Narrating Gypsies

Telling Travellers
To Joan Shaw, Anna-Karin,

Christofer, Steven,

Flubber (the Guinea pig) and Blixten (the hamster)
Narrating Gypsies, Telling Travellers

A Study of the Relational Self

in Four Life Stories

Martin Shaw
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Introduction

One day I did summat that I avent always dun – I took car to work. When I’d got thear I tried to remember how I’d dunnit. Ar menny times had I changed gears? Ar menny times had I pushed darnt excellerator, breyk ant clutch? Ar menny left and reyt turns had I med? Ar menny times ad I signalld when I’d med a turn? I ad, like everybody else, driven on “reyt” side ot street, but I’d not qwestiond why ad dunnit. I remember reading a cupple o times abart people who adn’t (driven on the correct side of the road). One time ther wer an old man hood driven darnt motorway rong way, and another time a forinner did summat similar. It was all int news. When tha learns to drive tha learns ruels, and when thas passd thi test tha sort o picks n chooses which rules tha follows an which tha dunt. Sometimes tha signals when tha wants to mek a left turn and sometimes tha duzent, sometimes tha speeds and sometimes tha sticks to t speed limit, cos thez somebody behind thi in ther car in a rush. Car that I drive as only wan edlamp that works, and, don’t tell anywon, but exhaust pipes broke in two. I ort to fix car up, but I think car as a personality as it is. Somewhere there must be a perfect driver, who sticks to t rules nomatter what, someone that can remember everything that theyd dun ont way to wherever the wannad to go, someone hoo always drives ont “reyt” side ot road, teks over other cars on reyt side, stops when lines ont road se so, and always signals when they turn – I doubt it tho.\(^1\)

The constructed passage above serves as a metonymic tool to introduce themes as diverse as the un-reflexive acceptance of a dominant and dominating form of writing, forms of power, control and order, the social construction of taste, methods of transcription and the pre-conscious way that people perform many everyday practices.\(^2\) A spoken form of language can be transformed, translated, re-produced or re-presented in a multitude of forms. However, there is, generally speaking, only one form of written language that the majority of people are exposed to in written/printed form. The persistent and repetitive pedagogy that has led to the taken-for-grantedness of “standard” English is a distinct indicator of class, national and dominant ideology at work in a seemingly silent and un-purposeful manner. However, the attempted control of language through the production of volumes of authoritative “rules” and “regulations,” or calls to order, that retain their power through indications of inferiority or deficiency in comparison to a constructed “standard” (didnt; didn’t; did not), cannot totally control how individuals engage in re-presenting their own versions of spoken language in written form. A person’s seemingly “natural” reaction, or lack of reaction, to a form of writing is also an indication of the social construction of taste. We like some things and/or accept them in

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\(^1\) The passage is my own construction. See the Appendix for a different version of the passage, which is also my construction.

\(^2\) The word “pre-conscious” is meant to have a similar meaning to “sub-conscious.” The word “pre-conscious” emphasises the connection between consciousness and a before-consciousness repository of suggestive guidelines or dispositions. The prefix “sub,” indicating below, tends to give primary significance to the conscious elements of selfhood, whereas I wish to emphasize both the interconnectedness and interdependence of the two, and the primary significance of the pre-conscious.
some way; we refuse, dislike or decline others, but our “choices” are part of a series of larger, historically anchored schemes of relational self- and co-surveillance. In my view, relationality, as a relationship of interdependence with others, objects, ideas and/or discourses, is not something that we can choose to have, or not. Relationality is something that we construct our selves and our relationship with our surroundings with, through and therefore, of. The concept of relationality also acts as a metonymy for other un-reflexive acceptances of forms of practice that people interact with on a daily basis.

The driver in the passage interacted with the pedals, gears and steering wheel of the car that s/he was driving, and interrelated with the characteristics of the environment that s/he drove in, which include(s) other cars and/or pedestrians that s/he met on the way to a destination. The driver more or less adhered to the rules and regulations of the Highway Code, but could not distinctively remember doing it. Furthermore, there was no conscious effort needed to drive on the “correct” side of the road; this rule was so internalised that it did not need to be actively brought to consciousness. In other words, many practices that we take part in everyday seem to be performed through guiding schemes that are pre-conscious and embodied, and we are not always aware of the symbolic significance of such practices. People become so attuned and immersed in the discursive and physical environments that they interact in that they forget that co-opted ranges of acceptable behaviour, speech, movement and even writing are in operation. And whether we refer to ourselves by using signifiers such as man, woman; young, old; police, anarchist, rebel or in terms of class, religion or group-belonging, the range of the codes of interrelation that people more or less adhere to do not vary to a great degree.

In this introduction I will provide a short description of the four Gypsy and/or Traveller life stories and discuss the concept of “relationality” in the context of autobiography theory, including the I’s of autobiography. I will then introduce a theory of relationality and related concepts, which I will consequently adapt to story analysis. The epistemology that follows maps continuations of interdependent historical discourses and links them to a series of life stories about and/or with Gypsies. In my subsequent presentation of the authoritative collection point of such discourses in England, I will discuss particularly influential individuals associated with this discursive centre. I will then reconnect the proposed effect of the previous discussions to the main focus, the life stories, and discuss the effects of geo-political contexts and discursive domination on the production process and the possible and probable narrative content of the respective life stories.

Narrating Gypsies: Telling Travellers investigates and problematizes the relational practices of narration, speaking and writing in four autobiographical narratives that were produced
with or by persons who used the primary signifiers “Gypsy,” “Traveller” and/or “Romany” to
describe themselves in the context of their stories and the respective production processes.
The first part of the main title, “Narrating Gypsies,” evokes a series of possibilities as far as
narration is concerned: firstly, that someone is involved in the practice of narration, secondly,
that someone is telling the story of a Gypsy, thirdly, that someone who identifies themselves
as a Gypsy is narrating their story, and lastly that someone, who identifies themselves as a
Gypsy is telling the story of a Gypsy. In a similar vein, the second part of the title, “Telling
Travellers,” involves the four previous possibilities, but adds another important ingredient:
the idea of significance, as in the attraction of interest to a person that is perceived as living an
unusual life. In my view, all the connotations and ambiguity that I have described in relation
to the title are involved in the narration of Gypsy and/or Traveller lives.

The first sign of ambiguity that a person approaching a literature that is written about or
by people who write or speak using the signifiers “Traveller,” “Gypsy” and/or “Romany” is
that there is no consensus concerning what the terms are meant to indicate. However, in my
view, there is no consensus involved in describing any group, as all “groups” (for example;
English, Irish, Welsh and Scottish) are heterogeneous and imagined. They are heterogeneous
once the powerful idea of homogeneity, as a pedagogically produced emblem of forms of na-
tionalist ideology, is scrutinized, and imagined, as no individual has knowledge of all the
members of the group and therefore the group, whether it is considered homogeneous or het-
erogeneous, is imagined. However, the importance of definitions attached to so-called “mi-
nority” groups becomes significant in relation to the State for political and legal reasons. The
definition-obsessed dominant group needs a working description in order to delineate a “devi-
ant” group in order to purposefully and effectively exercise its power. Representatives of the
groups affected struggle to defend the/an image of the collectivity, and/or gain the possible
benefits that such a definition may provide access to by involving themselves in the process.
In the positioning and re-positioning of the three signifiers, “Traveller, “Gypsy and/or “Rom-
any” (and a range of others), social, political, historical and ideological discourses are in-
volved. Many attempts have been made to define, delineate, classify, categorise, racialize,
etnicize, nationalize, construct boundaries and/or create a check list (criteria) for inclusion

3 See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (Lon-
don: Veritas, 1983). The idea of imagined groups is an extension of the I/we connotations of Anderson’s concept
of imagined communities: “It is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know
most of their fellow members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their
communion” (15, original emphasis).
and exclusion of the imagined group referred to. However, the contextual usage and potential interchangeability of such terms by people who use them to describe themselves on an everyday basis and in contextual situations, creates slippages that delineate such utopian yearnings for a universal prescriptive order.

The Life Stories, Group Signifiers and Related Terminology

The earliest of the four texts that I will analyse is Gordon Sylvester Boswell’s *The Book of Boswell: Autobiography of a Gypsy* (1970), which was taped, transcribed and edited by John Seymour, a travel writer, and renowned writer of books on self-sufficiency farming. Boswell’s life story was reprinted in paperback editions in 1973 and 1987. Boswell is characterised by a series of social and political changes that the protagonist considers himself to have been successful in dealing with. The reader can follow the protagonist from his childhood in Blackpool to his parents’ involvement with Gypsy missionary work, through two world wars and then on to his establishment in the scrap metal business in Spalding, Lincolnshire. The next life story, *Traveller: An Autobiography by Nan Joyce*, was published in 1985, and is the life story of Nan Joyce, who describes herself as an Irish Traveller. The 1985 edition was taped, transcribed and edited by Anna Farmar, a freelance editor and self-help co-ordinator at the time. Farmar also published the 2000 edition of Joyce’s life story under a new title, *My Life on the Road: An Autobiography by Nan Joyce*, and included a seven-page afterword, which updates the reader on certain incidents in Joyce’s life between the two editions. In my analyses and references to Joyce’s life story I use the 2000 edition unless stated otherwise. *My Life* is unromantic, politically orientated and reflects Joyce’s subjectivity as a political activist and many stories are characterised by the traumatic and disempowering effects of living within the constraints of a social position and political environment that disregard and silence sections of its subjects. *My Life* follows Joyce’s life as a child and a parent within and between three focal points: Belfast, Dublin and visits to England.

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4 See Thomas Acton, *Gypsy Politics and Social Change: The Development of Ethnic Ideology and Pressure Politics Among British Gypsies from Victorian Reformism to Romany Nationalism* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974). Acton lists over thirty signifiers that are in use to differentiate and subjectively segregate one group, or a set of traits attached to a group, from another.


The third life story is Jimmy Stockins’ *On the Cobbles: The Life of a Bare-knuckle Gypsy Warrior*, which was published in 2000 in both hardcover and paperback editions. *Cobbles* was taped, transcribed and edited by Martin King and Martin Knight. Much of Stockins’ life story revolves around the central theme of fighting, which is the point of entry into the genre of fighting books that *Cobbles* is shaped and organised to belong. “Fighting” has many meanings in *Cobbles* and is evident in portrayals of organised fights, an emotional battle to come to terms with his father’s death and perennial struggles with representatives of authority (police, the courts, site wardens) and their perceived double morality. Jess Smith refers to herself as a Scottish Traveller and wrote a trilogy of books that were published in 2002, 2003 and 2005. The first part of her trilogy, *Jessie’s Journey, Autobiography of a Traveller Girl* is concerned with the protagonist’s first fifteen years in which she, and her family, lived in a blue bus. The second part, *Tales from the Tent: Jessie’s Journey Continues*, traces Smith’s family’s movement to a sedentary life style and Smith’s marriage. The final part of Smith’s trilogy, *Tears for a Tinker: Jessie’s Journey Concludes*, will not feature in the thesis, as it was published too late to integrate, but deals with Smith’s relationship with her husband in relation to work, family and life in a house. I have highlighted the life story elements of Smith’s trilogy; however the number of stories (fables, folktales, legends et cetera) that are interspersed with the autobiographical material exponentially increase from *Jessie’s Journey* to *Tears for a Tinker*, and the autobiographical elements become relatively scarce in the latter book. Smith declares herself to be an incurable romantic in *Tents* (85), and the stories that she includes in her life story are not restricted to what one might categorise as “Traveller” stories. The personal stories in *JJ* and *Tales* are characterised by the people she met, the stories that various people told her, and the exploits of members of her family. Smith’s life story also engages with a more overt political agenda, and she interjects regularly with comments and opinions concerning perceived inter-group relations.

The primary signifiers that the narrators themselves use in the context of narration and the respective configurations of the production process are the terms that I adhere to.

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10 Jess Smith, *Jessie’s Journey: Autobiography of a Traveller Girl* (Edinburgh: Mercat Press, 2002). I will refer to the first part of Smith’s life story as either *Jessie’s Journey* or *JJ* from now on.

11 Jess Smith, *Tales from the Tent: Jessie’s Journey Continues* (Edinburgh: Mercat Press, 2003). The second part of Smith’s life story will be referred to as *Tales* henceforth.


13 Of course, in the transcribed texts the spelling conventions of the group signifiers are ambiguous as the reader is unaware whether the life story subject or the transcriber/editors are responsible for a particular spelling or not.
mary personal and imagined group signifier that Gordon Sylveste Boswell uses in his book is “Gypsy,” but he also refers to himself as a “Romany,” a term he uses to denote “race,” nationality, people and/or group. Nan Joyce uses primarily the signifier “Traveller,” although she occasionally describes herself (I/we) as a “Tinker” or “Mincéir.” Jimmy Stockins uses “Gypsy,” “Traveller” and “Romany” but mostly Gypsy and Traveller. Jess Smith’s preferred self-referential term is Traveller in her personal stories, although “Tinker,” “Romany” and “Gypsy” are used in other story contexts. The particular political, social and ideological connotations attached to the signifiers are, however, and inevitably, my own interpretations.

I have chosen to use the term “collaborative life story” to describe the primary literature that I will discuss and analyse in the thesis. The word “collaborative” is meant to indicate the direct or indirect influence of others in the discursive trajectory, form, organisation and content of the production process, without suggesting that there is any “pure” or essentialist form of performing the process. Collaboration, in the sense that I use it, involves interrelations with reference to the two or more persons present in the interview situation(s) in transcribed life stories, the adherence to the conventions of chapter and thematic organisation of the transcribed or self-written material, the writing and/or transcription of paratexts and the eventual inclusion of the opinions and/or stories of others. Furthermore, the interjection of publishing editors and the conditions applied to grant applications also fall into a sphere of influence that I include in the idea of collaboration. My choice of the term “life story” to describe the primary literature is a simplification strategy that distances other more conventional terms like autobiography and biography. “Life story,” or “life narrative,” is a more dynamic and flexible term, and indicates that a series of ordered stories are compiled by the “author” and/or one or more of the collaborators involved in order to project, in some way, a retrospectively produced impression of a life lived, or a part of a life lived.

For example, the word “Gypsy” is often spelled with a low case “g” in the life stories and the signifier “Romany” can be spelled otherwise.

14 Mincier is a word that Irish Travellers can use to refer to themselves.
Relationality in Theory and in Practice

In *How Our Lives Become Stories*, Paul John Eakin discusses the results of power relations within critical discussions concerning autobiographical writing and gender. He discusses the relationship that developed between autonomous and relational perspectives of the autobiographical I: “Because autobiography creates the illusion of self-determination: *I* write my story; *I* say who I am; *I* create my self. The myth of autonomy dies hard, and autobiography criticism has not yet fully addressed the extent to which the self is defined by – and lives in terms of – its relations with others” (*Lives* 43, original emphases). The “myth of autonomy” is a social construction (of taste) and is anchored and maintained through the embodiment of an ideology that imparts a blueprint for translation onto the interpreter. As another socially constructed interpretational schema becomes available, the previously dominant interpretation finds itself paradoxically cemented in place and difficult to maintain.

Eakin refers to a relational view of life story interpretation as a way of conceptualizing autobiography that can repair the individual (male)/collective (female) and the autonomous (male)/the relational (female) binaries that have been constructed in the critical debates of male and female autobiography (*Lives* 48). These binaries not only separate male and female autobiography, informing how autobiographies should be interpreted and/or written, but also condemn male autobiography to an individual and autonomous frame of interpretation. Furthermore, the binaries that have developed reinforce the autonomous I’s dominance, as the reason that the polarization occurred was a desire to distance, or actively create a difference between women’s and men’s autobiography. If all autobiography is to some extent relational, as Eakin suggests, the autonomous, individual, universal and unified male is open to reinterpretation, and as Eakin points out, “like women, men also are constructed by patriarchal ideology” (*Lives* 49).

The term “relational autobiography” is not the invention of Eakin, but of Susan Stanford Friedman. She juxtaposes the idea of relational autobiography involving a sense of shared identity between women, which is held in tension with a sense of their own uniqueness, against Georges Gusdorf’s idea of an autonomous individual that can be identified with a community (*Reading* 201). Eakin suggests that Friedman and other feminist critics kept the Gusdorf model in place by attacking it and stating that it did not apply to women, only men (*Lives* 49). The myth of the autonomous individual, then, has maintained its position through

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both patriarchal ideology and its juxtaposition with the project of constructing a feminist autobiographical subjectivity. In her discussion of St Augustine’s *Confessions* (A.D. 397), a text generally positioned as a primary example of the male autonomous I, Nancy K. Miller reads *Confessions* relationally, and relates to the split between chapters i-xi and x-xiii as an allegory for the ideological maintenance of the autonomous I:

Augustine’s readers, both dominant and feminist, have inscribed this change of regime with him. In their eagerness to erect a monumental origin for a marginal genre, readers have re-suppressed what Augustine places boldly at the center of books i-ix: Monica’s role, through her desire for him – or rather his desire for her desire.¹⁶

Both male and female critics have forged an origin for their ideological preferences, or desires, through a process of forgetting, which involves an internalised schema of interpretation that “notices” certain elements and ignores others. Miller suggests that “[w]hen we return to male-authored texts in the light of patterns found in female-authored texts – reading for connection, for the relations to the other – we may want to revise the canonical views of male autobiographical identity altogether” (“Representing” 5, original emphasis).

In her essay “First person plural: Subjectivity and Community in Native American Women’s Autobiography,” Hertha D. Wong claims that anyone who lives closely with seasonal cycles and relies on a network of reciprocal obligations for survival may have a relational identity.¹⁷ Wong’s idea concerning relationality and its links to “reciprocal obligations” can be extended to the taken-for-granted and everyday practices that persons engage in with others. In my view, the strategies of engagement that persons are involved in, and are unintentionally obligated to perform in possible and probable ways, are part of the inter-subjective and multi-voiced nature of practice itself. Furthermore, Wong’s summary of her ideas are in concord with a more versatile reading of life story:

My point is that numerous kinds of relational subjectivities are possible, that a subject is not either individual or relational, but may be more or less individual or relational or more or less relational in diverse contexts, and that subjectivity is not determined entirely by either biological or social-cultural discourses. (“First Person Plural” 169)


Wong seems to suggest a context based relational continuum of subjectivity that spans from, for example, dominant group men to “minority” women with no pre-selected and reserved place on that continuum for any representation of subjectivity. The subjectivity of an “individual,” being context based and therefore relational, is found in various places all along the continuum. Wong adds that “although cultures do indeed have dominant and dominating orientations that shape subjectivity, individuals or groups within those cultures may not always conform to them” (“First Person Plural” 75). Basically, Wong insinuates that a socially or biologically defined subjectivity in autobiography is not a matter of blind obedience to rules, norms and conventions.

The idea of a context based relational continuum is interesting, but the “individual” and “collective” sides of the continuum are, in my view, ideals, and therefore, when scrutinised, unrealisable. In his analyses of relational autobiography, Eakin considers all selfhood to be relational, but differentiates relational autobiography from collaborative or “as-told-to” autobiographies by reasoning that in relational autobiography, the autobiographical act is doubled as the story of the other, or informant, is accompanied by the writer’s own story (Lives 59). However, Eakin’s criteria for separating relational autobiography from transcribed life story ignore the direct/indirect involvement of the editor/transcriber/co-author in the transcribed text itself. Furthermore, the transcription method and the depth of the relationship developed between the two or more people involved in the interview situation(s) pre-determine the degree of dialogic transparency of the transcribed text. Transcribed life stories can take a considerable amount of time to tape, transcribe, edit and rewrite. In Alex Hayley’s foreword to The Autobiography of Malcolm X, Hayley portrays a relationship between himself and Malcolm X developing:

Malcolm X and I reached a point, ultimately, where we shared a mutual camaraderie that, although it was never verbally expressed, was a warm one. He was for me unquestionably one of the most engaging personalities I had ever met, and for his part, I gathered, I was someone he had learned he could express himself to, with candor, without the likelihood of hearing it repeated, and like any person who lived amid tension, he enjoyed being around someone, another man, with whom he could physically relax. (26)\(^\text{19}\)

There are two aspects of the production process of Malcolm X’s life story that have significance for my own analysis of Gypsy/Traveller life stories. The first significance is the re-

\(^{18}\) Miller suggests a similar continuum: “Autobiographical practices might then be mapped along a continuum of relatedness and autonomy which often but not always coincided with gendered signatures” (“Representing” 18). However, Miller still seems to think that there are autobiographies that adhere to an autonomous variety (24, note 31).

relationship between the interlocutors. As we see, Hayley portrays himself and Malcolm X developing a relationship as a result of the life story project, therefore perceived differences and likenesses between the two become part of the conversational exchange. In other words, they speak with and through their relational knowledge of each other as both individuals and perceived group and class representatives. The other significance of Malcolm X’s life story is that Hayley expresses his dread as his co-author continually re-edits the written manuscript in lieu of political and religious changes during the production process (Malcolm X, 39-40). The example of contemporary change affecting the narration of past events emphasises the importance of the contextual and discursive environment in the construction of who we think we are, and the temporality involved in the practice of a historical person leaving a written version of his or her life on paper.

The I’s of Life Story

In Reading Autobiography Sidonie Smith and Julie Watson introduce a model for revealing the complexities of the “I” in life stories. The proposed model includes four basic “I”s: the historical “I,” the narrating “I,” the narrated “I” and the ideological “I.” The historical I is the physical person that the reader has no knowledge of even though his/her existence in the world is, or was accepted; s/he is not the I that we gain access to in the life story, as Smith et al explain: “This ‘I’ lives or lived in the world, going about his or her business in everyday life.”20 The historical I, then, is the person referred to as a Traveller and/or Gypsy that has left a much-simplified version of his/her life story behind in an interview situation or situations, or a (re)writing act, and has moved on with his/her life and developed further experiences and outlooks.

According to Smith and Watson’s model it is the narrating I that wants to tell or is encouraged to tell the autobiographical narrative: “While the historical ‘I’ has a broad experiential history extending a lifetime back into the past, the narrating ‘I’ calls forth only that part of the experiential history linked to the story he is telling” (Reading 59-60). The narrating I is the narrative voice that refers to herself/himself as a Traveller or Gypsy and who tells stories concerning his/her life in the interview situation(s) or at the time(s) of (re)writing before publication. However, the “experiential history” of the narrating I also involves historical discourses that can be re-associated to internalisations of dominant ideologies and is therefore historical in an accumulative sense. Smith and Watson describe the narrated I as the protagon-

nist of the narrative or the object I, and the version of self that the narrating I “chooses to constitute through recollection for the reader” (Reading 60). However, the word “choice” may not be the appropriate word to describe the processes involved in speaking or writing, because the “choice” is dominated by previous internalisations of discourses and the probable and possible narratives that can be used to frame a person’s life at a particular time. A further complication with transcribed life stories is the context and configurations of the interview situation(s), which involve at least two people. The narrative parameters and subject matter of the narrating I’s life story become affected by the other person(s) presence, the relationship that develops between the people involved, the length of time that the project takes, the knowledge they have of each other’s lives and how the other person(s) is perceived as being symbolically representative of another imagined group or groups. Therefore, the idea of an intended reader becomes ambiguous, as the idea of an addressee becomes split between the personages involved in the physical context of the interview situation and the abstract and potentially distanced idea of book production. Further complications arise when we consider that there may be an encroaching consciousness or pre-consciousness of group pressure that propagates an articulation of certain aspects of individual or group experiences and serve to prohibit others.

The narrated “I,” then, refers to a younger version of self, or the narrating I’s character, that is (re)told/(re)constructed by the narrating I at the time of writing, or, in the case of transcribed life stories, at the time(s) of speaking. Smith and Watson place the narrated I into perspective as they discuss the role and temporal positioning of experience:

Even in cases where the narrator tries to reproduce the sense of what that experience might have been like, through recourse to simplistic vocabulary, to truncated phrases, to sensory description, to citations from a past diary, she can only do so as the older narrator with greater knowledge, narrative experience, and linguistic competence. (Reading 61)

The narrating I situates and stories the narrated I and other characters in historical and experiential locations from the narrating I’s contemporary perspective. The respective life story subjects (re)tell or (re)write their stories using discourses, story scripts and structures that are available at the time of telling or writing. They use their oral and/or written competences and respective knowledge to (re)create and/or (re)tell earlier experiences within the ideological and socio-political contexts at the time.

Smith and Watson describe the ideological “I” as, “once everywhere and nowhere in autobiographical acts, in the sense that the notion of personhood and the notion the ideologies of identity constitutive of it are so internalised (personally and culturally) that they seem
‘natural’ and ‘universal’ characteristics of persons” (Reading 62, original parentheses). Although this description of the ideological I seems to condemn the subject to unconscious determinism, this is only partly the case. Smith and Watson draw attention to the ideological I’s multiple, mobile and mutating nature, which implies that a degree of agency is involved as previous configurations of power relations meet new and different experiences that demand new and differing combinations of stances (Reading 62-3). Therefore, as Smith and Watson suggest, life story protagonists inhabit multiple and potentially conflicting positions inside the available narratives of self.

**Habitus: Co-structuring, Re-production and the Gap**

In his essay, “The Matter of Habit,” sociologist Charles Camic describes what he refers to as a general view of habit: “To many, the notion of habit immediately conjures up behavior that consists in a fixed, mechanical reaction to particular stimuli and is, as such, devoid of meaning from the actor’s point of view.” Camic identifies the influences of post-nineteenth century evolutionary theory and physiology as the catalysts that changed the dominant and conceptual usages of habit. Firstly, according to Camic, habit was “prominently used by evolutionists when they described the elementary behaviors of lower species,” and then its use was adopted to describe the habits of human beings (“Matter” 340). We can see how such a development led to the idea of “Wanderlust,” which, in scientific discourse, describes a proposed inherited nomadic habit of a lower “race” that could not be resisted. In a further change, Camic identifies the alignment of evolutionary theory, physiology and the “new” science of psychology in biophysics around the turn of the 20th century, which meant that habit was extrapolated from the movements of decapitated chickens to the acquired reflexes, reflex actions and the nervous system of humans (“Matter” 340-41). In this discourse, habit became a mechanical and automatic response to outer stimuli and connected to the structuring of the brain.  

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22 We find an example of the inclusion of habit as a reflection of the nervous system in George Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949; London: Martin Secker and Warburg, 1965). Orwell’s work is generally related to as a dystopia and a prediction of a future society within which co-surveillance and coercive surveillance combine in European countries and especially England. In this passage from Orwell’s novel, the narrator comments on the dangers of habit: “Your own worst enemy, he reflected was your own nervous system. At any moment the tension inside you was liable to translate itself into some visible symptom. […] It was only a twitch, a quiver, rapid as the clicking of a camera shutter, but obviously habitual” (67-8).
23 John Paul Eakin’s interdisciplinary discussions concerning the development of self follows the scientific theory of “neural Darwinism” and the work of neurologist Israel Rosenfield in this field (*Lives* 18-21). Eakin uses this theory to illustrate that people are literally not the same people that they were in their younger years as the
Pierre Bourdieu (1930-2004) used life narrative and personal stories as part of his ethno-graphic and reflexive attitude to his research in sociology, anthropology, ethnology, education, critical theory, literary criticism, art theory, media and cultural theory. In all his work the concept of *habitus* formed a constitutive background to his analyses and he even used the term’s connotations in his reflections over his life, work and the “miracle” of his climb up the ladder of the French education system. My use of Bourdieu’s concept *habitus* to theorize the internalisation and embodiment of relationally produced and co-opted schemes of symbolic interaction within particular and familiar environments is described by Bourdieu in *The Logic of Practice*:

> [T]he systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organize practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the occupations neces-sary in order to attain them. Objectively “regulated” and “regular” without being in any way the product of obedience to rules, they can be collectively orchestrated without being the product of the organizing action of a conductor.

The habitus is the equivalent of a simultaneously individual and collective inexact and incorporated code that guides interrelations with people, objects and environments within the taken-for-granted everyday activities that agents participate in, and are drawn to participate in. References to structure in the passage refer to an agent’s propensities to effortlessly interact with an environment that they are familiar with, which means that a person immersed in and therefore familiar with the interrelational configurations of a particular environment will, without consciously aiming to, be in agreement with it:

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This harmony may be expressed in their sense of being “at home” in what they are doing, of doing what they have to do and doing it happily (in the subjective and objective sense), or with a resigned conviction that they cannot do anything else, which is another way, though a less happy one, of feeling “made” for the job.27

This co-structuring and re-structuring is a product of the class, gender, physical, intellectual and pedagogic environment and the configurations of interaction and practice that are the accumulated result of a long process that begins in childhood. And, although the dispositions of the habitus are durable and therefore serve to reproduce schemes of perception, thought and (inter)action, they also re-produce them in times of social change, in lieu of personal experience and in contextual situations.

By re-production I mean that the change in environment (economy, working possibilities, political change et cetera) leads to a re-adaptation of dispositions that unintentionally serve to reproduce a sense of taken-for-grantedness; an ease of interaction and sense of orderliness. Neither are the schematic principles of the habitus at the deterministically oriented end of objective rules, regulations, norms or conventions, but “guarantee the ‘correctness’ of practices and their consistency over time” (Logic 54). The incorporated schemes that operate in contextual interaction and interpersonal relations are forms of social or symbolic capital that accumulate, distribute and unintentionally seek praise, respect, esteem, honour, and tend to avoid or deflect negatively perceived capital such as dislike, disapproval et cetera. The various configurations and means of balancing, investing, accumulating and exchanging aspects of capital that act as both a system of power relations and constructions of taste, are embodied as dispositions in people in familiar environments, but are disturbed and disorientated in different and/or changing environments.

The question of agency has been theorized in many ways, and as Smith et al explain, many theories of autobiography and agency are pre-disposed by desire: “We like to think of human beings as agents of or actors in their own lives, rather than passive pawns in social games or unconscious transmitters of cultural scripts” (Reading 42). The proposed “false consciousness” of an unquestioning acceptance of “choice” and “free will” has been conceptualised as a misunderstanding of the workings of ideology.28 In terms of habitus, agency and resistance are located in the lack of fit, or disorientation of habitus within contextual situations, a changing environment, an unfamiliar environment or a sudden change in a familiar envi-


28 See Smith and Watson (Reading 42-47) for an overview of theories of agency with reference to ideologies, a space in the synthesis of different constrained systems, the failure to conform to the multiple demand of norms, the unconscious as a repository of the repressed and an agent’s ability to play the games of culture.
ronment. In other words, using game theory as a metaphor, the “feel for the game” is disturbed by new players, a change of referee, a move to a higher league, a change of game or a change in the fit between a pre-conscious inexact adherence with the principles of the rules of the game and an, as yet, unaccomplished adjustment to the new. The embodied schemes of perception, thought and practice cannot simultaneously and un-problematically re-assume a cohesive relationship with the different environment. And it is in this position, within the complexities of the agent’s logic of practice and the continuous invention of ways in which to meet the varying configurations of context, that we find strategies. Strategies, resistance and agency, then, are found in the gaps that new configurations of contexts continually generate and their space is in the resultant expansion of consciousness. It is in these “gaps” and the tensions, conflicts and/or cohesions that characterise them that my analysis of narratives in the Gypsy and/or Traveller life stories focuses on.

A further result of a change of environment is that a person who moves from one class, social and/or intellectual environment to another can develop a split habitus; the inculcated bodily dispositions before the move and after are not in harmony and can result in a critical and strategic resistance to the constituents of the ideological and/or particular ideational constructions of both positions.

\textit{Habitus, History and the Trap}

There are two elements of stories, story and discourse, that are generally perceived as concepts in narratology that can be separated and separately discussed.\(^29\) In \textit{What Stories Are}, Thomas M. Leitch readdresses the problem of the relation of story to discourse: “[W]hat makes a given series of events into a story (more accurately, what makes different states of affairs into a series of events) is the manner in which the discourse presents them,” which leads him to the conclusion that “[a] story is not what a narrative presents, it is a narrative, since no story exists outside or independent of a narrative discourse” (\textit{What Stories are} 17, original emphasis).\(^30\) If we accept Leitch’s arguments, a story is not a story without the discourse or process of narration, and, consequently, the two interdependent concepts become inseparable. The idea that discourse decides the inclusion and exclusion of events in the dis-

\(^{29}\) For instance, Jonathan Culler describes story as “a sequence of actions or events, conceived as independent of their manifestation in discourse, and discourse, as the discursive presentation or narration of events.” Jonathan Culler, “Story and Discourse in the Analysis of Narrative,” in Mieke Bal ed., \textit{Narrative Theory: Critical Concepts in Literary and Cultural Studies} Vol. 1 (London and New York: Routledge, 2004) 117.

course/story also involves controversies concerning the fact or fiction content of stories. In my view, the story scripts presented in stories are all fictional, although I see the question as largely irrelevant. Whether the events in the story are perceived as factual or fictional or any combination of the two, become irrelevant, as the discourse, or what the narrator wanted to communicate, remains for a reader to interpret. And it is the reader’s interpretation that renders any statements related to factuality or truth fundamentally ambiguous, and dependent on the particular reader’s relationally co-opted schemes of interpretation and desire.

My use of the word “discourse” is multiple and the different usages are interdependent of each other. In the interview situations of transcribed life stories, discourse indicates that a conversation has taken place in the sense that two or more people talk to each other with different and differing degrees of concentration on the life story subject’s oral (re)presentation and construction of life events. In the analysis of stories, discourse relates to the process of (re)telling a narrative; modes of narrating or the presentation of a narrative. In a further sense, discourse refers to the accumulation and continuation of ideas, interconnected systems of dominant ideas (ideology) and institutional forms of authoritative language and representation with historical antecedents (legal, political, (post, pre) colonial, religious). The latter form of discourse also relates to ideology in its Gramscian hegemonic form; the capacity of dominant classes to persuade subordinate ones to accept, adopt and internalise their values, norms and ideas concerning common sense and logic. The three definitions of discourse interact and are interdependent of one another in my analysis of the transcribed or self-written life stories, because the respective narrators’ words and sentences that they spoke and/or wrote contain and retain all three elements.

The narrators of the respective life stories position the characters and objects in their stories within certain “physical” environments and narrative structure that I will call a “story script.” Within the story particular configurations of interrelation take place; the characters are placed in interaction and discussion with other characters and respond in various ways to the actions and/or projected utterances of the other characters in the story. Therefore, the actions and reactions of the characters in stories are the resultant product of a particular way of organising forms of relationality and are configured from a particular point of view.

A logical continuation of the discussion above would indicate that the narrator’s mode of thinking and viewing the world is responsible for the discourse and therefore the arrangement of events and characters in the story script. The concept of “worldview,” as described by Donald Braid, provides a theoretical framework for the movement from thought to discourse in story script construction: “Though not determinative, worldview is an influential resource
that informs an individual’s perceptions, interpretations, and constructions of meaning and therefore shapes how he or she interacts with and engages the world.”

Discourses/stories can be described as “constructions of meaning,” therefore discourses re-present worldview in written form (or in the case of the stories that I will analyse, written or transcribed form). And, as Braid explains, worldviews are “rooted in a continuity of experience that begins at birth and integrates both personal experience and symbolically mediated associations with other people and ancestors” (Traveller Tales 106). According to Braid, worldviews are emergent constructs that are both individual, due to each individual’s interests and interpretations, and shared, through interrelations and continuities of interaction (Traveller Tales 105-06). I see worldview as an integrated part and a product of habitus, as it reflects a process through which interpretations and meanings are produced through pre-dispositions. Jen Webb et al illustrate the connection between habitus and what they call “knowledge”: “[k]nowledge (the way we understand the world, our beliefs and values) is always constructed through the habitus, rather than being passively recorded.” Accordingly, how the Gypsy and/or Traveller narrators organize the constituents of a story/discourse (affairs, events, characters and the dispositions of the characters et cetera) represents the involvement of the narrator’s habitus and worldview in the construction and communication of meaning.

However, habitus can also be described as subjectified, socialised or embodied history, which, in the sense that I use it, includes the internalisation of contemporary and historical dominant discourses as part of the life story narrator’s construction of worldview in story form. Bourdieu’s concept “misrecognition” (his view of ideology) is a process of forgetting in which the agent actively and unknowingly concurs with his or her structural and discursive constraints. As a controlling or self-controlling mechanism, ideology, in Bourdieu’s sense, works best when the dominated agent’s embodied and collectively orientated habitus works to re-produce the previous relations of domination. This form of re-production results in “symbolic violence”:

Symbolic violence is the coercion which is set up only through the consent that the dominated cannot fail to give to the dominator (and therefore to the domination) when their understanding of the situation and relation can only use instruments of knowledge that they have in common with the dominator, which, being merely the incorporated form of the structure of the relation of domination, make this relation appear as natural; or, in other words, when the schemes they implement in order to perceive and evaluate

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themselves or to perceive and evaluate the dominators (high/low, male/female, white/black, etc.) are the product of the incorporation of the (thus naturalized) classifications of which their social being is the product.\textsuperscript{33}

The effects of cooperative and consensual domination, which can involve the rational and logical defence of a particular political stance or the adoption of a reserved social or spatial position (sites, reservations or positions adopted in order to qualify for human rights), involves the agent’s accommodation of the dominant discourse and the consequential self-positioning as the dominated of that discourse.

In order to provide an idea of the historical discourses that have accumulated and become part of the production process and story scripts of the four life stories and their narrators, I will construct a historical overview that involves the various ideological and pedagogical effects that serve to dominate the subordinated and lead the subordinated to adopt dominated positions. All four life story narrators and the groups that they align themselves with have been categorized, generalized, imagined, fantasized and mythologized as people and groups that live unusual lives.

\textit{An Epistemology of the Practice of Telling Unusual Lives}

Writing and speaking are forms of practice that intersect with, follow, re-produce, re-structure and negotiate continuums and accumulations of discourse. The particular “freedoms” and constraints of a discourse, or series of discourses, are set within the particular possibilities and probabilities of the configurations of the socio-political and/or institutional environments at the time of speaking and/or writing, and are configured within the ideological parameters of specific contexts. Therefore, any search for the origin or beginning of any form of representative practice is based in the ideology, class/gender bias and intellectual composition of the (guiding) environment of the interested party or even the institution of the re-searcher. The question then arises: At which point should I begin to construct my historical narrative? As the topic of my research is the textual representations of narrators that align themselves, and are encouraged to speak and/or write in accordance with the signifiers “Gypsy,” “Traveller” and/or “Romany,” a logical position to begin construction would be the first recorded example of such a narrative.

In \textit{Origins of the Individualist Self}, Michael Mascuch describes the generative atmosphere surrounding written representations during the first half of the eighteenth century as being

dominated by criminals, courtesans, castaways, comedians, “captains,” quacks, and the peculiar characters, accounts of whose personal activities momentarily satisfied the seemingly insatiable popular appetite for novel (that is deviant) experience. Once exposed to it, even readers of relatively refined taste grew to crave [...] a *Life* of unusual activity.

The last two words of Mascuch’s passage, which are construed from particular points of view, reveal a class-transgressing interest in people who are perceived and storied living unusual lives. “Unusual lives,” as I use it, indicates that an individual or imagined group is simultaneously located and objectified in the contradictory positions of desire, in the form of a romanticized and/or exoticized discourse, and prescriptive moralism; the *should* of the dominant discourse of objective rules. Laws, rules and regulations create Others (oppositional outsiders) and form the relational structure that restructures and legitimises the rules as objective. The outsiders are, thus, positioned as outside the limits of social acceptability by the very rules that were created to position them there. However, as figures of resistance that are constructed from below, people who were perceived as leading unusual lives were translated into mythic characters; characters that act as blueprints for further constructions of characters of resistance.

Mascuch identifies two ideational directions that such interest in “unusual activity” gave rise to: firstly, “as a primer of popular taste for what was to come in the novel” and secondly, “the tradition of confessional literature in the criminal lives and the scandalous memoirs” (*Origins* 163-64). One of the risks when entering into a historical discourse concerning people referred to by the word “Gypsy,” any of its variants, or people considered to live unusual lives, is that the motivation to record events tends to communicate with stereotypical discourses, and as Robert Dawson explains, “the inevitable disadvantage of only having non-Gypsy written sources, which will inevitably deal with matters with a reason to record them” is that they are “often criminal by nature.” And it is in the context of an interested audience and within a tradition of scaffold and confession narratives that we find Thomas Tattershall’s *An Account of Tobias Smith, A Gypsy, Who was Executed at Bedford, April 3rd 1792. Published at the Earnest Request of Himself, and Many Others Who Visited Him in Confinement*.

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This collaborative text is a conversion, confession and reform narrative written on Smith’s behalf, and characterises both the configuration of interrelation and the aspect of interest that we see in later narratives. Tattershall, a Methodist preacher, approached Smith, thus following a two-hundred-year convention or custom of others and fulfilled a perceived demand from an expectant audience/reader. Furthermore, as Mascuch explains, there were both ideological and social factors involved in the production of confessions:

In the eighteenth century, the confessional criminal biography represented the apotheosis of the penitent: it functioned as a vehicle for creating and promoting a charismatic deviant, \textit{individualist}, self-identity. It underwrote the image of the criminal as the subject of popular concern and even sympathy, transforming him into a kind of tragic hero, whose exploits culminated in his final moments [...] when he demonstrated publicly his acceptance of personal responsibility for his actions. \textit{(Origins} 180, original emphasis)

As we see, Mascuch describes the raising of conscience and consciousness combining to produce an ambiguous mode of narrative that provides temporary status and celebrity for the “criminal” in the imagination of an audience/reader, while promoting individual responsibility with regard to law and order in both a public, and published space.

Justice of the Peace, Henry Fielding, discusses the “official” intent and the perceived reality of reactions to hangings in his essay “An Enquiry into the Causes of the Late Increase of Robbers” (1751). Fielding firstly relates that “[t]he Design of those who first appointed Executions to be public, was to add the Punishment of Shame to that of Death; in order to make the Example an Object of greater Terror” (168, original capitalisation), and then refers to both a human and socially constructed element of the spectacle:

I will appeal to any Man who hath seen an Execution, or a Procession to an Execution; let him tell me when he hath beheld a poor Wretch, bound in a Cart, just on the verge of Eternity, all pale and trembling with his approaching Fate, whether the Idea of Shame hath ever intruded on his Mind? Much less will the bold daring Rogue who glories in his present Condition, inspire the Beholder with any such Sensation. (“An Enquiry” 168)

Fielding’s dialectic combines a proposed common reaction to the idea of death with the self-glorification of the “bold daring Rogue” to produce a discourse of resistance to an authoritative strategy that links fear, death and shame with prevention of further “crime.” The effect of

\[\text{36} \text{ Thomas Tattershall,} \text{ \textit{An Account of Tobias Smith, A Gypsy, who was Executed at Bedford, April 3}^{\text{rd}} \text{ 1772. Published at the Earnest Request of Himself, and Many Others who Visited Him in Confinement. Thomas Tattershall, 1792.}}

\[\text{37} \text{ See Mascuch’s account of scaffold narratives and criminal confessions and the forms of their production from 1500 up to the last decade of the eighteenth century} \text{ (Origins} 162-201).\]

\[\text{38} \text{ Henry Fielding,} \text{ \textit{“An Enquiry into the Causes of the Late Increase of Robbers,”} in \textit{An Enquiry into the Causes of the Late Increase of Robbers and Related Writing, ed. Malvin R. Zirker (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1988).}}\]
the spectacle is other than the proposed intention, and the criminal confession performs as a collective mode of resistance against authority and the authorities.

In Henry Mayhew’s *London Labour and the London Poor* (1851-52), we find a “brief tale” of a “gipsey” entitled, “Narrative of a Returned Convict,” which begins by listing a range of activities projected as unlawful and ethically questionable and ends with a proclamation of moral conversion and reform. The man is portrayed as a “daring highway robber” and is quoted taking part in begging, stealing horses, visiting fairs, selling stolen goods and falling in with a gang of thieves. Mayhew also uses a double-stereotype to describe the “gipsy”: “In character he is very different from the generality of our London thieves, having hot African blood in his veins and being a man of passionate unbridled character” (496). From the final decade of the eighteenth century to the middle of the nineteenth, the basic story has not changed drastically, although there is a change of emphasis; the moral conversion is depicted in the correctional capacity of deportation to a penal settlement, and the projected foreign origins of the man serve as an ideological frame to explain and exponentially increase an apparently inherited, essentialist and deviant nature. We can also see a colonial discourse enter the equation, as the word “African” is selected as a generally understood code that serves to actively distance or Other an object under discussion. A further reference to racialist ideology is Mayhew’s inclusion of the word “blood” and its connection to “natural” characteristics involving a lack of emotive control.

The meta-narrative of conversion, as a change for the “better,” that is, towards a privileged and dominant perspective, is also characteristic of many “round” characters in literature and the development of what has become conceptualised as the *Bildungsroman*. In narratives of conversion the character or object is portrayed undergoing a change or a metamorphosis that involves a gradual movement towards contemporary dominant ideologies concerning religious, moral and/or ethical standards of practical behaviour.

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39 Henry Mayhew, *London Labour and the London Poor* (1851-52; London, Penguin, 1985) 496-99. The narrative ends with a quote from the Gypsy man: “‘I returned from one of the penal settlements about a year ago, and have since led an honest life’” (499). For a discussion of the change between the scaffold and penal/correctional punishments, see Michael Foucault, *Discipline and Punishment: The Birth of the Prison*, trans., Alan Sheridan (1975; Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1979) 3-32. Anyone familiar with the work of Michel Foucault on this subject could perceive a parallel in my movement between Tattershall’s and Mayhew’s texts. However, if we are to position Foucault’s decline of the “spectacle” of scaffold executions and a proposed new move to a more hidden punishment with an emphasis on reform, we must conclude that in England we are discussing the reactivation of a previous discourse. In A. L. Beier, *Masterless Men: The Vagrancy Problem in England 1560-1640* (London: Methuen, 1985), Beier’s discussion of the bridewell, or house of correction (“proto-penal institution”) in seventeenth century England positions the aim of the bridewell system as the reform of “vagabonds” through work (164-69). From now on I will refer to Beier’s work as *Masterless*. 
Although scientific developments and secularisation diminished the previous intellectual and moral dominance of the Church in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, evangelism and missionary work became the ideational centre of the next few Gypsy narratives. In his 1816 *Historical Survey*, John Hoyland, a Quaker, presents many of the ideological parameters that motivated the targeting of Gypsies as an object for missionary work.⁴⁰

Can a nation, whose diffusive philanthropy extends to the civilization of a quarter of the globe, and to the evangelization of the whole world, be regardless of any of the children of her own bosom, or suffer the pious, truly patriotic solitude of her King, for the instruction of the meanest of his subjects to remain unaccomplished.⁴¹

Hoyland positions and rationalizes the moral conversion of Gypsies within the logic of a civilizing process that “civilizes” Them, but neglects its national and paternal role in civilizing These; he turns the colonial process into an internal one, thus finding his Others inside the “nation.” Another way of expressing Hoyland’s motivation would be that he was interested in These people who lived unusual lives and wanted to convert them to a “proper” way of thinking and acting inside a Bildungs-narrative. The plurality of notions concerning education and being educated is one of the areas that I focus on in the respective Gypsy and/or Traveller life stories.

One of the authorities involved in Hoyland’s *Historical Survey* is the German orientalist Heinrich Gottfried Grellman, whose *Dissertation on the Gypsies* (1783) served as a collection point for discourses emanating from previous and contemporary international pseudo-knowledge concerning “Gypsies.”⁴² The sociologist, Kenneth William Lee, positions Heinrich Grellman’s 1783 book as the first to treat “the Gypsies” “as discursive subjects for systematic study.”⁴³ Lee’s discussion of Grellman’s arrangement of discourses leads him to conclude that Grellman laid down a blueprint for the future study of Gypsies in his organisation of the chapters in his book. Lee links groups of chapters to academic subjects: habits and customs/anthropology, social issues/sociology, history and origin/Gypsy origin, linguist-

⁴⁰ See David Mayall, *Gypsy-travellers in Nineteenth-century Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988) 97-129. In a chapter entitled “Evangelism and the Reforming Mission,” Mayall discusses the influence of the Quakers on the evangelical mission to transform Gypsies into “useful citizens,” which is depicted as a change in attitudes from “transportation, banishment and execution” to sympathy and reform (100, 97). Mayall also makes a point of emphasizing that responses to people considered to be Gypsies did not fall into the narrative pattern of perpetual and consistent persecution (97).


⁴² Heinrich Moritz Gottlieb Grellman, *Dissertation on the Gipsies, being an historical enquiry, concerning the manner of life, economy, customs, and conditions of these people in Europe, and their origin*, trans. Matthew Raper (1783; London: Elmsley, 1787). Hoyland refers repeatedly to Grellman’s work in section 1 of Historical Survey.

tics/language studies and a theme of Christian salvation/evangelical and missionary interest (“Orientalism” 134-35). The categories that Lee extracts from Grellman’s text reflect a mode of organising (pseudo)knowledge at the time, and which he considers to have moulded the trajectories of Gypsy studies up to the recent present. The category of Christian salvation and Hoyland’s “internal” reformation of ideologically constructed internal Others form the major themes of the discourse of two interconnected conversion narratives: Cornelius Smith (1890) and his son Gipsy (Rodney) Smith (1901).

A shared meta-narrative of Christian conversion links both narratives as they refer to John Bunyan’s *Pilgrim’s Progress* in their narratives of religious conversion. Cornelius Smith refers to the significance of Bunyan and his book in his description of his own and his two brothers’ conversion: “[A] young man came out to read the book to us. As he read our convictions grew stronger. We felt, like its author (it was ‘Bunyan’s Pilgrim’s Progress’), that we wanted to get rid of our burden” (*Life Story* 16, original parentheses). We find a re-wording of the previous story in a chapter of Gipsy (Rodney) Smith’s life story, and Smith aligns his own conversion to stories he heard of John Bunyan’s life:

I shall never forget my thoughts and feelings while I listened to the people as they spoke of John Bunyan. They took us to see the church where he used to preach, and showed us his monument. During our stay in the town, I spent some portion of every day near the monument. I had heard the people say he had been a tinker and a great sinner, but had been converted, and that through his goodness he became great. And, oh! How I looked up as he stood on that pedestal, and longed to be good like him. And I wondered if I should always live in a ‘wagon’ and spend a life of uselessness. (69-70)

Cornelius and Gipsy Smith construct their life stories around a narrative structure that communicates their own conversion to Christianity and extends the narrative’s blueprint status to the myth of the converted Gypsy. Both the “original” convert story, which is G. Smith’s interpretation of the dominant discourse of the “people as they spoke of John Bunyan,” his retrospectively oriented desire to conform to the myth, and his re-projection of the discourse

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45 There is no indication of who actually included the title and author in the parentheses. It could have been Cornelius Smith or an editor keen to transmit the source of the message to a potential reader.

46 Smith re-tells parts of his father’s narrative in a chapter entitled, “My Father, and how he found the Lord” (*Gipsy Smith* 42-54).

47 There is a similar scene in Cornelius Smith’s life story: “We went to see John Bunyan’s Statue; and as we gazed at it we asked God to use us in that town, even as He has used his servant John Bunyan in years gone by. From there we went to Bunyan’s Chapel” (24).
onto the monument of Bunyan, the converted “tinker,” construct Bunyan as a role model to emulate. However, both narrators position the motivation behind the production process of their life stories in the desires, wishes and interests of others.48

In the preface of C. Smith’s life story we find the words, “I have frequently been asked by many friends to give some account, in book form, of God’s dealings with me” (2), and in G. Smith’s “Note to my Readers” Smith writes, “The story of my life is sent forth to the world with a diffidence amounting to reluctance on my part, but I have often been urged to tell the tale of my unromantic career in full, and these persistent requests are my justification for the present volume.”49 The two life stories conjoin with the myth of Bunyan and form a mythology of conversion narratives that are politically appropriated to perform as models of conversion for others.50 Furthermore, as Gypsies are conceptualised as in particular need and difficult to convert, the propagandist effect is to relay a message that anyone can be morally reformed or civilised. Moreover, mythical discourses (that act as narrative models) of conversion, confession, reform and a continuity of the popular interest in unusual lives converge with the internal expansion of the civilization mission of colonialism in the two narratives.

The existence in print of George Smith’s narrative is also the result of the continuity of popular interest in “Gypsies” and the International Exhibition of Navigation, Travelling, Commerce and Manufacturers in Liverpool in 1886.51 Smith paid a considerable amount of money for himself and his family to become involved in the proceedings and his narrative was sold at the exhibition, which was open for seven months.52 Among the exhibits were “Tamill,” “Hindoo” and “Ceylones Indians,” “Hottentots” and “Laplanders,” which were, according to several contemporary newspaper clips referring to the event, eclipsed by the Gyp-

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48 For a discussion of the politics surrounding Bunyan’s and other spiritual autobiographical works, see Linda Anderson, Autobiography (London: Routledge, 2001) 27-33. In a discussion concerning the proliferation of memoirs and autobiographies during the seventeenth century due to the breakdown of state censorship during the civil war in England, Anderson writes, “[f]or members of the dissenting sects which proliferated during this period, and who produced by far the largest number of such autobiographies, personal testimony was an important form of religious propaganda” (27-8).

49 There is no page reference for Smith’s “Note.” Smith also refers to a “Mr. W. Grinton Berry” who he depicts giving him “literary help,” and therefore Smith’s life story is collaborative in the sense that it is co-written.

50 See Gipsy Simon Smith, Adventures of a Gipsy Boy and Other Stories (1924; Gipsy Simon Smith, 1927). According to Simon Smith, he is the brother of Gypsy Rodney Smith and joins the chain of evangelist Smiths. Smith also communicates with the theme of unusual lives; he portrays himself being born in Epping forest, and mentions it being the haunt of Robin Hood and Dick Turpin (1), rogue tricks (58) and in the last chapter he enters a fantasy of a Bunyan-like kingdom of heaven in which stands a colonial white throne decorated in the “finest ivory ornamented with gold” (140).

51 George Smith, Incidents in a Gipsy’s Life by George Smith (1886; Romany and Traveller Family History Society, 2001). Smith’s life story was “ghost” written (5, 22).

52 See Sharon Floate’s introduction to Smith’s narrative (5). Also see Mayall for a short description of Smith’s involvement in a touring group, the “Epping Forest Gypsies,” who gave balls and played music on their camps and charged admission (Gypsy-travellers 56).
sies’ presence. References to the “Gypsy King and Queen” (Smith and his wife), “bohemians,” nomadism, origin and oriental connotations abound in the newspaper clips, and although Smith and his family were not an exhibit as such, they did become an object of the selective gaze. In Colonial Photography and Exhibitions, Anne Maxwell comments on the ideologically motivated application of ideas from one area of (pseudo)science to another:

The decision to display colonized peoples coincided with the public’s growing interest in scientific theories about the origins of the different races. No less that the botanical and zoological specimens that preoccupied Victorian scientists, colonized peoples were exposed to hierarchical systems of classification.

The reported popularity of Gypsies at the Liverpool Exhibition would seem to position the Gypsies at Smith’s encampment on the highest rung of the ladder of objectified and “endangered species.” Smith’s narrative forms part of a discursive continuum connected to the “internal” civilizing mission and conversion narratives, which positions Smith within a process of objectification, racialization and de-humanization. However, as Maxwell explains,

[the problem was that colonialism was founded on a basic contradiction: on the one side was a rhetoric proclaiming that the colonized possessed the capacity to become civilized, while on the other was a political and economic agenda that depended on exclusiveness and the myth of racial purity. (Colonial Photography 3)]

The ideological and narrative environments in which I have situated a selection of early collaborative Gypsy narratives become embodied in the writings of an influential source of discursive authority situated in England, The Gypsy Lore Society.

Accumulation and Continuity: The Gypsy Lore Society

The Gypsy Lore Society was founded in 1888 by Charles Godfrey Leland, an American philologist, ethnologist and folklorist, Henry Thomas Crofton, a Manchester solicitor, local historian, and co-author of a book on Romani language, David MacRitchie, an accountant, amateur archaeologist and ethnologist, and Francis Hyde Groome, a folklorist. The four inaugurators

53 The first three references to group signifiers are from the main text of Smith’s collaborative narrative (14) and the latter two from Sharon Floate’s introduction (6).
54 The newspaper extracts that I refer to are collected in an appendix in Smith’s autobiographical account (17-23).
56 In an extract from the Liverpool Review June 19th, 1886, the reporter depicts himself asking Smith a question: “‘It is said that, like the Red men, you gipsies are being civilised out of being?’” (Incidents 20).
of the GLS embodied an intersection of contemporary discourses that were to mould the future trajectories in the field of Gypsy Studies, and as Mayall explains, discussing the influences of romanticism and the folklore movement, in which MacRitchie and Groome were involved, “[b]y the 1860s and 1870s this vogue for folklore and romanticism, combined with the development of scientific enquiry and classification […] found their way into Gypsy studies” (Gypsy Identities 163). However, the conjunction of romanticism and Gypsy studies does not lie in the discursive environment of the folklore movement itself. The intersection of ideas concerning the civilising mission, interest in people that live unusual lives, romanticism, “Gypsies,” travel and rogue literature and life story is embodied in a Victorian novelist, amateur philologist and member of the English Bible Society: George Borrow.

In the second half of the nineteenth century Borrow wrote a series of semi-autobiographical travel narratives that were influential in cementing a romantic element into representations of Gypsies. Ken Lee describes Borrow’s influence in terms of an ideational break in relation to Gypsies: “Borrow positioned Romanies as Romantic wanderers, thereby challenging the paradigm of Romanies as a problem social group of degenerates, criminals and heathens.” In my view, Borrow re-directed the continuity of various interconnected discourses and synthesized them within the continuation or re-emergence of a romanticist discourse. As David Mayall states in his essay concerning official and rogue literature in the early modern period, the break that Lee projects depends on the source material that the researcher focuses on:

From rogue literature a picture is given of colour, excitement, energy, freedom and lack of restraint, mixed with an element of (false?) indignation at the brazen immorality of the group. From official records the emphasis is more on the threat and danger posed by the group to morality, health, law and order, the commonwealth and to society.

As we see, Mayall’s conflation of the two sources shows a distinct romantic element in rogue literature (biographical portraits, surveys and revelations of low life, deceitful practices and gallows confessions [“Egyptians” 56]), and the moralistic and pejorative element in offi-

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58 The romantic interests of both Leland and Groome are evident from the titles of their books: Francis Hinde Groome, Gypsy Folk-Tales (London: Hurst and Blacket, 1899), and Godfrey Charles Leland, Gypsy Sorcery and Fortune-telling, Illustrated by Incantations, Specimens of Medical Magic, Anecdotes, Tales (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1891). I will refer to The Gypsy Lore Society as GLS from now on.


cial literature. In other words, the two faces of “official” control and order and resistance characters that I identified with Henry Fielding and the criminal confession have become discursively consolidated; the romantic and deviant-producing discourses have become mythologized.

Another area of interest in my story analyses is the way that a significant/telling Gypsy/Traveller is either encouraged to tell, pre-dispositioned to tell, or anticipates the expectations of a reader and mythologizes self in “Gypsy/Traveller” discourse.

Borrow is also attributed with the introduction of specific hierarchal and classificatory terminology like “Romany Rye” and “true Romany.” Both terms were obviously attractive as they situate the people adopting, using or placing the terms in status positions. “Romany Rye” came to have two lasting and primary meanings; firstly, a person gaining privileged access to a Gypsy or Gypsy family and, secondly, a person, usually related to as a gentleman that studies Gypsies. The discourse of the “true Romany” was meant to designate “racially pure” Romanies and led to a categorisation of traits that only “true Romanies” were perceived to have; the rest were positioned in a chain of degenerate half-breeds (“Orientalism” 138-41).

Although Borrow died six years before the GLS was founded, the discourses of “race,” privilege and romanticism that ran through Borrow’s works continue to mould and form undercurrents in both Gypsy Studies, and the ideational environments in which life stories concerning people who align themselves with the signifiers “Gypsy,” “Romani” and/or “Traveller” are produced. Dora Yates, the long-time secretary of the GLS, positions Borrow and his influence in her life story (1953): “The first question asked of every Romani Rye and every Romani Rawnie is always what turned his or her interests to the Gypsies. And in five cases out of six the invariable answer is: ‘Reading the work of George Borrow.’”

61 Note the mixture of religious, romantic, sexual and pejorative discourses in Borrow’s description of a female and male Gypsy that his character met in a picturesque lane in *Lavengro* (1851): “[H]er skin was dark and swarthy, like that of a toad, and the expression of her countenance was particularly evil; her arms were bare, and her bosom was but half concealed by a slight bodice, below which she wore a coarse petticoat, her only other article of dress. The man was somewhat younger, but of a figure equally wild; his frame was long and lathy, but his arms were remarkably short, his neck was rather bent” (31). George Borrow, *Lavengro: The Scholar, the Gypsy, the Priest* (1851; London: J. M. Dent and Sons, 1961).


In 1894 the GLS and its textual outlet *The Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society* ceased to exist, but both were revived in 1907 due to an increase in paternal socio-political interest in Gypsy-related questions concerning moral and social reform, living conditions, sedentarism, and education. The revival of the GLS was financed by a member of a family of sugar refiners, Robert Scott Macfie, whose family’s wealth can be traced to trade with the West Indies and America and a 200-year family relationship to the produce of slavery and imperialism. If we were to defer the context of Edward Said’s comments on imperial connections in nineteenth century English literary classics in *Culture and Imperialism*, we could say that the domination of colonized subjects in one world helped to finance the discursive domination of another. Mcfie was encouraged to become part of the GLS by David MacRitchie and the particularly influential John Sampson, who was a librarian of University College, Liverpool. Sampson’s famous book, *The Dialect of the Gypsies of Wales* (1926) pinpointed the link between “race,” linguistics and the idea of the “true Romany,” that were thought to be inherent in the inflected Romani of the so called “Welsh Gypsies.” In Macfie’s scientifically inspired fantasies concerning “pure Gypsies” in *The Romanitshels’, Didakais’ and Folklore Gazette* (1912), we find a series of discourses intersecting and, once again, connections to folklore:

The race is slightly dolichocephalic, or longheaded, and the average height is 5 feet 4’9 inches. Their limbs are wiry, their movements vivacious, and their hands and feet small.

