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Historicizing Roma in Central Europe: Between critical whiteness and epistemic injustice: Edited by Victoria Shmidt and Bernadette Nadya Jaworsky, London and New York, Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2021, (hardback), ISBN 978-0-367-47198-9

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of the Comecon area, on a kind of symbiosis with the surrounding planned economic realities, although Hungary's more decentralized and more market-oriented model included non-agricultural activities in the countryside. The book would also have benefited from including a list of tables, and in some cases even better editing of some tables, which appear unclear. There is also a presumed mistake in the translation, for example on page (198), where CoCom has been named Comecon. But overall, this does not interfere with the reading in any noticeable way. Through the detailed description of actors in the transfers taking place, and the in-depth information given in many footnotes, the reader receives a multifaceted insight into the so-called "Hungarian miracle".

Note

1. See Cook (1985), "Soviet Agricultural Policies and the Feed-Livestock Sector", *American Journal of Agricultural Economics*, Vol. 67, No. 5, December, 1985, pp 1049–50 and Cook (1990), "Reforming Soviet agriculture", in: William Moskoff, ed., *Perestroika in the Countryside: Agricultural Reform in the Gorbachev Era*, M. E. Sharp, p.55.

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Critical scholars interested in the histories of Central and Eastern Europe have long yearned for this kind of book, one that can be considered an addition to the growing literature on "critical whiteness" and "epistemic justice" in Roma-related studies. The authors urge readers to reconsider the role and ideological nature of science in reproducing and solidifying racism while perpetuating an invisible operation of whiteness. As a result, socially imbricated whiteness focuses upon the Other without challenging the epistemic location of the researcher, policy- or decision-maker. Nor is the question posed of who discursively and materially influences the lives of racialized Others, such as Roma.

In the Introduction, the authors chart the "*longue durée*" of analogies drawn between "Gypsies" and African Americans, blacks or savages throughout various historical periods. Depending on a politics of science containing a constitutively embedded whiteness, these analogies were either equated or negated. Schmidt and Jaworsky begin in 1783, with Heinrich Grellmann's analogy between "Gypsies" and African American slaves. This equation is followed

by Leopold Glück's distinction between "Black Gypsies" as the eternal nomadic versus "White Gypsies" as the settled and nearly assimilated in 1897. This is followed by Eva Justin, who in her 1943 critique of the politics of assimilation, proposed the forced sterilization of Roma based on the U.S. eugenic agenda conducted against "white trash" and racialized groups. After World War II, during state socialism in Central Europe, the picture was more mixed. Although the previous trend to equate Roma with African Americans had fallen under fire, this parallel was still accepted as a "world analogy" based on the social status and practice of segregation commonly endured by Roma, African American and indigenous populations, like Native Americans. In his 1993, controversial and racist study, even the evolutionary Hungarian psychologist, Tamás Bereczkei concluded that Roma and African American reproduction is similar while their reproduction strategies are more compatible with those of animals than with white individuals. At the end of this historical timeline, the authors refer to the human rights lawyer Bob Hepple who deploys litigation strategies from the Civil Rights Movement's iconic case, *Brown v. Board of Education*, to expose educational discrimination against Roma.

The authors argue that the analogies made between Romani and non-white populations (predominantly African Americans and other indigenous groups from America and Australia) cover a long intellectual history that has shaped both the segregation and integration of Roma. Moreover, these analogies have established "core channels for translating whiteness to Europe". Notwithstanding the authors' argumentation, readers unfortunately receive no clarification regarding what contextual and ideological differences exist among the various logics of racialization. Moreover, whiteness remains an imported concept that accompanies the historical analogy made between European Roma and non-European racialized groups. The Introduction makes a very ambitious promise in the following statement: "the book aims to solve two interrelated tasks: (1) to deconstruct the contemporary obstacles to accepting the legacy of whiteness in the history of Roma in Central Europe and (2) to retell the history of Roma as a genetic narrative of whiteness in the region". Accordingly, the book is divided into two sections with several short chapters.

Consisting of four chapters, the first section of the volume is built upon the important concept of epistemic injustice as coined by Miranda Fricker (2007) who argues that no wrong done or violence committed against someone in their capacity as a knower, in this case the Roma, should make sense of their existence. Fricker splits epistemic injustice into two inter-related parts: *testimonial injustice* and *hermeneutical injustice*. *Testimonial justice* refers to when the prejudiced researcher/scholar/expert, etc. simply deflates the level of credibility to a speakers' work, in this case the Roma. *Hermeneutical injustice* befalls "at the very beginning when a gap in collective interpretive resources puts someone at an unfair disadvantage when it comes to making sense of their social experiences". Essentially, the continued historical injustice and violence committed against Roma in Central Europe is not addressed because we lack the critical concept. The first section of the book thematizes and historicizes this ongoing epistemic injustice by using Fricker's foundational concepts. The authors identify three thematic post-socialist pathways that historicize epistemic injustice: (1) pathologizing the past of Roma (2) normalizing whiteness in the course of transnational and transhistorical human rights discourse (3) remarginalizing the collective and individual memories of Roma. Despite this ambitious goal, in several places the reader feels left alone without substantial explanations. One such instance can be found in the second chapter, where the authors expose the practice of obscuration or "color-blind" racialization without offering any contemplation on the literature of racial liberalism that, lacking critical reflection, promotes inherited racial distortions.

The second section (four chapters) focuses on the historicized idea of Roma (in)educability, a concept justified by scholars and experts in a way that meanwhile strengthens the embeddedness of whiteness based upon the racialization of Roma as the inferior Other. This part ties together a chronological and thematic order in the following way: (1) The politics of

assimilation during Maria Theresa's reform in 1770s; (2) Roma in a postcolonial Central Europe in the nineteenth and early twentieth century; (3) The institutional racialization of Roma between 1920s and 1940s; (4) The meta-racialization of Roma in postwar Central Europe. The authors use a tremendous wealth of archival materials to illustrate the dominant approaches taken towards Roma that have contributed to fossilizing the trope of the "ineducable Roma." The most elaborated and readable chapter in the book is the last chapter, Chapter 8: "In (re)search of inclusion: Roma under pressure of de-historicizing between the 1950s and 1990s." This chapter elaborates upon a very important example of epistemic injustice: the neglected recognition of the Roma Holocaust (*Porajmos*) after WWII, a silence that objectified and further racialized Roma by divesting their testimonies and knowledge of their past.

In sum, *Historicizing Roma in Central Europe: Between Critical Whiteness and Epistemic Injustice* is a useful work, if somewhat uneven and sometimes difficult to read. In spite of these slight drawbacks, Shmidt and Jaworsky have succeeded in making a contribution to the meagre literature on "critical whiteness" and "epistemic injustice" in Central Europe.

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