

Modern Gypsies: Gender and kinship among the Calós from Catalonia

DAVID LAGUNAS ARIAS

The *Calós* of Catalonia are a Gypsy group worth an anthropological study. Mataró, a city near Barcelona, a rich community not in the outskirts of the city but in the centre, cultivates good relations with the *payos* (non Gypsies). These people describe themselves as Gypsies and speak the Catalan language. They are in a sense *modern* Gypsies. Their apparent normality—the reason other Gypsies call them ‘apayados’ (more *payos* than Gypsies)—is highly significant.

Keywords: Gypsies, modernity, gender, kinship, Catalonia, power, identity, exotic, social body, alliance

A non-exotic context

The object of my study, a Catalan Gypsy community, is presented as fundamentally polyedric: the Gypsy in its relationship with the dominant society—the local relationship with the global—as well as the multiple hidden facets they represent. The Mataró Gypsy Community¹ is a concrete social unit, from which I have tried to capture the point of view of its members on issues such as gender and kinship, since such issues are characterized by a certain originality that contrasts with the values and dominant practices of the predominant society. The *Caló* (singular; plural *Calós*) is the

1. I did fieldwork from May 1994 until December 1998. The method of work was interviews with my informants, but especially *being with* them. I didn't use a tape recorder because my informants distrusted it and the slant that I introduced on their words, and I did a few formal interviews. I got close ties not only with lay people (*compadrazgo*), but also professionals—besides working regularly with a family selling in ambulant markets. I became secretary in their Gypsy association in an official manner although their norms prevented that any non-Gypsy occupy a political position (my integration made possible the contravention).

David Lagunas Arias is researcher in anthropology at the Centro de Investigaciones sobre el Estado de Hidalgo, Universidad Autónoma del Estado de Hidalgo, Ciudad Universitaria, Edificio Cevide, Colonia Carboneras, 42074 Pachuca de Soto, Hidalgo, Mexico. E-mail: davlagunas@hotmail.com.

ethnonym of the group according to the dialect (*caló*), and the term *Gitano* is also used as opposed to *payo*—non-Gypsy. But, the Catalan Gypsies prefer to use the term *caló* to describe their everyday life within the community because of its inner representation of symbolic importance that describes their identity as a separate group, while *gitano*, originally derived from an external representation—*egipciano*, is a term which the Spanish gave to the Gypsies that came into the peninsula in 1425. It is usually employed in their social interactions with the *payo* world.

The Catalan *Calós* are concentrated in mid- and large-sized cities such as Barcelona (the most important), Girona, Lleida, Tarragona (capitals of provinces), and other settlements like Mataró, Salt, Blanes, Reus, Vilanova and Sitges, which stand out for their commercial and industrial level of importance. The community of Mataró, the object of this study, is a coastal city and capital of the Maresme region and it is one of the most important textile centers in Catalonia.² This community is made up of 150 individuals, most of them working as street peddlers in regularized markets in coastal cities and in the inner northeastern part of Catalonia. They also sell clothes door to door and to commercial and professional establishments.

The *Calós* appeared to be well adjusted to the urban way of living, with good financial positions and, apparently, not put off by their non-Gypsy neighbors. Those were the Gypsies who participated in the closing ceremonies of the Olympic Games in Barcelona, who would go shopping every Saturday afternoon at fashion stores in downtown Barcelona, or who would rent discotheques for their ostentatious wedding parties. At a glance, it seemed as though this group of Gypsies was of little concern to the scientific community: they were not as visible or exotic as some other Gypsy groups and yet, they were closer to us. Their ‘normality’ was what made me suspect that they were either not of interest to the scientific community or that they had always been their concern. The ‘normality’ which I refer to I imagine as a representation coming from the academic world as well as the popular world. The Catalan Gypsies are known to live in an urban context and for various generations are seen as more ‘integrated’ within the majority society compared to other Gypsy groups with different historic, linguistic,

2. Catalonia is one of the autonomous regions of the political-administrative division in the Spanish state—although the Spanish constitution defines it as ‘historic nationality’, the same as Galicia and Basque Country. The Catalan reality is bilingual: there are two official languages, Castilian and Catalan.

economic and social characteristics; on the other hand, they are a Gypsy group hardly observed by anthropologists in the peninsula. I think this is because what is of interest to anthropologists is the usual imaginary exotic perception of Gypsy groups coming from criteria of cultural relevance: those which are obvious, such as ostracism, poverty and flamenco.

Isidre Nonell, one of the most prolific figures in modern Spanish painting, started to paint only Gypsy women from Barcelona at the beginning of the century. Far from the typical folk art of the nineteenth century, he painted with thick and simple brush strokes, using dark colors. His Gypsy women appeared sad and apathetic, contradicting that colorful idea of the Gypsy. Nonell fought with what Anta defines as 'Gypsyism' in the nineteenth century: 'a concrete way to approach, study, classify, learn and mechanize all Gypsies born in the nineteenth century and which applies to all the interests and needs of the governmental science-ideology' (Anta 1999: 175). He did so with no apparent reason ('I just paint and that's all', he would justify himself before the theorists). Gypsyism, comparable here to exotism, is a way of classifying and romanticizing the Gypsies that have persisted and been accepted through time.

According to its representations, the *Calós* defined themselves as Gypsies, but also, as *modern* Gypsies. *Modernos* is an *emic* concept which the Catalan Gypsies have used to distinguish themselves from the rest of the Gypsy groups. However, this term does not exclusively refer to them because it could be employed by other groups or individuals. But the fact that this concept is evident in their self-image as a different group makes it more significant in their context. *Modernos* is semantically the opposite of *atraso* (backwardness), which is a scornful term very much used by Gypsies to refer to the situation of exclusion and ostracism experienced by a part of the Gypsy community in Spain. If the Catalan *Calós* identified themselves as *modernos*, on the other hand, they described the rest of the non-Catalan Gypsy groups, pejoratively, as *gitanos apayados*, that is, assimilated to the dominant society.

