

Negotiating Identities

Real Roma and Imaginary Gypsies: Immigration, Identity and Interculturality in Southeastern Brazil, 1936-2007

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My paper focuses on how modern Brazilian Gypsies (also known as Roma) remember and identify with their ancestors' experiences of the Holocaust, migration to Latin America as refugees, and persistent discrimination in their new homeland. I'm exploring how the Eastern European Gypsies define their place within Brazilian national identity in relation to other European and non-European immigrants, looking at how they lobby for political support, visibility and citizenship rights. Acculturation has been an ambiguous process for Gypsies, who continue to experience a high degree of undesirability and exclusion from Brazilian society despite their presence in Brazil since the sixteenth century. At the same time Gypsies retain an aura of freedom and mysticism in the Brazilian cultural imaginary that is present in Brazilian literature, soap operas, and even in Umbanda (Afro-Brazilian) religious practices.

I will analyze to what extent the Roma constitute an ethnic and racial exemption to typical discourses of racial tolerance which have been very important in 20th Century Brazilian political discourse. Gypsies were only officially acknowledged recently: Brazilians celebrated National Gypsy Day for the first time in May 2007. An important part of Brazilian Gypsies' experience as immigrants has been their encounter with pre-existing Brazilian ideas about and images of Gypsies. Brazilians viewed Gypsies as mystical beings – and Gypsies in Brazil have had to negotiate with this stereotype, deciding whether or not to make use of it in their dealings with outsiders.

Growing up Caribbean: Issues around Sexuality and Gender-Role Learning.

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This presentation is based on an exploratory research that was conducted partly in responds to the limited empirical studies and data on Caribbean peoples' socialization. It is motivated by the expressed lack of focus on the socialization experiences and practices of Caribbean people who have migrated outside the region, specifically to Toronto. Moreover, this work contributes to the existing studies and literature in that it focuses predominantly on the multiple ways in which sexuality interacts with gender, and ethnicity/ "race" to shape the gender socialization and sex-role learning of Afro-Caribbean and Indo-Caribbean youth in Toronto, who originated from or whose parents originated from three specific Caribbean geographic locations, Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago, and Jamaica. As such, the presentation asks: How do notions about sexuality, or rather heteropatriarchal ideas on sexuality and gender, inform Afro-Caribbean's and Indo-Caribbean's (both first and second generation immigrants) gender socialization and sex-role learning processes in the home? To address this major research question, I asked several broad questions regarding the types of messages communicated through socialization to youth about gender, sex

and sexuality, two of which I will highlight in this presentation. First, what are considered to be “appropriate” and “acceptable” expressions of sexuality for boy and girl, man and woman? Second, how are perceived sexual transgressors treated within cultural spaces, like the home? This presentation will also tell the story of the methodological and ethical challenges or tensions that I faced throughout the study. In addition, I will shed light on possible directions for further research in this area.

Yuh Nah Sih Mih Fuh True/You Don't See Who I Really Am: The Politics of Hybrid Guyanese Racial Identity

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This paper is an introductory study within Caribbean scholarship that provides a theoretical articulation of what it is to be a Guyanese person of East Indian, African, Chinese, and Western European racial descents. As I am visibly Indo-Caribbean, I have struggled with not fitting entirely in any one box, recognizing that there are structures that exist that control my view of what my identity is.

I begin with providing the racial context of Guyana from its European conquest and economic endeavours from the sixteenth century to the present day. Within this discussion is the politics of race that dominates the political structure of the region from pre- through to post-emancipation eras.

The second section discusses race, racism, and race theory as it pertains to the Guyanese situation examining particularly the ideological and structural conditions that exist. It becomes evident as this point that many of the concepts presented, such as race, politics, economics, and colonialism, are so closely interconnected that they cannot be observed accurately as separate notions.

The third section examines identity with the particular focus on the multiracial and ‘multiple’ identity of the Guyanese individual. This ‘multiple’ identity encompasses one’s ethnicity, language, religion, class, and gender, in addition to race.

The final section examines the notion, or as some scholars claim, the ideology of hybridity and a politics of identity revealing such concepts as essentialism, difference, individuality, and fragmentation. This section examines the results of what role politics have played in the construction of the Guyanese racial identity.