

Roma¹ and Czechs: Mindful of Difference

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This essay applies theory and method developed over the past two decades by a number of cognitively- and psychologically-oriented social scientists to explore antipathy between Czechs and Roma in the present-day Czech Republic. It investigates how Czech understandings of personhood and otherness are variously organized, acquired, and practiced. Although ethnic hatred continues to be a problem in the Czech Republic, recent findings in psychological anthropology advise against assuming that it is reproduced wholesale from one generation to the next—nor even one instant to the next. The main source of data is the narratives of twenty-five young Czechs, who recall their earliest childhood encounters with Roma. I use their stories to explore the early learning of ethnic categories and formation of affects and motives, based on both the regularities they experience as members of Czech society and the unique circumstances of their individual lives.

Prologue

The following synopsis of Czech-Roma interrelations was broadcast on Radio Prague on March 16, 2010:

The conditions in which the Czech Republic's Roma minority lives have not improved in the last decade. In fact, many of the groups working with Roma say their situation in society and their relationship with Czechs are in a downward spiral. Unemployment is higher than 80%. High debt is rampant. This

¹ The term “Rom” (plural, Roma) means “man” in Romany and was adopted by the Roma Union in 1971 as a substitute for the pejorative “gypsy.” There are an estimated 300,000 Roma in the Czech Republic—roughly ten percent of the population—and tensions between Roma and Czechs have existed since the sixteenth century.

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combination has fostered social exclusion and a breeding ground for crime and drug use. In turn, violent crime against Roma communities has become more extreme.

Introduction

Following recent trends in psychological anthropology, this essay combines ideas from cognitive science and psychoanalysis—an approach Nuckolls (2001) calls “Deep Cognition”—to take a fresh look at ethnic conflict between Czechs and Roma in the Czech Republic. A shift of analytic focus from the objective structural and socio-political to the subjective is worthwhile because it provides richer accounts of people’s motives and actions than other approaches currently employed in social science (Frank 2006; Nuckolls 2001; Ortner 2001). Both cognitive science and psychoanalysis are interested in human development and enculturation within particular cultural groups, and how such processes shape human cognition, emotion, perception, motivation, and mental health. In addition, both fields are interested in the way mental representations of the self and other people are constructed and encoded, which is of particular use for understanding interpersonal functioning. Briefly, cognitive science focuses on information-encoding and information-retrieval and provides a theory of thought by way of organized knowledge structures—so called schemas and scripts—that offer ready-made pathways for processing sensory information (Westen 2001). Simply put, learned patterns of information become properties of the mind—with neural correlates—subsequently used to interpret and reason about objects, persons, and events. People’s schemas reflect the values and normative expectations of their social group, and these are subsequently maintained through selective processing of information (Monroe, Hanken, and Van Vechten 2000). In short, a thought is a schematically organized perception.

Psychoanalysis, too, offers a theory about the creation of consciousness by way of unconscious structures related to affective and motivational processes, emphasizing the emotional significance of information. It posits a “subjective unconscious” by which unconscious feelings and fantasies shape, constitute, and give partial meaning to conscious feeling and experience. In contrast to cognitive science, which often compares the human brain to a computer and thought to information processing—a distinctly objectivist and rationalist position—psychoanalysis concludes that feeling states do not simply mirror external

events; that we have subjective, not mechanical experiences of the external world (Chodorow 1999:40; Bruner 1992; Elliott 2002). In fact, according to psychoanalytic theory, subjectivity or “psychic reality” is created through transference, a process whereby we use unconscious experiences and feelings from the past to give partial meaning to the present. One type of transference is projection, whereby we put feelings, beliefs, or parts of our self onto an “other.” “I am angry at John” becomes “John is angry at me” (D’Andrade: n.d.) Another type is introjection, whereby aspects or functions of a person or an object are taken into the self; for example, when children take in attitudes of parents, teachers, heroes, and other significant people in their lives (Chodorow 1999:15). In either case, cognitively-oriented social scientists now agree that interpersonal encounters are more accurately understood as intersubjective encounters, characterized by transference and countertransference on the part of the interlocutors, and that the psychic conditions of self-organization at any moment—that between an ethnic Czech and a Rom, for example—involve powerful fantasies and anxieties that shape each person’s self experience (Elliott 2002). Nancy Chodorow’s use of the term “interfantasy” to describe such encounters seems particularly apt (1999:58).

The two fields thus agree that there is an unconscious. Cognitivists, however, emphasize implicit, procedural knowledge, while psychoanalysts are more interested in affects. Practitioners of both fields agree that knowledge systems tend to begin organizing during specific sensitive developmental periods and that childhood-derived systems of knowledge influence the construction of adult propositions. Further, selfhood is dynamic; every person’s self is the outcome of ongoing micro-historical processes—specifically, our social relations—that characterize the constitution of the mind (Toren 2001). Self, Naomi Quinn states, is “the totality of what an organism is physically, biologically, psychologically, socially, and culturally” (2006:362). Ultimately, as the psychological anthropologist and psychoanalyst, Douglas Hollan explains, consciousness of ourselves and other things emerges by way of “a complicated series of feedforward and feedback loops within a broad and open system of information exchange [that] encompasses the synaptic structure of the brain, intrapersonal processes of memory and symbol formation, and interpersonal self-other configurations as organized and shaped through familial, social, and historical processes” (2000:539). Psychoanalysts label what goes on in a person-to-person or intersubjective encounter, transference and countertransference; a relationship between

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information and internal models of self and other, leading to a unique, contingent, emergent creation of intersubjective and intrapsychic meanings (Hollan 2000; Chodorow 1999). Hollan explains that our many and varied engagements in the world are “organized around self-other configurations that slip into and out of awareness depending upon the interpersonal matrices from which they emerge and with which they become engaged” (2000:546). So, again, the mind is never a mere reflection of outside events; rather, “impressions of the world are constructed out of numerous and varied perceptions and self-states” influenced by cultural and linguistic variables as well as “the creative and imaginative capacities of individuals” (2000:542).

It will be surmised from the above that my approach relies on a dualistic notion of culture as a set of common understandings manifest as act and artifact (Bohannon 1995; Brumann 1999). It is in two places at once: inside someone's head as understandings, and in the external environment, embodied as a psychological state and a social construction that includes intrapersonal and extrapersonal meaning (Strauss and Quinn 1997:16). In the present example, racism is a belief that resides in some people's heads; the discriminatory actions of racists constitute its public or material dimension. One way in which culture is transmitted from one person to another is when someone witnessing a racial act accepts and adopts its premise. Subsequently motivated by this newfound understanding, she then goes on to commit her own act of racism. Alternatively, the same person may recoil from the action and reject its premise, thereafter becoming an advocate of racial tolerance. Culture's internal or private dimension—personal understandings or beliefs that constitute one's psyche—makes it a differentiating device; an indicator of personal webs of meaning; hence, of a distinctive individual orientation (Quinn 2005c). Its external or public dimension—symbols, structures, and processes that shape and constrain our behaviors—makes it a collective phenomenon, an aggregating device (Strauss and Quinn 1997).

Theory of Mind and Social Relations

A fresh approach to ethnic conflict (as well as racial and national conflict) like the one I'm proposing is timely because many orthodox, so-called materialist or objectivist explanations of ethnicity and ethnic conflict ignore a great deal of information. Consequently, their explanations are unsatisfying. Framed mostly in terms of modern, large-scale, sociopolitical processes that cite economic decline and the loss of a

way of life as causes of ethnogenesis²—reflecting only culture’s outside locus—they frequently downplay the fact that social forces are supported by affective and emotional mechanisms that operate on both conscious and unconscious levels. One consequence of this is that they suffer from what is sometimes termed “groupism”—the tendency to assume that every member of a group has the same ideas and expresses them by the same means (Brubaker 2006; Kusserow 2004; Winant 2000).³ Groupist accounts, in other words, assume that culture is shared, or evenly distributed, among members of a group (Brumann 1999; Hannerz 1992). Such monolithic views, in turn, lead to a presumption of collective common purpose, which seriously mischaracterizes motivation as a product of cultural codes and categories rather than of actors’ purpose and desire. Consequently, human agency is reduced to little more than the socio-culturally mediated capacity to act, with resistance to power and/or utilitarian individualism being the most commonly cited examples of action (Frank 2006; Nuckolls 2001:182). In short, so-called objective or

² Wilmsen and McAllister et al. (1996:vii), are representative of this approach, as when they insist that “ethnicity is always politically constructed and may arise anywhere and at any time, not only when erected for its own purposes by an oppressive regime but more frequently when individuals perceive a need to join in a consolidation of security through shared identity in the face of economic, political, or other social forces.”

