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Zanko, chef tribal: ethnography of a text

Susan Marie Kirwan
Wayne State University,

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ZANKO, CHEF TRIBAL: ETHNOGRAPHY OF A TEXT

by

SUSAN MARIE KIRWAN

DISSERTATION

Submitted to the Graduate School

of Wayne State University,

Detroit, Michigan

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

2011

MAJOR: ANTHROPOLOGY (Cultural)

Approved by

Advisor Date

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation would not have been possible without the collaboration and the assistance of Monsieur Gilles Eynard and Monsieur Zanko Michel both of whom are my hands and eyes in France. They have untiringly traveled many times from Toulon to Paris to examine museum archives housing the Zanko papers and then sent me the results. I especially owe Gilles Eynard a thank you for living with my family an entire month in order to facilitate the translation of Zanko Chef Tribal into English as well as to advise me concerning the Romani language and Romani issues pertaining to this text. His kindnesses are so many and so varied that I cannot enumerate them here but I am forever indebted to him.

I would also like to say a special word of thanks to Madame Régine Chatard for sharing her personal correspondence and news-clippings with me and my colleagues.

Father Brian Mulcahy’s (O.P.) suggestions as to Father Chatard’s probable theology as a Dominican priest in France (1940-1964) is also much appreciated.

I also owe a debt to my advisor and the head of my Ph.D. committee, Dr. Barry Lyons Associate Professor of Anthropology, who is patient and helpful throughout all difficulties, and whose academic expertise and knowledge of ethnographic research are invaluable. I also thank the other members of my committee, Dr. Mark Luborsky (anthropology), Dr. Richard Marback (English), and Dr. Lucia Cherciu (English) for their interest in this project, their insights and assistance. Although neither Dr. Frances Trix (linguistic anthropology), and Dr. Janet Langlois (Folklore) studies are not on my official “committee,” I owe both of them heartily felt gratitude for knowledge imparted to me.
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CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

The subject of this study is the text, Zanko, Chef Tribal: Traditions, Coutumes, Légendes des Tsiganes Chalderash (1959). Zanko, Chef Tribal is an important literary classic for all scholars who interest themselves in Gypsies,¹ and for numerous reasons that must be carefully delineated. Therefore, this introduction consists of a description of the text including a rationale for the study, an explanation of how the text was generated, a discussion of the many people concerned with it, and a contextualizing of the book in a particular historical milieu. The introduction concludes with an examination of the study’s methodology of analysis.

¹ Chalderash and Roma Americans of the Detroit metropolitan area use the terms Roma or Gypsies, and Kalderash or Gypsies, interchangeably as do French Chalderash. They do not consider “Gypsy” to be a derogatory term and they are proud to be Gypsies. Since many of them are now literate they are insulted if someone fails to capitalize the term. Their rationale is that the ethnic designation Native Americans is a generic that is always capitalized therefore the term Gypsy which is a generic should also be capitalized. And since it is a convention of the English language to capitalize the names of the various Native American nations (e.g., Iroquois, Miami, Ottowa), the names of the various Gypsy “lineages,” that is, extended families (vitsa) must also be capitalized.
The Rationale

_Zanko Chef Tribal_ is a book that resulted from the cooperation of a Dominican priest (Reverend Father Chatard) and a revered elder of many Chalderash families and lineages, “Old Zanko.”² In May of 1954 they met in the village of Villeurbanne (just southeast of Lyon) so as to record the first recitation of the book, _Tradition of the Ancestors_ (1959: 18). Today, Old Zanko’s grandchildren and great-grandchildren regard the text _Zanko, Chef Tribal_ as symbolic of family and Chalderash identity (communications with Gilles Eynard and Michel Zanko 2009) testifying to the continuity and the vitality of Chalderash traditions. In addition to inspiring family and Chalderash loyalty, _Zanko, Chef Tribal_ also produces friendships between Chalderash and non-Chalderash creating various sorts of social interactions and social ties to this day. Thus, this study is not only an analysis of content. Rather, it is a study of on-going relationships, of on-going discourses and social interactions although five decades have passed since its first publication. Therefore, this is specifically an ethnographic study. It is not simply an exercise in literary criticism.