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for scientific racism applied to Gypsies in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, fail to understand the importance of the mutual loathing of Borrow and the early Gypsyologists. [...] In fact he was their model of undisciplined auto-didactism” (109). Acton, however, seems to be discussing early Gypsyologists and a historical person called George Borrow; Yates is, in my opinion, commenting on the influence of the myth of George Borrow and selective interpretations of his writings – a much more powerful discourse.

For an overview of State policy towards Gypsies, vagrants and vagabonds, and the Methodist preacher George Smith of Coalville’s attempts to bring “the lowest dregs of society” within the educational and sanitation laws” so that they would be taught “loyalty, honesty, industriousness and faithfulness” (37), see David Mayall, *English Gypsies and State Policies* (Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire Press, 1995) 29-54. From now on I will refer to the *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society* as JGLS.

See Rachel Hosker, “Rooting around in the Papers the Macfie Family,” *Dunaskin News; the Newsletter of Glasgow University Archive Services*, 2, 2004-2005, 5 Nov. 2005 <http://www.archives.gla.ac.uk/about/dunaskin/2004-05/editon2/macfie-pfv.html>. According to Hosker, the Macfie family began their interest in sugar refinery in Scotland in 1788 and had refineries in Greenock and then Edinburgh. In the second half of the nineteenth century the company moved to Liverpool until it was sold in 1938. Hosker describes the family as “a unique example of ‘well travelled’ industrial Victorians.”

Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1993) 78. The passage that I refer to is Said’s references to ‘contrapuntal reading’: “In practical terms, ‘contrapuntal reading’ as I have called it means reading a text with an understanding of what is involved when an author shows, for instance, that a colonial sugar plantation is seen as important to the process of maintaining a particular life in England” (78).

Their features are regular, and in youth often extremely beautiful, though the mouth is not small: the teeth are good and white, and the nose straight with a tendency to be hooked. They are deeply pigmented, the skin of pure Gypsies being olive or even darker, and the hair is straight and black with the peculiar blackness which is described as ‘blue black’. The iris is dark, especially among the women, and the eyes have a lustre which everybody notices but nobody has yet succeeded in describing.\textsuperscript{68}

In a few sentences Macfie unites elusiveness, mystery, “race” classification and categorisation, the pseudo-sciences of physiognomy and phrenology and (re)constructs the mythical and scientific object of the “Gypsy.” The discursive construction of a “folk,” or object of ideologically motivated interest, acts as a way of controlling, positioning, fixing and re-producing discourses that are imbued with status. As and when such discourses are internalised and reproduced as status descriptions by the “object” themselves, discursive self-domination can result.\textsuperscript{69} In \textit{John’s Story} (2001), we find a description of Aunt Amy: “Aunt Amy was a true Gypsy with jet black hair down to her waist which she plaited into circles round her ears or crossed over her head. She had very dark skin with piercing black eyes and wore big hooped gold earrings. She never smoked or drank alcohol and spoke fluent Romani.”\textsuperscript{70} In other words, the pseudo-science-driven and ideologically produced myths that act as models in which Gypsies are located by interested parties can form the narrative parameters within


\textsuperscript{69} See Vine Deloria, Jr., introduction, Black Elk, \textit{Black Elk Speaks: Being the Life story of a Holy Man of the Oglala Sioux}, ed. John G. Neihardt (1932; Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1988). Deloria discusses her ideas of the influence of the collaborative life story on North American Indians: “The most important aspect of the book, however, is not its effect on the non-Indian populace who wished to learn something of the beliefs of the Plain Indians but upon the contemporary generation of young Indians who have been aggressively searching for roots of their own in the structure of universal reality. To them the book has become a North American bible of all tribes. They look to it for spiritual guidance, for sociological identity, for political insight, and for affirmation of the continuing substance of Indian tribal life, now being badly eroded by the same electronic media which are dissolving other American communities” (xii-xiii).

\textsuperscript{70} John Hearn, \textit{John’s Story}, ed. Mary Horner (Rotherham: Romany and Traveller Family History Society, 2001) 8. For another example of racist elements being expressed in a text by a Gypsy, see William Lee, \textit{Dark Blood: A Romany Story}, ed. Cecil Humphrey-Smith (London: Minerva Press, 1999). The title, \textit{Dark Blood}, is described in a foreword by Cecil Humphrey Smith, who is attached to The Institute of Heraldic and Genealogical Studies: “True Gypsies do appear as a wandering race and call themselves and their language Romany. They are a distinct race with dark tawny skin, and they generally have black hair. Their blood is known to be rich and dark, reflecting the melanin colouring in the skin of most of them” (xiv). The text of \textit{Dark Blood} is transcribed, communicates with almost every Gypsy stereotype in existence and involves aspects of biological inheritance (Wanderlust, inherited difference and difference of interests [even though the orphan protagonist was not aware that he was born of Romany parents] and dark blood). On the back cover we find references to the disappearance of the “great oral tradition of storytelling” and the following passage: “William Lee’s starkly realistic tale revives an England now almost gone: the England of George Henry Borrow’s \textit{Lavengro}. Do not miss \textit{Dark Blood}.” Again, we find that “Gypsies” are locked within romantic and anachronistic discourses, and therefore “colonyed.”
which “interesting” Gypsies can be described, and are expected to position themselves (or they will be ignored and not recognised as such).  

The pre-conscious and embodied criteria involved in an interested party’s “choice” of an “interesting minority” group member contributes to a continuation of discursive self- and group domination in life story production. In collaborative life stories of discursively dominated “Gypsies,” “Travellers” and/or “Romanies” the “attraction” that led to a “choice” being made, or in the case of Jess Smith, a “choice” being made to write, guarantees that the resultant life story will involve stories that are framed in the discourses surrounding people who live unusual lives. Furthermore, the selection or self-selection involves the double-narrative of the object as subject and the subject as object and therefore demythologises the subject/object and either/or split that an ideology based on dichotomies and classification thrives on.

**Narrating Gypsies: Tell me our Gypsy Story!**

Gordon Boswell’s life story, *The Book of Boswell* (1970, with John Seymour) stands at a pivotal point of human rights movements, “ethnic/race” struggles, the involvement of the GLS, the centrality of the GLS in England as the centre of Gypsy studies and political relations with the State. We can see the flow of discourses and a particularly interesting continuity between “race” and “ethnic group” in John Seymour’s description of “Gypsies” in his life story (1978):

> The Gypsies are a distinct ethnic group and their history is known with some precision: there is no mystery about their origins at all, at least until we get back to the thirteenth century. They are descended from a race, or tribe, of people who roamed about India, getting their livings by making music, horse-dealing, blacksmithing and kindred trades.

> “The Gypsies,” “ethnic group,” “race” and “tribe” are all positioned on a historical axis and equated, but the collectivity is either fixed in an unchanging mould, or projected back in

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71 Another relative of the Smith family, and Gipsy Smith’s nephew, Wesleyan Methodist minister George Bramwell Evans, was better known as the Romany of the BBC. Evans broadcast a radio program in the “Children’s Hour” from 1933 until 1943. See David Lazell, *From the Forest I Came: The Story of Gipsy Rodney Smith M.B.E.* (London: Concordia Press, 1970) 174-77. The radio programmes were studio based but depicted Evans walking in the countryside with his dog Raq. Evans’ talks were also printed in book form and the animals that he described were often positioned as allegorical projections of differences between Romanies and “non-Romanies.” See Bramwell Evans, Romany of the B.B.C., *Out with Romany: Adventures with Birds and Animals* (1937; Bickley: University of London Press, 1945). Evans also consolidates and reiterates the idea that the “natural” place for Romanies is in a rural landscape. Furthermore, according to Lazell, Evans “was a keen member of the Gypsy Lore Society” (*From the Forest* 175).

72 In the 1970s the GLS faded, but re-emerged in the United States in 1991. The 1968 Caravan Sites Act was an attempt to encourage London Boroughs and county councils to provide sites for travelling Gypsies and involved Gypsy organisations in the decision-making process.

time, and thus re-presented in the present as anachronistic remains. The romantic element of earlier discourses in relation to “Gypsies” and the element of fantasy, imagination and exoticism are re-produced by Seymour in narrative form. In the interview situation, Seymour and Boswell talked through their co-recognition of Gypsy discourse, and Boswell was hailed to speak through the dominant discourse to Seymour. Boswell discusses connections to Gypsy missionaries and discourses of reform and conversion in his life story, “[M]y mother and father was converted at Liverpool by John Wesley Baker, a Gypsy evangelist, and Gypsy Rodney Smith” (27), and his family were involved in missionary work with Rodney Smith.

We also find characteristics of rogue literature, travel writing, the Bildungsroman, conversion narrative (“round” character), romanticism, longing for the past and folklore (belief in fairies) in Boswell, and if Boswell fails his discursively orientated “Gypsy” narrative role, Seymour realigns him with dominant discourses in his footnote apparatus. Boswell is identified, and identifies himself as a “true Gypsy,” and the narrative content of Boswell communicates their (Boswell’s and Seymour’s) co-produced story of it. Furthermore, in my view, Seymour “chose” a “telling” Gypsy (Boswell) as a life story narrator, because he fitted the description and definition of what he was pre-consciously looking for.

Jimmy Stockins’ life story, On the Cobbles; The Life of a Bare-knuckle Gypsy Warrior (2002) in collaboration with Martin King and Martin Knight, is part of a constructed and expanding genre that celebrates and satisfies an interest in people who live unusual lives, and is

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74 I use the word “hailed” here in the Althusserian sense, as a call to order or interpellation. Boswell is called upon to speak as a Gypsy and falls into the discursive role. See Louis Althusser, Lenin and Philosophy and other Essays, trans. Ben Brewster (New York and London: Monthly Review Press, 1971). In one essay, “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses” Althusser states that “ideology has always-already interpellated individuals as subjects, which amounts to making it clear that individuals are always-already interpellated by ideology as subjects” (176). In my interpretation, ideology is embodied and when hailed, as in Boswell’s case, is interacted with in the appropriate (dominant) discourse.

75 See the short chapter entitled “The Mission Tent” in Boswell (52-55). A further link between George Smith, Boswell and George Borrow is that Smith was a member of the Smith family that Borrow is said to have been inspired by in his portrayals of Gypsy characters in his books. Boswell’s critical appraisal of Borrow’s dealings with his father can be read in the JGLS article: “Wester Boswell’s Medal,” The Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society, 3rd ser. 34 (1953): 129-33.

76 For example, Boswell discusses a period when he worked in a circus. He points out certain practices performed by “casual labourers” working at the circus: “[t]hey’d perhaps be boiling a sheep’s head in a bucket, to eat, and then be boiling their shirt in the same bucket later on, and that wasn’t my way of life” (63-4). Seymour, following discourses emanating from the GLS, positions Boswell’s “cleanliness” practices in an exotic and “eastern” discourse informed by a taken-for-granted primordialist stance: “Among other relics of Indian ritual cleanliness among British Gypsies is a strong aversion to washing clothes, or even hands and faces, in a receptacle used for washing eating utensils. Every true Gypsy family, no matter how poor, will have two washing basins: one for hands and one for crockery” (187). For one example of the many texts dealing with aspects of the racialist discourse of cleanliness in Gypsy studies, see Thomas William Thompson, “The Uncleaness of Women among English Gypsies,” The Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society 3rd ser. 1.1-2 (1922): 15-43. Thompson’s article also features many Gypsies with Boswell as a surname.
advertised as providing insights into an underworld of violence. In *Cobbles*, Stockins is encouraged to speak and tell stories as a Gypsy and Gypsy bare-knuckle fighter and readily takes up the narrative role, which creates a discursive trajectory that places an exaggerated gap between Gypsies (imagined; us, we) and non-Gypsies (imagined; them). The context of the telling also leads to a distinct tendency to position his character (narrated I) in juxtaposition to dominant institutions, representative individuals of such institutions and ideas of control and order. As a characteristic feature of the genre, *Cobbles* tends to glorify violence in many heroically framed and graphically explicit fight stories.

*Telling Travellers: Modelled Travellers*  

Nan Joyce can be seen as not only living an unusual life, but also practising unusual and telling activities for a Traveller. One of the reasons that *Traveller* was published was Joyce’s political activities and her participation in the 1982 General Election in Ireland, where she stood for election on a Travellers’ Rights ticket in Dublin (*My Life* 109). Joyce was an advocate of ethnic group status for Travellers, which meant that the labels of “drop-out” and “foreigner” had to be negotiated and a long indigenous history created for Travellers in Ireland. The need to construct a narrative of national character that can contain a “people” must also negotiate and even dismiss other competing narratives, and the dominant nature of such narratives. Joyce’s “national” narrative falls paradoxically within a series of national narratives that compete and vie with one another. The integration of imagined people/characters living unusual lives into the Celtic Literary Revival and Anglo-Irish cultural nationalism produced a post-colonial narrative at the turn of the twentieth century, and as Helleiner explains, “Wanderers including ‘tinkers’ appear in the literature of the Celtic Revival in part because they, along with the peasantry, especially on the west of Ireland, were seen as the embodiments of the pre-colonial past.” One person interested in both Celticism and Gypsiology in the nineteenth century was GLS member John Sampson.

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77 The genre of books that fighting-books are associated with can range from books on boxing, bare-knuckle fighting, knife fighting, criminal lives, street-fighting and football hooliganism.

78 I have separated “Gypsy” and “Traveller” in order to follow the respective narrators’ usages of the primary signifiers. I do not wish to indicate that Travellers (Irish and Scottish) are not Gypsies, as I believe the reluctance to use “Gypsy” as a canopy term is part of the effect of national ideologies and the political/colonial history of relations between England, Ireland and Scotland.

79 See the first chapter of *My Life* entitled “We are a Different Speaking People.”

80 Jane Helleiner, *Irish Travellers: Racism and the Politics of Culture* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000) 41. For a relatively detailed overview of the influences of revivalist and folklorist discourses pertaining to narratives concerning the origin and “nature” of Travellers, see pages 29-51.
Sampson positions the ‘Irish Tinker’ in the civilizing discourse of English (internal) colonialism in his 1890 article “Tinkers and their Talk”: “[H]e still comes of good old stock, rich, if in nought else, in hereditary and developed characteristics, which, doubly serviceable, endear him to the anthropologist, and furnish an inviting field for the labours of the missionary and social reformer”81 The “Irish Tinker” is proposed as an object of study, and reconnected to the civilizing mission of moral reform and religious enlightenment. Sampson further objectifies his subject by referring to evolutionary theory and a salvage operation: “Preserved in his life, as in his language, are many archaisms, which one would fain see placed on record, before Time with his harsh breathing aspirates them out of existence” (“Tinkers” 220). The colonial and pre-colonial narratives combine to create a discourse similar to the romantic/pejorative discourses that appeared in Borrow’s novels and the extension of the dichotomy into the inclusion and construction of Ireland’s national consciousness.82

The discursive parameters within which Joyce can speak in her political voice are formed through various dominant discourses and are involved in and within Joyce’s negotiations of a position for Travellers in Ireland. Joyce is continuously communicating with her knowledge of others’ “knowledge” of “Tinkers” and “Travellers” and adopts, as the four life narrators do (in varying degrees), a defensive stance based in a need to explain with its foundations in a history of a relationship of discursive subordination and over-determination.

One of the significant events that formed the literary and societal niche that storyteller and singer Jess Smith performs in is the Folk Revival in Scotland that gained momentum during the late 1950s. One of the major influences and mainstays of the Revival was Hamish Henderson (1919-2002), who was active at the School of Scottish Studies at Edinburgh University in the early 1950s. In his essay, “Voice of the People” (1989), Henderson positions the Folklore Revival in the wake of a post-religious narrative that locates Scotland under the “hegemony of the Kirk,” and constructs a better time when many Scots were not “devoting themselves to empire-building”: “[T]here can be little doubt that the years building up to and including Robert Burns’s short lifetime were a golden age in Scottish culture.”83 According to

82 See Michael Cronin, A History of Ireland (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001) 165-68. In a section entitled “Cultural Nationalism,” Cronin discusses the influences of cultural nationalists in resisting the discursive domination of the British in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The preservation of the Gaelic language, which was considered under threat from English was promoted and literary personalities like William Butler Yeats, James Joyce and John Millington Synge became important to the narrative of Ireland’s history. Also see Helleiner’s discussion of Synge’s integration of rumour and sexual innuendo in his play The Tinker’s Wedding (1904) (Irish Travellers 44-45).
Henderson, the process that led to the revival or salvaging of Scottish “folk traditions” in the 1950s, was orchestrated first in the pedagogical environment of schools and then in “traditional folk-music festivals” organised in specific geographies where people living unusual lives met. One of the places that Henderson mentions is Blairgowrie:

'Blair' was chosen because it already hosted a huge informal get-together in the berry-fields at the height of summer, when pickers from all over Scotland came to pick raspberries and to have a good time [...]. Last but not least, Blair was in berry-time the temporary home for hundreds of gifted traveller musicians and singers from as far away as the north Highlands and Ireland.” (“Voice” 2)

Blairgowrie was a “traditional” meeting place for Travellers and there are two names of interest that Henderson mentions in connection with the festivals that will lead us to Jess Smith and the thematic content of her life stories: Stanley Robertson and Betsy Whyte. In his essay, “Scottish Gypsies/Travellers and the Folklorists,” Willie Reid discusses the national appropriation of Travellers in relation to the revival movement and the configurations of historical relations with the dominant group: “In almost every souvenir shop you will find the books of Betsy Whyte and sometimes the stories of Duncan Williamson and Stanley Robertson. How ironic it is that these books should come to represent a strong Scottish identity.”

The content and ideational trajectory of Jess Smith’s life story are a product of discourses related to the “Folklore Revival” in Scotland and intersect, once more, with a pre-colonial narrative and a fascination for people who live unusual lives. However, Reid (re)positions the particular interests of researchers from the School of Scottish Studies:

In reality, these researchers created for us the culture of nostalgia: a Golden Age, a culture that had its day, a culture that was fast disappearing. A traveller that was housed, informed and educated was rejected; only those who wandered with tents and were non-literate were accepted as “true Travellers.” (Scottish Gypsies 34)

Smith identifies herself as a Traveller storyteller, the titles of her two books Jessie’s Journey and Tales from the Tent adhere to the ideology of travelling that Reid projects being selected and modelled for Travellers, and the autobiographical content is interspersed with both “traditional” and “Traveller” stories. The discursive content and trajectory of Smith’s life story is part of, constructed alongside, and within a selective and romanticized search for an elusive

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Scottishness driven by a national ideology. And, as a consequence of the selectiveness of interest in Travellers (an extension of a popular interest in people that lead unusual lives), Smith’s two books concentrate on the time that she was travelling, and there is a reluctance to divert from the theme. Smith has lived in a house for over 40 years, yet still she gives her readers what she thinks that they are interested in, what she is most interested in, and adopts the narrative of a travelling Traveller.

Previous Research and an Interpretive Position

Research concerning Gypsy and Traveller life-stories is quite rare. The only text that the present writer has knowledge of and that deals solely with Traveller life stories is Jonathan Bernard Geidt’s MA thesis entitled “The Oral Context of Gypsy Identity” (1990). Geidt analyses four Gypsy life stories (two by women and two by men from Scotland, England, Ireland and Wales) and comes to the conclusion that “if Gypsy culture is oral, any move towards literacy is therefore away from orality, and must undermine the indigenous Gypsy culture which supports a de facto political separation from the dominant community” (1-2, original emphasis). Geidt sees Traveller identity and the persistence of a distinct Traveller culture and group(s) as dependent on orality and asks the question: “Can Travellers become literate and remain Gypsies?” (2). Geidt bases his hypothesis on the reluctance of Traveller-children to go to school, difficulties with learning and an oral mind-set. Even though Geidt analyses Traveller life stories, he approaches them as data and analyses content, plot and style for signs of orality, identity and societal framework. There is little or no literary or story analysis involved.

Donald Braid’s ethnological research in *Scottish Traveller Tales: Lives Shaped through Stories* is an investigation into the stories and songs of people who refer to themselves as Scottish Travellers. Besides the functions of entertainment, education, identity and comprehension of interest, Braid sees the stories and songs that he has taped and presented in his book as “a way of responding to the social, political, and issues that affect their lives” (*Traveller Tales* 46). I have already mentioned Betsy Whyte, Stanley Robertson and Duncan Williamson in connection with the School of Scottish Studies and Hamish Henderson and, according to Braid, it was Henderson who guided Braid to Williamson, which led to Whyte and Robertson (*Traveller Tales* ix, 47). Braid focuses on the performance and process aspects of.

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the stories he recorded, which “demonstrate ways in which Traveller lives are shaped through stories and, conversely, how lives of those who tell stories can exert a formative influence on the stories they tell” (Traveller Tales 284). The re-production aspect of Braid’s ideas is not unlike my own. However, I also argue that historical and “shaping” discourses have already impregnated the storytelling act, as they are embodied, and that the stories told are affected, and shaped by, the act of becoming a sanctioned and well known storyteller.

Literary scholar, Paul Delaney’s essay on the subject of Irish Traveller life stories “Stories from Below Sean Maher and Nan Joyce” (2004) focuses on the respective narrators’ usages of Shelta, the relationship between print and speech, speaking/writing back against history and responding to misrepresentations of Travellers. Delaney also comments on the status of both Maher’s and Joyce’s texts and indicates that they have been neglected by literature scholars in Ireland (“Stories from Below” 470). Another literary scholar, José Lanters is partly in congruence with Delaney in her essay entitled, “We Are a Different People”: Life Writing, Representation, and the Travellers” (2005). Lanters describes Travellers’ use of life writing in terms of addressing the majority population in order to express a desire for greater understanding and to correct negative stereotypes. Lanters adds that because travellers “emphasize their difference from the settled community, it is questionable whether such an approach can entirely achieve the desired effect” (2). Lanters, then, points to the potential ineffectiveness of a strategy that extricates differences, while simultaneously expressing a desire for better understanding and belonging. The national project of constructing a belief in a nation’s homogeneity is questioned by a move towards distancing one imagined group form another under the signifier “ethnicity”; the politically useful and internalised illusion of unity is threatened.

Another academic that uses narrative in his work is sociologist Brian A. Belton, who argues that “an ethnic and racial focus on Gypsies, portrayed as a distinct population within American and European society, has given rise to an ethnic narrative of Gypsy identity.” Belton emphasises that there is a lack of social and contextual analyses in the literature, and is critical of tendencies in the literature to use the terms “culture,” “race” and “ethnicity” inter-
changeably (Questioning 4). Ideas concerning the “modelling” effect of narratives of ethnicity, and the vagueness and criteria-directed usages of the word that Belton points towards, are also considerations that I am interested in. Another area of research that involves narrative is the body of work that is usually described as stereotypes or representations of Gypsies in literature.  

Theoretical discussions concerning the imagined group or groups that are referred to as “Gypsies,” “Travellers” and/or “Romanies” (among others) in the geographical area that has been attributed the signifier United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland are various and complex. Polemic discussions and critical works are usually organised around a series of discourses that are combined in various ways. “Culture,” “race,” “ethnicity,” status group, socio-economical status group, origins, occupations, modes of employment and self-employment; behaviour, attitudes, cleanliness rituals; genealogy, family names and surnames; gender, family and extended family and language are among the criteria that researchers are guided towards and expected to “choose” from and look for.

Theories concerning social construction, primordialism, diaspora, nomadism, sedentarism, homelessness and historical linguistics compete, combine and wrestle with one another for academic acceptance within ideological parameters, the methods and favourite theoreticians of specific academic disciplines and local, 

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89 See Belton’s *Gypsy and Traveller Ethnicity*. In a chapter entitled “What is Ethnicity,” Belton explains his ideas concerning the re-connection of biological elements to the problematic concept of “culture” and “ethnicity,” and their use in constructing difference and categorization (47-58).

90 See Frank Timothy Dougherty, “The Gypsy in Western Literature,” diss., University of Illinois, 1980. As the title suggests, Dougherty’s investigation has a wide birth and begins in the seventeenth century with Miguel de Cervantes and progresses chronologically through an international array of classic and lesser known writings up to the 1970s. Also see Marguerita Needham, “Gipsies in English Literature,” BA thesis, University of Illinois, 1920. We find a different approach to the representation of “Gypsies” in Rosemary Wright, “The Representation of the Romani/Gypsy in 19th and 20th Century Writings,” BA thesis, University of Technology, Sidney, 1994. Wright’s analysis is based on a questionnaire survey of Australian academics in English and Anthropology Departments and members of the Romani Association of Australia. Wright also added a further level of investigation and analysed “four major writers of the Romani lifestyle” and “two Australian Classics” (12). Wright’s major interest can be assessed from her hypothesis: “A negative stereotype representation of the Romani/Gypsy has been progressively developed in nineteenth and twentieth century writing” (2).

91 David Mayall categorizes research into Gypsies under four different but interconnected headings, racial, which incorporates “real Gypsies” and blood inheritance, socio-economic, which is linked to a way of life (nomadism), ethnic/racial, with an emphasis on diaspora, linguistic continuance and transnationality and ethnic/cultural, which rejects the significance of origin (Gypsy Identities 5-8). For an example of essentialist criteria being recommended in a genealogical arena, see Sharon Sillars Floate, *My Ancestors Were Gypsies* (London: Society of Genealogists, 1999). Floate inserts the criterion of an “expert on Gypsies,” who maintains that to be one hundred percent sure of Gypsy origin, a person should have a traditional Gypsy surname, an unusual forename, a typical Gypsy occupation and evidence of mobility (8-9). For a socio-economic status group approach that defers the relevance of ethnicity, origin and language, see Judith Okely, *The Traveller Gypsies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), and for a linguistic approach, see the essays, “The emergence of Romani as a Koînè outside India” by Ian Hancock and “The genesis of ‘Angloromani’” by Peter Bakker, in *Scholarship and the Gypsy Struggle: Commitment in Romani Studies*, ed. Thomas Acton (Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire Press, 2000) 1-14, 14-32. For an example of the “status group” approach, which is suggested in preference to an ethnic approach, see Angus Bancroft, *Roma and Gypsy-Travellers in Europe: Modernity, Race, Space and Exclusion* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2005) 43-47.
regional, national and transnational politics.\textsuperscript{92} Notions of exoticism, romanticism, ritualism, generalization, overgeneralization, exaggerated and universalised victimization, imagination and fantasy are elements that recur in the literature. Furthermore, practical criticisms involve ideas concerning the differences and perceived inadequacies involved in the relationship between “first-hand” and “paper” knowledge, and the written and documented dimension of research over the oral.

One theory that has had a shaping effect on fundamental ideas concerning research into Irish Travellers is the Culture of Poverty Theory, which was formulated by the anthropologist Oscar Lewis in his studies of the urban poor of Mexico.\textsuperscript{93} Lewis’s theory was applied by sociologist Patricia McCarthy in her thesis (1972) on Travellers in Ireland and became a recurring element in further research.\textsuperscript{94} As McCarthy explains, the culture of poverty theory was based on the idea that “poverty was cultural and inherited” which diverted attention from “the structural causes of poverty – the economic class system and the inbuilt institutional barriers to social mobility within social systems of capitalist society” (“Reconsidered” 122). We can assume, using a framework of possibilities and probabilities, that a theory that defers blame from the (re)production of hierachical structures based on ownership and material accumulation to the materially “poor” themselves, would be a more acceptable scenario, as it does not constantly reiterate the results and shortcomings of the dominant ideology.

The relatively recent history of “Europe” has been dominated by the various discourses emanating from contact with “other peoples” and “tolerant acceptance” of “others” within the territorial borders of previous (and continuing) colonial powers. The ambivalent legacy of “race” in its many disguises lurks paradoxically in the background of attempts to categorize and somehow surgically separate one constructed and imagined group from another. There should be no surprise, however, concerning the re-emergence, continuation and durability of

\textsuperscript{92} See Wim Willems, \textit{In Search of the True Gypsies} for a social constructionist argument. Willems argues that the German orientalist Heinrich Moritz Gottlieb Grellman constructed a “Gypsy identity which previously had not existed as such” and created a way of thinking about otherwise diverse population groups (293). For an example of the primordialist approach, see Donald Kenrick, \textit{Gypsies: from India to the Mediterranean} (Toulouse: Centre Régional de Documentation Pédagogique de Midi-Pyrénés, 1993), and Donald Kenrick \textit{Gypsies: from the Ganges to the Thames} (Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire Press, 2004). For a social constructionist view, which includes connections between homelessness statistics and the adoption of a Traveller lifestyle, see Brian A. Belton, \textit{Gypsy and Traveller Ethnicity: The Social Generation of an Ethnic Phenomenon} (London: Routledge, 2005) 59-107.


such ideas, as the younger, development years of many academic disciplines were spent within the taken-for-granted grasp of theories of evolution, nationalism, colonialism and vari-
ances in the biological aspects of “race” (inheritance, “blood,” generation, naturalisation, categorisation, classification, fixed traits, criteria, and more recently genetics). The contempor-
ary terminology emanating from academic sources emulate, intersect with or fulfil a similar function in relation to the earlier discredited, but not forgotten, power word. Contemporary power words such as “culture,” “ethnicity,” and “identity” have dominated and shaped the conceptual environment of critical discussions concerning so-called “minority groups” to such a degree that they have become taken-for-granted and almost untouchable.

I avoid the direct usage of the aforementioned power words, as they have, in my view, become absorbed into dominant discourses, and the discourses of “minority” group representatives to such an extent that they have become static, fixed and part of the symbolic domination of the respective imagined groups. When we speak of a dominant group (also a “minority”) and dominant discourses, we tend to either exclude academics, or to juxtapose one set of academics or a tradition of a discipline against other academics (politicians [na-
tional, regional, local]), the resultant ideas that emerge from state institutions and the judicial

95 For a racist-geneticist argument, see Herman Arnold, “The Gypsy Gene,” The Journal of the Gypsy Lore Soci-
96 See Michael Banton, “The Idiom of Race: A Critique of Presentism,” in Theories of Racism: A Reader (Lon-
don: Routledge, 2000) 53-63. Banton maps the changes and continuations of ideas of race in connection to de-
scend, character, nation, national character, genealogies, origin, religion, zoological exploration, Darwinism, so-
cial Darwinism, type and post world war immigration, and concludes that contemporary uses of the word “race” are in use in consensuses and legislation with no agreement on a definition. Banton also suggests that a further use of the word “race” is being established; an administrative and political use that will be used to support older racial explanations (60). The word “race” becomes a power word because it is in official documents without a definition and therefore open to any interpretation. See Luke Clements and Sue Campbell, “The Criminal Justice and Public Order Act and its Implications for Travellers,” in Gypsy Politics and Traveller Identity, ed., Thomas Acton (Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire Press, 1997) 61-69. Clement and Campbell state that the definition of “gipsy” that appeared in two government acts (1968 and 1994) is “a person of nomadic habit of life, whatever their race or origin” (62). The word “race” is not defined and acts as a power word as it allows for the notion of the racially pure “Real Gypsy” or any politically useful definition of “race” to be attached.
97 See Kenan Malik, The Meaning of Race; Race, History and Culture in Western Society (London: Macmillan, 1996). In two chapters entitled, “Race, Culture and Nationhood” and “From Biological Hierarchy to Cultural Diversity,” Malik discusses how culture and ethnicity have come to fulfil many of the functions of “race” (128-69). According to Malik, ethnicity and culture are seen as “race” without biology and “race” difference is rec-
coded as cultural or ethnic differences using demarcation strategies “borrowed” from older discourses related to “race.” And although ethnicity and culture can be seen as wholly learned, they still adhere to the principles of “race” and divide humanity up into discrete groups. The categories that people are allotted to, ascribe themselves to or “choose” adhere to the groups that the ideologically functional word “race” made into fixed categories. Also see David Theo Goldberg, Racist Culture: Philosophy and the Politics of Meaning (Oxford; Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell Publishers, 1993), 10 Jan. 2006 <http://www.netlibrary.com/Details.aspx>. Goldberg defines “race” as a “fluid, transforming, historically specific concept parasitic on theoretical and social discourses for the meaning it assumes at any historical moment” (74). He further states that “race” is not a straightforward form of ethnicity or reducible to biology and comments that although ethnicity seems to signify a choice “people generally continue to classify themselves as they traditionally have been, that they are even asked to classify them-

selfs on this criterion, suggests that behind the principle lies the expectation that they will take themselves racial-
ly to be what they ‘naturally’ are” (87).
system et cetera). The power words that are used to frame, describe and construct a network of dominant competing and/or similar sets of ideational configurations tend to pre-determine the positions and spaces so called “minority” groups can, and are expected to manoeuvre within.98

My position as a person working within the accepted limits of the institution within which I am in the process of becoming discursively embedded is an ambivalent and, inevitably, a dominant position. Even though my intention is to follow the trajectories that I see emanating from the respective interview situations and the configuration of the narratives that I analyse, I dominate the exercise through my interpretation and “choices” of trajectories. In other words, the literature that I have read by “Gypsies” (collaborative) and about “Gypsies,” in combination with my interpretations of the ideas and theoretical stances of other academics, and the literature and critical literature that I have read during my inauguration into the discipline, have contributed to construct me as a specific kind of reader.

My position in the critical literature concerning Gypsy studies is that I see the desire of Gypsies, Travellers and/or Romanies to belong to a “minority” ethnic group as consensual adherence to older and discredited forms of categorisation. A definition of an imagined group is needed; not initially by anyone who considers themself to be a “Gypsy,” but by the dominant group that is involved in the elimination of nomadism. The corresponding ideological construction of a legally defined and deviant category aids the targeting of the group or groups so that the limits and constraints involved in the legislation can be (potentially) efficiently carried out. The strength and durability of much-repeated mythic discourses find their way into the legal discourse and lead to a continuation of this form of representational dominance. In my view, Gypsies and/or Travellers become trapped in the narrative parameters of the historical discourse of people living unusual lives and are thus positioned on the periphery of an ideology that regards property-ownership, control and surveillance as integral components of both maintaining a class order/hierarchy, and keeping potentially anarchistic elements (resistance figures: rogues, vagabonds, Gypsies; chaotic influences) at bay. However, in my reading, the domination and dominating “landscape” in Gypsy studies, and Gypsy

98 For an essay that focuses on Northern Ireland, policy making and various levels of political rhetoric, see Pat Noonan, “A View from Northern Ireland,” in Irish Travellers: Culture and Ethnicity, ed., May McCann, Séamas Ósíocháin and Joseph Ruane (Belfast: The Queen’s University of Belfast, 1994) 170-79. For a table that identifies five categories of Travellers taken from the National Gypsy Council, see Brian A. Belton’s Questioning Gypsy Identity. The five categories with suggested “origins” are Tinkers (Roman descent), Peddlers (Travelling salespeople), Romanies (probable Indian descent), Irish Tinkers (Ireland; eviction, famine, poverty) and Scottish Tinkers (probably Celtic metalworkers and the Highland clearances) (86). We can deduct that such prescriptive categories can assert narrative pressure on people who find status in aligning themselves with any one of the authoritatively presented signifiers.
and/or Traveller life stories, lies within the political and discursive geography of national and pre-, post-, internal and external colonialisms.

**Methodology, Aims and Interests**

Through a relational analysis of the production process of the respective life stories and story analysis, I will investigate the internalisation of dominant discourses. I will also discuss the effects of contemporary interpretations and strategic usages of such discourses on the potentiality, probability and effectiveness of resistance in relation to discursive forms of symbolic dominance, including self-dominance. In other words, I will investigate the constellations of relationality in the “fit” within a familiar environment among familiar others, and the “lack of fit” with relation to unfamiliar environments, the internalised interpretations of particular discourses and the rejection of others. The stories that the respective life story narrators position themselves, other characters and objects in, act as scripts that are configured within the possible and available ways in which stories can be told and organised in contextual situations. Therefore, in the context of the interview environment(s), which involves the presence of another or others, the discursive trajectory of stories and/or specific elements of stories will reflect the configuration of interpersonal relations. The resultant life story is therefore a co-produced, collaborative text that is double-voiced in the specific sense that both or all persons present are still present after the transcriber has erased his or her own voice (and others) from the transcribed text.

In the first chapter I will analyse the production process of the respective life stories from a relational perspective that positions the respective narratives in historical, ideational and political discourses. Furthermore, a relational analysis removes the respective transcribers/editors from the periphery of the production process and re-asserts them as co-producers and co-authors. My analysis of the co-authors’ effect on the content and/or trajectory of the speech acts that were produced in the interview situations positions the other people present in the transcribed text, and provides insights into the configurations of power relations involved in the encounter. As a result, the otherwise “hidden” dialogism of the text is foregrounded and acts as a reminder that the co-authors’ presence problematizes interpretation and therefore they have to be kept in mind during any further analysis of the main text. As far as Jess Smith’s self-written life story is concerned, I will use a similar relational approach. However, the focus is on Smith’s story of the production process of two of her books, which she communicated via a series of e-mails.
In the second chapter I analyse stories that involve various forms of acquiring knowledge: institutional education in schools, and education through significant others (family education). The two forms of education are not meant to disqualify each other, thus creating essentialisms, but emphasise the effects of familiar and unfamiliar environments on the durable and transposable dispositions that pre-consciously affect what people are drawn to, and withdraw from. The chapter also serves as an introduction to my use of habitus in story analysis and the durable effects of inculcation on various representations of embodied dispositions.

In the third chapter, “The Mythologized I,” I analyse four stories that I consider to be significant to either the motivation behind the initiation of the production process, the theme of unusual lives or the life story narrators themselves. The “scam” story in Boswell acts as a narrative that communicates with a long history of rogue stories, and Nan Joyce’s anti-traveller protest story, is in concord with her political activist profile. Jimmy Stockins’ fight story is the first narrative that the reader reads in Cobbles, which is a distinct indicator of a convention of the fighting-book genre on the organisation of life story material. Jess Smith’s Burker (body-snatcher) story involves three generations of her family and is representative of her involved interest in Traveller stories. The respective stories involve myths in the sense that they act as narrative models for a projected personal philosophy (Boswell), the demythologisation of Travellers (Joyce), a story that positions the narrator in a mythology (Stockins) and the use of myth as a pedagogical tool (Smith).

In the fourth chapter, “The Misrecognised I,” I analyse three origin myths and two personal stories and identify the internalised dominant discourses that the narrators operate from within. I discuss the strategies that the narrators use to delineate discourses that are not considered desirable, and introduce a colonial context that sees the respective narrators’ resistant strategies incorporated in earlier forms of internalised dominant discourse. The chapter raises disturbing questions concerning disempowerment and the possibility, probability, but the overpowering improbability of certain people in certain social positions being able to speak and be listened to in a way that can sustain a sense of hope that things can change for the “better.”
Chapter One: The Production Process

In this chapter I will discuss and analyse the production processes of the four collaborative life stories, which consist of three transcribed life stories, *Boswell, My Life* and *Cobbles* and Jess Smith’s self-written *Jessie’s Journey* and *Tents*. My analyses of the production process of the respective life stories revolve around the concept of relationality, which provides a useful tool for framing the currencies of power relations involved in the production process, and which, in turn, indicates the differing status and social positions of the parties involved. The idea of relationality is also involved in what the Native American literature critic, Arnold Krupat, refers to as “a recognition that our speech and thought is inevitably implicated in the speech and thought of others.”99 In other words, an individual can be likened to a complex and diffuse Russian doll; instead of the different casings or moulds fitting inside one another with a rigid unified structure and pre-arranged dimensions, the ontogeny of an individual’s subjectivity is an internalised, fragmented and fluid mass of “the speech and thought of others,” which is called forth (in the Althusserian sense of interpellation) and becomes selectively structured through the possible and probable interpretations and re-interpretations of the configurations of a contextual situation. Basically, this form of relationality is involved in the workings of Bourdieu’s concept of habitus. For example, in an interview situation two or more people, whose pre-consciously activated “internal(ised) others” are embodied from differing social, intellectual and pedagogical environments, meet and a re-structuring, re-framing or re-formulation of the previously embodied voices and the accompanying discourses occurs in the speech situation(s) which the transcribed life stories are derived from.

Furthermore, as relationality is involved in all interaction, in my analysis of Jess Smith’s life story I will develop trajectories from a series of e-mails, in which Smith provides a story of the production process of her books. I will connect the discursive trajectories of these e-mails to the main text and provide insights into the ideological parameters of the production process. My main points of discussion will revolve around the restrictive influence of significant others and discourses of assimilation, while discourses concerning salvaging and post-colonialism form a more abstract and historical level to my analysis.

In order to provide a framework in which to relationally analyse the production process, I will divide the chapter into four interconnected stages. The first stage, “The Idea Stage,” posi-

99 Arnold Krupat, *The Turn to the Native: Studies in Criticism and Culture* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1996) 28, original emphasis. The context of Krupat’s comments, which I frame as relationality, is his interpretation of Bakhtin’s dialogic approach.
tions the initiation of the production process in ideological arenas that reconnect the Gypsy and/or Traveller life stories that I focus on to earlier narratives. In the introduction I discussed various forms of motivation that led to the production of a series of Gypsy life stories: religious conversion, a civilizing mission, internal colonialism, exoticism and the resistance narrative connected to mythologized rogue characters. In the idea stage of the more contemporary life stories that I focus on, we see a similar pattern of “outside” interest informing the motivation(s) behind the idea to produce a life story and the “choosing” of a life story subject. I will discuss the following questions: In which discursive and ideological environment did the motivation to produce a life story emerge? And who “chose” who and why?

The second stage is the “Speaking Stage,” in which oral and other embodied forms of communication are involved in the interrelational situation of the respective interview(s). The impossibility of the virtual reproduction of the interview situation(s) in transcribed life stories provides us with an opportunity to investigate the textual evidence of the collaborative and communicative exchange. For instance, the auto/biography critic, Thomas Couser, suggests that the consciousnesses of the collaborators conflate into one undifferentiated voice in a transcribed text. I agree with Couser on this point, however, I would situate the source of the conflation to the pre-consciousness of habitus. The habitus, as a durable, transposable and embodied network of schemes of internalised “responses” involving unintentional strategies of self- and other appreciation, engages, or calls forth, possible and probable speech practices in connection with particular contextual situations. These speech practices, which are re-organisations of previously internalised and re-organised speech acts and parts of speech acts and, which work in the “gap,” become the products of what can be called agency; the illusion, belief or desire (based on personal and collective/personal experience) that we have some say in what we do, say or think. However, the speech acts also perform within co-opted schemes of recognition with the other person or persons present. Therefore the respective life story narrators communicate with both the motivation behind the initiation of the life story project and the specific interests and forms of knowledge of the other(s) present. I will discuss how the transcribers can be “seen” in the transcribed speech of the life story narrator, problematize the direct and uncritical interpretation of a written text produced through the practice of transcription and, wherever possible, position the life story narrators’ spoken words in the discursive arena of the transcribers/co-authors. Furthermore, by extending the “seeing” and re-

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introducing the ambiguity of interpretation, the idea of an individual’s speech being a product of a multiplicity of many voices, which are diffusely available for use and brought into an organised arrangement in a contextual situation, is made visible.

The penultimate stage of the production process is the “Writing Stage,” which involves transcription, additional writing (paratexts; prefaces, endnotes, forewords, afterwords, word lists and appendixes) and includes a general aim of producing a manuscript for publication. In this stage I will discuss the transcription methods of the transcribers and the transcription method’s effects on the spoken life story material. The last stage, the “Book Stage,” refers to the editing and marketing of the transcribed and self-written manuscripts. I will comment on power relations and the main characters involved in the publication of the books, discuss the influence of other significant people, the effects of life story conventions on the form and structure of the finished book and analyse the choice of front covers and blurbs.

I will begin each of the four stages with Gordon Sylvester Boswell’s life story as the starting point of discussions and analyses, and there are various reasons why: firstly, Boswell’s life story, published in 1970, a particularly significant year with reference to politics between Gypsies/Travellers in England and Wales and the State, is the earliest of the four life stories secondly, it is the first life story advertised as a life story of a Gypsy to be printed by a mainstream publisher (Victor Gollancz) and thirdly, the transcription method used in Boswell’s life story, makes it the most transparent.101 By transparent I mean that the co-author/transcriber, John Seymour, remains directly identifiable in the text through the “you,” “you know” and various other indications that point to another’s presence. Through these referential constructions, the reader is constantly reminded that Boswell is not alone, and subsequently that the text that the reader is reading is polyvalent in its interactional context. The other person, in this case Seymour, is therefore positioned in Boswell’s transcribed speech, and differences and similarities between the two (as individuals and/or representatives of the respective imagined groups that they align themselves with) can be subjected to interpretation. Boswell’s life story is, as I indicated in the introduction, also intimately connected, through both Boswell and Seymour, to the main source of penetrative discourses concerning “Gypsies”: The Gypsy Lore Society, the Society’s members and its textual outlet, the *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society*. The transparent effect of Seymour’s transcription method provides a model through which to analyse the two other transcribed life stories, which are transcribed

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101 According to Anne Sears, who mediated Seymour’s responses in an e-mail, Seymour did not have any particular interview technique in mind, he “just spent hours and hours engaging Boswell in conversation – asking him lots of questions, and taping it all.” Anne Sears, e-mail to author, 29 Oct. 2004.
using different transcription methods, different levels of knowledge concerning transcription and aimed at different, although interconnected markets.

The Idea Stage

The idea or the motivation behind the idea to begin the process of life story production is what characterises the idea stage. Although many people who refer to themselves using, among other terms, the signifiers “Gypsy,” “Romany” and/or “Traveller” in the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland are far from illiterate, the imagined group or groups are generally linked to oral forms of communication. For individuals who are considered to be and/or consider themselves to be unable or lacking in the constructed standards of writing and self-representation in writing, transcription is a way for a person who considers themself to be literary competent to contribute to, or intend to contribute to, an end to a particular form of silence. By transforming the spoken word into written words on a page, previously silenced or restricted voices become available for a larger audience’s various interpretations. Therefore, the idea stage of the production process is potentially deeply political. In my analysis, I will discuss the respective political and/or social environments that culminated in people being “chosen,” or in the case of Jess Smith, “choosing” to write in order to begin the practical process of life story production.

*John Seymour: “Choosing” Gordon Sylvester Boswell*

John Seymour co-authored, transcribed and edited Sylvester Gordon Boswell’s life story, *The Book of Boswell: Autobiography of a Gypsy* (1970). On the dust-sheet of *Boswell* we can see that Seymour, writing to the reader, refers to the “problem” of the Gypsies as a “highly topical one.” Seymour is, in my understanding, referring to the practical stage of the 1968 Caravan Sites Act. The Act attempted to place a duty on London Boroughs and local authorities in England and Wales to provide official sites with facilities for Gypsies. The year 1970 is significant because it was in this year that the first sites were being constructed. The timing of the production of Boswell’s life story and its acceptance by a mainstream publisher are, in my view, a direct response to a contemporary political situation, which contributed to bringing Gypsies into the public gaze, or, alternatively, the public gazing at Gypsies. Therefore, the socio-political environment provided a ripe ground for someone interested in Gypsies and their plight.
In his life story Seymour stated that he was employed by the BBC to produce both “sound programmes” and a TV programme (Where do we go from here? [1967]) about the life of Gypsies in England, and it is through these jobs that he met Boswell (I’m a Stranger 115). Therefore, according to Seymour, he knew Boswell at least two years before the life story project was initiated. Furthermore, Seymour qualified his relationship to Boswell: “I got to know one family of them, the Boswells – Gordon Sylvester Boswell and Mabel his wife, and their children and relations – so well that I still look on Gordon […] as the staunchest of my friends” (I’m a Stranger 115). Seymour, then, eight years after Boswell’s life story was published, positions himself in the discourse of the Romany Rye that I discussed in the introduction; a non-Gypsy “gentleman,” who has gained some kind of privileged access to a Gypsy family.

There are two other aspects of Seymour’s background that are relevant to the idea stage, and they are Seymour’s ideational connections to the Gypsy Lore Society and to self-sufficiency farming. Seymour wrote books concerning the theme of living off the land/self-sufficiency in the 1960s and 1970s, which corresponds to the time that Boswell’s life story was published. Furthermore, Seymour describes his links to the discursive environment of the GLS in connection with the radio programmes: “I had to read everything in English about Gypsies, and meet the members of that extraordinary body The Gypsy Lore Society, alas now defunct, as well as a great many of the more interesting or influential Gypsies in the country” (I’m a Stranger 115). And it is in the ideational grasp of the discourses of the GLS that Boswell’s life story is usually situated.

Siobhan Dowd, seemingly unaware of Seymour’s possible contribution to the life story, directly accuses Boswell of being in cahoots with the Gypsylorists:


103 GLS influences are also apparent in Manfrí Frederick Wood’s life story, In the Life of a Romany Gypsy (1973). There is much evidence to suggest that the “editor” A. Brune, a member of the GLS at the time, included GLS material into Wood’s life story. Geidt lists a few questions concerning Brune’s influence on the text in his M.A. “The Oral context of Gypsy Identity”: “Was it Brune’s idea to include the letter? If so, what other material was produced by Brune for inclusion by Wood, and where do all the cures neatly presented under headings come from? There are many old books on cures; could Brune have drawn on these?” (“The Oral Context of Gypsy Identity” 31). Also see Ian Hancock, “The Concoctors: Creating Fake Romani Culture,” in The Role of the Romanies: Images and Counter-Images of ‘Gypsies’/Romanies in European Cultures, ed. Nicholas Saul and Susan Tebbutt (Liverpool: The University of Liverpool Press, 2005) 85-97. Hancock refers to Wood’s collaborative life story as a “prime example of deliberately faked tradition” (85), and examines the sources of information that Wood and/or Brune used to construct parts of the text containing references to religion, linguistics, and origin.
He, like the Gypsylorists, seems obsessed with his family’s genealogy. He proclaims a belief in fairies, describes a childhood of freedom and rural bliss, and various fairground scams. He often professes “Wanderlust” which he cannot resist. His wife tells fortunes. In other words, his autobiography is a serving of precisely what Gypsylorists have led us to expect and what he thinks we, his non-Gypsy readers, will want to hear.\footnote{Siobhan Dowd, “Romani Writers, ‘G/gypsy’ Stereotypes, and the Forging of Romani Identity,” M.A. thesis (Greenwich University: 2001) 60. I might add here that Dowd’s Master’s Thesis is based on the analysis of poetry and her reference to Boswell’s life story is very brief. However, such an uncritical dismissal can result in the re-silencing of a previously silenced voice.}

Dowd is insightful in listing the connection between Gypsylorist themes and the content of Boswell’s life story, but uncritical in judging the book without problematizing Seymour’s part in its production. Seymour’s ideological background plays a significant role in the production process and, as I will show in the speaking stage, his influence even extends (directly and indirectly) to the transcribed content of Boswell. Seymour had a close ideational connection to the GLS, its members and its Journal, and he was an open promoter of discourses related to self-sufficiency farming, which includes an oppositional stance in relation to industry and modernisation.\footnote{Here is a selection of the many books that John Seymour has authored. The titles of Seymour’s books indicate his interest in India, Africa, forgotten arts and folklore and especially travel writing and self-sufficiency: The Hard Way to India (1953), Round about India (1955), One Man’s Africa (1956), The Fat of the Land (1961), Self Sufficiency (1973), The Complete Book of Self Sufficiency (1976), The Lore of the Land (1982), The Forgotten Arts (1984) and The Forgotten Household Arts (1987). As we see between 1961 and 1978, the year that Seymour’s life story was published, self-sufficiency was a major theme of his writing. See John Seymour, interview, Thirdway, 24 April 2005 <http://www.thirdway.org/files/articles/intseymo.html>.}

We can identify Seymour’s ecological ideas as he includes himself in his description of “neo-peasants” and “New Homesteaders” in his life story: “We were people who were consciously trying to break away from industry-dominated society and form a new kind of society – a simpler, less materialistic, less polluting, less dangerous kind, in close touch with the soil” (I’m a Stranger 25). There seems to be a degree of compatibility between Seymour’s romantically framed ecological ideology and the contradictory salvage (in a social Darwinist sense; recording before disappearance), paternal, Golden Age, racial, oriental, exotic and (internal)colonial discourses of the GLS, and many of its members and articles in its journal.\footnote{The books that Seymour refers to having read would have been for the most part, if not entirely, written by GLS members or by non-members who used GLS member’s books and/or the JGLS as their foundational sources. Seymour is no exception to this field of (pseudo)knowledge and there is evidence of this in his life story; themes concerning “true” Gypsies, lone inflected-Romani speaking knife-grinders, explicitly romantic statements concerning the Gypsies of his childhood and highly imaginative and descriptive connections to India, are typical examples. For an example of a book that has been compiled using the JGLS as an authoritative source see Brian Vesey-Fitzgerald, Gypsies of Britain: An Introduction to their History (London: Chapman and Hall, 1944). In the Acknowledgements Vesey-Fitzgerald writes, “The Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society is the treasure house in which all trustworthy knowledge of the Gypsies – not only those found in Britain but of those to be found anywhere in the world – is stored” (vii, original emphasis).}
be of no surprise whatsoever. Seymour, who initiated the production process, was looking for someone who matched the image that he had gleaned from his readings, GLS members and “the more interesting or influential Gypsies,” who I, calculatedly, assume that he was selectively directed towards.

However, if we change the focus from Seymour to Boswell, we may be able to suggest how Seymour came to “choose” Boswell. Boswell read the JGLS, he also authored an article in the Journal and, furthermore, he, and other male ancestors of his family were written about in the Journal. One of the articles written about Boswell appears as an appendix in his life story and involves a reproduction of a speech concerning the 1968 Caravan Sites Act that Boswell made at Appleby fair in 1968. Furthermore, in an endnote in Boswell, Seymour positions Boswell presiding over the fair: “The Fair was threatened with closure in 1965 by the local councils, but a deputation led by Gordon Boswell persuaded them to change their minds. Gordon Boswell now presides over the Fair, and organises it” (Boswell 191, note 34). Boswell was also a successful and financially secure scrap-dealer in Spalding, Lincolnshire at the time that his life story was published, and we do not need to look far to find Seymour’s ecological ideology involved in connections between Gypsies and scrap-dealing: “Without their services this country would rapidly be smothered in its own scrap” (Boswell 190, note 32.).

In an e-mail from John Seymour, answered through his daughter Anne Sears, Seymour indicates that he encouraged Boswell to write his life story and he would not have written it otherwise. Anne Sears, e-mail to author, 10 Feb. 2004. I make the assumption that Seymour was directed to certain Gypsies, and not others, with reference to the categories of “Gypsies” that were positioned in ideological contexts by both GLS members and Gypsies themselves. Boswell mentions a number of family names in his life story including Lee, Lock, Loveridge, Lovell, Herne, Stanley, Wood and, of course Boswell, which were regarded as “Real” Gypsies as far as the GLS was concerned. Basically, there is a historical network of families, which have been attributed the status of “Real” Gypsies. In a footnote Seymour reacts to Boswell’s description of certain “Gypsy families” as “other classes of people” (32). Seymour wrote, “By ‘other classes of people’ Gordon Boswell means people who are living the nomadic life but are not Gypsies: i.e. they have no, or little, Romany blood. They are looked down on by Gypsies. […]. The true Gypsies have not out-married very much, and families like the Lees and Boswells have kept themselves racially very pure” (183-84). Although Boswell does refer to Romanies as a “race” in his life story, in this particular example Seymour has translated, or transformed, a discussion concerning class into a racial discourse, and in doing so both utilises and sustains the discursive frame that the GLS and its members were instrumental in cementing into Gypsyology.

Boswell wrote a letter to the long-time secretary of the GLS, Dora Yates, dated the 29th of July 1965. Part of the letter was an appeal to Yates to help two people become members of the GLS. Boswell wrote, “I left my last two copies of the GLS with […] to read.” Also see Appendix II, III and IV in Boswell (175-80), which are extracts from the JGLS from 1890 and 1892 (Boswell’s grandfather, Sylvester ‘Wester’ Boswell), and 1968 (Boswell). Also see Gordon Sylvester Boswell, “Wester Boswell’s Medal,” The Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society 3rd ser. 34, 3-4 (1953).

In his life story, Seymour makes the connection between the environment and Gypsies more clear-cut: “There is much talk by ‘environmentalists’ these days of the need for ‘recycling’. Well, Gypsy scrap-dealers and totters (rag collectors) have been doing nothing else for years. Our countryside would be covered in junk if Gypsy scrappers didn’t come along and clear it up, often paying good prices for it, and take it to the steel mills to be recycled (I’m a Stranger 119-20, original parentheses).
courses exuding from the authoritative GLS, was attracted to one of the few lights (Boswell) that matched both the practicality of the life story project and its ideological parameters. Boswell was sedentary, which made him more suitable as a life story subject than other more (commercially) mobile Gypsies; he had the right surname and family credentials; and his political activities concerning the Caravan Sites Act and Appleby Fair connected him to both the salvage/traditional side and the potentially progressive side of Gypsy politics. Moreover, Boswell was involved in what Seymour interpreted as environmentally friendly work, which appealed to him. Actually, the “choice” was not very much of a choice at all; Boswell possessed a great deal of “Gypsy” capital and was translated as having ecological capital in Seymour’s world. We can extend the idea of “choice” to all three transcribed life stories, as it was the co-authors/transcribers who did the choosing, and the choosing was based on what they were looking for.

Anna Farmar: The Politics of “Choosing” and Helping Yourself

The selection of Nan Joyce as a life story subject has its ideational beginnings in Traveller politics. Joyce stood as a candidate in the General Election of late 1982 on a Travellers’ rights ticket in Dublin and was then involved in an all-Traveller activist group called Mincéir Misli (Traveller Go) (My Life 109, 118). On the back cover of Traveller we also read that Anna Farmar was “Communications Officer for Self Help, the organisation for Third World self help development” at the time that Traveller (1985) (re-printed as My Life on the Road [2000])) was published, which positions Joyce as an even more attractive life story subject for Farmar. In chapter 13, the last chapter of My life, which acts as a two-page summary of Joyce’s hopes, concerns and opinions in connection with Traveller politics and inter-group relations, we find a reference that indicates Farmar’s presence: “Our own group, Mincéir Misli, is working for travellers rights and we have help from settled people and priests and nuns who want us to help ourselves – not to be doing things for us – and that’s another great change” (118). The passage, on the last page of My Life, is a direct indicator of Farmar’s presence in the interview situation as interlocutor. Instead of “charitable” help, that can be based on unwelcome sympathy, self-help, or help in helping yourself, was the order of the day, and Joyce was one of the most visible Travellers seen exercising this new “right.” In my interpretation, the “choice” that Farmar made was guided by her own ideas concerning the social and political situation of Travellers in Ireland, and Joyce was the embodiment of the principles of
the dominant group’s self-help movement. As we see from the passage, there are “nuns” and “priests” involved in the self-help work. And although there is no question of any need to convert Joyce to Catholicism, as she is already a catholic, the aim with self-help, as it is involved on a discursive/ideological level with the State and the States settlement program, is to bring Travellers, through their own efforts, in towards acceptable forms of living; not on the side of a road or “nomadic.” Joyce comments on the pressure to settle and a preferred way of living in *My Life*: “We shouldn’t be bullied to settle down. I would love a house in the wintertime but I’d like to be free to go off if I took it into my head maybe to go to Belfast for a couple of months” (118). In other words, Joyce shows defiance in the face of the dominant discourse of settlement, thus positioning herself in a resistance narrative, and expresses a desire for a compromise on her own terms.

As with Boswell’s life story there are both personal (ideological) and professional factors that led to a representative of a silenced group being given the opportunity to speak to a potentially wider audience. However, Joyce herself (like Boswell) was not particularly silent, as she must have been one of the most recognisable and visible Travellers at the time; she had appeared on television several times in connection with the General Election, and after the election, on a more controversial note, in the newspapers. Another member of Joyce’s family was also involved in the production process of a book about Travellers. Joyce’s aunt, Nan Donohoe, was one of the informants in *Tinkers and Travellers*, which won the Book of the Year Award in Ireland in 1976. Joyce portrays herself as an unwilling contributor to a publicity event for the book and depicts herself gaining insights into the political possibilities of the media (*My Life* 83). Joyce states (talking to Farmar) that

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111 Anna Farmar describes her own interest in Joyce: “I became interested in Nan Joyce for several reasons. First, I had been aware of the Travellers as an oppressed minority group (I was interested in development issues) and Nan had become prominent as an activist she was a candidate in the general election of 1983 and was an articulate spokesperson for Travellers’ rights” (original parentheses). Anna Farmar, e-mail to author, 29 Sept. 2003.

112 According to Joyce, she was interviewed for the *Late Late Show*; a popular live television programme (*My life* 101). Joyce also depicts herself being the subject of a programme for the BBC (*My Life* 109-10), and two excerpts from newspaper articles accompany a story concerning Joyce’s arrest in chapter 12 of *My Life* (111-16).