These distinctive features of the *Calós* with respect to some other Gypsy groups as well as non-Gypsy groups, were passed on through their language (Catalan and *caló*); history (they felt more Catalan, pure blood); the high social and economical status (the use of expensive clothes, visits to selected restaurants, ball rooms); the food (because they ate *escudella*—a typical Catalan dish), etc. They showed ostentatious consumption as a characteristic trait of being Gypsies. The rivalry for status and position was dramatized

clearly—for example, on the compulsive purchase of new cars, always a different model than the last one bought by the others. In this sense, they gave the car importance, not because it gave the buyer more prestige but because he became known and had better relations with the family where he comes from or his allied friends. Consumption was a sign of their integration and also a reflection of individualistic tendencies in an ideological egalitarian society.

This ideal representation of themselves, as modern Gypsies, was just a process of inner classification. Assigning codes and shared meanings (an extra-cultural nature) is, in other words, a vindication of an elitism that precisely takes as foundation of its identity its contact and interaction with the outer world. Other Gypsy groups classify themselves according to their authenticity as Gypsies, to their roots or tradition, building up visions of the world, and blaming external influences for their loss of cultural content. The Catalan *Calós* emphasized the inverse trajectory: they would not vindicate themselves as Gypsies with a strong tradition (*we have lost all of what is customary among Gypsies, we only have left the Gypsy mourning and wedding*). It was precisely that contact with the *payo* world (which for others meant some kind of influence), according to the *Calós*, that made them adapt much better to the modern times, losing part of their cultural content but keeping their Gypsy identity. Their prolonged contact with their *payo* neighbors in an urban environment resulted in the development of good relationships between them. Their standard of living was similar or even higher compared to that of their neighbors, which greatly contributed to their being less excluded by society.

Furthermore, the *Calós* worked with the *payos*, living among them. Taking as a foundation three of the elements that form an important part of the identities of European popular culture—land, blood, and name (Piasere 1998: 91)—I find that the *Calós* may be explained equally by the importance of their name and blood, which were supposed to be perpetuated by men. However a third element is missing—land. To this effect, it might be suggested, following Piasere (1985: 136–84), that for the *Calós*, the land is the *payo*, who inhabits the territories that configure the eco-social place from where the *Calós* extract their living. This economic surplus allows the group to increase in number. Thereby, the *Calós* prevail by cultivating a relationship, not with the land, but with the *payos*. Cultivating the *payo* is like cultivating the ground, in a way that the *payo* turns into a 'humanity-nature.' (Piasere 1995: 31). On the other hand, their social and economical features

do not fit into the academic concept of 'peripatetic groups', but rather they are situated in the periphery of such a concept: they move all over the land for economical purposes although they live in stable residences. And likewise, their rejection of wage-work (see Kaprow 1991: 17–34) would indicate a resistance to one of the tools of production and participation in the social resources of the non-Gypsy world, at the same time denying their sub-alternated position, which would relate them with other 'Roma' groups (see Stewart 1997: 97–180).

Gender and power

The problem set forward is that of how Gypsies prevail in another universe, a non-Gypsy world, a world of *payos*.³ This appears to be the problem every Gypsy community must face. To keep (as a requirement) a social and symbolic separation from the non-Gypsy must be articulated within a culture characterized by a strong division of gender and age. This determines the status and social position. Although there is no social-hierarchic structure leading to the development of hierarchic groups, the *Calós* have a hierarchic vision of their society. At an inner level lies the hierarchy of age and gender, and at an outer level lies the hierarchy regarding the *peluts* (hairy), a term that groups (in a less than concise way) the non-Catalan Gypsies. They see the *peluts* in a double form: like their *race brothers*, who generate sentiments of solidarity, (*who are like the poor who arrive at the house of the rich*), and like violent Gypsies (non adapted to the modern world). So, from the point of view of the *Calós*, the backwardness (*atraso*) of the *peluts* is a sign of their lower condition with respect to the modern adaptation of the *Calós*.

In this respect, it is relevant that the Catalan *Calós* differ from all other Gypsy groups in the peninsula, precisely due to a spatial difference such as the national territory. The *Calós* are Catalans in the eyes of the Castilians, *Extremeños* and Andalusians. However, they are also Catalan before those groups of Gypsies that live in Cataluña, to whom the *Calós* attribute a lack of historical roots and tradition in the place. They are immigrants, recent arrivals, and besides—it is said—they do not speak Catalan, an unmistakable sign of their (supposed) inability to identify with the land. This attachment to the territory is considered as one more sign of modernity,

3. For Piasere (1985), *immersion* and *scattering* are the principal terms to report, with universal character, of the settlement of Gypsies among the non-Gypsies.

of being in the history, permanently living together with their non-Gypsy neighbors. We are talking of an *emic* representation now of sufficient examples that exist of Gypsy groups settled in others parts of the country, the Andalusian ‘caseros’ for example. Nevertheless, the *Calós* of Mataró show an inclination towards a patriotic devotion. In fact, the majority of them vote for the political party that governs in Catalonia, that is characterised by its moderated nationalism.

