

## A PICTURE OF A GYPSY IN FOLK SONGS

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1. It is well-known that folklore expressions can fix a certain cultural background, its values and attitudes in time and space. They also represent the artistic fiction which is largely subject to the rules of one folklore genre or the other (folk tale, humorous narrative, anecdote, song, proverb, folk theatre, etc.). Folklore material can in these terms serve as a basis for the reconstruction of the way of thinking, of the value system and emotions of its exponents.

Similarly to the Jews, the Romanies occupy an important position in the folklore of Slavonic nations. Both these ethnic groups, genetically foreign to Europe, differing in their habits, language and physical appearance soon awakened the interest of autochthonous population. This led to the formation of the corresponding stereotypes.<sup>1</sup> Some Polish investigators have studied the issues of the stereotype of a Gypsy in the last decades.<sup>2</sup> A. Bartosz attempted to reconstruct a picture of the Gypsy on the basis of folklore, primarily for oral traditions, ceremonial masks and puppets in the national play *Szopka*.<sup>3</sup> Some of his conclusions correspond with Slovak material. The author presents the generally valid "ambivalence" of the evaluation and of emotional relations of the majority inhabitants to the Romanies, the propensity towards a one-sided negative judgement which is found in Polish folklore material - in proverbs and folk tale (*bajka*). He alerts to the existence of the detailed portrayal of the Gypsy in the songs, where, however, "the motive of a Gypsy often serves for delineating the features typical of other characters".<sup>4</sup> He is thus characterized by the distinct traits of certain stereotypes.

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<sup>1</sup> BARTOSZ, A.: *Wizerunek Cygana w folklorze. Materiał do badań nad stereotypem*. In: Zbornik radova XXXII Kongresa Saveza udruženja folklorista Jugoslavije I, Novi Sad 1985, pp. 151-154.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. See also MIRGA, A.: *Stereotyp jako model "prawdziwego swojego" i "obcego"*. Prace etnograficzne 19, 1984, pp. 51-70; BARTOSZ, A.: *Postać Cygana w obrzędach i plastycy ludowej*. Polska sztuka ludowa 1982, pp. 145-150. From the viewpoint of the stereotype of a Gypsy, a number of interesting contributions are published in: Prace etnograficzne 24, 1988, especially MIRGA, A.: *Krajobraz wiejski z Cyganami. Z badań nad stereotypem Cyganów w Polsce*; GÜNTHER, W.: *O funkcjonowaniu stereotypu Cygana w pruskich aktach policyjnych*.

<sup>3</sup> See Note 1.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

In my contribution I shall try to make an in-depth insight into the picture of the Gypsy in Slovak folk songs. In this part of folklore the portrait of the Gypsy appears to be the most vivid. To make the outlined picture complete, I shall use some formulations and attitudes held by the majority of the population to the Romanies and which are embedded in sayings and proverbs.<sup>5</sup>

The portrait presented can be regarded as sufficiently representative. It comes from an extensive body of available manuscripts and published sources from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries from all over Slovakia. More than 70,000 records were examined.<sup>6</sup> The theme explored has created, although not so numerous, nevertheless a stable part of the folk song repertoire, which is common even today. Although the outlined portrayal does not document local or regional specifics in detail, it provides satisfactory information about the differing views, relations and emotions of the majority population to the Romanies based on the incidence and the spread of the individual types of songs. With regard to the distinct inertia of the stereotypes the picture does not give an account of changing attitudes towards Romanies over time or of the present state. Some interesting and some novel aspects of the image of the Gypsy have emerged in the material from Eastern Slovakia, which corresponds with the actual concentration of the Romany inhabitants in this part of the Republic.

2. The comprehensive picture of the Gypsy in the folk songs is a testimony to the longlasting and frequent contacts between the autochthonous inhabitants and the Romanies and demonstrates mutual tolerance and cooperation. We can also see, however, a clearly indicated the gulf or rather barrier between the two groups, which is expressed in songs chiefly through certain objections, taboo, and negative emotions. The Romanies are perceived not only as "they" but also as an ethnic group with unique qualities, language, attributes, psychological characteristics, and way of life. The frequency of particular signs functioning as attributes of an ethnic group documents a relatively good knowledge of some special features of the Romany population. This is particularly apparent in such situations when occupations characteristic of the Romanies and necessary for the life of their villages were performed (blacksmiths, musicians), so the relation between the majority population and the Romanies was complementary. No ethnic group appears in the Slovak folk songs so often and so vividly and multidimensionally as the Romanies, which also supports the fact that they are important to a Slovak

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<sup>5</sup> The material is from the book ZÁTURECKÝ, A.P.: *Slovenské príslavia, porekadlá a úslovia*. Ed. M. Kosová, Tatran, Bratislava 1974. (The numbers of chapters and pages are given in brackets).

<sup>6</sup> In addition to the basic collections of the Slovak folk songs published there are mainly archives of the manuscripts of the Institute of Musical Science, Institute of Ethnology and the scientific archives of the Slovak Ethnological Society, SAV Bratislava. I completed the materials with the songs from my own research. The texts were recorded by various collectors. We have transcribed, modified them and unified the numbering of the stanzas.

village. There is also evidence that the majority population perceived the Romanies as distinctive. Their picture is composed of many more distinctive signs as compared for instance to the Jewish people or other ethnic groups. The portrait of the Gypsy I shall try to trace is built up from outside, impressions on the songs, in which "the others", "the outsiders" sing about the Romanies. I shall neither deal with the role of the Romanies featured in the song repertoire of a village (mainly carols, some wedding songs, etc.) or in their own repertoire.

Talking of the songs presented here, I would like to say that although many songs express at first sight the negative relations to the Romanies, it is not always so. We can discuss the fact whether a song expresses a really adversary attitude or whether it is just a kind of taunting as part of entertainment, particularly at weddings and dances, always merely in the context of a particular situation. The genre characteristics of these songs also play their role. Many of them belong to joyful taunting songs. Since the Romanies have often been musicians, it is proper to tease them. Many songs of this type are equally "unmerciful" to other groups living in the village (young – old, girls – boys, old women, spinsters, bachelors, Jews, beggars, pastors, teachers, shepherds) as well as to the "normal" individual.