114 The American woman was Sharon Gmelch, whose writings concerning Irish Travellers have been linked to a reconnection to the culture of poverty theory that I discussed in the introduction (see Helleiner 11-12), also transcribed Nan Donohoe’s (Joyce’s aunt) life story: see Sharon Gmelch, *Nan: The Life of an Irish Travelling Woman*, Prospect Heights, Waveland Press, 1986. In the preface of *Nan*, Gmelch makes a few very distinct statements: “Irish Travellers are fundamentally similar to other members of Irish Society; they are white, English-speaking, Roman Catholic, and native to Ireland […]. They are poor and powerless and therefore constitute no economic or political threat. Yet they are pariahs (Nan 15). There is no problematization of national and/or colonial politics in Gmelch’s statements and she communicates directly with the culture of poverty theory, thus positioning all Travellers in a stereotypical and static construction as “powerless” and “poor.”
an American woman was doing a book on the travellers and getting publicity for it on the Late Late Show. She asked my aunt, Nan Donohue, to go on the show with her and my aunt asked me to go along for company. When my aunt saw all the lights and cameras where Gay Byrne was, she got cold feet and shoved me on instead – I’d only come to watch. (My Life 83)

In My Life Joyce also commented on her own history of talking back, and her realisation of the power of the media: “Ever since I was very young I’ve been speaking up, I was always the one to give back cheek, I wasn’t afeared of what would happen but it’s only since I went on television and got things in newspapers that I got my voice heard” (My Life 83). A reasonable assumption, then, would be that previous and positively interpreted experiences concerning media coverage in combination with Joyce’s political objectives at the time of Farmar’s initial approach, would favour the initialisation of the life story project. And, even though Farmar inherited a power position, as initiator of the life story and “chooser” of the life story subject, there are indications that strongly suggest that Joyce was aware of its political potential. In Cobbles on the other hand, Martin King, a co-author of Stockins’ life story, explained the initiation of the life story process in less political terms.

Martin King and Martin Knight: “Choosing” a Fighter, Discovering a Gypsy

According to Martin King, his initial interest in Jimmy Stockins was his reputation as a prize-fighter and not his Gypsy background (Cobbles 194). Stockins’ subjectivity as a Gypsy did become important for the book as the subtitle, The Life of a Bare-knuckle Gypsy Warrior, suggests but his life story was initiated in response, and in relation to, a growing genre of fighting books. King and Martin Knight co-authored two books about football hooliganism and terrace culture, and King, besides being an editor and writer, was an ex-member of the Chelsea Headhunters; a group of football fans associated with violence on football terraces. According to King, the initial contact with Stockins was arranged through a boxing trainer, and was characterized by caution and suspicion. King writes that Stockins’ cousin, Joe Smith

115 Joyce comments on a perceived change in media coverage concerning Travellers: “And today the newspapers and the radio and television are fair to us” (118).
116 The genre of fighting books also includes King of the Gypsies: Memoirs of the Undefeated Bareknuckle Champion of Great Britain and Ireland, the life story of Bartley Gorman and co-authored by Peter Walsh. Gorman refers to himself as an Irish Traveller.
had to be reassured that King and Knight were not “some sort of journalist or something, about to sell us down the river” (Cobbles 193). The degree of suspicion that King depicts himself and Knight being met with can be seen as a result of the internalisation of previous relations (experience) between “gorgers” (“non-Gypsies”) and the imagined group that Stockins aligns himself with: “With gorgers, we start off by assuming they are all out to do us down in some way, unless proved otherwise” (Cobbles 127). Based on the above discussion concerning the problematics of Knight and King’s descriptions of themselves gaining access to Stockins, it is clear that King and Knight initiated the life story, but the actual meeting was on Cousin Joe’s and Stockins’ terms. Gaining access to Stockins was a matter of checking credentials (capital) and resulted in a shift in power relations, because King and Knight had to be approved as “good gorgers.” However, there is also a further interpretation of King’s description of the procedure involved in gaining access to Stockins, and that is that the difficulty described creates the impression that the reader is gaining some kind of privileged insight into the life of a “fighter” and a “Gypsy.”

If we now change focus to Stockins’ motivations for accepting King and Knight’s proposition, we find them more difficult to assess, because the motivations expressed in Cobbles were most probably formulated during the process of life story production. However, in the epilogue King quotes Stockins communicating with a, for Stockins, new form of intergenerational transmission: “When I’m gone there will be something there. Something my children and their children can read” (199). Other motivations articulated by Stockins are listed in the preface: a hope that the book gives respect to “Gypsy warriors,” an insight into the sport of bare-knuckle fighting and a glimpse of what being a contemporary Gypsy is about (7). As we see, Stockins’ stated motivations are, or became, synchronized with King and Knight’s motivations for initiating the project and the book’s frame narrative: fighting, Stockins’ subjectivity as a Gypsy, and a reading public interested in the fighting-book genre, which includes a specific interest in the historically nurtured resistance narratives of “underworld”

118 According to King, Joe Smith checked King’s credentials by visiting a friend of King’s in prison. The friend knew King from his football days. Smith also checked Knight’s credentials by talking with family members that lived in the same area as Knight did (Cobbles 193).

119 Stockins consolidates the sentiment of initial distrust and suspicion by referring to collective/personal experiences with representatives of officialdom: “But the people we learn to distrust, with no ifs and buts, are the gavvers, the Old Bill, the police. My earliest memories of them are when we’d pull onto a bit of land and they would come along with the farmer to persuade us to move on. Then they’d be back, escorting some geezer in a suit from the courts or the council, serving an eviction notice. We could see that our parents were cross and harassed and we immediately saw the police as the people who were trying to stop us living our traditional lives” (Cobbles 127-28).

120 King notes an ironic twist to Stockins’ statement, as Stockins realises that he would have to make sure that his kids can read and write to be able to read his book (199).
themes that I articulated in the introduction. If Stockins’ proposed motivations for recording his life story were pointing towards the present and the future, the story that Jess Smith used for framing her motivations for writing her life story would indicate a need, and an interrelational struggle to record the past in the present.

**Jess Smith: Problematic Relations and Relational Motivations**

*Jessie’s Journey*, the first part of Jess Smith’s life story, is dedicated to Smith’s father Charles Riley and, according to Smith, it reflects her father’s wishes to print his experiences:

> As a boy my father suffered hardship beyond any understanding. He witnessed rapes and murders and saw a rawness toward travellers that imprinted on his mind. When he grew old all he wanted to do was write about those times, tell the world. But his family members stopped him even trying to have him certified and locked away. His lungs were weak and along with a broken spirit he went to his grave never having seen his work published [. . .].

As we see, Smith projects the idea that she is fulfilling her father’s desires by writing, and Smith’s use of the present tense, while replying to a question that I asked concerning the dedication of *JJ* to her father, would seem to suggest that she continues to write with her father in mind, albeit not predominantly consciously: “Perhaps in a way I write for him as well as myself.” Imprinted in Smith’s story of her father’s wish to write, and her own motivation to write, is an accumulative and relational need to tell. However, telling one’s life story is not an individual act and inevitably includes others on many levels. Furthermore, including others in a life story has moral and ethical connotations.

While discussing her father’s side of the family in her life story, Smith states, “[all] of the Riley clan (except Daddy) eventually integrated into the settled community and gave up the Travelling life for good” (*JJ* 1, original parentheses). We can see that Smith positions her father and his relatives inhabiting different positions in relation to the “settled community,” and thus Smith’s story concerning her father’s wish to tell involves a discourse of selfishness and betrayal. Smith also portrays many of her sisters opposing the publication of her life story: “I had many negative reactions from six of my seven precious sisters.” I will continue the discussion of the ethical and relational problems of life story writing in the speaking stage, however, a similar struggle between not telling and needing to tell is evident in the Prologue of *JJ*.

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121 Jess Smith, e-mail to author, 12 Nov. 2003 (2).
122 Jess Smith, e-mail to author, 12 Nov. 2003 (2).
123 Jess Smith, e-mail to author, 12 Nov. 2003 (1).
In the Prologue Smith communicates with the perceived results of a combination of social change and assimilatory processes on Traveller “culture”:

The ways of my people, their language, culture and livelihoods, are with each passing moment vanishing off the face of the earth. […] Although regarded by many as Scotland’s outcasts, travelling people are as true to her soil as the roots of the heather. I proudly cleave to these roots, and preserve her culture and traditions. (ix-x)

We can see that Smith gives herself the authority to speak on behalf of the “travelling people” and communicates with national, post-colonial and salvage discourses. The Education Welfare Officer and Co-founder of the Scottish Gypsy Traveller Association, Willie Reid, expands on the connection between post-colonialism, Travellers and “folklore”:

The interest in Gypsies/Travellers came from the School of Scottish Studies and the Folk Revival. This focus on our community was not with the intention of studying Gypsy/Traveller identity but came from a search to discover Scottish identity and roots. The oral tradition found among Scottish Gypsies/Travellers represented an ancient oral form that was thought to be “authentically Scottish.”(Scottish Gypsy/Travellers 33, original emphases)

Reid positions (semi)academic interest in Travellers in the context of the two italicised words. According to Reid’s post-colonial narrative, Travellers had preserved a Scottish heritage that was, as envisaged by Scottish nationalists, lost during the years of colonisation by the English. The folk revival (beginning in the 1950s) in Scotland resulted in an increased level of interest in Travellers and their stories, but not, as Reid indicates, in Travellers themselves. As I explained in the introduction, one of the personalities connected to the Edinburgh School of Scottish Studies (founded 1950), Hamish Henderson, recorded many Traveller’s voices from the 1960s onwards. Smith positions herself as a willing advocate of the post-colonial narrative, and, in an e-mail, mentioned that Henderson was waiting to publish her father’s work.

If we were to summarize Smith’s depictions of the problems involved in life story writing, we might characterise them by words like need, desire, prevention and restriction. However, I would also link life writing to the maintenance of subjectified history:

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124 The School of Scottish Studies is a part of Edinburgh University.
125 I have presented Reid’s view of the interest in Travellers in Scotland as a post-colonial narrative and followed his use of words. I would however question the use of words like “community,” which suggests a homogenous unity rather than an imagined group linked by a heterogenous diversity of views and outlooks. “Oral tradition” is also a problematic concept as traditions are constructed in the wake of particular political interests. Therefore the interest shown by the School of Scottish Studies probably helped to form the idea of a tradition of storytelling and gave people pride in telling stories. Jess Smith is an example of a Traveller becoming a storyteller and fulfilling a demand for storytelling, which was nurtured by the interest created by the post-colonial narrative.
126 Jess Smith, e-mail to author, 12 Nov. 2003 (1). Smith states, “he went to his grave never having seen his work published although Hamish Henderson from The school of Scottish Studies was awaiting it.”
From as far back as I can recall those days in the bus never left me. As night followed
day I kept alive those times with my sisters and parents in that small, secluded space.
Sad times, happy ones, unbelievable and wonderful memories kept reliving themselves
in my head until I knew without a shadow of a doubt I ‘would write a book.’

The “reliving” of memories that Smith describes is representative of the ways in which the
habitus forms and re-produces its generative force in locations and emotional attachments to
such locations. In Smith’s case, the central signifying and permanent environment is a blue
bus, which she spent her most formative years living in. JJ is also framed by the period (up to
Smith’s 15th year) that Smith, her parents and sisters lived in the blue bus.

If we leave JJ and focus on the second part of Smith’s life story, Tales, we can see that
Smith’s story concerning her motivations to write are expressed in terms of freedom (at a
price) rather than restraint: “When I sat down to write Tales all those previous threats were
buried, sisters now disowned me freeing me to continue. This wonderful sense of liberation
freed my hand to complete Tales in under five months.” A closer analysis of Smith’s words
suggests that Smith does not actually describe herself being “disowned” by her sisters in her
story. She portrays herself continuing to write despite her sisters’ disapproval and therefore
she “chooses“ to alienate herself in order to write. However, Tales has also a similar founda-
tion to JJ, as Smith divulges: “The Scottish Arts Council gave me a grant to reassert and in-
clude many stories heading to the graveyard.” Again, Smith communicates with the salvage
discourse and depicts herself using the grant to resist a process of homeostasis. Furthermore,
Smith portrays herself using the grant from The Scottish Arts Council to re-member her own
personal stories by “visiting woods and beaches we’d lived as children, a sort of bringing
alive.” Re-creating or re-membering the past can also be conceptualised as a phenomenon
linked to the contemporary structures of thought in habitus or subjectified history. And, as
remembering is a reflection of the remembering subject’s present, and therefore also involves
forgetting, the context of the telling becomes significant. The significance of context is the
main theme of my analyses of the speaking stage.

127 Jess Smith, e-mail to author, 8 Nov. 2003.
128 Jess Smith, e-mail to author, 11 Nov. 2003.
130 Jess Smith, e-mail to author, 03 Dec. 2003.
The Speaking Stage

As the title suggests, the speaking stage is the part of the production process in which the spoken word is the primary form of communication. In the case of transcribed life stories the character of communication between the interviewer(s) and interviewee(s) depends on the depth and nature of the relationship that they develop, the agendas that they take into the interview situation(s), and their respective social positions and perceptions of those positions contra others. I will focus on the respective texts and the way the life story subject speaks through and positions the other person or persons in the process of speaking. As far as Smith’s life story is concerned, I will investigate the relational trajectory of Smith’s story with reference to her sisters and discuss issues concerning assimilation and the relational ethics of life story writing.

Gordon Sylvester Boswell and John Seymour: Interpretation and Ambiguity

If there was any doubt concerning Seymour’s presence during the recording of Boswell’s voice in the production process, we would only have to evaluate the evidence in the text itself. While attempting to authenticate a World War I memory, Boswell projects Seymour as a physical and almost visual presence: “And of course this was going now into the beginning of 1916, and the Cavalry Division moved back again to Albert and I remember the sixteenth of July as well as you’re sitting there, when the cavalry charge happened” (72-73, my emphasis). In my discussion of the relationship between Boswell and Seymour, I will find Seymour in the main text of Boswell and provide insights into the plurality of the “I,” problematize interpretation and analyse the differences evidenced in the discursive positioning of the two people involved.

In the idea stage I discussed Seymour’s ideological background in terms of his self-sufficiency farming and ideational connections with the GLS. And, if a deeper knowledge of Seymour’s background was not available, the following passage from Boswell would be difficult to interpret

I knew very little when I left school. Because I’m more or less a self-educated man. Through trying to be in business, do some booking, carry a pocket-book, pencil and paper, write a letter – I think it’s beautiful. I’ve achieved something. Yet I can’t do it properly, a hundred per cent. But it’s brought me a long way up for people of your education,
and other people’s education, to listen to me. And I’m satisfied if they call me an odd character. It’ll do me. (92, my emphasis)

As we see, Boswell separates Seymour’s education from “other people’s education,” and in lieu of our knowledge of Seymour’s background, we can suggest a more calculated interpretation, and assume that Boswell is aware of Seymour’s self-sufficiency ideology. Furthermore, after discussing his father’s travelling routes, Boswell communicates with Seymour’s ideology and provides further insights into the ambiguities of interpretation:

These counties I have mentioned, Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex, Cambridgeshire and Lincolnshire, being sparsely populated in the past, and mostly agricultural, would be the most suitable for living off the “fat of the land” as the saying goes, I mean rabbits, hares, game, and the birds, and the hotchi (hedgehogs). (170, original emphasis and parentheses [by Seymour])

Self-sufficiency farming can be said to be living off the ‘fat of the land,’ but the significance of the saying is that Seymour wrote a popular book entitled The Fat of the Land in 1961. As we see, rather than interpreting Boswell’s words in terms of nearness to nature and the positioning of Gypsies in their “natural” place in rural England, Boswell is speaking through (and with) his knowledge of Seymour and adapting the trajectory of his speech to suit. The words “I mean” in the passage signal a difference between notions of “living off the ‘fat of the land’,,” and suggest that the difference is Seymour’s self-sufficiency contra Boswell’s hunting perspective. We can also wonder why Seymour decided to emphasize the words. Did he do this because they were of special significance to him?

A further example of interpretational ambiguity becomes apparent as Boswell discusses his childhood: “We had marvellous times. Never any children today or the past forty years even up to the’14 War – no children was born that since then ever had the times we had as children. We lived so close to nature. We didn’t want any plastic toys” (29). The temptation would be to directly discuss “closeness to nature” in direct relation to romantic discourses (which it also is), whereas the close vicinity of the words “nature” and “plastic” point towards Seymour’s “green” ideological background, and are, as I would suggest, a result of Seymour’s presence in the interview situation. Basically, any reference to nature or romanticising the past in Boswell would have to be interpreted with the dialogic and relational context of the interview situation in mind.

In the introduction, I positioned George Borrow (1803-1881) and his writings synthesizing various dominant discourses (romanticism, the civilizing mission and travel and rogue literature). In his life story, Seymour mentioned his involvement with travel writing and Bor-
row, the Victorian travel writer: “I made one series of sound programmes by getting myself to Llangollen, in North Wales, and following on foot the route taken a hundred odd years before by George Borrow, after which he wrote that incomparable travel book: *Wild Wales*” (*I'm a Stranger* 106). 132 Seymour’s primary interest in *Wild Wales* (1862) was to follow Borrow’s route and to revisit the contours of the countryside that he described, but Borrow also wrote other books, *The Zincali, or an Account of the Gypsies in Spain* (1841), *Lavengro* (1851), *The Romany Rye* (1857) and *Romano Lavo-Lil* (1873). All five books include Gypsy themes, and it would be difficult to believe that Seymour read *Wild Wales* so intently, but not Borrow’s other books. In the following passage from Seymour’s life story, we can see aspects of the extension of Borrow’s romanticism and exoticism in Seymour’s portrayal of a childhood meeting with Gypsies:

I remember, as a little Gaujo child living in the Manor House of an Essex village, walking along a lane with my nanny and suddenly seeing an encampment of Gypsies. They looked so impossibly romantic that they gave me a strange feeling of yearning (to go off with them), amazement (that there should be such beings in our civilized, settled, world), and wonder. (*I'm a Stranger* 117, original parentheses)

Seymour communicates with discourses of desire and distance, as he positions “they” as intruders in “our” world. We can also evaluate that Seymour is a rather privileged child and the class (or “race”) difference is cemented by Seymour’s inclusion of the manor house and nanny. A passage in *Boswell* concerning the “old English gentry” also leads us to pose the question; how often and how much had they discussed each other’s pasts before and during the production process?

More often than not, when the old English gentry were living the lives of which they have been deprived since times have changed, Mother would have given to her many things that would surprise people today, such as chicken, hams, venison and game of all sorts – besides having done business at the same house or hall. (*Boswell* 21)

There is no doubt that Boswell’s transcribed speech is involved in and communicating with his knowledge of Seymour in complex ways and, as I discussed in the idea stage and the introduction, the themes of the Gypsy Lore Society, of which George Borrow’s influence is a

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132 In his life story Seymour comments on his travels and states that he “spent most of my life travelling in such countries as Damaraland, Ethiopia, Barotseland and Sri Lanka” (9), and notes that “[i]n Ceylon I have frequently seen bands of people – so obviously Gypsies that they would not have looked out of place at Appleby Fair – travelling the country with portable huts made of cadjan, or woven coconut fronds, loaded on donkeys” (116-17). In another travel experience, Seymour creates an essentialist discourse linked to a “Gypsy” occupation: “Riding through the Punjab once I came upon a large band of them, encamped outside a big Jat village, with a train of perhaps two dozen ox carts to carry their belongings. The men were smiths, and were working busily at primitive forges doing all the blacksmith work for the village” (116).
relevant factor, complicates the interpretational possibilities and further pluralizes the narrating I in the text of *Boswell*.

However, we can also see from the transcribed text that Boswell relates to Seymour, which provides us with a possibility to assess the differences between the two and not just the ideational conflations. In the following passage, which follows a discussion of Boswell’s “fight” with the army after his discharge, a social gap seems to reveal itself:

> And I may as well tell you that from the day of my discharge I’ve had many a fight, and I’ve won them all, but I’ve tried to defend myself in persecution. I’ve lived through it, and I’ve got through it – and I’ve conquered something! I have conquered it to such an extent that I’m accepted by you, and I am satisfied that I have achieved something in my life and I am at peace with myself. (92, original emphasis, by Seymour)

Boswell illustrates the ambiguities concerned in multi-directional and ever-ongoing assimilation processes; Boswell describes himself being “accepted” by Seymour, but what does this acceptance actually mean? Does it mean that Boswell has adopted dominant group norms and conventions to “such an extent” that he considers himself to have become accepted, which could bring a degree of contextual liberation, or does he consider himself to have been accepted because he has aligned himself with dominant discourses relating to what a Gypsy *should* be and how a Gypsy *should* think, which could be potentially imprisoning? We can see that Boswell positions Seymour as the other, which is a distinct indication that there are unresolved tensions between the two as perceived representatives of different imagined groups/classes. Seymour’s transparent transcription method provides an excellent tool for finding Seymour in Boswell’s transcribed words, but in *My Life* Farmar is much more difficult to find, and we find the reason for Farmar’s lack of visibility in the parameters of Farmar’s “choice” of Joyce as life story subject.

*Nan Joyce and Anna Farmar: Falling into Position*

The effects of the relationship between Nan Joyce and Anna Farmar in the speaking stage of the production process of *My Life (Traveller)* is much more difficult to assess than in *Boswell*. Farmar’s transcription method left very few direct indications of her own presence in the transcribed text and I have few biographical details with which to provide a wider insight into the collaboration between the two. However, in the following passage, extracted from a story concerning the police and some savings, Farmar is referred to on a point of behaviour: “The guards counted the money – you know the way you throw money into a drawer without
counting it, I didn’t know how much was there” (81). You can almost imagine Farmar nodding her head in order to acknowledge the generality of Joyce’s actions.

Due to Joyce’s political activist profile, we can assume that any discussions concerning Travellers’ rights would be discussed from different viewpoints and class perspectives. Farmar’s comments on the nature of Joyce’s speech can also be conceptualised as revealing a possible re-routing of the ideational content: “Of course, she would ramble as she narrated, go off on tangents, lose her thread, as everybody does. And I would ask her to explain, expand, clarify details etc etc.”

Although explaining, clarifying and expanding on points in a spoken life story interview are largely unavoidable, the points that are to be expanded upon, explained and clarified are points that the interlocutor is interested in (on the reader’s or life story subject’s behalf). Furthermore, the formulation of questions can inadvertently re-frame a narratives trajectory into another person’s worldview and value system, which can have a positive effect for the reception of the text, but can also add a subtle slice of ideational violence. One effect of the perception and use of a class perspective can be assessed from the text of *My Life* and provides an instance of contextual dissonance in the main text. We can also see that the connection to the self-help theme that I discussed in the idea stage re-emerges.

Farmar inserted a newspaper article in the main text of *My Life* concerning Joyce’s participation in a Human Rights seminar. The article from *The Irish Times* and dated the 18th June 1983 is situated within a story with the same subject matter. In the story, Joyce comments on her own contribution as a spokesperson for her workshop group: “We were supposed to speak for five minutes but I went on and on I said I thought it was great to help foreign countries and the poor hungry children of the world and the outcasts but first we should look at our own doorstep and do something about our own people” (116). The problem with the passage and the rest of the seminar story in *My Life* is that Joyce does not mention Travellers, although the words “we should look at our own doorstep” insinuate it. The insertion of the article is, in my interpretation, an example of Farmar helping to position Joyce/Travellers in the sphere of self-help politics. The reporter of the article also quotes Joyce positioning herself in the dialogue concerning self-help: “‘You people are very concerned about the Third World. I think you should also be concerned about us, we are the Fourth World’” (116). Joyce locates and positions Travellers as an underclass in Ireland and in doing so places herself/Travellers in the inferior and disempowered, albeit potentially empowering, position in the dominant discourse.

133 Anna Farmar, e-mail to the author, 29 Sept. 2003.
The article also relates the effect of Joyce’s speech, “Mrs Joyce had an extraordinary impact on the seminar, receiving more applause than anyone else who presented reports,” which stands in stark contrast to Joyce’s report on her own performance: “I’m sure there were people angry over what I said to them but it doesn’t matter how well educated you are you have to be told” (My Life 116). Obviously, the two interpreters’ pre-dispositions were configured to interpret and re-present the events at the seminar in different ways; Joyce predicts people’s anger, whereas the reporter saw her contribution as a triumph. The article’s and Joyce’s versions of events compliment each other and create dissonance, but both articles also serve to emphasise and consolidate social difference and class distinctions. Furthermore, by embracing the space available in the dominant discourse, Joyce can speak and be listened to, but she also fixes and reserves a space for Travellers in both a world and internal national hierarchy. Furthermore, any Traveller that does not fit the “poor underclass category” is distanced from the imagined group in dominant discourse. Jane Helleiner comments on the constructed difference between Travellers and “Traders”:

[T]he label of “trader,” which was first introduced into official discourse in the late 1970s, served to exclude more mobile and prosperous (as evidenced by their new vans and ornate caravans as well as by the value of goods they traded) families from the definition of Travellers, thereby allowing the latter to continue to be equated in dominant discourse with poverty and a need for settlement. (Irish Travellers 157)

Both the article and Joyce’s transcribed words create a discursive trap that fixes Travellers in a power definition that includes the labels “poor” and “needy,” and which serve to confirm the dominant group’s settlement program for Travellers. Anyone who falls outside the definition is removed from the constructed and imagined category and classified in another. Unlike the double-voiced discourse of the stories of Joyce’s seminar participation, the dissonance in the speaking stage of Stockins’ life story is caused by the configuration of the interview situation(s) and the amount of bodies present.

134 Helleiner is paraphrasing a point made by social worker Mervyn Ennis, “Twenty Years a Social Worker,” Paper presented to the Irish Association of Social workers, 31 Mar. – Apr. 1, 1984. Also see Dáil Eireann, “Diaspoireachtaí Parlaimeintte: Parliamentary Debates,” 492.5, (17 June 1998), 18 Nov. 2005 <http://www.gov.ie/debates-98/17jun98/dl170698.PDF>. During a debate concerning the Housing (Traveller accommodation) Bill in 1998, a debater suggests that the discourses concerning “genuine” Travellers and Traders should be separated in the “public mind”: “We must distinguish the needs of travelling traders from those of other traveller families. Travelling traders generally travel in large groups and often leave large amounts of refuse and great ill feeling behind in their wake. They cause great distress among local people as members of local authorities will confirm. We should address this matter in the bill with effective sanctions such as seizure of vehicles. This may sound draconian but we must establish our commitment to genuine traveller families and separate them in the public mind from travelling traders” (1028-29). The traders fall outside the constructed category of “genuine Travellers” because of their superior material wealth in relation to “genuine Travellers,” who should be for the most part poor and in need of housing. Can this be seen as a modelling effect of the culture of poverty theory?
Jimmy Stockins, Martin King and Martin Knight: Conflating and Separating Voices

The collaborative nature of On the Cobbles differs in significant ways from the two previous life stories. The preface, which was supposedly written on Stockins’ behalf and in Stockins’ words, provides an insight into the configuration of the collaborative project: “[T]his book is my story. My words. The two Martins have put them in the right order for me, encouraged me to remember people, incidents and times. They’ve put it all together from hour on hour of conversations with me, my family and my friends” (Cobbles 7). As we see, Cobbles could be referred to as an auto/biography that combines both Stockins’ life story and the opinions and stories of others. However, the speaking stage of Cobbles is also much more complicated than Boswell and My Life. In the Epilogue Martin King stated that the conversations with Stockins were taped in weekly interviews at Stockins’ house and in relatively chaotic conditions. King also noted that after an interview session

I’d get home and play the tape and find it was totally intelligible as Wally and Joe bantered with one another whilst Johnny Frankham told a story to Martin. Only now and then did you hear Jim, who would wait patiently for a lull in the cacophony to answer a question I had put to him earlier. (Cobbles 194)

According to King’s admission, various amounts of life story material were unavailable for transcription, and the material that was available was fragmentary. Furthermore, as the interviews were characterised by a conflation of many voices (predominantly male), the other people present would inevitably, affect the topics, trajectories and content of stories. Elinor Ochs and Lisa Capps comment on the configuration of speech acts as they discuss the possible contribution of significant others in conversational narratives:

Family members dive onto one another’s narratives even when they have no direct experience of or privileged access to the events, in part because they do usually have background knowledge concerning the protagonists or the events and in part because they have the right to intervene as a family member.135

Although King presents the people in the interview situation speaking separately, the reference to Stockins’ delay in answering a question insinuates that the question triggered an array of speech acts. Ochs and Capps also state, “similar funds of background knowledge and rights to narratively intervene obtain in other relationships, for example, among friends and close

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colleagues” (Living Narrative 8). In the case of Cobbles, then, we can assume that the movement from spoken word to a coherent transcribed text was more challenging.

Moreover, besides Stockins, two other people take up autobiographical space in Cobbles: Cousin Joe and Toucher, a friend. Cousin Joe Smith, a former professional golfer, (re)tells his life story in chapter 10 and Toucher is allowed to (re)tell his story in chapter 7. King also describes Joe Smith’s story being recorded in difficult conditions with two families and their children in King’s house during the recording (Cobbles 194). However, King can be found in the text of Cobbles and gives us some insight into the configuration of power relations between the main people involved.

In King’s depiction of the dialogue between King, Knight and Stockins we can see how Stockins is positioned in an authoritative role, but then agrees to be overruled: “He insisted from the start that if he said something was true, and it was, then it could go in the book. Indeed, there were times when we suggested to him that certain episodes should remain in his memory. ‘Up to you boys, but it’s true,’ he would shrug” (Cobbles 194). We can interpret King and Knight’s proposed censoring of the content of Stockins’ life story as a reflection of a deeper awareness concerning the written word’s permanence, and a constructed tradition of life stories being linked to confessions and notions of “truth.” However, in the preface we find a legitimising statement from Stockins, which tends to deflate any notions of paternalistic tendencies on the behalf of King and Knight: “[e]very bit has been read back to me, until I am happy that’s the way it was, the best I can remember it.” Basically, whatever King and Knight did suggest for censorship, and despite the notion that their actions contradicted Stockins’ initial insistence concerning truth-claims, the people involved did agree on the content of Cobbles.

Furthermore, from the text of Cobbles, we can see a link between the written word and Stockins’ insistence on telling the “truth.” In a discussion concerning an incident with three boys and his brother Wally, and a subsequent newspaper article, Stockins tells how the reporting of the whole incident was twisted: “An article in it told how a single local boy had been ambushed by a ‘gang’ of gypsies and beaten senseless with his own bicycle” (60). On the same page Stockins makes a general statement concerning the reportage of their arrival at new stopping places:

Whenever we stopped somewhere new, there would be stuff in the local paper about us. It was normally pictures of the piles of rubbish we had made, although, more often than

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136 Smith tells mostly about his fighting, boxing and golfing experiences. Smith describes his story as being part of Traveller folklore (117), and the story concerns Toucher’s skills with a catapult and muscular bouncers.
not, this was scrap which the men had collected and you can be damned sure were going
to sell. These pictures were accompanied by stories of cats going missing (I suppose the
implication was we were eating them) and other terrible but unsubstantiated crimes. (60,
original parentheses, by King and Knight)

From Stockins’ interpretations of the media’s bias traits, we can sense a need to control
the content of his story and to set some of the misconceptions and myths concerning “Gypsy
behaviour” straight. We can see one example of Stockins’ wanting to correct a possible mis-
conception in Stockins’ juxtaposition of bare-knuckle fighting and football hooliganism, and
within this discussion we can also identify King’s presence.

As I mentioned in the idea stage, King was a member of the Chelsea Headhunters, which
involves associations with football fans and hooliganism, and had written books concerning
football and the terraces. We can also assume that King and Knight informed Stockins of their
involvement with publishing in order to provide themselves with credentials before the initia-
tion of the project with Stockins. In the following passage we see that Stockins juxtaposes the
central theme of Cobbles with the central theme of King’s other books:

I fought for honour on the whole. I can’t understand why anyone would fight purely for
fun or when their opponent isn’t more equally matched, or both parties are up for it.
Take football hooligans. What is that all about? Grown men running around in gangs,
kicking each other senseless. Knifing people who have done nothing to them or their
families – people they have never seen before and will never see again. That’s beyond
me. And it’s not as if they’re all going through their teenage or young-man aggressive
phase. I’ve met some of these blokes who are middle-aged, overweight men in their for-
ties. (190-91)

Without any knowledge of King’s past we could interpret Stockins’ apparent inability to
grasp the mentality of a football hooligan as an attempt to differentiate bare-knuckle boxing
from mindless violence. However, if we know about the football context of King’s past, in-
terpretations become ambiguous. Did Stockins say this because he was looking for an expla-
nation from a “middle-aged” ex-football hooligan? Did Stockins choose to juxtapose his
fighting with other forms because of King’s presence, or because of previous tensions be-
tween himself and King? Was Stockins projecting some form of anger that he had accumu-
lated earlier that day or week onto King? As we see, the inclusion of context multiplies the
interpretational possibilities. If we were to create a common denominator between Stockins
and King we could say that both were involved in unusual activities (bare-knuckle boxing and
hooliganism) that challenge the authority of “official” institutions of control and order. There-
fore, they embody the historical discourses of what I described in the main introduction as
resistance narratives and tend to adhere to the contemporary versions of interesting “under-
world” story scripts. Therefore, interpretations concerning stories that include references to the police and authority figures who are involved in maintaining established forms of order can become affected by Kings’ (and other’s) presence and situated in a juxtaposing frame. In contrary to the multiple personalities involved in the speaking stage of Cobbles, in Smith’s story concerning the production of Jessie’s Journey and Tales the complications involve discourses of assimilation and attempts to stop the production process from reaching the publication stage.

**Jess Smith: Split Relations and the Resistance/Subordination Dichotomy**

As I discussed in the idea stage, Smith’s story of the production of JJ, suggests that the book was caught up in the complexities of assimilation and betrayal. The context of the following passage, in which Smith refers to her sisters, provides a scenario in which to discuss an aspect of the process of assimilation: “[N]ot all travelling people are proud of their roots. Unknown by myself was the fact they had failed to tell their children about our background. It never entered my head that this was the case.”¹³⁷ In terms of habitus, Smith portrays her sisters protecting themselves and their children from the embodied stigma of their knowledge of linguistic schemas connected to words such as “Tinker” or “Traveller.” The projected dissonance between particular practices of generative transmission that Smith refers to is representative of what sociologist Loïc Wacquant, discussing and explaining Bourdieu’s work, refers to as the “[u]nresolvable contradiction inscribed in the very logic of symbolic domination,” which he identifies as having two positions: “Resistance can be alienating and submission liberating. Such is the paradox of the dominated and there is no way out of it.”¹³⁸ The paradox that Wacquant is commenting on is the negative aura that surrounds the word “assimilation” towards the dominant group and its relation to the dichotomy of “subordination” and “resistance.” Wacquant, discussing Bourdieu’s questioning of the discourse of resistance, connects it to forms of self-dominance:

> [I]s it resistance to have no means other than to make mine and to claim aloud the very properties that mark me as dominated (according to the paradigm “black is beautiful”), in a manner of the sons of the English proletarians proud to exclude themselves from school in the name of the ideal of masculinity borne of their class culture […], is that resistance? If, on the other hand, I work to efface everything that is likely to reveal my

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¹³⁷ Jess Smith, e-mail to the author, 12 Nov. 2003.

¹³⁸ Pierre Bourdieu and Loïc Wacquant, *An Introduction to Reflexive Sociology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992) 24. I choose to use Wacquant’s explanation of Bourdieu’s sociology in this section, because Wacquant positions Bourdieu’s ideas in a context that is particularly relevant to my discussion.
origins, or to trap me in my social position (an accent, physical composure, family relations), should we speak of submission? (An Introduction 23-4, original parentheses)

In other words, to adhere to the prescriptive narrative components of that which maintains the relation of domination is a particularly non-resistant position in which to claim resistance. A strategic (in Bourdieu’s sense) submission to the dominant system, which would expand the range of an agent’s consciousness without removing the previously embodied dispositions can turn strategic submission into a form of resistance, and disturb the taken-for-granted dichotomy of positions of subordination/resistance. An agent that adopts another position “works” in the gap.

In my reading of Smith’s passage, Smith’s sisters are represented refusing the negative labels and adjusting or integrating with the new environment. Of course, this does not mean that ingrained attitudes and schemes of behaviour are abandoned for others, but it means that the selective perceptions of behaviours that correspond to ideological constructs of “natural” traits and essentialisms are not called forth through the stigma of a label. However, Smith’s description of the views of her family members in relation to the subject of travelling is split in JJ, and we can conceptualise it as a split family habitus. In the first few pages of JJ, Smith discusses her family in such a way as to suggest that the move from living in a house to travelling was pre-determined. She describes the families’ move to a house that burned down, another that flooded and the final refusal of planning permission which resulted in the family moving to the blue bus that features so prominently in JJ (2). Smith’s portrayal of the reactions of particular family members indicates that the move was not so popular: “Mammy was far from happy at the thought of her proud lassies crammed like sardines in a bus. The older girls were horrified, and the wee ones were neither here nor there. Except me!” (2). As we see, Smith has isolated herself from the other members of her family and, in doing so, positions herself on either side of negative and indifferent points of view concerning the change. Smith also provides access to her view of one of her sister’s views of an unfamiliar lifestyle: “My oldest sister Mona had been used to living in houses; she thought of the travelling life as a way of the past, and a touch below her!” (3). Smith’s references to her older sister(s) sug-

139 See Mary Louise Pratt, Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation (London: Routledge, 1992). Pratt comments on the selectiveness of observation: “One need only to see a person at rest to bear witness, if one chose, to the trait of idleness. One needed only to see dirt to bear witness to the trait of uncleanliness. This essentializing discursive power is impervious until those who are seen are also listened to” (153). The relation between the label or signifying body that the one-sidedness of such interpretational schemas are “triggered” by can be erased by someone who has no external signifiers (in Pratt’s context, travel writing and the various discourses that legitimate colonial ideology). According to Smith, her sisters can “hide” the stigmatic catalyst that creates the selective categories of observation.
gest that travelling was not a particular prominent part of the period in their lives during their most informative years. Therefore, the rejection of the “Traveller” and “Tinker” labels, which act as stereotyped references to the practice of travelling in dominant discourse, is not portrayed as a pre-constitutive part of her sisters’ habitus. Therefore the dichotomy of subordination/resistance becomes ambiguous, and as Wacquant points out, embodied:

[T]he submission of workers, women, minorities, and graduate students is most often not a deliberate or conscious concession to the brute force of managers, men, whites and professors; it resides, rather, in the unconscious fit between their habitus and the field they operate in. It is lodged deep inside the socialized body. (An Invitation 24)

In the scenario that I have constructed, Smith’s family is split because the members of her family have differing relations to the “fit.” Therefore, an assimilation process that leads towards dominant and projected as normative ways of living have different meanings in Smith’s family.

Smith also takes up a potentially ambiguous position as a Travel(ler) writer, who writes about Travellers and travelling from within the walls of her house. However, her position is only ambiguous if an essentialist view of Travellers and their “proper” dwelling place is adopted. We can note that the main title of the second part of Smith’s life story is Tales from the Tent. Living and writing in a house as a Traveller is not ambiguous, but living in a house and writing solely or predominantly about travelling in a travel narrative form reconnects Travellers to the essentialist notion of a nomadic way of life. The form of writing, which has historical connections to a host of other writers who travelled and wrote about their experiences to an interested “national” public, maintains a discourse that involves an interest in exotic and strange people that are met “on the road,” within landscapes and, in discursive extension, connected to an imperial or post-colonial project. The ambiguity of her position within her family and a tradition of writing locates Smith as unambiguous in her role as a sedentary Traveller writer, but reconnects her to a dissonant role as a writer who complies with narrative forms that (re)position her in the dominated space that she no longer physically occupies.

The stalemate between Smith and her sisters concerning the writing and publishing of her life story leads to a compromise: “I struggled for years before turning my back on them and going ahead with my story. I did change their names however.”

Instead of abandoning her sisters’ roles in her life story, which would seriously restrict its possible content, Smith actually reverses the projected practices of her sisters; Smith positions them (or someone else) in history as Travellers by changing their names, whereas her sisters position themselves in the

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140 Jess Smith, e-mail to the author, 12 Nov. 2003.
past using their names, but jettison the framing signifier. The Writing Stage is also character-
ised by interpretation and change, but the change is a transformation from the spoken word to
the written and from one form of speaking to a representative form of another.

The Writing Stage

In the writing stage of the production process the writer or transcriber/editor produces a
manuscript, which is subsequently introduced to a publisher. As I will show, transcription is
not an exact practice or a uniform act and can be performed in various ways. Boswell, for in-
stance, remains directly visible in the transcribed text, whereas Farmar is largely invisible and
King and/or Knight are involved in degrees of co-writing. The transcription act also involves
shaping the text and in Boswell’s life story I will discuss Seymour’s adoption of the Bildungs-
roman as a moulding form. As far as Farmar’s transcription is concerned, I will discuss the
significance of the projected roles of Joyce and Farmar in the transcription and paratext (sin-
gular), and suggest an ideological connection to their roles as helper and self-helper. In Stock-
ins’ life story I will discuss the various anomalies in the transcribed text and show how and
where the co-collaborators both co-write and write on Stockins’ behalf. I will also begin a
discussion concerning the use of dialects in Smith’s life story and the ideational dissonance
concerning language between Smith and her publishers Mercat.

John Seymour; Transcription, Convention and Borrowing

In the Editor’s Preface to Boswell, John Seymour gives a short explanation of his method of
transcription: “[w]ith the exception of the Prologue, and a few pages elsewhere in the book,
this story was spoken by Gordon Boswell into a tape recorder and subsequently transcribed.
[…]. The reader, then, is respectfully asked to consider the spoken word, unscripted and un-
prepared, and not to judge it by the standards applied to written work” (10).141 Seymour
seems to have transcribed Boswell’s spoken words using a spelling and sentence structure that
represents a spoken form of language, and the text itself does retain much of its oral origin.
Furthermore, Seymour did not erase his own presence in the text; the “you” and “you know”
et cetera remain, and he used italics to show emphasis and parenthetical elucidation.142 How-

142 For example, “[a]nd I brought this horse: it was a broken-winded horse, it was a good type of horse to rob a
man with at the time. It was a good-looking horse” (95). The emphasis on “looking” gives an indication of the
intonation used at the time of utterance. In the next example we can see the use of parentheses; Boswell is talk-
ing about his father: “Well every morning from then on he used to come puffing and blowing. "Now my son,
you millionette.” (He used to call me a millionette for a millionaire you see)” (160). Seymour is also referred to
in the parentheses – “you see.”
ever, transcription also involves organizing the text into chapters and ordering the content of chapters.

*Boswell* is organised chronologically and the reader follows Boswell’s story from childhood through to adulthood and the inclusion of travelling and fair scams connects it to a lengthy history of rogue literature and to the theme of confession. Boswell also passes into the pattern of a *Bildungsroman* as Boswell locates two turning points in his early life that lead him to leave his family at twelve years of age. The first event is his mother and father’s conversion to Christianity and the resultant change of lifestyle (27), and the other is an incident in a school, which he portrays as the catalyst that caused him to run away (56). The remainder of *Boswell* traces the narrated I’s development and learning experiences in “society” as well as through two world wars. A reader who is familiar with the pattern of the *Bildungsroman* and is therefore aware of what to expect loses sympathy with the protagonist in *Boswell*. Boswell loses sympathy as he expresses a selfishness embedded in survival: “It was *me* that mattered – self first, self second, and if there was anything left give it to self and I think that’s the way of the world” (129, original emphasis, by Seymour). In this egotistical sense *Boswell* can be likened to William Makepeace Thackeray’s *The Luck of Barry Lyndon*. Thackeray introduces his protagonist as a loveable Irish rogue, but gradually distances the reader’s empathies and his hero becomes an egotistic villain. Towards the end of the novel, the character, Barry Lyndon, becomes the metonymic target of Thackeray’s, or his reader’s, middle class moralism. In this sense, Thackeray echoes the ethical discourse of Henry Fielding that I highlighted in the introduction in an interdependent relation to the romanticization of “criminals.” However, in contrary to Thackeray’s protagonist, *Boswell* reconnects to the general pattern of the *Bildungsroman* and regains the empathy of the reader. The last two chapters of *Boswell* involve Boswell’s philosophy regarding work, the setbacks that he had to work through while building up his scrap business, his good relations with his customers, and his relation to his father, sons and grandchildren. In other words, Boswell assesses his life and considers himself

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143 Boswell does not “confess,” but the theme of the fair scams and descriptions of how they work pass into the initial pattern of confession narratives.

144 William Makepiece Thackeray, *The Luck of Barry Lyndon*, ed. Martin J. Anisman (New York: New York University Press, 1970). The word “Luck” in the title is significant and Thackeray’s discussion concerning his protagonist emphasises this point: “[…] as the public will persist in having a moral appended to such tales, we beg here respectfully to declare that we take the moral of the story of Barry Lyndon, Esquire, to be – that worldly success is by no means the consequence of virtue; that if it is effected by honesty sometimes, it is attained by selfishness and rogery still oftener; and that our anger at seeing rascals prosper and good men frequently unlucky, is founded on a gross and unreasonable idea of what good fortune really is” (351). According to Anisman in the introduction, *The Luck of Barry Lyndon* was first published in monthly instalments in 1844 in *Fras er’s Magazine*, and first published in book form in 1856 under a new title, *The Memoirs of Barry Lyndon Esq* (1).
to be satisfied that he and his family have found a niche in “society” in which they are comfortable and secure (159).

Anna Farmar: Transcription and the Peripheral Position of the Helper

In contrary to Seymour, Farmar decided not to write an Editor’s Preface describing her version of the process of the book’s production. She left Joyce to comment on the production of the book in an Author’s Note:

   It’s an awful sad thing to have no education. If I knew how to write properly and had good spelling I wouldn’t have done this book on tape. Anna Farmar recorded it and wrote it out for me – if I wrote a book by myself whoever published it would need a medal for bravery.

Besides Joyce’s confession concerning her internalisation of the dominant group’s idea of education (institutional) and writing “properly,” and the form of violence (shame) that such constructed “norms” perform on her, the Author’s Note qualifies the respective contributions of the two people involved as necessary and thus serves to legitimise the project. However, the title, “The Author’s Note,” singles out Joyce as the singular author, and consequently gives the impression that Farmar’s contribution was peripheral rather than central. Farmar is in fact transcribing a voice, which carries, in its largely hidden complexity, the story of an encounter in which internalisations concerning social positioning and power relations formed the configurations of the ideational and intellectual exchange. Furthermore, transcribing is a difficult and time consuming practice and Farmar is referred to, rather reductively, as the editor on both the front inside covers of Traveller and My Life. In small print on the back cover of My Life, however, Farmar is referred to as the tape-recorder, transcriber and editor – a more representative description of Farmar’s functional contribution in the production process.

In Farmar’s description of her method of editing Joyce’s spoken text, we can see that parts of the text can have been recorded on different days, but appear in the published book as if they were spoken one after the other: “After transcribing everything (less the repetitions and false starts etc) I literally scissored and pasted the resultant typescript to make a coherent typescript in chronological order.”145 Farmar’s reference to “chronological order” also indicates an adherence to the conventions of autobiography and the child-through-to-adult story

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145 Farmar, Anna, e-mail to the author, 29 Sept. 2003 (original parenthesis). Farmar commented retrospectively on her method of transcribing Nan Joyce’s life story: “I would record everything and then type out everything – on a little, battered portable typewriter. My family complained that they were sick of listening to Nan’s voice echoing around the house, as I constantly rewound and replayed the tape, as I tried to get down her words accurately. Farmar, Anna, e-mail to author, 29 Sept. 2003.
of a life. However, as Robert Atkinson explains, there is more to transcription than transforming the spoken word into a written version: “The transcription process consists essentially of leaving out your questions, using standard spelling, creating sentence and paragraph structure, leaving out extra things, adding missing things, and possibly reorganizing certain sections to keep common subject matter together.” Farmar has edited out her direct involvement in the interviews, and an inspection of *My Life* also reveals the possibility that Farmar edited out Joyce’s references to her. I am not suggesting that Farmar is in any way purposefully “hiding” in any conspicuous way, but, that her method of transcription and her reference to herself as editor, plays down and partly erases her part in the collaborative process. However, the effects of Farmar’s low profile positions her transcription method in a helper/self-helper relationship; Joyce, the “self-helper,” is foregrounded and presents the story of the production process and Farmar is positioned as Joyce’s helper.

As is conventionally the case, Farmar transformed Joyce’s spoken words into standard spelling and grammar, and although *My Life* becomes available to a wider audience through the use of standard forms, it does not represent how Joyce actually spoke. Standard spelling is what the general reader has been conditioned (through persistent and repetitive exposure) to expect, and is therefore considered more reader-friendly, although taste, preference and conventions are incorporated social constructions. The majority of readers are conditioned to expect a chronologically structured, thematically organized and coherent text written in Standard English, but such consensual adherence can also lead to the loss of specific personality traits of the life story subject and the stories themselves.

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147 See Sharon Gmelch, *Nan: The Life of a Travelling Woman* (Prospect heights: Waveland Press, 1986). Sharon Gmelch interviewed Nan Donohoe, Joyce’s aunt. Gmelch did not edit out the times when Donohoe referred to her in the text: “I didn’t feel happy having children so quick, Sharon” (*Nan* 106). The transcribers/editor’s name can be removed from the text by deleting the word “Sharon” without a recognisable distortion to the connection to the next sentence. The same principle of omission applies when Gmelch is referred to in the middle of a sentence: “When I got off at the station, Sharon, I was scared to death” (*Nan* 57). Sometimes whole sentences may have to be erased: “‘But she’s sending for me,’ says I. And so she was Sharon” (*Nan* 153).
148 See Gearóid Ó Riaín, ed., *Traveller Ways Traveller Words* (1992; Dublin: Pavee Point Publications, 2000). Chrissie Ward, Joyce’s sister and poet, gives some indication of the way that Nan Joyce would probably speak: “The first Traveller up in the mornin’d make the kittle of tae. So the kittle o’ tae was supplied t’everybody along the road. Everyone’d get a mug o’ that kittle o’ tae” (53). In the introduction to *Traveller Ways Traveller Words* Gearóid Ó Riaín writes, “Travellers have their own style of speech, their own dialect of English. This book attempts to represent the speech as closely as possible to the interviewee’s pronunciation while at the same time ensuring that it is still easy to read. We did this because we saw the pronunciation and syntax, the way a sentence is put together, as a valuable part of the oral heritage” (12).
149 The meaning of the word “coherent” is also dependent on the configurations of the ideational environment and the form(s) of narrative available at any given time. Commenting on coherence and her Javanese-Surinamese women informant, Yvette J. Kopijn notes, “although we spoke the same language, her utterances sometimes seemed to me to be relatively unrelated. Hence she did not seem to observe the norm of coherence at all; in fact, she talked in a manner which I experienced as highly fragmented.” Yvette J. Kopijn, “The Oral His-
tion of the spoken material, as grammatical constructions such as commas, full stops, question marks, gaps between words, sentence and paragraph formation are added. This translation is inevitably incomplete, as, for the majority of texts, gestures, facial expressions, intonation, expressions of irony et cetera are all missing from the published book. Any interpretation of the transcribed and published text can only be partially successful, as the text only carries with it a diluted version of the fluidity and expressive qualities of the interview situation. As Smith and Watson suggest, “collaborative life writing, as a multilingual, transcultural process, can be a situation of coercion and editorial control presented in the name of preserving the voice, the experience, and the culture of the life narrator” (Reading 55).

I am not suggesting that Farmar is being consciously coercive in her editorial decisions concerning Joyce’s life story. Indeed Farmar (like Seymour and King and Knight) used their respective knowledge(s) to record a voice, which would have otherwise remained unrecorded. However, and in retrospect, “giving thematic shape to the narrative by virtue of decisions about what is included or excluded, a coaxer can subordinate the narrator’s modes and choices of storytelling to another idea of how a life story should read and how its subject should speak appropriately” (Reading 55). The appropriation and transformation of a spoken text risks moulding a life story into a more acceptable, and therefore dominant sense of what a life story should be like. If we were to contrast Seymour’s and Farmar’s transcription methods, we could say that Seymour wrote down every word that Boswell said without omissions, and that Farmar was interested in recording Joyce and not references to herself. In Cobbles we begin to see a few anomalies that suggest that the production process of Stockins’ life story was also characterised by re-writing and even co-writing.

**Martin King and Martin Knight: Helping too much?**

Even though the preface in Cobbles acts to legitimise and authorize both the collaborative work of King and Knight and the source of the book’s content,
this book is my story. My words. The two Martins have put them in the right order for me, encouraged me to remember people, incidents and times. Every bit has been read back to me, until I am happy that’s the way it was, the best I can remember it” (7, original emphasis),

it also betrays the act of writing for Stockins rather than transcription. The emphasis on the word “is” is King and/or Knight’s work and is directed to the prospective reader. Further-more, as the marked word represents a written style of expression and not the product of oral speech, we can assume that King or Knight wrote it and Stockins approved it at a later date. The italicised word also indicates a need or an expectation based on the ethical conventions of collaborative life story writing to display a statement of authorization; a convention that Stockins would not have known about. The statement has the ambiguous qualities of legitimi-sing the project, disarming King and Knight’s part in the collaborative process, and positioning them in coercive roles within the process. In the introduction to this thesis I discussed the relational and multiple nature of the “I” and its counterpart, the idea of the autonomous individual. In the case of collaborative life story production the “I” is relational and therefore multiple in another sense, because of the configuration of the interview situations and the copresence of others.

In the writing stage the transcribed text is organised and interwoven to create the conventions of coherence and organisation connected to a series of books by themes of violence, insights into an “underworld” and interest in people who live unusual lives. As we know, Stockins could not take part in the transcription process or the initial organisation of the text, because of the standard of literacy skills needed to perform these practices. Therefore, Stockins had to leave the organisation to his collaborators’ discretion and, as I have discussed in the speaking stage, they also had a censorial role in reference to the life story material. Besides the conventions of the life story, Cobbles was also designed to fit into the fighting-book genre. Therefore, instead of Cobbles beginning with the classical “I was born,” King and Knight’s initial interest in Stockins, bare-knuckle fighting, dominates the first chapter. An internal argument among Travellers on a camping site leads to a bare-knuckle fight, and it is not until the second chapter that references to Stockins’ birth first appear. The conventions of the fighting-book genre, and King and Knights knowledge of them, were instrumental in deciding the opening sequences of Cobbles.

152 At the end of the introduction to Cobbles, King and Knight echo the words in the preface: “This is his story.” (28).

153 Also see Bartley Gorman and Peter Walsh, King of the Gypsies: Memoirs of the Undefeated Bareknuckle Champion of Great Britain and Ireland (Bury: Milo Books, 2002). Gorman’s life story belongs to the fighting-book genre, and, like Cobbles, begins with the story of a bare-knuckle fight.
Along with the life story material acquired from Stockins and his friends and family, King and Knight include a fourteen-page introduction explaining the connection between Mitcham, Epsom and Gypsies, and their involvement with the early development of boxing. The contents of the introduction are also part of the organisational conventions of other books with a fighting theme. King also incorporates a seven-page epilogue containing his own memories of a day out at Goodwood race track with Stockins, which features a short section containing information concerning the production of the book. The writing stage of *Cobbles*, then, involved not only editing and transcription, but also additional writing by King and Knight.

Among the pages of *Cobbles* we also find a few constructions that point towards King and/or Knight co-writing in the main text, or alternatively, that Stockins made corrections to the main text after his co-collaborators had transcribed it into manuscript form. For instance, during the introduction to a building-job story in the last chapter of the book Stockins’ comments on the stories position: “What happened next, though, wasn’t meant to. In terms of this book, it should have occurred six chapters ago” (184). The word “wasn’t” suggests an oral form of language and therefore transcription, but the references to the book and chapters are out of place and improbable. Of course, Stockins could have added the building-job story after the first manuscript was transcribed, but how could he position it within the layout of the book? In a more likely scenario, King and Knight wrote it in order to position the theme of Stockins’ story, which portrays a setback in his attempts to change a previously self-destructive lifestyle, in a corresponding context.

Another anomaly in the text is a reference to the reader, which appears after a fight story with another Traveller called Kenny: “I hear Kenny has found religion and is now a Jehovah’s Witness. So, reader, think twice before you slam your front door in the face of a hard-looking man who asks you for a minute of your time” (115). We can see that the inclusion of the reader in Stockins’ voice cannot have taken place in the context of the interview situation with King. A clearer indicator of co-writing in *Cobbles* is found in a reference to a change of speaker; Stockins begins a story and his brother, Wally, who was most probably with him during the interview situation, continues. The transmission between the two speakers is referred to: “Wally takes up the story” (134), and cannot be anything other than the inclusion of additional information by King or Knight. Another reference to King and/or Knight writing in

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154 *King of the Gypsies* also includes a prologue with a historical overview of Gypsy fighters.
155 King and/or Knight also placed a word glossary at the front of *Cobbles*. The glossary has two headings: Romany and English. However, the words listed under the heading Romany also include English slang and cockney words. Furthermore, many of the words in the 100-word glossary do not appear in the book itself.
the text is in chapter 10, which consists of an introduction to Stockins’ relation to his cousin Joe and consists of Joe’s golf story. The introduction is not part of the ordinary transcription process and is constructed to serve the purpose of an introduction. The transmission between “Stockins’” introduction and Joe’s story is achieved by additional writing and, again, includes the reader, “us”: “Joe takes us back to the beginning” (155). We find a similar situation in the introduction to chapter 7, “Toucher’s Tale,” in which Stockins’ friend tells a story. As before the introduction is an after-construction and the transmission reflects its function: “As I said, it happened one night when I wasn’t there — so here is Toucher’s Tale” (117). There is an obvious conflation of Stockins’ transcribed words and the written invitation to read, and the two are separated by a hyphen. The words of Cobbles, then, although Stockins’ authorised them, are not only his words. King and/or Knight have co-written them in order to aid the coherence of the text by including unmarked links, and references to the reader.

Furthermore, paratexts are written with the conventions of the sub-genre of fighting-books, which suggests that the organisation of Cobbles was in the hands of King and Knight. In Smith’s story of the writing stage of Jessie’s Journey, we see that rather than transcription, co-writing and paratextual convention, as in Cobbles, the book is a result of translation.

Jess Smith: Language Negotiations

In Smith’s story concerning the presentation of the first manuscript of her life story to a publishing editor, we can see that she is aware of the significance of written language and audience reception: “The editor did not see my original manuscript because I wrote it in broad Scots and traveller cant. This was obviously going to hinder its publication and distribution so I changed the entire script into English with atmospheric Scots.” Smith’s manuscript story, then, suggests that JJ is a translation instigated by an awareness of the periphery status of dialects that are considered to be at an unacceptable distance from the privileged and almost unchallenged status of the prestige dialect that Standard English represents. However, Smith does sprinkle JJ with officially “unusual words” (hence the title of the word glossary “unfamiliar words”), which are recorded in a forty-word glossary at the end of the main text, and serve to position the language of JJ in a national setting rather than, as Smith positions her original manuscript, in a national and Traveller setting. Moreover, according to Smith’s pub-

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156 Jess Smith, e-mail to author, 8 Nov. 2003.
lishers, Mercat Press, who specialise in books with Scottish themes, they were not in total agreement with Smith’s decision to remove many of the Scottish elements of her book.\textsuperscript{157}

In \textit{Tales} the glossary of unfamiliar words is twice as long as in \textit{JJ} and may well reflect Mercat’s comments concerning the lexical content. However, Smith also co-authored a book entitled \textit{The Scottish Traveller Dialects} in 2002, which positions it between the publication dates of \textit{JJ} and \textit{Tales}, and can have had an effect on the glossary content.\textsuperscript{158} I will defer further discussion of Mercat’s involvement in the configuration of the language in Smith’s book to the last stage of the production process, the book stage.

The Book Stage

In the book stage a publisher is approached with a manuscript and eventual alterations are negotiated or agreed upon with the transcriber/editor and/or the life story teller/writer. In Smith’s life story I will continue discuss the negotiations involved between Smith and her publishers concerning the language content of her books and the ideological parameters involved in the choice of one style of language over another. I will also discuss the significance of the presentation of the front and back covers between hardbacks and paperbacks (\textit{On the Cobbles}) and subsequent editions (\textit{Traveller} and \textit{My Life}), and the effects of blurbs and edited reviews on the front and/or back covers. As far as Boswell’s life story is concerned I will continue to position the production process in the ideational grasp of the Gypsy Lore Society and its members.

\textit{Gordon Sylvester Boswell: Ideational Anchoring and the Unrelenting Grip of Romanticism}

There are a number of reasons why \textit{Boswell} became the first Gypsy life story to be published by a mainstream publisher, Gollancz. A combination of Seymour’s previous experience as a publisher prior to 1970, a renewed interest in Gypsy matters due to the 1968 Caravan Sites Act, and the backing of the GLS were all contributory factors.

One connection between the GLS and the book stage of Boswell’s life story becomes apparent as the involvement of Richard Wade is analysed. One of the appendices of \textit{Boswell} is an extract from the \textit{JGLS} in 1968 written by R.A.R. Wade, the Assistant Secretary of the GLS. The appendix explains Boswell’s idea of forming a Traveller’s Traders’ Guild, and a

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{157} Tom Johnstone, e-mail to the author, 11 Nov. 2003. 
\textsuperscript{158} Jess Smith and Robert Dawson, \textit{The Scottish Traveller Dialects} (Alfreton: Robert Dawson, 2002).}
transcription of his speech at Appleby Fair. Boswell and Wade were involved in the rescue of Appleby Fair, an important annual social event for Gypsies, in 1965. Robert Dawson comments on Wade’s relationship with Boswell in his introduction to Henry Dry-Bread: The Richard Wade Papers: “He met and became a close friend of Sylvester Gordon Boswell, the illustrious Romani author (in fact, he only ever used the name Gordon), and as trust grew between the two men, be [sic] was made an honorary member of the Boswell family, something which gave him intense pride thereafter.”