Furthermore _Zanko, Chef Tribal_ continues to generate controversy, fuel debate and create animosities. For example, an important conflict resulted from a pirate edition of _Zanko, Chef Tribal_ that had appeared in France in 1987 causing Gilles Eynard and Michel Zanko to seek legal counsel so as to have the pirated edition suppressed. Fortunately, the Chalderash right to Chalderash intellectual property was upheld by French copyright law (Communications with Gilles Eynard 2007). One thing is clear. That someone thought _Zanko, Chef Tribal_ valuable enough to risk prosecution for publishing a version that was unauthorized by the Gypsies (more about this later), testifies to its important status as a classic of Gypsy studies. Such contentions

² Among the Chalderash in France, “old” is a term of respect. Henceforth, the Chalderash narrator, Monsieur Zanko, is referred to as “Old” to confer respect in accordance with Chalderash custom. This is the preferred rubric of both Zanko Michel and Gilles Eynard.
and conflicts that surround *Zanko, Chef Tribal* also have political implications that are elaborated in the chapters concerning authority and power. Suffice it to say here, that all of the discourses and actions generated by *Zanko, Chef Tribal* (whether of a positive or a negative nature) illustrate the importance of this text and furnish the rationale for this study. Indeed, this study recognizes the importance of Old Zanko, his family, and the Chalderash. To do this, I draw upon “modern” ethnographic methodologies and “post-modern literary deconstructionism.” In fact, this is the first time that *Zanko, Chef Tribal* (1959) has been analyzed according to ethnographic and literary methodologies developed after 1959, and it is the only translation and analysis that is authorized by the Zanko family.

As for other indication of its importance, academically *Zanko, Chef Tribal* remains one of the most cited classics of Gypsy studies. For example, French author Jean Paul Clébert cites *Zanko, Chef Tribal* no less than eleven times in his compendium of everything “known” about the Gypsies (1967). Sometimes, Clébert quotes nearly verbatim whole pages taken from Old Zanko’s revelations (ibid: 135, 163n, 169, 172n, 174, 176, 178, 195, 207, 247, Plate 37). Meanwhile, Clébert’s *The Gypsies* also remains a classic of Gypsy studies.
Description of the Text

*Zanko, Chef Tribal* begins with a *Preface* (1959: 7-15) that commences dramatically with a four-phrase exposition in Romani (French beneath each phrase) that expresses in ritualistic and formulary language the way in which the Chalderash see themselves in terms of time, place, and in relation to people who are not Gypsies. Immediately following these formularies, Father Chatard’s colleague and editor, Michel Bernard, for the first of many times afterwards, pretends to the position of Old Zanko’s co-narrator, for his commentaries intersperse Old Zanko’s actual narratives, tales, and statements. In actuality, Bernard merely presents (from an academic and non-Gypsy outsider’s perspective) historical, folkloric, linguistic, and other cultural data about the Roma that had been gathered over the centuries by non-Roma (non-Gypsies). This data is often comprised of the assumptions and speculations of various Gypsiologists (“tsiganologues”) as to the nomadic character of the Chalderash and other Gypsy lineages, alleged migratory patterns, and the way in which Chalderash are regarded by so-called “sedentary” populations in France and other European countries. A brief bibliography follows Bernard’s exposition so that it is possible to ascertain the literary trends and academic argumentations which influenced Bernard. The bibliography includes such scholars as Franz de Ville (1956), Jules Bloch (1953), and J. Boulnois (1939) who were directly concerned with Gypsies. It also includes some writers who never actually mention Gypsies such as Mircea Éliade (1962, 1964) when he describes shamanism and other religions, Gordon Childe (1935) who examines the archaeology of the “pre-historic East,” (1935), and Tamara Talbot Rice who investigated the ancient Scythians (1958).

*Zanko, Chef Tribal* is then divided into six parts. *Tradition of the Ancestors* comprises the first (1959: 17-72). Therefore, one would expect Old Zanko to begin his recitation of the
Tradition immediately. Instead, before Old Zanko’s voice has a chance to be heard, Bernard inserts himself into the text writing, Introduction to the Tradition of the Ancestors (ibid: 18-20) which espouses Gypsy-Lore cannon. Bernard then interrupts himself to present a transcript of Father Chatard’s pointed questions and Old Zanko’s responses to them. The subject of the questioning concerns which Gypsy lineages are aware of the Tradition. Thereafter, Bernard again engages in commentary that interprets Old Zanko’s statements for the reader (ibid: 19-20).