3. The details in the overall portrait of the Romany in the Slovak folk song had the following characteristics:

a) *Denotation*. The Romanies are named in the songs *Cigán*, *Cigánka* (a Gypsy man, a Gypsy woman) or sometimes *vajda* (he-Gypsy chieftain) or *vajdovka* (she-Gypsy chieftain). Similarly to Polish and Czech, the denotation *cigán* (Gypsy) is used as a synonym of a liar, a deceitful man. It is thus a kind of negative stereotype.

You told me you would marry me,  
you wouldn't leave me,  
and now, my dearest,  
you're a liar.

Povedalz'mi, že ma vezneš,  
že ma nenaháš,  
a čilek ty, môj najmilší,  
cigán ostávaš.

(*Záblatie*, WS)<sup>7</sup>

There are no such liars  
as a married couple,  
they fight at first  
and they soon are reconciled.

Ľieto večích cigáňov  
ako manželia,  
/:keť sa aj pobijú,:/  
hneď sa pomeria.

(*Bobrovec*, CS)

The clock in Nitra  
it is the liar's clock

Tí hodziny nitranské,  
vet su oni ciganské,

<sup>7</sup> Abbreviations used: WS – West Slovakia, CS – Central Slovakia, ES – East Slovakia.

my girl told me to come,  
when it strikes four.

kázala mi milá príst,  
že ked budú štyri bit.

(Dolné Srnie, WS)

The synonym of *cigán* (Gypsy) and a liar is frequent mainly in proverbs: *He lies as a Gypsy chieftain.* (X/226) *Who makes a promise and does not fulfil it just as a liar (cigáň).* (X/81) *The higher the rank of the master, the better liar (cigán) he is.* (III/110)

The denotation of *cigán* occurs at the same time in the folk songs without negative emotions, it is also understood as neutral, similarly as other "foreign" ethnic groups (Hungarians, Germans, Czechs or Jews). Note for instance - the Gypsy (*Cigán*) in child folklore:

Oh, kupky, jamky  
where are those Gypsy women?  
They went into town  
to buy dough.  
They went to Hrádok  
to buy flour  
for noodles, for noodles,  
they fell into a hole.

Oj, kupky, jamky,  
d'e sa tie cigánky?  
Išli do mesta  
kupovať cesta,  
išli do Hrátku  
kupovať mlátku,  
na rezanky, na rezanky,  
člup do jamky, ven!

(Bobrovec, CS)

Similarly the following lullaby sounds neutral:

Čiči, beli, hajda,  
your father is vajda (*a chieftain*)  
your mother is vajdovka (*chieftain's wife*),  
Gypsy's girl.

Čiči, beli, hajda,  
tvoj otec je vajda,  
tvoja mači vajdouka  
cigáňova dieuka.

(Senča, WS)

A more lucid and precise attitude to different ethnic groups is expressed in the sayings: *A Slovak is a target for every demon. German, Tartar, Magyar, Gypsy, Jew.* (XIV/4) Or: *Hungarian (Magyar) - brother, German - brother-in-law, Gypsy - Godfather, Jew - neighbour.* (XIV/17)

From this perspective the following text is in essence neutral:

1. A Gypsy woman went to a feast,  
she had her gown the wrong side out.
2. A Gypsy man beseeched:  
turn it inside out.

1. /:Išua cigánka na hody,:/  
/:mjeua rubáček naruby.:/  
2. /:Cigáň ju prosiu velice:/  
/:obráť si rubáč na líce.:/

(Vajnory, WS)

Hey, Gypsies, farahuňi,  
damn you,  
hey, when you spooked  
me tonight.

Ej, cigaňi, farahuňi,  
by vas porazelo,  
ej, ket še mi česka večar  
z vami matoželo.

(*Bardejov, ES*)

Similarly the following song frequent in our material:

1. A Gypsy was covering the roof,  
and the second was looking at him.
2. A lath has broken underneath  
and the Gypsy – fall into mud.

1. Jeden cigan dach pobijau  
a druhý sa naňho d'ivau.
2. Zlamala sa pod ňim lata  
a to cigan, buch, do blata.

(*Šumiac, CS*)

It is not only in folk narratives but also in these songs that the Gypsy topic predominates in funny and taunting expressions. The following song is rather frequent:

A Gypsy woman fell asleep near a coal house  
a Gypsy man set her navel on fire with hot coal  
she lets out a yell  
pass the water in a pot.

Zaspala cigánka pod uhlárňou,  
zapálil jej cigán pupok z hlavňou,  
ona kričí z veľkým krikom,  
dajte skoro vodu z rajtoplíkom.

(*Pohorelská Maša, CS*)

In connection with the traditional craft and occupation of the Romanies musicians or smiths are also denoted as Gypsies (*Cigáni*) to a lesser degree.

In the portrait of a Gypsy there are indications of certain differences in the attitude towards a Gypsy woman and a Gypsy man. She is seen as beautiful, seduced and deserted, her love is unrequited, she has supernatural abilities, she can read future in the palm of one's hand, she is experienced and can advise inexperienced young men; but she is assessed lower than the girls from the majority community: she does not wash herself, she is poor, she earns her living by prostitution. It was probably associated with their different self-assertion and with the function of the members of the individual sexes of the Romanies within the village community.

b) Another important sign of the difference between the Romanies and the majority population was their *language*. The long-lasting coexistence of both ethnic groups is documented mainly in a few macaroni songs or the songs, in which the Romany language or only some of its words are used as the attributes of a Gypsy (a Gypsy woman). The parts, which are sung in the Romany language are often corrupted (*džamore, džau, jaj more*, etc.). Bilingual songs are known from

the ethnic and language borderlands (chiefly Slovak–Magyar songs). They differ, however, from the Magyar–Slovak or German–Slovak songs in that the texts are not bilingual. Naturally corrupted parts sung in the Romany language represent only one of the attributes of the Romanies. The songs serve as evidence that the Slovak inhabitants had and have not mastered their language. The macaroni songs are mostly addressed to the Romanies and they have often been described by singers as “mocking the Gypsies”:

1. Čajha more, aki more,  
rekone, rekone,  
Say, Gypsy, what did you do  
last night in the pantry?
2. Devla šoška, bibachtale,  
what did you do in the loft  
I was seeking bristle  
for painting brushes for the housewife.