Boswell was on friendly terms with Wade, and he also knew Dora Yates, the secretary of the GLS from 1929 to 1974 and editor of the JGLS from 1955 (Social Change 121). Three of the four appendices are excerpts from the JGLS, and Wade also supplied the photograph of Boswell on the dust-sheet. Of the 27 illustrations and photographs, five are supplied by the GLS and three by Richard Wade, which would suggest that the GLS, and especially Wade, were involved in this aspect of the book’s production. Between pages 104 and 105 there is a photograph of five men sitting and kneeling in the vicinity of a tent and a wagon, and the caption reads: “Members of the Gypsy Lore Society in front of a rod tent, 1912.” The arranged photograph of GLS members in a “Gypsy” environment is a reminder of the GLS’s multi-faceted involvement in all stages of the book’s production.

The black and white photograph on the dust-sheet of the 1970 edition pictures a large and highly decorated wagon, or vardo. A man sits at the reins of the horses holding a whip and a

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159 Appleby Fair is an annual fair and traditional Gypsy gathering place. See Thomas Acton and David Gallant, Romanichal Gypsies (Hove: Wayland Publishers, 1997). There is a photograph on page 10 of Gordon Boswell (Sylvester Gordon Boswell’s son) at Appleby Fair with one of his barrel-topped, horse-drawn wagons. The caption mentions Sylvester Gordon Boswell’s campaign to save Appleby Fair in 1965 and his father’s (Wester’s) aid in writing one of the first dictionaries of Romany. See also Gordon Boswell, Gordon Boswell Romany Museum 26 Sept. 2005 <http://www.boswell-romany-museum.com>, a website that presents Boswell’s son’s Romany Museum in Spalding, Lincolnshire. The Museum reflects a continuity of a Romany “tradition” within the family, as the museum holds a collection of wagons, harnesses and tent types with links to recorded Romany and folklore music.


161 In Boswell, Seymour mentions Wade in a joke concerning hedgehogs: “I intended to find one this winter and have it roasted and bring Dick Wade to supper “ (46). In a hand-written letter dated the 29th of July 1965, Boswell wrote to Dora Yates thanking her for her help during the attempt to save Appleby Fair. In the letter Boswell also asked if Yates could recommend a person for membership of the GLS, because they had helped him. Boswell writes, “I spoke of you and Dick Wade and the G.L.S. and he would very much like to become a member, and I thought I would propose him through you” (original emphases).

162 The people in the photograph are from left to right: Reverend George Hall, unidentified, William Fergusson, Oliver Lee and Fred Shaw. Hall was rector of the parish of Ruckland, Lincolnshire from 1905 and authored a book about his experiences with Gypsies: George Hall, The Gypsy’s Parson – his Experiences and Adventures (London: Sampson, Low, Marston, 1915). Fred Shaw was a photographer and took many photographs of Gypsies in the South of England. Shaw took many of the photographs collected at the Gypsy Lore Collection at Liverpool University. According to other photographs taken at the same location, Robert Andrew Scott MacFie was presumably holding the camera. I also assume that in the context of the photograph Oliver Lee would be regarded as a “true Romany.”
young girl and a woman with white full-length aprons sit beside him. All the people in the photograph, including a boy who is walking in front of the horses, all look towards the camera. The wagon represents a romantic image of a relatively well-off Gypsy (hence the decorated wagon) and projects the idea that the book’s content will concentrate on the pre-mechanical era. And even though the majority of Boswell’s life story does take place in the first half of the twentieth century, and he portrays himself continuing to keep an interest in horses and donkeys up to the 1970s, his portrayal of a Golden Age is ambiguous because of the co-presence of Seymour’s self-sufficiency ideology and the permeation of the romantic elements of the GLS. Inside the front cover there is a photograph of Boswell supplied by Richard Wade, and the last few sentences of Seymour’s introduction on the dust-sheet capture the competing tensions that characterise the production process of *Boswell*:

The problem of the future of the Gypsies in these over-crowded islands is now a highly topical one, and Mr Boswell’s book helps to give us a wider perspective in our approach to it. But it is also immensely enjoyable in its own right, a grand yarn, as pungent as wood smoke and as fresh as the wind on the heath.

We see the ideology of Seymour in the reference to “these over-crowded islands,” an insinuation that the “problem” is to be solved by others, a reference to time and increased political interest, an admiration for the subject, and last but not least, a whole series of romantic clichés.

The colour photograph on the front cover of the 1973 Penguin edition depicts a similar motif to the 1970 hardback edition, but shows a close up of a section of a carved and decorated wagon. The text on the inside cover describes events in the book connected to religion, education, occupations and Boswell’s involvement in the First World War, and four photographs that were present in the 1970 edition are missing in the 1973 edition. In an uncanny coincidence, the omitted photographs seem to match the interests of the unknown writer of the cover text. On the back cover there are three romantically orientated blurbs that serve to maintain the ideational ambience of *Boswell* firmly in the grasp of a desire for someone else’s bygone past. In contrast to *Boswell*, the subsequent edition of Joyce’s life story is differently orientated and frames a change of focus on the political content of *My Life*.

**Nan Joyce: From Traveller Politics to the Politics of Children**

There are two front covers to the 1985 edition of *Traveller*. One cover shows a pro-traveller protest action superimposed on a background of a group of roadside Travellers, whereas, the
second cover is dominated by a photograph of Joyce, which portrays her in the process of speaking. The latter photograph is mounted to resemble a protestor’s placard and the upper two thirds of the background is red and the lower third depicts a number of vehicles and caravans at the side of the road. Both of the front covers of Traveller are in synchrony with Joyce’s subjectivity as a political activist for Traveller’s rights at the time of publication. The synchronisation also extends to include much of the thematic content of the life story and the majority of the photographs. On the other hand, the front cover of the 2000 edition, shows a young Traveller girl holding the rope-reins of a horse, with an upturned metal washing basin in the foreground. The photograph of Joyce from Traveller now appears on the back cover in much smaller format. Obviously, the political aspect of the books content was not deemed as marketable in 2000 as it was in 1985. In an article entitled “Racism in Ireland: Travellers Fight Back,” Patricia McCarthy provides an explanation of the activities and demise of the all Traveller political group Mincéir Misli:163

Minceir Misli lasted almost two years. During this time it organised protest marches, hunger strikes, pickets, and spoke at numerous meetings around the country to galvanise support for Travellers' demands. They initiated contact with the trade unions and, in some unions, got resolutions passed instructing members not to take part in evictions. However, Minceir Misli was outside consensus politics from the outset and as such could not get access to any funding to carry out its work. In addition, almost all its members were illiterate which made it extremely difficult for them to function effectively.164

As we see, the particular political movement that Joyce was active in had ceased to exist by the time that the 2000 edition was published, and the projected focus of the 2000 edition can be linked to two interconnected discourses. The first discourse involves Joyce’s experiences as a young Traveller girl and draws the reader’s attention to one of the most heartfelt episodes in the life story. The context of this story is described on the back cover: “After her father died her mother was imprisoned for a year for stealing scrap to provide for her family. Nan and her brothers and sisters were left to fend for themselves.” However, the demise of Mincéir Misli was not the end of Joyce’s political activity, and, in another reference on the back cover, Joyce is re-positioned in a political context: “Since the 1980s she has played a leading role in campaigns for travellers’ rights.” The girl on the front cover, then, acts to combine the life story aspect and the political aspect, and provides an example of how the ap-

163 Jane Helleiner translates “Mincéir Misli” as “Traveller Go” (Irish Travellers, 123).
peal of children is used, not only in a commercial sense, but also in the context of “minority” politics. In her essay, “Little Angels, Little Monsters: Keeping Childhood Innocent,” Marina Warner comments on the strategies of charities in relation to images of children and what she calls “the Oxfam Syndrome”: “[H]ow to portray the need and poverty of others without making it look like their endemic, perennial hopelessness. Images of children, who are vulnerable and dependent in every society, whatever its circumstances, help to evade that implicit condescension.” The photograph of the (Traveller) girl on the front cover of My Life creates an intersection of myths of childhood and child innocence and signals need and empathy simultaneously. As Warner states, “The injured child has become today’s icon of humanity” (“Little Angels” 47). The front covers of the two editions of Traveller and My Life are very different and tend to change the initial focus of the reader’s attention from the political activity of adults to the strategic usage of the image of a child. In the hardback and paperback versions of Cobbles, the front covers are visually similar, but the accompanying text that promotes the paperback edition re-positions it in a particular historical discourse.

Jimmy Stockins: Masculinity and the Fixation of “Underworld” Connections

The two editions of Cobbles, in hard and paperback advertise the book using differing strategies. The front cover of the hard-back edition (2000) features Stockins in a preparatory boxing pose wearing a horseshoe ring. In the background we see a long boxing bag hanging from a metal hook, which gives the impression that the environment has been adapted to create an improvised outside gym. A catchword, “They don’t like us when we travel. They don’t like us when we stop,” is placed in citation marks and positioned to the right of Stockins’ head, which suggests that it is the voice of Stockins. However, the catchword only makes sense once the reader has associated it with the word “Gypsy” in the subtitle. The mixture of King and Knight’s initial agenda, which was Stockins’ fighting reputation, and Stockins’ subjectivity as a Gypsy are intertwined in the presentation of the hardback edition. However, Stockins’ fighting history in his life story consists of two elements: the “illegal” bare-knuckle side, which Cobbles focuses on and the “legal,” sanctioned boxing side (with gloves and in a ring), which is quickly glossed over in a short chapter. The background of the front cover tends to focus on the training or preparation side of the fighting game.

166 Of course, the use of the child to signal a need for action without directly indicating that all Travellers are poor, can also redirect shaping ideas connected with the culture of poverty theory.
The photograph of Stockins on the front cover of the paperback edition (2001) is very similar to the hardback, as Stockins wears the same white armless vest and horseshoe ring. However, in the later edition Stockins is throwing a punch with his right hand and the horseshoe ring, an obvious promotion of an emblem of “Gypsiness,” is much more prominent. Furthermore, at the end of the punch, Stockins’ hard-looking and damaged knuckles appear magnified in comparison to the rest of his body in the photograph, and the scars on his face can be more clearly demarcated. In short, Stockins’ masculinity is accorded more emphasis on the front cover of the paperback compared to the hardback.

There are also differences in the background between the two photographs; in the paperback edition Stockins is clearly outside with the dark silhouette of a tree in the background. In this photograph the emphasis is on the actual fighting rather than the preparation and much more active. In an edited review of the hard-back edition from The Mirror newspaper, which is positioned to the right of Stockins’ head on the front cover of the paperback edition, two films that focus on fighting are used to promote the book: “This memoir contains elements of Snatch and Fight Club… A fascinating tale of life on the open road… a rare insight into Romany life” (original italics and punctuation). The popular films, Snatch and Fight Club, were released in 2000, and became associated with the paperback edition of Cobbles, but why? Both Snatch and Fight Club highlight bare-knuckle fighting with an Irish Traveller as the protagonist in Snatch. Fight Club features the formation of a secret club for bare-knuckle fighting and the main characters and founders (actually one and the same person) of the club have a “Jekyll and Hyde” split personality. In Snatch, two “loveable” rogues with connections to the “criminal underworld” of London become involved with an Irish Traveller group (referred to repeatedly as “pikies” in the film) living on an unofficial site and a group of “gangsters,” who rig boxing fights. At the end of the film the Irish Travellers ambush the gangsters and kill them in revenge for the death of the protagonist’s mother in a fire in her caravan. The Travellers then disappear without a trace (leave the site). Both films feature bare-knuckle fighting and secret “underworld” groups that stand in an oppositional and hence resistant relation to dominant ideas and ideals of a perfect society of law and order.

Obviously, the relation between the two films and Stockins’ life story are “fighting” and the “underworld” category that positions and fixes “Gypsies” and other groups as anarchistic elements that work outside the projected-as-normative rules of an ordered society. The fight-

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ing in the two films takes place in barns, basements, underground car parks and cellars: in secret groups and out-of-the-way places. In other words, the long-standing fascination and interest with people who live unusual lives and do unusual things, and the discourse’s historical roots in the scaffold narratives of the sixteenth to eighteenth century, are maintained and linked together on the front cover of the paperback edition of Cobbles. There is a further connection to the romantic and “rogue” element of the Gypsy image in the excerpt from The Mirror, and the word “fascinating” appears in the text. The words, “A fascinating tale of life on the open road,” act as an example of the stereotypical usage of romantic slogans that often accompany, and are “chosen” for the purpose of promoting books with Gypsy themes. Furthermore, the slogan also indicates that the person who wrote the review did not actually read the book.

The front covers of the two editions of Cobbles focus respectively on the preparatory and direct practice of the fighting theme of the Gypsy life story. The active pose captured in the close-up photograph on the front of the paperback edition also magnifies Stockins’ masculinity. References to films that focus on “underworld” groups and fighting have the effect of fixing the paper edition of Cobbles within the romantic/derogatory and resistance/criminal discourses of fascination and revulsion that plagues the stability of the process of subjectivity construction. The historically constituted and inseparability of notions of self (Gypsy) and “Gypsy” collapse and conflate the subject/object dichotomy into a “sobject,” within which the multiplicity of constitutive parts cannot be objectively identified. The split personality of the main character(s) of Fight Club may find its nemesis in the proper name itself in Cobbles; the name on the front cover of the hard-back edition is Jimmy Stockin and Jimmy Stockins on the paperback. If we were to conceptualise the front cover of the paperback edition of Stockins life story as distancing Gypsies from “society’s” norms, we can see that Jess Smith’s relationship with her publishers are concerned with ideas concerning the “standards” involved in the delivery of a text to a particular market.

**Jess Smith: Publishing Standards and the Desire to Belong**

According to Smith, the “journey” of JJ to a publisher began with Maurice Fleming, ex editor of The Scot’s Magazine, whom Smith met at a traditional music concert. Fleming put Smith in

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168 We do not need to look any further than the 2000 edition of Nan Joyce’s life story, My Life on the Road, to illustrate this point. The title of another Gypsy life story, Tom and Julie McCreavy’s, also involves another popular cliché. See Tom and Julie McCreavy, A Wandering of Gypsies: The Autobiography of Two Present-day Romanies, ed. Robert Dawson (Alfreton: Robert Dawson, 2001). The words “wandering” and “roaming” that indicate aimlessness are often associated with the word “Gypsy.”
contact with John Beaton, a literary agent, who contacted publishers Mercat Press. According to a representative from Mercat, the main editing that Mercat Press performed on *JJ* and *Tales* concerned punctuation, chronology, grammar and the restructuring of sentences. According to Mercat, the books had confused chronology and chapters towards the end of each book had to be reordered, and *Tales* was altered to distribute the folk tales more evenly throughout the book. Smith was also encouraged to increase the amount of autobiographical content. Mercat rewrote and restructured the books, although Smith approved the editorial changes. Mercat Press edited the books into the constructed and accepted conventions of narrative, writing and structure (chronological, linear and “organized”), thus providing their idea of a target/general reader with what that reader is conditioned to expect. When I asked Smith how she would write if she wrote primarily for Travellers, she replied, “If I were to write my book especially for travellers then only they would be able to read it because it would be written firstly in cant then in a voice indecipherable to mainstream society.”

According to Mercat, *JJ* was first written in Broad Scots and Cant, but presented to them with much of it edited out. Mercat was disappointed that so much of the Scots and Cant was changed, and suggested that Smith increase the amount of Scots and Cant in *Tales*. In other words, both parties were interested in representing the book(s) to a receiving audience, and saw the use of “non-standard” English in Smith’s life story from different standpoints. *JJ* is the product of a translation and both *Tales* and *JJ* are hybrid texts, and the configuration of the language used reflects the tensions involved in the symbolic absorption of a group traditionally seen as unwanted in Scotland into the field of Scottish literature. We can find the tension in the contradictory messages in the beginning and end of *JJ*. Smith communicates with a discourse of ethnicity on the first page of the Prologue: “Nor do I wish to burden you with the ‘ethnic cleansing’ story others have written so passionately” (ix, original emphasis), and then, on the last page of the main text, she writes, “The ethnic minority of my people is being cleansed from the roads of Scotland. There is no place left for the likes of Charlie, Jeannie and their bus full of bonnie lassies!” (244). Wanting to belong to a larger collectivity is one thing, but a subjectified history that is agitated by narratives of rejection and exclusion makes the practical side of the desire more difficult to achieve.

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170 Tom Johnstone, e-mail to the author, 11 Nov. 2003.
171 Tom Johnstone, e-mail to the author, 11 Nov. 2003.
172 Jess Smith, e-mail to the author, 8 Nov. 2003.
173 Tom Johnstone, e-mail to the author, 11 Nov. 2003.
In my analyses of the production process of the transcribed collaborative life stories I have argued that the respective editor/transcriber “chose” the life story subject, but the “choosing” was guided by both personal ideology and degrees of collaboration with the discourses of the Gypsy Lore Society (Boswell and Seymour), dual, but different political interests (Joyce and Farmar) and “underworld” connotations combined with reputation (Stockins, King and Knight). All the editors/transcribers had previous knowledge and experience of both writing and publishing, and this, along with their literary skills, combined with their particular interests and motivated them to initiate the respective life story projects.

One of the main foci of my analysis has been to problematize the conflations of pre-consciousness in the published manuscript and to position the transcriber/editor in the ideational environment of the life story narrator’s transcribed words. I have also pointed towards the complex and context-related ambiguity in the practice of interpretation when certain available aspects of the interlocutor’s background are brought into the interpretational frame. As the collaborators were present during the interview situations and did affect the content of the respective life stories, we are reminded that they cannot be ignored during the following chapters and story analyses. Therefore, Seymour’s self-sufficiency ideology and Seymour’s and Boswell’s various connections with the (internal) colonial discourses of the GLS will have to be taken into account. In a similar fashion, Joyce’s communication with Farmar’s self-help connections and King’s and Stockins’ respective relations to authority, authority figures and discursive connections to the “underworld” theme also need to be considered.

Another trajectory of my interest was the different transcription methods used in the respective life stories, which provides the reader with varying degrees of insight into the production process. Seymour’s transcription method, which involves staying close to the spoken material, kept his own presence visible in the published text. On the other hand, I positioned Farmar’s transcription method as an indicator of a desire to keep Joyce’s participation central, and her own peripheral. I framed the textual result of Farmar’s transcription method in the idea of the self-helper/helper relationship. In Stockins’ life story there is evidence of co-writing and discrepancies concerning improbable “speech” acts, and, although Stockins legitimates the whole process in the Preface, it is unlikely that he had the overview to be able to make an informed judgement on content based on having the text read back to him. However, as I am interested in stories and story analysis in the forthcoming chapters, and consider that the stories, even if they were transported in the text to conjoin with a common theme, or to pass into a certain structural organisation, would be transported whole, the anomalies of the
transcription in *Cobbles* are of a transitional and introductory nature, and therefore do not adversely affect story analysis.

However, my analysis of the photographs and blurbs on the front cover of the paper and hardback editions of *Cobbles* reveal a discursive connection that is important to my analysis, and can also be extended to all four life stories. The connection, or more accurately, the re-connection and maintenance of the link, involves the historical connotations of the “unusual lives” and “underworld” themes that I discussed in the main introduction. “Gypsies” are positioned in three slots that consist of ideologically nurtured narratives: One of these slots is the “lower,” “criminal” and “violent” discourse of class and “race.” The second slot involves a projected deviant and anarchistic orientation juxtaposed with a discourse of law, order and the (utopian) ideal of a perfect society. And the third slot is the resistance discourse that produces “rogues” and romanticizes and mythologizes resistance figures constructed from below. *Cobbles* is fixed within the mythic parameters of these three interconnected historical discourses by the blurbs and the two films, “Snatch” and “fight club,” that were used to promote the paperback edition.

We see a similar continuance of earlier discourses in *Boswell*, as Seymour’s “choice” of Boswell was based on his readings, which I calculatedly suggested would be related to the GLS, its journal, the GLS members that he met, his work with the BBC and his connections to George Borrow. Boswell’s own political activities, his contemporary and historical (familial) connections with “Romany Ryes” and the involvement of GLS members in the production process, locate *Boswell* within and enveloped by the dominant discourse. And, even if Boswell does not live up to his narrative role, Seymour realigns him in his footnote apparatus. The production process of *Boswell* becomes trapped in a romantic cocoon, which the main text of *Boswell* is not wholly conducive to.

In Smith’s life story I discussed the ideational trajectories concerning her story of the production process of *JJ* and *Tales* and connected her contemporary subjectivity as a storyteller and collector (salvager) to the discourses emanating from the revival movement and a Scottish post-colonial narrative. The relational aspects of Smith’s portrayal of her father’s and her own struggle to write and publish were also problematized. In this discussion, I positioned their respective desires to write in discourses of need, belonging, restriction, prevention, betrayal and selfishness. Smith’s story of the production process of her life story projects both the relational and ethical aspect of life story production and points towards, as all life stories do, the multiplicity and duplicity of voices involved. One further trajectory that I developed was the projected differences between the embodied and inculcated dispositions of the various
members of Smith’s family, which I theorized as a split habitus orchestrated by a variance in
the relation to the “fit” between sedentary and travelling ways of life. I also discussed notions
of ambiguity and essentialism in Smith’s location as a sedentary Traveller who writes primarily about Travellers and travelling. I concluded that smith communicates with other forms of
writing (internal travel writing) that lead her to (re)position herself in the interesting environ-
ment of people who live unusual lives; a space that has, in a historical context, been conceptual-
ually, discursively and politically dominated.

The theme of relationality that I used to frame the production processes of the respective
life stories, has proved useful in identifying discursive structures that lead us to a preliminary
and, for the moment, a provisional conclusion: Gypsy and/or Traveller speakers/writers can
only communicate with the dominant group or representatives of the dominant group by re-
producing a discourse that is recognisable in the particular context. By speaking and/or writ-
ing through the dominant group’s discourse, a meeting takes place, which produces a narra-
tive that is both expected, and shared. The production process is therefore a story of the
“meeting,” which can only take place in the discursive environment of the dominant group
and the internalised knowledge of the dominant discourse of the respective life story subject.
By telling the story within the dominant discourse, the speaker/writer can gain degrees of re-
spect that he or she is otherwise deprived of. In the next chapter, The Educated “I,” I will ana-
lyse stories concerning forms of education (institutional and group) and link habitus in its
many shapes and forms to the accumulative knowledge and structural positioning of a narrat-
ing “individual.”
Chapter Two: The Educated I

What’s up with your schools? I’d say. Him – ‘This is school’.
We squinnied blueprints as if they were Braille.
Taught ourselves ground up. A small conversation
    David Morley, “Clearing a Name,” Clearing a Name.

In this chapter I will discuss and analyse what I will call “educational narratives.” Educational narratives are stories concerning a much “younger” version of the narrating I that relate to various forms of mediating or communicating knowledge. The knowledge can be, in relation to the life story narrators and the construction of their narratives, knowledge acquired in a school environment (institutional education), through significant others (family education), or, alternatively, a knowledge the listener and/or reader is encouraged to acquire from the narrating I’s story. One important aspect of this chapter is that I am not analysing the stories of children, but the narrating I’s (re)construction of a (fragmented) memory from an adult’s point of view. Smith and Watson make this point clearly: “Even in cases where the narrator tries to reproduce the sense of what that experience might have been like, through recourse to simplistic vocabulary, to truncated phrases, to sensory description, to citations from a past diary, she can only do so as the older narrator with greater knowledge, narrative experience, and linguistic competence” (Reading 61). The narrated I (the object I, or the narrating I’s character in the story) is, as we have seen from the previous chapter, the product of the narrating I at the time(s) of speaking and/or writing, and, in the case of the transcribed life stories, in the environments of the interview situations.

The narrating I’s habitus is also represented in the narratives and story scripts that I will analyse. As Bourdieu elaborates, the habitus “ensures the active presence of past experiences, which, deposited in each organism in the form of schemes of perception, thought and action, tend to guarantee the ‘correctness’ of practices and the constancy over time” (Logic 54). The way that something is, or not, presented in a (life)story is, in my view, an expression of the subjectified history of a narrator. The individual/collective habitus of a particular narrator mediates how a story can be told and the mediated “choice” and construction of story scripts. The habitus, which is inculcated within familiar environments and forms of interrelations and likened to a “feel for the game,” is responsible for the discursive positioning of characters and objects in representations of particular environments and contexts. The habitus of the narrating I is also responsible for the story scripts that are available for use at a historical point in
time. A person who expresses his or her alignment to a certain imagined group, like Travellers and/or Gypsies and/or English, Scottish, Irish et cetera, and especially a dominated or minority (numerically) group, would have a series of story scripts that an individual could possibly use (as other story scripts would be un-thought of) at a particular time. Furthermore, as habitus mediates the assortment of story scripts that can be used, the nature of the discourse (story), including the configuration of interrelations between characters and objects, habitus is, as Bourdieu indicates, a site that incorporates tendencies, inclinations, propensities and strategies: “Through the systematic ‘choices’ it makes among the places, events and people that might be frequented, the habitus tends to protect itself from crises and critical challenges by providing itself with a milieu to which it is as pre-adapted as possible” (Logic 61, original emphasis). The narrating I of the educational narratives is therefore pre-disposed to a bias concerning the representations of self in character form and the context of story telling. Leitch’s definition of plot captures the relational aspects of narrative: “[T]he trope by which narrative images human action, an action involving either the relations among different agents the narrative presents or relations between storyteller and the audience” (What Stories Are 17). Characters, including the narrated I, are discursively and contextually positioned in the story script and the plot relays relations between the characters of the story (discourse). In the context of the life stories and their primary signifiers, the individual Traveller’s and/or Gypsy’s habitus informs the choices of story script that can be used in a particular narrative and the nature of interrelations between the characters in the plot. The story script and the plot are informed by the story/discourse, which, in turn, is informed by the narrator’s subjectified history.

Bourdieu’s concept of habitus can also be adapted for use in school environments and environments that can be associated with Traveller/Gypsy ways of life, because both mediate knowledge(s) from within similar dialectical processes. In his essay, “On Reproduction, Habitus and Education,” Richard K. Harker expresses the dialectic nature of school knowledge as “the tension between the conservative aspect of schooling (the preservation of knowledge and experiences from one generation to the next), and the dynamic innovative aspect (the generation of new knowledge).” Individual/collective habitus change within a similar process in which each individual has to adapt to and accommodate changes in historical and material conditions. Each generation re-produces (reproduction with change) the subjectified history of

174 Of course, the middle-class and discursively dominant group would also be a minority group (numerically).
the previous generation. Harker explains his view of the gaps and agreements in relation to differing habitus in a school environment: “Since only one habitus is reflected back to pupils from the school (the habitus of the dominant group), then those who already have such a habitus are at an advantage in acquiring educational capital (qualifications)” (“On Reproduction” 124, original parentheses). We can see that if the environment in school and at “home” within the family are infused with degrees of compatibility then the children will already have a “feel” for the “school game” before they begin school; the more compatible the habitus, the more “they do not exchange anything for their qualifications” (“On Reproduction” 124). On the other hand, as Harker explains, using the imagined group of the working-class as an example, “a sixth former with four ‘A’ levels from a working-class background is lost to the working class – there are no working-class jobs that require ‘A’ levels for entry” (“On Reproduction” 124). As we see, there can be a potentially high price to be paid for the acquisition of school educational capital: a distancing from the other members of the imagined group’s occupational and social environment.

However, if a particular Traveller or Gypsy individual is not imbued with the habitus of the school environment, which includes dominant, and therefore projected as expectant and normative codes of behaviour, language use, values (ideas, morals), rules (control and order) and disciplinary procedures et cetera, the Traveller would not have a “feel for the game” and school and the school environment can be perceived as an alienating experience. Furthermore, as habitus is an individual and collective mediating product, attitudes and ideas concerning school and school education can be of a pre-conceptual nature, being influenced and coloured by significant others’ positive, negative or non-existent attitudes and stories. Therefore, for school and school education to be considered a necessary aspect of a person’s life, it would have to be invested with some form of status. Any type of knowledge that is imbued with status or prestige, and recognised as such in an environment (for example, an official or unofficial camping site) associated with Travellers, acquires a level of symbolic capital. Symbolic capital, in the sense that I use it, is a practice or object imbued with status or prestige, and, in the case of the narratives that I will analyse in this chapter, it is the depiction of status imbued in forms of practice or objects within a story.

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176 I use the concept “generation” to indicate the transference of knowledge from adults and significant others who inhabit the same or similar material and social environment to younger members of the family or group.

177 I have chosen to use “official and unofficial sites” as an example, and only as an example of a Traveller environment. I do not consider sites to be “natural” places for people aligning themselves with the word “Traveller” or “Gypsy,” just as I would not consider a reservation as the “natural” place for American Indians.
Another form of education is found in what I call narratives of “Traveller education” or alternatively “family education.” Traveller education is, as indicated, education within the family and/or extended family, which prepares a child for a future role in the family and the family economy: instruction between older family members, usually adults, and Traveller children. In *Traveller Children: A Voice for Themselves*, Kathy Kiddle, discusses family structure and kinship bonds:

> [T]he children are reared, to look after each other, to learn to make a living, to take on the roles of responsibility within the group. They care for younger siblings from an early age, take part in earning the family living by working alongside their parents as soon as they are old enough, learn of their history and heritage from their grandparents.\(^\text{179}\)

The form of learning and interrelations that Kiddle describes is an expression of the process of acquisition of the family and group’s habitus within the material and economic possibilities of their environment. We can also deduce from Kiddle’s (general) description that school education need not be prioritised for Travellers to participate in and contribute to the family economy. Therefore, school education may not be invested with the relevant currency to change the concept of regular school attendance from theory into practice. One aspect of the respective Travellers’ representations of their relationships with school environments in their respective life stories is the temporality of the stay at the respective schools. The majority of the educational narratives either describe schools that they attend when the family is sedentary during winter (Smith), temporarily sedentary (before returning to a travelling life style: Smith and Stockins), and/or shorter stays at various schools while travelling (Boswell and Joyce).

The chapter is divided into two sections. In the first section I will deal with the subject of Traveller or Family education and analyse themes in relation to the recognition of habitus and forms of capital in stories concerning a much younger version of the narrating I. The themes that I will develop, play (Gordon Sylvester Boswell), sudden environmental change (Jess Smith), Traveller occupation (Jimmy Stockins), and the splitting effect of educations (Nan Joyce), highlight various aspects of the respective narrators’ “feel for the game.” The themes are meant to serve as an explanatory introduction to my ideas concerning habitus, the significance of symbolic capital, interrelations, environment and lifestyle in story analysis. The questions that are of relevance in this section are: How is habitus expressed in the representations of Traveller education in the respective educational narratives? How is subjectified his-

\(^{178}\) In the context of the stories that I will analyse in this chapter adults are the usual source of Traveller education, however other children and older children would also be involved in habitus acquisition.

tory, lifestyle and symbolic capital represented as interacting and producing choices and non-choices in the stories? How can continuations and discontinuations of the dispositions of habitus be evaluated from the narratives?

The second section will be comprised of school narratives that involve interrelations between teachers and the narrated I and/or between “non-Traveler” children and the narrated I. Although the majority of the narratives of institutional education in the life stories communicate a sense of traumatic and/or problematic interrelations with either headmasters, teachers and/or other children at the schools that the narrators depict themselves attending, there are a few more positive impressions (notably from Nan Joyce). I will continue to use the concepts of habitus and symbolic capital, but I will also focus on what I deem to be the effects of Traveler habitus on the depiction of the school experience. One of my interests will be to discuss what the Travellers depict themselves having learnt during their school experiences, which also infers what they chose to include and/or exclude in their narratives. Also, with reference to Nan Joyce’s depiction of her school experiences, I will discuss what I interpret as her education of the reader. One question that I will pay particular attention to is the strategies that the respective narrators use to claim, re-orientate and/or reinstate a sense of self-respect in their educational narratives.

Traveller Educations, Habitus and Symbolic Capital

In this section I will deal with the themes of play, environmental change, occupation and the splitting effect of educations in order to present how I see the acquisition and inculcation of habitus through family education represented in the narratives. My intention is to illustrate how people aligning themselves with the signifiers “Traveler” or “Gypsy” maintain and reproduce a style of life in a particular environment. Representations of lifestyle, social conditions and the pedagogical environment presuppose possible and probable earning opportunities and ways of interacting with the world, which indicate that there is no essential “Gypsy” or “Traveler” lifestyle, but only different ways of dealing with similar or different, sedentary or travelling environments. The maintenance and re-production of Traveller/Gypsy habitus is representative of continuity from one generation to another, and by discussing both historical and sudden environmental change I will present their effects on the individual/collective habitus in the respective story contexts.
In Gordon Sylvester Boswell’s representation of himself and his siblings playing as children, Boswell communicates with the re-production of behavioural and gender roles, which constitute part of the individual/collective habitus. In Boswell’s reminiscences of his childhood we can also see how symbolic capital works in the maintenance of habitus. In a chapter of Boswell’s life story entitled “Boyhood” (chapters organised and [probably] named by Seymour), Boswell comments on the nature of play in his early years: “[W]e would make it as though we was travelling, because as children we used to play tents and wagons at that time” (29). The duplication of a travelling style of living that Boswell depicts is not only “pretend” but involves the inventive use of “materials” that the children find around them: foals instead of horses, a tin tray instead of a wagon (29). By creating a miniature and parallel version of their parents’ environment, Boswell depicts the children internalising possible codes of behaviour and interaction with their environment through reconstruction. Another play scene adds inter-relational perspectives to Boswell’s depiction of play: “We would have our own little set of rods and we’d probably travel in this corner of the field or further down the lane or common and under a bush we would build a little tent up and we’d even play husbands and wives and kids falling out like we’d heard other people” (29). The re-enactment, restaging and (re)interpretation of family-member interrelations is representative of the process of inculcation of subjectified history. And as a further reference to children’s play illustrates, habitus includes an introduction to future gender roles: “And we would make a stick fire and we would boil a kettle, and we’d go and fetch something to eat, and the little girls used to put a little basket on their arm and go along the hedges probably blackberrying or picking leaves and say they was going out hawking and they was bringing the food home” (29). The “little girls” are depicted (by Boswell) re-producing their mothers’ economic roles as providers, while the boys’ roles, which I assume to be included in the “we,” are complementary. Boswell’s depiction of the creation of a miniature and parallel world shows the children in his story developing a kind of blueprint that includes aspects of interaction (with the environment), interrelations and trajectories for future adult roles.

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180 See Fran Duncan, “The Language Needs of the Young Traveller Children,” in Language, Culture and Young Children: Developing English in the Multi-Ethnic Nursery and Infant School, ed. Pat Pinsent (London: David Fulton Publishers, 1992). The production and selling of “wares” is also evident in a more practical sense in Fran Duncan’s description of a seven-year-old Traveller boy’s activities at school: “He proceeded to make clothes pegs, explaining the process to his fascinated classmates. The following day several children appeared complete with tin cans, wood and penknives, asking Jake’s help in manufacturing their own clothes pegs. The enterprising lad not only helped them make their pegs. At the end of the session, having already explained he made them to sell, he collected them all in and took them home!” (“Language Needs ” 57).
However, notice the change in gender roles evident in Kiddle’s historical overview of economic roles in “the Gypsy Traveller family”:

In the earlier part of the century the women in the Gypsy Traveller family had a strong economic role to play. In many families the men made craft and other useful objects which the women would hawk around the doors and sell. On the back of a sale there was often an opportunity for fortune telling. As economically viable work shifted to the heavier jobs of building, demolition, scrap collecting and tarmacking, the men undertook this work and the women were in many cases increasingly confined to domestic and child-rearing roles within the trailer and its limited surround. (Traveller Children 89)\footnote{In \textit{JJ} Smith provides a story concerning her mother hawking in the late 1950s to early 1960s. Smith states that hawking “a bit or a bob” was an appendage to her mother’s real objective: “What she really wanted was to tell the lady’s fortune or read her tea-leaves, either way she made a great deal more from that” (193).}

Boswell’s description of his character and his siblings playing “Gypsies” obviously took place before the demand for and saleability of hawked goods waned. The historical process (modernisation; mass production of “hawkable” objects; a shift from horse-power to motorised vehicles) and its (over)generalised effects on Traveller gender roles that Kiddle describes, is almost a reversal, or at least an unusual variant, of tendencies within many other groups with regards to gender relations and economic contribution. Also evident is how families and groups have had to adapt their way(s) of life to new spatial configurations, modes of transport and changing economic conditions.\footnote{Notice how Fran Duncan describes the changes in playing among Traveller children at a scrapyard: “Visiting a Travelling family who were temporarily residing in a scrapyard where they worked; I encountered three small children kneeling in front of an old sofa outside their trailer. On the sofa were several neat piles of metals, carefully being sorted into copper, tin, steel and iron. Children live in a house will play ‘houses’, so why not ‘scrap-yards’ in a scrapyard? Looking more closely, I saw just how accurately and carefully the children were sorting the metals. They could also tell me how much weight each metal would be worth. These children were five and six years old” (“Language Needs” 47). By juxtaposing the playing practices of the children in the scrapyard with Boswell’s childhood (re)construction we can see how quickly one set of practices can be exchanged for another, and how drastic changes in the social environment lead to paradoxical sense of continuity and change in the individual and collective habitus.} Basically the habitus of people embracing life styles associated with Travellers has \textit{had} to be durable and transposable to be able to reinterpret and transform modes of interaction and interrelations, while maintaining a sense of continuation and belonging; the re-production of habitus in relation to the family economy and symbolic capital has been re-produced within certain constraints that kept families (and extended families) and individuals from breaking up and/or dispersing into the larger society through an ever-ongoing and ultimately directional process of integration – assimilation. Having established that social change has affected the ways in which people adopting or continuing travelling lifestyles can interact with their environments has changed, and changed relatively
quickly, what would happen if the change happened overnight? In Jess Smith’s story of her move from a travelling to a sedentary lifestyle, change is depicted as happening suddenly and tensions develop between the “fit” between her habitus and the new environment.

**Jess Smith: A Return to the Familiar**

At the beginning of the first chapter of *Tents*, Jess Smith describes how she tried to cope with the loss of the blue bus that she and her family had lived in and the change of environment in her sister Shirley’s house: “The neat bedroom she prepared for me with girlie curtains and bedspread to match stank of scaldy (settled) life and made me puke” (1, original parentheses). Smith’s scathing and derogatory depiction of her reaction to the change of environment Others perceived “non-Traveller” ways of living and normative ideas concerning being a “girl.” Her usage of words like “neat” and “girlie” signal a distinct distaste for normative notions of spatial order and engendered decor. Smith then heightens the sense of rejection by constructing another scenario: “I wished I was a road tramp with skin as brown as toads, eating out of deerskin lunzies and laying my filthy body down to sleep behind bumpy-stoned dykes, with a star-encrusted heaven as my roof” (*Tents* 1). By painting a picture of two extremes, Smith expresses her unacceptance of an environment that her habitus has not prepared her for; she distances herself from aspects of the environment that are not imbued with positive currency (“girlie curtains” and “bedspread to match”). However, in her next lines Smith comments on the qualities of her Traveller education: “On the other hand I knew survival wasn’t impossible, not with the knowledge I’d accumulated on the road. We Travellers are born survivors” (*Tents* 1).

Although one could fantasize about “wandering” or “roaming” Travellers, the movements of the family that Smith describes in *Jessie’s Journey* and *Tents* are well planned to maximize the possibility of earning opportunities. Furthermore, knowledge of the geography of seasonal work and the work needs of particular communities are depicted as essential to the family income. Moreover, the family is depicted saving up money during the summer months in order to cover a sedentary winter period. Therefore “survival” and “knowledge” are related,

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183 A “lunzie” is a tramp’s bag or pouch (*My Life* 224).
184 Smith depicts her mother revisiting the village where her mother and father were married and states that her mother “had folks who looked for her coming to do their fortunes. Bags of clothes, shoes and the likes that their bairns outgrew were laid aside for her visit” (*JJ* 115). Smith also describes her father adapting to new occupational opportunities like the spray-painting of barns (*JJ* 68).
185 Smith describes her father’s worry concerning travelling and earning money in *JJ*, and suggests settling or building a more permanent shelter. The problem seems to be that the jobs that the travelling family can secure
for the most part, to adaptations to familiar places that change rather than acclimatization and adjustment to new environments in Jessie’s Journey and Tents. The new environment in Smith’s story also involves regular work in a paper mill, which, although not totally devoid of capital in Smith’s family, involves regular working hours in the employment of a “non-Traveller” employer, and therefore is not imbued with a significant level of symbolic currency among travelling Travellers.  

In order to collaborate (or conventionalise) the description of her own unhappiness at the mill, Smith includes the empathetic comments of another Traveller working at the mill: “Stella was from travelling stock and she said she knew how I felt” (Tents 1). Even though Smith depicts interrelations at the mill as friendly, friendliness is not enough: “[A]ll the kindness in the wide world failed to remove my misery, and one day round about three on a Friday afternoon I collapsed” (Tents 2). I interpret the depiction of Smith’s physical and bodily collapse as a metaphor for the “gap” between Smith’s individual/collective habitus and the drastic change of living conditions and working practices that she describes. Bourdieu expresses the process involved:

The presence of the past […] is, paradoxically, most clearly seen when the sense of the probable future is belied and when dispositions ill-adjusted to the objective chances because of hysteresis effect […] are negatively sanctioned because the environment they actually encounter is too different from the one that they are objectively adjusted. (Logic 62)

Smith rejects the new environmental codes and modes of interaction as she depicts her character in the story not being able to cope with the suddenness of the change. Consequently, “Friday afternoon” signals the end of the working week and, for Smith, the end of her mill-working days in her story. Smith’s joy upon leaving the mill in her story provides a background for a (re)constructed verbal exchange between herself and Stella: “‘My God girl, you’d think ye were gittin oot o’ the stardy.’ ‘I feel like I’ve been in one,’ I told her” (2).

are not bringing in enough money to supply the economic needs of their growing family, therefore the move to a more reliable job seems a necessity (JJ 65).

I make the differentiation that Travellers that travel or settle during winter may not consider a regular job working for a “non-Traveller” a status job, but that does not mean that settled Travellers would not. However, self-employment or jobs with a large proportion of autonomy would have more capital than other more monotonous jobs, or jobs where the Traveller can be perceived as constantly taking orders from others. Of course, being moved on by police and authorities and a possible lack of interest on the part of employers in employing a person identified as a Gypsy would reduce the possibilities of securing regular jobs even if they wanted to; see Mayall (Gypsy Identities 229). Smith also writes about the boss of a lampshade factory where she worked and attributed him with various forms of capital: “I must say […] my boss was a gentle little man who smiled and nodded and seldom gave orders (Tents 108-09).

“Friday afternoon” can of course refer to the end of a working week and the beginning of the “freedom” of the weekend.

The word “stardy” means jail or police station (Tents 225).
As we see, Smith uses a linguistic strategy (a code-switch) to distance her character from Stella (a sedentary Traveller), thus projecting a sense of difference through language. And although Smith’s reference to prison insinuates the idea of “freedom,” Smith is actually proposing a move towards a more familiar and less alienating environment. Furthermore, Smith links her inability to cope with the idea of “choice,” when referring to Shirley’s response to her decision to leave “the scaldy life”: “[S]he was mortified, but what else could I do? What choice did I have? None” (2). The choices, or more correctly the lack of choice, that Smith depicts her character having, or not having, involve the dissonance between inculcated dispositions and the prospect of the continuance of living in a house and working in a factory.

Smith then describes her return to a travelling life style and provides a seemingly paradoxical view of her sister; initially Smith describes Shirley: “She was now a scaldy; her days of travelling had ended” (2), and then inserts a poem written by Shirley entitled “The Berries,” which refers to berry-picking at Blairgowrie in Perthshire (a traditional meeting place for Travellers in Scotland) and claims that “Shirley may have left the road but the road never left her” (2). The ambiguity is striking, as Smith refers to “travelling” as an essential element of being a Traveller, whereas Shirley’s poem and its subject matter seems to re-instate her as a Traveller. In other words, travelling (physically) can create a hierarchy between Travellers, and even Travellers from the same family, but a particular way of relating to the world, which includes themes and places that are imbued with mutually recognised degrees of capital, can re-establish a same-ness within difference, but the difference is maintained. We should remember here that Smith herself lives in a house and has done so since the late 1960s, and although Smith is (re)constructing her childhood memories the capital attached to travelling is notable by its presence.

The berry campsite, was brimming with trailers, hawker’s lorries, vans and lurcher dogs. The women, with heads of thick hair wrapped in multi-coloured head squares, were all cracking and gossiping. Younger lassies showed off slender figures, flashing smiles and gold-ringed ears. Men were spitting on their hands and doing deals over horses or motors. (3)

As we see Smith’s description includes many, for her, familiar aspects of Traveller inter-relations; modes of transportation, hunting dogs and specifics of male and female behaviour.

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190 The word “cracking” refers to stories of experiential events, like a “crack” concerning the last job that someone did, or the last time a person saw a certain relative. Donald Braid discusses the usages of the word “crack” among Travellers in Scotland. He found that the word “story” referred to folktale and “crack” to a variety of other narratives, however the distinction was not always adhered to (Traveller Tales 51-53). The reference to “spitting on their hands” is an indication that a deal has been made; money will exchange hands and/or a swap made.
Smith then describes the effect that the scene had on her: “I felt the giant butterflies bursting into life inside of my young breast – I was home, back on the green” (3). The word “home” involves recognition of codes, environments and behaviours and the internalised tools to decipher and communicate with the codes without being able to consciously describe the codes involved; habitus. Smith ends this section of her story by addressing the reader: “If you’re not a traveller then you’ll be thinking that I went mad. If you are, well, need I say more?” (3). Smith predicts, then, that her story may well seem strange to her “non-Traveller” readers, but fully understandable to Travellers, because of a projected similarity in ways of thinking, or in my interpretation, a mutual connection to a collective habitus linked to a travelling life style and dispositions that make certain ways of viewing, interpreting and being in the world more possible than others. I have presented Smith’s story as an example of how a drastic change over a very short period of time can disorientate habitus and cause a retreat to a more conventional environment. In Jimmy Stockins’ story there are no such problems concerning change. Rather his story illustrates Traveller education and the putting into practice of familiar codes.

Jimmy Stockins: His First “Diploma” in Traveller Education

The reader can sense a degree of pride and status involved in Jimmy Stockins’ (re)construction of his memories concerning his first experiences of work with his father: “I was in my element, not yet seven but going to work with Dad each day, knocking on doors and offering to asphalt people’s drives, or trim hedges and trees. We made a decent living as we pushed out further and further into Essex and beyond” (49). Notice that Stockins does not describe himself helping his father. Father-son relations are depicted more in terms of a partnership involving co-contribution to the family economy. I interpret Stockins working with his father as part of his Traveller education; an indoctrination into a means of earning money (self-employment) that the family’s life style made possible at the time. In the next few lines Stockins depicts himself negotiating for a job:

Dad and me were tarmacking a drive and I got a bit bored as Dad was finishing up the work. I wandered off down the tree-lined road, inspecting the state of the neighbouring driveways. One had cracked concrete like streaks of lightening leading up to the front door. As bold as brass, I stood on tiptoe and rang the bell. (51)

Again, Stockins represents himself working with his father, but he also introduces the theme of re-production, as Stockins depicts himself “copying” his father’s (a grown-up’s) actions by scouting for and identifying a potential job. The theme of re-production is more clearly evi-
dent in the retrospective comment that Stockins includes while depicting his character speaking to a prospective customer: “‘Hello mister,’ I said, going straight into the spiel I had heard so many times” (51). The “spiel” acts as a form of relationality as it is depicted as part of, and a re-production of, Stockins’ father’s strategic use of language in order to maximise the amount of jobs actually secured.\(^{191}\)

A further illustration of reproduction as indicative of habitus re-production can be extracted from Stockins’ discussion of the price with the prospective customer: “I rubbed my fingers on my chin, looked down at the drive and walked up and down it, just like I’d seen the old man do a thousand times” (51). We can see that Stockins re-presents himself performing familiar gestures and geo-spatial movements as component of his education; he is depicting himself in the process of acquiring a “feel for the game.” Stockins then describes his father joining him and the customer, who have already decided a price (unknown to his father): “Dad rubbed his chin with his fingers and walked up and down the drive” (51). By representing the repetition of his father’s gestures and actions, Stockins compounds the link between significant others, Traveller education and habitus; he depicts himself acquiring vital knowledge that can be adapted to other occupational situations other than tarmacking. After his father has spoken with the customer in the story, Stockins describes the emotional significance of the event: “Sitting in the truck on the way home, he told me he was proud of me. I’d never felt so good as I did that day” (51). Stockins’ depiction of his first deal as one of the emotional high-points of his life describes how he earned capital in the eyes of his father – his first and most precious recognition; a “diploma” in Traveller education. The re-production of speech patterns, bodily gestures and movements are all consituents of habitus and Stockins’ educational narrative is representational of its maintenance and re-production through significant others. To sum up, in Stockins’ story I dealt with the re-production of various Traveller codes as constitutive of aspects of Traveller education. In Nan Joyce’s story I will discuss the problematics involved in Joyce’s entanglement of codes of family and institutional education, which lead to the projection of imbalances, frictions and splits among her family members.

**Nan Joyce: Educations, Ambiguity and the Workings of Habitus**

There is a great deal of ambiguity embedded in Nan Joyce’s story concerning her father’s education of his children. Joyce describes several scenes within which the younger family

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191 The “spiel” that Stockins refers to includes constructions that project respect and politeness: “‘Would you allow me to give you a good price for ashfeling your drive? We’re only working across the road, sir, and I can see your drive is cracking’” (51).
members are instructed by her father in an atmosphere of fear, while contextualizing her father’s death in terms of the termination of a desired (school) education. For example, Joyce describes her father instructing religion: “My father never battered us, he’d never hit us hard, but while he was teaching us the catechism we’d be looking at this sally rod, going” (20). Avoiding being punished by the “sally rod” becomes the incentive to learn in Joyce’s story. The seemingly unflattering image that Joyce paints of her father, which superimposes a version of the sadistic headmaster stereotype onto her father, is not enhanced by Joyce’s description of his method of teaching the ten commandments either: “We’d go along lovely until we’d come to the fifth or sixth commandment and we’d stop blank because we’d forgot all about it. And he’d make us go over and over the ten commandments until we had them by heart” (21). Another example of how Joyce depicts her father’s brutal pedagogy can be extracted from Joyce’s description of the children praying: “In the wagon there was nothing only boards on the floor, there was no carpet and your two knees would be paining, and you’d be praying for him non-stop. If he was tired he’d stop real early, he’d just go on for a few minutes, but if he wasn’t he’d go on for hours” (21). Although Joyce connects learning with fear and the children’s capacity to endure pain, her father’s teaching of religion, prayer and the alphabet are also seen as a lost opportunity: “This went on every night, we were learning. But my father died when we were very young and he didn’t get much time to teach us” (21, my emphasis). The education that Joyce depicts her father teaching his children confuses the types of educations (institutional and family) that I use in this chapter. Joyce’s father is depicted teaching religion and the alphabet in a way that suggests institutional education, but in a family environment.

Webb et al explain how Bourdieu’s concept of habitus can be a structural hindrance in a school environment: “[S]chools tend to encourage a belief that they serve the children’s interests, they are really disposed to serving the interests of children who have already had access to the kind of values and environment which the school system promotes” (Understanding Bourdieu 114). Basically, the ability of a child to adapt to the environment created by the school depends on how familiar the environment (behaviour, language, values, recognition of familiar objects) is to the home environment of the child. The ability to succeed in school is, in this scenario, based on the degree of change that the child has to undergo to assimilate to the required environment at the school. Joyce’s father is depicted (or projected) in the role of a teacher in a classroom that simulates the environment that might be expected in a “strict” environment.

A sally rod is a slender, pliable stick cut from sallow. Joyce describes a sally rod as a “about as thick as a match […]. It was springy and if you got it across the legs you’d really feel it” (20).
school environment, which would indicate that his children would be nearer the dominant habitus when they entered school; they would have a greater “feel” for the “school game.” Joyce’s “choice” of story script accentuates her father’s attempts to educate his family, thus communicating a sense of regret regarding her own lack of institutional education as an adult, and what might have been. The harshness and inflexible image of her father’s teaching methods also creates a bridge between what Joyce’s internalisation of a “non-Traveller” impression of an imagined group of Travellers (illiterate, poor, ignorant, uneducated [institutional education], irreligious and unable/unwilling to learn [“non-Traveller ways”]) and what Joyce wants her listener/reader to gain insight into; the environment and way of life that she and her family grew up with were hinders; she did not choose not to be educated in school.

Joyce’s description of her educational environment also includes aspects of internal exclusion among significant others in relation to hierarchies of gender and class. Besides religion and prayers, Joyce describes her father instructing his children concerning the histories of “the places we passed through,” old castles, monuments and the alphabet, and then creates a juxtaposition between her mother and father: “My mother couldn’t read or write, she never had any education and I think she felt a bit left out because my father was such a scholar” (6). Joyce locates the ability to read and write and the words “education” and “scholar” in a superior/positive context, and consequently positions her mother in a space that indicates both lack and unfulfilled desire. In other words, Joyce projects her own feelings of inferiority in the face of school-educated people onto the position of her mother when she was a child. Joyce does not consider herself to be “scholarly” and therefore her mother’s “inferior” position in the family is a metaphor for an “inferior” class position where she speaks from in her life story (in the interview situation with an educated Farmar, and possibly with an imagined educated reader in mind [who has been to school and can read and write]). We might also assume that Joyce does not have a “feel” for the “interview game” that she and Farmar are engaged in, and that the two habitus, inculcated from different environments, are in a condition of tension.

The projected divisions in her family that Joyce describes are not only represented as a division between her mother and father: “My older children got no education, they lost out on everything because we were being hunted from place to place […]. My two youngest children got a better chance: they started school at the right age with the settled children and they’re getting on great” (117). The second split concerning education that Joyce describes in her family indicates that the individual/collective habitus have been re-produced in and adapted to different educational environments. To start school “at the right age” can also mean that the
children are initiated into the school environment at the same educational level as other children, whereas older children, who, as Joyce indicates, probably missed periods of schooling due to harassment, are always playing “catch-up”; they inhabit (or inherit) an “inferior” position in the school educational environment and levels of education achieved contra age. However, Joyce does not present school education in a negative way, rather in terms of an opportunity that the probabilities and possibilities of the family’s lifestyle either make possible or improbable. In the continuation of her story, Joyce predicts a future trajectory: “I’d like to be able to afford to send them to college. But they will still always be travellers” (117).

Educational capital, then, although potentially in jeopardy through lack of economic capital is not linked to the threat of assimilation, which in my interpretation, would seem to suggest a certain confidence that her children’s habitus, and especially the role of their inculcated durable dispositions, can adapt to new (or similar) environments without too much slippage. In fact, Joyce imbues school education with a great deal of status.

We can see that Joyce describes the position of her family differently with regards to school education in the afterword of the 2000 edition (fifteen years after the first edition) of her life story:

If I’d had this [running water, a toilet and a house on a small estate for Travellers, which Joyce calls a site] when my children were small it would have been a great gift for us, they would have all been educated … I know they’re highly educated in their own way of life, in survival. Settled people would look at you as an uneducated person but I’ve been highly educated in cooking, looking after children and managing. (xii, my parentheses)

The division between educations in her family that Joyce described in 1985 is, fifteen years later, dissolved and Traveller education (general and gendered) is emphasised through the repetition of the words “highly educated.” School education becomes, for Joyce, an unactuated desire that would have been beneficial for the family; “us.” Joyce also projects the

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193 See Kiddle’s list of positive and negative reasons that Travellers have given for “finding it difficult to send their children or support them in school, condoning absence or deliberately keeping children out of secondary school” (Traveller Children 79). Negative: hostile environment, bullying and name-calling, poor literary skills, moral welfare (especially for girls), sex education, drugs, showering, loss of family values from mixing with non-Traveller pupils, assimilation and potential damage to family networks. Positive: the feeling that from twelve or thirteen years of age children need a family education, economic need for children to be part of the family economy, the desire for girls to take on domestic responsibilities, and the need to take part in family events (fairs, weddings, funerals, Christian conventions) (79-80). Other difficulties that Kiddle presents are: the difficulties in providing a quiet space and time for homework, providing the correct school uniform and PE kit (travelling), a belief that school has no relevance once the children can read and write, the school’s preparation of pupils for a job market that is of no relevance to Traveller occupations and a belief that they will be discriminated against even with qualifications (80). We can deduce from the lists above that the re-production of habitus and its (pre)dispositions (pre)dispose individuals to adhere to the practicalities and sensibilities of their objective realities and therefore unintentionally biased towards the re-production process.
idea that if her family’s material conditions of habitation had been nearer to the conventional and dominant modes of living, a school education would have been a more realistic and practical possibility.

In my discussion of Joyce’s attitudes to and constructions of her families’ relations to school education, it is obvious that family/individual habitus can play both an adaptive and restrictive role. Habitus allows for change, but the lack of “fit” can lead to a tendency to withdraw from unfamiliar environments that are based on another group’s habitus. Joyce’s desire for school education is represented as un-actuated, as the interrelational configurations could not be negotiated. The “feel for the game” that is an effect of a habitus in harmony was not realised in an institutional educational environment, only desired, as Joyce’s environment and the effects of her travelling life style prevented the fulfilment of her educational wishes. Although Joyce attributes school education with symbolic capital as an adult, it is obvious that other factors contributed to the failure to acquire school education for herself and her children. However, as Joyce stated, she and her children are “highly educated” in other forms of education.

School Education: Interrelational Narratives and School Environments

In this section I will analyse narratives concerning school environments and focus on the respective narrating I’s representations of their interaction and interrelations with the characters in their stories: headmasters, teachers, other children, siblings and other Gypsy children. I will continue to illustrate how habitus and capital affect the way that the environment, characters and the positions of characters can be represented, but I will also introduce the themes of power relations, authority, logic and strategies of the maintenance of self-respect to my analysis. I will provide a short introduction including a concise run-through of the main features of each story before beginning my analysis.

Jimmy Stockins: the Logic of Reversal and the Workings of Habitus

In my analysis of Stockins’ educational narrative I will illustrate how he slowly but surely distances himself from the concept of school and school education; he logically and discursively dismantles the authority of the teacher, the other children and the headmaster in his story. Stockins reverses the configuration of power relations through discourses connected to cognitive schemas, spatial surveillance, institutional rules and codes of behaviour and control. In my interpretation there is a logic operating in Stockins’ story, and this logic creates illogi-
qualities in his school story. Family and family relations form the basis of Stockins’ character’s view of the world and his story takes the reader through a period in his life where two main changes are portrayed taking place; from travelling to a sedentary life style and his introduction into a school environment. The main features of the school story are: Stockins’ father decides that the family should move to a house, Stockins is sent to school; he comforts his brother and is reprimanded by a teacher; Stockins talks back to the teacher; the other children call him names; he gets into a fight with another child and is sent to the headmaster and is caned; his father goes down to the school and Stockins does not have to go to school any more.

In the first few lines of Stockins’ school story he reflects on his childhood: “For us kids, we had not a care in the world. We had the fresh air, the fields and the rivers, but most of all we had each other. We were living a child’s dream” (46). If we were to take Stockins’ words literally we would interpret them as expressing a retrospective description of his childhood in a carefree, nostalgic and romantic manner. However, Stockins’ romantic introduction to his story is strategic and informed by firstly, a sense of loss connected to a change in his way of life, and, secondly, a rejection of “non-Travel” discourse concerning the advantages of a sedentary life style contra a travelling way of life. We can see Stockins’ strategy developing as he juxtaposes a Gypsy way of life, “one never-ending holiday,” with his ideas concerning a “non-Gypsy” sense of holiday: “[G]orgers saved up all year to have a week on a caravan site – to live like we did. I can’t imagine any of us putting our pennies away to have a week in a house!” (46). As we see, Stockins frames “gorger” behaviour as an attempt to emulate a Gypsy mode of habitation, and the unthinkable opposite scenario. The catalyst for Stockins’ glorification of his childhood is found in his father’s decision that the family should move to a house: “The thought of it upset me, and I couldn’t understand why Dad was moving us to a house. Kennas were not for us, but there was a lot of pressure at the time to stop gypsies travelling and promises of a better life” (46).194 Stockins’ romantic introduction to his school story exaggerates positive impressions of the past and juxtaposes it to a perceived drastic and sudden change.

