



– Institute's Colloquium –



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Sinti thinking the world – ethnographic reflections on gendered cosmoeconomies

In this paper, I will put into question dualist approaches understanding Gypsies in an oppositional inside – outside or Gypsies – non-Gypsies frame. I will discuss this through ethnographic data on economic practices of those Sinti women with whom I lived for 36 months in a caravan camp in the North of Italy. During this time, I accompanied women for manghel (begging and selling which is almost exclusively a female practice in the Sinti context) and was struggling with feelings of shame. Soon I learned that this was far from corresponding to Sinti women feelings. They go out for manghel to support their families and see begging as part of a broader exchange with Gaḡe as well as with other Sinti, including the dead. They see this exchange as receiving material value such as money and food for giving spiritual practices of thinking about/remembering people. This continuous thinking/remembering is understood as a practice of respect and dialogue with living people and their own death relatives. Invisible as well as ritualized expressions of remembering constitute the basis of everyday practices. These ethnographic data request a holistic approach in which Sinti, dead and Gaḡe are thought in relation and economies are seen as part of a broader cultural cosmos.

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4-6 p.m.

Institute of Ethnology

Studtstraße 21, Raum STU 105 (2.10)

Everybody is welcome!