The political power does not rely on armed violence, nor any institutional specialization, but on the personal qualities of an individual, the *onclo*, whose qualities are used for community service. With no coercive competition, it is his generosity, but fundamentally his speech⁴ and his capacity to conciliate that turn him into a prestigious and famous individual, where society grants him the condition of a man of respect. At the same time, he acquires a debt that he must honor with his interventions. On the other hand, although inter-family authority lies firstly in the father and secondly in the mother (who performs her role according to the dominant system), I noticed how girls and young marriageable Gypsies with apparently very restricted social environments always managed to act liberally despite their parents’ surveillance. To be exact, their fondness for TV series and women’s magazines; their flirtations with *payo* men from the neighborhood, which were not just limited to visual seduction but to clandestine encounters by the beach; their seductive way of looking at Gypsy men at wedding parties or at the marketplace; even their fanaticism towards young Latin singer *payos* like Ricky Martin and Chayanne, considered the new saints of modernity; all these were indicators of both a symptom and a change—the emergence of romantic love among the younger generations.⁵ Individuals with apparently fewer cultural opportunities were able to negotiate with different worlds that gave their personal lives an ingredient of novelty. A formula which radically spread the understanding of sublime love; power and autonomy in the face of deprivation, fixed routines, and rules of the existing institutions, as Giddens (1998: 45) points out in relation to the emergence of passionate love by the end of the eighteenth century in Europe. In addition to romantic love, the generalized use of cosmetics among young marriage-

4. I dealt with a society where written culture did not have priority over the oral language.

5. The elder *Calós* say they did not have the freedom their children (especially their daughters) have nowadays to choose a spouse. In their days, marriages were arranged between families and little opportunity to individualism was given.

able Gypsies highlighted their beauty, thus exploiting the woman's sexuality within the limits of the roles of the gender system.

Young Gypsy girls were not slaves of their inequality with respect to men. They developed instead their own transactions and saw themselves as more important; as guardians of the reproduction of their society. Evidently, this was not the only discussed theme about femininity among *Calós*. Pasqualino analyses gender issues among Gypsies from Jerez, linking them to flamenco dancing and singing, and observes the *décalage* between speech and practice. While men show themselves as dominant and women as submissive within the system, in practice, men show themselves morally weaker than their mates and families, and economically dependent on their wives' incomes; 'it all happens as if they were dispossessed of their economic power and moral strength' (Pasqualino 1998: 105). Gay (1999: 115–16), on the other hand, points out that Gypsy women from Jarana view the relationships with their husbands, house and children with positive and negative implications. These appear not as choices but in a dynamic way, highlighting women not merely as passive subjects of men's domination, but who also questions gender inequality. Among Mataró's *Calós* there are also positive and negative views concerning gender, arising from both the feminine and masculine sides, which are fragmentary and contradicting, the social practices shaping that heterogeneity. So, the conception of a woman's dual archetype is important: as a reproducer (the chaste and immaculate mother-virgin) and as a disturber of peace (the lascivious woman) in a complex movement where there is nothing in between, one can be either a virgin or a prostitute. This is not only a masculine view, but one that is also shared by the women.

The *demanament* (the formal asking of the bride's hand in marriage) started the official courtship between two people. It did not seem unusual to me, as in the traditional Spanish culture it was quite popular. This preliminary rite ended the period of semi-freedom of the young Gypsy man, who led a double role in his society. On the one hand, he should be libertine during his adolescence, have relationships with non-Gypsies accepted by the group; and on the other hand, he should guard and protect virginity (of his sisters, cousins and other girls). The meaning of this preliminary rite did not seem very different from the theoretical statements about Mediterranean cultures; an awkward concept but of real heuristic value and non-determining, that suggested some insecure youngsters unsure of their own masculinity, knowing that women were very bossy at home. Not

in a metaphorical way, but actually in the real sense of the word. Gypsy girls would repeatedly say that *Caló* youngsters were afraid of marrying them because the girls were very bossy: they would say, 'men do not want to marry us because we eat them.'⁶ Young Gypsy boys were pampered by their mothers since their early childhood; then they would progressively overcome their influence, and be sexually encouraged, first by young *payas* women from the wild and chaotic *payo* world, and then, as a second stage, attracted to the dangerous ground created by the Gypsy girls. The practical evidence of this stage lies in the varied symbolic use of space in Gypsy wedding parties, where gender division can be seen: single and married women occupy the central stage at the ball, men remain in the outer edge of the space, while the mothers exercise control and meta-languages halfway between the men and the other women. This disposition of space is quite similar to that of Pasqualino (1998) among the Jerez Gypsy men. However, the formal similarity in the spatial disposition of men and women during the wedding dance tells us nothing about the complex ritual that is shown to the observer as tremendously evocative, curious and strange. Considering that different social groups are being dealt with and that symbols concerning the ritual can be interpreted in various ways, not only among different groups but for each individual, my intention is to propose an interpretation of a ritual based on the intuition that it should be more profound. Moreover, a message that the members of the group themselves can recognise from experience.

In this case, Gypsy girls tended to create the propitious environment in order to fulfill Gypsy men's foreseen fate: the wedding, which was regarded as the end of a dream, their death as libertine youngsters, and their coming home to become a member of the Gypsy society within the community. Thus, the wedding, as the most important initiation rite in a person's life showed itself as an event of symbolic value as it represented the prototype of the works of feminine seduction: the young Gypsy girl would encourage the man but at the same time she would keep her chastity, her virtue. Thus, Gypsy girls would appear sensual and voluptuous, contradicting their normal condition of virgins: their function was to seduce and deceive others, which is the same as having control over them. The problem for

6. This cannibalist metaphor is not just an anecdote. Apart from being women's discourse, it could be an explanatory model of social reproduction, as I will argue below.

the young Gypsy girl was that if she wanted a husband, she had to think of a strategy, one that was expressed through glances, the non-verbal communication that triggered seduction. But this notion of woman being the interesting one and the man the interested one, was just an apparent idea. Although everything was pointing at this direction, one of the young Gypsy girls gave me the clue: I was wrong, she said to me: *we do not dance for the men, we do it for the mothers*. This concept of the Gypsy women's power in the rite, in consonance with what happens in the Mediterranean, confirms that mothers are the mediators between the male and female worlds.