1. Čajha more, aki more,  
rekone, rekone,  
povedz, cigán, čo si robel  
čerá večier v komore?
2. Devla šoška bibachtale,  
čoz' robila na povale?  
Hladala som ščecinu  
na ščetky pre gazdinu.

(*Záblatie*, WS)

Oh, Gypsy girl went to get water  
from the well,  
džau, džau, džau, džau, džau, džau  
she obtained the water, and cried:  
džau, džau, džau, džau, džau, džau.

Oj, cigánskuo d'iouča išlo na vodu,  
džau, džau, džau, džau, džau, džau,  
vody nabralo a tak volalo:  
džau, džau, džau, džau, džau, džau.  
(*Čerín*, CS)

This is the only enumerative song in our material reminding of a fragment of the ballad with the “Romany” refrain:

1. A Gypsy woman had three daughters,  
jaj more, jaj more,  
hraj to šurger, to burger.
2. She gave one of them to a blacksmith,  
jaj more, jaj more, hraj...
3. And the blacksmith forges, thrashes his wife,  
jaj more...
4. She gave the second to a joiner,  
jaj more...
5. The joiner hews and barks at his wife,  
jaj more...
6. She gave the third to a carpenter,  
jaj more...
1. Mala ciganka tri pekny cery,  
jaj more, jaj more,  
hraj to šurger, to burger.
2. Jednu odala, to za kovala,  
jaj more, jaj more, hraj...
3. A koval kuje, ženu bičuje,  
jaj more...
4. Druhu odala, to za stoł'ara,  
jaj more...
5. A stoł'ar kreše, na ženu breše,  
jaj more...
6. Trecu odala za cimrmaša,  
jaj more...

(*Stretava*, ES)

Several versions of another macaroni song, which also documents the parody of the portrait of a Gypsy mentioning his different way of life (farming is alien to him) are quite frequent in the Slovak material:

1. Hey, a Gypsy bought a donkey,  
and his wife ploughed  
hey, džamore, džamore,  
there is a nice plough there.
2. A Gypsy ploughed one day  
and the Gypsy woman the other day  
hey, džamore, džamore,  
there is a nice plough there.

1. Ej, kupil cigaň somara  
a cigaňka orala,  
ej, džamore, džamore,  
tam sa šumňe ore.
2. Hej, /:orau cigaň jeden d'eň  
a cigaňka druhý deň,:/  
/:hej, džamore, džamore,  
tam sa šumňe ore.:/.

(Žakarovce, ES)

variant:

A Gypsy bought a donkey  
and a Gypsy woman bought a horse,  
he went to plough,  
hey, čavori, čavori,  
there is a nice plough there.

Kúpeu cigáň somára  
a cigáňka koňa,  
tašou orať prvý d'eň,  
ej, čavori, čavori,  
jak sa dobre ori.

(Hradište, CS)

c) *A special way of life and moral-ethical norms.* In the area of morals we face strong objections from the majority inhabitants of the village to the Romanies. The fact that it is an important sign of the stereotype of *Cigán* (Gypsy) is illustrated in the language of the songs (an in the sayings) by the mentioned synonym of the word *cigán* and liar, deceitful person. The portrait of a Gypsy (*Cigán*) appears in contradictory relation *we* – *they* in connection with the different way of life of the Romanies. The songs emphasizing the non-peasant way of life and occupation of the Gypsies are very frequent. They tell us of their frequent participation in weddings as musicians:

And the Gypsies do not plough,  
And the Gypsies do not sow  
But the Gypsies eat bread  
at any wedding.

A cigaňi ňeoraju  
a cigaňi ňešeju,  
a cigaňi chľeba jedza  
na dojednym vešľu.

(Krivany, ES)

The Romanies' negative relation to farming and to the soil is classified also as a manifestation of their cunning and idle attributes in some songs and proverbs: *The Gypsy was too lazy to mow, let the one gather, who scattered, said the Gypsy.* (V/661)

1. And the Gypsies do not plough,  
do not plough, nor do they sow, they do not sow,  
they even have enough bread to eat and  
are nicely dressed up.
2. Nor does More plough,  
nor does More sow,  
but he eats bread  
and laughs at a poor peasant.
1. A cigaňe ňeoru, ňeoru,  
aňi vozmi ňešeju, ňešeju,  
i chľeba še najedza, najedza  
i paradňe nachodza, nachodza.
2. Aňi More ňeore,  
aňi More ňešeje,  
zato More chľeba je,  
zo šedlačka še šmeje.

(*Ordzoviany*, ES)

The relation of the Romanies to children is regarded as unique in the songs and in proverbs and sayings:

*He loves him as a Gypsy loves a child.* (III/648)

*A Gypsy woman loves her child.* (I/700)

*A Gypsy woman thinks her child is the most beautiful.* (I/700)

*He is happy about it as a Gypsy about a child.* (IX/421)

Parental love and the many children in Romany families are remarked upon as well as the “peculiar” methods of their upbringing:

It was cold and drizzly  
when a Gypsy child was born,  
jaj, jaj, jajajaja, jaj,  
and the Gypsies were happy,  
that the boy had curly hair,  
jaj, jaj, jajajaja, jaj.

Zima bolo, mrholilo,  
cigánča sa narodilo,  
jaj, jaj, jajajaja, jaj,  
a cigáni boli radi,  
že je chlapec kučeravý,  
jaj, jaj, jajajaja, jaj.

