looked a bit like one of the Indians we saw constantly defeated in TV westerns. . . . Beside him was a woman. . . . There was something frightening and wild . . . about the woman herself; she grinned at us, and we saw that one of her front teeth was broken in half. [She had]

55. Andrea Lee, *Sarah Phillips* (New York, 1984), pp. 39-40; hereafter abbreviated *SP*.

small dark eyes that had the same glistening brightness, the jumpy intensity, of the eyes of a crow that had once alighted for an instant on my bedroom windowsill. [*SP*, pp. 42–43]

The Gypsies' bearing conveys both envy at the neighborhood's affluence and pity for the "colored" who are forced to live in segregation. "Well, everybody's got . . . to . . . feel . . . better . . . than . . . somebody," Sarah's father puts it that evening, "drawling his words out progressively slower until they were as slow and exaggerated as the Uncle Remus record we had. . . . 'Most of the world despises Gypsies, but a Gypsy can always look down on a Negro'" (*SP*, p. 44). In the Gypsies' wake, the furniture they have sold to Sarah's family and neighbors immediately collapses, and her mother makes "a few quips about the 'Romany spell' that must have been cast to get her to buy something so worthless. . . . It was the same for the rest of the neighborhood; stories of the ephemeral tables and chairs that fell apart during thunderstorms or barbecues became standard jokes" (*SP*, pp. 45–46). But Sarah herself remains under the "Romany spell," with lingering Gypsy nightmares:

It was not that I had really feared being stolen; it was more, in fact, that they seemed to have stolen something from me. Nothing looked different, yet everything was, and for the first time Franklin Place seemed genuinely connected to a world that was neither insulated nor serene. [*SP*, p. 46]

Arriving in an enclave of nonwhite Americans, themselves the survivors of diaspora and slavery, the Gypsies this time bring with them a memory of poverty and oppression, history rather than forgetfulness, a connection *back* to the outside world. Yet the narrator insists on that knowledge as a theft of innocence, on the lawn furniture as bewitched, on the Gypsies as inscrutable, frightening, animal-like. "Everybody's got to feel better than somebody": even a nonwhite writer attempting to write about minority experience in America cannot resist the temptation to invoke a racist mythology one more time, as shorthand for questions of identity and developmental memory. Andrea Lee's "Gypsies" suggests, in fact, that Gypsy alterity, cultural cohesion, and "race memory," so long a threat to the narratives of European nationalism, are equally threatening, for somewhat different reasons, to the self-conception of an emerging black nationalism as well, struggling against its own diasporic history and its own forced suppression of memory. What this has meant in practice, unfortunately, is that the Romani of North America, a much smaller and more dispersed group than African Americans, have been forced to mount a separate civil rights movement of their own.

Ronald Lee's *Goddam Gypsy* both laconically foretells this final instance of Romani exclusion even from "revolutionary" ethnic struggles

and at the same time recounts a rather different sort of story, with a ray of hope for new, postnational coalitions. Set on the margins of an ostensibly pluralist and multicultural Canada, the novel chronicles a "struggle to find recognition and equality in the land where I was born. I failed in both these aims and this is the story of that failure."⁵⁶ Adopted into a white foster family late in his childhood, Yanko (the Ronald Lee figure) grows up "white" and integrated into the Canadian mainstream; he attends university, marries a non-Gypsy, and works in an office. After the marriage founders, however, he takes to the road, meets up with other Gypsy ethnics, and recovers his cultural identity. The autobiography opens with this ethnic coming-to-consciousness, then describes at length the community of outcasts Yanko gradually gathers around him in Montréal: Gypsies still recovering from the Nazi persecution that drove them to Canada and suffering anew from the prejudice of the white community there, which categorically closes to them all legal employment and all neighborhoods save the slums; young native women from the reservation and a French-Canadian prostitute, both trying in vain to find a foothold in the city; a Black Muslim expatriate from the American South; legal and illegal immigrants full of nationalist nostalgia for their own Serbian, Greek, and Turkish cultures and deep-rooted hatred for each other's; angry young French and English Canadians, dislocated intellectuals dreaming of a revolution that is separatist, socialist, or both.