However, there is another change that Stockins describes himself being unhappy with in his story: “Worse was to come: The next thing I knew, Mum and Dad sent me to school” (46). School was obviously not Stockins’ favourite place: “What did I want to go to school for? School was for gorgers. Why should I learn to read and write? No other person I mixed with

194 “Kennas” means houses.
could. All school could do for me was ruin my day, but what Dad said went – you didn’t argue” (46). For Stockins school is associated with both difference and convention. Stockins insinuates that the interrelational environment that he describes himself belonging to does not connect reading and writing with symbolic currency. He does not understand the point of learning to read and write if there is no interrelational value and/or status attached to it. Therefore, Stockins’ negation of school, by stating that school is only for “gorgers,” is not a wish for separation from “non-Gypsies” and education in school, but a wish to be conventional and not different; he wishes, or more accurately, is strategically coerced through his habitus, to adhere to the conventions of the people around him. We must also remember that Stockins spoke from an adult’s point of view when recalling and reconstructing his childhood views of school and education. It is quite obvious that even if the reader accepts that Stockins’ views of his school days reflect what he felt at the time, his attitudes towards school have not changed to such a degree that he felt it necessary to discuss it. He does not create a now/then scenario, which would juxtapose an earlier negative view of school with a changed outlook. Stockins did not and does not see school and school education as a necessary part of his way of life.195

Stockins’ previous references concerning a carefree way of life find their Other in his regimental description of the school environment: “I hated it. Sit still. Sit up straight. Single file. Fold your arms. It was like being in a fucking cage, all silly rules and saying prayers” (46). The environment that Stockins has described so far in his story has changed in three major ways: firstly, his lifestyle has changed from travelling to sedentary, secondly, he is separated for large parts of the day from other members of his family, and, thirdly, he has to cope with a set of “silly” rules “in a fucking cage.” The theme of “silly rules” becomes an integral part of the next event in Stockins’ school story; Wally (Stockins’ younger brother) is sent to school for the first time (Wally is in the infants and Stockins is in the juniors) and Stockins describes the playground as divided by “a white line painted on the tarmac” (46). Stockins depicts himself crossing the line in order to comfort Wally, who was crying: “It’s all right, bruv. It gets better. You wait and see. I was like this on my first day too” (47). The line on the tarmac is not just a line in Stockins’ story, but a line accompanied by two legitimising components; a rule, which gives meaning to the otherwise arbitrary line, and someone to recognize the rule, which imbues the otherwise arbitrary rule with power. When the rule is rec-

195 In the epilogue, written by Martin King, Stockins mentions school with reference to his life story. He is depicted in conversation with King and Martin Knight reflecting on the process of producing the book and possible sales figures. Stockins is quoted as saying, “When I’m gone there will still be something there. Something my children and their children can read” and King adds, “Jim grinned as he immediately saw the irony in what he had said. ‘I’ll have to make sure they go to school and learn to read and write,’ he shrugged and returned to the bar” (199). We can deduct that Stockins has not deemed it necessary to send his kids to school.
ognised the enforcement of the rule calls into play a set of power relations. Stockins has effectively positioned himself on the wrong side of the line in his story and this has its consequences: “As I walked in, a teacher, Miss something-or-other, pulled me by the arm out of the line. ‘Jimmy, you crossed the white line, you know that’s against the rules’” (47). This time Stockins is “pulled” out of a uniform and organised line of pupils obeying another rule and effectively separated from that line by the authority of the teacher, who reprimands him for breaking a rule.

Even though Stockins depicts himself explaining the reason why he crossed the white line to the teacher, “[s]he wagged her finger at me and rattled on about rules being rules” (47). Throughout the story Stockins positions himself either on the wrong side of rules or pulled out of lines because he has crossed lines; he is continually out of order. Furthermore, as Stockins’ next statement suggests, he cannot understand the significance of the line or the teacher’s reaction: “I honestly couldn’t understand what was wrong with what I did, why she was getting so cross” (47). Stockins depicts himself prioritising, as he would among his own family, and his priorities were to his brother and not the rule that imbued the white line with meaning or the power that the teacher used to legitimate the rule; for Stockins, family comes first and “silly” rules second, if they come into consideration at all.

In his story, Stockins slowly undermines and questions the legitimacy of the rules and the teacher’s authority and power to enforce them. The next event in Stockins’ story illustrates his lack of respect for the teacher: “I gave her some lip, something I would never have dared do to my Dad, Mum, uncles and aunties. We were brought up to respect our elders” (47). By depicting himself never daring to talk back to his elders, he communicates with an interrelational discourse and indicates that the teacher has pushed him over a line that he otherwise would never cross; he breaks yet another rule. Stockins then comments on the code that his father uses to signify respect: “If Dad said ‘He’s a good man’ about someone, and then looked at me for a few seconds, I knew Dad wanted me always to respect and honour that person” (47). Stockins not only portrays his character being taught to show respect (and recognise capital), but also how to behave in order to be respected and honoured (achieve a high level of capital); obvious masculine goals for Stockins. The next part of the code in Stockins’ story refers to another aspect of his behaviour: “If I was misbehaving, all Dad had to do was look over and I stopped dead in my tracks. He was firm but fair – same as my Mum” (47). The looks and gestures that Stockins describes form part of the code that he has learned and internalised from significant others; he has a feel for this game. The teacher in Stockins’ story is possibly depicted as being “firm,” as she “pulled” him out of the line of pupils, but Stockins
did not think that she was “fair.” Hence, Stockins’ description of the teacher’s actions, she
“rattled on” and “wagged her finger,” bear the signs of a lack of respect; negative capital. We
also see that Stockins depicts himself behaving when he is among his elders and obeying the
signs that suggest mutually understood rules, whereas in school he is out of order, crossing
lines and in breach of rules.

Stockins also locates himself and his brother in positions of alterity in his description of
their relation to the other children: “Wally and me were the only gypsies there, and some peo-
ple seemed to want to remind us of this all the time” (47). He then expresses his view of the
name-calling: “I couldn’t understand why them calling ‘Gypsy’ or ‘Gypo’ across the play-
ground was meant to annoy me. After all, that’s what I was” (47). We can see cognitive
schemas (and habitus) at work here, as Stockins shows his awareness (at the time of speaking)
that the other “people” or “them” at the school had already, in their young years, internalised
the word “Gypsy” as a strategy for upgrading their own image. In order to illustrate that the
kids shouting “Gypsy” at him did not achieve their supposed aim, Stockins invents a particularly
effective mirror scenario: “If I had shouted back ‘South West Londoner’ to them, I doubt it
would have hurt” (47). In other words, using a reconfigured rhyme to illustrate Stockins’
point: sticks and stones may break my bones, but that name can never hurt me. Stockins con-
tinues his story by confirming that he is proud of whom he is: “Gorger kids seemed to think
we didn’t like being called travellers for some reason. Nothing could have been further from
the truth” (47). In this part of the story it is not relations to rules, lines, authority, respect and
order that are the problem, but problematic interrelations caused by the different emotions and
associations attached to the particular signifier “Gypsy.” We can also see that Stockins uses
the word “travellers” and not “Gypsy” in the passage above, which would suggest either their
inter-changeability or a contextual usage (from a supposed “non-Gypsy” point of view) of a
less stigmatised term.

Even though Stockins has only described interrelational problems so far in his story, he
changes focus once more to provide a more balanced view of his schooldays: “All the same, I
had plenty of gorger friends and, on the whole, we got on fine” (47). However, Stockins de-
scribes the interrelations between the other kids and his character as having a geographical
limitation: “Mum and Dad didn’t like us going round their houses, though. In fact, it was for-
bidden” (47). Stockins’ defence of his mother and father’s decision not to allow him to visit
“non-Gypsy” houses is in the form of an assumption: “I suppose they worried about perverts
and the like; at least on the sites you knew everyone inside out and anyone the least bit suspect would be banished from a site like that. Our parents had no fears for us there” (47).

The inside/outside configuration of Stockins’ supposition suggests that there was a perceived greater degree of control over moral conduct on sites in comparison to houses not on a site. Gypsy sites are also described in terms of cross-surveillance; the people living on sites are monitored and they must adhere to the various standards and expectations required or risk being ejected; they must have a “feel for the game” on the site, which involves mutually understood codes that inform tendencies to interrelate and behave in acceptable ways. Stockins is (habitually) inclined to see the internal surveillance on sites as an effective and self-regulating selection process involving morals and ethics, or, in my interpretation, part of habitus maintenance: “you knew everyone inside out.” Interrelations between Stockins and the other kids in his story are limited to the school; a relatively controlled environment, although a rather too controlled environment from Stockins’ point of view.

The next event in Stockins’ school story depicts him fighting with another child and appearing before the headmaster. The headmaster is described as the previous “governor of the nearby Feltham young offenders’ prison” (48), and as he canes the protagonist in the story, he is described as “having a mad look in his eyes” (48). Again, we see the sadistic headmaster stereotype in a school story, but in this case it is compounded by the headmaster being depicted as having been the head of both prison and school institutions. The strategic position that Stockins situates himself in his story script, is a disempowered and dominated one, but it is also a position where he can express defiance: “I felt the tears prick the back of my eyes, but was fucked if I was going to let him see” (48). Stockins denies the proposed sadist his pleasure and authority, thus refusing to be positioned as the powerless and passive victim. He further diminishes the headmaster’s dominant position by re-contextualising his actions: “What was a grown man doing striking seven-year-old kids with a big stick? I knew school was bad, but I wasn’t expecting this” (48). The dominant school patriarch is now reduced to an adult bully by Stockins, and used in order to confirm and extend Stockins’ supposed pre-conceived attitudes towards school. As far as Stockins is concerned the school and the people involved with it do not match his version of logic and fairness and he discursively distances himself from them.

196 Kiddle provides some indication of perceived moral differences when questioning Gypsy families in the 1970s: “Some of the Traveller women […] could not understand how parents could be so irresponsible as to let their teenage daughters leave home and live on their own in a society as promiscuous and fraught with moral danger as they perceived ours to be” (Traveller Children 31).
Stockins’ proposed reaction to being caned is to threaten the headmaster: “‘My dad’s gonna muller you,’ was all I could say as I turned around and let myself out of his office” (48). Stockins’ father represents protection, firmness and fairness (security) to Stockins and it is to his father that he turns to right the proposed wrong. Furthermore, by impregnating his story with direct speech Stockins re-establishes himself as a subject with control over the proceedings. In addition, he denies the authority of the headmaster and creates a scenario of an active agent in charge of his own actions by not waiting to be “dismissed” by the headmaster: “I turned around and let myself out.” For Stockins at this stage in the story there are no rules, lines or authorities in school; only “illogicalities” that need to be set straight. Stockins then describes his father’s reaction to his son’s caning: “Dad was furious when I told him. I had never seen him so angry. His hands trembled, I remember that” (48). By depicting his father confirming his own anger at being caned, Stockins has learned that such an action from an authoritative figure should not be accepted. Furthermore, the caning is the catalyst that ends Stockins’ days at school: “‘Jim, you ain’t going back to school, son’” (48). Stockins’ father is now positioned as the protector, who has his son’s interest at heart, and the headmaster is transformed into the rule-breaker and line-crosser. The reversal is completed by Stockins’ fantasy concerning his father’s dealings with the headmaster: “Shame that Dad wouldn’t let me go down there with him in the morning, when he tried to drag the head across his desk but was restrained by the other teachers” (48). This image of revenge (or the Avenger) foregrounds the powerlessness of the headmaster and his need of protection when a “man” (Stockins’ father) enters the equation. Towards the end of the story Stockins reveals his attitude to school and school education: “I was pleased that I had survived a couple of years of schooling without learning a thing, knowing that I would never set foot inside one again” (48). Obviously, school only represents so much “loose change” in Stockins’ world and not a place that warrants any great degree of personal investment.

In Stockins’ school story he depicts himself having learned that rules, lines and the authority figures that legitimate them were not compatible to his own subjectified notions of fairness, firmness and mutual respect. Claims of authority and the power to act on that authority are based on the premises that rules are rules and rules have consequences. However, 

197 Muller means to kill – in this context to beat up.
198 Stockins has obviously internalised the discourse of literacy versus illiteracy and feels the need to illustrate the benefits of not being able to read, and discusses the input of significant others on the subject: “There is one good side effect of us not reading and writing – when did you ever see a gypsy wearing glasses? We don’t need them. We don’t strain our eyes reading books and filling out forms, that’s why. Mind you, another theory is that standing in front of the bonfire is another reason not many gypsies need spectacles. Dad believed that the smoke from the fire was good for your eyes. It smoked all the shit and dirt out of them, he said, and that was what his dad told him” (48-9).
Stockins describes his character in the story not understanding the reasons behind the rules and therefore the consequences cannot be judged to be fair, or otherwise. School and learning to read and write are not described in terms of positive currency within his circle of friends and therefore Stockins deems school and school education an unnecessary element in his life. Family came first in Stockins’ story (comforting his brother) and last (his Father and the headmaster). If rules are rules in school, then family is family and family rules are family rules for Stockins. In Stockins’ educational narrative, he discursively dismantles potentially asymmetrical power relations, in Boswell’s school story we see that Boswell speaks from a platform that he considers himself to have built up and earned during his working life.

**Gordon Sylvester Boswell: Scripting in Defence of the Other**

It is evident from my analysis of Boswell’s school story that Boswell superimposes an adult script onto his reconstruction of fragmented memories of his school experiences. In my interpretation, Boswell (re)constructs his school story with the theme of defence in a potentially hostile environment as a meta-narrative. This narrative, in turn, forms a miniature version of a macro world (outside school) in which Boswell considers himself to have forged a status position. Boswell uses his story like someone might use a platform; a position where he can not only defend himself, but go on the counter-attack and speak back. However, Boswell’s view of school, the school environment and reading and writing show signs of ambiguity and contradiction. The main features of Boswell’s story are: Boswell, his siblings and other Gypsies are sent to a school; Boswell and the other Gypsies at the school are involved in many fights; the Gypsies are teased and treated differently at the school, and Boswell and his siblings get their lunch stolen.

Boswell’s concise and concrete description of Mauney Road School in Romford, Essex, presents Boswell’s collective view of his own and his siblings thoughts concerning school: “It was a big school. None of us was happy there, but we had to go all the same” (36). The sense of resentment that Boswell gives voice to is developed throughout his story and communicates with Traveller Willie Reid’s impression of his school years: “[…] I felt trapped in a hostile, threatening and unwelcome environment” ([*Traveller Children* 93]). Boswell continues

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199 Willie Reid ascribes himself to be a Scottish Traveller. Reid went through the school system and works within it. At an education conference he commented on “rejection by other children, of institutional rejection and of teachers who had made up their minds in advance that the Traveller children would be failures” ([*Traveller Children* 93]). He also spoke about power relations involved in school – Traveller relations: “The reason that I had a full secondary school education was because the Authorities gave my mother a simple ultimatum: ‘Put them to school or we’ll put them in a home’. We learnt in fear” ([*Traveller Children* 93-94]). See Willie Reid,
to construct an impression of the environment at the school by describing some of the other pupils: “Looking back on those days, the lads in our school were a rough lot, sons of coster parents and the like” (36), and the headmaster: “[...] a bad-tempered case. He had a King Edward beard, and spent most of his time giving the lads the cane” (36). As we see, Boswell describes the school pupils as “a rough lot” and the headmaster in terms of a sadistic patriarch. Boswell then, seemingly speaking from experience, adds an account of the headmaster’s various uses of the cane: “Not only on their hands: he would bend you over a desk and lay it on thick and heavy: He hadn’t much patience with us at all” (36). So far in the story Boswell has provided an image of the school as unwelcoming and potentially hostile. In fact, Boswell depicts conflict at the school as almost an inevitability: “Of course the Cock of the School had to have a battle with the Gypsy boys, so we had to defend ourselves at all times” (36). By depicting the “Gypsy boys” forming a group, “we,” within the school Boswell creates an us/them scenario where the conflicts are based on essentialist projections rather than any other cause. However, as Boswell explains, once the fighting starts it is difficult to stop: “Not many days passed without a fight. If I won one, Brother Lewis would lose his and that made me look for the one who beat him and so it went on” (36). The fighting is now based on belonging, the protection of family members and other members of the group of “Gypsy boys.” The fighting was not reserved for the boys either, as Boswell explains: “My sisters would have their share of battles too” (36). Basically, Boswell describes Romford School in terms of the necessity of defending one’s self, one’s nearest relations and the collectivity of Gypsies.

Boswell also provides an example of one of the reasons why tensions run high at the school: “We got the ‘Gypsy, Gypsy, live in a tent, can’t afford to pay your rent!’” (37). Such teasing is alienating as it creates both a material and economic gap between the teaser, who, supposedly lives in a house, and whose parents pay rent, and the teased, Gypsies, who are assumed to be deviant (live an unusual life) in these respects. Although teasing is a common aspect of communication between children at school, the use of derogatory insinuations concerning a particular signifier in relation to an associated imagined group reflects a lack of censorship of such phenomena (if such phenomena were/are thought of as in need of censorship) in the school and among the parents of the “non-Gypsy” children in Boswell’s story. In short, the effect of the teasing in Boswell’s story can be described as Othering. It creates, maintains


200 By “coster” Boswell could mean street sellers, market sellers, etc.
and fixes difference between a supposed superior subject and an inferred inferior object. Boswell expresses a sense of Otherness as he sums up his experience at the school: “This was one of the worst schools we were sent to. I think it was because it was so big, and so many children. We seemed for ever in trouble – all because we were Gypsies and looked different from the others” (37). Notice that Boswell refers to differences of physical appearance as well as group affiliation as reasons for the other children’s proposed reactions. Although Boswell does not elaborate on whether the perceived difference is to do with the colour of his skin, the way that he was dressed or his bodily dispositions, he does perceive it as having an alienating effect. Furthermore, according to Boswell, Romford School was “one of the worst” schools, which suggests that similar scenarios were also played out at other schools. Boswell also depicts other children stealing his own and his siblings’ dinners, which if reported “meant another fight after school” (37). However, Boswell also insinuates that the reason that the other children stole his and his siblings’ dinners was because “[m]ost of the poorer boys’ dinner was bread and jam, wrapped up in newspaper” (37). Boswell, on the other hand, describes his lunch consisting of “thick currant pancakes Mother made in the pan (and butter in the middle too), and home made cakes” (37, original parentheses, by Seymour). Boswell and his siblings are obviously not portrayed as belonging to the economically poorer children at the school: he also describes his parents giving their children money to buy other food in case their lunch did get stolen (37). Even though Boswell describes Gypsies being Othered at the school, he and his siblings did not belong to the materially poorer group of children.

One aspect of Boswell’s school story is that he does not discuss anything that he learned at school from the teachers.\(^{201}\) It is as if the only thing that he learned at school, or the only thing that he wanted to relate to Seymour, or a reader, was how the other children reacted to Gypsies. In my reading, the school represents a miniature version of the macro world of Gypsy adults outside of the school. The two worlds can be seen, albeit in a generalised form, as similar with respect to “outsider” attitudes towards Gypsies. Furthermore, if we assume that the adult members of the family in the macro-world would protect Boswell and his brothers and sisters, we can also assume that the method that the children used to protect themselves would have been procured from observations, interpretations and adaptations of what their parents and other significant others do in similar situations to the scenarios in school.

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\(^{201}\) Boswell talks about his son Lewis’s kids and the subject of school education: “They wear these little badges, and they get monitors at school, and they’re very intelligent. Lewis is like me – he’s giving his children as much education as he can, and fill it in in the winter months, and then when summertime comes they’ve got to move, and if they’re in a place for a fortnight or three weeks they send them to the nearest school if they can fit them in” (164). We can see that schooling is limited to winter, nearness to a school while travelling in summer and the availability of places.
Boswell spoke in the interview situation with Seymour and discursively created his childhood from an adult point of view. Here again, the speaker is superimposing an adult script concerning interrelations, onto the incomplete and fragmentary script of his childhood school experiences, therefore the adult discourse dominates and pre-determines which events become events in his story and which events not. Obviously, Boswell does not attribute events in the classroom or what he learned at the school(s) any status or recognition, and therefore they do not appear in the discourse as events.

Boswell does mention other schools in *Boswell*, but, again, there is no indication of anything he learned in the school environment. In one school, Eastwood, he is much more positive about the experience: “We had a real happy time there – both at school and play” (38). However, Boswell only discusses what he learned with the other Gypsy boys after school; catching sparrows, blackbirds, thrushes and rabbits; collecting and selling acorns as pig food and smoking. We see a similar pattern at another school in Essex: “I remember we had a real happy time there as children” (39), but once more Boswell only discusses what the children did outside of school: catching birds, fruit picking and his father digging a well. The only reference to schoolwork at all is a reference from his parents: “Still my parents insisted that we must go to school and learn to read and write – and then we needn’t go any more – that was the promise” (38). The contract that Boswell depicts himself and his siblings having with their parents is not a learning contract in the sense that they should become educated in order to increase their possibilities of getting a job as an employee. The contract is depicted as an agreement through which school is used to gain specific skills that can be exchanged for economic capital; reading and writing can give them an advantage over others in their future trades, or gain them status and respect in relation to others in need of someone with reading and/or writing skills.

In *Boswell* Boswell openly praises his parents for sending himself and his brothers and sisters to school, but, again, we see that reading and writing is the desirable and useful skill referred to in a school context:

“I’ve got those people to thank, my mother and father. “Children, you *must* go to school for a week or a fortnight!” Much as we was persecuted at the time. Because we didn’t

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202 Boswell discussed the advantages and disadvantages of being educated from a language perspective: “Because an educated person – I’ve always found out and I admire them for it – they can use less words. Put them to you in sentences and you’ve got it in a nutshell. But a man that’s not educated, he’s got to think and he’s got to thoroughly explain himself in his way to find a few words to put together, and it’s a long sentence, and therefore the educated man beats the uneducated at this job. So its difficult, because the educated man doesn’t seem to have patience, or tolerance” (158). According to Boswell, education is something that he admires, but it does not necessarily carry with it “patience” or “tolerance” with the “uneducated.”
like it! We was forced to go, and I thank my mother and father ten thousand times for what they’ve done for me, and many of my brothers and sisters who can read and write. (92, original emphases, by Seymour).

Although Boswell depicts his parent’s accrediting school education with specific capital, he, in an apparent paradoxical turn, does not give school any credit for his education: “I knew very little when I left school. Because I’m more or less a self-educated man. Through trying to be in business, do some booking, carrying a pocket-book, pencil and paper, write a letter” (92). Boswell refuses to imbue the school environment with status and links his writing abilities to his occupational practices. In my view, Boswell denies the “official” institution of school any credit in order to promote himself as a self-made or self-educated man. Boswell adopts the narrative of the self-made man in order to stand on the discursively created platform that he constructs so that he can speak back.

In another story Boswell synthesizes themes of fighting and defence while positioning himself in a polemic discussion with a non-Gypsy holidaymaker:

‘Well I’m used to giving it to the point when I get a chance because I have a cause to defend, and it’s a very strong cause too and I intend to defend myself and my people. I’m like a man in the boxing ring when two men get together. It’s defend yourself at all times and that’s been me all my life and I’ve had to defend myself. And now I’ve lived to be in a position when I can tell you people I intend to put it on thick and heavy.[sic] (157-58)

As we see, Boswell positions himself as the active and intentional defender of a “cause,” which involves his own defence and that of his “people.” Moreover, by assuming an active position he also refuses to adopt the position of a passive victim that simply takes without giving back. There is even an integrated warning: “I intend to put it on thick and heavy,” which suggests that Boswell is not satisfied with just defending himself, but wishes to go on the counter-attack. Boswell illustrates this proposed change of strategy from defence to attack by situating himself “in a position” (a newly acquired position) in which he positions John Seymour in the discourse. Seymour becomes a metonymy for Boswell’s perception of an imagined group of educated, privileged and superior “non-Gypsies” through the words “you people.” Boswell is forcing his views through a previously blocked channel in order to refuse any

203 The two marked words “must” and “forced” are ambiguous and can have various meanings. Do the words “must” and “forced” refer to obligatory schooling laws that “force” Boswell’s parent’s to send their children to school? Or do Boswell’s parents send their children to school because they see the value of being able to read and write? Although I see the marked words referring to both questions I will follow the idea that Boswell presented concerning the learning “contract” between his parent’s and their children. I think that the majority of people misrecognise school attendance as voluntary, however refusal to send children to school can lead to various acts of institutional violence, including the imprisonment of parents or state custody of children.

204 The [sic] indicates the omission of the closing quotation mark.
feelings of inferiority (he raises himself out of a pre-suggested Otherness and places himself on a self-made platform) so that he can speak. Additionally, by using the simile of two men in a boxing ring as a metaphor for defence, he also creates a metonymy of the many battles he has fought in his life, including his construction of his school environment; the source of the micro-world script in Boswell’s story meets its macro-world theme. We can see from Boswell’s story that habitus and symbolic capital are decisive factors in the “choice” of scripts and events in a story, in Jess Smith’s school story we also see how habitus and relationality can be reflected in the symbolic significance of an object and lead to violence.

**Jess Smith: The Significance of a School Satchel**

In *Jessie’s Journey* Jess Smith wrote a story depicting the significant events of her last day of school. Smith’s story represents the protagonist at a particularly threatening junction (or liminal stage) in her life, in which many seemingly negative elements converge. Smith’s school satchel and the restrictive space of a hump-backed bridge become explosive containers of a meeting between the historical weight of school bullying and Smith’s habitus. The main features of Smith’s story are: Smith goes to school feeling depressed; she is presented three certificates; on the way home Smith is teased by some children; other children join in and Smith’s satchel is thrown from a bridge; Smith fights the children and her satchel is recovered; she arrives home, but does not tell her parents of the events with the other children.

Smith begins her story by providing the reader with information concerning the significance of the day in question: “The 10th of March, my fifteenth birthday, had passed and by law I’d almost finished with school” (239). In this first sentence of her story Smith foregrounds two, from her point of view, happy occasions that seem to set the mood for the rest of the story. However, already in the next sentence Smith dampens any such hopes by injecting her story with a degree of foresight: “If it hadn’t been for the bullies, my last days at school could’ve been happier” (239). The prospective mood of the story darkens even further, as Smith adds a retrospective layer to her introduction and tells how the blue bus, which the family had been using as a mobile home, was being sold off part by part. Smith signifies how important the bus was to her by portraying herself acting unlike herself: “The first time in my life I ever screamed at him (Smith’s father) was when he gave a man the dynamo and cylinder-head, because he was giving away the heart of the engine” (239, my parentheses). The bus also has a special place in *Jessie’s Journey*; it encapsulates the capital of “home” to Smith, as she lived in it from her fifth year to her fifteenth, and *Jessie’s Journey* is framed by Smith’s
and her family’s life in the blue bus. In addition, Smith expresses the significance of the bus by prioritising its loss within a hierarchy of other afflictions in her story: “Nothing hurt me more: not measles, mumps, chicken-pox or my sorest bout of tonsillitis, or, come to think of it, bullies” (239). Smith has now provided the reader with a background to the competing shades of emotion that will affect the remainder of her school story.

As we see in Smith’s first comment concerning her school story, the plight of “her” bus is portrayed laying heavily on her mind: “I went to school that morning feeling as if I’d been at a funeral, and try as I might the feeling wouldn’t go away” (239). Smith then expands upon the depth of “the feeling”: “It was the day of prize-giving, and although I was presented on stage with three certificates I still felt despondent” (239). Although Smith does not elaborate on her school achievements in Jessie’s Journey, her depiction of herself receiving “three certificates” would suggest that she did achieve a degree of education at school. Smith omits the rest of the school day in her story, thus minimalizing any capital that the school could symbolize, and continues after school: “Making my way home, lost in thoughts of losing my summers, I failed to hear those oh so familiar voices echoing behind me until they were on my heels” (239). The reference to Smith “losing her summers” refers to Smith’s (temporary) sedentary life after the bus was scrapped; she portrays herself living with her sister Shirley for a while until she returns to travelling with her mother and father (JJ243, Tales 1-2).

Returning to the story, Smith’s expressive reference to the other children (bullies), “those oh so familiar voices,” communicates a sense of continuity concerning problematic interrelations in connection with the school environment. Smith then illustrates a form of negative interrelation by providing an example of teasing aimed at Smith: “’Tinkie, Tinkie, cold bum. Yer Mammy cannae knit. Yer Daddy’s lying drunk in the auld village nick’” (239). The rhyme contains references to Smith, her mother and father being slotted into various positions of alterity. Following the anterior logic of the teasing rhyme, non-“Tinkie” children have warm bums, their mothers can knit and their fathers are not drunk and in prison. Such “juxtapositioning” is Othering, as aspects of superiority and inferiority are both implicitly and ex-

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205 Smith also comments on a specific relational aspect that connects herself and the bus: “My bus was created in the same year as myself” (JJ2).

206 In another school story Smith depicts herself writing an essay that should have been five hundred words long: Smith wrote five thousand words on “a magical tale.” Smith portrays the teacher rejecting her essay because it was too long, but it ends up in the hands of the headmaster, who reads it and invites Smith’s parents to see him. In Smith’s story, the headmaster sees “‘a great potential as a writer’” in Smith and is depicted expressing his wish to develop her abilities. Smith’s comment on her story illustrates the impossibility of the headmaster’s proposed proposal: “Of course I’d no intention of going to college or taking extra lessons; all I wanted was to travel!” (236). Higher education is an unthinkable option for her; an expression of habitus that engages with a selection of options that can or cannot be taken in a particular context. In further reference to school, Smith does mention a liking for cookery and art (236).
plicitly contained in the trajectories of the teasing rhyme. Smith also includes other examples of derogatory inferences: “They went on and on with volleys of curses, followed by disgraceful lewd innuendos” (239). According to Smith, the teasing has now a more direct and derogatory tone, as sex-related references further objectify Smith. Smith then depicts herself being cornered on a “humpbacked railway bridge” with three girls behind her and two boys in front (239). At this point in the story, Smith has positioned herself as the trapped and relatively powerless potential victim of the bullies with no apparent means of escape. The reader is then informed of the diachronic dimension of the bullying at the school: “‘They’re determined to get me before I leave this day,’ I thought, as the fear they’d put me in for four years returned” (239). The railway bridge incident in Smith’s story is depicted as the culmination and accumulation of four years of “fear” that Smith has endured at the hands of the bullies. The story script that Smith has used would suggest that the remainder of the story would be concerned with a battle of wits, which Smith (the Traveller) would, of course, win. However, this is not the case; even though Smith is relatively powerless and outnumbered in her story, the rest of the story follows another trajectory.

The catalyst that leads to action, revenge and violence in Smith’s story is Smith’s school satchel and its symbolic significance. The event in Smith’s story that triggers a change in power relations involves her satchel and one of the boys: “One lad came up behind, wrenched my leather satchel and threw it over the bridge” (239). The incident with the satchel sends Smith into a rage-building fantasy:

“My precious bag that Mammy bought me.” I thought on her hawking street upon street, legs aching, doors slammed in her face, fat, roller-headed women parting with pennies to hear her fortunes. My tender loving mother, with the little money she saved, bought, through the greatest love, that satchel. (239-40)

The satchel, then, symbolises a range of sacrifices, ordeals and hardships for Smith, and is imbued with relational meaning. In *Jessie’s Journey* there are many stories concerning Traveller education (a Traveller teaching another Traveller his or her means [plural] of providing for the family), and Smith depicts herself learning from her mother through observation and praxis from an early age. Therefore, Smith is aware of the deeper meaning attached to aching legs, slammed doors et cetera and this intensifies the relational connectedness (collective habitus) and therefore the symbolic currency invested in the satchel. The satchel also acts as a carrier (or bridge) between her “home” environment and the environment of the school; it fol-

207 Smith depicts herself learning her mother’s view of the therapeutic benefits of fortune telling (*JJ* 29), the wrath and prejudice of a holy wife (*JJ* 55) and experiences with an angry farmer (*JJ* 141).
lows her *between* the two environments and, as a luxury item, bought for the lone purpose of carrying school books, it is meant to provide a degree of capital (read conventionality) in the school environment. The satchel acts as a container of items for use in school and is transported from the school environment into Smith’s home environment and acts as a sign of belonging; it is deemed (by Smith’s mother) to be something that Smith *should* have at school, and therefore symbolises Smith’s mother’s ideas concerning what the school habitus expects, which includes (artificially) narrowing the potential difference between Smith’s and the other children’s material accessories (school uniform, clothes, shoes, *satchel* et cetera).²⁰⁸

The incident with the satchel in Smith’s story changes fantasy into a multitude of emotions and feelings represented through bodily transformation: “Butterflies in my stomach turned to hulking buzzards until I felt they would burst out my chest. Hands began shaking, mouth and throat went dry. My eyes stared through red pools, almost leaving their sockets” (240). The passive and fearful potential victim of the narrator’s protagonist has undergone a metamorphosis: firstly, Smith depicts a change of size and stature through her allegorical references to delicate and gentle insects contra sturdy birds of prey, and, secondly, a change in the normal states of bodily parts. However, Smith’s body is not the only body that Smith depicts undergoing change: “There weren’t five kids in my presence. There were five rats needing scoured from the Earth” (240). Instead of standing on a bridge outnumbered, disempowered and in fear, Smith has, discursively, created a “hulking buzzard” out of a “butterfly” and “five rats” out of the five children. Smith has used imagery and metaphor to reverse power relations; the rats become potential fodder for the buzzard.

Smith then describes the combination of elements that lead to violence in her story: “I don’t remember much from then on because I snapped. Years of torment, losing my bus, no future in travelling, brought forth a demon. I didn’t know I possessed” (240). As we see, Smith depicts the satchel incident setting into movement a chain of events and thoughts that trigger a reaction to Smith’s lack of control. She depicts herself having no control over the bullies, she has no control over the loss of “her” bus, and she wants to travel but sees “no future in travelling.” In Smith’s story the protagonist is projected into violence as the only aspect of her environment that she has the possibility to control is the bullying. Smith’s description of the ensuing fight reflects a repressed rage: “Handfuls of hair sprouted from clenched fists, every nail was imbedded with skin and blood, great waves of strength swept my being...”²⁰⁸

²⁰⁸ There is a photograph of Smith in school uniform in *Jessie’s Journey* (between 150-151). In the picture Smith wears white plimsolls, light coloured ankle socks, a dark school uniform, a white shirt buttoned up to the neck and a light coloured cardigan. In *Tents* another photograph (taken towards the middle of the 70s) shows Smith’s three children in school uniform (between 180-181).
and with every blow I rained down screams of ‘Bastard bairns!’” (240). The focus point of the protagonist’s frenzied attack is, in the context of the story, the bullying children on the railway bridge. The humpbacked railway bridge is supposed to represent a safe passage from one environment to another (with the danger below), but in the context of Smith’s story, the bridge becomes a passageway that transcends one environment (the extension of the school environment in the form of the bullies), and the safety and security of the other side of the bridge (an extension of the safe home environment), which Smith is prevented from reaching because of the bullies’ presence. The bridge also symbolizes change; the bridge is modern in the sense that it is a railway bridge, but its architecture (“humped”) suggests historical age. The driving force of Smith’s story lies in the gaps between the old and the new, the past and the future and movement and negotiation between subjective tradition and collective convention. The explosive power and depictions of violence in the fight in Smith’s story reflect the build up and release of various forms of the frictions and tensions of subjectified history, and not just the bullying children.

The next event in Smith’s school story involves a “black-faced miner” informing Smith that the other children had run away, and Smith portrays her character expressing her surprise: “They ran, those evil youngsters who’d made my life a misery for so long, ran! I could hardly believe it” (240). Smith stereotypes the bullies in her story by representing them as bullies and cowards, and depicts herself learning that to stand up for oneself gives results. The “passageway” is now open for the protagonist to continue or return; she has regained control over her “path.” Smith then portrays the miner’s friend retrieving her satchel “after a goods train had trundled over” and writes, “[i]t must have been blessed, that wee bag, because it hadn’t even one scratch” (240). The “wee bag,” which, in my interpretation, represents, among other things, Smith’s mother’s sacrifices, ordeals and love for Smith, is intact, likewise the memories and representations of Traveller symbolic currency invested in it; they are durable. Smith depicts herself lying down in the bus and crying when she arrives home in her story, but she keeps the incident a secret: “By the time the family arrived, my broken heart was hidden and I told no-one about the bullies” (240). By portraying her character withholding this part of the story, Smith adds a level of personal experience that is not shared; she expresses herself procuring a potential scheme of personal agency. Smith acted independently; she has learned that, as a Traveller, she must “fight back” and not just accept social positions created for her through another’s discourse.

Smith’s story is accompanied by a particularly striking poem in free verse that consists of thirty-three statements and rhetorical questions and is an expression of the intersubjective na-
ture of habitus.209 The poem is pre-advertised as a poem to bullies: “Many years later I wrote these words to those people who tormented me” (240).210 The first lines of the poem, Yes, it may be said you are ‘better’ than I, your peers have obviously blessed / you with a grand home, fine clothes, the best schooling, good food etc., reflect Smith’s perceived material and class position from an internalised “non-Traveller” point of view. She depicts herself initially as the Other in order to talk back: I, on the other hand, saw life from the mouth of a ‘tinker’s’ tent (240). The word “tinker” and “tent” act as bearing strategic signifiers of inferiority, and Smith uses them to introduce a whole list of romantic, geographic and historical statements and rhetorical questions concerning what she has experienced and witnessed as a Traveller in Scotland: I have seen the hills of Glen Cloe clothed in purple heather, heard her mountain tops whisper a thousand curses on the murder of the MacDonald bairns. [...] / Have you ever listened to a deaf child sing a beautiful Scottish ballad, music and words unwritten? (240-41).

The personal pronoun “you” is not directed at the specific bullies that Smith refers to in her story, but acts as a denial of the power and potential “over-determining” properties of dominant discourses. Differences are also elaborated upon in Smith’s poem: We are different, you and I: I am the wind in your hair, you are the voice of / mistrust [...]. / I am the grouse in the purple heather, you are the hunter who denies me my flight (242). The “you’s” and “I’s” of the statements form juxtapositions on both psychological and practical levels, and represent a difference in mind-set and ways of acting in the world; the carefree/suspicious and freedom/restriction metaphors are in communication with a historical depth of un-reconciled and problematic interrelations. The last two statements of Smith’s poem are reserved for self-assertive statements concerning a relational Smith: I am the seed of all who went before me. I am from the brave ones who hid, / not burned the tartan. I am from those who spoke Gaelic in secret places. / I am part of the ‘true’ Earth’, the sea, the sky - / I am ‘THE SCOTIA BAIRN’ (242). The first part refers to relationality and connectedness with the past, the second part to the Highlanders, the highland clearances and the destruction of the clans, the third part refers to Gaelic speakers and the fourth part illustrates an organic connectedness with nature, which I consider to be a strategic position that Smith adopts in order to delineate the perceived attitude of an imagined group of people, and to project her own view of herself as knowing more

209 The first line is a statement with reference to non-Traveller materiality, the next four statements juxtapose Traveller experiences of Scotland to non-Traveller materiality. The next sixteen lines are rhetorical questions asking the “people who tormented” Smith at school if they had done, experienced or ever thought of the things that she has. The next two lines are statements, in which Smith states her distinctiveness and difference. The next eight lines consist of questions and statements that juxtapose differences and the last two lines are reserved for statements concerning the relational constituents that form Smith.

210 The poem is printed in italics in Jessie’s Journey.
about Scotland, its history and mythic-history than other so-called Scots do. The poem is a poem of assertion, denial and it literally and visually speaks back.

Smith’s educational narrative is a story concerning the significance of the school satchel that her mother had bought for her. The satchel represents a concentration of symbolic currency and subjectified history, and becomes a catalyst of violence when it is cast from the railway bridge onto the tracks. The retrieval of the satchel is a declaration of independence from the bullies, a refusal of the arbitrary authority and legitimacy of dominating discourses and a re-confirmation of her subjectivity. Smith’s poem, is not just a poem against one particular person, or the bullies in her story, it is her own statement and affirmation of who she is: a Traveller. We can say that Smith’s school story re-enacts a history of problematic and un-reconciled interrelations in a school environment, but Joyce’s school story tends to illustrate a desire to “bridge over” interrelational dissonance.

Nan Joyce: Educating the Reader

Nan Joyce’s school story does not involve any indication of what she learned at school, which indicates that she did not deem it noteworthy to mention in the interview situation with Farmar. Therefore I will analyse Joyce’s school story from a few chosen perspectives: the relation between labelling, school, habitus and Joyce’s depiction of the “good” school, Joyce’s assertions with reference to class and classlessness and her thoughts concerning friends at school and when travelling. I think that Joyce, rather than illustrating what she learned at school, attempts to educate the listener/reader concerning stereotyped Traveller and “non-Traveller” interrelations. The stories that Joyce (and Farmar) presents in My Life are mostly positive concerning her experiences in school. The main events in the story are: Joyce goes to school in Lancaster, England; she makes friends with the other children; after Joyce is taken ill the other children follow her back to the camp; the police move her family off the site that they are staying on and Joyce has to leave the school.

In the introduction to Joyce’s school story, Joyce depicts her father working “on a building site” for a few months in Lancaster, England, and, by doing so disrupts a normative narrative concerning Travellers and/or Gypsies and a proposed preference for self-employment (23). Joyce continues her story by describing the environment at the school: “I went to school in Lancaster and I found that the children and the teachers were so nice to me!” (23). The exclamation mark, inserted by Farmar, illustrates her interpretation of the way that Joyce was judged to have said this particular sentence at the time and place of transcription. Therefore, I
assume that Joyce’s comment referred to a degree of out-of-ordinariness concerning her portrayal of her school experience. In the next line of her story Joyce clarifies what she sees as an important aspect of being “nice”: “They never once called me a bad name or anything though they knew I was a traveller” (23). By foregrounding the absence of negative labelling, Smith illustrates how conscious she is (as an adult) of the destructive power invested in such labels.

Kathy Kiddle expresses the splitting effect of being objectively classified in a school context: “It is difficult for Traveller children to come to schools simply as themselves, without having to cope with the image and experience of their group” (Traveller Children 44). I think that it would be impossible for Travellers to go to school “simply as themselves,” as Traveller children would have already, to a certain extent and various extents, internalised themselves as other. Joyce is fully aware of the position of Travellers and a perceived Traveller position: “If you’re born a traveller you’re born with a stigma and lots of young travellers will hide that they’re travellers, they’ll disguise themselves to get into discos or to go anywhere” (xiv). The intersubjective world of being simultaneously Othered/othered and othering/Othering (the internalisation and re-production of the pejorative discourse of the dominant group(s) [in the forms of difference and opposition] and its strategic use in “speaking back”) does not begin at school and Traveller children can already have a feel for this game before they begin school, but not necessarily a developed coping mechanism. By accepting Bourdieu’s developmental and selectively accumulative view of the habitus as “the result of a long process of inculcation, beginning early in childhood, which becomes a ‘second sense’ or a second nature,” we can assume that the “inculcation” has led to a certain degree and varying degrees of internalisation in Traveller children by school age. By observing the reactions of parents and other significant others and internalising their reactions, opinions, views et cetera, the child acquires the dispositions that he or she has the possibility to use in a particular situation. Kiddle is aware of the importance of a school environment that is different: “If Traveller children are to feel secure and flourish in school, then whatever the hostility outside, school has to be a safe

211 See Sinéad ní Shuinéar, “Why do Gaujos hate Gypsies so much, anyway? A case study,” in Gypsy Politics and Traveller Identity, ed. Thomas Acton (Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire Press, 1997). Shuínéar exemplifies the problems involved with stereotypes and Othering when describing and interpreting Traveller actions in her essay. Shuínéar describes what she calls “perfectly practical” long-term and short-term strategies for working on non-Traveller fears. The long term strategy involves any display of “‘insane’ violence” or associations with fortune-telling, curses, mysterious powers et cetera that effectively warn non-Travellers “not to mess with them.” The short term strategy, according to Shuínéar, is much the same because “Gaujos are going to think the worst of them anyway” (32). Shuinéar, then, provides a few examples of “scams” that involve Travellers’ deliberate adherence to stereotypes in order to gain some kind of monetary or material gain. Shuinéar projects the idea that Gypsies act as screens: “Gaujos need Gypsies to personify their own faults and fears, thus lifting away the burden of them” (27, original emphasis).

haven” (*Traveller Children* 42). I would suggest that the exclamation mark that Farmar inserted to accentuate her understanding of the meaning behind Joyce’s spoken words at the time of transcription, and Joyce’s comments concerning the lack of negative labelling at the school indicate that her experiences at the school, spoken from the adult narrating I’s perspective, were not in synthesis with what Joyce would normally expect. On the other hand, Joyce’s school story acts as a warning against “Traveller” and “non-Traveller” overgeneralisations concerning relations between Travellers and the concept of school; not all children at all schools have internalised negative ideas concerning Travellers and not all Travellers concentrate on the “bad” side of school. We might also add that Joyce’s representation of her early instruction by her father (in this chapter) would seem to suggest that the distance between school habitus and Joyce’s habitus was not excessive.

Returning to Joyce’s story, Joyce sums up her experiences at the school in a neat and concise statement: “I really enjoyed going to school there, the friends were so warm” (23). Joyce’s description of the young school kids’ lack of reaction to Joyce being a Traveller would also suggest that neither the teachers’ nor the kids’ parents have influenced their children to think and/or act in any negative way towards others. Joyce continues her story by describing the other children in terms of class, material wealth and symbolic currency: “They were all high-up children from rich backgrounds, like doctors” (23). Although, Joyce selects the occupational signifier “doctors” as a status example of the friendly children’s parentage, she also depicts doctors in a less than positive light in *My Life*: “Some doctors wouldn’t bother with our children, they wouldn’t come out to look at a traveller, so we had to bring the children into the hospital […]. I found the black doctors were the best, they were really kind and they understood us” (38-9). I assume that Joyce associated the friendly children with her ideas concerning “good” doctors. We also see that Joyce creates a bridge of understanding between the “black doctors” and Travellers, which, in my interpretation, insinuates a perceived degree of shared experience with reference to histories of objectification and projected inferiority. In her story, Joyce actually quashes the differences in class between her character and the other children at the school by first drawing attention to it and then projecting the idea that she was treated the same as any other child at the school. Joyce also disrupts a myth of prejudice; that class and prejudice are in some way exponentially related – the higher the class of the persons involved the more the prejudice. The children at the school in Joyce’s story are not depicted showing any form of (pre)dispositioned prejudice.

Joyce actually critiques travelling with regards to interrelations among children: “I never met so many friends as we had there (at the school). As a traveller you don’t have friends; you
might have them for a little while but then you leave them all behind” (23, my parentheses). Of course, Joyce is talking about friends and not siblings here and provides an image of a lonely and friendless environment without any traces of references to a romantic and carefree childhood. Loneliness is also the driving factor in a story that Joyce retells in *My Life*:

> When we were at a lonely camp […] we’d be dying to move. Sometimes if Father wouldn’t shift we’d go up the road, open the gate and hush the farmer’s cattle out on the road […]. Father would get the blame, the police would come down and we’d be shifted. (12)

Besides providing Joyce’s depiction of “naughty” children utilising a functional method of “getting their way,” embedded in the story is Joyce’s view and projected awareness of the process of blaming – the seemingly automatic relation between something happening, the accusation of a Traveller and action being taken against the Traveller. Being moved on is also the initial reason that Joyce gives for leaving the school: “The police came and shifted us and I just hated leaving” (23). In contrast to her friendship with the school children, Joyce does not depict positive interrelations between the police and Travellers: “We were always aware that we were hunted, like rabbits, or like dogs after a fox, hunted from place to place” (23-4). Notice that class re-emerges in Joyce’s use of simile and metaphor. Hunting for foxes is for the most part an upper middle to upper class “sport,” and involves various images in the context of Joyce’s story: the privileged versus the under-privileged, the powerful disempowering the dominated and the control, surveillance and increasing restriction of space. Although Joyce’s depiction of her relations with the other children at the school is class free, class still finds its way into her story at an abstract level.

> Although, the “official” institution of order, control and legitimated violence (the police) are initially blamed by Joyce for her own and her siblings’ lack of school education, Joyce also admits that sooner or later they (the family) would have moved anyway:

> Maybe if we’d stayed there we’d have had an education. But of course my father wouldn’t stay long in England. The travellers are a peculiar people, although they were never really wanted in Ireland, they were outcasts in their own country still they had great love for it. When we were away the first thing would sing about was Ireland. (24)

As we see, Joyce depicts love of country as the reason for the family not staying in England. The contradiction of not being wanted and wanting to belong locates the interdependent relation through which the inclusive and exclusive practices of nationalism operate and illustrates the position that Joyce allocates for Travellers in Ireland. Joyce describes Travellers

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213 The chapter that Joyce’s school story appears in is entitled “As a traveller you don’t have friends.”
feeling as though they are foreigners in England but perceiving themselves as alienated in Ireland.

In my interpretation of Joyce’s school story I have emphasised the “unusualness” of her story: her father works for someone else instead of being self-employed, the “high-up” rich kids are not depicted practising internalised anti-Traveller prejudice and Joyce does not express difference between herself and her school friends by way of class. On the other hand, Joyce critiques her childhood lifestyle and communicates her feelings of loneliness and friendlessness when travelling. Traveller/non-Traveller interrelations cannot be automatically cast into an oppositional, fixed and unchanging mould. The quality and content of interrelations are dependent upon context, environment, lifestyle, the nature of pre-conceived ideas upon entering an interrelational arena, the durable and transposable nature of habitus and power relations between individuals who align themselves with imagined groups.

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In this chapter I have discussed several ways that expressions of habitus are represented in the life stories. I have emphasised relations between life styles and environments in the foundational characteristics and structures of individual and collective habitus and shown how certain representations of habitus, speech patterns, body gestures and children’s play are performed as expressions of re-production practices. Furthermore, I have analysed and discussed representations of the conservative and generative roles of habitus in educational narratives, and its connection to symbolic capital encapsulated in (pre)dispositions related to environments, life style and interrelations. Whether the environment is described as hostile or harmonious, or perceived as ambiguous or paradoxical depends on the constructed relationship between the configuration of the “facts” of fragmented memory, and the representations of adult habitus projected onto the script of the story. The relationship produces the possible ways that stories can, or cannot be told and involve, in turn, the re-production of habitus. Depending on the distance between codes of disposition encoded in different habitus, which includes the nature and respective compatibility of capitals, the habitus can lead to an increase of integration and/or assimilation, an accommodation of the new environment into perception schemas or can have a more restrictive role, which can lead to a rejection or a pre-consciously instigated strategic withdrawal from unfamiliar situations. Although Stockins’ general description of his time at school, “I had plenty of gorger friends and, on the whole, we got on fine” (47), provides a relatively harmonious picture of his days at school, his choice of educational narrative, which culminates in his leaving school for good, presents himself in conflict with a teacher,
other children and the headmaster. Boswell gives his mother and father credit for sending himself and his siblings to school against their will, but refuses, in order to present himself as a self-made man, to accredit school education with his reading and writing abilities. Smith’s school story represents her school days as plagued by bullies, and Joyce, although positively inclined to school education, presents school and school education for herself and her own children as an un-actuated desire. There is no doubt that a travelling lifestyle (or reconstructed memories of a travelling lifestyle) creates a series of possibilities, probabilities and impossibilities that are specific to individual Travellers, but they are in communication with a family and/or group habitus. According to Stockins, learning to read and write was not part of his everyday interrelations and therefore not imbued with symbolic currency. In Joyce’s story, her father’s education of his children is represented as likening an instructional school situation, which seems to bring the teaching environment at “home” nearer to the school habitus.

One of the findings of this chapter is that Travellers construct their narratives from a perspective that is biased towards accommodating the durable, transposable dispositions of their habitus. The stories that I have analysed reveal the need to reconstitute self positively and to reinstate a sense of self-respect. Stockins’ reversal of power relations together with his use of logic to create illogicalities in his school story, construct a moral world where Stockins and his family retain the higher ground. Boswell, through a discourse of defence, constructs a platform from where he can speak from the self-acclaimed position that he considers himself to have forged during his working life. In Smith’s school story Smith “literally” and figuratively fights back against dominant group discourses that threaten to devour and overdetermine her existence. Joyce communicates positively with the benefits of school and school education and, in my view, embraces the opportunity to educate the reader concerning generalised representations of Traveller/non-Traveller interrelations. However, fifteen years after the first edition of her life story, Joyce returns to a mode of maintaining self-respect by testifying that herself and her children are “highly educated” in Traveller education. Although the two types of education that I have used, institutional (school) and family (Traveller), were not meant to mutually exclude each other, we can see that a Traveller/Gypsy lifestyle that involves travelling (being moved on by police et cetera) and problematic interrelations with the settled community are not conducive with success at school (whatever that might involve).

The main point of this chapter that carries on through the next chapter is that the Gypsy and/or Traveller narrators embody and co-produce forms and degrees of capital that reproduce a sense of agreement with familiar interrelational, physical and discursive environments in their stories. The dominant structures position the respective narrators in the domi-
nated social and discursive positions, and these positions are the positions within which the co-opted schemes of appreciation are applied. The familiar environment is the position of domination, therefore withdrawals from other less familiar environments become the probable and most possible result; the dominated return to, legitimise and defend their dominated social positions. Therefore, the process of maintaining a relation of domination is co-produced. The dominant group rejects, and the dominated withdraws, thus staying within its discursive and structural constraints. The trap has a double-lock with two keys; one key is turned by the dominant group and the other by the Gypsy and/or Traveller.

In the first chapter I noted that the life story narrators communicated through the dominant discourse and positioned themselves within the continuation of historical discourses connected to “unusual lives” and “underworld” themes, and in this chapter I discussed the dual process of maintaining and re-producing relations of domination. In the next chapter, “The Mythologized I,” I will investigate habitus as an ordering and structuring principle that mediates the discursive dispositions that the narrating I has access to in order “to make the world conform to the myth” (Outline 167).
Chapter Three: The Mythologized I

I often told a man the truth and he wouldn’t believe me,
and I often told a lie and he believed me […]. So, I’m a
liar, I’m a rogue, and I’m a thief. I’m one of each.

Patrick Stokes, *Puck of the Droms* 214

Over and over again, throughout the years, I have tried to con-
vince gypsies that, as a friend, I would much prefer an answer I
did not like, providing it was the truth, than one I did like but
was not the truth. I have been assured over and over again they
understand the implication of all this, but I am yet to be con-
vinced I have been successful in persuading any of them to
match performance with assurance.

Norman N. Dodds, *Gypsies, Didikois and other Travellers* 215

This chapter will focus on the various strategies of resistance and/or negotiation that the re-
spective narrators employ in their life stories. I will analyse four stories from a perspective
that perceives resistance and negotiation as forming part of a defence system. The defence
system communicates with and/or rejects “outside” views, opinions and potential influences
that are either considered to be illegitimate intrusions, or lead to a (re)negotiation and re-
establishment of a desired order. By “outside” I mean that the narrating I (the voice that
speaks on behalf of the narrator’s character in the story) is positioned in the story in opposi-
tion, negotiation or compliance with an other (different) or Other (oppositional) individual,
imagined collectivity and/or discourse. I discussed the interdependent and embodied relation-
ship between habitus, worldview, story script and story/discourse in the main introduction,
and I will now include the concept of myth.

Bruce Lincoln describes myth in terms of “a style of narrative discourse” and a particu-
larly powerful type of story. 216 As Lincoln explains, “whenever someone calls something a
‘myth,’ powerful – and highly consequential – assertions are being made about its relative
level of validity and authority” (Theorizing ix). He describes these “assertions” as either

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215 Norman Dodds was the Member of Parliament for Dartford (1945-55) and Erith and Crayford London, from 1955. See Norman N. Dodds, *Gypsies, Didikois and other Travellers* (London: Johnson Publications, 1966). Dodds, who was involved in the promotion of the 1968 Caravan Sites Act, comments on the nature of the information available for members of Parliament in the 1960s: “It was amazing to me that in the House of Commons library, one of the best libraries in the world, I could get authentic information about almost any of the lesser known tribes of central Africa, but nothing at all on Britain’s own minority problem” (46-47).

strongly positive (primordial truth, or sacred story), strongly negative (lie or obsolete worldview) or as a "pleasant diversion," "poetic fancy" or "story for children" (*Theorizing* ix).\(^{217}\)

The validation and authority of myth, then, is very much a product of points of view, ideologies, power relations and constructions of histories. Furthermore, as Lincoln explains,

> [i]t is not always the case that myths are the product and reflection of a people who tell stories in which they effectively narrate themselves. At times, myths are stories in which some people narrate others, and at times the existence of those is itself the product of mythic discourse. (*Theorizing* 211)

In my view, in order for an imagined “people” to construct a story that presents itself as a legitimate and/or authoritative I/we story of a particular group, the story would have to be, as part of the legitimisation process, juxtaposed to another group. The characteristics of the “us” story would create its Other, whose incorporated members would be discursively produced as non-conformers to certain moral and ethical characteristics and values (ideas, manners, tastes). Therefore, the construction of an “us” group with “naturally” inherited good qualities creates both a hierarchy and a model for the continuation and maintenance of the unequal relationship between the groups. Distance is thus ideologically constructed between the imagined groups, and involves the valorisation and normalization of qualities that are considered to be positive attributes of one group and the, at least, partial demonization of the projected qualities of the Other. In other words, the “us” group constructs itself as non-mythic and legitimate and the Other group as mythic in three interconnected senses: firstly, in the sense that the Other group’s stories are demoted to non-legitimacy and therefore rejected as superstition or lacking credibility; secondly, the group and/or a generalized portrayal of individuals perceived as belonging to the group are narrated as un-modern, anachronistic and/or even child-like, and; thirdly, that the imagined group or members of the group are romanticized as performing acts of resistance that parts of the dominant group, who, in turn, perceive themselves as being dominated by a minority dominant group, project onto them. In consequence, the group is mythologized and positioned structurally within the constructed discourse. “Real” members of the group are then expected to narrate themselves from the positions imagined for them to occupy in order for them to be recognised.

The stories that I will analyse in this chapter re-produce the dominant story from a non-dominant perspective. Therefore, the narrators create themselves from within the gaps created by the internalisation of what I refer to as the Other’s Othering process. The Gypsy/Traveller

\(^{217}\) Myths have been described as connected to “primitive mentality” (early anthropologists), a product of the “Savage mind” (not inferior, but different), juxtaposed to narratives of progress and used in romanticist national-ist projects (*Theorizing* 210).
narrators speak back in various ways against the flow of negative discourse that they are aware of and can articulate in their re-negotiations of the problematic relations that they portray themselves having experienced. The negotiations and resistances of the life story narrators that I will focus on are forged from within the context(s) of narration, which means that the respective narrators speak from a position that is pre-determined by the discursive configuration of the production process of their life stories. Therefore, the I is involved in negotiation with a dominant mythology on two levels; firstly, as discursively and structurally dominated individuals, who speak with, through and inside their own internalisations of dominant discourses pertaining to the imagined group that they align themselves with, and, secondly, through the context of book production, which encourages them to speak as Gypsies and/or Travellers. In other words, the respective narrators are actively encouraged to speak as Gypsies and/or Travellers and therefore to narrate stories that stay within a particular narrative discourse and context.

In his essay concerning the construction of media representations of subjects as “‘out of the ordinary’ or dramatic or moving and therefore commercially viable,” Patrick Champagne comments on the representations leaving “little space for the discourse of the dominated, it is because their voices are particularly difficult to hear. They are spoken of more than they speak, and when they speak to the dominant group, they tend to use a borrowed discourse, the very one the dominant offer about them.” The myth that Gypsies/Travellers tell “non-Travellers” what they want to hear is not a specific or essential trait in communication with a trickster stereotype. As Fanon elucidates in a colonial context in *Wretched of the Earth*,

[m]an is only human to the extent to which he tries to impose his existence on another man in order to be recognised by him. As long as he has not been effectively recognised by the other, that other will remain the theme of his actions. It is on that other being, on recognition by that other being, that his own human worth and reality depend. It is that other being in whom the meaning of his life is condensed. (quoted in Belton, *Questioning Gypsy Identity* 136)

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218 Patrick Champagne, “The View from the Media,” Pierre Bourdieu et al, in *The Weight of the World: Social Suffering in Contemporary Society*, trans. Priscilla Parkhurst Ferguson, Susan Emanuel, Joe Johnson and Shoggy T. Waryn (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1999) 46, 51. Commenting on clashes between the police and French Youths from a district of Lyon, Champagne lists the events that the media covered and the proposed retention of “the public”: “The public tend to retain only the violent actions, the clashes with the police, the vandalism, the burning of a supermarket or cars, and to offer pell-mell, as causes of these troubles, explanations gathered by the press, such as police brutality, the idleness of the young people, delinquency, ‘the mood of depression’ in these suburbs, the housing conditions, the bleak surroundings, the absence of sport and leisure facilities, the overconcentration of immigrant populations, and so forth” (51). Champagne argues that the media coverage itself reproduces its own discourse as people discussing the event(s) repeat what they heard on the news the previous day. Also see Bourdieu’s discussion of Champagne’s text in Pierre Bourdieu, *On Television*, trans. Priscilla Parkhurst Ferguson (New York: The New Press, 1996) 19-20.
The myth forms a “reflection” of a discursive, and therefore historically dominated position and is the product of the possible and probable ways that the inculcated dispositions of an individual unintentionally seek some kind of respect, status and/or conventionality (what is expected) in a contextual situation; the “Gypsy” or “Traveller” discourse becomes the familiar one.

I will analyse four narratives that contain particular relevance for both the respective life story narrators and the presentation of the life story in book form. In my analysis of Gordon Sylvester Boswell’s “scam” story I will show how he reverses and transforms the discursive positions of the characters in his story through strategies that “belittle” and “shame” Others. In my interpretation, Boswell deploys the myth of the “good loser” as a psychological ploy that serves to reduce the likelihood of conflict, and promotes the myth as a philosophy, and therefore a future model of life. There are moral and ethical issues at stake in Boswell’s story as he battles to justify a narrative with its generative roots in the historical discourses of confession, vagabond and rogue literature, but resists the confession and/or conversion aspect of such narratives. As far as the political activist, Nan Joyce, is concerned, I will analyse an anti-Traveller protest action. I will focus on the method that Joyce uses to disrupt the powerful mythic discourses that produce “Travellers” in the imagination of members of the dominant group. Joyce’s reflexivity in the story also negotiates a pathway among the groups of protesters involved in her story, and leads to self-help collaboration and a proposed re-humanisation of Travellers in the pedagogical arena of the media.