(*Záblatie*, WS)

Gypsies, Gypsies,  
where are your little Gypsies?  
Hey, they are up, out at grass  
like wild ducks.  
(pigs)

Cigaňe, cigaňe,  
gdze vam cigaňata?  
/:ej, na hure še pašu:/  
jak dzivý kačata.  
(prasata)

(*Krivany*, ES)

or:

1. Džavor, džavor, džavore,  
a Gypsy man is sitting in a pantry,  
and a Gypsy woman under the stove,  
thrashing the kids with a wooden spoon.
2. My dear kids, don't steal,  
whatever you see, just pinch,  
I am old, I never stole,  
what I saw, I pinched.

1. Džavor, džavor, džavore,  
sedí cigáň v komore,  
a cigánka pot pecu,  
bije děti z varecu.
2. Ďeti moje, ňekradňiťe,  
čo viďíťe, uchmatňiťe!  
Ja som starý, ňekradel som,  
čo som viďel, ukradel som.

(*Pivnica in Yugoslavia*)

Although no strict distinction is made between nomadic and non-nomadic Romanies for they are perceived as one group, their dwelling in a separate place, outside the village is mentioned several times (*Down in the valley, In a dark, thick forest, In a dark forest in Šumava, Not far, in a sad wood...*). The following song also implies a certain distance between the Romanies from the majority inhabitants, indicating some sort of hostility:

1. And down in the valley,  
there are Gypsies there,  
there are Gypsies there.
2. And when I came closer,  
they gave me nothing,  
they gave me nothing.
3. They flung shabby slippers at me,  
they flung them at me,  
they flung them at me.
1. A tam dolu na dolinę,  
/:tam sú cigáni,:/  
tam sú cigáni.
2. A ked' som ja ku ňim prišol,  
/:ňič mi ředali,:/  
ňič mi ředali.
3. Otrhanie papučiská  
/:za mňu hádzali,:/  
za mňu hádzali.

(*Riečnica, WS*)

The following song alludes probably to a wandering Romany, stressing the free way of life of the Romanies without a permanent home:

What does a Gypsy need a wife for,  
he doesn't have any house to live in.      /:/:Načožet' je :/cigáňovi žena,:/  
/: ked' on řemá zimoviska doma.:...  
(*Terchová, CS*)

The Romanies eat meat, which is considered to be inedible:

The Gypsies are happy  
when pigs die,  
go, Gypsy, go to the wood,  
there is nothing there, no meat.

Cigaňe še raduju,  
kedy šviňe zdychaju,  
idz ty, cigan, do l'esa,  
maš tam frasa, ře mesa.

(*Krivany, ES*)

or:

The Gypsies are happy  
when rams die,  
go, Gypsy, to the forest,  
you will find nothing there, no meat.

Raduju še cigaňi, cigaňi,  
že zdychaju baráňi, baráňi,  
/:aš sa cigaň do l'esa, do l'esa,:/  
maš tam frasa, ře mesa, ře mesa.

(*Krivany, ES*)

Within the context of the way of life in a Slovak village, unmarried mothers were not rare. In connection with the “double morals” of the majority community, the following song sounds interesting. It demonstrates a surprisingly unambiguous condemnation of the behaviour of a Romany man. We know that the depic-

tion of similar, in principle, trivial stories, was in Slovak folk songs more tolerant to their own than to outsiders. The song can at the same time demonstrate how sexual relations within the Romany society were perceived as freer by the majority population.

1. In that famous city,  
in the city of Budapest,  
a Gypsy slept with a Gypsy woman,  
now he doesn't want her any more.
2. And he is smiling at her,  
that he will sleep with other four,  
and he will put on  
a rosemary leaf\* once more.

1. U tym slavnym mesce,  
u tym Budapesce  
prespal cigan ciganočku,  
teraz ju vžac řechce.
2. A von na ňu čeri,  
že šče prespi štyri,  
že šče sebe raz položi  
pirko z rozmariny.

(*Stretava*, ES)

d) *Social status, employment, craft.* As I have already mentioned, the Romanies' occupation was and in many Slovak villages still is that of musicians, still earlier of blacksmiths. The Gypsies occur in songs most often as musicians. The word *cigán* (Gypsy) appears as equivalent of the musician, mainly in the introductory address: *Play, Gypsy, play, And you Gypsy, play a nice song*, etc. The image of the Gypsy shows thus the character of stereotype. The Gypsy emerges in wedding but also in other humorous songs accompanied with the music (*pri muzike*):

Play, Gypsy, anything you can,  
I bake a naked mouse for you,  
and I would bake it,  
but it ran away.

Zahraj, cigáň, jakú víš,  
upečem ti holú myš,  
/:a já bych ti upiekla,  
ale ked' mi uťiekla.:/

(*Černík*, WS)

Play, Gypsy, play nice songs,  
be careful of the girls,  
good suppers will be prepared,  
black chicken baked,  
it hasn't been baked yet,  
it has run away.

A ty, cigan, dobre hraj,  
na dzifčata pozor daj,  
budze dobra večera,  
čarna kura pečena,  
ešče še nam nespeklá,  
už nam s peca ucekla.

(*Krivany*, ES)

1. Four splinters, five logs,  
a boy married a girl,  
he married a proud girl,  
where will musicians come from?

1. Štiri trjesky, peť opl'enkou,  
ožeňiu sa šuhaj z d'ieukou,  
zau si d'ieuku veľmi pyšnú,  
skad'ial'že jej hudci prídu?

\*A symbol of a fancy-free boy.

2. Trďíkouci\* would come  
but they are haughty,  
and when they came, they played nicely,  
the Dobročanians danced.

2. Trďíkouci, tí by prišli,  
aľe sa to veľmi pyšní,  
a ked' prišli, pekne hrali,  
Dobročaňa tancovali.

(Čierny Balog, CS)

Romany musicians were valued as equal partners who had to be paid for their work, it was their way of earning a living:

Play, Gypsy,  
I'll give you a pig,  
I don't have any today,  
I'll give you one tomorrow.