³ The neglect of subjectivity is rooted in methodological principles adopted a century ago (Hirschfeld 2000; DiMaggio 1997). Then, social scientists were reluctant to portray culture as the aggregate of individual subjectivities—a strategy known as methodological individualism—due to the lack of method that would permit inferences about mental functioning. Only external aspects of culture—so-called social facts—were deemed amenable to direct measurement, and a strategy of methodological collectivism was followed. The psychological facts of individuals—belief, desire, will, a sense of self, and the ability to reason about means and ends—were left to psychologists. Twentieth-century social scientists, however, gradually came to see that methodological collectivism discounted actors with individual minds, implying as it does that persons and selves are socially or culturally determined. The critique of method subsumed the various forms of constructionism (cultural, social, political), which conceal the true explanation behind people’s actions, namely, their beliefs and desires (Chodorow 2000; Shweder 1995). In implying that history inheres in social structures, institutions, ideologies, collective representations, cultural models, or social constructs, objectivist or materialist arguments like those mentioned above give short shrift to subjectivity—to motivation, emotion, and actors’ personal histories (Toren 2001:157). This oversimplification is what caused E.P. Thompson (1978) to famously decry the telling of history without a subject. It’s not that social formations don’t contribute to shaping, organizing, and provoking modes of thought and feeling; it’s that people don’t sort neatly into homogeneous groups whose putative members share collective intention. We are not socio-culturally determined.

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materialist accounts of ethnic conflict are psychologically reductive. Missing from them is sufficient consideration of the interior domain of human life—individuality, personal idiosyncrasy, quirkiness, and difference (Frank 2006)—and of the tension that exists between such inner, personal, and outer, public worlds. In this paper, I take the side of an increasing number of analysts from many academic disciplines who favor the problematization of psychological functioning, for I agree wholeheartedly with Roy D’Andrade that “any attempt to explain things at the social and cultural level always assumes an account of psychological processes” (D’Andrade:n.d.).

As has already been alluded to, and as will be further investigated below, Deep Cognition solves many theoretical and empirical problems and enables us to better understand ethnic and racial conflict and other behaviors—chief among them, the problem of the relation between culture and action, or motivation. It does so by probing the way people think and feel—and also the way they feel about what they think (Luhman 2006). The focus on thought-feeling, or subjectivity, helps to broaden understandings of ethnic and racial conflict such as that between Czechs and Roma. As used above, the adjective “deep” implies that the brain draws on and integrates both conscious and unconscious systems of knowledge by way of a kind of parallel processing (Nuckolls 2001:184). Conscious knowledge, sometimes referred to as explicit knowledge, comprises schemas of cultural images, words, and action scenarios. Unconscious knowledge, also known as implicit and/or subconscious knowledge, comprises knowledge of procedures, as well as representations of childhood interpersonal relationships and related affects that are not consciously brought to mind, but which, nonetheless, shape forever one’s impressions, including one’s sense of self, as well as one’s expectations of others. Research on memory reveals that knowledge of both types is stored in “associational networks,” the contents of which vary according to people’s experiences. For example, affective associations—feelings, wishes, and fears—may be associated with representations of abstract concepts, situations, or people. Such affects may become activated along with other forms of information when part of the network is primed by something in the environment or by thought processes that touch on the network.

Consciousness, according to this model, results from feedback and feedforward loops between the two cognitive subsystems whose units of information are “associatively connected” or “networked” in the course of learning and never erased (Hollan 2000; Westen 2001; Nuckolls 2001).

The two subsystems comprise what Hollan calls (2000:539) a “self-system,” by way of which self-awareness is constructed out of one’s ongoing engagements with the world, including, of course, those of the interpersonal variety, such as those between Czechs and Roma. D’Andrade labels this construction of consciousness “appraising”, which he describes as a signal of match or mismatch of perceived events to schemas that represent one’s expectations of the world based on his early learning and personal experience (D’Andrade:n.d.). This system uses sensory input and feedback from different inbuilt networks to produce information about whether or not one is in familiar territory. Normally, this happens automatically, without consciousness. Sometimes, however, we encounter the unexpected and suddenly we experience a sensation or feeling, what D’Andrade calls a “felt appraisal.” Felt appraisals generate a combined feeling and thought, or affect, that vividly informs one about one’s relation to the world and moves one to action. Accordingly, in social encounters, one’s sense of self “emerges in interaction with other people whose behavior deeply affects its constitution” (Hollan:2000:541). Drew Westen (2001), another proponent of Deep Cognition, cites research on associative memory that supports the model. To wit, a great deal of implicit knowledge is stored along networks of association as we unconsciously observe regularities in our experiences. In any social encounter feelings, wishes, and fears associated with representations of people become activated unconsciously along with other forms of information as one part of the network is primed by something in the environment or by thought processes that touch on the network. This is Hebb’s Rule: neurons that fire together at one time will tend to fire together in the future (Siegel 2001:26).

I demonstrate the efficacy of the analytical framework I’ve presented thus far with a text I came across on the internet (Czechkid for Teachers) in which a thoughtful, yet bewildered Rom teenager encounters a young Czech mother carrying an infant in one arm, a suitcase in the other, while being followed by two other small children at a tram station in Prague. At the outset of his soliloquy he notes, “*She was Czech, she looked nice, about twenty-five years old.*” The Czech family and Rom teenager all disembark at the same stop, where a long steep staircase to the outside awaits. The young man wants to offer his help; perhaps he could hold the children’s hands as they climb the stairs? Whether he’s motivated by chivalry or sympathy, the reader isn’t sure, although he states that “*Roma tend to be very courteous among themselves.*” Still,

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however, he hesitates as a raucous debate takes place in his head, the text of which gives readers a glimpse into the workings of his mind:

How should a black gypsy address this Czech woman, who probably has prejudices against Roma people and against foreigners in general, especially late at night in a deserted underpass? What would she say? She would say, 'Well, thank you very much, that's very kind.' Or might she think I wanted to chat her up? Or perhaps she would think worse things? What would I do if she started to scream when I approached her and offered her help? Or am I interpreting the whole thing badly? How much negative and defamatory stuff is written about the Roma people?

Here we see a rich example of subjectivity as the young man constructs a host of thoughts based both on real experience and sheer conjecture. Psychoanalysts refer to this as the emotional construction of selfhood: "individuals structure themselves out of present and past relationships as mediated through intense desires, identifications, and repressions" (Elliott 2002:6). Not knowing what the woman is actually thinking, he infers and surmises, constructing a fantasy that has its basis more in his own knowledge and emotions than on actuality. His interpretations momentarily meet his deep needs for connection and validation. As described above, the thought process involves transference and projection. He is aware that some Czechs feel hatred and fear toward those whose skin color is similar to his. Being a young male, he is also aware of the possibility that any female-directed gesture on his part might be misconstrued. Nonetheless, he is hopeful that this particular kind-looking woman will be different; that she will give him an opportunity to show that he is different; that he is kind and trustworthy, and that she will be appreciative of his help. Why he finds her "nice looking" is unclear. Perhaps she appears upright; perhaps he is physically attracted to her. He feels culturally and personally obligated to offer assistance and is feeling guilt even before he makes his decision. He seems to want simply to be able to express his feelings naturally, to be free of the agonizing ambivalence that he feels deprives him of his humanity. This encounter represents an opportunity to change people's opinions, indeed, to change himself. Ultimately, however, he withdraws due to the insecurity he feels which is based on the knowledge he has accumulated about such cross-cultural encounters. His calculations seem to have convinced him that the

odds of his good deed turning out badly outweigh those of it turning out well. And instantly he feels regret and shame:

Just after midnight I had suddenly found myself in a situation in which there might be an explosion of prejudices. A whole minute went by. I went around her, as though not intending anything, as though I hadn't noticed her plight. Like an impolite animal on two legs, I simply continued along the entire platform, leaving the suitcase, children, and her behind. I ran down the concrete steps, taking two by two, and then up the other side, until I was amongst the houses. A cold wind blew from the underpass. Perhaps this woman hadn't had any prejudices. . . . If you don't have such prejudices, dear woman, then I really did you an injustice and failed you. And your children. And myself. In these night hours, I buried my courtesy. Today and now, I promise: Whenever I find myself again in such a situation, I shall certainly offer my assistance, regardless of how the other person reacts. And then my courtesy will certainly return to me.

