

FULL NAME	ALENKA JANKO SPREIZER	FIELDS OF INTEREST, RESEARCH AREAS, FIELDWORK
YEAR OF BIRTH	1969	Romany/Gypsy studies and romology
POSITION, TITLE	Ph.D., teaching assistant	Social anthropology and ethnographic fieldwork
DISCIPLINE	social anthropology	Ethnicity and nationalism
INSTITUTION OF EMPLOYMENT	ISH – the Ljubljana Graduate School of the Humanities, Ljubljana, Slovenia	Racism
		Anthropology of migration and transnationalism
		Literacy studies
		Adult Basic Education (Functional Literacy)



RECENT RESEARCH INTERESTS

I started my career as an adult educator interested in literacy studies. During the preparation of my diploma works in pedagogy and sociology of culture I started to work at SAEC. SAEC is an institution which had been developing a functional literacy project, transposed from England to Slovenian adult education. I was a member of the working group that elaborated the definition of the concept of functional literacy within the Slovenian context and the functional literacy programme. Teachers were trained for the implementation of the programme. This had many consequences for my career, because the project raised my scepticism towards such “armchair scientific work”, derived from the fact that “experts” relied on their commonsensical notions of what literacy is and what functionality is supposed to be in a person’s life. My then colleagues were mainly teachers stuck in the ideologies; they matter-of-factly assumed that people with lower-level education live in impoverished and narrow-minded worlds. Having had contact with the target population of the programme, I was able to see that my colleagues were in error. As a consequence, my curiosity turned increasingly towards ethnographic evidence. I also began to study how literacy is conceptualised and turned to anthropological writings, those of Jack Goody, Andre Leroi-Gourhain and Brian Street. Later, I was invited by a Romany group of students attending the adult literacy program to visit their community, where I would see their village, their way of living, and the manner in which their people use literacy in their daily practices. Thus I begun my almost a decade long work with Romany. To begin with, I was familiar with the “implicit social knowledge” (van de Port 1998) about Roma; however, and at that time I studied romology without the necessary critical distance. Later on, I was able to deconstruct the definition of functional literacy. I was forced to quit my job as an adult educator because my superiors did not allow me to study Romany literacy in the field: my approach was regarded as too critical for their taste, whereas my ambition to do fieldwork met with no understanding at all: it was suggested to me that it was quite redundant. These views I could not accept. I therefore decided that it would be better for me find another job than give up my personal conviction that fieldwork is of utmost importance in theorizing about any human practices. The most crucial turning point in my professional path was the educational program at the CEU Summer University, Budapest, where I attended the course of Michael Stewart entitled “The Plight of the Gypsies/Roma”, which helped me organize my perspective to suit my post-doctoral research.

Doing ethnographic fieldwork in Romany community, especially living with Roma and *Prekmurci* (the inhabitants of the Prekmurje region in North-eastern Slovenia), and bearing witness to their every day lives, I was shocked to see how profoundly racist the attitude of the local people is towards Romany and how stoically the latter dealt with the issue. The fact that Slovenian romology is no less racist was another stimulus for my researching interests in taking romology as a particular field of knowledge worthy of exploration. I believe that this professional tradition, such as it is, has a great impact on the development and reproduction of the imaginary on Romany and that it contributes to the reproduction of Romany marginality, as a part of Romany culture, instead of contributing to the clarification of the social processes of exclusion. The state of arts in Slovenian Romology presents an obstacle for exploring and understanding social processes in Romany communities. After Slovenian state independence, this type of racist romology was substantially revived, although it was claimed that the discussions on Romany community, and the “solutions” of their unique situation have been set within the “European” policies context. In my dissertation, I argued that the existing mainstream professional tradition is inextricably intertwined with the ideologically charged discourse of Slovenian nationalism.

I expect that this project on post-colony and post-socialism possesses the conceptual tools for the interpretation of these and the like social processes. Several research and teaching projects presently conducted under the auspices of the European Community and its institutions appear to address problems very similar to those experienced by the so-called indigenous peoples around the world in the colonial and post-colonial times. Likewise, the political movements and struggles of Romany activists appear to have an agenda closely reminiscent to those of the anti-colonial movements. I hope that within our project, I will be able develop a course on Romany studies employing a broader comparative perspective.

FIELDWORK:

- 1995-1997 and 1997-2001. The Romany settlement Pušča, North-Eastern part of Slovenia, close to Hungarian and Austrian borders;
- 2002- Fieldwork in Ljubljana, among migrants, mainly Bosniacs from Bosnia and Herzegovina, and people of African immigration into Slovenia (in cooperation with ISH students of the course on Anthropological Fieldwork methods led by dr. Irena Šumi);
- 2003 - Romany immigrants (refugees) from the territories of Former SFR Yugoslavia, in Ljubljana and Paris. This fieldwork is in progress; my current work is collecting ethnography.