In Jimmy Stockins’ fight story, I will focus on Stockins’ worldview and the various functions that the fight is portrayed fulfilling within the various groupings of his story. I will also discuss the trap that the story poses, as the reader is only exposed (in the story and much of Cobbles) to Stockins’ role as a Gypsy fighter and his self-promoted view of his own position within a contemporary mythology of fighters and fighting stories. One of the stated aims behind storyteller Jess Smith’s life story (two books) was to record traditional stories that would otherwise be lost. Therefore I will analyse a story that I consider is of importance to Smith’s project, her immediate family and the imagined group that she chooses to align herself with. Smith positions four generations of the female side of her family in a myth concerning Burkers (body-snatchers), and presents a pedagogical situation in which the re-production of a Traveller woman’s way of viewing the world is imbued into future generations. The myth involves a hair-breadth-escape scenario based on the use of knowledge, logics and intuition in avoiding danger, and, as I will show, the pedagogical structure of the myth reveals a modern message still in use today.
The story that I have chosen to analyse from Boswell has many connections to various mythologies and histories concerning rogues, coney, vagabonds and their accompanying scams, tricks and sleights-of-hand. The social historian A.L. Beier writes, “The cony-catchers were Londoners almost to a man. The City authorities issued a proclamation against card-sharpers and cozeners in 1571, and one of the professed aims of the rogue writers was to alert unsuspecting provincials to London’s dangers” (Masterless 135). Although Boswell’s story and Beier’s comments concerning “roguery” are a few hundred years apart, there is a tradition at work. Vagabonds often appeared in the imaginative literature of roguery and, according to Beier, “the vagabond was as likely to be portrayed as a cozener, or cheat, as an ordinary thief […] because frauds made livelier reading than common larceny, especially deceits involving gambling” (Masterless 134). Furthermore, Beier’s comments concerning the preferred location for people out to cheat unsuspecting people in the 1600s, “[c]ony-catchers often gathered at fairs to find their victims” (Masterless 136), can also be used to describe the setting of Boswell’s story: Boswell depicts himself and his partner Jack setting up their “games” at Risca fair in Wales.

Although popular appeal, fantasy, imagination and desire played a significant role in the production of rogue literature, it also provided an authoritative repository of signifiers, derogatory terms and moral stances that could, through their repetition and eventual acceptance, become constituent parts of a mythic discourse. According to Beier, “Gypsies” were also singled out for their particular practices and were even “accused of introducing sleight-of-hand tricks to England” (Masterless 61). The story that Boswell relates (to Seymour) is a story concerning gambling and sleight-of-hand and therefore communicates with a long tradition of such stories. 219 Boswell’s story includes various strategies of reversal, belittling and shaming that seemingly work against the discourses evolving from the imaginative writings of the rogue tradition, but in fact consolidate them. However, Boswell disrupts other discourses that accompanied rogue narratives and narratives of people living unusual lives, as he does not communicate with the conversion and confession aspects of such narratives. In my reading,

219 David Mayall comments on the “overlap” between Gypsies and other perceived groups: “The reason that the representations of Gypsies show considerable overlap with those of the wider vagrant and vagabond population is that the images are mostly taken from identical sources. […]. Furthermore, this image was subsequently picked up by later commentators, who, by accepting the literary image at face value and neglecting alternative sources or a critical reading, then repeated the distorted stereotype of the colourful but threatening criminal world and low life” (Gypsy Identities 73).
Boswell uses the story to create an empathetic ear for his philosophy of life in order to explain rather than to appear apologetic or express a desire for personal reform. My analysis will show how Boswell transforms victim into victimiser, and victimiser into victim in order to legitimise and verify the relation between his philosophy of life and gambling. I will also show how Boswell projects strategies of belittling and shaming in order to represent, readjust and/or reverse power relations and situations of order and control. Furthermore, I will relate the aforementioned strategies to psychological ploys concerning norms of masculinity, gambling and the myth of the “good loser.” Before I begin my analysis of Boswell’s story, I will include Boswell’s descriptions of the two games involved in the story. The descriptions of the games in *Boswell* seem to follow a tradition in rogue literature by revealing the trick behind a scam, but, as I will show, there is a difference in Boswell’s case. Boswell’s description of the two games also establishes his attitudes to the games themselves and his punters.

*The Games: Cover the Spot and The Cobbler Joint*

Boswell’s descriptions of the moneymaking “scams” that he depicts his character and Jack using in his story establish the initial impression of the punter as the proposed victim. I use the word “victim” to illustrate that the punter (the Welshman in the story) gambles on the misconceived pre-understanding that he can win more money. Boswell’s description of “Cover the Spot” projects the proposed intention behind the game: “You cover a spot with four pieces of galvanised sheets – they never would cover the spot. A little bit always showed. But with a sleight-of-hand I could show them how it was done” (129). The matter-of-factness of Boswell’s description betrays how under control the game was, and correspondingly how chanceless the punter was. Boswell also provides a description of “The Cobbler joint”: “There was a little stall with about three foot six wide with a platform on it and a bar at the top, and a ball on a string from this bar. And in the middle of the platform a little pointed peg like a clown’s hat. You had to hit the peg with the ball” (128). The trick connected to “The Cobbler joint” game was, according to Boswell, to put a spin on the ball to hit the peg, otherwise “[t]he ball would go round the peg, you see” (128, original emphasis [by Seymour]). There was another trick to the game if the first trick was discovered by the punter, as Boswell explains, speaking to Seymour: “I had a wide-brimmed hat on, you see, and I’d just wipe the string with the rim of my hat and steer it round the peg” (128).

Boswell concludes his explanation of the workings of the game by stating that the punter “couldn’t win” (128). The “cold-bloodedness” of the descriptions of the two games is striking
and Boswell’s professed self-serving philosophy with relation to the games does not diminish the impression: “It was me that mattered – self first, self second, and if there was anything left give it to self and I think that’s the way of the world. And that’s how I find other people has been living so I imitated them” (129, original emphasis). Although Boswell is apparently conscious of the possible impression of what he has said (to Seymour) and attempts to blame others, or at least share the blame for his otherwise open and brutally honest selfishness, he is not apologetic. And neither does he actually reveal any secrets about the “The Cobbler joint,” because, as Boswell points out, “it’s all barred from a fairground now, but it’s a wonderful game” (128). Boswell does not apologise for his actions in the story either, and it is quite obvious that he does not think that he has to.

Boswell’s (Contradictory) Myth of the “Good Loser” as a Philosophy of Life

The main events of Boswell’s story are: Boswell and Jack, a fellow Traveller, move their trailers to a fair at Risca in Wales; a Welshman plays first Boswell’s game and then Jack’s and loses money; the Welshman contacts the police and Jack is arrested; Boswell attempts to get bail for Jack; Jack appears in court and is found guilty and fined; both Boswell and Jack then leave Wales.

The situation described by Boswell at the beginning of the story is that Boswell and Jack have set up their respective cobbler joint and spot games at the top of a hill near the fair on the roadside. Then “up the hill came a little Welsh fellow with a blue melton coat on, a little bowler hat: he would be about five foot two” and, according to Boswell, he lost “five or six shillings” at his cobbler joint game (131). Boswell’s strategy here, and later in the story, is to belittle the people that he deals with and to project the amount of money lost as paltry. Boswell illustrates the latter point by commenting on a board that he supposedly had printed with the words: “‘Teach me to win if I may win and if I may not win make me a good loser’” (131). The proposed reason for the message on the board is explained by Boswell: “And if I had anybody that grumbled about losing a bit of money I used to show him this board and read it” (131). Boswell’s strategy, or the way that he describes it in Boswell, is to belittle through description and to use the powerful myth of the “good loser” to reduce the likelihood of complaints. A punter would think twice about complaining over losing what would be referred to as a small amount of money if he was confronted with the option of either being a

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220 A Melton jacket is a jacket made of wool.
“good loser,” or a “bad loser,” which involves the risk and potent shame of a loss of masculine capital.

The scenario that Boswell presents in his story works as the Welshman does not complain, but Boswell’s presentation of Jack’s method of belittling the Welshman creates another scenario that leads to trouble. Boswell passes the Welshman over to Jack and his spot game, and after the Welshman has lost his money, Jack’s belittling remark is: “‘Yes you have and do you want your mother with you?’” (132). Although Boswell and Jack use similar strategies in order to avoid complaints, Jack’s more personal approach leads to an unexpected reaction; the Welshman turns out to be a “bogey” and he fetches the police. The policemen arrest Jack in Boswell’s story using physical force: “[T]hey lifted him through his coat […] and they marched him down this hill” (132). Power relations are now transformed as the previously disempowered Welshman is now in control over the events with the help of the two policemen, and Jack is no longer in charge of the “game.” However, Boswell discursively defends Jack’s disempowerment by describing the policemen as “big ones too” (132). So far the size and stature of bodies and impressions of belittling in Boswell’s story are related to power and in turn to the amount of perceived control Boswell and/or Jack had over the (re)constructed events in the story.

However, even though the policemen are “big ones” in Boswell’s story, this does not mean that the policemen, or their power and authority, remain unquestioned. The police are depicted taking Jack to a “stone building with a stone roof,” which turns out to be a “mortuary” with no windows (132). However, Boswell refuses to accept the situation and threatens to appeal to a higher authority in order to revoke the policeman’s power position: “‘I’m going to try to bail him out’” (132). The policeman’s reaction to Boswell’s proposed defiance is to ask him “‘Are you a householder?’” which, of course, Boswell was not at the proposed time that the story took place (and if you are not a householder you cannot get bail). Boswell’s reaction to the state of affairs in his story is to ask a householder, Jack Evans, to bail his friend and business partner out, and although Evans is depicted attempting to get bail, his first reaction was not positive: “‘It’s a nice thing to come to the Secretary of the Showman’s Guild […] to bail two lads with two little thieving joints!’” (132). Boswell could quite easily have omitted Evans’ part in his story, as it projects an insider’s view of Boswell and Jack’s activi-

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221 I interpret the word “bogey” to mean “trouble” or “trouble-maker.”
222 Boswell makes a mistake in the story here as only Jack is arrested, which points towards Seymour’s adherence to the content of the tapes when he was transcribing. He could have easily have changed the quote to re-establish coherence.
ties, and their unwelcome status among “showmen.” However, Boswell’s defensive strategy seems to suggest that Boswell sees himself providing a service: “[W]ell that’s what you call them’ […]. ‘I call them very suitable for the public at the moment in the mood they’re in’” (132-33).

Although Boswell portrays Evans trying to get bail for Jack in his story, bail is refused and Jack appears in court. And Boswell describes the magistrate: “He was a little low-grown sort of aWelshman with a little beard, a man about fifty, and his little flat ears had been frozen on the mountains with the sheep – he was a little shepherd man I should think” (133). Although there is no physical threat involved in Boswell’s court scene, we see that Boswell uses size, stature and stereotypes in his description to readdress a perceived imbalance in power and knowledge relations. The impression is that the magistrate embodies power and authority temporarily and through a disguise, which, when removed, would reveal just a “little” man. Boswell commented on the inequality of power relations in court (and otherwise [talking to Seymour]): “And you know I’ve always found, both on the road and in court, with a Gypsy the prosecution is nine times stronger than the defence” (158). Somehow, the imbalance of power relations has to be redressed and Boswell uses narrative discourse to disturb the order. Boswell’s “belittling” strategy drains authority from its object and indirectly ridicules it by depicting its importance as illusory and temporarily adopted.

Returning to the story, the “little” Welshman is depicted giving evidence, and Boswell includes his own psychological strategy in the Welshman’s proposed statement and juxtaposes it to Jack’s faulty strategy:

“Your Worship – you know – I did not mind losing my five shillings, but I just said to this man ‘Have I lost my five shillings?’ and he said to me: ‘Yes – do you want your mother with you?’ Now,” [sic] he said, “I did not mind in the least about my five shillings, but it was my mother. She has been dead for some years now, and also my two sisters, and it pricked me to the quick, Your Worship. It pricked me to the quick.”(133)

As we see, Boswell positions his own philosophy of the good loser in the Welshman’s speech and emphasises the message by repeating it. He also reveals the cause of Jack’s arrest and positions it in Jack’s too personal belittling strategy. We can also hear how Boswell continues to distance the Welshman through references to “feminine” over-sensitivity and the

223 The words “you know” in the passage are ambiguous and pose a few questions concerning the interpretation of the quote. Did Seymour misinterpret “you know” as the Welshman’s voice in the story, rather than a reference to himself when he transcribed Boswell’s spoken words? Could the “you know” actually have been addressed to Seymour, which would suggest that the words “Your Worship” were meant to project an impression that the Welshman was using a strategy of ingratiation? The [sic] refers to a missing quotation mark.
“quaint” saying, “it pricked me to the quick,” which transgresses class (and national) heteroglossia. And, in a further aspersion on the Welshman’s credibility, Boswell includes a sequence that questions his integrity: “And of course he found another witness somewhere – there was none there at the time he lost his five shillings, but he found one so he was a bit of a hook in my opinion, so we got fined eleven pounds and three pounds costs, or Jack did” (133, original emphasis). Suddenly, then, the Welshman, the character that was positioned as either the victim, or alternatively, the fool in Boswell’s story, occupies a more ambiguous position in the story. Has Jack been transformed into the victim of the story now? Jack has been arrested and belittled by two “big” policemen, thrown in a windowless mortuary (rather than a police cell), a “false” witness has witnessed against him in court, and, according to the “little” Welshman’s testimony, it was not the money, but the reference to his mother that caused him to fetch the police. Boswell resolves the question of whether Jack is the victim or not by describing him having “lost about a stone and a half during the night in weight – what with fright and one thing and another” (133). Once again, we return to the body, but this time Jack’s proposed loss of body size seems more serious as it is a physical loss rather than a descriptive effect, and, thus, creates an empathetic/sympathetic space for Jack. Jack has become not only the victim of the story, but also the hero, as he has, according to Boswell’s description, endured unjust punishment and heavily fined by “official” powers on the testimony of a Welshman, who lied in court.

When Jack is released in the story, Boswell makes the decision to move: “‘We’re going to fill the two tanks with petrol and we’re going back to civilisation’” (133). The reference to “civilisation” is a reference to Cambridgeshire, England and indirectly positions Wales and the Welsh as “primitive” in Boswell’s mind. By gradually transforming Jack from a victimiser into a victim, and the Welsh punter from a victim to a co-victimiser, Boswell creates an empathetic space in which he can explain his philosophy and reflections on the subject of gambling:

Of course – a funny thing – that the meanest of people looks for a gambling job. I’ve always found that out in life. A straight easy game they don’t want. They want something where there’s a game of chance, and they gobble it, and when they work it out and find that they’re at the losing end of the business they can’t take their medicine. And of course I can’t help but laugh at such people like that. They should be like I say they should be – a good loser. If a man is a good gambler he must be a good loser. Without that he can’t sail on, can he? (134)

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224 I interpret the word “hook” to mean a dishonest fellow. As in the saying by hook or by crook, the Welshman is depicted winning the case by any means.
Boswell, then, positions the Welshman of his story as someone who we should “laugh at” because he is a bad loser and, according to Boswell’s philosophy, bad losers do not deserve any sympathy. Boswell belittles the Welshman and portrays him lying in court because he does not adhere to his projected philosophy/worldview, which includes the myth of the “good loser” and the masculine connotations that hold it in place. In my view, Boswell’s philosophy is also a metonymy for a worldview where learning from mistakes and experiences is part of survival; life is gambling – winning and not winning. To be a good loser is part of growing up for Boswell and to dwell on circumstances that are beyond one’s control means that you “can’t sail on.” In other words you make your own luck, and if you do not it is your own fault – do not blame anybody else. Boswell sums up his life in terms of winning, or not winning in *Boswell*, but not losing:

[…] I’ve had many a fight, and I’ve not won them all, but I’ve tried to defend myself from persecution. I’ve lived through it, and I’ve got through it – and I’ve conquered something! I have conquered it to such an extent that I’m accepted by you, and I am satisfied that I have achieved something in my life and I am at peace with myself. (92, original emphasis, by Seymour) \(^{225}\)

Boswell positions himself in a place of conflict in his story, because that is the place that he has learned how to live. Boswell’s occupational roles involve “gambling,” whether it be in the form of buying, selling, exchanging (dealing and trading) and he is always in positions where practices of agreement, conflict and differences of opinion are parts of the game. Gambling (ideally) places people and minds against each other and by not winning (by being a good loser) you win experience and acquire a “feel for the game.” According to Boswell, he has “conquered it” and “achieved something” that the bad loser can never achieve in Boswell’s world – acceptance and respect (symbolic capital). The “little Welshman,” who lies in court in Boswell’s story, is the antithesis of Boswell’s I, the “big” policemen are the Welshman’s “henchmen” and the “little” magistrate is the “hangman,” and Boswell, in his role as the storyteller, told it how he saw it through his philosophy and his worldview. Jack became the victim because he did not have the experience to realise that the Welshman was a “bogey” and he paid the price. Jack learned his lesson, and in Boswell’s world, he should move on, learn from the experience and most important of all, continue to be a good loser.

However, there is one problem in my analysis, Boswell’s story is a bad loser’s story, and Boswell has not moved on as he says others should. Boswell has dwelled on the fact that he lost (or his partner Jack did) and repeated it in the interview context with Seymour. Further-

\(^{225}\) See my analysis of the passage in chapter one, 70.
more, his stereo-derogatory descriptions of the Welshman and the magistrate re-inscribe and mimic the ideological use of similarly constructed typecast images of Gypsies. Othering and stereotyping serve to actively distance, “cordon-off,” fix and deny history to their contextually and ideologically constructed opposites, and act as powerful mythic discourses that re-vitalise and reassure a flagging view of self.226

Boswell fought an uphill battle to justify and defend his actions in his story, and many readers who have internalised the moral and ethical connotations that are projected and maintained as “norms” of “natural” reaction to such stories may well consider him to have been less than successful. Boswell’s belittling and reversal strategies form stereotype Others in his story against whom he can project his philosophy of life and moral code. And, by doing so he communicates with a long tradition of telling “scam” stories and positions himself in a familiar narrative that connects it to a continuum of story scripts surrounding the mythical figures of rogues and vagabonds. In Joyce’s anti-Traveller story, Joyce is also involved in a defence strategy that reverses ethical standpoints and Others an opposing group, but, unlike Boswell’s character in his scam story, Joyce is interested in political change rather than promoting a philosophy of life. And, rather than moving away from trouble, like Boswell did in his story, Joyce portrays herself moving towards the opposing group in order to disrupt a mythical discourse and create a space for better interrelations.

Nan Joyce: Modern Myth, Travellers and the Anti-Traveller Protesters

In My Life Joyce re-told the story of an anti-Traveller protest action in Tallaght, south Dublin. Joyce’s story maps a demythologising process within which Joyce’s reflexive polemic delineates a perceived dominant discourse that positions Travellers as undesirable Others. The introduction of a third group of protesters in her story serves to transgress the previous interrelational dichotomy and forge a space for the beginnings of reconciliation and better relations. Joyce utilises dominant narratives linked to national/colonial and other inter-group themes in order to position the dominant group and disrupt and demystify the group’s mythology concerning Travellers. The helper/self-help scenario also returns in Joyce’s story and becomes the catalyst for the hope of better interrelations. The main events of the story are: the settled peo-

226 See Michael Pickering, Stereotyping: The Politics of Representation (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2000). Pickering warns of the classical view of stereotyping: “[T]aking stereotypicality as indicative of a misinformed attitude, irrational value or inaccurate representation implies that there are always firm grounds for rectifying it” (Stereotyping 11). Although Pickering does not dismiss the classical view’s potential concerning the erosion or modification of stereotypes, he sees stereotypes as operating as a “means of evaluatively placing, and attempting to fix in place, other people or cultures from a particular privileged perspective” (Stereotyping 47).
ple gave the Traveller families camping in Tallaght forty-eight hours to move; after the time
is up they march in protest against the Travellers; a number of people protest against the
march; the host of a popular morning show in Ireland records a show on the camping ground
after the march; Joyce takes her chance to talk on the show and a telling document is pro-
duced and distributed.

*The Other/other Sides of the Story*

In the beginning of Joyce’s story we find a short statement that presents Joyce’s explanation
of the problematic relations between the Travellers in Tallaght and the “settled people”:

> They’re building houses for settled people where there are no amenities for them and
> then when they’re working they have so much tax to pay and so much taken off them it
> sets them against the unemployed – they say, “You’re living off the land.” The people
> are so tormented that when the travellers camp beside them they sort of knock it out of
> them. They should be knocking it out of the government or the county councillors be-
> cause travellers have suffered enough down through the years. (99-100)

Rather than blaming the “settled people” for harassing Travellers and the unemployed, Joyce
communicates with discourses linked to misdirected projection and scapegoating. Joyce’s de-
fence strategy is to position the protesters (two groups) of her story in a relationship of alter-
ity, which provides a discursive position within which Joyce can deconstruct discourses that
frame the pedagogical acquisition and configuration of linguistic schemas connected to the
signifiers of an imagined group.

As Joyce begins her story, she discusses two problems that the Travellers on the Tallaght
site had to deal with: the disruption of schooling due to the protest and “skips for the rubbish”
(100). Joyce describes her own children doing well at school and the untidiness of the site due
to the lack of the basic service of rubbish collection (99). In one of the photographs that ac-
companies Joyce’s anti-protest story, the themes of tidiness and schooling are directly and
indirectly communicated with. The photograph depicts a female child of school age holding a
placard at the front of a large crowd of protesters. Written on the placard are the words “We
Love (shape of a heart [supposedly red]) TALLAUGHT / HELP KEEP IT TIDY.” A woman
in the same photograph holds another placard with a different slogan: “NO HALTING /
SITES IN / TALLAGHT.” The basic message communicated by the photograph is that the
protesters wanted to be rid of the people on the site and their rubbish.

According to Joyce, representatives of the protesters gave the Travellers a forty-eight-hour
ultimatum to leave the site before the march, and Joyce compared the ultimatum to “some-
thing like a cowboy movie.” Joyce also questioned the moral foundations of the people involved in the protest: “[…] and yet this was Ireland, a Catholic country, a great Christian country for years and years” (100), and thus positions them practicing un-Irish and un-Christian behaviour. And by doing so, as Helleiner explains, Joyce communicates with an Irish post-colonial strategy: “Following centuries of colonial domination during which Catholicism signified grounds for subordination, Catholic nationalism emerged as dominant in the struggle for independence” (Irish Travellers 7). In other words, Joyce uses a dominant, and shared, Irish resistance narrative in order to illustrate her sense of her own domination and uses the discourse as a counter-narrative against perceived oppressors.

Joyce then personalises the proceedings further by introducing more specific information about the children after the march: “Some of the children were very nervous. My little boy Richard wouldn’t go to school, he was saying, ‘Mammy, what about all the people – they’ll kill me down the road then [sic] I come out’” (100). By emphasizing how her own child thought in direct speech, Joyce projects a pedagogy at work that inculcates an us/them dichotomy in the very young. Furthermore, Joyce’s use of her child in connection with discourses concerning education and psychological distress projects her own internalisation of the significance of powerful stories that link children to “minority” politics and human rights issues. And, continuing on the same theme, Joyce provides a more detailed review of the extended effects of negative attitudes on children: “This is the way the travelling children are growing up: in fear of everything and it’s not right because it’ll turn them into hardened criminals or into nervous wrecks – afraid of everything and never able to speak out for themselves” (100). As we see, Joyce positions the effects of the negative attitudes in a process of embodiment and maps the probable and possible future trajectories of “travelling children” in terms of either silence or criminality. And both silence and criminality reinforce and maintain the unhindered re-production of particular and taken-for-granted negative stereotypes, and the pre-

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With blisters on her feet, she moved from place to place
Outside Dublin city ’81
Sick and tired of being a stranger in her own home
Where others had their comforts, she had none

They gave Nan Joyce’s people 48 hours
To leave with their belongings once again
But Nan Joyce had seen enough of these evictions
She dreaded facing the winter’s wind and rain

All her life Nan faced fear and ignorance
Saw her loved one turned away from countless doors
With ancient songs and tales around the warm fire
Spirits raised by the wealth of the travellers lore

Nan Joyce had a dream and it lifted her
She stood her ground and held her head on high
She found her voice and spoke out so her children could be loved
As Irish brothers and sisters by and by
consciously inculcated interpretational schema that give rise to selective observations and serve to position people within the scripts of dominant myths about Travellers.

In my reading, Joyce attempts to demythologise Travellers in her story and points to a dialectic that creates dysfunctional interrelations between the two imagined groups in her story. The first part of the dialectic involves a degree of understanding: “I wouldn’t wonder for the settled people to be against us because they were hearing nothing but bad about us and they thought we were all the same and we’re not. There’s only a tiny few of the travellers committing crime” (102). In other words, negative over-generalisations are communicated through diffuse pedagogy (media and oral communication) and serve to reiterate and reconfirm a derogatory image that forms a mythologized view of Travellers. In the second part of the dialectic, Joyce indicates a lack of both personal self-confidence and confidence in the prospect of better interrelations: “If you grow up in fear it’s only the very odd person that will speak out” (100). The dialectic leads to a refusal or inability to speak, and, subsequently, to a continuation of others speaking for and about Travellers. Furthermore, as the dialectic leads to silence and both social and self-exclusion, the notion of self-help becomes a remote possibility as the combination of discursive domination and an accompanying inferiority complex become potentially unbridgeable hinders. The potential seriousness of the dialectic is embedded in both visual and narrative forms in Joyce’s anti-Traveller protest story.

Joyce’s use of simile, when referring to the march itself, points to the potential violence of the encounter: “When the march came down there was a lot of chanting like the Ku Klux Klan, they were all shouting ‘Out, out, out,’ all together” (101). The combination of the Ku Klux Klan and cowboy movie similes reflect the absurdity and the seriousness of the scene, suggesting that if the protesters were to take a step back and envision what they were doing, their actions would seem ridiculous, or, alternatively, alarming. And, a further alarming allusion is found in a photograph of a group of people who protest against the march. In the photograph the counter-protesters carry a banner with the slogan: “Will there be gas chambers in the new Town Centre?” which is an obvious allusion to the Holocaust.228 The combination of

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228 One of the interesting points of the quote concerning gas chambers in the “Town Centre” is that the reference to the Holocaust is not located in the margins, periphery or a narrow history of one particular group and discriminatory practice, but positioned discursively in the centre. For an excellent analysis of the positioning of the Holocaust in the centre of modern civilization and the everyday of contemporary society see Zygmunt Bauman, Modernity and the Holocaust (1989; Ithica: Cornell University Press, 2000). Bauman states, “[t]he truth is that every ‘ingredient’ of the Holocaust – all those many things that rendered it possible – was normal; ‘normal’ not in the sense of the familiar, of one more specimen in a large class of phenomena long ago described in full, explained and accommodated […], but in the sense of being fully in keeping with everything we know about our civilization, its guiding spirit, its priorities, its immanent vision of the world – and of the proper ways to pursue human happiness together with a perfect society” (8).
references to cowboy movie and Ku Klux Klan similes in Joyce’s story, and the “gas chamber” allusion project a potential future scenario; a movement from xenophobia to organised racist and racialist practice and then on to “race” extermination. However, Joyce confirms the presence of the counter-protesters as a new phenomenon and a sign of hope: “That’s something that never happened before in all the places I have been where people came against travellers” (101).

In a further reflexive moment in her story, Joyce creates a mutual connection between the counter-protesters, Travellers and the processes of distancing: “It’s very hard for settled people to stand with travellers because they’ll be called ‘knacker-lovers’ and they have to live with settled people whereas we’re a bit out from them” (101). Besides the idea that there are certain advantages with living geographically segregated from the “settled people,” Joyce indicates her own view of the attitudes taken towards people considered to have transgressed an imaginary homogenous group loyalty; they are labelled and Othered as “knacker-lovers.” In the next lines of her story, Joyce begins to delineate the previous settled people/Traveller dichotomy in her story and personalises the people protesting against the march: “These were ordinary people, housewives and working men who all had their own families and their own houses in Tallaght that they were trying to buy” (101). The upstanding citizens that Joyce describes are now personalised and involved in a dialogic that disarms another mythic discourse; a connection between the presence of Travellers and a decrease in the worth of property. Furthermore, Joyce describes the men as “working men,” which differentiates them from the unemployed people that Joyce considered to be part of the Othering process in the opening quote. And, although Joyce positions the “ordinary people” living a different style of life, their actions suggest that they accept that people can be different without the difference being constructed into a mythologized power-discourse of an undesired Other. In a personal comment on the friendly non-Travellers’ actions, Joyce states, “I thought it was great of them to stand with us and give us some sort of hope” (101).

According to Joyce, Gay Byrne, the host of a popular morning show in Ireland, recorded his show among the Travellers after the march. Byrne’s presence attracted other people among the caravans, and Joyce questions their behaviour:

So many people came the place was full of them; they were all on top of the travellers and walking around the fires where some of the old people were making a drop of tea. If you walked in on settled people, into their privacy and trampled their gardens there’d be a big kick-up about it but these people were just standing around as if we were dirt – as

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229 “Knackers” is a derogatory term for Travellers.
if we didn’t matter but they mattered, as if we weren’t people but they were people. (101)

Joyce projects the distancing practices of dehumanisation, disempowerment and objectification onto the people and provides an insight into an interpretational schema; a colonial scene emerges where the inhabitants are non-human, issues of ownership, property, personal space and dignity are unrecognised and the environment is free to be physically and discursively dominated. Joyce continues to unpick the threads of dominant discourse as she gets the chance to speak on the show and talked about the

things that had been going on and the names the travellers were being called. It’s very easy to call people names if they can’t speak back – it’s like going up and battering a little child. Speaking to the travellers at that time was like speaking to children because they never got the chance to speak back. (101)

The repetition of the child simile reinforces the idea of myth-production, maintenance and disruption, as Joyce, firstly, positions Travellers in the impotent space of the defined and dominated, and, secondly, creates a then/now scenario that suggests that the situation has changed for the better, and that Joyce’s contributions led to a more positive trend.

Joyce accredits her own reflexivity concerning dominant/dominated relations to her ability to read, and exemplifies her ideas concerning Traveller unawareness of the extent and distribution of derogatory discourses concerning Travellers among settled people: “I read the papers a lot and sometimes I was glad that some of the travellers didn’t read, the way they couldn’t hear the things that were said about them for if they did they would go mad. When you read and see what’s going on it really torments you” (101-02). Joyce projects the idea that other and Traveller cognitive schemas concerning the labels/signifiers Traveller/Tinker/knacker have been circulated without a counter-discourse that disrupts, questions and de-generalizes; the continuation and accumulation of the a-historic “tinker” myth continues to exist as a central aspect of discursive domination.

A significant event in Joyce’s story, which involves finding a method of re-positioning a previously silenced voice in discursive relations, is found in Joyce’s interactions with a priest:

Father Travers came down to see us and I was telling him the way travellers were treated and all the terrible things that are said about us and how we didn’t get the chance to speak up for ourselves. I wrote a travellers’ manifesto – what we should have and our needs. Father Travers typed it out for me and he drove me round and we dropped letters in to all the newspapers. (102)

Once again, Joyce communicates with the helper/self-help scenario, and depicts the cooperation and collaboration producing results: “[f]rom then on the travellers’ names were
mentioned and mentioned in the papers and on radio and television and it wasn’t all bad; before we went to Tallaght the things you heard about travellers were all bad” (102). The change that Joyce portrays is the result of sanctioned communication; with the support of a representative of the Catholic Church, and in an “official” form that the dominant group recognises. Furthermore, Joyce describes the media taking part in a process of de-objectification by naming Travellers; using their Irish-sounding names. Thus, another level of description is added that, in its pedagogical action and projected repetition, has the potential to unveil speaking human beings.

The illogical status of overgeneralization is also underlined by Joyce, as she positions Travellers in a parallel discussion with a perceived dominant view that locates Travellers as bad, criminal and lawless: “There’s only a tiny few of the travellers committing crime. Some of the travellers are really good people, they don’t break the law and they are just trying to survive” (102). The doubling of the quantifier, “tiny few,” duplicates the double-voice of the passage and introduces proportion and an aspect of necessity into the polemic. Furthermore, Joyce’s story concludes with the formation of a Travellers’ rights group made up of “settled people“ from Tallaght and Travellers, and all the people involved are named (102). In other words, Joyce practices what she preaches and refuses to mimic and re-inscribe the proposed previous practices of the dominant group.

Joyce’s story, in all its twists and turns, is a story of hope, a hope that Travellers will continue to speak out and challenge dominant discourses that dehumanise, objectify and scapegoat them. The power discourse of the dominant group, which I have conceptualised as mythic discourse, creates a fictive Other that serves an ideological purpose. Joyce’s anti-Traveller story negotiates a path through a historical terrain that leads from projected passivity to political activity and from internalised inferiority to an ambiguous share in the politics of re-production and self-representation. In Cobbles, Stockins interacts with a dominant myth of the Gypsy bare-knuckle fighter, which forms the context of his life story’s production, however, unlike Joyce, Stockins does not question the over-determining character of the narrative. And although Stockins dispels other dominant myths by including various functional and interrelational linkages to his fight story, he still narrates from within the prescriptive cocoon of the subject of his story.
Jimmy Stockins: A Male Fight Story

The fight story that I have chosen to analyse from Jimmy Stockins’ *On the Cobbles* is positioned at the beginning of the book and, as I highlighted in chapter one, is a result of the conventions of the fighting-book genre. The story provides a window through which to assess Stockins’ worldview, but it is also a worldview that is framed in a discourse that isolates a particular part of his self; Stockins is encouraged to retell stories that adhere to the narrative of the Gypsy fighter. In his story, Stockins speaks from within the narrative constraints of other fighting stories, positions himself within a mythology of Gypsy fighting stories, and dispels other myths.

In my view, the important themes at stake in Stockins’ story are the relational issues of self-respect, reputation and personal/family honour and status. The story also relates a process in which the honour of the female side of his immediate family is defended. In my reading, the fight in Stockins’ narrative has two main aims, firstly, to maintain and/or improve his family’s status, and secondly, to defend and increase Stockins’ reputation as a bare-knuckle fighter. Furthermore, I interpret the fight as a method by which arguments, or potentially serious conflicts between families can be averted. The main events of Stockins’ fight story are: Stockins returns from a night out and senses that there is something wrong at the site; he is then beaten up and the police arrive; Stockins is then challenged to a fight by “Creamy,” a fellow Gypsy, which he accepts; after the fight the two fighters and their respective families maintain reconfigured relations.

*Maintaining Order and the Mythology of Interaction*

In the introduction to Stockins’ story, and the first lines of *Cobbles*, Stockins portrays himself returning from a night out, and although his initial impression of what happened at the site was incorrect, it illustrates a few significant aspects of his projected worldview:

> I wasn’t that pissed, but I’d had a few pints this night and I was mellow, driving home from a friendly pub with a bit of music drifting out from the cassette player. As I turned the motor into the road leading to the site where I was pulled up, lights started coming on in trailers all over the place. Something was going on. As I pulled into the site, I could see figures moving around in the darkness. Turning the cassette off and winding the window down, I heard women screaming and hollering. It’s going off, I thought, maybe the gavvers are here again making themselves busy. (29)

Stockins does not talk kindly of the police (gavvers) in *Cobbles*: “We were vermin who caused trouble wherever we went, and it was up to them to extinguish us” (128). The collective “we” in the quote reflects Stockins’ opinion of the police’s all-inclusive view of Gypsies. He also illustrates a generalised view of non-Traveller thoughts concerning inherent deviance: “Remember, we are about the only people on earth born criminal” (128).
The reference to “a friendly pub” involves its opposite, and consequentially indicates that there are pubs that Stockins is not a welcome guest. Such a statement invites us to contemplate over the possible scenarios that lead to some pubs being considered friendly and not others from a Traveller perspective. One scenario would relate the idea that Stockins’ individual behaviour, or his behaviour in the company of others has led to a prohibition in some pubs. Another scenario could be an undocumented group restriction based on a projected essentialist, universalising and therefore racist discourse of “Gypsies/Travellers” as troublemakers/criminals/thieves et cetera. A further cause for the existence of unfriendly pubs can also be a documented group restriction as in the case of “No Travellers” or “No Gypsies” signs. The latter two potential scenarios suggest that the pub owner or manager not only categorizes Gypsies/Travellers through a lens of superstition based on the internalisation of myths about the imagined group, but also a preconceived idea that the guests share the superstitious images. An extension of this discourse would suggest that the pub manager attempts to protect the cash flow of his or her establishment by relaying the potential economic danger of allowing members of a paradoxically known but also unknown group onto the property. Although the aforementioned scenarios cannot provide an answer to Stockins’ inclusion of the reference to friendly pubs, they provide an insight into a world that other more privileged people would find difficult to accept: we cannot imagine a pub owner writing a sign that stated “No English.”

Another aspect of spatial restriction in relation to Travellers is the setting of Stockins’ story, a site, which performs as a segregated and relatively controlled space or “reservation.” Of course, Traveller sites are not “natural” locations in which Travellers “wander” to, but legitimised spaces that the dominant group has decided are suitable for the group to reside. And, as Stockins’ assumption concerning the police presence on the site, “maybe the gavvers are here again,” suggests, unwelcome and uninvited intrusion on the site was not uncommon.

The actual cause of the commotion on the site in Stockins’ story is described by Stockins: “I see my mother and sisters arguing with another family from a nearby trailer” (29). The dispute is a dispute between families on the site and, according to Stockins, the argument incites Creamy, one of the members of the other family, to attack him as he steps out of his car: “Accurate and telling blows are coming in fast, all to my face. I get one back in and feel the bones of my knuckles connecting with my attacker’s flesh before another punch connects with my

Being “born criminal” is being on the “wrong” side of the limits of an ideologically constructed form of order and control.
jaw and I’m going down. Don’t think I’m sparked, because I remember it” (30). As we see, Stockins enters into a discourse of descriptive violence and, in doing so, interacts with the expected narrative of the fighting-book genre. Therefore, Stockins concentrates and consolidates a Gypsy myth that re-produces and maintains a particular link in a linguistic schema concerning the word “Gypsies”: Gypsy – (bare-knuckle) fighting – violence. Furthermore, the major part of Cobbles is preoccupied specifically with fighting related issues and stories similar to the forthcoming fight with Creamy.

Although interrelations in Stockins’ story are dysfunctional, Stockins’ description of the actions of the people on the site when the police arrive re-establishes a sense of unity: “The crowd that has gathered scurries off to the safety of their own trailers and the lights go off everywhere, almost as if there is a central switch” (30). By synchronising the response to the police presence on the site, Stockins positions the police and the people on the site as separate and oppositional groups. And in Stockins’ cinematic commentary concerning the actions of the police (garlos) on the site, there is a sense of trickster involved: “Four cars screech in. The garlos only ever come onto the site mob-handed. They’re leaping out of the cars and shining their torches between the caravans, but all they can see is a completely peaceful and empty camping site” (30). Stockins ridicules the “garlos” by dramatising and exaggerating the apparent eagerness of the police, and creates a sense of disappointment on the police’s behalf as a “completely peaceful and empty” camping site awaits them. Furthermore, Stockins insinuates that a mutual agreement exists between the police and the Gypsies on the site: “And they ain’t about to start knocking anyone up either, to find out what’s been going on. It’s rude to wake up people when they are asleep in bed. They know that” (30). Rather than the police being in control, Stockins reverses the configurations of power and depicts the people on the site controlling and observing the actions of the police.

In Robert Dawson’s booklet on Gypsy codes and taboos, he comments on a code of behaviour among Gypsies that reinforces the impression of unity in relation to the police:

Another aspect of sticking together is that whenever there is trouble people avoid going to the police. Even if, as has occasionally happened, one Gypsy is badly injured or murdered by another, there is a code of silence. No-one saw anything or heard anything. Or it was an accident and everyone witnessed that it was.

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231 We can see that Stockins directs his speech, “Don’t think I’m sparked,” towards King and Knight. A possible reason could be to re-assure his co-producers that he is not easily “sparked.”

232 Robert Dawson, Gypsy Codes and Taboos (Alfreton: Robert Dawson, 2002) 24. Stockins provides an example of a code of silence in Cobbles. Stockins’ story involves a pub brawl; the police have arrived and asked questions, and the combatants answer: “Wally said he didn’t know who hit him. Mark’s face was marked where Wally’s rings had cut him up a bit, but he too didn’t know who hit him. Then the guvnor of the pub was wheeled
One of the strategies that Stockins uses as a defence against seemingly dominant institutional power is to position the police performing pointless and inane exercises of power. In other words the police are projected as official representatives of order and control with nothing to order or control, and therefore they are disempowered. The residents on the site are projected forming a consensus of practice and thought that is a product of habitus, and positions them as game-masters, and not just having a “feel for the game.”

The reason behind Creamy’s attack is then developed by Stockins in his story: “Back in Mum’s trailer, she and the girls give my cracked head some attention with plasters and creams, and fill me in on what has happened. There’s been an argument between the female sides of our families, and it has got out of hand. Tonight, it has been stepped up a gear” (30). The conflict has now changed hands and become more serious as the men of the respective families have become involved. Although Creamy leaves the site in the story, he returns to challenge Stockins to a fight, and, according to Stockins, the argument between the families will be settled between the two fighters on a neutral site. Dawson explains a procedure for settling arguments: “[W]hen relationships in the Gypsy community break down, fights and feuds occur. Simple disputes are settled by fighting. Someone with a grievance fights the alleged cause” (Gypsy Codes 25). The fight, then, represents, at this point in the story, a method of avoiding any further escalation of violence between the two families, and therefore, in a paradoxical twist, serves as an organisational form of keeping the peace.

However, Stockins also describes the fight as a fight between two reputed fighters: “We were both well known among the travelling and fighting circles” (31). The impression now is that the fight serves a dual purpose: firstly, to resolve a family dispute, and secondly, as part of a tradition of bare-knuckle fighting. Stockins also builds up the fight’s status by comparing it to other fights:

There are bare-knuckle fights every week on sites up and down the country, borne from arguments, drink and bravado, and then there are the classics. Ordinary fights are had there and then. Only people in the vicinity get to watch and after a few minutes, some blood and a few broken teeth, hands are shaken and all is forgotten. (31)
In other words the fight between Stockins and Creamy is no ordinary fight: “Classic fights are arranged, and are between good, highly rated fighters who will attract crowds and money” (31). In Stockins’ story the two “good, highly rated fighters” are Creamy and himself. The fight is arranged to take part in thirty days time, and Stockins comments on the personal and collective meaning behind the fight: “I knew that for my own self-respect and my family’s honour, I had to get myself in top condition and give this my best shot” (31). The fight has now taken on many significances: an individual meaning; self respect, a collective meaning; family honour (and not just to resolve a dispute), and a mythological meaning; as a prestige fight it joins a system of stories concerning classic fights.

Returning to the story, Stockins describes his preparation for the fight, which involves not only health-related (giving up cigarettes and drinking) and physique-related (running, sparring) training, but also spiritual and relational support, which his brother, Wally, embodies: “He had been with me through thick and thin. He would die for me, as I would for him” (32). Although Wally is in jail at the time, he is described helping Stockins by telling him to get in touch with Mark Ripley “to ensure that fair play was upheld” (32). Ripley, then, acts as a guarantor and mediator on Stockins’ behalf between the two families/fighters, and “would not allow any liberties to be taken before, during or after the fight” (32). Respect for the man responsible for fair play would be the principle of order during the fight.234 The fight that Stockins describes is not an indiscriminate punch-up, but an order re-establishing event in need of organisation and guarantees of mutual trust between the families involved in the dispute. In this sense the fight is characterised by two sets of interdependent paradoxes: conflict/peacemaking and unity/division.

The two fighters, in Stockins’ story, Creamy and Stockins, are respectively nineteen and twenty-three years old at the time of the fight, and Stockins is intent on dismissing any possibility of misunderstanding:

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234 In *King Of the Gypsies* Bartley Gorman (with Peter Walsh) described an arranged fight, which nearly cost him his life (150-55). The need for fair play is illustrated by Dawson’s description of arranged fights: “As soon as someone wins a fight, someone else challenges. They are often brutal occasions, and I have known people receive serious injuries, including the loss of an eye” (*Gypsy Codes* 26). In another story in *Cobbles*, Stockins speaks of a fight with another Traveller, Johnny Love. Wally, Stockins’ brother, is depicted fighting Love after the fight has ended (151). In yet another story Stockins fights a Traveller, whose main aim is depicted in terms of inflating his reputation among Travellers by “saying he had challenged and fought Jimmy Stockin” (176-77). Jimmy Stockins is often referred to as Stockin in *Cobbles*, and in one of the photographs as Jim Smith.
Creamy may still have been in his teens, but he was a bull of a man, standing around 6ft 3ins with an impressive physique. Us gypsies mature early. We go from nappies straight into long trousers and braces. By the time your 14 you’re a man, and you have to live as a man. (33)

As we see, Stockins’ inclusion of his generalized references to Gypsy manhood is a specific reference to King and/or Knight, as the other people (Travellers) present in the interview situation were probably aware of the mythic dimensions of the discourse. Therefore, Stockins mediates that Creamy is already five years into manhood at the time of the fight, and dismisses a possible misapprehension that Stockins was fighting a “kid.” Furthermore, Stockins positions Creamy at the head of a history of fighters, which further reduces any perceived distance between the two: “Like myself, Creamy came from a long line of fighters and he was determined to dispose of me. No prize-money or stakes were required to drive this fight. It was about family pride. Nothing more, nothing less” (33). Both fighters are now manifested with a subjectified history that involves the burden of upholding a collective tradition in their family, and “family pride” is now upheld as the main driving factor behind the fight. And Stockins uses similar currency to frame his fighting career and directs the brunt of his argument at Martin King:

I fought for honour on the whole. I can’t understand why anyone would fight purely for fun when their opponent isn’t more or less equally matched, or both parties are up for it. Take football hooligans. What is that all about? Grown men running around in gangs, kicking each other senseless. Knifing people who have done nothing to them or their families. (190-191)

The specific juxtaposition of football hooliganism in relation to Stockins’ “honour” is not a bias comment on the superior morals of Stockins’ style of performing violence, but a direct result of the interview situation and an indicator of the significance of context and the potential ambiguity of interpretation.

Returning to Stockins’ story and the narrator’s description of the onlookers and supporters, we can see that the fight is by no means an all-Traveller affair and involves gambling among “underworld” characters: “Travellers, gorgers, hard men, monied men – they were all here. All tense and waiting. Many would have money riding. Others were supporting their man. Some just liked seeing blood” (34). As we see, the people at the fight are from different material and class backgrounds, who have been privileged with information concerning the location and time that the fight will take place; a group of people linked by networks of trust and confidentiality that spread, yet restrict knowledge of the event. And, although the fight

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235 See chapter one and page 75 for a relational analysis of this passage.
involves two “Gypsy Warriors” and displays of courage and self-sacrifice, the social meaning behind gambling is also of significance, as Elliot J. Gorn explains in connection with Victorian pugilism: “A man who put his money on a fighter gained status among his peers because he revealed his willingness to lose all in an effort to win big; gambling was a mark of courage.” In Cobbles, Stockins describes his father’s gambling ethos:

He really did love it. He loved winning and he loved losing. Sounds ridiculous, but it’s true. He wasn’t one of those blokes who sulk and get violent or drunk when they lose. He just smiled and carried on with his business, as he would when he won. I’ve seen him win five grand and I’ve seen him lose five grand. Both times he kept the same expression on his face. (90).

If we combine Stockins comments concerning his father’s relation to winning and losing and Gorn’s generalized comment on gambling, we can see that win or lose, symbolic currency in the form of the attribution of degrees of manliness can still be gained. Furthermore, Stockins frames the fight between himself and Creamy in a similar vein of no-loser logic.

Just as the classic fight is about to begin in Stockins’ story, he comments on the status of the match and introduces a further social significance: “Win or lose, this fight was going down in gypsy folklore” (34). We now hear that the fight has entered and reserved a niche as a contemporary myth, and serves to reiterate the status and/or honour (dependent on the context of the retelling) of both the fighters and their family names. The myth-making involved with bare-knuckle fights, and transmissions of stories through significant others is explained by Stockins:

We knew the stories behind the fights, each little detail, and we got to here about the new duels when they happened. From tiny boys, we couldn’t help but realise that bare-knuckle fighting was very important to the grown-ups and that the men who seemed to command the most respect and admiration among them were the best fighters. (44)

The fight that Stockins describes in Cobbles is now positioned within a fighting mythology and the system creates, maintains and re-produces a myth that confirms the links between heroism, masculinity and status that Stockins describes himself emulating. Furthermore, the narrative forms and scripts (positions of characters) of the stories Stockins’ portrays himself hearing pre-determine the possible and probable narrative structures that he can use to re-tell his stories in Cobbles. And, as a part of his subjectified history, and embodied through inter-generational transmission, the configurations of the discursive and physical environment act as a blueprint for the possible paths that he could take in life, and leads him to “choose” cer-

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tain paths in life rather than others. In a story concerning his first organised fight, at ten years of age, Stockins describes his father arguing with another Traveller, which results in Stockins and another boy, “Mucker,” fighting: “A crowd gathers and urges both of us on. I’m not sure why I’m fighting Mucker, but if Dad thinks I should them I am not going to let him down. I sense that this is different from the tear-ups with other kids. It is about family honour and pride” (57). As we see, Stockins portrays himself in the process of becoming aware of the significance of the fight, or, more accurately, he frames the proposed experience in a more contemporary and developed notion of “family honour and pride.”

The fight in Stockins’ story lasted forty five minutes, and, after Creamy has admitted defeat, Stockins comments on the fight from the projected perspective of the “cheering and clapping” on-lookers: “Two gypsy warriors who had just fought like lions” (38). Both men have defended their family’s and their personal honour and “the bad blood had been spilt and washed away” (39). In Stockins’ story, the unresolved differences that had initiated the conflict thirty days previously are now satisfactorily resolved, and the uneasy balance of status and honour relations is satisfactorily renegotiated. After the fight the fighters and some of the crowd go to a pub for a drink (despite their injuries), then Stockins returns to the site, and describes the scene: “My sisters were waiting outside my caravan, with my mum standing behind them. As I got to the car they rushed up and hugged me. ‘Well done, Jim,’ Mum says gently as she strokes my sore head” (39). Although Stockins’ story involves primarily male characters, the female members of his family frame the story: they were portrayed as the initial cause of the fight and it was their honour (and consequently the whole family’s honour) that he was defending. Furthermore, the hero’s welcome that Stockins depicts himself receiving, projects the impression that the female members of his family approved of the fight. By quoting his mother in direct speech (the co-writers transcribed it this way) Stockins’ projects his desire for love from his mother, and reveals Stockins’ “softer” side.

The story ends with Stockins informing Wally, his brother, about what happened, and “How I hadn’t let Dad down” (40). Stockins considered his father to be the boss of the family, his idol and role model and the person who introduced him to, and encouraged (even pushed) him to pursue a boxing/fighting career. As the eldest male, after his father’s death, Stockins inherited the relational reins of responsibility and defends the family’s honour, and reproduces a tradition of male fighters in his family.

In my reading of Stockins’ story, the narrating I portray a system of control and order among Travellers and Traveller families. Stockins also projects a worldview based on individual/family/gender interrelations and the negotiation and balance of reputation, respect,
status and honour. The world that Stockins creates involves responsibilities that he has inherited from his father, and that Stockins is expected to defend if called into question. However, Stockins’ enthusiastic interaction with the focus of Cobbles conjoins bare-knuckle fighting and Gypsies in an all-too narrow narrative connected to the “underworld” theme that I developed in the introduction and continued in chapter one and communicates with model traits of group-belonging that become linked to essentialist behaviour and categorisation. Stockins also positions the fight, Stockins versus Creamy, as part of a mythology of fight stories and fighters. Furthermore, by positioning his own storytelling in a tradition of storytelling, which acts as a transmitter of possible narrative forms for use in the future, Stockins also contextually locates himself as the mythologized “I” of his fight story and within the narrative discourse of a long history of interest in “underworld” themes.

In his fight story concerning a system of control in family and inter-family relations, Stockins was both the narrating I and a main character. In Jess Smith’s Burker myth, in which three generations of the female side of her family are involved, Smith retells a story that her mother told her, and that her mother had told her. Smith’s character’s role in her grandmother’s story is also that of a listener, rather than a physically active participant.

Jess Smith: a Female Burker Myth

In Jessie’s Journey, Jess Smith (re)tells a story that she professes she heard from her mother, and that her mother heard from her mother (Smith’s Granny Power). The story is known as a “Burker story.” According to Hamish Henderson, Burker stories are “gruesome folklore about ‘burkers’ (body snatchers) who were supposed to be continually on the wait to waylay and murder travelling folk.” The myth’s title derives from a William Burke, who “was hanged in Edinburgh in 1829 for selling murdered victims to Dr. Knox’s anatomy school” (Traveller Tales 79). In an introductory passage to her story, Smith situates the myth historically and

238 William Burke and William Hare were accomplices. Here is a shortened form of the main points of a version of the story/myth. One of Hare’s lodgers had died owing rent. He avoided funeral expenses by selling the corpse to an Anatomy Department. Hare and his friend William Burke conveyed the body to the University and became acquainted with a medical student (a member of Knox’s extramural anatomy class) who told them that they would obtain a much better price for the body at Dr Knox’s school. The easy money encouraged Burke and Hare to start murdering old vagrants and other homeless people whose deaths would be likely to pass unnoticed and whose bodies could be sold to Dr Knox’s anatomy school. During the following year they murdered at least 16 such individuals. At their trial Hare turned King’s evidence and Burke was found guilty and sentenced to death by hanging (28 January 1829) and the court ordered that his body be publicly dissected by Professor Alexander Monro Tertius. Burke’s skin was stolen and pocket books and wallets made from his skin were offered for sale on the streets of Edinburgh. The people made up a rhyme: Doon the close and up the stair / Butt and ben wi Burke and Hare / Burke's the butcher, Hare's the thief / And Knox the boy that buys the beef! I. Maclaren, “His-
points towards a reason why “Burkers” might choose Travellers as victims: “Most stories were told by the older generation who lived in a time when there wasn’t a forced law to register a birth or death” (95). Therefore, according to Smith, unregistered Travellers “were easy prey for body-hungry scientists needing to know the ins and outs of the human form” (95). In my reading of Smith’s Burker myth, I will focus on the expressions of a female Traveller worldview and Smith’s use of logics and wits (plural) as the defence strategies of the mythic heroine (a resistance character that incorporates and provides behavioural and moral models for others to emulate) that she constructs. In a summary, I will also reveal a pedagogical structure to the myth that communicates a modern prescriptive system that is still recognisable and viable today.

Smith’s Burker story involves her “Granny” as the heroine and her mother’s sister, as a child and proposed victim of the Burkers. The story has two settings. The first setting is Smith’s mother (re)telling the Burker myth to Smith and her sisters and the second setting, the setting of the Burker story, is the late summer of 1913 and depicts Smith’s Grandmother and third child, Maggie, out hawking (95). The main events of the story are: “Granny” senses that something is wrong; she hides Maggie and sees a coach and horses; the coach passes by and the sense of danger is dismissed; the coach waits around the next bend; the coachman attempts to steal Maggie; the heroine pretends to give up the child, then snatches her back and runs onto a moor where the carriage cannot follow her. Besides being a Burker myth, the story also falls into several types of story: a family story, a trickster story, a personal experience story and involves a reversal of the stereotype of Gypsies stealing children.

The references to Knox refer to Robert Knox: see Robert Knox, The Races of Men (London, 1862). Also see George L. Mosse, Toward the Final Solution: A History of European Racism (New York: Howard Fertig, 1985). Mosse describes Knox in terms of England’s “own Gobineau” and thus refers to Comte Arthur de Gobineau (1816-82) and the two contemporaries’ racist theories. According to Mosse’s interpretation, Knox thought that there were two superior races, Saxon’s (the ideal type) and the Slavonic races (capable of transcendent thought and rationalism): the Greeks, as a mixture of Saxons and Slavs were regarded as perfect (Towards the Final Solution 68). The coincidence that Travellers and Knox have become entwined in the Burker story is striking.

Notice Smith’s use of the word “forced” with regards to the law. Laws are part of a system of control, order and in this case also surveillance. Donald Braid provides a similar explanation for Traveller victimisation by “Burkers”: “Some Travellers said their ancestors felt they were particularly at risk from Burkers because the combination of Traveller nomadism and non-Traveller dislike of Travellers meant that Travellers would neither be missed nor cared about in situations of foul play” (Scottish Travellers 79).

Smith’s consciousness of the child-stealing stereotype is evident in the prologue of Jessie’s Journey: “Come with me, reader, and share a traveller’s campfire. I promise we won’t steal your children or fleece your pocket. You might even get a wee bit closer to understanding us” (x, original emphasis).
Defending Through the Logics of Wits and Intuition

In the introduction to the story Smith describes the scene before the Burker story begins: “[W]e gathered round our mother’s feet, pushing and jostling for the best view at her face, so as not to miss a look, a gasp, or the usual closing of her eyes in apprehension that a fearful sight was coming to her mind” (95). Here Smith, in her role as storyteller, injects the story with a foretaste of what the story is missing; another level of narrative, which reminds the reader that the written story is part of a larger interactional experience; facial gestures and gasps as codes of interrelational knowledge and active co-communication in oral transmission are artificially represented. Smith also exemplifies the relational character of storytelling, as she explains her method of delivery: “As my mother passed it on to me, word for word I pass it to you” (95). Smith describes herself repeating her mother’s words, thus her mother’s words become a part of her, Smith a part of her mother and the “I” becomes polyphonic.  

Female Travellers dominate Smith’s story, as the extraction of Smith’s father from participation in the proceedings (he is backgrounded washing the dishes) illustrates. The storyteller(s), listeners, heroine and potential victim are all female Travellers, and all connected by, or through birth. The male characters in the story; Smith’s grandmother’s husband, the coach-driver and coach-passenger all have negative roles, which suggests that Traveller women are intended as the central theme.

The first few lines of the story describe how “Granny” took her youngest child, Maggie, with her hawking while her two older children were left with their father: “The night before’s booze, as usual, resulted in Granny taking the brunt of his violent temper; the pain in her arm proved it” (96). In Smith’s account of her mother’s childhood we can see a cohesive pattern between Smith’s great-grandfather in the Burker myth and her mother’s father in another story: “Our mother had a difficult childhood. Every day from birth until she married was on the road; horse, cart, a father seldom sober and too fond of his fists” (2). In both stories Smith’s great-grandmother is positioned as a triple victim: a woman, a beaten wife and a Traveller.

The first event in the story depicts “Granny,” as she hears a horse and carriage, and Smith introduces the themes of intuition and danger: “She’d no reason, but a sense of foreboding

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241 Smith illustrates intra-family relationality with the use of body metaphor (and an explanation for the reader) after telling an account of her mother’s near-fatal illness: “I always imagined that because of the closeness of us living in such a tiny space, we became as one body. Let me put it simply for you: our parents were the head. Then, according to the age of my sisters, we were joined into limbs and so forth, one living body!” (25). Others are not expected to understand Smith’s ideas concerning the extent of relationality in Traveller family interrelations.
took hold as the sound made by the horse’s hooves on the old road became louder and louder” (96). The words “no reason” suggest that there is no logical explanation for the heroine’s “sense of foreboding,” and, because the heroine’s intuition proves to be right in the story, it encourages logical thinkers to reassess their worldview, and, in the proposed context of the story, Travellers to trust in intuition. The heroine then hides Maggie, the child, and gives her instructions: “‘No matter what happens, don’t show yourself – courie down well!’” (96). Smith, then, depicts the heroine as willing to sacrifice herself in order to save her child, and consolidates this idea by stating: “No stranger could be trusted by a lone traveller in those days” (97). Having built up a scene of expectant danger in her story, Smith then moves on to the proposed source of the danger.

Smith describes the horses as “black as hell” and the coach as “shining like a funeral carriage” (97). However, the similes depicting death and doom are ignored because of the heroine’s knowledge of horses; the stallion is deemed by the heroine to be the “mount of a gentleman,” and a gentleman “would not interfere with a traveller woman and her wee one” (97). Here, logic and a historic discourse of authentication enter the equation, and soothes the heroine’s apprehensions of danger. However, the initial intuition of the heroine proves to be well founded as the coach and horses wait around the next corner, “[s]traddling her path.”