Zahraj, cigáň,  
prasa ti dám,  
ňeská ňemám,  
zajtrá ti dám.

(Dolné Kršky, WS)

or:

When we cooked poppy noodles,  
the village mayor liked them,  
he gave a present to the Gypsy  
to buy a cymbal.

Ket sme slíže makovili,  
richtárovi šmakovali,  
richtár dau taký dar,  
cigáňovi na cimbal.

(Vajnory, WS)

1. The Gypsies went to Bardejov  
with their violins  
the Gypsy woman cries,  
she hasn't got a skirt with laces.

2. Don't cry, Gypsy woman,  
I'll buy a skirt with flowers to you,  
When I come back from Bardejov  
with my violin.

1. Išli cikaňi do Bardéjova  
z hušľami,  
cikanka plače, že ňema kidľu  
s čipkami.

2. Ņeplač, cikanko, kupim ci kidľu  
s kvitkami,  
až pojdzem nazat od Bardéjova  
z hušľami.

(Plavnica, ES)

1. When I was in the mine  
the Gypsies played for me,  
I had no money,  
they took my hat.

2. Don't take, don't take,  
give my hat to me,  
I'll pay to you,  
when I come back from the war.

1. Keď som bou na baňi,  
cigáni mi hrali,  
/:ňemau som peňazí,:/  
/:klobúčik mi vzalí.:/  
2. Ņeberťe, Ņeberťe,  
klobúčik mi dajťe,  
/:ved' vám ja zaplatím,:/  
/:keď sa z vojny vráťim.:/  
(Hrochot', CS)

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\*A Gypsy family name.

The picture of a Gypsy – blacksmith is also frequent in folk songs. The versions of the following song with this topic belong to the most frequent of these.

1. And down in the valley  
there are Gypsies there,  
there are Gypsies there.

2. They sat down in two rows,  
they forged the nails,  
they forged the nails.

1. Behind the mountains, behind the woods,  
there are Gypsies there,  
there are Gypsies there.

2. They sat down on a hill,  
the nails were clinking  
the nails were clinking.

3. One clapped, the second cut,  
the third, the third played on bagpipes,  
the third played on bagpipes.

4. And the fourth one on the hill,  
made love to Hanča,  
made love to Hanča.

1. A tam dolu na doliňe  
/:tam sú cigáni,:/  
tam sú cigáni.

2. Posedali vo dva rady,  
/:klince kuvali,:/  
klince kuvali.

(*Riečnica*, WS)

1. Za horami, za lesami,  
tam su, tam su cigani,  
/:tam su cigani.:/

2. Šedli sebe na brižeček,  
klinci, klinci klepali,  
/:klinci klepali.:/

3. Jeden klepal, druhý seká,  
treci, treci gajdoval,  
/:treci gajdoval.:/

4. A ten štvarty na brižečku  
Hanču l'uboval,  
/:Hanču, Hanču, l'uboval.:/  
(*Plavnica*, ES)

An explicitly taunting character is evident in our precious record of the song:

1. I had a little woman,  
she didn't want to obey,  
I gave her to the Gypsies,  
she has to work the bellows.

2. Blow, my girl, blow,  
you have to blow strongly,  
to learn  
how to obey your man.

3. And, Gypsies,  
you can have her,  
that woman  
doesn't want to obey at all.

1. Mal som ja ženičku,  
ňechcela ma slúchať,  
dal som ju cigánom,  
musí mechy dúchať.

2. Dúchaj, d'ieuča, dúchaj,  
musíš dobre fúkať,  
aby si ved'ela  
dobre muža slúchať.

3. A veru, cigáni,  
mož'že si hu ňechať,  
ved' ma tá ženička  
ňechce vúbec slúchať.

(*Riečnica*, WS)

By contrast this song is often heard:

1. How proud are the Gypsies  
in Pribilina,  
they didn't want to shoe  
my wife's boots.
2. They shoed them  
all night long,  
but you, my little woman,  
don't deserve the boots.
1. Akí sa to cigáne  
v Pribil'ine pyšní,  
ňechcel'i mi pokúvať  
mojej žeňe čižmy.
2. Kuoval'i ich, kuoval'i,  
od večera do dňa,  
aň si ty, žeňička,  
tých čižmouňehodná.

(Liptovská Kokava, CS)

The motives of the Gypsy – blacksmith were often connected with erotic motives:

And what, you Gypsy,  
are you doing on a Gypsy woman?  
I shoe a horse and a mare,  
can't you see, can't you see?

A ty, cigáň, na cigánke  
čo robíš, čo robíš?  
/:Kujem koňa, aj kobylu,  
šag vidíš, šag vidíš.:/

(Liptovské Sliače, CS)

The motive of work with metal (tinkering: clack, Gypsy woman, clack) is met in the lullaby:

Vaj, vaj, swing,  
and what I give you, keep,  
clack, Gypsy woman, clack,  
the food is ready  
even eaten up.

Vaj, vaj, kol'embaj,  
a čo ti dám, to si dobre zachovaj,  
kl'ep, cigánka, kl'ep,  
už je kaša navarená,  
aj dávno zjed'ená.

(Beňuš, CS)

The lower social status of the Romanies and their poverty are quite often emphasized in the songs. The motif of inheritance from the deceased Gypsy woman is one of the most frequent:

A Gypsy woman died down in a valley,  
the Gypsies were fighting on an eiderdown,  
Gypsies, Gypsies, do not fight,  
tear the eiderdown to pieces and take your shares.

Zemrela cigánka na doliňe,  
cigáni sa bili na periňe,  
cigáni, cigáni, ňebite sa,  
/:rozdrapťe perinu, rozd'elťe sa.:/

(Liptovské Sliače, CS)

A Gypsy woman died in Szeged,  
she left everything to her family,  
she left a torn gown,  
which smelled all of smoke.

Umrela cigánka v Segedíne,  
poručila všetko svoj rodine,  
poručila im plášť potrhaný  
a všetko od dýmu začadený.