I have more to say about this particular incident below. For now, however, let me simply repeat that cognition is not as straightforward as the popular analogies to computing or information processing might suggest. Far from being a simple computation or decoding, meanings are elaborate interpretations evoked in a person by an object or event. Interpretations draw upon culture as well as people's experiences and feelings from the past to give partial meaning to the present (Hollan 2000:541; Chodorow 1999:14). An analysis of ethnic conflict that attends to cognition, emotion, and motivation avoids groupism—i.e., assumptions of mass intersubjectivity—and enables us to understand ethnic conflict in ways that are far more satisfying than the more typical approaches that focus on the role of large-scale socio-political processes. For example, we can more fruitfully address the following issues: Are all Czechs racist, or just some of them? Which ones are, and why these particular ones? Do they hate all Roma, or just some? Again, why? How can we account for similarity and difference? More generally, what makes people political? What makes them value social relations? We cannot answer these questions with standard social theories. Understanding the intricacies of

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cognition, however, enables us to better appreciate the complexity that exists in any society.

The remainder of my argument will proceed as follows: in the next part of the paper (Part III), I will discuss the background of this project, how I became interested in Czech-Roma antipathy, and how I conceived a strategy for investigating the problem. In Part IV, I will share excerpts from seven of the student narratives I collected, narratives which, I believe, clearly support a methodological and theoretical focus on discourse analysis and subjectivity as critical research strategies in any study of ethnic conflict. The data in this set of narratives also enable me to sketch a portrait of Czech ethnopsychology—the way, that is, that most Czechs understand such psychological issues as mind, self, body, and emotion. As Poole observes, “Concepts of the person and ideas of folk psychology are mutually implicated in descriptions and explanations of the culturally significant lineaments of human thought, feeling, and action” (1985:184). Although I am not ordinarily an ethnographer of Czech culture, I draw upon Ladislav Holy’s (1996) rich insights to explore Czech cultural models of personhood, self, and other, so as to understand how many Czechs assess the social world. I will also discuss child development and socialization, the process by which some, but not all, Czech children acquire these models. Following up on this discrepancy, in the fifth part of the paper, I will explore additional data that illustrates intra-cultural variation. Finally, in Part VI, I will bring the discussion to a conclusion.

Background and Method

My deep probe of Czech-Roma ethnic conflict is possible only because of an unusual source of data I collected as a visiting professor at Palacky University, in Olomouc, Czech Republic, in 2002. Assigned to teach a class in race and ethnicity that semester, I decided to exploit what I assumed my students already knew well, namely, the acrimonious social relations between Czechs and Roma. My hope was that my students’ empirical familiarity with ethnic conflict would facilitate their theoretical mastery of this complex social problem. As lessons got underway, I was encouraged to find a classroom full of critical thinkers, all of whom were 23-24 years old at the time, which would have made them all between 11 and 12 when the Soviet Union and Warsaw Pact collapsed. As will be seen, such dating is helpful for understanding how my students experienced themselves and how they understood others at the time of my

visit. Having but a cursory understanding of the Czech-Roma issue myself, mostly of the macro, socio-political, objective sort, I was desirous of more of an “emic,” or insider’s, perspective of the situation. So, I decided to begin the class by asking the students to recall for me, in writing, their first encounters with Roma; the first time, that is, that they became aware that their society made distinctions between its various members on the basis of ethnicity. Their accounts were to take the form of two-to-three pages of first-person narrative, and students were urged to avoid academic jargon and theoretical speculation.

With this simple strategy in place I hoped to be able to take the class quickly beyond mechanistic explanations of ethnic conflict and to gain insight into the kinds of encounters that occurred between Czechs and Roma. By eliciting personal narratives I hoped to discover the connections between cultural and mental processes and thereby gain insight into ordinary motivation. I hoped to discover in my students’ reasoning the mental structures—schemas and affects—used by Czechs like my students to interpret Roma.⁴ My reading was guided by the following questions: Who were the actors—what was their age, their gender, their socioeconomic status? What everyday plots developed between Czechs and Roma? How did Czechs and Roma enter into the imaginations of one another? And how did things typically go wrong? What did the people involved in the interactions think and feel?⁵ And finally, can social theory capture this complexity?

The twenty-five accounts of Czechs’ “formative encounters” with Roma that I collected—a total of sixty pages of written narrative—turned out to be chock full of psycho-cultural information that changed my own theoretical orientation dramatically, showing me that there was no such thing as a typical Czech, a typical Rom, or a typical encounter. To the contrary, there seemed to be, rather, an infinite number of possible dramas, each depending on the particular self-other interpersonal matrix that plays out when one person engages with another (Hollan 2000:541).

⁴ Incidentally, I believe that my students’ writing in a second or third language was not entirely disadvantageous as some might expect. I believe it limited their ability to evade or soften events, and that as a consequence, they wrote with more honesty.

⁵ Ironically, I was most curious about the very existential conditions I was least adept at explaining. An economic anthropologist, I had been trained to look for structural explanations of identity politics, usually by way of quantitative data. In fact, like most social scientists of my generation, I had been admonished to eschew psychology because of its methodological limitations and its inability to connect external and subjective aspects of culture (DiMaggio 1997).

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Before I get to the analysis I would like to discuss the methodology by which I make sense of my data. The method I employ is the “cultural analysis of discourse,” which its inventor, Naomi Quinn, describes as an effort to reconstruct, from spoken or written language, the underlying cultural assumptions that shape our thoughts and our ability to reason (2005a:3-4). Quinn frequently cites socio-linguist, Charlotte Linde (1993), who has been eliciting and analyzing life stories throughout her career. Linde asserts that personal narratives contain a great deal of psycho-cultural information; they express who we are and how we got that way, in short, how we construct selves. She says that we use stories to enhance and communicate this sense of self and negotiate it with others. As we do so, Linde argues, we stake our claim to membership in a group and try to show that we are worthy members (see also O’Neill 1996:146). Strauss and Quinn (1997:9) assert that such information goes a long way in clarifying issues of identity and interpersonal relations, for it testifies to the fact that identity is neither predetermined and fixed nor entirely constructed and fluid. This perspective offers vital insight for understanding ethnic conflict between Czechs and Roma.

With its focus on individuals, this method breaks with the customary methodological collectivism of conventional social science. One advocate explains that “the point is not that one individual’s knowledge structure represents all of culture in the microcosm, but that social action is the result of a process by which public events are turned into private representations and acted on, thereby creating new public events, and we need a better understanding of how this happens” (Strauss 1992:16). Quinn believes that eliciting copious amounts of discourse or talk via extended interviews or other means enables the cognitively oriented social scientist to discern the cultural meanings that organize the thoughts of the interviewee or raconteur and also the way the interviewee or raconteur reasons about various things; how, in short, people frame and reflect upon their every experience prior to taking any particular action. Bloch (Hirschfeld 2000:621) agrees that the basis of cognition can be discovered in the analysis of the style and contents of narrative, while DiMaggio (1997:266) and Strauss (1992:16) call discourse analysis an ingenious technique that allows strong inferences of mental structures, which are key to connecting external and subjective aspects of culture.

Expounding on the rationale behind the method, Quinn (2005a) explains that there is much about culture that cannot be articulated by its users. People come by their knowledge both as a result of formal teaching and real life experiences, and in the latter case, people’s explanations for

their own actions often remain ambiguous. A methodological focus on discourse, she argues (2005a:4), allows us to reconstruct what actors know and how they know it, as well as what knowledge they lack, and the ways in which they do not or cannot know—information from which researchers can deduce the reason for their actions. Strauss concurs, saying that “some feeling states are imperfectly conveyed by verbal description, but if we are to attempt to understand others’ lives from their point of view, their words are indispensable” (1992:16). Insight into the thought process, especially in regard to motivation, can help us extend our understanding of agency beyond such simplistic notions as the socio-culturally mediated capacity to act (Frank 2006:282).

The Data

In this section, I present seven excerpts of what I call my students’ “formative encounters of Roma” to illustrate both the quality and utility of this data for analyzing social relations along the lines I discussed above. I believe these data illustrate the process by which many young Czechs internalize cultural models—archetypes—of both Czech and Roma personhood by virtue of constant exposure to and regular participation in Czech society. How, that is, they define and subsequently discern normal and abnormal behavior and come to emulate or eschew it, as the case may be, while learning, too, that the word *cizinec* applies to people who exhibit non-Czechness, a situation that often provokes a feeling of unease.⁶ For editorial reasons, I’m limited to these few examples, so I have attempted to select carefully those passages that best illustrate the cognitive science-psychoanalytic synthesis that I am advocating in this article. In the interest of protecting people’s identities, all of the names used below have been changed.