The novel ends, in fact, with Expo 67 (the Montréal World's Fair in the year of the Canadian centennial and an important symbol for Canada's emergence as a postcolonial nation) and with the rise of militant separatism in Québec, a moment at which the dreams of both Canadian and Québécois nationalists seem on the verge of being realized. But this is also, not by coincidence, the moment at which Yanko and his native wife decide to emigrate to Europe, to join the Romani activist movement then getting under way. In Canada, in Québec, Yanko predicts, the situation of the underclass, of native peoples, of the "unassimilatable" nonwhite and non-Western minorities, is bound to get worse than it was before, since *they* are not the groups that the new nationalist governments will speak to or for. Throughout the novel his own attempts to raise political awareness among his people and win public recognition for their plight have failed repeatedly. The months spent helping the last Gypsy patriarch compile the first Romani dictionary prove time wasted. For other national groups in the past, the publication of a vernacular dictionary had marked an important milestone in the group's self-definition and in its quest for credibility as a nation in the eyes of the world; indeed, given the historical absence of a written language and written records, a dictionary is the only possible one of the traditionally efficacious "national monuments" that

56. Ronald Lee, *Goddam Gypsy: An Autobiographical Novel* (Montréal, 1971), p. 8; hereafter cited parenthetically.

Rom intellectuals like Lee can use to stake a claim for Gypsy nationhood. But in the Canada of the late 1960s (in a publishing market notoriously unable to hold its own against American competitors) the publishers have little enough interest in English-Canadian fiction, let alone a Romani dictionary. The media is similarly indifferent—or worse, seeks yet another occasion to sensationalize Gypsy life, playing down its poverty and pariah status in favor of the same tired clichés.

Yanko's attempts to support his family "as a Gypsy" and by non-criminal means are similarly disastrous, despite his university education. Forced by economic pressures into a variety of semilegal scams, he longs for more respectable work that will engage his artistic and intellectual talents. In fact, he is a self-trained expert in the miniature reconstruction of historical ships, using extensive archival research and painstaking craftsmanship. But official curatorial work remains closed to someone so literally a gypsy scholar, and his only career break in this line comes as "someone who knows and understands animals": a job as theme director of an Expo wildlife pavilion, sponsored by a shadowy group of big-game hunters:

They wanted to set up a privately sponsored, unofficial exhibit dedicated to the preservation of our Canadian wildlife. . . .

"We must preserve, at all costs, this great national heritage of ours." . . .

"Many species of animals are being forced into extinction today and we must do everything possible to save them. Others are being decimated and driven out of their natural habitat by predators. Animals that have developed certain habits and instincts cannot survive if they are suddenly and ruthlessly transplanted into a foreign environment or if they are struck by disease from man's pollution."

Listening, I felt suddenly indignant as I thought of my wife and family, the Gypsies, Indians, and all the poor in the slums.

[The exhibit] would consist of stuffed animals in their natural surroundings, in large, plexiglass cases. . . . life-size dioramas, store dummies dressed as hunters, trappers or anglers set in typical single or group scenes. [GG, pp. 178-79]

The episode has many layers of irony. From behind the scenes, the opening of Expo (and the opening salvo of the new Canadian nationalism, announcing itself to the world) appears as farce: to get one prize-winning caribou into its glass case, Yanko's crew lops off part of its antlers, and when it is pointed out that the deer "couple" in another case is actually two males, the crew quietly castrates one of the two stuffed stags. In some sense, this is what world's fairs, natural and national history museums, indeed nationalist movements themselves, have long been about: an unself-conscious "nature" is neutered, embalmed, displayed in a glass case, killed in order to support the claims for a living culture, their "great

national heritage." The novel as a whole suggests clear parallels between the dismantling and reassembling of animal bodies to make them fit their cases and labels, the psychological bludgeoning and symbolic castration that Gypsies, native peoples, and other "wildlife" undergo in their respective ghettos and reservations. Yanko details case after case of friends who become alcoholic, impotent, abusive in response to the prejudice, poverty, and degradations of daily life; the more deadened and narcotized they become, of course, the more they confirm the ethnic stereotypes.

Far from breaking this vicious circle, Yanko suggests presciently, the nationalist movements of both English and French Canada will reinforce inequality for all groups save their own. Indeed their effect on their own culture can be destructive even as it is curative: they will inevitably need to freeze culture in order to preserve it. Ronald Lee's own book represents the attempt to develop a different, internationalist, strategy for representing cultural diversity. In a way, the autobiography manages to become the narrative equivalent of one of the ships Yanko painstakingly reconstructs, detail for detail, until the finished piece stands as a metonymic model for a whole historical epoch: in its anecdotal fashion, the book presents one of the most compact, panoramic, and biting social visions in Canadian literature (perhaps the reason it is virtually unknown in Canada today). And yet its presentation is completely casual, vernacular, seemingly haphazard and unstudied: an endless stream of impressions, chance conversations, political aperçus, overheard voices. Lee's autobiography in fact attempts to create itself as precisely what Canada is not: as a utopian Romanestan, as a polyglot, dialogic space in which travellers with different languages and cultural experiences can interact freely with each other, tracing family connections and comparing notes. But it is a book he can write only from memory, as an expatriate, from Europe:

Jimmy and I had one last drink in the house. I took my glass and threw it against the wall where it smashed into fragments.