(I. Galko: *Songs of Liptov and Orava*, collection of J. Czuper, No. 10, p. 33)

Poverty is also stressed by the things bought from an *Olah Gypsy woman*:

1. Smoke is coming from the chimney  
of my girlfriend's house,  
while baking bread yesterday,  
her eiderdown was burnt.
2. Ey, not only an eiderdown  
but also pillows,  
her grandma bought  
from the Olah Gypsy woman.

1. Jak se kuri, tak se kuri  
milej mojej s komina,  
včera večer chleba pekla,  
zhorela jej perina.
2. Ej, čoby len ta perina,  
ej, ale i zahlavky,  
čo jej stara mat kupila  
od olaskej ciganky.

(Rejdová, ES)

Bare-footed Gypsies are also give evidence of their poverty:

1. In the street of Brezovica  
there was a crop of millet,  
the Brezovians danced bare-footed  
like the Gypsies.
2. The women of Brezovica don't have boots,  
they wear slippers  
and when they haven't got them either,  
they dance bare-footed.

1. V Brezovici na ulici  
zrodzilo še proso,  
Brezoviaňi jak cigaňi  
tancovali boso.
2. Brezovianky čižmy ňima,  
ta bočkore noši, noši, noši,  
a kedz aňi na to ňima,  
zatancuju boši.

(Brezovica nad Torysou, ES)

e) *Specific qualities and psychic characteristics, mentality, predominantly negatively evaluated.* It is mainly a different way of thinking, indolence, slowness, inadequate hygiene, fear of death, etc. They are reflected not only in songs but also in sayings:

*When it rains, a Gypsy looks forward to nice weather and when the sun shines, he is afraid of rain. (XIII/194) A Gypsy promised every winter that he would not be without wood next year. (VII/286) The Gypsy was made a king and he, in the first place, hanged his father. (III/1286) Incomprehensible, illogical behaviour:*

The Gypsy's shanty is burning,  
the Gypsy is shaving in the corner,  
the fire is burning down,  
the Gypsy finishes his shaving.

Cigánska búda horí,  
cigán sa v kúte holí,  
búda už dohorieva,  
cigán sa doholieva.

(Hrboltová, CS)

The following song speaks about a relatively good knowledge of the way of thinking and superstitious ideas of the Romanies. It is a parody of the actual fear of death, flavoured with an erotic ambiguous conclusion:

1. Once upon a time there was a Gypsy  
who was afraid of death,  
he did not even sleep at home,  
at home, at home, at home, at home,  
he did not sleep at home,  
so much was he afraid of death.
2. Gypsy, don't be afraid of death,  
I won't give you to the death,  
I have such a hole I can hide you in there,  
I won't, I swear, give you to death.
3. My dearest Gypsy woman,  
for God's sake. Death is coming to fetch me,  
hide me in a sack, in a sack, sack, sack,  
hide me in a sack.  
Death is coming to fetch me.

1. Bol jeden cigán, čo sa smrťi bál,  
ten aňi doma, doma ňespával,  
/:doma, doma, doma, doma,:/  
doma ňespával, čo sa smrťi bál.
2. Ňeboj sa, cigán, smrťi ťa ňedám,  
mám ja takú kušu, do tej ťa skovám.  
/:Do tej kuši, na muoj duši,:/  
do tej ťa skovám, smrťi ťa ňedám.:/
3. Predrahá cigánka, preboh'ťa prosím,  
id'e pre mňa smrť, do pytl'a ma strč,  
/:Do py-, do py-, do py-,:/  
do pytl'a ma strč, ide pre mňa smrť.

(Slatinské Lazy, CS)

f) *Special abilities, knowledge.* These concern the Romany women, who can "conjure", read one's hand, the Gypsy man is a good salesman, he can bargain.

I once had a blouse  
I gave it to a Gypsy woman,  
and you, black Gypsy woman,  
conjure up a boy for me.

Tell me, black Gypsy woman,  
which girl is a virgin,  
which girl is,  
which girl is a virgin?

Mala som ja rukáuce,  
dala som ich cigánce  
a ty, čierna cigánka,  
pričaruj mi šuhajka.

(well-known)

Povedz mi, čierna cigánka,  
ktorá pana je poctivá,  
/:ktorá pana je,:/  
ktorá pana je poctivá?...

(well-known)

1. It was a still May evening  
a girl went through the green wood,

1. Bol večer ťichý, večer májový,  
išla d'ieučina cez háj zelený,

a girl, who was in love,  
she met a Gypsy woman in a gown.

išla d'ieučina zamilovaná,  
stretla cigánku f plášti od'etú.

2. Black gypsy woman, you can foretell  
what whirrs in the forest, you know everything,  
read my right hand,  
I will express my sincere thanks.

2. Čierna cigánka, ty hádať umíš,  
čo v lese šumí, všemu rozumíš,  
zahádaj ty mňe z mej pravej ruky,  
ja ti za to dám srd'ecnej vd'aky.

3. The black Gypsy began reading her hand,  
the young girl began to cry,  
Don't cry, my girl for him,  
he isn't worthy of your grief.

3. Čierna cigánka hádať začala,  
mladá d'ieučina plakať začala,  
ňeplač, d'ieučina, ňeplač pre ňeho,  
on nie je hoden žiaľu tvojeho.

(Pohorelská Maša, CS)

g) *Physical appearance*. In this connection the ambivalence of the evaluation of the Romanies is most evident. The positive appraisal of pretty girls and also of men with nice teeth and hair predominates but the black (blackish) complexion is mostly evaluated negatively:

1. Eyes, my eyes,  
you bring shame upon me  
you love anybody  
whom you see.

1. /:Oči moje, oči,  
hambu mi robíte,:/  
gd'e koho vidíťe,  
každého lúbiťe.

2. If you saw  
a black Gypsy boy,  
eyes, my eyes,  
you would fall in love with him.

2. /:Keby st'e vid'eli  
aj cigáňa čierneho,:/  
oči moje, oči,  
zalúbili by st'e ho.