In fact, the community predicts a different destiny for both genders. Men are encouraged to demonstrate their virility and women, to care for their *chastity*, their virtue, what they most cherish. It happens in two opposite worlds: young *Caló* men are initiated in the *payo* world, *outside*, and the young *Calí* women *on the inside*; which does not mean that men have no relation with the *caló* world or that women are isolated from the *payo* world. I mean that the social practice follows different directions about sexual relations between Gypsies and *payos*. While men are able to have pre-marital sexual relations with *payas*, women must remain virgins up to the wedding day. A young *Caló* acquires his virility through sexual relations with *payas*.

This is how the wedding rite works in a seemingly male-dominated society, as a real rite of taming masculinity. Zulaika (1992: 159) pointed out that contrary to hunting, which ends up with the animal's death, domestication means tolerance to the end:

the hunter has to trap the prey and keep it within a fence, though these fences are not permanent as in domestication, they are temporary. The final and essential end to the social system is matrimony, and it is right to define a cultural equivalence between getting married and being domesticated. It is known that the hunter has nothing to do with either the tamed animal nor the permanent closure; his objective is wild, erratic, with no bounds. So, the erotic model of hunting is in conflict with the model of the domesticated or married animal.

If the single *Calí* women's role is that of attracting the non-domesticated man to the dance circle, the closure, of the wedding ritual space, the *Caló* young men know that the centre is a dangerous place, because dancing with a girl may turn into a wedding: *we have to be very careful about weddings. We might be hooked. If you start dancing, you are exposed. Mothers and single women see you, talk of you, of your family . . . I don't know . . . it seems as if you were looking for a bride.*

I suggest that virility, as opposed to virginity, is encouraged during the adolescence years by the symbolic scheme of the bullfight, where masculinity is devoured and tamed by the mother–bride–community trio, the man (as the bull) being socially devoured and diluted into the group that performs a sort of cannibal banquet (Delgado 1986: 190). It is a stage of a more general process: young Gypsy women appear in the wedding ritual looking sexually attractive,⁷ reversing their secular role as virgins because their role is to attract the macho, to ‘bullfight’ him,⁸ through a free masculinity attraction–integration strategy to incite an engagement (first stage), followed by the matrimony–sacrifice/castration (second stage), to end up in maturity–integration of the parental system (third stage) (Delgado 1986: 146). So the wedding, like the bullfights, tells us also about the maternal power that has to do with the bride and the society/community. The symbolic division of the ritual space of the wedding among men and women confirms the hierarchy of the society over the individuals. Zulaika (1992: 95) affirms with respect to the symbolism of the closure in the hunting of the wild hog

‘to demarcate a territory implies hierarchy. The formal action of closing in involves the relation of inclusion that places both the inside and outside at different levels. To demarcate a territory, organise a certain activity and discriminate a cultural context imply the imposition of a hierarchical structure. To fence a wild pig’s territory confirms the supremacy of society’.

The symbolism of closing in on the wild animal with respect to the domestic animal of a shepherd or the cattle owner is similar, but just formally, as according to Zulaika (1992: 98), it causes ‘cultural configurations and quite different meanings’.

Among the Catalan *Calós* the moment when everything perpetuates is in the wedding, where everything starts—hence, its social induction. It is important to note that the *Calós* choose to celebrate this act in a discotheque. It is an element that adds to their image of *gitanos modernos*, unlike other Gypsy groups who understand this practice to be purely a spectacle. In one of the weddings which I attended, an Andalusian Gypsy male married a young Catalan female and the tensions between both families arose

7. They look so provocative that the other non-Gypsy groups say that *Gypsies dress like prostitutes*. The *Caló* men themselves do not quite agree with the clothes they wear, they see it immoral.

8. The mothers themselves really use the term ‘to bullfight’ as a synonym of to dance—that is, the Gypsy women that dance ‘bullfight’ the Gypsy men.

from the beginning of the party, which took place in a discotheque. On the first floor, the Andalusians were singing flamenco while on the ground floor the Catalans were dancing with modern music (*salsa, rumba, merengue*, etc., all latin music that was in vogue in Spain) which sounded through the speakers. When the moment came for the couple to dance in the Andalusian tradition, both families had a strong argument because the Catalans wanted the Andalusians to stop this Andalusian custom so that they could continue using the special effects such as dry-ice and disco lights which at this moment had to be stopped. The confrontation of both families reflected the opposite conceptions about the correct interpretation of the ritual of wedding.

What better place than the discotheque, apparently profane but turned into a sacred one by the work of this culture? The idea of sacred being relevant as a constitutive of all rituals: the wedding as a non-prescribing and inalienable ritual, would integrate, through symbolic efficiency, individuals within the community, putting the society as a whole in motion. That is why there is freedom for non-Gypsies observers to get inside their society. These rituals are usually open to non-Gypsy audience. In weddings which I went to, I saw the baker, a nun of a religious order, two journalists of a local newspaper, and even the mayor of the city of Mataró pass by. Therefore, the anthropologist, who claims merit for discovering the secrets of the cultural rituals, in reality, does not discover anything that has not already been observed by others. The challenge for the anthropologist is to take certain traits and to propose an interpretation. Indeed, the wedding will be the same as the *kula*, the *potlatch*, or the gifts of modern society. On the one hand, a space and specific time of social interchange; on the other hand, a privileged moment in society's life, where the social strings are founded and social unity is reinforced (Kilani 1996: 57–8)