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242 Hamish Henderson listed some of the characteristics and versions of Burker stories: “Lum-hatted black-frockcoated noddies (medical students) drive the ‘burker’s coach’ into the countryside to try and find isolated tinker encampments; the coach is long and black-draped, looking like a hearse; blood hounds lope silently beside it; the horse’s harness is swathed in cloth to prevent it from klinking; the horse’s hooves have rubber pads on them. In some of the stories the tinker victim gets his throat cut, and his relatives discover too late that he is missing; in others, there are hair’s breadth escapes from the villainous doctors and noddies” (Man, Myth and Magic, “Tinkers” 2636, original parentheses). Smith’s Burker story belongs to the “hair’s breadth escapes” variety. However, we should not be too hasty to attribute the characteristics of the Burker myth to a particular nation or group as both Henderson (above) and Simpson et al in A Dictionary of English Folklore do: “A fairly common motif in legends of the 19th century or earlier is that the ghost of some local aristocrat or landowner rides about the countryside at night in a spectral black carriage; its horses may be headless, or fire-breathing, or luminous, and similarly monstrous black dogs may precede it. Recorded versions show considerable relish for the macabre details” (276-77). See Jacqueline Simpson and Steve Roud, A Dictionary of English Folklore (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

243 See Robert Greene, The Thirde and Last Part of Conny-catching: with the New Devised Knauish Art of Foole-taking; the like Cosenages and Villenies never before Discouered. A Disputation betweenee a hee Conny-catcher and a shee Conny-catcher (1592; Edinburgh, 1966). In Conny-catchers a male thief or foist (Laurence) and a female whore or Traffique (Nan) compete to decide which one of them is more hurtful to the common-wealth. During the course of the constructed disputation Laurence is convinced by Nan that the whore does more harm to the common-wealth than the thief: the thief only steals from men and brings them to poverty, whereas the whore not only thieves but brings youths to ruin, causes married men to lose their wives and children, men to spend all their money, and are brought to begging and end up at the gallows for stealing. Whores also spread diseases (35-36). In order to authenticate the highly unlikely and constructed event Greene uses authoritative witness-figures like Justices of the Peace, Gentlemen and his own testimony. Also see Henry Fielding’s An Enquiry into the Late Increase of Robbers (1751). Fielding introduces an account of the High Constable of Holbourn concerning “Houses set apart for the Reception of idle Persons and vagabonds,” and, as if the title of “Constable” was not enough to authenticate the account, Fielding includes the words, “none who know that Gentleman, will want any Confirmation of the Truth of it” (143, original capitalization). The word “gentleman” seems to legitimate a story and signify “truth.”
(97). In other words, the intuition and caution of the heroine almost prevented danger, whereas the heroine’s use of logic reintroduced the threat of danger to the story. The “official” medical students (Burkers) and the Travellers embody the seemingly incompatible dichotomy of logic (in connection with science and empiricism that locates a chain of reasoning in order to arrive at a conclusion) and intuition, which I regard as a myth derived from direct experience and/or mediated experience of significant others (and their stories). Therefore, if Smith’s heroine had trusted her own logic, the logic of intuition, which involves caution and a healthy degree of suspicion, and not a chain of rational logic, she would have avoided endangering herself and her child. After initially suspecting that “Granny” herself was the potential victim of the Burkers, Smith describes the heroine exclaiming: “‘They didn’t want her! They wanted her little girl! Her precious child!’” (97), and signals a change of Burker story tradition. In his initial description of Burker stories, Braid claims that they usually “relate actual events that place adult travellers at risk” (Traveller Tales 79). As we see, Smith’s version of the myth is adapted to the proposed context of the (re)telling; mother to small children, and Traveller and storyteller Duncan Williamson, whom Braid interviewed, commented on this function of the story: “Burker stories were sometimes told as warnings for children to stay close to the camp and to be suspicious of strangers” (Traveller Tales 79).244 Williamson positions the intended message of Burker stories in a pedagogical frame; the transmission of contextual experience and expected behaviour.

The transmission of expected behaviour to dependents is also involved in Smith’s reversal of the child-stealing stereotype. Henderson commented on a Traveller “persecution complex” that he found to be embedded in Burker stories:

Although the ‘flattie’ (non-tinker) population for long feared that the tinkers were child-stealers (witness the lullaby ‘Hush ye! Hush ye! Dinna fret ye! The black Tinkler winna get ye’), the folklore of the tinkers shows clearly and even poignantly that they lived in much greater fear of the ordinary population than the ‘flatties’ did of them. (“Tinker” 2636, original parentheses)

In my interpretation, the meaning behind Smith’s story goes beyond the threat of the Burkers; it is a metonymy for the perceived vulnerability of women and children in relation to unfamiliar others. The threat, or the potentiality of threat, from “outside,” which is embodied by the “Burkers” is a defence system characterised by a recommendation of caution and suspicion. And although the particular threat of the Burkers is fixed in the past (“in those days”) the

244 Among other publications Duncan Williamson has published is a life story entitled The Horsieaman; Memories of a Traveller 1928-58 (1994). Williamson includes a burker story in one of his other publications. See Duncan Williamson, Fireside Tales of the Traveller Children (Edinburgh: Canongate, 1983) 143-52.
message that the Burker myth relays is functional. In a way the “black Tinkler” of Henderson’s nursery rhyme and the Burkers of Smith’s Traveller story are each other’s mythical antitheses, but serve similar purposes in different environments.245

Returning to Smith’s story the threat from the Burkers is then realised as the coachman relays the hopelessness of the situation: “‘Let her go, tinker, it’s futile. Look round woman, there’s nobody for miles!’” (98). Both the word “tinker” and “woman” are positioned in the direct speech of the coachman and characterise the proposed victim’s and the coachman’s linguistic schemas in a relation of dissonance. The coachman is imbued with a negative view of “tinkers” and a generalized opinion of women as inferior in strength and incapable of defending themselves. And the repetition of the word “woman” in the speech of the middle-aged passenger “‘Give her to me, woman, we’ll take her with or without your assistance!’” (98), compacts the idea of general inferiority involved in the altercation and conveys the idea that any woman would be chanceless against the Burkers. Smith has, however, positioned the heroine of her story for the trickster part of the narrative, as there seems to be no way out for her heroine, other than the use of her wits. As the story continues we see that Smith’s granny does not pass into the projected generalised view of women; she is a Traveller woman and uses her wits to lure the Burkers. And after pretending to give up the child after a brief struggle: “‘Here, take the bairn if you need her so bad!’” (98), the heroine backs up her decision by using a logic that the coachman understands: “‘Stop struggling with me, I give her to you. Do I not have a drunken bastard for a man, and two other bairns? What would one less mean to a poor woman like me?’” (98). Smith’s representation of her heroine attempting to put the coachman at ease acts as a metonymy for the need of the discursively dominated to gain and utilise their knowledge of other people’s way(s) of thinking in order to survive. The chain of logic that places burdens on Maggie (drunken husband, two other children, poverty and being a woman) in the context of Smith’s story represents another way of thinking and stands in stark contrast to a statement made earlier in the story by the narrating I: “[T]here was no way she’d give up her child without a life-or-death struggle” (98). Knowledge of another logic is held in contrast to Traveller logic in Smith’s story, and as logic, in its various forms, is involved in how people view and construct meaning in the world, logic is subjectified history.

The actual trickster event in Smith’s story is made possible through the heroine’s practical knowledge of horses and the environment, which act as a blueprint for how disempowered Traveller women (also remember her painful arm; the arm turns out to be broken) can use

245 We could add the “bogeyman” to the list of fantasy figures that are supposed to inculcate caution and suspicion with reference to people that they do not know.
their wits to get through difficult situations: “She knew to halt the horse the coachman would have to pull on the reins, and as he did so Granny retrieved her precious bundle and ran like the Banshee herself was after them, into the boggy ground of Rannoch Moor” (98). In the story, the heroine’s actions aid her escape from the Burkers, but also serve as an additional comment on the practical knowledge of a lifestyle involving mobility. Knowledge of the geographical environment as commercial nomads providing services was/is essential for the survival of the family, and experiential knowledge concerning horses/mechanised vehicles were/are necessary skills. Although Smith’s Burker story has a specific context, the traces of a collective habitus remain present.

In the continuation of Smith’s story the danger is only temporarily waylaid and the heroine is forced to take evasive action: “She then bundled up what they could each carry, warning her vulnerable family the evil men would come in the night, and made a long weary journey to the far side of Loch Tulla. It was here her cousin Andrew and his family were camped, seven miles over the moor!” (99). Smith emphasises that there is safety in numbers and that the extended family is a source of security, safety and protection. Moreover, Smith describes the heroine leaving her drunken husband behind, which suggests, in the context of the storytelling situation, that Traveller women cannot rely on their husbands to protect them.

Smith’s story acts as a pedagogical and ideological tool, as it promotes the idea that women need to be independent in order to deal with the unpredictability of their economic and social roles.²⁴⁶ Hence, Smith removes the men in her story from the context of the Burker story, or positions the men in the story in negative roles (drunkards, Burkers). Furthermore, the story teaches children to be suspicious and wary of strangers without their parent’s direct guidance. The heroine or resistance figure of the story is also infused with knowledge of the environment that she operates in and an advantageous knowledge of other ways of thinking (male and rational), which aids the movement from disempowerment to empowerment and allows her to deal with potentially dangerous situations; she uses her wits. Even though Smith involves her own character, her sisters, mother and grandmother in her story, and positions several generations of her family in a myth, the story speaks a powerful language and is involved in what we might call a continuity of a modern system of stories (mythology). The only difference involved in the pedagogical transfer of knowledge and expected and projected patterns of behaviour is the mode in which the knowledge is subjectified; rather than through

²⁴⁶ I would like to note that a hawking woman with a child should not automatically be referred to as a woman’s role, as the child would also function as a tool to induce a degree of empathy in prospective customers in order to heighten the chances of selling products or services.
oral stories and significant others, institutional, familial and a more diffuse pedagogy is involved in the inculcation process. And as Smith’s closing remark to her story suggests, “By the silence within the bus, it passed my mind that we were all thinking the same thing: the traveller’s lot was indeed a fearful, dangerous one at times!” (99), the pedagogy, or ideology of self-surveillance, co-surveillance and wariness, in its taken-for-granted form, impregnates many people’s worldview.

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In this chapter I have investigated myth construction, re-production and promotion from a perspective that sees the respective life story narrators positioning themselves in the context of their respective life story’s context of production. Boswell tells a “scam” story to Seymour, which, in its subject matter and moral content, placed it in a historical continuum of narratives related to people who are perceived to live unusual lives. Stockins, likewise, is encouraged to tell his story from a Gypsy and a bare-knuckle fighter’s point of view, and speaks from that position in his story. Joyce, a Traveller rights activist, narrates a story in which she describes a progression in interrelations based on a process that demythologises Travellers in the dominant group and media coverage. Smith, as a storyteller, which is a role made available for her to adopt by the Scottish Revival movement and its post-colonial narrative, projects the idea of a storyteller onto her mother and grandmother, and involves them in a pedagogical and behaviour-structuring myth.

All four narratives provide the reader with worldviews that are involved in complex ways with the dominant group’s mythic discourse. In my interpretation, Boswell mimics the Othering and stereotyping strategies of the dominant group with reference to Gypsies by positioning the two Welsh men (punter and judge) in the sheep-farmer stereotype. Boswell also communicates with a well-nurtured and maintained narrative connected to confession, rogue and vagabond literature in his “choice” and location of narrative. Furthermore, the police in Boswell’s story act as the legal and controlling side of the historical discourse that position certain people practicing unusual activities on the wrong side of the law. Thus, as a consequence, Boswell’s resistance strategies become contradictory; the method that he uses to reverse the roles of the characters in his story re-produces the strategies of the dominant group. Boswell uses the myth of the “good loser” as a power narrative that uses his knowledge of the use of capital in the structuring of masculinity, which reconnects it to a colonial narrative. Boswell’s “good loser” myth has to be constantly repeated, pointed to and visually evident in order to
retain its power. The contradiction and frailty of Boswell’s philosophy is revealed as we realise that Boswell’s story is in fact a bad loser’s story.

Joyce’s demythologisation of “Traveller” discourses includes both Othering and othering, but also humanising and re-humanising elements that she portraits disrupting and disturbing the myths of the dominant group. Joyce also points to both the absurd and alarming sides of the anti-Traveller protest action, but attempts to bridge the effects of contrasting linguistic schemas and the resulting interrelational dissonance. Joyce’s story promotes a sense of hope, and hope is embodied in the counter-protesters and Joyce’s self-help collaboration, which she depicts resulting in less biased media coverage of Travellers. In contrast to Joyce, Stockins, remains in a relatively isolated Gypsy world in his story, and his fight story relates a system of interrelations that uses violence to prevent an escalation of violence. The fight is also portrayed as a means of negotiating balances of family and personal honour and reputation, an event that allows for betting and a means of entry into a mythology of fighting stories. The two fighters are also portrayed as the embodiments of subjectified and gendered histories involving significant male others and a fighting tradition. Stockins’ story forms part of a heroic and contemporary mythology that the context of the book’s production pre-determined and, however interesting the story is, or, alternatively, because the story is interesting, we can evaluate that the mythology it rests on for its discursive power lies in the “underworld,” “secret,” “insight” and “resistance” connotations that have been involved in a construction of taste that renders and promotes “Gypsies” as “inherently” interesting.

Smith’s Burker story presents Smith narrating a story that she heard from her mother, and portrays her mother retelling her grandmother’s story to Smith and her sisters. The story itself involves Smith’s grandmother and one of her children escaping from child-snatching Burkers. I interpreted the figure of resistance (the heroine) using her own knowledge of another’s way of logical or rational thinking to outwit the Burkers in the story and positioned the child-snatching scenario as a reversal of the dominant group’s Gypsy stereotype. I also replaced the word “intuition” with direct or mediated experience and connected it to a pedagogy of caution and healthy suspicion transferred from parents to children. Smith’s Burker story also reproduces a pedagogy that forms a blueprint for a set of prescriptive codes of interrelations that are promoted for inculcation today, albeit through a greater variety of channels.

Whether a narrative discourse is referred to as a myth or is demoted to another form of narrative depends on the point of view, level of abstraction, depth of historical awareness and ideological anchoring of its users or critics. A narrative discourse can be fixed in an ancient past, regarded as ahistorical or connected to other groups (not ours). Furthermore, whether a
myth is defined in terms of an improbable story, a continuity of discursive practices in story form, a pedagogical tool and/or a powerful discourse that aids the positioning, and maintenance of distance in relation to others, it can, in my opinion, not be excluded from the present, the modern or political negotiations between imagined groups. All groups use myths as power discourses in their stereotypes, fantasies and imaginings concerning the group that they consider themselves belonging to and the positioning, distancing and construction of others.

In the next chapter, “The Misrecognised I,” I will analyse two personal stories and three origin stories and present an ideological point of view that sees the respective narrators use and promote discourses that serve as traps. The narrator’s articulation of and unintentional collaboration with older, dominant discourses form the basis through which strategies of resistance aimed at more contemporary situations are negotiated. Thus, the story scripts that the narrators use serve to position and even legitimise their own social, structural and dominated positions.
Chapter Four: The Misrecognised I

For him I hope the bonds of ethnicity will never define him, the corral of race never hold him or the exactitude of culture, defined outside him, impede his progress in looking for himself, a search which at its best has no end.

Brian A. Belton (Acknowledgements), Gypsy and Traveller Ethnicity

[In the absence of visual confirmation, these “touchstones” – race, culture, language, blood – still form a kind of authenticity test, a racial-reality game that contemporary Native people are forced to play.]

Thomas King, The Truth About Stories: A Native Narrative

The aim of this chapter is to identify and analyse forms of self-dominance embedded in the various ways that the respective narrators position themselves in the historical, ideational and social environments of their respective narrative constructions. I will divide the chapter into two sections which are designed to lay their main focus on the roles of ideational structures, respectively social structures in the formation of the ontological space in which the respective narrators position their characters and other/Other characters and/or discourses in their stories. My analysis of the origin stories will focus on the two Bourdieuan concepts of “misrecognition,” and “doxa,” and my analysis of the two personal stories on the Bourdieuan term “symbolic violence.” Each of these concepts forms part of the other and in turn all are part of habitus, which lies at the contextually organised pre-stage of all practice, linguistic utterance, story construction and self-positioning. Bourdieu describes misrecognition as “the fact of recognizing a violence that is wielded precisely inasmuch as one does not perceive it as such” (An Introduction 168). Misrecognition, then, is a form of forgetting, or not knowing, which is embedded in the pre-consciousness of habitus and, importantly, recognised there by

the set of fundamental, prereflexive assumptions that social agents engage by the mere fact of taking the world for granted, of accepting the world as it is, and of finding it natural because their mind is constructed according to cognitive structures that are issued out of the very structures of the world. (An Introduction 168, original emphasis)

Misrecognition is the failure to see the arbitrariness of taken-for-granted structures and discourses that are instrumental in re-producing the agent’s “feel for the game” and internalised social position(s). The un-reflexive acceptance of taken-for-granted cognition is what
Bourdieu calls doxa, and extends the term’s frame of reference by using it in order to re-vitalise another: “By using doxa we accept many things without knowing them, and that is what I call ideology.” Doxa is the subjectified inability to reflect over a world, which an agent is so immersed in that other forms of perception, thinking and practice are either unthinkable, refused, unavailable or dismissed.

The violence that Bourdieu attributes to the workings of misrecognition and doxa is symbolic violence: “[T]he violence which is exercised upon a social agent with his or her complicity […]. Of all forms of ‘hidden persuasion,’ the most implacable is the one exerted, quite simply, by the order of things” (An Introduction, 167-68, original emphases). Symbolic violence is the unintended and self-promoted effects of doxa:

Dominated agents, who assess the value of their position and their characteristics by applying a system of schemes of perception and appreciation which is the embodiment of the objective laws whereby their value is objectively constituted, tend to attribute themselves what the distribution attributes to them, refusing what they are refused (‘That’s not for the likes of us’), adjusting their expectations to their chances, defining themselves as the established order defines them, reproducing in their verdict on themselves the verdict the economy pronounces on them, in a word, condemning themselves to what is in any case their lot […] consenting to be what they have to be, “modest,” “humble” and “obscure.”

The life story narrators, who use the signifiers “Gypsy” or “Traveller” to refer to themselves, are the “dominated agents” and their negotiations of “position,” “perception” and “appreciation” refer to the workings of various forms of capital within a discursive and practical environment of interaction. By passing into the narrative of the dominant view of their correct and “natural” place, and “refusing what they are refused,” which can involve making do with limited resources and adopting attitudes with self-inbuilt limits, the dominated adhere to the restrictions that are placed on them. Symbolic violence is a subtle form of violence committed by the agents on themselves (without conscious knowledge of its source, and with their consent) within the dominated space(s) in which they produce and re-produce habitus. This mis-recognition as a recognition of doxa is the area of focus in the narratives that I will analyse. The chapter re-positions theories of resistance in wider discourses that, in their repetitiveness and unperceived pedagogical action create the continuity, accumulation and internalisation of such discourses, thus forging the range of possibilities and probabilities that have the greatest tendency to win through in the end. Although no one has total control of the game and there

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will be disputes and changes to the “rules,” the “minor” players lack the power to effectively score a goal; they are forced into defence and the likelihood of own-goals increases potentially.

In the first section I will analyse three Gypsy/Traveller origin stories. Gordon Sylvester Boswell’s origin story is positioned in a polemic with counter-discourses on two different, but similar levels. Boswell indirectly resists another origin account, while his own is accompanied by John Seymour’s footnote commentary. Seymour’s footnote forms a parallel discourse that demotes Boswell’s account, while re-establishing the account that Boswell was interested in contesting. Similarly, the narrators in *Tents* and *My Life* situate their origin stories in polemical opposition to other dominant accounts, which are perceived as threatening to over-determine their own preferences. All three life story narrators integrate significant historical/national events, and/or historical/religious characters in their negotiation and construction of their origin stories, and use their stories as either an ambiguous defensive gesture (Gordon Sylvester Boswell; a platform that invites hope for the future), a political statement (Nan Joyce; platform for ethnic group status) or a platform for discussion (Jess Smith; an invitation to discuss the “why” of Gypsy persecution).

All three origin stories serve political ends and illustrate that the life story narrators occupy an ambiguous position in the liminal zone of their respective national narratives, and, therefore, attempt to negotiate their own “national” narrative from the pre-dispositioned discourses available at the time. In Joseph Lennon’s *Irish Orientalism: A Literary and Intellectual History* (2004), he identifies several strategies that (pseudo)historians used to gain national and ideological capital through processes of assembling, re-framing, re-writing and the refutation of other narratives. (Pseudo)historians have, in other words, aligned their narratives with status-giving locations (Rome, Greece, Egypt), prestigious (mythical) historical figures (Brutus, King Arthur, prominent biblical and religious figures), languages (the Tower of Babel, original language or a discursively constructed equivalent) and significant historical events, and used these constructed histories to legitimise colonial and nationalistic political aims and activities.

Lennon also provides an insight into the usage of narrative in the construction of the “people,” of which the origin or national narrative corresponds, and links Greek and Roman

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249 I use the words “Gypsy and/or Traveller origin stories” in order to illustrate how Jess Smith negotiates a path between two ideas concerning Scottish Traveller origin; Gypsy origin (“foreign”) and geographically local (“indigenous”), and how Nan Joyce sticks to the geographically local (“indigenous”).

barbarian histories to their tendency to represent “barbarians” from various peripheral geographies sharing traits based on the “barbarians” perceived propensities to “resemble one another in their strangeness” (Irish 13). This “lumping together” of Othered people in collapsible trait categories becomes, at a much later date (after the Middle Ages and in the wake of colonisation and national consciousness), a way of both creating an ancient past for an imagined people (or nation) or a legitimisation of colonial activities. Lennon’s example of the unequal competition between British and Irish origin stories illustrates the ambiguity of the process:

Repeatedly over generations, British pseudohistorians and writers discredit the origins of the Irish. Instead of merely dismissing the legends, however, these writers convey Ireland’s fantastic origin legends as evidence of the wild nature of the Irish. Such a rhetorical move allows them to illustrate the barbaric character of the Irish before they, though contradictory, discredit Ireland’s claims to antiquity – both activities gird the British interest of bringing Ireland into the kingdom. (Irish 39)

Bruce Lincoln’s positioning of myth in a classification of other types of story distances myth from what Lincoln calls “the Eurocentered taxonomy that grants privileged position to history.” According to Lincoln, history is privileged because of its three constitutive parts: a date, attesting written sources, and humans as the only significant actors, while Lincoln’s taxonomy rests on the claims of the narrators and the acceptance of their audience. A fable, for instance, has no truth claims and is accepted as fiction; other narratives have truth claims, but lack credibility and are referred to as legends. And, according to Lincoln, history has both truth claims and credibility, but lacks the authority of myth (Discourses 24). The authority of myth, in Lincoln’s sense, lies in its function as a “blueprint” or “template,” but he also extends the discursive power of myth; myth can “evoke the sentiments out of which society is actively constructed” and politically “mobilize social groupings” (Discourses 25). Lincoln’s taxonomy is useful to me in its insinuations concerning the contest between competing origin stories and colonizer/colonized or dominant/dominated and the ideologically motivated positioning and re-positioning of narratives in the various credible/incredible slots of myth, history and legend.

The narrative construction of all three Gypsy/Traveller origin myths recall power struggles on many fronts: firstly, as I will show, all three origin narratives are constructed from a

251 Lennon quotes from Nennius’s *Historia Britinum* (mid ninth century), which describes connections between an early Roman leader Brutus and Britons, who were depicted as settling before the Scots and Picts (Irish 36-7). Lennon also paraphrases from the twelfth century pseudohistorian Geoffrey of Monmouth, who claimed that Britain had a rightful claim to Ireland due to King Arthur’s earlier incursions into the island. Furthermore, Lennon adds that up to the sixteenth century British historians perpetuated national narratives of King Arthur’s conquests of Ireland (Irish 38).

basic colonial narrative frame (or blueprint), which was established by early members of the Gypsy Lore Society in the late nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century; secondly, potentially dominant external narratives enter the equation, directly or indirectly, as undesirable counter-narratives; and, thirdly, the narrators promote their respective national narratives using strategies of silencing, narrative integration, polemic argument and/or rejection. The narrator’s origin stories provide an ambivalent mixture of taken-for-granted and therefore misrecognised adherence to colonial narratives, a conscious disruption of potentially over-determining narratives and illustrate agency in the re-construction and usage of their respective national narratives. Boswell denies a dominant origin account credence, but adheres to its dominant theme, thus proclaiming a foreign origin for “English Gypsies.” Joyce, likewise, follows the colonial narrative by promoting an indigenous origin for Travellers in Ireland. She also negotiates a parallel pathway through Irish history with two other groups, but resists the dominant group’s dropout story. Smith rejects a dropout scenario and denies another origin account discursive space, but presents a narrative that includes the proposed indigenous/foreign origin of Scottish Travellers of the dominant colonial narrative. All three narrators reject paternalistic counter-narratives that attempt to position them (I/we) in history on the dominant group’s terms, but misrecognise their compliance with older colonial discourses.253

The life stories are comprised of a series of retrospective (re)constructions of fragmented memories that are formed into coherent stories at the time of telling and/or writing, and provide a rich, but not unproblematic site for the adaptation of Bourdieu’s form of ideology to story analysis. A person (re)constructing a narrative of a past event can re-formulate his or her story in order to, for example, erase the potential embarrassment of misrecognition that has become realised at a later date. Thus, the person’s habitus, which is sensitive to issues concerning capital, and therefore bias in its pre-dispositionally constituted representations of itself, either avoids the post-realised topic of discussion, or retrospectively treats a previous

253 Jimmy Stockins did not present an origin story in his life story, but he provides a few insinuations: “We weren’t here from the beginning – who was?” (103), and in comparison with showmen: “The showmen were the people that ran the fairgrounds and, like the Romanies, for centuries they had travelled around the country, taking their fairs from one town to the next” (88). A direct reference to Indian origin is present in Martin King and Martin Knight’s introduction and there is an indirect reference in the text-version of a speech made by Eli Frankham (poet and chairman of the National Romany rights Association) in 1994 (inserted in Cobbles as an appendix). Frankham locates “gypsies” as both foreign and non-European, but omits mentioning India as the country of origin (16, 200-201).
event reflexively. However, post-realisation does not necessarily mean that the respective life story narrators are aware of new and potential modes of forgetting.

In the second section I will analyse two personal stories that illustrate particularly poignant aspects of symbolic violence in narratives depicting interrelations with representatives of individuals and institutions involved with forms of order and control. The respective life story narrators guide the reader/listener through the events of their stories and position their characters (the narrated I) in situations of conflict with representatives of state institutions. Both stories are infused with obvious patterns of unequal power relations and, although both stories involve structural as well as discursive aspects of misrecognition, the symbolic violence involved in the stories is differently distributed.

Jimmy Stockins’ story follows his character’s (the narrated I) conflict with the powers of a council and a particular council employee. His story traces the narrated I and his family’s movements from a “sanctioned” site, onto the road and then into a house; it is a narrative of attrition and integration constructed from within a larger assimilation process. I will focus on the discourses connected to structured spaces and the ownership, control and order of such spaces. Nan Joyce’s story involves a process of disempowerment and dehumanisation at the hands of the police and judicial system. The story also includes the traumatic experiences of Joyce’s character, as she is transformed into an Irish Traveller stereotype. I will focus on the misrecognition of symbolic violence with reference to Joyce’s character’s body, and the themes of power, order and control with reference to discourses that upset, or threaten to upset, a doxic order and prevent the continuation of a guided forgetting in the dominant group.

Origin Stories: Colonial Misrecognition and National Negotiations

Gypsy origin was, and continues to be, a preoccupation, or alternatively, an obsession within Gypsy studies, and, until recently, the vast majority of writing on the subject was written by people other than Gypsies. The historicity of the “quest” for Gypsy origins is adequately illustrated by the preface of the first volume of the *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society* in 1888; the editors, David MacRitchie and Francis Hindes Groome, wrote with reference to the primary aims of the journal: “These are to gather new materials, rearrange the old, and to formulate

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254 For instance, notice Joyce’s retrospective reflexivity concerning her depiction of a girl’s child-caring role in the family: “If you were a girl you were never really free because you were always helping your mother with the children. Since you were nine or ten you were holding the youngest child in your arms, you were sort of weighed down with them. You were never allowed go anywhere but when I was growing up we never just thought about it” (*My Life* 16).
results, so as little by little to approach the goal – the final solution of the Gypsy problem.”

These aims were related to as an attempt to find the “true answer” to the “problem” of Gypsy origin. One of the sources of the “old” materials was mentioned in the preface: Heinrich Moritz Gottlieb Grellman. Grellman’s Dissertation on the Gipsies (1787) was translated for an English public by Matthew Raper, who wrote in his preface: “As my chief aim in translating the following sheets, was to give such of my countrymen, who are unacquainted with the German language, an opportunity of learning from what part of the World, it is probable the Gipsies came among us.” In both 1787 and 1888 the basis of the search for Gypsy origin was their “foreign” origin, and in both cases this origin was located in the “East.”

Before I begin my analysis of the three origin stories I will identify the master discourse of Gypsy/Traveller origins in England, Scotland and Ireland. I will then analyse the three origin stories from a perspective that sees the self-promoted and taken-for-granted indigenous and/or foreign origin of the imagined groups as a form of forgetting. Therefore the respective narrator’s negotiations with other narrative discourses that are perceived as a threat, and therefore rejected in some way, are actually based on an even earlier dominant discourse.

The Colonial Process of the Production of Origins

In his 1889 JGLS article MacRitchie (founding member of the GLS and co-secretary and co-editor of its Journal) provided a definition of “Tinkers,” which created a connection between two Othered imagined groups: “Although the caste of ‘Tinkers’ cannot be regarded as identical with that of the Gypsies, yet it is undeniable that the two are closely associated, and that a great number of Gypsies are tinkers.” MacRitchie also quoted Charles Godfrey Leland, president of the GLS, in order to legitimate his own ideas on the subject: “‘He who catches a tinker has got hold of half a Gypsy’” (“Irish Tinkers” 350). The foundation of MacRitchie’s conclusion is partly based on linguistic evidence from Francis Hindes Groome (co-secretary and editor of the JGLS and a folklorist) and partly on the authority of an unnamed “Irish Lady.” The Lady, who was quoted at length by MacRitchie, commented on resemblances be-

255 David MacRitchie and Francis Hinde Groome, ”The Editor’s Preface” The Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society 1st ser. 1 (1888): 1-2. The other main interests mentioned in the preface were language, manners and folklore.
256 Wim Willems devotes a chapter of his book, In Search of the True Gypsy, to Grellman and his influences in the proposed formation and future development of studies of Gypsies (22-93).
258 For a particularly striking expression of colonial mentality, see Charles Godfrey Leland, “The Tinker’s Talk,” The Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society vol.1, 2 (1907). Leland fantasizes about his “discovery” of Shelta: “It was indeed with the feeling of Columbus, the night before he discovered America, when he saw the light shining from afar through the darkness, that I heard the word ‘Shelta,’ and asked the fern-dealer if he could talk it” (170).
between Tinkers’ and Gypsies’ wandering habits, typology and “caste” monogamy, which she considered partial proof of “Tinkers” being a “species of Gypsy” (“Irish Tinkers” 351). MacRitchie, however, selects one particular element of the Lady’s description, a proposed exchanging of wives, as ample evidence of a Gypsy connection, and continues by constructing, in pseudo-historical fashion, a number of arbitrary links between Gypsies and Tinkers through this supposed custom.²⁵⁹ He then summarised his discussion by stating, “we have here a visible link between the Spanish Gypsy and the semi-Gypsy of Ireland” (“Irish Tinker” 352).

MacRitchie concluded that the language of the ‘Tinkers’ was a compound of English, Romanes, and Gaelic. However, John Sampson, who, sociologist Ken Lee refers to as the “Rai of Rais” (“Orientalism”145), disputed MacRitchie’s findings on linguistic grounds: “I incline to think that Shelta, is, or was originally, derived from an even older language than Old Irish, probably from a prehistoric Celtic.”²⁶⁰ Sampson’s, uncertain, but authoritative ideas concerning the origin of “Shelta” contributed to a separation between Irish ‘Tinkers’ and Gypsies, and as Helleiner explains, a hierarchy was constructed:

Once it was concluded that the linguistic evidence indicated a Celtic rather than Indian origin, the Irish ‘tinkers’ were slotted into the racial hierarchy of Travellers created by British Gypsiology. At the top of the ladder were the allegedly pure-blooded ‘true Gypsies,’ who alone were worthy objects of ethnological study. Below the Gypsies were the Scottish Travellers, whose status was uncertain (i.e., either Celts or mixed Gypsy and Celt), and below them were the allegedly Celtic Irish ‘tinkers.’ (Irish Travellers 38-39)

As we see the “Celtic Irish tinkers” are excluded from any “racial” connection to (“foreign”) Gypsies, and therefore constructed as Irish, whereas the “Scottish Travellers” are positioned in an either/or category. Furthermore, the process of hierarchal ordering was not exactly hidden, as Sampson’s colonial use of Shakespearian rhetoric in the introduction to Andrew McCormick’s The Tinkler-Gypsies (1907) suggests: “Yes, Gypsies are Gypsies, but are Tinkler-Gypsies [Scottish Travellers] Romané? That is the question. And if so, where

²⁵⁹ MacRitchie combined a quote from a book by Don Juan de Quinones (1632) (quoted in George Borrow’s The Gypsies of Spain [1841]) concerning wife swapping among Spanish Gypsies and the Irish Lady’s revelations. In Poets and Dreamers, Lady Gregory, whose home, Coole Park in County Gallway, was one of the initial homes of the Irish Literary Renaissance, like MacRitchie, relays hearsay on the same subject: “They [Tinkers] fight at night and make friends again in the daytime; and they sell their wives to one another; I’ve seen that myself” (123, my parentheses). Helleiner states that John M. Synge based his play The Tinker’s Wedding (1911) on country people’s stories in the East of Ireland, including an eye-witness account of how “tinkers” swapped wives. She also notes how the idea of “tinkers” swapping their wives found its way into the writings of MacRitchie and Sampson (Irish Travellers 44-45).

²⁶⁰ John Sampson, “Tinkers and their Talk,” Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society 1st ser. 2 (1890): 207-08. References to “Shelta” refer to the language of Irish Travellers, although Joyce refers to it as either Gammon or Cant (My Life 5).
about in the hierarchy of the Romani races should we place them?” (x-xi). Although hearsay, fantasy and pseudo-historical narrative construction created resemblances between two imagined groups, linguistic evidence, in combination with colonial and national politics, was the deciding factor that separated them. The three frame stories hierarchally presented by Helleiner endured and we find them, relatively undisturbed, in the three origin stories that I will analyse.

**Gordon Sylvester Boswell: Myth as a Tool of Rejection and Signifier of Hope**

The Gypsy origin story that Gordon Sylvester Boswell presents in his life story is, according to John Seymour in the editor’s preface, one of the only parts that Boswell wrote himself. Although I do not ideologically prioritise the written word over the spoken word, there is a greater sense of deliberation about what is written, as it can be rewritten, changed and so on. Oral material is more spontaneous and the speaker has less opportunity to think about the significances of what he or she is saying. Boswell’s Gypsy origin story is positioned at the end of the prologue, and therefore it is the last piece of writing that the reader reads before entering into the main text. Furthermore, instead of being addressed to Seymour, as the vast majority of the main text is, Boswell’s story is directed to the reader. However, Seymour is not excluded from this part of the text as he included a competing discourse in connection with Boswell’s origin story in his footnote commentary. My analysis will focus on providing insights into these questions: what is the purpose or function of the story in Boswell? Why did Boswell choose to present his Gypsy origin story in the prologue and in such a strategic position? And how can the story be linked with misrecognition and who is practicing these forms of forgetting? In my analysis I will focus on the themes of belonging, resistance and negotiation in connection to nationalism and nation (people), contemporary politics, and the ideologically constructed dichotomies of traditional versus modern and superstition versus science.

Boswell’s Gypsy origin story fits into Lincoln’s taxonomy in an ambiguous position; it has a truth claim, which is linked to a depth of pedagogy through a chain of male ancestors, but it lacks initial credibility. However, the story acts as a blueprint or meta-script for various other narratives that I will discuss in due course, and therefore Boswell’s narrative qualifies for the status of myth:261

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261 Manfri Frederick Wood, who describes himself as a Welsh Gypsy, recorded another version of the origin account in *In the Life of a Romany Gypsy* (1973). Wood’s extended version, entitled “The Wooden Horseshoe and the Three Nails,” includes a Roman invasion, the invention of iron horseshoes, the first (black)smith and an addi-
Now going back to the origins of my people, according to the teachings of my father and grandfather and great-grandfather and it’s been handed down to me: we believe that when Jesus was crucified and the two thieves with him, we believe it was a Gypsy they went to to make these nails, and that they was made of copper. But the Gypsy people found what these nails were for, and instead of giving them four nails they only give them three – one of them managed to escape with one of these nails. And the Gentiles have been looking for that nail ever since. And it has been this search that has led to the persecution of the Gypsy. And I believe that it’s just coming to the point when they’re finding that nail, and they are realising that the Gypsies done a good turn by taking it away instead of adding it to the other three.

That’s my belief. That’s what I’ve been taught. (14, original emphasis and last line positioning)

One ambiguous aspect of the passage is that Boswell relates to “the Gypsies” as a “people” before the nails were made, and thus Boswell’s version of the myth actually reads like a story solely about the origin of Gypsy persecution (and enforced nomadism), and not the origin of the “Gypsy people.” In fact Boswell interacts with a meta-narrative that entwines persecution and Gypsies in a stable and unchanging narrative mould. However, this is not the only contradiction concerning origin in Boswell; the most distinctive assertion of origin that Boswell makes is in an appendix: “I am still of the opinion that my forefathers came from Egypt, and not India, and that information was handed down from my father to me, from his father Wester” (Boswell 171, [placed in Appendix 1 by Seymour]).

As with Boswell’s crucifix story, his assertions of origin are authenticated through a series of male descendants and oral
transmission. On the other hand, if the reader were to approach Boswell with a pre-
dispositioned notion of Indian origin, and read only the main text, diasporic evidence (al-
though in need of imaginative extension) could be found to support the idea of Indian origin.
Boswell mentions interactions with Bengalis and Ghurkas during the First World War, which
seem to contradict his assertions of origin from a linguistic point of view: “I used to swap
words with them – some of their words were like our words” (84). In another episode, while
buying ponies in Brussels, Boswell depicts himself meeting other Gypsies, who he talked to
through an interpreter: “For they was Gypsy people: they’d be more than one nationality:
some were Hungarian, some German, might have been Italian Gypsies” (120). 265 However, as
Boswell refers to the crucifixion story as “the origins of my people,” and states that he be-
lieves he comes from Egypt, I will respect his assertions.

The first question that needs to be responded to is: why did Boswell place the crucifixion
story at the end of the preface in such a strategic position? I would suggest that the story has
more than one function, and the important features are its context in Boswell and its discursive
history. Furthermore, uncritical, and a-historic dismissals like Sinéad Ni Shúinéar’s, “[s]ome
groups have charming legends, either for internal consumption or for gullible outsiders: for
example, the famous story of the smith who made the nails for Jesus’s crucifixion being con-
demned to wander, or the wonderful fantasy about being Egyptian nobles on prolonged pil-
grimage” (“Irish Travellers” 60), fix the narratives in an either/or category, and refuse to
communicate with their ideological usages or their blueprint status as national narratives. 266
The origin stories that I have found in the literature have been, for the most part, isolated from
their contexts, whereas Boswell’s is not. 267 There is no doubt that Boswell knew about the In-
dian origin account; therefore a reasonable assumption would be that Boswell used his origin
myth in order to create an oppositional discourse. The crucifixion story performs as Boswell’s

265 Boswell seems to base his ideas of the people at the market in Brussels being Gypsies on their dress and ap-
appearance: “The men were long, some of them with spurs on – well dressed, good-looking men,” (120). Also see
Ken Lee’s foreword to Ian Hancock, We Are the Romani People = Ame sam e Rromane džene (Hatfield: Univer-
sity of Hertfordshire Press, 2002). Lee, discussing the sources of his first knowledge of ‘‘foreign’ Romanies,’’
writes: “I had heard my father and other Romanichals talk of ‘foreign’ Romanies they had travelled with in the
1930s. I had heard of old Gordon Boswell talk of the ‘foreign’ Romanies he had traded horses with in Belgium
before the First World War” (3).
266 Sinéad Ni Shúnéar, “Irish Travellers, Ethnicity and the Origins Question,” in Irish Travellers – Culture and
Ethnicity, ed., May McCann, Séamas Ó Síocháin and Joseph Ruane (Belfast: The Queen’s University of Belfast,
1994) 54-77.
267 For an example of a version of the legend from 1949 that is extracted from its context and positioned in a
footnote, see Denis Harvey, The Gypsies, Waggon-time and After (1979; London: B T Batsford, 1984). “A
Gypsy stopping in Jerusalem, being a stranger in that region, was ordered to forge four nails for the cross of
Christ. It was only after he had made three nails and was hammering out the fourth that he overheard what the
nails were to be used for. The Gypsy, who had been hearing rumours about the Son of God, flung away the half-
forged nail and fled. Ever-afterwards the Gypsies have kept on the move, hounded by the nail that reappears,
glowing red –hot, if ever they should settle down” (142, note 13).
refusal to communicate with the almost universal belief of the members of the GLS and the writers involved in the JGLS. He not only denies another origin account any space and credence, but also silences what he considers to be a dominant “non-Gypsy” discourse that threatens to overdetermine the ideas and preferences that he presents in Boswell. Boswell speaks from a position of financial security (he ran a successful scrap business), which affords him respect and status in both “Gypsy” and “non-Gypsy” worlds; he does not have to pander to other people’s views. I do not mean to argue that Boswell has not absorbed and internalised many of the discourses of the dominant group, or that he, like anyone, adapted the trajectory of his life story to the context of its telling, but I maintain that he was also prone, through predispositions regarding possibilities, probabilities and propensities, to disrupt unwelcome discourses.268

However, the unwelcome discourse of Indian origin is found on two interconnected levels in Boswell: firstly in the authoritative discourses of the GLS that Boswell is aware of, and secondly, in John Seymour’s footnote, which Seymour obviously felt had to be attached at the end of Boswell’s origin myth in the preface. In the footnote Seymour first states that “[t]he legend of ‘the fourth nail’ is widely believed among European Gypsies” (181), which has the effect of producing a shared belief between Boswell and others on the continent. However, in his life story Seymour referred to the crucifixion story as a “cock and bull story” spread by Gypsies in “large bands – hundreds strong” on their journey through the “Near East and Europe” (I’m a Stranger 118). Therefore, Seymour’s depiction of Gypsies “believing” the crucifixion story in his footnote is either a diplomatic move on Seymour’s behalf, or an attempt to be objective and reiterate the information from his sources (GLS members, the JGLS and published books emanating from this discursive centre). The next lines in Seymour’s footnote refer to origin: “It is known, from documentary as well as philological evidence, that the Gypsies came from northern India, and reached eastern Europe in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries” (181). The effect of Seymour’s fact, “It is known,” is to project Boswell’s crucifixion story into the realms of superstition and tradition, which contrasts it with modern and ideationally dominant practices of knowledge-acquisition. In other words, Boswell’s truth claims are overruled by another truth claim with its fundaments in scientific methods and scientific forms of legitimating evidence. Seymour’s footnote reduces Boswell’s myth to the

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status of legend as it is now projected as lacking credibility and authority and therefore its blueprint status.

George L. Mosse provides what I see as a historical blueprint for the main themes of Boswell’s origin story in his discussion of Jewish blood libel and the legend of Ahasverus, which re-emerged in the late nineteenth and first half of the twentieth century (Towards the Final Solution 113-15). Mosse links the Christian legend of Jewish blood libel (that Jews murdered Christian children and drank their blood during the feast of Passover) to the “legend” of the wandering Jew. In the story, Christ curses Ahasverus, “who sped Christ along to his crucifixion and refused him shelter.” As a result, Ahasverus is doomed to a life of wandering, without a home, despised as rootless and disinherited” (114). The connections to Boswell’s origin story are striking and strengthened in Mosse’s summary: “The legend of the wandering Jew reinforced the view of the Jew as the eternal foreigner, who would never learn to speak the national language properly or strike roots in the soil. This myth, in turn, was linked to the supposed oriental origin of the Jew as described in the Bible” (115). The narrative that Mosse describes provides an example of the political use of meta-narratives (in this case, Christianity) in the construction of Others, and as a myth or model for other powerful narratives.

However, Boswell constructs his origin story to include connections to contemporary politics, which positions the story in conjunction with a potential practical solution to the “problem” of “the Gypsies” and links it to modernisation processes. The link to contemporary politics is evident from Boswell’s personal attachment to his origin account, which injects it with a message of hope for the future: “And I believe that it’s just coming to the point when they’re finding that nail, and they are realising that the Gypsies done a good turn by taking it away instead of adding it to the other three” (14, original emphasis, by Seymour). The final part of the origin story, then, points towards hope of an improvement in interrelations between “Gentiles” (read non-Gypsies) and Gypsies. Boswell’s origin story can now be seen as functional in its personalised context, and Boswell uses it as a motivation for a social grouping. But what is this hope and motivation that Boswell so carefully infuses into the myth?

Richard A. R. Wade, a Gypsy Lore Society member, quoted an extract from Boswell’s speech at Appleby fair in 1967, which included Boswell’s vision of a system of Gypsy camping sites. Boswell was reported as having said,

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what I would like to see is some camps up and down the country. I’d like to see three types: a permanent camp where old people can go and stop and rest and be left in peace; a transit camp where you can come from one town to another and pay to go in and travel the country from the North to the South if you wish; and camps where you can stop in decent comfortable conditions in the Winter months. (Boswell 179)

As we see, Boswell was aware of, favourably disposed to, and apt to promote the discourse that led to the 1968 Caravan Sites Act. Therefore he integrated his own thoughts on contemporary politics onto the structure of the myth, illustrating its continued usefulness in a contemporary political context. Boswell effectively, but almost un-detectably (to the general reader), breaks the ideological construct that holds tradition/superstition in juxtaposition to modernity. However, his positive view of the aims behind the CSA can be seen as an act of misrecognition, as the CSA was a cog in the modernisation process in the sense that the main focus of the act was the control of nomadism. In other words, (ideally) a legal “reservation” system would be set up and anyone not residing on the reserved spaces would be automatically illegal. The goals of the CSA, then, suggest a solution to a problem; a problem that Boswell recognises, albeit from a different point of view:

Wherever you go nowadays you’re doing wrong, or you’re attempting to do wrong, or you’re about to do wrong and what then? When we’ve done all these things we are just going where we should go, where we have a right to be. People has commandeered our common lands to build on. They’ve taken our by-ways, our lovely lanes away from us. And where are these people that’s left on the roads today? They’ve got nowhere to go […]. It’s all restrictions. (33-34, original emphasis, by Seymour)

The process of modernisation, which includes the active promotion and encouragement of discourses related to ideologies of ownership and a purposeful obsession with control and the utilization and naming of all space, is involved in instilling order, but whose order? People who are not sedentary become a problem because they represent all too visual signs of how modernisation processes, which are linked to ideological constructs such as notions of “progress” and “development,” become the driving forces of structural exclusion and make visible

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270 See Derek Hawes and Barbara Perez, *The Gypsy and the State: The Ethnic Cleansing of British Society* (Bristol: The Policy Press, 1996) 20-36 for the social and political situation of the Gypsies prior to, and after the Acts implementation. Hawes et al state that the Act “imposed a duty on county authorities and London boroughs to provide sufficient sites to meet the numbers of Gypsies and Travellers residing in or resorting to the area” (26).

271 See Helleiner’s discussion of the suppression of mobility in Ireland (colonial order) and England (maintenance of control linked to internal change) from the mid-sixteenth-century (*Traveller-Gypsies* 33-35).

the inherent deficiencies and dehumanising effects of modern structures. Through scapegoating, stereotyping and other deviant-producing processes, which include paternal discourses of rehabilitation, conversion and re-formation of people living imagined “unusual,” thus deviant ways of life, debates concerning the deficiencies of modern “civilized” structures and economic systems can be effectively silenced or, alternatively, returned and/or kept at doxic levels; at the level of misrecognition, which is a particularly effective mode of forgetting. Boswell’s origin myth is also involved in one of the major ideologies of the last 150 to 200 years, which positions the myth as a meta-structure and meta-narrative for ambiguous discourses involving belonging and difference.

Boswell’s crucifixion story is a narrative of belonging as it re-produces a discourse of nation. Integrated with the story, and very economically so, is a date of origin, a place of origin, a connection with a famous historical person (probably the most famous of them all in Europe) and a solid link with the dominant religion. Boswell had already discussed another constructed-as-integral aspect of nationalism, language, in the prologue. Boswell promotes his story as “the origins of my people” and connects his “people” to an occupation and common, shared experiences: persecution and travelling. What Boswell actually describes through his origin myth is a mixture of war (long drawn-out symbolic and physical violence) and nationalism, and as John Hutchinson et al suggest “many nationalists have seen heroic struggle both as a test of collective fitness and the true route to independence from oppression.” We can see the script of an enduring struggle against oppression and hope of a reprieve from harassment in Boswell’s origin myth. Consequently, the crucifix story is not only an ideological narrative that re-produces a nationalist narrative, but it also produces a people within a people, or a nation within a nation, and therefore Boswell is conjoined with Seymour (and the members of the GLS) by referring to himself and the imagined group that he aligns himself with as a “race.”

There is no mistaking Boswell’s internalisation of these discourses, as is evident from his indignant reply to a man he meets in a lay-by; the man does not believe that Boswell is a Gypsy, and Boswell’s character replies, “‘Oh I am,’ I said. ‘And I’m proud of my race. And a man who’s not proud of his nationality is no man at all. I’m a true-bred Romany’” (157). As we see, Boswell equates nation and “race,” which includes notions of inheritance and pedi-

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273 After he introduces himself to the reader in the Prologue, the first thing that Boswell writes about is a medal that was presented to “Wester” Boswell. According to Boswell, the following inscription was written on the medal: **Wester Boswell, a Grammarian of the Ancient Gypsy Language** (11).

gree: “true-bred.” Furthermore, Boswell imbues “race” and nation with both emotional and an essentialist masculine capital, however, in the same story, while replying to the same character, who suggests that Boswell is a “foreigner,” Boswell finds himself in a conceptual pickle: “‘No I’m not. No. I’m Romany. I’m a Gypsy man. I’ve lived in England all my life – I was born in it!’” (157). The myth of national homogeneity based on “race” is difficult to coordinate with another “race” and the inherent incompatability/difference that racialist theory attaches to it. As we see, as the man accepts that Boswell is a Gypsy, a cognitive schema appears that categorizes Boswell as “foreign.” While an imagined “people” may gain status and acceptance in a political situation (by adapting their story), in another situation, if the story creates fixed and static essentialisms (or temporary essentialisms that become uncontrollable), it can prove to be a difficult and potentially dangerous position to adopt.

Although Boswell is involved in a strategy of resistance in which discourses concerning Gypsy origin are promoted and demoted, the accounts are constructed around the narrative structure of a nationalist meta-myth that involves the creation of an illusory homogenous collectivity with a series of common traits. Essentialisms are thus constructed in both accounts, which serve to fix, re-fix and/or maintain discursive and structural dominance over non-sedentary Gypsies. In my view, Boswell’s use of his myth as a collective motivator that projects a sense of acceptance and hope for the future is misrecognised, as it is, in its ideational make-up, still within the meta-narrative of the GLS and the victim-orientated discourse that positions Gypsies in the dominated slot constructed for them by the dominant group. Furthermore, as a “true-bred Romany,” Boswell falls into a contradictory “category”; he cannot be of English “origin,” although he states that he was “born in it,” and, although he denies foreign origin, he also promotes it. In a scenario where “race” is actively communicated with, which includes the categories that scientific racism produced, negotiations of difference become contradictory. The status origin for English/Welsh Gypsies when Boswell’s father, grandfather and great-grandfather were alive was foreign according to the early Gypsylorists.275 And although Boswell designates Egypt, and not India as a place of origin, thus potentially forging a position of resistance within the dominant discourse, the larger tendencies involved in the essentialist details and meta-aspects of the narratives win through and continue to perpetuate a dominant/dominated relationship.

275 See the introduction, page 35, 57n, and chapter one, page 59, 109n for Boswell’s ancestors’ connections to the GLS and before the GLS was founded. I use the signifier English/Welsh Gypsies” to illustrate that although Welsh Gypsies were considered “real” because of their inflected Romani, Boswell’s grandfather’s language also made him “real” and he was not a so-called “Welsh” Gypsy.
The origin story that Nan Joyce presents in *My Life*, like Boswell’s, is posited against another unwelcome narrative, but differs from Boswell’s in its focus on “indigenous” origin and its many connections with authority figures and events in Irish history. Joyce’s story is also used to forge difference between her own imagined group and two other groups, while promoting parallel and indigenous development for all. And her goal is to motivate a social grouping in the struggle to gain Travellers’ Rights through an appeal for ethnic group status and ethnicity.

*Nan Joyce: Origins, Resistance and National Politics*

In *My Life*, Joyce communicates her idea of Traveller distinctiveness by pointing out the existence of another group in Ireland that have, according to Joyce, similar qualities to Travellers: “The truth is that we’re people like everybody else but we’re a different-speaking people with our own traditions and our own way of life and this is the way we should be treated, like the Gaeltachts, not like dirt or drop-outs from the settled community” (1). The similarity that Joyce creates between Travellers, Gaelic speakers and the dominant group is ambiguous. Firstly Joyce creates a unity, “we’re people like everybody else,” which is a statement of belonging, although it can be interpreted as a statement of common Irishness or humanity. Secondly, Joyce creates a similarity between Travellers, Gaelic and the dominant group based on mutual difference, but the similarity of difference between Travellers and Gaelic speakers is more overtly emphasized, and thirdly, she constructs a desire for Traveller difference to be recognised by the dominant (powerful) group based on “traditions,” “way of life,” language and the notion of a “people.” Thus, Joyce creates (or imagines) Travellers, Gaelic speakers and the dominant group living separate, but parallel existences in one geographical area (Ireland).

The separation is further enhanced by Joyce’s politically strategic tactic of distancing Travellers from connections to the imagined dominant group through her negation of what

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276 “Gaeltachts” refers to the areas of Ireland where Gaelic is spoken as a community language. Helleiner states that the Gaelic speaking population “has experienced both economic marginalization and targeted state intervention, but remains unethnicized. The non-ethnic status of this population can be attributed to a process of Irish nation-building that equated the Gaelic language with the core of the nation despite its minority status” (*Irish Travellers* 7). The paradoxical idea of “minority status” becomes a nationalistic strategy to preserve a coherent story of a pre-colonial past and to preserve the illusion of homogeneity.

277 We can also see how Joyce re-produces earlier strategies of Roman and Greek historians. She creates a desire for Travellers and Gaelic speakers to be treated with equal status in relation to the dominant group, which leads to the Roman and Greek methods of describing all “periphery peoples” (on the edge of the civilized world) under the name “barbarians.” The linguistic conflation of various groups leads to an economy of objective description to develop, which involves the usage of a “pool” of words to describe many different groups that are perceived and labelled as “races,” nations, peoples or classes.
she calls the “drop outs” scenario, which would carry the paternal connotations of unsuccessful citizens, occupational failures and/or victims of infra-structure deficiencies and/or colonization. Basically, Joyce is positioning the imagined group “Travellers” among the other recognised “Irish” groups in Ireland. She is also imbuing the group with status by joining in the political game of constructing ethnicity, which was seen at the time primarily (at least by Joyce) as a possible passageway to create a situation in which Travellers’ rights would be recognized. However, what Joyce also does by rejecting a competing origin story that threatens to overdetermine her own ideas, is to frame Travellers in a relatively static and essentializing discourse of ethnicity. Instead of gaining “rights,” ethnicity threatens to create a series of constraints, boundaries, inclusions and exclusions framed by “a way of life,” “traditions” and a specific variety of language. Furthermore, both the origin story of Travellers as “drop-outs” and victims of colonisation, and Joyce’s ethnic construction promote paternal action; assimilation and/or rehabilitation “back” into the dominant group, or advance the dominant group’s awareness of and provision for the needs of ethnic Travellers. Constructing ethnicity can be seen as a modern political strategy for positioning a “people” within/beside (and importantly also under) an imagined dominant (ethnic) group, however, Joyce also combines this strategy with a more ancient and “traditional” one that positions Travellers alongside the two other groups in the past.

278 See Martina O’Fearadhagain’s introduction to Janine Wiedel and Martina O’Fearadhain, Irish Tinkers (London: Latimer New Dimensions, 1976) 9-10. O’Fearadhain records a host of theories concerning the origin of Tinkers, which involve the Scottish clearances, Cromwell’s ‘to Hell or Connaught’ campaign, the battle of Boyne (1690), the battle of Aughrim (1691), the 19th century potato famines, Celtic rivet-makers, ancient Picts, criminal bands and the displaced vassals of feudal lords (9). Also see Mary Burke’s essay “‘Phoenician tinsmiths’ and ‘degenerated Tuatha De Danaan’: The Origins and Implications of the Orientalisation of Irish Travellers,” The Australian Journal of Irish Studies 2 (2002): 22-34. Here myths of Oriental or pre-Celtic origin attempt to identify Irish Travellers as less authentic Irish, as invaders or conquerors of the Celts or as a vanquished caste.

279 On page 103 of My Life there is a photograph of Joyce and a number of children on a horse-led cart. The children on the cart hold a placard with the words “Travellers demand recognition as an ethnic group in our own right.” The placard that Joyce carries states, “Travellers are here to stay and wont vanish into thin air.”

280 By restricting Traveller ethnicity to “a way of life,” “traditions” and language, a set of qualifications are produced in which some Travellers can perceive themselves as more Travellers than others, and notions of “genuine,” “real” or “traditional” Travellers can be adopted from dominant racial discourses (of which Travellers are a part) and lead to discriminatory practices against all Travellers; the qualifications of “genuine” Travellers can become ideals that no Traveller can live up to. Joyce also refers to the different “tribes” of Travellers by using phenotypes: “The Wexford tribes are mostly red-haired and they have freckles though some of them are fair-haired. The Galway tribes are very dark and good-looking. My father’s people, the O’Donoghues, came from County Longford and they had snow-white hair and very blue eyes and then there were the Donoghues from Dublin who are very dark” (2). Joyce also communicates with biological and genetic discourses in references to “blood,” kinship and phenotype, while discussing a proposed Spanish migration to Ireland: “You can see the Spanish blood coming out today in our family; my mother and her brothers were completely dark. My mother’s mother was from Roscrea, she was one of the Doyles and they’re very dark beautiful people with big black eyes and shiny black hair” (1-2). Basically the discourse of ethnicity that Joyce promotes is wrapped in the previous, continuing and inculcated discourses of “race.”
In the next lines of her story, Joyce attempts to create Irish capital by moulding her Traveller origin story to religion in a truth claim: “The travellers have been in Ireland since St Patrick’s time, there’s a lot of history behind them though there’s not much written down – it’s what you get from your grandfather and what he got from his grandfather” (1). By aligning Travellers with St Patrick, and hence a powerful myth concerning the beginnings of Christianity in Ireland, Joyce projects a pre-colonial and ancient origin for Travellers that demotes the “drop out” story. The strategic position that St Patrick is portrayed occupying in Irish history becomes the meeting place of the three imagined groups (Travellers, Gaelic speakers and the dominant group) from where they intersect, and at some point, part company on their proposed parallel but different future histories.

Joyce extends her argument concerning parallel histories by connecting the language of Traveller’s to the Bible and St Patrick. Joyce retells a story concerning a visit to a church in Downpatrick, where “St Patrick is supposed to be buried” (5). The story is centred on a romantic scene: “It was a Sunday and we sat around the graveyard, my mother and all, and Father told us the history of St Patrick from a book he took out, and he sitting on one of the gravestones” (5). As we see, the transmission of the myth of St Patrick is framed in the author’s written script. Joyce then connects language to the graveyard scene by boasting about her father’s reading and linguistic competence: “He could read anything and he knew Irish and our own language that we’ve had for hundreds of years” (5). The three languages, “Irish,” “our own” and the insinuated “English” are separated from one another and given separate historical trajectories: “Some people call it gammon and more of us call it cant – it depends on which tribe you’re from. It’s a very old language, even older than Irish – some of the words come from the Bible” (5). Traveller language is given an ancient origin and, once again, connected to a book that is connected to both the nexus of the national narrative of Ireland, and its most famous historical figure; the patron Saint of Ireland (and travellers).

Joyce’s ideas concerning Traveller origin construct Travellers by tapping into and adapting her idea of the dominant group’s historical narrative; Joyce thus harmonizes Travellers into Ireland’s master story of Catholicism, while retaining the, for Joyce and her goal of ethnic recognition, all-important notion of difference. The construction of her origin myth is also

281 In Irish Traveller Sean Maher’s life story (1998), Maher relates a story that portrays Maher as a child in conversation with his mother. The conversation topic is Traveller origins and the length of time Travellers have been on the road. His mother is depicted replying, “a good few hundred years” and then (re)tells the outlines of a story about St Patrick: “[A]t the time of St Patrick, there were many travellers in Ireland. Indeed, it was they who helped St Patrick when he was a boy slave. They smuggled him away from his cruel master, because the travellers hated any form of slavery or being tied down to settled life” (The Road to God Knows Where 68). Maher’s story links Travellers to the patron Saint of Ireland (and travellers), while simultaneously defending a tradition of economic nomadism.
coherent; it illustrates a feasible continuance from a historical past to a modern present. However, Joyce is also aware of the empirical gaps in her story and therefore includes a diplomatically strategic inclusion of the imagined dominant group’s “drop-out” story: “Some of my ancestors went on the road in the Famine but more of them have been travelling for hundreds of years – we’re not drop-outs like some people think” (1). Origin stories are constructed by creating coherence, credibility and believability, but they are also reliant on a selection process that involves construction in the sense of selected inclusion (remembering) and selected exclusion (forgetting). Joyce includes an element of her story that she could have left forgotten, but Ireland’s agricultural history, and especially the famines, are a particularly significant part of Ireland’s national, post-colonial, demographic and Traveller narrative. Therefore, the famine and its possible effects on the imagined Traveller population are brought out in Joyce’s narrative and form a discourse of awareness that positions Travellers before the Famine. However, Joyce also creates a division between “drop-outs” and Travellers based on environmental adaptability and working ethics:

The travellers were used to coping with the cold and hardship and hunger, they could survive anywhere because they had their own way of working and their own culture. But the settled people weren’t used to managing on their own, they slept in old sheds and barns and did a sort of slave work on the farms. Some of them married in with travellers. (My Life 2)

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282 The Great Famine, which Joyce refers to, took place between 1845-1851, however, there were other famines in 1317, 1520, 1540, 1580-1, the 1740s and 1877-8. Mike Cronin states that “[m]uch mythologized history, especially within the Irish nationalist or Irish-American canon, has directly linked the devastation of the famine (Great Famine) with the presence of the British in Ireland” (136, my parentheses). Basically, Cronin indicates that the Great Famine has been singled out and framed in an ideologically motivated narrative.