RESEARCH PROJECTS (financier: Ministry of Education, Science and Sports of the R of Slovenia):

- **Imagining the other: construction of otherness in the case of immigrants** (refugees, displaced persons, asylum seekers). Principal researcher.
- **Inventions of national landscapes in a multiethnic borderland: Istria from mid-19th century to present.** Associate researcher. Principal researcher: dr. Bojan Baskar.
- **Processes of ethnic differentiation in Slovenia: confronting the perceptions.** Associate researcher. Principal researcher: dr. Irena Šumi.
- **Adult literacy and participation in education** (Pismenost odraslih in udeležba v izobraževanju). Associate researcher.

COURSES TAUGHT		RECENT TEACHING EXPERIENCE, PRACTICE, METHODS
1.	Seminar of field research	As I am practically a novice to teaching, I do not have much experience. As I have written above, I conducted seminar work and consultations on anthropology of migration and transnationalism, anthropological fieldwork, and IRW. At times I also hold workshops on identity for Romany youngsters and women at People's Universities or at Summer camps organized by the Romany Union (i.e. Romany cultural association).
2.	Ethnography of Europe	
3.	Culture & Society	
4.	Culture Studies of Scientific Knowledge	

MAJOR PUBLICATIONS IN LAST FIVE YEARS

1.	<i>Vedel sem, da sem Cigan – rodil sem se kot Rom : znanstveni rasizem v raziskovanju Romov</i> , (I knew I was a Gypsy – I was born as a Roma: scientific racism in Gypsy research) (Knjižna zbirka Documenta). Ljubljana: Institutum Studiorum Humanitatis, 2002.
2.	Reprezentacije migracij prekmurskih Romov skozi antropologijo: iz Prekmurja v Vojvodino in Istro. (Representation of the Prekmurje Romany migration in an anthropological perspective: from Prekmurje to Vojvodina and Istria). In: Lukšič-Hacin, Marina (ed.). <i>Sezonstvo in izseljenstvo v panonskem prostoru: sosodstvo Avstrije, Hrvaške, Madžarske in Slovenije : zbornik razširjenih razprav mednarodne konference (Seasonal Work and Emigration in the Panonia Space: the Neighbourhood of Austria, Croatia, Hungary and Slovenia)</i> , Migracije No. 4. Ljubljana: Založba ZRC, 2003.
3.	Socialnoantropološki pogled na romologijo v Sloveniji (Socio-anthropological Views on Romology in Slovenia). <i>Monitor ISH</i> , 3/1-2, pp. 29-63.
4.	Etnografski pristop k raziskovanju pismenosti : primer etnografije pismenosti v izbranem romskem naselju. (Ethnographic approach to literacy research: the ethnographic case in a Romany settlement). <i>AS. Andrag. spoznan.</i> , 1999, 5/1, pp. 27-43.
5.	Funkcionalna pismenost na prelomu tisočletja: novejša raziskave in opredelitve pismenosti odraslih. (Functional Literacy at the beginning of the millennium: recent research and the definitions of adult literacy) <i>AS. Andrag. spoznan.</i> , 1998, 3/4, pp. 9-21.
6.	Slovenski Romi : "Avtotoni indijski nomadi?" (Slovenian Roma: »Autochthonous Indian nomads?«). <i>Emzin (Ljubl.)</i> , 2000, 10/ 3-4, pp. 79-81.
7.	Funkcionalna pismenost-skrb vseh. (Functional literacy – our common concern) In: Novljan, Silva, Grosman Meta (eds.). <i>Branje - skrb vseh</i> . Ljubljana: Bralno društvo Slovenije, 1998, pp. 27-40.
8.	Autochthonous and non-autochthonous Roma: socio-political construction of ethnic differences in Slovenian romology. In: VITTRUP MIKKELSEN, Annette (ed.). <i>Engaging the world : book of abstracts</i> . Copenhagen: Institute of Anthropology, University, [2002], p. 204.
9.	(book review): Barbara Bender and Margot Winer (eds.) : <i>Contested landscapes: movement, exile and place</i> , Berg, Oxford 2001. In: <i>Monitor ISH</i> , 2002, 4/1-4, pp. 287-291.

MEMBERSHIPS IN PROFESSIONAL ORGANISATIONS, FORUMS ETC.

1.	EASA – European Association of Social Anthropologists (2002 -),
2.	Gypsy lore society (2002 -)
3.	Reading Association of Slovenia (1997 -),
4.	Slovenian Society for voluntary work (1998 -)
5.	Slovenian Adult Education Association (1997 -)