The stress created by, on the one hand, the matrimonial strategies, agreed between families and, on the other hand, the individual desires of the betrothed stood out. In any case, the latter should at least be approved in a formal way by both families. But what is highly significant is how the transformations of the ruling society affected the *Caló's* social life, like the use of cellular phones among the youngsters. Thus, the generalized use of these phones by the young *Calós*, without any doubt (besides the implications of its own social status and distinction), increased acquaintance with possible spouses, granting greater freedom and independence to the young Gypsy females facing the trend of convenience weddings organized by their par-

ents. Clandestine encounters were common, so that young Gypsies could get to know each other a little bit better, in spite of the community's control. This technology takeover summarizes Gomes's hypothesis (1998: 55) that the Gypsies construct and give meaning to materials of various origins—which already have an existing meaning—'Gypsyzing' them, according to a new logic and meaning, without losing their cultural identity or compromising the symbolic frontiers they have created. Although the example of the cellular phone appears to place Gypsies as living on the marginal edge of the dominant society, in a primordial state (as if cellular phones didn't belong to them but to non-Gypsies) nothing could be more untrue. Furthermore, the use of cellular phones by the *Calós* is embedded in a generalized dynamics of appropriation of consumer goods in modern societies, which show that a consumer is not a passive subject manipulated by advertising agents (and of capitalism in general) but that he is the manipulator in first place (Delgado 1998). Delgado remarks that the question does not lie exclusively in the use that the consumer makes of the products but on the use of the purchase itself and the spaces and contexts where these take place. So

the user, indeed, 'makes the products,' using them on the side or behind the backs of the instructions of the dominant economic order, constituting their practices on a kind of anti-discipline, a form of creative language that appropriates of the indicators of consumption and makes of them the raw material of a generalized exclusion, an authentic exclusion of the masses. The so-called consumers produce a non-signed culture, non-legible, non-symbolized, unstable but very powerful'. Delgado (1998: 43–5)

Social body, identity, presence

For San Román (1976, 1986, 1994), Ardévol (1986a, 1986b), Giménez (1994) and Anta (1994), Gypsy society organizes its social relationships based on kinship logic articulated by patrilineal lineages.⁹ Such an authoritative position creates convincing answers from just two ingredients: the group as a legal person (owner of the status that it distributes), and the role of descend-

9. However, San Román (1996: 84–106) suggests, most recently, the need to recapitulate and to lose the lineage concept (which she employed in all her previous works—according to her—by the influence of the filiation theory of Britannic Structural-Functionalism. The 'lineage' concept has been applied in a-critic form (with varied shades of meanings) by the rest of Spanish anthropologists.

ants in uniting the groups, that explains most of the known and recognized facts within their conceptual universe.¹⁰ Gay (1999: 146 ff.) speaks about the 'father groups' in Jarana but recognizing 'the contextual versatility' of the relatives that conform it, pointing out that if indeed the Gypsies use the concept of 'family' to express several realities (nucleus family father-groups, far relatives), the idea of 'race' persists as a language to activate the functions of the father groups as political units of action. Gamella (1986: 106–9), in my opinion, attempts to point out (according to the subtitle of his work) that Spanish Gypsies organize kinship based on 'cognatic' and 'bilateral' relations (it is not clear if he distinguishes 'cognatic'—who are the descendants of both lines, patrilineal and matrilineal, to create corporate groups—from 'bilateral'—who are the descendants of both lines without the creation of corporate descendant groups or if he considers both concepts interchangeable), although contradictorily, he uses terms such as 'clan sections' when addressing the existence of operational 'kinship groups', where the open approach might have been more prolific from the perspective of *net* analysis. In any case, my position sets out from the wrong use of the concepts such as 'lineage' or 'father group' to a human group such as the Mataró, which suggests that the instruments and analysis concepts must not be mechanically applied to the various Gypsy communities of the peninsula. Actually, no author of prestige in Europe defends the existence of lineages among the Gypsy groups. Based on the empirical material which I have at hand about various Gypsy groups in the peninsula and of the ethnographic material of various authors available at the moment, nothing can stop me from thinking that the existence of lineages might be only fiction. This position is the same as Kuper's (1982) who denies the concept of lineage as well as what Schneider adopts (1984) with reference to the corporated groups. So, my 'reality', Mataró's *Calós*, is situated around Kaprow's thesis (1978) concerning the Zaragoza Gypsies: the lack of lineages. Significantly, Kaprow (1978: 140) affirms that the kinship nomenclature can give the impression that a lineage organisation exists among the Gypsies, because a lot of them refer to the ambilateral relations by the patronymics ('los Hernández', 'los Giménez', 'los Sotelo'), as in the US they say 'the Kennedys', 'the Rockefellers' or 'Smith and Brown'.

Among the Calós, and referring to the social body, blood is a basic symbolic element. It is the substance that is transmitted. The ideology of *pure* blood underlines the importance of men over women, being a tentative

10. Following Verdon (1991: 64).

internal differentiation (*I have got pure blood, I'm a Gypsy from the four lineages*) as well as external (*we have to purify our race, by marrying Gypsies, cleaning the blood*). The metaphors used with blood express the symbolic character of its social construction, which works because it is strongly symbolic. There is an ideology strongly androcentric of the blood flowing through the body, linked to the appraisal of semen as a creator principle, although in practice they are bilateral. That is why, women's blood has a less symbolic value. That is how man is conceived as a creator of life, while woman as carrier of the fetus, who gives her blood, the blood that nourishes the child, whereas man as a creator of life, gives his semen. Altogether, consanguinity, the belief in the blending of blood, from both the father and the mother, appears with an ideology of the father's semen which gives him the privilege of being the main transmitter of genes, of identity. Men usually say that children are more of a creation of the father than of the mother. When I insisted on the 'reason', one *caló* man answered me:

the majority of the chromosomes, the genes, are given by the man, the woman I think gives three chromosomes. The woman doesn't count. It is like before, the woman only had to have children, to care for the house . . . There are men who have more female spermatozoon and others that have more male spermatozoon, and so there are more possibilities for bearing sons or daughters. The genes are given by the father. So you see how children are born with similar traits: the personality, the look, the face . . . Everybody says: 'he looks like his/her father'.