(Vráble, WS)

Hey, you are as black as a Gypsy,  
hey, how can I love you,  
I am wondering myself  
that I love you.

Hej, čarny ši jak cigaň,  
hej, jak ja ce l'ubic mam,  
hej, sama še čudujem,  
/:že ja ce l'ubujem.:/

(Brezovica nad Torysou, ES)

h) *Endogamy and love relations to the Romanies*. This is the domain where the psychological and cultural barrier between the majority inhabitants and the Romanies is reflected most evidently. Love or matrimonial relations between the two ethnic groups are understood as unacceptable. Here we also meet negative even pejorative pictures of a Gypsy (man and woman) and marriage to a Gypsy is perceived as humorous threat or unthinkable, and in fact, no alternative to a spinster. The contrast is relatively frequent:

Although the Mayor's daughter,  
I have a Gypsy boy friend.

Čo som ja aj richtárova céra,  
ale ja mám cigáňa frajera...

(Hriňová, CS)

It is popular to make fun of a girl or a boy, whose lover is a Gypsy or a Gypsy woman:

I used to love Ďurija  
now I love Janko  
eyhoy, because a Gypsy woman  
remained with Ďurija.

Lubilam Ďurija,  
teraz budu Janka,  
ejhoj, bo u Ďurija  
zostala ciganka.

(Močarany, ES)

Boys, such you are,  
you make love with a Gypsy girl  
even on dung  
for a piece of suet.

Parobci, ta vy sce,  
pol'ubeli by sce  
ciganku na hnoju  
za falatek loju.

(Bajerov, ES)

What for do they buy  
lacquer shoes for me,  
when my boy friend loves  
Gypsy women of Parchovany.

Naco mi kupuju  
lagovo topanky,  
kedz moj frajir l'ubuje  
parhovsky ciganku.

(Parchovany, ES)

or:

Listen, my sweetheart, kiss my ass,  
you don't have to come to see us,  
nor to see us in my mother's house,  
you better go to see the Gypsy woman.

Počuj, milý, bozaj ma v riť,  
ňemusíš ty do nás chodiť,  
/:ani do nás ku mej mamke,  
račej hybaj ku cigánke.:/

(Riečnica, WS)

Marriage to a Gypsy is seen as the worst possible alternative and at the same time this perception of the Romanies as *they*, undifferentiated, *all equal*, is well demonstrated by the text of this song:

1. People say  
I will never get married,  
a Gypsy woman has died  
the Gypsy will marry me.
2. I shall sew a shirt  
with black thread,  
to recognize him  
among other Gypsies.

1. Povedajú na mňa,  
že sa ja ňevydám,  
/: umrela cigánka,  
vezme si ma cigáň.:/
2. Ušijem košeľu  
čiernymi ňitami,  
/:by som ho poznala  
medzi cigáňami.:/

(Zuberec, CS)

i) *Open conflict, confrontation.* Such an attitude towards the Romanies occurs in the Slovak folk song in principle only as extreme, atypical, and exceptional.

These songs probably arose directly from a certain particular event and do not belong to the generally repertoire. We have recorded only two such songs, the first of them representing a conflict the Gypsies vs. "Chairman" (Rudaš), the second is a personal fight:

The Gypsies of Beňuš  
stand at the upper end of the village  
they send a message to the Chairman (Rudaš)  
that they aren't afraid of him.

You dirty Gypsy  
you have stolen my money  
I will sue,  
you must give me my money back.

A beňuskí cigáni  
v horňom konci stoja,  
odkazujú precedovi (Rudašovi),  
že sa ho ľeboja.

Ty cigáne svinský,  
ukradneš mi rynský,  
ja ľa budem žalovať,  
ty mňe musíš rynský dať.

(Beňuš, CS)

j) In contrast to the conflict there is another extreme – *romantic and sentimental portrait of a Gypsy or a Gypsy woman, which has its origin in literature*. The fashion wave of sentimental songs of the Western European type, largely of non-folk origin which spread over the Slovak territory mainly in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries did not avoid the topic of the Romanies. The Romanies in these songs most often personify tragic, romantic mysteries of positive characters. Such an image of a Gypsy is, however, not characteristic or frequent in the folklore repertoire. An example of the tragic destiny of a Romany beauty, who fell in love with a non-Romany boy is the romantic song inspired probably by literary prototypes (Hugo's Esmeralda). The tragedy of the relationship only supports the existing taboo on love and moreover in matrimonial relations between non-Romany and Romanies.

1. In a thick dark forest  
lived Gypsies,  
they had a pretty girl  
whom they loved.
2. One day the girl  
stood leaning against a tree  
when a smart lad was passing by,  
she said to him.
3. Stop, young man, give me your hand,  
give me your right hand,  
the Gypsy woman will foretell  
your future.

1. V jednom hustom, tmavom lese  
bývali cigáni,  
tí mali švárnú d'ieučinu,  
ktorú milovali.
2. Jedného dňa d'eva stála  
o strom podopretá,  
šiel ta'e švárný šuhajček,  
takto mu povedá.
3. Postoj, šuhaj, podaj rúčku,  
podaj rúčku pravú,  
cigánka ľi osud povie,  
aj budúcnosť tvoju.

4. The lad took his hat  
he whistled happily  
and gave the young Gypsy girl  
a hot kiss.
5. The girl stood captivated,  
leaning against the tree  
and when she came to her senses,  
she could not see the boy any more.
6. I fell in love  
with a smart boy,  
who betrayed, cheated me,  
he doesn't deserve my love.

4. Šuhaj klobúčku si zvrtol,  
veselo si pískol  
a mladej ďeve cigánke  
horúci bozk vťiskol.

5. Ďeva stála omámená,  
o strom podoprená  
a ked' sa už spomätnala,  
šuhaja ľevid'ela.