Excerpt 1: Jana

My first experience of seeing gypsies was in Slovakia. I remember traveling there and seeing a real gypsy village. It was always so interesting to look, if only for a moment,

⁶ Cizinec is a derivation of “cizi,” foreign, which has a number of meanings ranging from alien, unfamiliar, different, to strange. Above all, says von Kunes (1999:84), what is cizi is hard to identify with.

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from the passing train. It was a round village with the houses—if you could call them that—made of mud and wood somehow. I always wondered why they didn't fall apart. In the middle of the village there was always a fire burning, and it was very lively. There were naked kids running around, with muddy hands in their mouths, watching the train. Sometimes we got to see women with long skirts and scarves cooking on the fire or washing clothes in a brownish pond beside the village, apparently the only water available. Lightly dressed men brought wood to keep the fire going. The village seemed to be constantly in motion—people, pigs, and hens—and there was mud and rubbish all around. From my point of view, this was an unlivable place and if I ever misbehaved, my parents would tease me, saying that if I didn't stop, they would sell me to the gypsies.

Excerpt 2: Katka

I had a good overview from the window in my bedroom and I could watch them. There was a fireplace in front of their house. Gypsy women preferred to cook outside in a big pot which was much bigger than the biggest one in our kitchen was. One day we had some visitors and I called them to come to my bedroom to see the gypsies. We could see the water in the big pot boiling and then an old gypsy woman came out of the house and threw a few big pieces of bloody meat into the pot. This happened when I was eight years old and we had bought our first pet—a black poodle called Betty. It took a long time to persuade my father to buy her. I was a shy child and did not have many friends, so Betty meant a great deal to me. My father told me and my sister not to leave Betty in the garden alone. He told us that some gypsies eat dogs. He visited a gypsy village in Slovakia and saw them killing and then eating a dog. I became afraid about Betty. I did not want my dog to be eaten up by those gypsies. I became worried and angry. Every time I had to pass their house, I ran. I wished they would disappear or move away.

What can one deduce from these narratives? Let me offer a few preliminary observations beginning with the obvious. Czech society is highly segregated. Entire regions, as well as many cities and towns are ethnically homogeneous, as are many institutions.⁷ So, for many Czechs, a glimpse from a passing train or a distant bedroom window is as close as they will ever come to Roma. In fact, many of my students reported that they didn't encounter "others" until well into childhood. Such children might be described as ethnically "aschematic," in the sense that they lack schemas for national and ethnic categories other than their own, and scripts for interethnic relations (Baldwin 1992). Consequently, they do not yet distinguish; they do not yet discriminate. They don't know yet what to make of the difference they observe; what to feel; how to react. They simply do not have the mental faculties to categorize ethnic others. Indeed, in the narratives above, there is ample evidence of a prior curiosity, amusement, amazement, and even the suggestion of sympathy for the odd strangers. There is also evidence of ambivalence and anxiety—of simply not knowing how to interpret the scene—although we can see ethnocentric parents seizing the opportunity to shape their children's impressions by way of inculcating negative affects, namely, contempt and fear, which may be recalled or transferred later in life when Jana and Katka find themselves in the presence of ethnic others. Strauss and Quinn (1997) tell us that isolation and provincialism act as "centripetal forces" on culture, social organization, and history itself. That is, they act to preserve the socio-cultural status quo for the simple reason that isolated people don't attain new information that might disconfirm their assumptions. In the absence of social interaction, meanings cannot be contested and renegotiated (Ortner 2001). Cultural models of self, other, and relations between self and other remain static and antagonistic. Those Czechs who experience little diversity firsthand are likely to remain biased, unable to see that their perspective is an aspect of their selves rather than an essential quality of Roma (Bohannon 1995:38). National culture and traditions, aspects of culture's public or external dimension, thus have a profound centripetal effect on how people experience themselves, as well as how they understand others.

There's another lesson here, as well; one that concerns cultural transmission. We can discern in Jana's and Katka's narratives the outside-

⁷ Among the Roma, 75% of working-age adults are unemployed, 80% of Roma children attend remedial schools, and there is a near complete absence of Roma representation in government (Slavikova 2011).

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inside flow of culture; that is, someone who has internalized public—in this case, nationalist—discourses, will come to share, to a certain extent, such meanings. When people behave according to these now-personal meanings, they publicly manifest the meaning whereupon any witnesses may confirm—or alter—their own cultural understandings of the nation. Of course, there are other discourses circulating in Czech society, such as those that center on human rights and Roma rights.

Tellingly, when I tried to discuss segregation and discrimination in class, I drew the immediate ire of students who simply didn't want to consider structural inequalities or their possible role in perpetuating them. Most attributed high unemployment among Roma to laziness, rather than to discrimination, and low achievement in education to a lack of intellect and/or ambition, not to the fact that Roma children are often placed in special schools because they do not speak Czech. Some students became quite heated in defense of themselves and even more strident in their denunciations of Roma, and to my dismay, a few of them even quit the class. One observed "*I must confess that if I meet a Rom now, I am rather suspicious.*" And she went on to say, "*But I am not a racist. . . . I simply refuse to be called a racist, and I believe the majority of Czechs aren't racists. Hope so.*" (Excerpt C). Another stated that "*what the white people don't like is that in spite of their long stay in our country, gypsies still can't speak Czech, and they still don't simulate our way of life; they have too many children but they don't work; they only come for the social benefits.*" And she added, "*I don't know if relations between us and gypsies will be better, but I hope so*" (Excerpt K).

In addition to outright denials like these, there was a good deal of scapegoating in the data, not only of Roma themselves, but also of Communists, Soviets, and Westerners. One student observed, "*It seems that Roma are one of the greatest problems in the Czech Republic nowadays, at least in the eyes of other countries. It is difficult to say what I think about them because my opinions are much shaped by the media. I would probably be called racist or xenophobic if I say they are just dirty, uneducated thieves. It's just not politically correct*" (Excerpt M).⁸

Similar sentiments were voiced by other students:

⁸ The frequently invoked charge of political correctness provides additional evidence of my students' defensiveness and overall ambivalence about Czech attitudes toward minorities.

“A negative view of Gypsies was extended by the consensus that was present in the Czech majority. According to it, Gypsies were dirty, lazy, slapdash, and thieves. Hardly anyone realized that the mutual distrust and misunderstanding came for the faulty Communist policy that did not solve the problem and caused segregation and isolation of Gypsies” (Excerpt F).

“Another aspect of communist policy resented by the majority was social welfare which promoted a higher birth rate in the Gypsy community—while the average Czech family has two or three children, Gypsy families often have four, five, or even more” (Excerpt N).

Having only recently regained their sovereignty, my students—like many of their compatriots—were in no mood to hear Czech national culture being disparaged, even in the context of European Union membership in which discussions of human rights were common. They were fed up with outsiders’ criticisms and prescriptions, and they became defensive—even hostile—with those who did not see the Roma issue their way. Suddenly, in class, I became a villain. A cizinec. But though I was saddened that our initial esprit de corps was gone, I was even more puzzled by my students’ sudden unwillingness to question things; after all, in most other ways, they were astute, evenhanded, and compassionate.

The turn of events provoked a change of approach, causing me to become what Quinn (2005a:6) calls a methodological opportunist; that is, one who seeks data by unconventional means. Taking a cue from a variety of researchers such as Jan Penrose (Harrison 2006:53) and Michel Foucault (Scheper-Hughes 2001:73), I considered the possibility that the particular stereotypes that people hold of others in fact reveal much about the way they wish to define themselves; that stereotypes actually testify to the repressed fears, longings, and insecurities of the in-group; that the search for scapegoats constitutes a way of emphasizing the normalcy of the in-group; and that the kind of scapegoat that people invent depends on the particular behavior that members of a society are most concerned to disavow (see also Obeyesekere 1984:108). By this deeper logic, Roma serve as a repository for Czechs’ disowned and frightening aggressive feelings, while Czechs, themselves, are idealized and seen as good and admirable (Sherwood 1980). In fact, Ladislav Holy (1996) confirms this when he writes that Czechs have a history of desire to be acknowledged

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by other Europeans for their cultural achievements. Such recognition hasn't been forthcoming, he says, because of foreign domination, first, by the Hapsburgs, then, the Germans, and most recently, the Soviets.