283 See Stephanie L. Barczewski, Myth and National Identity in Nineteenth-Century Britain: The Legends of King Arthur and Robin Hood (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000). Barczewski traces the political and ideological appropriation of (the legend of) King Arthur in Norman, Saxon and Celtic contexts, and notes how academic research that placed doubt on the historical accuracy of accounts lost out to national ideology.

284 Helleiner gives a concise historical overview of the connection between Travellers and famines in dominant discourse: “The origin account that emerged during the 1950s and achieved dominance from the 1960s to the 1980s portrayed Irish Travellers as the descendants of peasants forced into landlessness and mobility by the evictions and famines suffered by the Irish during centuries of British domination” (Irish Travellers, 30).

285 See Michael McDonagh’s essay “Origins of the Travelling People,” in Travellers: Citizens of Ireland (Dublin: Parish of the Travelling People, 2000) 20-25. McDonagh, like Joyce, produces an argument against the connection between the Famine and Traveller origin by directing the reader’s attention to Travellers who emigrated to the U.S. at the time of the famine. He also admits, like Joyce, that “disasters like the famine would have swelled the ranks of Travellers on the road” (22). Also see Sinéad Ni Shúineáir, “Irish Travellers, Ethnicity and the Question of Origins,” in Irish Travellers – Culture and Ethnicity (42-77). Ni Shúineáir states that “[c]onventional wisdom insists that Irish Travellers are essentially dropouts from normal society, victims of their own inadequacy or of harsh colonialism, and a relatively new phenomenon, dating back to the Famine or at least to Cromwell” (66), and argues that the arguments supporting it are incomplete. She refutes arguments referring to similarities between Travellers and the “Irish peasantry” (she emphasizes the differences), she also contests another argument by stating that a large array of family names would have been displaced by the famines (she emphasizes that there are only a limited number of Traveller family names) and she challenges a link made between Travellers “riddled with social problems – alcoholism, criminality, chronic unemployment” (she emphasizes that deviants “are highly visible” and are published in a “biased media”) (67).
The “traditions,” “way of life” and the notion of a people are projected into the past and used to separate Travellers from the victims of the Famine. We also see that Joyce positions Travellers in a dominated position and portrays Travellers having developed a “culture” within which they can cope with their domination and exclusion.

Joyce’s narrative makes sense in the way that she presents it, but it is a modern narrative projected onto the past. However, an ethnic narrative that reshapes the past will also shape the future and runs the risk of creating an essentializing map of how Travellers must be to be Travellers. This map reintroduces older, and artificially repressed, discourses of discredited forms of categorisation, such as “race,” and thus “ethnicity,” “race” and “culture” glide nearer to one another until they become near-synonyms. To position Travellers at an intersection where discourses of “race,” language and nationalism, as a site-under-construction, meet is a potentially dangerous and misrecognised game.

In Jess Smith’s origin account and consequent discussion, Smith, like Joyce, argues her case against another narrative, which she discursively silences. Smith’s story is strewn with historical groupings and connected to two of the groups that characterise Lennon’s idea of a prestigious beginning: Roman and Egyptian. However, Smith also discusses her awareness of the contextually constructed nature of such narratives.

*Jess Smith: The Inequality of Notions of Origin*

The Gypsy origin account that Jess Smith retells in *Tales* is embedded in a story depicting a conversation between the fifteen year-old Smith and a boy called George, whom she describes as her first love. The conversation revolves around Smith’s “Roman slave” theory posited against George’s “Indian origin” theory. Smith’s origin account is grounded in a history that makes it “possible,” provides an explanation for the proposed enmity directed towards Gypsies and nomadism, and negotiates a pathway through contemporary nationalistic ideology in order to (re)gain the best possible capital for Travellers. The main features of Smith’s Roman slave account are: the Romans conquered the land and brought Egyptian slaves with them; when the Romans were forced to flee they left their unwelcome slaves behind and hence the Gypsy’s “nomadic existence and fight for survival through a hostile world” (33).

Smith introduces her story by commenting on her own and George’s common interest in “travelling history” and refers to the Roman slave and Indian origin accounts as competing theories. However, Smith denies the two theories equal status by legitimating her own account through direct speech: “I always believed our people were descended from ancient
Egypt and were brought here as Roman slaves” (33), and then paraphrasing George’s: “[…] that we originated from Northern India and spread through the world, arriving in Scotland seven or eight hundred years ago” (33).²⁸⁶ In other words, Smith promotes her own account to a myth, while demoting George’s account to a legend by denying it an independent voice, and removing its credibility: “I didn’t except this (and still don’t)” (33, original parentheses). The then/now correlation of Smith’s proposed retort insinuates a continuation of her rejection of the Indian account. But how does Smith present her myth of Traveller origin?

Firstly, Smith constructs a division between the Romans and the Egyptian slaves of her story: “Our masters had only one skill: the art of war […]. But the craftsmen, builders and scholars were all slaves of the highest esteem” (33). The division is forged through the “slaves’” desirable qualities that carry with them a great deal of “esteem.” Secondly, Smith injects her story with social change: “Of course when the Romans had to flee back home they had no place for slaves and left them behind” (33). The configuration of interrelations between the groups in Smith’s story has now changed. Instead of being slaves, the people left behind are now an enemy within: “Now, if you were a native and had seen the tyranny of conquerors run rampant through your land for many years, then it’s highly unlikely you’d have much time for the people brought with them” (33). In my interpretation, Smith constructs a scenario where common sense prevails and the “native” inhabitants, basically, react in a reasonable way. However, Smith also relays a notion that the “sense” part of common sense has a tendency to be fact-deficient when it becomes collectively inculcated. Therefore, Smith depicts the “native” population forgetting the useful nature of the Egyptian slaves of her story, and therefore adhering to a powerful myth that leads to a taken-for-granted exclusionary practice based on the internalisation of a dominant narrative and the self-promotion and self-maintenance of a pedagogy of selective remembering.

In the next lines of her story Smith silences and polemically disarms “George’s” origin account, promotes her own account and discursively conflates two rejected groups:

‘Where,’ I asked him, ‘do you get the title gypsy from?’ I went on, ‘there are folks who call us gypsies and them who call us Romanies. Doesn’t that speak for itself, Geordie

²⁸⁶ See Yaron Matras, “The Role of Language in Mystifying Gypsy Identity,” in The Role of the Romanies: Images and Counter-Images of ‘Gypsie’/Romanies in European Cultures (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2004). Matras connects certain narrative strands of Smith’s Roman slave theory and a Jewish myth, and states, commenting on what he learned at school in Israel, “so we were taught at school that Jews first arrived in Europe as captives of the Romans, who had crushed their uprising and destroyed their Temple. From slaves building roads for the Romans in Europe, they then mysteriously worked their way up to become pharmacists, merchants, scholars and moneylenders in Spain” (69). Matras adds that “[t]he captives-narrative served to underline the consistency of the victim role throughout Jewish history” (69). There are parallels with Smith’s story.
my lad, we were Rome’s Egyptian slaves.’ After the clearances, Highlanders forced from hill and glen shared our nomadic lifestyle and were grateful for it. (33)

The word associations linked to the signifiers “gypsies” and “Romanies” that Smith presents create a cohesive narrative that makes sense. Furthermore, the wordage that Smith uses in her re-creation of direct speech creates a sense of direction, as “folks” provide “us” with signifiers that “we” have to legitimise and defend. Smith also positions a displaced group from “without” (the Egyptian slaves) alongside a displaced group from “within” (the Highlanders), which suggests either parallel development in connection with a “nomadic lifestyle,” including a maintenance of difference between the two, or a conflation based on a mutual occupation of the environmental, social and class positions left available to them. Furthermore, references to the displacement of the Highlanders creates a double discourse of ownership and spatial control; Smith depicts the Egyptian slaves being owned by the Romans and left in a new space (read Scotland), while the Highlanders, displaced by (or absorbed into) a structural reorganization of agrarian land and modes of ownership, end up in the same spaces.  

Smith continues the legitimisation of her origin myth in her story by positioning the discourse in the oral transmission of significant others: “One thing our relatives had handed down in stone, however, was that a hell of a chunk of us were scattered and displaced Highlanders who joined the gypsies for survival” (34). According to Smith’s argument, Highlanders (Gaelic speakers) and “gypsies,” due to their common rejected status and subsequent social location, became Tinkers/Scottish Travellers.

At the end of her construction of Traveller origin, Smith silences George once more by skipping over his story: “George had his own ideas and wouldn’t be swayed” (33), but also unites both parties in a common thought: “[O]ne thing we did agree on was our puzzlement as to why Scotland accepted and gave respect to descendents of those other conquerors, like the Vikings and English, given the terrors they brought?” (33). Although George and Smith are involved in a polemical discussion in Smith’s story, there are points of agreement concerning mutual aversion to invading forces. The Roman, Viking and English invasions in Smith’s story are all historical invasions that affected the development and origin stories (national narratives) of Scotland. By introducing the various invasions in the same story, Smith points to what she sees as an intellectual rather than a physical invasion in Traveller affairs. Smith’s  

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287 See Neil Davidson, *Origins of Scottish Nationhood* (London, Pluto Press, 2000). Davidson positions the Highland Clearances in the historical development of capitalism, especially indigenous capitalism, and class struggles, rather than as a direct result of colonialism: “The British state certainly has much to apologise for, since it endorsed and supported what occurred in the Highlands, but the Clearances were carried out at the behest of Scottish landowners, organised by their Scottish factors and, where necessary, enforced by Scottish police or Scottish regiments” (105).
preference for Traveller oral mediation is perceived as being under threat and the threat is symbolised in Smith’s story by George’s “academic” account of Gypsy origin. Oral mediation can adjust and refine stories, and as Smith’s logical constructions supporting her own narrative of Gypsy origin suggest, there is no real benefit from repeating a story of origin if the people who retell it do not gain any status or advantage from it. Origin myths are not static, but dynamic narrative discourses that, in Lincoln’s words “recognizes the capacity of narrators to modify details of the stories that pass through them, […] most often in ways that reflect their subject position and advance their interests” (Theorizing Myth 149).

By “chiselling” her Gypsy origin story and depicting the Egyptian slaves as scholars, craftsmen and builders, and comparing their multitude of skills with the singular skill of their masters, Smith infuses Travellers with mythical authority and status. The fact that the Egyptians were slaves in Smith’s story means that they were brought, presumably against their will, to “Scotland,” therefore, in the context of Smith’s story, “gypsies” should not be paralleled with invaders (barbarians) that embody challenges to the established order. By conflating Highland Scots with Gypsies in her story, Smith creates a scenario where two groups with histories of oppression, harassment and structural exclusion conjoin. In my interpretation, Smith is, in a complex way, insinuating (and realising) that people should stop arguing over Gypsy origin accounts, respect people’s contextually constructed beliefs and truth claims, and, instead, concentrate on the interrogative “why” of persecution and discrimination, which would necessarily mean taking the discussion from a doxic level into open debate. Although the question is left unanswered by Smith, she does propose a solution.

Smith’s supposed solution to the “why” of Gypsy persecution is presented in the form of absurd fiction: “If big hairy three-headed spacemen come and help themselves to Scotland it will make little odds who we think we are. We’re all ‘Jock Tamson’s bairns’, as the old folks would say” (33-34). The invasion by spacemen is the fourth physical invasion of Scotland involved in the story, and insinuates that the only way that Gypsies can be conceptualised as equals is through the prism of another “alien” threat. The inclusion of “aliens” is meant as an absurd addition to the story, but serves as a continuation of the discourse concerning invasion forces, social change and subjectivity construction. The “spacemen” “help themselves” to Scotland, thus suggesting total domination and annihilation of the significances attached to

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288 “Jock Tamson’s bairns” refers to all people being the same, or equal.
289 In Jessie’s Journey Smith comments on “Tinkers” and an “alien” threat; the Great War: “Tinkers were treated like vermin in those days, but they still fought alongside many, and fell alongside them as well. A soldier once wrote: ‘generals’, privates’, dogs’, and tinkers’ blood mingles in the earth, an’ nane can tell the difference.’ Notice the tinker is listed below the dog.” (109). Inbuilt in Smith’s soldier’s quote is both an insinuation that war (especially death) was a leveller, and a hierarchy of classification.
“who we think we are.” In other words, the self-respect and status of “I’s,” “we’s” and “they’s” would have to be re-reconstructed and new credible stories created in order to forge a position in the new political situation. It is perhaps no accident that Smith’s spacemen have three heads and presumably one body. Smith’s subject construction consists of three interconnected and inseparable parts; she is a Scot, Scottish and a Traveller, and the polemics involved negotiate between three modes of story: legends, histories and myths.

However, even though Smith is aware of the political contingency of notions of origin, she still, like Boswell and Joyce, presents her origin myth using the meta-myth promoted by early British Gypsylorists. National and “minority” national politics, whether they are in the guise of “race”/“ethnicity”, or “culture,” promote categorisation, compartmentalisation and the exaggeration of difference. The life story narrators misrecognise the historical depth of their internalisation of dominant discourses in both written and oral transmission, and promote narratives that stand in opposition and negotiation with others. But the main structures of the narratives themselves are products of colonial thought and mirror ideas concerning historical and political interrelations between England (also seems to include Wales), Scotland and Ireland.

The origin stories that I have analysed have shown that there is a historical depth involved in the discursive domination of Gypsies/Travellers. Furthermore, oral transmission through significant others is not immune to such penetrative discourses. The configuration of the discourses may be adjusted within the group and groupings and form slippage, but the main structure of the dominant discourse is involved in the medium of speaking and/or writing. All three narrators obviously felt the need to discuss their origins, because others did, have and do, and therefore their narratives can be seen as responses rather than an “internal” need. However, when nationalist, ethnic and relations between nations are involved, a counter-narrative becomes an ideological necessity, and the characteristics of that narrative are an organised and calculated “pick ‘n’ mix” of status and respect-giving people, places, events and the ideologically constituted idea of a beginning.

In the origin stories, the respective narrators positioned themselves in counter-discourse with other narratives on the level of discourse and constructed their relative positions in relation to a relatively static story. However, in Nan Joyce and Jimmy Stockins’ personal stories power relations are stacked against the protagonists and in large parts of their respective stories they fight to hold onto a sense of self-respect. The stories reflect the respective narrators’ portrayal of the workings of ideology in a practical sense, and a chain of “real” events are not so easy to discursively manipulate. Therefore, we find the respective protagonists in dis-
empowered positions in their stories and the environments become both physically and psychologically hostile.

Institutional Violence: Pushing Back and Reeling in

In the two personal stories that follow we can see the grinding effect of ideology being depicted in both its indifferent mode, which leads to the gradual wearing-down of perceived deviants and in its active mode, which involves an awakening from a stance of indifference. Both stories, Joyce’s arrest story and Stockins’ story concerning his family’s move to a house, involve the portrayal of strategies that attempt to either forge a state of doxa or reinstate an imperfect state of orthodoxy. Stockins’ story follows an assimilatory strategy that pressurises him to settle and Joyce’s ordeal in her story forms part of an attempt to silence her.

_Nan Joyce: Symbolic Violence, the Guilt of Innocence and the Control of Doxa_

In Nan Joyce’s story concerning her arrest for theft I will focus on Joyce’s awareness and misrecognition of symbolic violence. In the story Joyce continuously refers to the physical and psychological effects of various forms of violence, which she repeatedly expresses through references to her body. In terms of my usage of habitus and narratology, embodied dispositions inculcated from childhood re-produce possible and probable ways that stories can be told in the present. In Joyce’s case, she commented on the perceived deviance of her body compared to others in a childhood recollection: “When I was young I was very thin, just straight down like a match but the go at the time was to be strong and well-made, the travellers thought a nice good-looking woman should be full bodied” (11). Joyce adds that she “was getting all kinds of things to feed me up,” and the goat’s milk that her father gave her made her physically sick (11). As we see, Joyce portrays herself becoming self-conscious of the deviant form of her physical body in relation to a co-opted ideal form. Related forms of symbolic violence can also be seen in Joyce’s story as she portrays herself being forced to evaluate and re-evaluate a position in which her hard-won personal and representative images are under threat. The first events of Joyce’s story are depicted as having taken place a few weeks after Joyce stood as candidate for the Irish General Election of late 1982. Joyce stood as an independent candidate on a Travellers’ rights ticket and ran partly against a “‘community’ candidate who stood on a ticket of Get the Knackers out of Tallaght.”290 The main features of Joyce’s story are: Joyce is harassed and eventually arrested by the police; she is taken to a po-

290 See the article by Patricia McCarthy, “Racism in Ireland: Travellers Fighting Back.”
lice barracks and charged with the theft and reception of jewellery; she appears in court on several occasions; in the end the charges are dropped.

Joyce introduces her story by providing a retrospective overview of previous events: “The police started harassing us; for months they were coming from all over Dublin to search the caravan and turn everything upside down; they would find nothing because there was nothing to be found” (111). The initial impression of the proposed police harassment that Joyce describes is that it is targeted, repetitive and seemingly ritualised. However, Joyce indicates that the timing of the police visits was significant as “the buses would be full of workmen and people going home and they would pull up right at the door of the caravan with all those guards and squad cars around” (111). As we see, Joyce attributes a particular intent to the police harassment, which reconfigures the proposed tactics of the police as politically strategic. Joyce then provides Farmar with her insights concerning the effects that the police action might have on contemporary Traveller politics: “I was really worried about it because the committee had been at it for so long and we’d worked so hard. I had got people to know me and trust me as a speaker for the travellers and here were the guards around the place” (111). The “worry” that Joyce gives voice to in the introduction to her story is that the respect and trust that she depicts herself having built up among “non-Travellers” during the General Election as the spokesperson for Dublin Travellers would become tarnished. In the rest of her story Joyce develops this frame story and includes a particularly vivid description of the effects of overt and covert violence on Joyce’s body.

I would also suggest that Joyce’s story provides insights into the workings of political violence and strategic attempts to retain control and order on a discursive level; an attempt to re-install discourses that threaten to emerge from the doxic, or undiscussed level of the taken-for-granted, to the level of heterodoxy, which would be the equivalent of bringing a previously silenced, or unformulated discourse, into open debate. As Bourdieu asserts, “[t]he dominated classes have an interest in pushing back the limits of doxa and exposing the arbitrariness of the taken for granted; the dominant classes have an interest in defending the integrity of doxa or, short of this, of establishing in its place the necessarily imperfect substitute, orthodoxy” (Logic 169, original emphases). According to Bourdieu, orthodoxy “aims, without entirely succeeding, at restoring the primal state of innocence of doxa” (Logic 171), and there-

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291 The word “guards” means police.
292 The “committee” was a Travellers’ rights Committee, which Joyce calls “a little pressure group” and the active members gave talks to schools, convents and colleges. Joyce also communicates with the idea of majority group misrecognition: “In Ireland we’re so good to foreigners and it is good to help anyone who doesn’t get the chance to speak for themselves. But I felt that we’d been put under the mat and forgotten about” (107). Misrecognition is a form of forgetting.
fore, in my interpretation, Joyce’s story re-produces a scenario where the police become instruments of violence, and whose general direct or indirect aim is to keep the people of the majority and dominant group in a state of misrecognition. My analysis will also focus on Joyce’s depictions of the symbolic and physical violence inflicted on her body by her arrest and the subsequent judicial process that she has to endure. I will also comment on Joyce’s depicted reactions to the events in her story and relate how she moves between positions of misrecognition and realisation.

Joyce continues her story by providing a closer rendition of the police harassment in the form of unwanted and unwarranted intrusion:

I woke up suddenly one morning and saw a crowd of strange men in the trailer. They just rushed in the door, three or four of them in plain clothes, and a *ban garda*, and hs [sic] was so ignorant she wouldn’t even speak to me, she was pulling everything out of the presses. I said, ‘Are you not supposed to knock before you come in to someone’s place?’ and I asked them what they were looking for. One of them said, ‘We’re looking for jewellery’ (111, original emphasis).

The inequality of power relations involved in the police actions are manifested in the intrusion into a private space and are doubled by the mental debilitation of being ignored. Furthermore, Joyce is not asking for a search warrant from the police, but just the common courtesy of a “knock,” which she depicts herself being denied. Moreover, the proposed statement of intention from the police, “We’re looking for jewellery” becomes the catalyst that produces an unnecessary confession: “I have two rings and a gold chain and a pair of gold sovereign earrings I bought years ago – travellers love things like that” (111-12). In my interpretation, Joyce’s polyvalent response reflects Farmar’s representative presence and communicates with ingrained discourses concerning a perceived disagreement between the ownership of “nice” things and the social position of certain people who have them in their possession. Joyce also describes herself showing the police the jewellery that she had, and states that “[t]hey never even looked at it! This is how I know they weren’t looking for jewellery” (112). Once more, Joyce insinuates that the police had an ulterior motive for searching her trailer, but the contradictory continuation of her story poses a question; did the police’s proposed strategy change?

In the next lines of her story Joyce describes the events of the next day, the behaviour of the police and her arrest for the illegitimate possession of jewellery:

The same guards and *ban garda* came back next morning while I was trying to get the children ready for school. They turned everything upside-down and they took a bracelet from a drawer full of junk. Then they said they were arresting me and pulled me out the

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293 The words in italics mean a woman police officer.
door. I said, ‘Could you leave me send the children off to school before they see me going in a squad car?’ I have them all ready, just let me put them out the door and they’ll run on to school.’ But they caught me by the arm and pulled me out. (112, original emphasis)

As we see, Joyce’s pleas for consideration and human courtesy are portrayed falling on deaf ears and the personal violations with regards to privacy, integrity and dignity are multiple. And we find further forms of violence in the continuance of Joyce’s story: “It was about twenty to nine in the morning and I had no coat on, just an old skirt and blouse and mucky boots […]. My hair was just up with two clips on top of my head […]. It nearly killed me altogether to be brought off like this” (112). There is an accumulation of degrading acts in Joyce’s story; repetitive harassment, purposeful and unapologetic intrusion into personal space, the imposition of invisibility and finally disrespect for standards of personal appearance. Joyce has, in effect, positioned herself in a relatively passive and disempowered position in her story.

Joyce then depicts herself being taken to a police barracks and describes her own disorientated condition, “[…] I was in an awful state, I didn’t know what was going on” (112). She also provides a portrayal of the effects that the prison cell had on her:

The cell was tiny and there was blood all over the walls. I was in there for a couple of hours but I thought it was for a lifetime because I have a phobia and when I’m in a closed-in space I feel all the walls coming in on me, I feel as if I’m smothering. Every minute I’d go over to the hole in the door to get air – it was as if I was drowning. I just kept marching up and down, I couldn’t sit easy. (112)

The red thread of disempowerment or enforced passiveness, as a synonym for lack of control, that has characterised Joyce’s story so far is doubled by the introduction of an uncontrollable phobia for enclosed spaces and the “blood all over the walls.” The re-visitation and re-construction of this memory also acts as a catalyst that doubles the experience to include Joyce’s father: “When I was locked in that dark cell the first thing I thought of was my father, what he must have felt like when he died in prison on his own” (113).294 The relational link that Joyce makes between location and significant others positions the treatment of Travellers

294 Joyce describes the loss of her father in a story in My Life. In the story her father goes to town to collect a bridle and never returns. As with the story of her own arrest, Joyce is suspicious of the police’s actions: “Next morning the police came up and said Father was dead. He died in the police barracks. I never knew what happened; Father wasn’t a man for going out breaking the law and he was a big strong man, very active” (42). Joyce also makes a connection to her father’s death at the end of a story concerning her husbands arrest and confinement: “He could have died there and there would have been nothing about him because he was a traveller. I have found out through life that when you’re a poor person from the slums or a traveller you don’t matter. When I looked at my husband I thought of my father: maybe he died that way” (95). There is also a connection of blood between Joyce’s own experience in a barracks cell and the description of her husband’s condition when she went to bail him out: “He had no shirt on and he was completely covered in blood. […]. His head was split wide open” (94).
in a linear and relatively unchanging form; there are four episodes that link state violence and Joyce’s family together; her father’s death in a barrack’s cell, her husband’s bloody experience in a barracks cell, her mother’s imprisonment for “stealing scrap,” which left her children to fend for themselves and her own story (42, 94-95, 43). The accumulation of synchronic and diachronic forms of embodied violence leads Joyce to present the significance of the event, “I’ve had a lot of bad experiences in my life but this was the worst I ever had. Everything kept running into my head and when I heard the bolts going across the door I got sick” (113), and seem to lead to the apex of the de-humanization process that Joyce depicts herself undergoing in her story. And we would expect to witness the beginning of a return to various forms of visibility and renewal of subjectivity. However, the next events, although at first signalling elements of hope, lead to a further deterioration of her bodily condition.

The first elements of re-humanization appear as Joyce depicts herself in conversation with a woman officer: “I felt so terrible I asked her could I wash my face and hands. She said, ‘Sorry, Mrs Joyce, we don’t have much facilities for women, but I’ll take you in,’ and she brought me in to the washroom” (113). Joyce is both named and referred to as a woman by the officer; thus Joyce’s physical body is re-inscribed with traits of personhood. However, Joyce’s description of events in the washroom illustrate that the respite is only temporary: “There was a big large towel hanging up and when I went to dry my hands I saw blood running off it on to the floor, the towel was wringing wet with blood. I nearly died, my nerves went completely” (113). Again, we see a bodily collapse in Joyce’s story and the catalyst is once more connected to blood – a linguistic schema that links institutions of control and order with violence, members of her close family and disempowerment is reassociated.

Furthermore, the descriptions of bodily violence continue in Joyce’s story as she is accused of theft: “’We’re charging you with stealing £500 worth of jewellery and with receiving a gold bangle.’ I nearly died with the shock, I thought he was only codding at first to frighten me. I said, ‘Go away, you’re only joking.’ He said, ‘You’re going down to court’” (113). The two charges actually have the effect of inscribing the stereotype of the “Tinker thief” onto Joyce’s body. However, there is another aspect of the process of degradation that Joyce’s story has already touched upon, and that is personal appearance: “They didn’t let me bring my bag or my cigarettes and then to have no coat and the mucky boots and my hair not combed I felt awful to be coming into court like this because I always like to keep myself tidy especially if I’m going anywhere” (113). Basically, Joyce has discursively described herself being transformed, through several forms of violence, from a Traveller woman, who is part of a po-
politically active Traveller group fighting for Travellers’ rights, into a disempowered and dishevelled-looking “Tinker” thief.

As Joyce’s story continues we see forms of misrecognition becoming concretised in her story, and these forms of forgetting, or, alternatively, awareness of previously forgotten violence are, again, expressed in symbolic terms on her body: “The guards had no book of evidence ready so I got out on bail but I had to go back again and again. I was a nervous wreck, I couldn’t sleep at night and I lost an awful lot of weight” (114). Before her arrest for theft, Joyce, as a Traveller, had to live with her own internalisation of the stereotype of the “Tinker” thief, and the double-voiced discourse that she inherits through that internalisation, however, as she is accused of being a thief, the possibility of being seen otherwise is dispelled. Joyce is a Traveller thief in the eyes of others in this part of her story, and the realisation that she has no option but to accept the already decided verdict is overwhelming.

However, the marked position that Joyce has to endure in court is extended, as Joyce introduces the power of the media into her story:

The day after I was arrested a travelling man gave me the paper and he said, ‘Nan, your name is in the paper that you’re up for so much jewellery. I never knew that you’d steal anything!’ And people that knew me, that were really my friends were coming out with jokes, calling me ‘cat burglar’ and things like that. But it wasn’t a joke to me. I felt so down I just kept in the caravan I didn’t want to go out and face anyone. I’d break down when I’d think about it. (114)

As we see, Joyce depicts even a Traveller treating the words in the paper with authority, and thus indirectly indicates the multiplied affect that the writing in the paper would have on others. Basically, the perceived stigma inscribed on Joyce’s body, causes her to actively avoid the public and individual gaze, and thus, she is effectively silenced because she depicts herself silencing herself. And, in doing so, Joyce withdraws into the “natural” doxic position that is reserved for her in the class structure. Simultaneously, Joyce positions the media in a wider discourse concerning the continuation of social and political dominance of others through its maintenance of misrecognition among its listeners and/or readers. The potential progress made by Joyce in her work on behalf of Travellers, which would, in terms of habitus, aim at promoting and maintaining a more objective and proportional image of Travellers, is returned to the realms of the forgotten. And, Joyce’s depiction of the specific reaction of a woman she

295 See the article “Racism in Ireland: Travellers Fighting Back.” In the article Mary McCarthy refers to Nan Joyce’s arrest and its reportage in the newspapers: “This was widely reported in the papers and with headlines such as “Tinker Queen arrested for theft.” The word “Tinker” and “Queen” are now used to describe Joyce rather than Traveller, Traveller woman or a politician fighting for Traveller Rights.
meets is indicative of a return to a doxic relationship: “One day I went down the town, I’m great friends with the women in the markets. One woman said, ‘Hello, Mrs Joyce, how are you?’ When the woman beside her heard I was Mrs Joyce she moved her handbag” (114-15). We can see that the word “thief” and its connotations have been added to the cognitive schema of “Mrs Joyce,” and the insinuated source of (dis)information is, presumably, the media.

Joyce continues her story by commenting on the incident with the woman, and repeats discourses of shame, self-silencing, withdrawal and responsibility:

I could see her catching on to her bag and it nearly killed me, just looking at her. For a few days after, I wouldn’t come out of the caravan, I was afeared to go out and face the people in case they’d say, ‘Oh, there’s the one that was speaking up for the travellers – when she’d do this, what would the rest of them do?’ (115)

An additional effect of the accusation of theft is its ideational transference onto other Travelers through Joyce’s representative status, and a return to a controlled and orthodox discourse: “People had come to know me and trust me and now I felt everything was gone. I’d say to myself, ‘When I’m speaking to people again what will they be thinking, they won’t believe me’” (115).

At this point Joyce’s story reaches a turning point and she provides a few examples of women that expressed their disbelief in the allegations, and a few women who travelled to give her their support (115). The women’s actions and support combined with the encouragement of several priests that Joyce depicts visiting her serve to project Joyce towards the resolution of her story. After enduring repeated visits to the court both charges are dropped in Joyce’s story, but she still feels the need to prove her innocence: “I felt really down about the whole thing but then I said to myself, ‘If I give up, if I don’t go on speaking out, people will think I was guilty’” (115). By reasoning in this way Joyce resists attempts to silence her, and continues to speak out for Traveller rights. However, Joyce’s depicted return to a realisation of misrecognition does not openly position the physical and psychological violence that she portrays herself enduring in the political arena; the combination of police action, court appearances and media distribution as the source of embodied suffering are left for Farmar/the reader to fill in. The question remains, is Joyce aware of the political motives behind the need to keep the doxic level of misrecognition(s) from becoming an integral part of open debate?

Joyce’s story highlighted the instruments (police, courts, media, visuality, oral transmission) involved in the control of freedom of speech and political representation. In her story, Joyce was discursively “pushed back” into the relatively safe place of her caravan. However,
in Stockins’ story, we see a different form of coercion in practice, and instead of being systematically distanced like Joyce was, Stockins is successively “reeled in” through gradual attrition to settle in a house.

Jimmy Stockins: Movements Towards Integration/Assimilation

Jimmy Stockins’ story focuses initially on the unequal relations of power between his character and a warden at a site in West Dreyton, London, and leads to a series of spatial moves that result in the protagonist’s wife placing the family’s name on the council list. The story follows the family from an official site to a disused yard and then onto a piece of rough land. In my analysis of Stockins’ story I will concentrate on the themes of symbolic violence, misrecognition and awareness in relation to spatial surveillance, competing systems of order and control and forms of capital.

Stockins’ begins his story by describing his central and authoritative position on the West Dreyton site, and we can see that he is not devoid of respect and status: “I was the guvnor of the site, and that is when the problems started. When I say the guvnor, I don’t mean in a gangster sort of way. People came to me to settle disputes and ask advice, and I’d help them out if I could” (179). Notice how Stockins feels that the word denoting collective capital, “guvnor,” has to be distanced from a perceived cognitive association between the signifier “Gypsy” and criminality. Stockins also speaks in terms of control and order in an enclosed space, and initially depicts his character (and the other Traveller residents) enjoying a high degree of political control on the site: “There’s normally a guvnor on most sites: someone who is respected and can keep the peace. I decided who came on and when. Didn’t allow any riffraff on the site. We had a good bunch of families and I was determined to keep it that way” (179). The kind of “quality control” that Stockins describes is subjective as the “I”s in the quote suggest. Therefore we can assume that the families allowed on the site are either politically associated through marriage, and/or compatible in the sense that they are adjudged to share the collective codes of interrelation necessary to “keep the peace.”

Another reason for exclusion could be that the Travellers are perceived as posing an economic threat; the area can be deemed to have too many roofers or scrap collectors et cetera. However, this would be a perceived threat, because the use of motorized transportation widens the areas in which Travellers can operate and provide services.
icates dominant deviant-producing discourses by labelling the undesirables “riffraff” in order to communicate their proposed inability to interrelate with the community (read site residents) in a proper and legitimised manner so that an order can be maintained.

In Stockins’ story the “riffraff” are forced to travel on (Stockins controls their movement) and it is Stockins’ “legislature” (decisions, definitions and guidelines), pre-dispositioned through his habitus, which decides the constellations of inclusion/exclusion on the site and the space that the excluded and included can occupy in his story. Stockins discriminates against the dominated, which, as a result of the internalisation of various dominant discourses related to the construction of hierarchal divisions within imagined Gypsy/Traveller groups (for example: racialist and/or culturalist discourses of “true,” “genuine,” “traditional” and/or “real” Gypsies/Travellers and internal adaptations of such discourses by Gypsies/Travellers), is characteristic of misrecognition and symbolic violence. Such discourses, which have permeated into dominant group state legislation, have led to the discrimination of all Gypsy/Travellers through an inability to identify the idealised traits of “real” Gypsies in “real” people.

We can see Stockins’ awareness of discourses emanating from a perceived dominant discursive centre in the following passage:

Because the traditional prejudices against gypsies don’t stand up in this more politically correct age, a new tack has been taken in the war against us. Yes – we’re not real Romanies. That’s the one. Even the current Home Secretary, Jack Straw, drew a distinction between ‘those who masquerade as travellers or gypsies and real Romanies.’

However, notice how Stockins’ aligns his acceptance of the discourse of the “real Romany,” while acknowledging that he can never live up to what he ironically describes as the qualifying criteria; static and timeless stereotypes:

But the problem is that unless you have two dangly earrings, a dancing bear tied up outside your barrel-topped caravan and walk around bumping into things because you’re

297 For example, Sally Kendall, states that “Travellers are the only group in Britain to have their freedom of movement directly controlled by legislation” (“Sites of Resistance” 77). Although Kendall’s claim that Travellers are the “only” group to have their movements restricted by legislation can be discussed, the 1968 Caravan Sites Act imposed restrictions on where the people defined by the Act could and could not reside, and the 1994 Criminal Justice Act criminalized a nomadic lifestyle and enforced a process of sedentarism (“Sites of Resistance” 77).

298 Kendall discusses a process of social closure where an excluded group excludes a weaker group in order to “access resources, power and/or control for themselves” (“Sites of Resistance” 76). She also paraphrases from Thomas Acton’s, Gypsy Politics and Social Change and his notion of a scapegoat mechanism in which “English Travellers blaming Irish Travellers for crime and mess, is used by the dominant society to discriminate against all Travellers” (“Sites of Resistance” 76). Basically, symbolic violence, accepted by Travellers as “the order of things,” becomes a system that aids and abets their own collective subordination and supports the perpetuation of the discriminatory process within the dominant group; stereotypical attributes and activities are all the more likely to be selectively observed and/or used as the themes of orally transmitted stories and media coverage.
busy staring into that crystal ball, then Jack and his gang don’t accept you are a Romany. Of course I’m a real Romany. If I’m not that, what am I? I’d like to know, I really would. (104)

In other words, Stockins accepts the discourse as a measuring stick of authenticity, “Of course I’m a real Romany,” and, presumably, gains symbolic currency among other Travellers through its use, but redefines its use. Therefore the two usages of the discourse of the “real Romany” form a discursive gap that confuses the parameters of interpretation. However, the discourse of the “real Romany” is divisive, contextual and hierarchal, and creates “us” and “them” categories based on lifestyle, occupation, “culture,” family-name et cetera. Suddenly, to be a “Gypsy” you have to adhere to a set of criteria and behave in certain ways, which, become part of the “feel for the game;” and set limits and boundaries of what a “Gypsy” is expected to be and/or even become. In other words, the discourse of the “real Romany” is a racial trap that creates hierarchy, classification and criterion, which, in turn, create both conceptual and physical boundaries for people to adopt and is misrecognised.

So far in his story, Stockins has depicted himself as a person who controls the composition of residents on the site, which, from his point of view, is a power position attributed with a great deal of respect and status. However, the next event in his story upsets relations of power on the site and forces Stockins to rescue what capital he can.

The event that reconfigures the power positions of the characters in Stockins’ story is the role of the warden, and Stockins’ authority becomes a problem:

But it was a council-run site, and they employed a warden. Inevitably, the warden and me were soon at loggerheads. He didn’t like the fact that no one listened to him and would only do something if I said it was okay. He complained that I undermined him. Of course that is exactly what I did – he was a fucking idiot. He wasn’t even a traveller, so he didn’t understand us. It was him or me. So he went behind my back and had me evicted. (179)

We can see that Stockins describes two un-integrated and un-synchronised systems of order at work. The site, as a bounded and supervised area (either by Stockins or the warden) imbued with various constellations of restrictions, becomes a metaphor for a nation within a nation. A nation does not have two Prime Ministers, Presidents or monarchs, but a nation does have the power to accept and/or deny people entrance or a sense of belonging within its “constructed” borders through its state legislature and exclusionary and deviant-producing discourses. Furthermore, a nation’s inhabitants are expected to live under its state laws, which codify and attempt to conventionalise moral, behavioural, hierarchal and political relations, while promoting the laws as enabling and helping to support collective and personal freedom. In order to
achieve an order and control (basically restricting people’s freedom) degrees of disorder have to be created in everything and everyone that does not adhere to the imagined, expected and “normative” (from a particular class, group’s or individual’s point of view) order of things. Stockins depicts himself and the warden “at loggerheads” over the authority to decide which configuration of “law” and order has legitimacy and power on the site. The warden inherits an officially sanctioned position on the site, because the council, his employer, owns the site, whereas Stockins depicts himself having the official status through the consensus (or at least not open opposition) of the other residents. The conflict, portrayed by Stockins as “inevitable,” is based on the warden’s “non- Traveller” status and his proposed inability to understand the socio-political environment on the site.

Of course, if we were to take Stockins’ self-professed prowess as a bare-knuckle fighter, the proposed conflict with the warden should have been easily resolved. However, this conflict is not to be settled by way of physical strength and the power involved in throwing punches, but through bureaucratic power. The proposed cause of the warden’s action is described by Stockins:

Ridiculously, he claimed I tried to run him over in my truck. I did pretend to once. I stared maniacally at him out of my windscreen, gripped the steering wheel and shouted ‘Out the way!’ but the truck was stationary and the engine wasn’t even switched on. I did it to annoy him. If I had wanted to hurt the silly old bastard, I would have done. (179)

Stockins’ power is reduced to notions of possibility and potentiality in the storytelling act, and his “him or me” statement becomes a one-sided affair: “I decided to move my own self before the council towed my home away. I’m having no fucker pulling and pushing my home around” (178). As we see, the overabundance of personal pronouns and words denoting possession betray the continuation of the significance of the move for Stockins. Also, instead of admitting defeat, Stockins exchanges the capital that he had accumulated as “guvnor” on the site for another (lesser? greater?) capital implied in his refusal to allow representatives of the council to tow his home off the site. Therefore Stockins denies the council the “pleasure” of visibly enforcing their power within sight of the other residents, but also misrecognises his compliance with the council’s (the warden’s) wishes; the council can evict other undesirable Gypsies from their property by the same means and with a minimum of economic expenditure and observable, sanctioned and legal violence.

Therefore, the uneven power struggle between Stockins and the warden is concluded and the latter is left to instil his version of order and control on the site. However, Stockins’ re-
venge on the warden is discursively produced in his story through references to oral transmission: “After I left, I heard the warden had a hard time. He couldn’t control the residents and even though he was taking a few quid in backhanders for prime pitches, his life was made a misery. He told one of my pals that he wished I’d never gone” (179). We can only assume that Stockins sees the warden’s proposed demise as a personal victory, as indirect references to disorder and lack of respect are deposited at the warden’s door. Furthermore, by depicting the warden as wanting him back, Stockins reconstructs himself as a desirable and order-generating influence. The word “made” also suggests a sense of intention regarding the warden’s problematic relations with the residents on the site. The social anthropologist, Judith Okely, discussing the work of site wardens and their (extended) roles as rent collectors, caretakers and social workers states that “the Travellers expected and demanded the wardens to make telephone calls, fetch doctors and do endless repairs in exchange for loss of privacy and independence” (Traveller-Gypsies 116). Instead of the warden controlling the residents and the condition of the site (in his way), the Travellers, if we adopt Okely’s interpretation of events, transform the warden, an employee of the council, into someone who works for them. In this constructed scenario, the Travellers re-establish a sense of self-respect by refusing the warden’s order, establishing a new “third space” order and deny the warden a “controlling” authoritative position. However, by making the warden’s life a “misery” the Travellers on the site also willingly perpetuate their perceived disorderliness in the eyes of the warden and reproduce a social meta-stereotype which depicts Gypsies as the embodiment of problems to be solved, and therefore contribute to their own objectification.

If we return to Stockins’ story, Stockins and his family leave the Dreyton site and move to a new location “where an old disused yard had been compulsorily purchased by the council,” and he adds a retrospective view that the family might “be left alone for a while” (179). Both the Dreyton site and the new location are owned by the council, and in anticipation of the next event in his story, Stockins includes a particularly significant catchphrase: “That’s the problem Travellers face: they don’t like us when we travel, and they like us even less when we stop” (179). The transient position of the catchphrase in Stockins’ story (after the eviction

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299 Okely’s comments on the site were observed between 1971 and 1973. Okely also comments on an increase of supervision on sites after the 1968 Caravan Sites Act and between 1971 and 1973: “Within eighteen months the temporary sites or camps were replaced by ‘permanent’ sites with greater supervision by ‘professional’ council employees, arousing new hostility among the Gypsy tenants” (Traveller-Gypsies 40). The supervision on the site that Stockins describes in his story was in the 1990s.

300 The catchphrase is printed on both the front cover of the hardback (2000) edition and on the back cover of the paperback edition (2002). In Stockins’ story the catchphrase is slightly altered to accommodate context. The catchphrase on the covers of the hardback and paperback editions reads: “They don’t like us when we travel. They don’t like us when we stop.”
from the “official” and sanctioned site and before the eviction from the “illegal” and council-owned unsanctioned site) suggests that “they,” the council, do not allow any space or any place for Stockins to stop. The situation that Stockins describes is, as Kendall points out, “the continuation of a historical process since and before industrialisation whereby all land (even ‘common’ land) has to have an owner and hence ‘controller’” (“Sites of Resistance” 72, original parentheses). The controller (warden) of the Dreyton site could not control Stockins and, as the next few lines in his story suggest, his presence is not tolerated at the new site either: “As if to underline this [the message of the catchphrase], we were moved on quickly even though our presence interfered with no one and there was no sign of any redeveloping happening any time soon” (179, my parentheses). We can see that Stockins depicts himself seeking out areas that “interfered with no one” and is therefore aware of, and is coerced into adhering to, his undesirable status and social position as a travelling Traveller; he has no choice but to conform to his abject status and position himself, his co-dependents and his home in adherence with an organised and spatial structure, where spaces and buildings are owned and defended. In other words, the system creates its discursively produced Others and the myth (powerful story and part of a narrative model) of the “dirty Gypsy” living in squalor can be made “real.”

In the next event in Stockins’ story, which involves a stay at Baleswood Lane, which Stockins calls a “shithole,” Stockins uses several strategies that create and salvage respect, while describing his transition from living in a trailer to life in a house. The first stage in his attempt to rescue self-respect is by describing the environment:

> It was a rough piece of land, alive with rats. These rodents activate an ingrained fear in gypsies. I suppose that over the centuries we’ve lived too close to them for comfort. When we were kids it wasn’t the bogeyman that would get us, it was the rats. The rats at Baleswood lane clearly had a good amount of food available to them, because they had grown to the size of fucking otters. Even the dog had given up or was too frightened to chase them. (179-80)

As we see, the gradual decline of the living conditions in Stockins’ story acts as a metaphor for an assimilation strategy in which people who do not follow the “right” path in life (and that is to settle in a house) find themselves with fewer and fewer choices. Living in a rat-infested area becomes the catalyst in Stockins’ story that instigates a move to a house. However, Stockins, not one to admit defeat, places the effects of the stay on his family into the di-

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301 Kendall states that, “Travellers’ unauthorised sites are often located on land which has been cleared for redevelopment […] the land or building is in the process of transition as it is moving from a strictly defined state, in which it is ‘filled’ with buildings and/or ‘legitimate’ people” (“Sites of Resistance” 71).
rect speech of his wife: “‘We can’t bring the kids up like this,’ said the missus finally. ‘I’m putting our name down on the council list’” (180). As we see, Stockins positions his wife in the role of the caring and nurturing mother who puts her children first, and by using this strategy Stockins skilfully attributes his wife with respect and status, which provides a window on his attitude to the role of women in the family, and exchanges his previous capital (a Gypsy man living in a trailer on a site or “on the road”) into a different capital (a Gypsy man moving to a house in a honourable manner). The descriptions of the size of the rats and the behaviour of the dog, combined with a sense of endurance, which Stockins characterises by the word “finally” make the move into a necessity rather than an admittance of defeat.

Furthermore, the theme of endurance captures the sense of attrition that Stockins traces to various processes of assimilation and coercion:

It had become harder and harder to travel. All the gypsies’ traditional stopping places had gone, so when we did stop it was in places where we were stopping ‘illegally’. And no sooner had we uncoupled the trailer than the men in suits were upon us with their writs and orders. And then the braver local residents would traipe over to challenge us, fearing we might have our eyes on kidnapping their children or shitting in their garden sheds. It was wearing us down and more and more travellers were giving up their way of life to take a council house. I sometimes thought that the government built the M25 so that they could put us all on it and make us just keep going round and round. (180)

The process that Stockins identifies and positions himself (I/we) in can be linked to several interconnected historical processes concerning the state (the legislative construction of any travelling Traveller as illegal), property (land enclosure, protective ownership and surveillance by the police, wardens, “men in suits” and members of the public) and the legitimisation of contextual public animosity and intolerance. In other words, the increasingly deviant and undesired travelling Gypsy is either coerced into adhering, or, as misrecognition would suggest, adheres to the conventions of spatial control with reference to modes of living and class-specific locations of residence (assimilation into the prevailing doxic structure), or Gypsies are moulded into the functional fantasy of the anti-modern and anachronistic deviant (produced as abominations, [ideologically] isolated from the modernisation process, but sub-

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302 The M25 was completed in 1986 and, as Stockins suggests, it almost forms a full circle around London. Also notice how Stockins ascribes the “braver” local residents with a certain amount of symbolic capital, which acts as a comment on Stockins’ awareness of the perceived actions of other less brave residents; residents who stay in their houses and ring the police or the council to get Travellers moved.

303 According to the legal definition of a “gypsy” used in the Caravan and Control of Development Act 1960, the 1968 Caravan Sites Act and amended in the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994, “[…] persons of a nomadic habit of life, whatever their race or origin, excluding members of an organised group of travelling showmen or person engaged in travelling circuses travelling together as such,” a Gypsy stops being a Gypsy on a permanent site, because they would not then be nomadic. The words “race” and “origin” in the legal definition of a “gypsy” also betray the primacy of obsessions concerning primordialism, the projected existence of “races” and, whenever an interpreter wishes, communicates with forms of biological and generational inheritance.
subject to the effective application of new technologies in the State’s directed usage of bureau-
cratic and surveillance-related violence).\textsuperscript{304} The violence that Stockins becomes aware of is overt, however, in the (translated) words of Bourdieu, symbolic violence is self-(re)produced:

\>[S]ocial agents are knowing agents who, even when they are subjected to determinisms, contribute to producing the efficacy of that which determines them insofar as they structure what determines them. And it is almost always in the ‘fit’ between determinants and the categories of perception that constitute them as such that the effect of domination arises. (\textit{An Invitation} 167-68)

Symbolic violence is covert and subtle; if a dominated agent accepts his or her structural and discursive limitations, and re-produces a framework whereby agents gain capital through narratives and depicted practices that link adaptability and flexibility to available environments and status, the agent begets, unknowingly, forms of violence upon himself/herself. The structures available to operate in are the structures that the agent has at his or her disposal and those structures structure the agent’s habitus, which, in turn, re-produces it in significant others.

Returning to Stockins’ story, the next move involves the transition from life in a trailer to a house, and Stockins comments on the move: “It was the end of an era in my life, and I knew it would be much harder than it had been for Dad to revert back to my previous way of life, should it not work out” (180). Although the pressure to settle is known by Stockins, it is not directly recognised as a stage in an assimilatory process: “The day we moved in, as we put our photos of the children up and laid out our best china, I knew that this was the first day of the rest of my life” (180). The decoration of the trailer space is transferred to the new space, and although Stockins divides his life into two parts, “rest” and previous, habitus is both synchronic and diachronic. Therefore the change from one way of living to another, or, alternatively, the change from one dominated space to the adoption of a comparative reserved space in the social order, and the more permanent change of environment that it implies, leads to an imperfect transposition of the schemes of habitus to the new environment. However, assimilation, as process, is a potentially painful one, and even though Stockins misrecognises sym-

\textsuperscript{304} Stockins actually positions Gypsies in the past and communicates with discourses concerning the association of differences in time and place: “Whilst the rest of the world was changing from the Middle Ages onwards, the gypsies carried on as ever, maybe lagging a century behind the rest of society” (182) and then continues in the same vein in more detail: “When the Industrial Revolution came and people abandoned age-old working practices to work in factories, the gypsies continued to sharpen knives and make baskets, earning their living in simple, traditional rural ways. When the motor car arrived, gypsies continued, for many years, to use the horse as their main mode of transport. Therefore, we provided a window on the past” (182). Gypsies are effectively positioned in the past and in the wake of a modernisation process that labels its Others as un-modern and/or traditional.
bolic violence in his story, the recognising is done from within discourses of assimilation and modernisation processes.

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In this chapter I have analysed and discussed both personal and origin stories from an ideological perspective. Misrecognition, as an ideology of forgetting based in the pre-conscious arena of the taken-for-granted, has been a helpful tool in the unlocking of the discursive environment of the origin stories and the practically orientated personal narratives. One of the findings was that dominant discourses can be appropriated, disrupted or opposed, but they can also be self-sprung traps that incorporate propensities for further domination and potentially increased levels of physical and psychological violence. Essentialist discourses can be produced, which repeat the framing effect of earlier dominant discourses and re-produce a mould that a “Gypsy” or “Traveller” has to adhere to in order to accrue specific forms of appreciation and acceptance. In all three origin stories, historical figures and events and status-giving locations became integral parts of the narrator’s respective narratives, and all three origin stories owed the configurations of their construction to the existence of counter-discourses that were perceived as threats to group status and/or personal belief. However, all three narrators used a narrative frame for their origin myths that was orchestrated by early members of the GLS from an English viewpoint. Therefore Joyce’s story positioned Travellers in Ireland as indigenous, Smith located Travellers in Scotland with both foreign and indigenous origins and for Boswell the origin of Gypsies was foreign.

In Stockins’ personal story I focussed on the themes of control and order in relation to space and territory. I also analysed the positions that Stockins occupied in his narrative and his duplication of various dominant discourses in relation to the discursive production of deviants. Furthermore, I positioned Stockins’ awareness of his own position inside a contemporary and historical process of assimilation in a wider historical discourse, which, in its ideological underpinning, aims at gaining control over nomadism and “reeling in” itinerants. And, finally, I suggested that although Stockins’ did “finally” settle into a house, there is little indication that he ceases to consider himself to be less of a Traveller. However, habitus adapts to changes in structural, interrelational and discursive surroundings and the direction of that change in future generations is dependent on the configurations of such surroundings. I also positioned the symbolic violence of Joyce’s personal story as a result of the perceived insta-

305 The assimilation process is not meant to indicate that only Travellers are involved in assimilation processes. Everyone is involved in such processes and, in terms of misrecognition, the process is most successful if the choices and ideas involved are thought to have evolved from the individuals themselves.
bility of doxic relations between powerful groups and the discursively and structurally disem-
powered. The traumatic experience that Joyce depicted herself enduring was partly self-
induced by her return to her reserved disempowered doxic position, and therefore misrecog-
nised, but partly realised in her decision to continue to draw unformulated or silenced dis-
courses into open debate (even though she was “marked” as a thief).

In short, misrecognition, as a form of forgetting, which is characterised by an agent’s
“choice” of discourse, practice and mode of narrative construction, and informed by the pre-
dispositions of the agent’s habitus by familiar interrelational, structural and ideational envi-
ronments, which include dominant structures and discourses (both contemporary and histori-
cal), forms the basis of the agent’s own reproduction of doxa, and is therefore both contribu-
tory and constitutional of the self-affliction of symbolic violence. Members of the dominant
group, who are, for the most part, as individuals, unaware, or in a state of denial, of the work-
ings of the system that maintains the doxic order, are inculcated with propensities that attempt
to restore a doxic order in times when discursive heterodoxy threatens that order. And when
heterodoxy is communicated with it is on the dominant groups terms (linguistically, concep-
tually, ideationally, perceptually and structurally), which turns the discussion back into ortho-
doxy; the imperfect restoration of “the order of things.”
Conclusion

The main theme of the thesis, relationality, which involves complex relations of interdependence and the operation of schemes of interaction and co-operation with others, objects and/or historical discourses, has provided a productive arena for the contextual analyses of the story scripts and production processes of the respective life stories in the geo-political area attributed with the signifier United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland.

I have problematized and discussed ideas of agency, strategy and resistance, and argued that the respective narrators work in the “gaps” that the ever-changing configurations of contextual situations continually produce. In the interview situation(s) of transcribed life stories, the representative functions of the people involved is constitutive of the unintentional generation of such gaps. The gaps, formed through lacks of agreement between incompatible and/or differently constituted aspects of habitus, re-produce strategies that reveal configurations of power relations and negotiations.

By introducing relationality into story analysis through Pierre Bourdieu’s concept of habitus and combining it with the embodiment of historical/contemporary discourses and representations of practices, I was able to produce a synchronic and a layered diachronic analysis. I have found that the life story narrators who use the group signifiers “Gypsy,” “Traveller” and/or “Romany” in the context of storytelling and the production process, are members of a discursively and structurally dominated group. However, the forms of domination, as they are historical and contemporary, involve a deepness that is difficult to negotiate. Likewise, the internalisation of dominant discourses, which form an integral part of the embodied schemes of interaction and interrelation, lead to the re-production of the dominant relationship and therefore re-produce the dominant and dominating structures.

I have argued that the “categories” (“Traveller,” “Gypsy” and/or “Romany”) and the geographical and discursive environments within which the respective life story narrators position their characters and others in their story scripts, are constructed and produced within and through discourses that can be historically traced to the discourses of “race,” the politics of colonialism(s) and (internal) colonialism(s), the ideological and “criteria-driven” scientific discourses of the nineteenth, and early twentieth century, and nationalist, folklore and literary movements. The “race” categories produced and consolidated within the aforementioned array of discourses continue to form the descriptive categories that the life story narrators are expected to, and do align themselves with.
Another finding was that the functional (discursively produced and exaggerated impressions of isolation/separation) and hierarchal effect of such discourses have become associated in complex ways to the appropriated power words that I highlighted in the introduction (“culture,” “ethnicity” and “identity”). Furthermore, through the complicity and complexity of the interdependence of the dominated and the dominant, which are not at such a discursive distance from each other as the dichotomy would indicate, the dominated speak through the dominant discourse. Thus, the dominated re-produce relations of domination in the form of strategies that are pre-consciously aimed at gaining desired forms of recognition. Therefore, relations become unintentionally complicit, consensual and generative and include the controversial concept, in its uncritical blame-the-victim connotation, of self-domination.

In this study, I have argued that the continuation, accumulation and therefore reproduction of dominant ideas and discourses are re-presented in the themes, form, content and organisation of the four life stories and their respective production processes. Subsequently, in chapter one I analysed the potential and probable trajectories that the internalisation of such historical discourses and the ideological imperatives that generate and re-produce them have had on the “choices” of life story narrator and/or “choices” of narratives. Furthermore, in my analysis of the promotional aspects of book production I was able to identify the continuation of historical discourses in promotional blurbs, photographs and other paratexts.

In chapter two, I analysed stories that focussed on the theme of education or, more accurately, educations. The four life story narrators followed different, but ultimately similar story lines, which indicated tendencies to relay defence strategies and project and/or reinstate a sense of self-respect in the face of a lack of institutional education. I conceptualised the story script constructions as unintentional strategic withdrawals towards familiar environments and away from the unfamiliar.

In chapter three, I analysed stories that I considered to be of relational relevance to the respective production processes of the life stories and discursive positions of the life story narrators. I conceptualised the stories as myths, in the sense that the narrators are encouraged to tell their stories within narrative forms that have both general and specific historical antecedents. The respective life story narrators are called upon to speak and/or write in relation to specific signifiers and therefore to conform to the ideologically constructed niches and modes of recognised expression that are available and that they are expected to occupy. In this sense, the life story narrators mythologize their respective characters or in the case of political activist Nan Joyce, the beliefs of the dominant group.
In the fourth chapter I analysed the respective life story narrators’ communication with dominant and meta-discourses from a particular ideological perspective. The main focus of the chapter was the taken-for-granted acceptance, usage and even promotion of discourses that lead to forms of self-inflicted violence and self-domination. I conceptualised the respective life story narrators resisting dominant narratives, but forgetting historical discourses and the deepness of the discursive and structural domination.

I also analysed two stories that demonstrated (the ongoing) processes of structural and discursive violence that create and re-produce Gypsy and/or Traveller stereotypes. I emphasized the part played by the combination of dominant institutions of control and the media in the suppression of uncomfortable voices and an assimilation process based on the gradual restriction of movement, the constriction of space and the reduction of possibilities.

On the whole, I have found that the respective life story narrators, whether they speak and/or write, or whether an interlocutor or reader is the intended addressee, speak from within and through systems of unequal power relations. The relations of power, produced through schemes of practical and discursive interaction, forge differences and commonalities. However, as dominated individuals speaking through the signifiers Gypsy, Traveller and/or Romany, the life story narrators forget the historical depth of the dominance. Therefore, the inequalities of the game favour the continuance of the dominant/dominated relationship. In many ways, dominant discourses and structures shape the possibilities and probabilities of the dominated, and as the dominated cannot help but interact with and through their dominance, self-dominance becomes the most probable of possibilities.

Narrating Gypsies, then, relates to a series of practices: narrators who tell stories; narrators who tell stories about Gypsies; narrators that speak as Gypsies and tell stories and narrators who speak as Gypsies and tell stories about Gypsies. I could say that one or more of my references to the word “Gypsies” in the passage above should be enclosed in inverted commas. The inverted commas would indicate that one or other references to Gypsies is in some way fictional and another not, but internalisation and discursive dominance involves the dissolution of the subjective/objective dichotomy. Thus, re-production through the schemes of the habitus involves varying degrees of unintentional absorption, status-usage (conscious and unconscious adoption of useful, profitable [in an economic and symbolic sense] discourses) and rejection of discourses, environmental structures and the “games” of social and practical relations. Furthermore, the Gypsies and/or Travellers that feature in the life stories that I have analysed are “telling” in both the narrative and significance-related meanings of the word. They are not “ordinary” members of the imagined group; they are either extensions of the
specific interest that the respective co-authors/transcribers/editors incorporated or positioned into a discursive arena within which specific categories of interest had already been historically established.

This thesis opens up a series of further investigations into the relationship between and varying transferences of colonial, post-colonial and internal colonial strategies for controlling and maintaining discursive and structural dominance over dominated groups. Within such an investigation resistance strategies that create possibilities for effective and sustainable resistance can be investigated and silenced voices forge capacities to be heard and listened to.
One day I did something that I have not always done; I drove my car to work. When I arrived I tried to remember how I had got there. How many times had I changed gears? How many times had I pressed the accelerator, brake and clutch? How many left and right turns had I made? How many times had I signalled when I had made a turn? I had, like everybody else, driven on the correct side of the street, but I had not questioned the reason why I had done it. I remember reading about people who had not driven on the correct side of the street. One time there was an old man who had driven down the motorway in the wrong direction, and another time a foreigner did something similar. It was reported in the news. When you learn to drive you also learn the rules, and when you have passed your driving test you tend to choose which rules you follow and which you do not; sometimes you signal when you want to make a left turn and sometimes you do not; sometimes you speed and sometimes you stay within the speed limit because there is somebody behind you in a rush. The car that I drive has only one headlamp that works, and, do not tell anyone, but the exhaust pipe is broken in two. I should repair the car, but I think that it has a personality as it is.

Somewhere there must be a perfect driver, who always obeys the rules; someone who can remember everything that they had done on the way to their destination; someone who always drives on the correct side of the road, overtakes other cars on the correct side, stops when the lines on the road indicate that they should, and always signals when they make a turn – I doubt it though.
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