In this respect the father is conceived as the possessor of the active and creative principle, and the mother as the holder where the child develops: *man creates it and woman realizes it (the baby)*. According to Hérítier (1996: 100) in many societies this paternal exclusiveness bestows on the mother a secondary role, as a container, bag or receptacle where the fetus is developed. Similarly, Gay (1999: 140–1) documents among the Gypsies of Jarana the idea that a lot of Gypsies think that there exist in a woman's body seven *vasos* or vessels, a discourse that, on the other hand, is not intrinsic to the Gypsies but is related to the European tradition.

The father-line emphasis on conception and bilateral consanguinity are compatible as native categories. This is a typical European feature: a father-line orientation seems to have coexisted with the concept of kinship based on consanguinity, according to Pomata (1994: 299). The idea of a gradual recession in blood similarity within relatives (Du Boulay 1984: 538), as generations follow after from an apical group of brothers, is useful in meas-

uring the proximity of the relatives. This agrees with the habit of tracing the lineage, the relationship with another individual, starting from the genealogical relationship of the ancestors (*my father and his father are off springs of first cousins, my grandfather and his mother are first cousins, etc.*), which are conceived to be of 'similar' blood, and therefore more identical. The greater the proximity, the greater the degree of affection, but also the greater the risk of incest.

This idea of dissolution of the blood, is also articulated with an inter-ethnic principle. As blood mixes with strangers (*payos*) its purity, in this case of the (Gypsy's) *raça*, is lost. One of the reasons *Calós* are encouraged to marry other Catalan *Calós* is so that *the race becomes purer*, thus, the bride and groom *clean the blood, they purify it*. Marriages with first cousins, are avoided, because identical blood types would anyhow *burn*. In fact, the ideology of purity of the blood, which must be renewed through generations, without blending too identical blood (that of first cousins), but neither of too distant bloods (that of *payos*), allows social reproduction. However, there is no absolute determination of this or other concepts precisely due to the relative indeterminateness to these concepts. In this and many other cases, women can make their own readings (*we carry our children in our bellies*), expressing some sort of resistance, 'a cognitive fight in regard to the interpretation of world-things, especially sexual reality', facing a symbolic domination by men, just as Bourdieu (2000: 26) points out.

Blood links are prototypes, meaning that affection and union are expressed in the ideology of blood shared. However, extensions of kinship turn up with godparents, ('godparents' is the mechanism, the semantic institution by which a stranger becomes a relative) and with all those close to the family who are considered family because of their close ties, as well as not too near-relatives or non-relatives, just because they have shared common experiences or activities with the family. Thus, relations function according to an inaccurate logic. One can get the idea of where kinship starts, but it is far more complex to find out its limits. The recognition of relations reflects doubts, forgetfulness, and confusions, which make *Calós* think of themselves as one of *the most disorganized races in the world*. The analytical unit base is the *familia*, likewise native social category, a concept as polisemic as subjected to negotiation in practice, but turns out to be the institution and semantic category on which the social, economic, political and educational organization lies. Its polysemic meaning indicates to us the flexibility and fluidity of the *Calós* conceptions of what is a relative, which is deduced

depending on pragmatic categories:¹¹ he or she is a relative or is close to being a relative when he or she shares certain activities with the family.

It couldn't be any other way in a community where there is an absence of precise limits among relatives and non-relatives, the contact, the treatment, in conclusion, the communication, its presence or its absence, end up making a stranger a relative and the relative a stranger. So, the *Calós* would not place emphasis in the formal genealogical aspect of the social structure but they would consider the interaction process that would lead to the representation and constitution of social units tied to each other. Nevertheless, this consideration was perfectly compatible with the centrality of the domestic group and the kindred as basic unit of society. The families that live within the community in some way tend to be related to one another, either closely or distantly.

On the other hand, the nickname is the label, the identification, the beacon, that marks the place that the individual occupies in the social network.¹² The personal and familiar identity is situational: the designation of identity by the name, the individual or family namesake, the *tecnonymy*, etc., depend on the communicative context, the place and the time, enabling emphasis on the paternal or maternal ties. It is not a mere classification operation but that the language communicates to us something more, a sense, a history. The nickname permits knowing the origin of an individual, which is the same as knowing its social identity. The family namesakes, preferably transmitted patrilineal, constitute a system that marks political and social status but does not determine the kind of interaction to be followed between the individuals. This patrilineal dominance in family namesakes are tied to the memory of male ancestors and the existent andocentrism (there are very few individual nicknames among the females while there are more among the men).

For the *Calós* what counts is the present. In fact, the *Calós* mark the nicknames or family namesakes as things more of the past—a *thing of old people*, and adapted from the rural world, as an informant points out:

The nicknames? They were to classify. By the nickname you could learn from what part of the country you were when you went to a place where there were Gypsies

11. Piasere (1985: 106–7) notes that the *zlahta* of the Slovenian *Roma* are not a social group, but neither a pure category, exogamic or ceremonial group. It is a *pragmatic category* because the relatives are those that are closely related. There are no examples of what an exclusive group is for a kind of activity, although occasionally it can function as such.