Other commentators express similar thoughts. Historian Jiri Staif (2005) asserts that Czech self-understandings have been influenced by the writings of nineteenth century Czech historians, whose interpretations of history reflected (1) the Enlightenment conviction that the telling of history not be confined to political events, but that it should also consider the history of civilization and progress; (2) the Romantic Period's notion that history was about nations—unique ethnic wholes occupying a territory; and (3) the classical German philosophy bias that regarded the state as the highest form of civilization. Journalist Jan Culik (2000) writes that modern (i.e., 19th century) Czech society defined itself defensively against the mostly Germanic world as a narrow, homogeneous, enclosed community, an attitude that strengthened during decades of communism, when the regime exploited Czech nationalism to foment xenophobia against those who came from the outside world. This history promotes a profound sense of inadequacy and a national identity crisis. Viewed in a new light, scapegoating can be seen as what Quinn calls a “task solution” (Strauss and Quinn 1997:122). This permits racists to displace their own negative thought-feelings onto Roma; as such, scapegoating serves to rationalize and justify Czech hatred and disgust, and this is one reason for the durability of identity (ethnic) conflict.

Returning to the data, in both excerpts, we obtain a phenomenological account of cultural difference. In Number 1, the narrator, Jana, identifies many of the material or objective markers that distinguish Roma in the eyes of Czechs: the circular village, the houses of mud and wood, the fire, the naked kids with muddy hands, the women in long skirts and scarves, the brown pond, the lightly dressed men, the wood, pigs, hens, mud, and rubbish. Her mention of these various objects indicates that none of them are part of the “cognitive background” of ordinary Czechs—the things that most Czechs learn implicitly by virtue of the objective and practical regularities in their own society; the implicit knowledge that constitutes the habitus of most Czechs (D'Andrade:n.d.; Strauss and Quinn 1997:24). Jana's observations affirm Paul Bohannan's (1995:21) observation that in the process of learning culture, people come to regard the particular version of it that they learn—i.e., their own culture—as a part of the natural world; the world they take for granted; the world they become enchanted by. By logical extension, that which is not natural is unnatural, and that which is unnatural is likely to be considered

fascinating or dangerous. Such appraising, of course, is a crucial aspect of humans' evolutionary design. It is what has made our species so successful. Commonplace things evoke no conscious response, nor do they arouse any feeling, and people go about their business efficiently.⁹ But because they are unfamiliar to her, she is aware of them; she is conscious of them. That is, they evoke feelings or affects in her. And what feelings are they? At this stage, the young girl is curious; her gaze is full of fascination. At the same time, one senses that she is confused about the social implications of what she sees; not yet having a firm conviction—and/or perhaps accommodating contradictory beliefs, e.g., a distaste for deviance, but also compassion for suffering people—she “wonders” about the dirty, shivering people living in hovels, information that does not match her expectations. Young Jana experiences fascination and disgust simultaneously; sympathy tinged with surprise; anxiety. We see much the same thing in the second narrative where the narrator, Katka, recalls the outdoor kitchen, the big pot, the fresh meat. Katka is alternately anxious, indignant, amused, smug; in a word, ambivalent. As both girls mature, however, they will learn to be consistent in their assessments by observing and associating with other competent Czechs.

This mental tallying of contrast between familiar and exotic objects all adds up for the phenomenologically-inspired anthropologist for whom external objects are the source of meaning. For such analysts, meaning is the essential property of the cultural object alone, and intentionality is simply a mental state directed toward or deriving from objects or entities outside oneself. Psychoanalytically-inspired anthropologists have a very different view of how the mind works; that it is meaningfully influenced by unconscious thoughts, affects, and motives. (Clarke 1999; Chodorow 1999; Paul 1989). For them, perception is less a process of decoding than one of transference; less a reflection of reality than a refraction of it. Everything and everyone we experience, we experience from the unique perspective of idiosyncratic selves: we have subjective impressions derived from multiple and personal schemas and affects; not “real” in any sense. Rather, they are distortions, personal fantasies, in fact, more reflective of personal subjectivity than of any object's presumed “essence.”

⁹ Regarding efficiency, cognitivists speak of the “cognitive economy” by which they mean the managing of one's mental resources, including time, effort and specific processing tools. Performance declines when one performs tasks that require more resources than are available but stereotypes decrease the information processing load (Macrae and Bodenhausen 2000).

The implication here is that there is no such thing as an external enemy; Czech-Rom interpersonal/intersubjective relations are organized around the habitual patterns of interaction and expectation each interlocutor has used in previous significant relationships from as long ago as early childhood (Paul 1989; Hollan 2000). Accordingly, all perception of an enemy is a projection of the ego as the enemy (Clarke 1999; Sherwood 1980). With this theoretical insight, we move beyond deterministic theories that prioritize public or extrapersonal meanings, and we become more aware of intrapersonal meanings and their associated affects—in short, of subjectivity and intersubjectivity—as the co-determinants of consciousness (Strauss and Quinn 1997). Consciousness is equivalent to an interpretation rather than a computation; the product of intrapersonal meaning and extrapersonal meaning. It involves an identification of the object, person, or event, expectations regarding it, and, often, a feeling about it and a motivation to respond to it (7). And the transactional nature of social interaction becomes clearer: our encounters are the emergent products of transference and countertransference (Hollan 2000; Chodorow 1999). Thus, meaning-making or “making sense” is equivalent to an interpretation evoked in a person by an object or event at a given time (Strauss and Quinn 1997:6). As mentioned previously, D’Andrade labels this construction of consciousness an “appraisal”. Appraisals such as these compel the agentic self to make decisions, to take action. Excerpt Number 2 illustrates the development of affective personal meanings related to ethnicity. Katka begins to associate Roma with feelings of fear, anger, and contempt, negative affects that lead to prejudice against and avoidance of Roma. One gains more insight into this development in the following three excerpts—numbers 3, 4, and 5—wherein we see that the naïveté and ambivalence of the children are replaced by a greater decisiveness and the result is less acceptance of difference.

Excerpt 3: Vitek

The first time I remember Roma was in Prague. I was five years old when we made a trip there. We sat in a subway train and two men got in and sat right opposite me. They smelled very bad. I asked my Mum why they smelled and if they were brown from the sun. She said they were gypsies and that that was their normal color, and they did not wash themselves. I asked her why they did not wash, and she

said that they were not used to washing and that they did not mind their bad smell. So in my child's brain, gypsies were connected with smelling bad. And this memory I have had for nearly twenty years.

Excerpt 3 retraces five-year-old Vitek's newfound ability to distinguish people by way of the formation of an idiosyncratic model of Roma. Interestingly, his appraising of others includes olfactory information; below, we will see that knowledge can be encoded in other sensory modalities as well—visual, haptic, kinesthetic, auditory or gustatory (Throop 2003). Vitek's trusted mother, though seemingly sympathetic to the Roma men's plight—she does not condemn them—nonetheless does not think her young son is quite ready for a lesson in Czechoslovakian political economy. So, she opts for a simple, non-political explanation—lackadaisical gypsies, dirty and smelling badly, but living life as they choose—and we see how this representation becomes an enduring aspect of Vitek's problem solving or reasoning; how, that is, it comes to constitute a significant aspect of his personality or self-system. To wit, for the next twenty years he associates Roma with filth and a lack of self-respect, a conviction that arouses disgust and promotes a sense of superiority that presumably develops further into a sense of ethnic and national identities. The cognitivist adage that “ethnicity is not a thing in this world but rather a perspective on it” (Brubaker 2004:17) is clearly illustrated through this and the next example.

Excerpt 4: Petr

I come from a little village in North Moravia where there were no gypsies at all, but that doesn't mean that I did not come across any of them. I recall two early impressions. One was that they were the source of jokes, like, 'Do not be lazy like a gypsy,' or, 'You are as filthy as only a gypsy can be.' I thought of them as strange people who eat squirrels and cats, and I imagined fat, loud women in tattered dresses and dirty kids playing in the mud. And if I ever met any, I would not look into their eyes because I thought there was something wild and devilish inside. My parents would never allow us to play with gypsy kids.

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Excerpt 4 offers more evidence of the mediating role of cultural and personal knowledge in organizing sensory inputs. Negative connotations of Roma were formed by way of oft-heard jokes during early learning, and thereafter reinforced by people's ordinary speech acts and routine practices.¹⁰ Roma were objects of ridicule and not to be taken seriously. Petr overlearned the negative stereotype to the point of automaticity, such that any ontological alternatives to this racist fantasy were out of the question. Since then, this understanding has continually influenced Petr's assessments and actions. Any residual curiosity from early childhood is seemingly all gone. He has become another Czech adult who will have nothing to do with Roma, testimony to the fact that the oppressive representation of Roma is widely distributed in the Czech Republic.