6. Zamilovala som sa ja  
do chlapca švárneho,  
/:který ma zradil, oklamal,  
škoda lásky jeho.:/

(*Pohorelská Maša*, CS)

The following sentimental story of a wandering Gypsy was recorded in two versions:

1. I am a Gypsy born in a field,  
lost under the stars of heaven,  
I have no house, a tent is my home,  
an old wrinkly woman lives in there.
2. I shall go, my sweetheart,  
to live with you,  
I shall ask nobody.  
People say, I'll go to heaven from there,  
I love, just you, my dear sweetheart.
3. Here is autumn, here is winter,  
it's snowing, covering my grave  
with a white sheet,  
nobody should pray at my grave,  
because I must go into that grave.

1. Cigáň som ja v jarkovisku zrodený,  
šírym nebom pod hviezdami stratený.  
Nemám dom, šiotor je môj rodný dom,  
stará baba vráskovitá býva v ňom.

2. Ta ja pôjdem, frajerôčka,  
k vám bývať,  
nebudem sa ja nikoho sptyovať.  
Ľudia vravia, odtiaľ pôjdem do neba,  
milujem ja, frajerôčka, len teba.

3. Tu je jaseň, tu je zima, sneh padá,  
už ten môj hrob  
s bielou plachtou prikrýva,  
nech sa nad mým hroboom nikto nemodlí,  
lebo ja do toho hrobu ísť musím.

(*Suché Brezovo*, ES, variant: *Ratkovské Bystré*, CS)

The portrait of a Gypsy gives an account of:

1. The existing contacts and approaches of the majority Slovak population to the Romanies, which are predominantly of *ambivalent* character (e.g. a Gypsy (*cigán*) = a liar, a deceitful man, but also a musician, a blacksmith, etc.); 2. a certain negative attitude following from the relation *ours* – *theirs*.<sup>8</sup> This reveals

<sup>8</sup> MIRGA, A.: *Krajobraz wiejski*, op. cit., p. 115.

some specific features (fixing stereotypes) in comparison with other groups (ethnic, age, social, territorial, etc.);<sup>9</sup> 3. certain mythicizing of the portrait of a Gypsy (in both positive and negative sense).

The individual constituent parts and contours of this image create a certain hierarchy. The *moral-ethical* evaluations (predominantly in the negative sense) appear to be the gravest from the point of view of value preferences of the majority population with respect to the Romanies. It is mainly the physical characteristics that are assessed both negatively and positively (appearance – curly hair, nice teeth, beauty). The greatest barrier between the two groups was projected into the area of serious love relations or matrimonial bonds, which are taboo. The songs about this theme often contain pejorative judgements and attitudes to the Romanies, although often expressed in jocular or parodied forms. By contrast the motive of open conflict occurred in the songs only exceptionally and rarely.

The universally valid ambivalence of the attitudes is demonstrated through a wide scale of signs and evaluations.

The *negative* attitudes include: a liar, deceitful man, thief (source of conflict but also of humour), laziness, cunning, poverty, according to the non-Romanies illogical behaviour, different way of thinking, different psychical background, improper manners in the presence of uninvited guests, they eat the meat of perished animals, they do not marry in church, they bring their children up in an unsuitable way, dark complexion, appearance.

*Neutral attitudes*: these accept Romanies with their distinctiveness. Their profession is other than peasantry, they live separately (they are nomadic, they have no shelter and permanent homes), they are afraid of death.

*Positive*: Physical appearance, exceptional abilities and beauty of women (they can conjure, they are experienced, read one's hand), strong feeling for children, musical talent, blacksmith skills (honest work), and the mysterious or tragical fate associated with the romantic image of the Romanies.

The concrete material and its analysis serve as a persuasive documentation of the sustained and predominantly peaceful coexistence of autochthonous population and the Romanies and their mutual tolerance. The portrait of the Gypsy belongs to the most frequently and best delineated of ethnic groups in Slovak folk song. The comprehensive image of the Gypsy is primarily associated with the fact that there are two basic levels in the approaches of the majority population to the Romanies which are intertwined : 1. *ethnic aspect* (denotation, language, appearance, way of life and thinking); 2. *social aspect*. It is demonstrated by ranking the Romanies into the lowest social stratum of the population (poverty associated with the occupation other than peasantry or asocial behaviour). The existing social distance, fixed in the portrait of the Gypsy, also considerably affects the psychical and cultural barriers. The portrayal of the majority Slovak population is also

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<sup>9</sup> See also Note 2 in: STOMA, L.: *Antropologia kultury wsi polskiej XIX w.* Warsaw 1986.

presented in the picture of the Gypsy and stereotypes encoded in him as negative in an interesting manner based on the contrast *we* – *they*.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> According to the generally accepted hypothesis the ancestors of the Gypsies who now live in Central Europe had come from India and gradually penetrated the territory in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The first mention of the Gypsies on the territory of Slovakia dates back to 1322. Demographic data show that in 1989 the Gypsy population was found to number 254,000 which made up 4 % of the inhabitants of Slovakia. In Eastern Slovakia the concentration of the Romany inhabitants is higher – 9 %, in some districts (Rimavská Sobota, Rožňava, Spišská Nová Ves) as high as 12–18 %. These data are, however, not exact and one can assume that the numbers reported represent only the lower limit of the actual incidence of the Romany population in Slovakia. The Romanies can be divided into two groups: 1. the most numerous group (90–95 %) – old settlers who have been settled on the verge of towns and villages from the 16th –18th centuries and have established local communities there – settlements. Traditional professions: blacksmiths, musicians. Today they mostly work as unqualified workers. 2. the former nomadic so-called Olah Gypsies (vlahíke Roma). They still live in family tribal unions, preserving the archaic manifestations in culture and in folklore. They traditionally earned their living as horse traders, blacksmiths, producers of wash tubs and cauldrons. Although they belonged to the socially poorest stratum until the 1950s, today they belong to the richest Gypsy strata as a result of the updated forms of bargaining. Prepared according to MANN, A.: *Rómovia na Slovensku* (Romanies in Slovakia, in press).