12. I have followed Palumbo (1997) who, in the Italian case, approaches the kinship from a symbolic and ideological dimension in relation to multiple levels of identity.

that didn't know you. The payos also had them. In the villages many people are known as 'Can Frigolé' or the 'Patufets'. We have done nothing else but copy from the payos.

We observe how the memory, or, let us say, the ideology of the memory of the dead, in a mytopoietic process, is linked in a particular manner to the construction of the identity of persons. The system works as if the *Calós* wanted to set limits and define the natural order and confusion of bilateral kinship ties, regarding themselves as organized within sociological groups of relatives, an expression of the identities that are constructed through a synthesis between classifying logic and feelings. Many authors assume that the male dominance and the patrilineal orientation in the transmission of family namesakes mark the presence of corporate groups among the Spanish Gypsies. In any case, the perspective can take two directions (depending on how we observe the identities, in substantial or relational form): (1) that an ego belongs to a real 'group' of people, a lineage or a corporate descent group, an operative and distinguished group; (2) that an ego names itself, and it is called, making reference to a 'category' of persons that belong to a social unit. In this sense, to emphasize point 1 means to give priority ontologically to the group, defining substantial identities, while point 2 shows the denotative, classificatory and differential function, of the language. The patrilineal slant visible in the cultural preference in the identification of the individual with the group of relatives of the father (which in the rural areas of unequal transmission identifies a house, a discrete unit) is linked with the dominance of the male over the female. In this sense, the transmission and possession of family and individual nicknames, have been one of the characteristic aspects of the European societies in ancient times.

It is important to observe that we are dealing with a community that is defined by a kinship network and a territory. The women must adapt to a strange community because the residential ideology is 'virilocal'. The women come from outside to feed back the identity: the men are solid in the territory. This is, however, an ideal type now that the apparent patrilineals-virilocal groups eventually melt. There are expansion and retraction cycles, where the different socio-historic moments of the town of Mataró play a fundamental role. The residence may not be stable but with the passing of the years, and residents may go from one town to another, without this being unusual, it is quite normal that a situation turns out contrary to what is ideal. Consequently, an uxorilocality is defined on the basis of other conditions and strategies, seemingly pragmatic (better markets in the zone,

wife's family wealth, etc.). In this case, like in other aspects, the ideology, as part of the more public and proclaimed practice, came not only softened but blown away by the real behavior of the individuals and the adjustments that were carried out.

On the other hand, if it is about a group that must continuously validate its identity, it must organize its presence in the world through *payol/gitano* division, and for this, it is necessary to maintain the ties that bind them as Gypsies through alliances. It appears so as an expression of the alliances as fission and fusion game in their dynamics, combining apparent non-structuring effects with re-linking alliances (matrimony with the indirect cousin) or group endogamy (matrominy between second cousins) In this sense, I suggest that the decisive step of their condition of *gitanos* to modern Gypsies is related to the change in alliance forms: the abandonment of marriage with the first cousin (*primo-hermano*)—which today causes a moral sanction among the *Calós* and it is attributed in other Gypsy groups as a sign of their *atraso*—that occurred in the middle of the twentieth century. Matrimony turns out to be the product of a tension between the strategies and the individual tendencies. But, nevertheless, an endogamic ideal appeared within the group, which correlation was the blood or genealogical purity, the protection of the honor of the group, and, by extension, the social structure reproduction preserving it from non-Gypsy influence. The exchanges define certain predominant structures such as the matrimony between second cousins or with the indirect cousin, in their diverse forms. Both alliances accomplish in a certain way the ideal marriage alliance: the preferable interchange is the one that produces an egalitarian honorability between both families, in other words, it is better to marry with those who, in one way or another, by consanguinity or affinity, or simply by long contact, one is already tied up to. Therefore, what was ideal was to get married, taking up again the already classic idea of Héritier (1981: 152–67) and Zonabend (1981): neither too close to (in kinship and blood terms) nor too far away (in sociological terms) among Catalan Gypsies. And as a result, it allows keeping kindred relatively closed, although not in a radical manner but significantly, the number of ancestors and, therefore, of relatives.

Conclusion

The concept of *gitanos modernos* interested me as a Gypsy theme (*emic* model) because of the theoretical question of whether they are 'really'

more integrated in modern times compared to other Gypsy groups (*etic* model).

I wanted to highlight the social situation of the woman, underlining the emergence of new forms of representation and practices that reflect in young Gypsies a negotiation with the possibilities of freedom and self-fulfillment. The wedding, as a central event in the lives of the Calós, shows itself as the 'official' method for contact in a society like the Gypsy, which, unlike Western societies, is much more conservative, it fragments and hides the bodies, the emotions and the feelings. In fact, the wedding resembles the concept of Mauss (1991) of the 'total social fact': the wedding as an event that expresses and synthesizes, in a spectacular way, a particular kind of culture. The metaphor of the bullfight and the cattle intended, in the interpretation of the ritual, to balance an internal approach (the rite as an initiating rite for its protagonists) and an external one (the rite as the triumph of society).

The blood is a central concept of kinship and identity. Relationships and bilateral descendants are understood from the concept of *sang*. The colored patrilineal dominance in the beliefs of conception or in nicknames could be one of those 'appearances' that Hérítier (1996: 43) points out and that can make us think in the existence of patrilineal filiation in societies, in fact, bilaterals. The lineages can be only a mere invention in the head of the anthropologist.