Excerpt 5: Helena

When I was eight years old, I was going to school with only white children and I thought that dark-colored people only lived in Africa. One day, we were told that a new student would be coming the following week. Living in a small village, where life moves slower, meeting someone new brought great excitement. The day arrived, and what a surprise it was when our teacher introduced Erzika, a dark-colored girl. When she sat down at her desk every single eye in the class was gazing at her. When we had our break, all of the children went to her desk and asked her who she was, where she came from, and why her skin was a different color. The questions might sound silly, but we were very interested little kids. There was no prejudice, no hatred or mean looks. We were innocent children who just wanted to find out about our new friend. We didn't know that some people prefer the white race or that some dislike gypsies. Even though she was shy, Erzika seemed like a nice person, the same as the rest of us, only with a different color of skin. The next day, however, the behavior of several children suddenly changed. They were mean to Erzika, making fun of the way she looked and calling her

¹⁰ Joking behavior is much studied in anthropology. Among other things, jokes are related to social control and the management of conflict (Goody 1977).

names. I didn't understand how they could behave so horribly towards her or how they could change overnight. A few years later, I talked to my parents about this incident and they explained to me that what probably happened was that, when the children went home and told their parents about the new student, the parents undoubtedly told their children many reasons why gypsies do not belong in our society. Their parents taught them to hate someone who had been a friend and the children's behavior changed.

Here, Helena reveals an abrupt change of behavior among some of her eight-year-old classmates. Again, the scene is a remote, ethnically homogeneous village, and the children are naïve in matters of ethnic identity. But the unexpected arrival of the dark-skinned Erzika prompts some of the children's parents to impart a critical lesson in ethnic labeling (Rogoff 2003; Quinn 2005c). Very quickly—overnight, in fact—some of the children learn that their new classmate belongs in a separate category from themselves and that as a “gypsy” she does not warrant their solicitousness, but rather their scorn.¹¹ It is a message that will be repeated again and again, both explicitly and tacitly, until a model of personhood is constructed along the lines described by sociologists Alena Nedomova and Tomas Kostecky.¹² A typical Czech, they write,

is represented by a Czech-speaking person of Czech citizenship and Czech origin, living in the same town/village or at least not far from his/her birthplace, has a close relationship with his/her place of residence and not willing to move anywhere, especially not far from his/her home country. . . . This person has no personal experience with living abroad [so] it is not surprising that his/her

¹¹ One wonders how the shy Erzika dealt with this situation—did she transfer to a remedial school as some of my other students in similar situations reported? And did she internalize or come to identify herself with the distortions of her classmates, much as the young Rom described in section two did? Projective identification occurs when negative feelings are forced into others with the result that the recipient is induced to feel or act in ways that originate with the projector (Clarke 1999).

¹² Notions of Czech self and Rom other are purveyed by way of popular culture, of course, as well as by national historiography (Staif 2005), the theater (Lemon 1996), and television productions of various kinds, e.g., post-Czechoslovakia debates (Leudar and Nekvapil 2000).

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attitudes towards foreigners generally (and immigrants in particular) can be described with words such as “fear,” “caution,” or “mistrust.” [1997:81]

This notion of ethnic or national typicality is important for this essay; recall from above that cultural models inform our judgment and that our social encounters are mediated by memories of previous self-other configurations (Hollan 2000). It becomes critical to know, then, what constitutes the average Czech’s cognitive background with regard to the category of person. We must try to understand the standard or model of proper personhood against which Eva, Honza, and other Czechs are assessing their sensory input. In addition to the information provided by Nedomova and Kostelecky, Czech sociologist Jiri Musil (1998) provides a glimpse into Czech national character vis-à-vis those of its Central European neighbors:

In comparison with Hungarians and to a certain extent with Austrians, Czechs are more restrained and careful. Czechs are also more skeptical, selective, and serious—they tend to weigh different aspects of an issue. Czechs are also considered to be very practical and to be the hardest working out of these three nations. . . . [These] are basically bland characteristics which—even when spiced up with the typical Czech sense of humor and irony—do not particularly attract or provoke anyone. Everything is somewhat unpronounced. The Czech mentality carries within it a strange, albeit understandable, paradox. All of the revolutions and shocks of modern Czech history, the pettiness of some Czechs and the bravery of others, led to the formation of a mentality that has no clear edges or contours. . . . Restraint linked with stubbornness have crystallized into thought processes, attitudes, values, and lifestyles that are relatively stable and functional.

A more detailed description of what Czechs expect of a person is provided by social anthropologist Holy, a one-time Czechoslovak, who lived much of his life in exile in Great Britain. Holy returned to his homeland to conduct a study of political subjectivity leading up to the breakup of Czechoslovakia in 1993. Among other things, he was struck by the fervent nationalism of his erstwhile countrymen, and the particular

ethnoconcept of Czech personhood. Czech national identity, he says, differs qualitatively from the identities that individuals assume on the basis of their achieved statuses:

It is 'superordinate to most other statuses, and defines the permissible constellation of statuses, or social personalities, which an individual with that identity may assume.' It is an imperative identity 'in that it cannot be disregarded or temporarily set aside by other definitions of the situation.' It resembles gender identity or identity determined by one's age in that it too is seen as something naturally given. When talking about Czechness on the whole, people mentioned three criteria: having been born in the Czech lands, speaking Czech as one's mother tongue, and having been born of Czech parents. Whilst some of them mentioned all three criteria, most were of the opinion that having been born in the Czech lands and speaking Czech were not enough to make one a Czech. Hardly anyone thought that those gypsies or Jews who were born in the Czech lands, and who sometimes spoke only Czech, were Czechs, and most people asserted quite strongly that 'someone who speaks Czech is not necessarily a Czech: a Czech-speaking gypsy is not a Czech.' Many people spoke of 'Czech gypsies' or 'Czech Jews,' but particularly as far as gypsies were concerned they vehemently denied the possibility that they could become Czechs. 'A gypsy will always remain a gypsy' was a phrase I heard many times. [1996:72]

Elsewhere, Holy constructs an archetypal character he calls "the little Czech man"—in Czech, *Maly Cesky Clovek*, or MCC—to depict the average Czech. The MCC, Holy reports,

is not motivated by great ideals. His lifeworld is delineated by his family, work, and close friends, and he approaches anything that is outside it with caution and mistrust. His attitude is down-to-earth, and he is certainly no hero The little Czech as the ideal member of the nation has roots in national mythology. The Czech nation survived three hundred years of oppression not because of its heroes but because of the little Czechs who were the nation. . . . The little Czech, the representative of the everyday and the ordinary, is the role model, and what is important about him as a role model is that he lacks individuation. . . . The reluctance to individuate persons is manifest in the Czech custom of addressing people by their occupational roles. . . . What this usage emphasizes, however, is not one's role in

the complex division of labor but the denial of individuation and the stress on identity deriving from category membership. It is an expression of the importance of the collective (in this case the categorical) identity over the personal one. [Holy 1996:62]

It can be seen throughout this analysis that labels necessarily imply some similarity among those within a given category and some difference between members of one category and members of another. As such, they encourage thinking in terms of in-groups and out-groups; that is, they abet political subjectivity.¹³ Without them, as can be inferred from the above, there is no object of general hatred (Greenberg, Kirkland, and Pyszczynski 1988). Something else that can be inferred from Helena's account is that along with learning the distinguishing criteria or the objective markers—skin tone, hair color and texture, surname and given name, language proficiency, clothing, posture—the newly discriminating child may also experience the pleasure of discovering the ability to torment or “make fun of” his/her adversaries. As mentioned in the introduction, sometimes inflicting pain compensates somewhat for an individual's own angst. There's a “deep motive” at work here; one unrelated to the usual motivation implied in structures of cultural knowledge (Nuckolls 2001; Quinn 2005a). Helena's classmates and/or their parents may be projecting some of their own anxieties onto Erzika, experiencing their own proscribed aggression as hers, perhaps, and thus perceiving her as threatening (Clarke 1999). “Deep motivation,” Nuckolls and others explain, is related to identity conflict resulting from childhood experience and includes the agent's desire to master the environment, control his/her actions, seek self-realization, or manipulate power relations (Nuckolls 2001:182; Quinn 2005a).