"To hell with Canada, Long live Romanestan."

Jimmy looked at me, only half understanding. He had heard of the proposed Gypsy state, a parallel to Israel, to be set up by the United Nations at the insistence of Gypsy leaders in Europe, educated men like me, who had found that they had no place as Romanies in their countries of birth. . . .

We drove along Sherbrooke Street on the way to the ship. . . . separatists, students and anarchists were holding a sit-in and a demonstration. . . . The Canadian and Quebec provincial flags had been hauled down. . . .

"Magnifique," Etien was excited. . . . "Formidable, on les aura. It had to come. It's got to be that way, separation, il faut en finir."

Yes, I thought, there must be an end to it somewhere. Will the French-Canadians be allowed to find their own destiny as a separate nation in North America or will they go down in an orgy of blood and

terrorism? Who knows? But they can't keep on going the way they are, losing their language, culture and self-respect. . . .

"Vive le Québec libre!" he smiled, "En avant aux barricades."

"Vive le Canada libre," I replied. It wasn't quite the same thing. [GG, pp. 236-37]⁵⁷

There must be an end to it somewhere. The problem for Ronald Lee is the way the rhetoric of nationalism and the model of cultural legitimation it establishes reinforce the division between the domains of ethnography and history, spectacle and narrative, between timeless "natural" cultures, locked into themselves, changeable only when disrupted, and culture-bearing, narrative-bearing nations, moving purposefully through history towards geographical and ethnic self-realization. In an epoch shaped by nationalist rhetoric, those peoples who do not claim a land and a written tradition for themselves, who cannot or do not claim a history, are relegated to nature, without a voice in any political process, represented only in the glass case of the diorama, the dehumanizing legend of the photograph, the tableaux of the open-air museum.

Books of Critical Interest

- Apress, William. *On Our Own Ground: The Complete Writings of William Apress, a Pequot*. Ed. Barry O'Connell. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1992. 344 pp. \$50.00 (cloth); \$16.95 (paper).
- Appleby, Joyce. *Liberalism and Republicanism in the Historical Imagination*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1992. 351 pp. \$39.95 (cloth); \$17.95 (paper).
- Attebery, Brian. *Strategies of Fantasy*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992. 152 pp. \$22.50.
- Bareham, Tony, ed. *Charles Lever: New Evaluations*. Savage, Md.: Barnes and Noble, 1991. 131 pp. \$39.50.
- Bell, Catherine. *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1992. 270 pp. \$15.95.
- Bell, Michael. *D. H. Lawrence: Language and Being*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992. 246 pp.
- Bennett, Bruce. *Spirit in Exile: Peter Porter and His Poetry*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1992. 294 pp. \$45.00.
- Black, Michael. *D. H. Lawrence: The Early Philosophical Works, A Commentary*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992. 476 pp. \$49.95.
- Brady, Kristin. *George Eliot*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992. 209 pp.
- Brontë, Emily. *Wuthering Heights*. Ed. Linda H. Peterson. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992. 467 pp. \$35.00.
- Brown, Richard. *James Joyce*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992. 131 pp. \$29.95.
- Burton, Richard D. E. *Baudelaire and the Second Republic: Writing and Revolution*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1992. 380 pp. \$89.00.
- Butler, Lance St. John. *Victorian Doubt: Literary and Cultural Discourses*. Savage, Md.: Rowman and Littlefield, 1990. 222 pp. \$51.50.
- Clark, Rosalind. *The Great Queens: Irish Goddesses from the Morrigan to Cathleen ni Houlihan*. Savage, Md.: Barnes and Noble, 1991. 270 pp. \$54.50.
- Cocking, J. M. *Imagination: A Study in the History of Ideas*. New York: Routledge, 1992. 297 pp. \$55.00.
- Corbett, Mary Jean. *Representing Femininity: Middle-Class Subjectivity in Victorian and Edwardian Women's Autobiographies*. New York: Oxford

57. Acton's discussion of Gypsy nationalism and the politics of the Gypsy Council reports obliquely on Lee's subsequent involvement with British activism, identifying him, somewhat surprisingly, with an "ultra-nationalist" position. Acton, *Country Politics and Society*.