On the other hand the alliances mark the presence of the *Calós* in the world; as an outcome of the tension between the individual and the society, a complexity in marriage alliances appears that cannot be reduced to enounce a simple tendency to endogamy. The marriage practice was what was important, to be able to dispose of several possibilities of election and play with them, and not the filiation rule.

In short, I have tried to show that from this analysis of categories and strategies of one local Gypsy community, it is possible to abandon the narrow views that gives their socio-cultural organization a simple or archaic character. On the contrary, the analysis shows how an urban group, adapted to daily life together with non-Gypsies and, supposedly, the lack of interest by their apparent normality, reflects the complexity of European tradition and, particularly, of Mediterranean and popular culture. The *Calós* are the example of what the popular and the modern bring together.

References

- Anta Félez, José Luís. 1994. Donde la pobreza es marginación. Un análisis entre gitanos. Barcelona: Humanidades.
- 1999. Poder, estado y políticas sociales: Una comunidad gitana en la ciudad de Málaga. *Demófilo* 30: 171–82.
- Ardévol Piera, Elisenda. 1986a. Antropología urbana de los gitanos de Granada. Tesis de licenciatura. Barcelona: UAB.
- 1986b. Vigencias y cambio en la cultura de los gitanos. *In* Entre la marginación y el racismo. Reflexiones sobre la vida de los gitanos. Teresa San Román Espinosa, ed. Pp. 61–109. Madrid: Alianza.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. 2000. La dominación masculina. Barcelona: Anagrama.
- Delgado Ruiz, Manuel. 1986. De la muerte de un dios. La fiesta de los toros en el universo simbólico de la cultura popular. Barcelona: Península.
- 1998. Els usos del costum. Àgora i simulacre en els nous centres comercials. *Revista d'Etnologia de Catalunya* 12: 36–49.
- Du Boulay, Juliet. 1984. The blood: Symbolic relationships between descent, marriage, incest prohibitions and spiritual kinship in Greece. *Man* 19: 533–56.
- Gamella, Juan F. 1986. La población gitana en Andalucía. Un estudio exploratorio de sus condiciones de vida. Sevilla: Junta de Andalucía.
- Gay y Blasco, Paloma. 1999. Gypsies in Madrid. Sex, gender and the performance of masculinity. Oxford: Berg.
- Giddens, Anthony. 1998. La transformación de la intimidad. Sexualidad, amor y erotismo en las sociedades modernas. Madrid: Cátedra.
- Giménez Adelantado, Ana. 1994. El grupo étnico en el medio urbano: gitanos en la ciudad. Tesis Doctoral. Madrid: Universidad Complutense de Madrid.
- Gomes, Ana María. 1998. Vegna che te fago scrivere. Etnografia della scolarizzazione in una comunità di Sinti. Roma: CISU.
- Héritier, Françoise. 1981. L'exercice de la parenté. Paris: Gallimard.
- 1996. Masculino/femenino. Barcelona: Ariel.
- Kaprow, Miriam Lee. 1978. Divided we stand: A study of discord among Gypsies in a Spanish city. Columbia University. Ph.D. thesis.
- 1991. L'adomesticamento dei 'Gitanos' e delle altre classi pericolose. *La Ricerca Folklorica* 22: 17–35.
- Kilani, Mondher. 1996. Antropologia: Una introduzione. Bari: Dedalo.
- Kuper, Adam. 1982. Lineage theory: A critical retrospect. *Annual review of Anthropology* 11: 71–95.
- Mauss, Marcel. 1991. Sociología y antropología; precedido de una introducción a la obra de Marcel Mauss por Claude Lévi-Strauss. Madrid: Tecnos.
- Palumbo, Bernardino. 1997. Identità en el tempo. Saggi di antropologia della parentela. Lecce: Argo.

- Pasqualino, Caterina. 1998. Femme, danse, société. Le statut de la femme chez les Gitans d'Andalousie. *L'Homme* 148: 99–118.
- Piasere, Leonardo. 1985. Mare Roma. Categories humaines et structure sociale. Une contribution à l'ethnologie tsigane. Paris: Etudes et documents balkaniques et méditerranées.
- 1995. A cura di. Comunità Girovaghe, Comunità Zingare. Napoli: Liguori.
- 1998. Le culture della parentela. Un approccio cognitivo fuzzy. *In* Le culture della parentela e l'esogamia perfetta. Leonardo Piasere and Pier Giorgio Solinas, eds. Pp. 1–202. Roma: CISU.
- Pomata, Gianna. 1994. Legami di sangue, legami di seme. Consanguineità e agnazione nel diritto romano. *Quaderni Storici* 86: 299–334.
- San Román Espinosa, Teresa. 1976. Vecinos gitanos. Madrid: Akal.
- 1986. Reflexiones sobre marginación y racismo. *In* Entre la marginación y el racismo. Reflexiones sobre la vida de los gitanos. Teresa San Román Espinosa, ed. Pp. 185–241. Madrid: Alianza.
- 1994. La diferència inquietant. Barcelona: Altafulla.
- 1996. La diferencia inquietante. Madrid: Siglo XXI.
- Schneider, David. 1984. A critique of the study of kinship. Michigan: The University of Michigan Press.
- Stewart, Michael. 1997. The time of the Gypsies. Oxford: Westview.
- Verdon, Michel. 1991. Contre la culture. Fondament d'une anthropologie sociale opérationnelle. Paris: Editions des Archives Contemporaines.
- Zonabend, Françoise. 1981. Le très proche et le pas trop loin. Reflexions sur l'organisation du champ matrimonial des sociétés à structures de parenté complexes. *Ethnologie Française* 11(4): 311–18.
- Zulaika, Joseba. 1992. Caza, símbolo y eros. Madrid: Nerea.