The next excerpt, Number 6, provides more evidence of the role of labeling and the acquisition of cultural models of self and other—us and them—and scripts for relations between them. It also suggests another

¹³ Expounding on political subjectivity, Rahimi (2011) notes that the subject is political in its very subjectivity: both in the sense that it engages in an ongoing act of subjugating/conjugating the world into meaningful and temporal patterns, and in the sense that it is subjugated/conjugated by the local meaning system in order to become a social subject. Meaning is always political because it is always the representation of a specific ‘interest’. This of course does not have to be the conscious ‘interest’ of a specific group or class, as in the interests of the state or the ruling class, but it is always an interest, and always the interest commonly shared by a ‘group of people.’

deep motive common to children, that of not disappointing their parents, which recalls Quinn's (2005c:480) observation that "the dread of losing parental approval or the need for parental approval provides strong motivation well into adolescence and beyond (Quinn 2005c:480).

Excerpt 6: Eva

My prejudices were built quietly by the general view of society I grew up in. And as I grew older, I suddenly realized there were some stereotypes I had adopted from the many trifling events and deceptive words and gestures that instilled in me and many others a prejudice toward people we didn't even know. There is one Slovak word, 'ciganit,' which means 'to lie; to cheat.' It is derived from the word 'cigan,' and that means 'gypsy.' Every time I lied or cheated, my parents called me 'cigan,' and I knew I did a bad thing and was ashamed of myself. But this simple phrase didn't only show me that I acted wrong. It also indicated that there are some people who lie and cheat all the time and are therefore bad. I became distrustful of this group of people, although I didn't know any of them.

In Excerpt 6, Eva describes the role of public culture, including what she calls "trifling events and deceptive words and gestures," in propagating and perpetuating stereotypic cultural models of Roma. She's referring to the daily social practices and attendant social patterns, the material culture, and the public discourse to which she has been exposed throughout her life. All of it has resulted in the buildup or internalization of a great deal of tacit knowledge, or habitus, that informs her reasoning about people like and unlike herself. Her account attests to the flow of cultural meaning from outside to inside to outside again; specifically, her internalization of public culture leads to personal feelings of aversion and subsequent acts of prejudice. Anthropologist Christina Toren (2001), studies cultural transmission among Fijians and is especially interested in how children become particular adults. She notes that history inheres in the living persons whose actions make social structures, institutions, ideologies, and cultural models material (157). By this she means that our practices objectify or instantiate cultural beliefs such that when others observe us, they learn what various things signify as well as how to behave in typical situations. The effect of this process, says Toren, is that

“children come to constitute the categories in whose terms adults represent what they know of the world” (170), which is seen again and again in narratives such as Eva’s. Here, as in the previous excerpt, the ethnic label, *cigan*, routinely employed by Eva’s parents, seems to have condensed many of the myths associated with Roma into a single word with the capacity to evoke a variety of feelings and intentions (Greenberg, Kirkland, and Pyszczynski 1988:77). Young Eva’s understanding of Roma is conditioned by parental authority by way of shame and fear and is therefore highly emotionally charged. It is associated with feelings of self-worth, as well with treachery and depravity; feelings that are likely to lead to anxiety and a lack of empathy and prejudice (Sherwood 1980).

In sum, Eva has an understanding of what a normal person should be like; a personal or idiosyncratic model of personhood based on her own life experiences. Roma do not accord with her model. The conviction that they are lesser human beings, that they are somehow defective, constitutes part of Eva’s self-system (Hollan 2000; Quinn 2006) and is probably similar, though not an exact replica, of that of many of her countrymen, each of whom is exposed to similar public culture but has had his/her own personal experiences with Roma. According to the model of Deep Cognition described above, she will use this model, this mental structure with its attendant affects, as an interpretive tool with which to organize perceptions and affects and to reason about the people she encounters. It will constitute one of the many critical models that form the cognitive background against which sensory input pertaining to the social world will be appraised.

As mentioned, Excerpt 6, like all those preceding it, highlights the critical role played by Czech parents in rearing children to be the kinds of adults who will be valued in the community. All demonstrate that the emotional interaction between a child and his/her primary caregivers is fundamental to self-organization. That is, the creation of self is achieved partly by incorporating others’ attributes, generating templates or models for understanding future relationships, such as those between Czechs and non-Czechs that are under review (Nuckolls 2001:189). Another way to put this is that we recall things the way in which we learn them, with similar emotional salience. Here I highlight the shift of focus in psychoanalytic theory from the strictly intrapsychic or subjective realm to the interpersonal or intersubjective realm. This post-Freudian move away from problems of drive regulation and toward relationship difficulties is attributable to the mid-20th century realization that interpersonal distortions are built into the self and reproduced in the social order.

Anthony Elliott explains, for example, that “the reproduction of the patriarchal and social order of modern societies is no longer understood as merely rooted in sexual repression and the denial of passion. Rather, repressive social conditions are traced to various pathologies that underlie human relationships” (2002:25). Later, he adds that “the distortions and traps of the imaginary order shape all interactions between the self and others, [ranging] from family interaction, through school, early adulthood, the work environment, and human relationships more generally” (35). The learning of ethnic cultural models being discussed here resembles Quinn’s findings on the acquisition of cultural models of marriage by American girls and women who come to understand and perform the role of wife by way of lifelong exposure to culturally-specific understandings of marriage. She concludes that

when particular ideas about human relations, about role obligations, or about types of people have force for us, rather than just being possible interpretations of the social world, it is because as children and young adults we have been socialized by means of appeals to these very ideas. We have been taught it is our role, our nature, the way we should be treated and treat other people. [Quinn 1992:121]

As with marriage relations between women and men, so too, I argue, with ethnic social relations. All of the narratives, but especially number seven (below) provide insight into how such lessons or what Barbara Rogoff calls (2003) “guided learning” proceed. Parents employ frightening tactics; sarcasm; emotional blackmail. Their efforts are constant, emotionally arousing, backed by rewards and punishments, sometimes even violence (Quinn 2005c). And they are effective: unfamiliar objects that formerly elicited wonder subsequently give rise to consistent and strong negative affects of anxiety, anger, disgust, and contempt. These affects are critical components of subjectivity and eventual motivation; the very affects that motivate discrimination, segregation, and violence.

Excerpt 7: Honza

Czech parents play a decisive role in shaping the opinions and attitudes of their children. From the very beginning, Czech kids are taught to hate gypsies. They are told,

'Avoid those lousy gypsies;' *'Beware of your pocket, they will steal your wallet;'* *'Do not talk to them;'* *'They are making children in order to suck our money;'* *'They are so stupid, they cannot even speak Czech.'* This kind of propaganda is heard in most Czech families—including mine. My attitudes toward gypsies came from the emotions of a little child who was not capable of critical thinking. There is still some prejudice due to those first negative encounters.

Intra-Cultural Variation: Individuality and Personality

To this point, I've created the impression that Czech society is homogeneous, that a particular form of culture is evenly distributed among all Czechs. It appears that as a result of child socialization all Czechs are racists; that they all regard Roma as inferior human beings. Such stereotyping is mistaken, of course; cultural understandings are not simply transmitted intact from generation to generation and uniformly shared among all members of a society. Children don't merely acquire ready-made meanings proffered by adults. Deep Cognition enables us to understand "intra-cultural variation" (Chodorow 1999) by confirming that Czechs don't all feel the same way about themselves, nor do they bring the same understandings—or fantasies—about others to their encounters with Roma. Accordingly, not all Czechs are ultra-nationalists, nor are they all paranoid. Many people, in fact, are highly critical of their society, and many empathize with—and even defend the rights of—Roma. As explained above, the reasons for this might include variations in subjective experience due to differences in the infant-caretaker relationship, as well as variations in intrapersonal understandings due to the different personal experiences of public culture attendant on structural differences in Czech society (Kusserow 2004). By way of the argument presented above, varying self-systems, comprised of varying senses of self and varying models of personhood, appraise the world differently and arrive at differing interpretations, and hence, at differing intentions. So, in cross-cultural encounters with Roma, not all Czechs experience ambivalence followed by anxiety-triggering defense mechanisms; all Czechs do not project personal hostility onto Roma. In the next two excerpts, I demonstrate that the negative cultural model of Roma and the feeling of patriotic pride, though widely distributed, are nonetheless not universally distributed throughout the Czech population. Rather, Czech individuals,

each embodying what Strauss (1992) calls a personal semantic network, think, feel, and behave variably toward Roma.

Excerpt 8: Veronika

I was born in Prague under a totalitarian system and at a time of little hope for change. My father studied philosophy and economics at the university, while my mother worked in the library. We lived in a small flat in a beautiful old house in a predominantly gypsy neighborhood called Smichov. We shared a bathroom with five gypsy families living there. We were the only “whites” in the place, and I played every day with our neighbors. My best friend was a girl called Zdenka and when my parents went out at night I spent the night at our neighbors’ house and had dinner with them and played all night with my friends. At that time I didn’t realize they were any different from us. I didn’t know anything else. Both of my parents love all that is different, and I was raised this way, too.

Excerpt 9: Lenka

My first experience with gypsies was in my hometown and was generally positive. Since childhood, I have lived in a block of flats next to a gypsy family. I met them all the time growing up and never knew they were of a different origin. No one in the house ever had problems with them. They had regular jobs, their children attended school, and they were quiet and respectful neighbors. I only became aware of the existence of gypsies in the 1990s due to racial tension between Czech authorities and the gypsies over the construction of a wall on Maticni Street in Usti nad Labem. Gypsies took the opportunity to flee our country, in order to seek asylum in Canada, Great Britain, Belgium, and Sweden. This incident ruined the image of Czechs in the West and made Maticni Street a headline issue.

These two accounts demonstrate the efficacy of the cognitive-psychoanalytic paradigm to explain cultural complexity (Hannerz 1993). Veronika and Lenka experienced a different kind of upbringing in

comparison to those of the narrators of the preceding accounts. They did not live apart from Roma, nor were they deluded by racist diatribes. Rather, their parents were trusting and pluralistic. As children, both girls were unaware of any social difference and were completely at ease in the presence of Roma. “Rom” and “Gypsy” were not salient cognitive-emotional categories for either of them, and as a consequence, relations between their families and their Roma neighbors were amicable. The interesting note, of course, occurs in the second narrative, number nine, where Lenka notes that the nationalist discourse unleashed by the collapse of the Warsaw Pact has an impact on her understandings of herself and other Czechs and of Roma. Her new perspective includes national consciousness and pride, as well as doubts about the loyalty and integrity of Czech Roma. This remodeling of her personal understandings highlights the capacity of Deep Cognition to accommodate the dynamism of the human experience.

Conclusion

Paul Bohannen known more for his work in economic anthropology, observed late in his career that “in the process of learning culture, people come to regard the particular version of it that they learn—their own culture—as a part of the natural world” (1994:21). To counteract bias, he offered, people need to “correct for their own culture as they observe other cultures,” which, he further advised, “requires an unusual capacity to see one’s own culture as an attribute of one’s self rather than as part of the essence either of one’s self or of the natural world” (ibid.38). His comments call to mind social attribution theory, which asserts that when people make decisions on attribution, they consistently succumb to cognitive distortions of two types: (1) the self-serving bias, which occurs when positive events are attributed to the observer’s dispositional traits and negative events are attributed to situational factors; and (2) the actor-observer bias, which occurs when the same negative event is attributed to situational factors when it involves the observer and to dispositional traits when it involves an observed actor (Monroe, Hankin, and Van Vechten 2000). At first glance, social attribution theory appears to be in line with much of what has been discussed here. Specifically, it implies that cognition contains a projective element; hence, it locates explanation of prejudice in the imaginations of Czechs. It understands, in short, that “ethnicity is a perspective on the world, rather than a thing in it” (Brubaker (2004). In this final section I

would like to reconsider attribution in the context of my earlier findings. I set up my concluding remarks with the last of my narratives.

Excerpt 10: Karel

First time when I could find that there was something wrong with our society's relationship to Gypsies was when I started my first year at school. Jirka (a Rom) attended the same classroom as I did. All of us in the class were ordinary children—full of life, curious, and also cruel—and we started to make differences. One day, there was an ordinary break. We used to leave our class to meet other pupils from other classes. There was a corridor and at its end was a door half made of glass. All of a sudden, somebody decided to take off his sandal and throw it at another boy. This boy then did the same and after a while there were about fifteen people playing this game. Jirka was among them. Everything would have been all right if someone had not hit the glass of the door. All the boys ran away instantly and waited to see what would happen. The noise of the broken glass brought a teacher to our class. She asked who had broken the glass since it was obvious that it must have been somebody from our collective. All the boys knew who had done it. But then something happened that really surprised me. The absolute silence was broken by the boy responsible for the broken glass. He said, 'Jirka. Jirka broke the glass.' This was a cruel and cool-hearted lie. The reaction of the others was immediate and shocking: 'Yes. It was Jirka,' they claimed. Why him? Why did the boy who broke the glass blame Jirka? Was it just because he knew that Jirka belonged among the rascals? Or had the boy already noticed that the teachers see Jirka through their fingers¹⁴ because he was Gypsy? I wish I knew. Jirka himself did not get a chance to prove his innocence. Actually, no one would have believed him. The teacher who had already had a suspicion towards

¹⁴ I'm told by a native speaker of Czech that if one looks through one's fingers at someone, it means that one doesn't like him/her; that one doesn't think highly of him/her because s/he is different from oneself; in addition, one thinks that one is better than him/her (Luci Skřítek Krejčíková personal communication).

Jirka easily accepted the cruel lie to be true. Jirka had bad luck. I remember the boys, content with the result of 'investigation.' They were laughing at him. I realized something and it lodged deeply in my mind: Jirka was someone who to be friends with meant that others would not be friendly to me. After that, Jirka became a target of our ridicule. He had to play a role he had not chosen. We 'the majority' cast him in that role. Finally, at the end of the first term it was decided he was going to leave because he failed. He was sent to a special school. Was it better for him? I do not know. One more thing: The one who broke the glass and blamed Jirka, became at the age of sixteen one of the skinheads. Matter of chance? I do not think so.

Several things merit brief comment in this example. Most remarkable is that the teacher commits the actor-observer bias when she attributes the negative event—the broken window—not to situational factors, but rather to Jirka's character. Her response might also be considered evidence of the self-serving bias, because she never considers the possibility that such mayhem could have been caused by a Czech like herself, leaving the blame to the only Rom in the classroom. Many of the young children—the actual perpetrator more so than the rest—are already knowledgeable of the Roma stereotype and skillful in scapegoating Roma. They, too, understand the actor-observer bias, and they know implicitly that their teacher is influenced by it and apt to make assumptions accordingly. Karel's remark that "*no one would have believed [Jirka]*" provides evidence of this. Such intersubjective knowledge plays an important role in the children's reasoning and decision-making process. Thus, social attribution theory would appear to offer a solid explanation for much of what transpires in this and many of the foregoing narratives.

Yet, without specifying the cognitive structures and affective processes attendant on the mental representations of self, other, and relations between them—without, that is, operationalizing more recent insights of the cognitive revolution—its conclusions can only remain partial and, therefore, unsatisfactory. Closer scrutiny, in fact, reveals that social attribution theory repeats many of the errors that have been criticized elsewhere in this paper. It presents a monolithic view of Czech society. It assumes that all Czechs hold the same understandings of self and other, and that they all have identical feelings, which, in turn, assumes

that childrearing has been a uniform experience for all Czechs (Briggs 1998). Together, these assumptions lead one to conclude that all Czechs have the same subjective experiences and that they are equally biased and hateful. But as was the case with narratives 8 and 9, Karel's narrative reveals that many of these inferences are inaccurate. For while there appears to be consensus and contentment among the boys in the classroom, Karel himself is initially shocked by the dishonesty and lack of compassion shown by his classmates. Surely, his upbringing was different; surely, the values of compassion and truthfulness were stressed more in his family, even if he soon comes to the realization that "*Jirka was someone who to be friends with meant that others would not be friendly to me.*" That is, his understanding of himself and of Roma deepens, and he soon joins the majority in tormenting Jirka, although it is apparent that he feels guilty in doing so. Jirka, meanwhile, is ridiculed and shunned for the rest of the first term, and subsequently sent to a special school, an outcome that fortifies the models of Czech, Rom, and relations between them. And so, once again, we come back to the issue of agency, and we see that social attribution theory, like many other social science accounts, does not venture far enough into the interior domain of human life; into subjectivity (Frank 2006; Luhrman 2006). Consequently, its account of meaning-making and motivation falls short. The remedy is to exploit what psychology has to offer and to recognize thereby that "individual members of society have different feelings, different personalities, different dispositions, both over the course of time and at any one moment" (Luhrman 2006:347).

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