This section contains important information as to how the text came to be generated and recorded, including Old Zanko’s gestures during recitations. We also learn who was present during meetings when Old Zanko and his immediate family reviewed what Father Chatard had written according to Old Zanko’s dictation (Zanko 1959: 17-19). Bernard also describes the ways in which these sessions were conducted. Narratives and interrogative dialogues are thus situated in a context of social relations that obtain between non-Gypsies (Father Chatard and Bernard) and Chalderash Gypsies (Old Zanko, his wife, children and grand-children).

After these preliminary commentaries authored by Bernard, Old Zanko’s actual statements begin with a Prologue (ibid: 20-21) in which he describes how he first came to hear of the Tradition of the Ancestors as a boy in Russia where he was born. At certain times his grandfather had encouraged him to broach important subjects (e.g. the persecution of Gypsies by non-Gypsies). These family questioning sessions inevitably led his grandfather to relate the

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3 Gypsy-lore canon is often social evolutionist in character. Its rhetoric promotes the fallacy that “culture” and other non-corporeal concepts such as “society,” and “religion,” evolve as do biological organisms that change physically over time. This application of biological evolution to non-biological entities assumes a linear trajectory of evolutionary progress (as in biological evolution) from a lower (according to eugenics ideology, therefore presumed to be inferior) form of life into a “higher,” therefore by implication, into a “superior” form of life manifested as “values,” “beliefs,” “behaviors,” and “attitudes.” This type of social evolutionism contributed to nazi ideology which justified atrocities committed against “less” evolved “subhuman races” such as Gypsies and Jews.
genealogies, history, and sacred stories which comprise the “Sunto Lil” (“Holy Book”) of the Russian Chalderash who had emigrated to France. Also in the prologue, Old Zanko presents a Chalderash cosmogony in brief (Zanko 1959: 20-21) that describes a division of space into “Two Worlds” due to two major events: a war between two factions and a great flood which are elaborated in The Tradition of the Ancestors. There is every indication that the Tradition is of very ancient origin (which it is the task of this study to elucidate).

After the Prologue, Old Zanko’s actual narratives begin of which there are seven, and each of Old Zanko’s statements is numbered. However, Bernard first lists and defines the Chalderash Gods and some personages which subsequently appear in the text. The first and second of the narratives, entitled Birth of the First World and End of the First World (ibid: 22-32) respectively, are devoted to Chalderash origin myth. Narrative Three, The Division of the Old World into the Raio and the Hiardo and the Coming of Our World, reiterates briefly the consequences of the two disasters (factional war and a flood) and then delineates the ways in which Gypsies divide themselves into various lineages demarcating Gypsy from non-Gypsy, and explaining that not all nomads are “Roma” (Zanko 1959: passage number 17: 34). Old Zanko also states quite forcefully that the Gypsies’ country of origin was not located in “Indic lands.” This opinion is completely contrary to Gypsy Lore cannon but especially interesting for this very reason.

According to the principles of ethnographic research, insiders’ knowledge (emic viewpoint and emic sources of culture) cannot be put aside for they occupy a privileged position during analysis, a point which will be dealt with more fully later. Also, oral histories often have a very special sort of validity according to the discoveries of socio-linguistic theorists (Portelli 1991; Basso 1976; Bauman 1977; 1992: Hill and Irvine eds., 1993). In addition, it is one of the
first principles of ethnography to consider the consultant as the expert, and the “the native’s,” or, “the actor’s point of view” as of paramount importance (Geertz 1960, 1963, 1968, 1973). Therefore, when Old Zanko disputes certain of the assertions of Gypsy Lore canon, his objections should not be put aside summarily, but rather carefully examined which is done in this study. This leads us to the next recitation.

Narrative Four is entitled, The Mystery of the Divine Child, his Star, and the Disposition of Our World (Zanko 1959: 35-40) and it is preceded by the definition of certain terms and personages authored by Bernard. Each passage of Old Zanko’s Narrative Four is numbered. The story is ostensibly about the birth of Jesus, and yet it is not exactly the same story in many particulars. Certain personages appear who do not appear in the New Testament, and a central theme features the defiance of Chalderash purity rules followed by punishment and a miraculous redemption that affirms the divine nature of the child.

Narratives Five and Six consist of only five numbered statements, each no more than four to five sentences in length (Zanko 1959: 40-41). Narrative Five, The “Sunto Lil” or, the Ancestral “Bible” of the Chalderash, compares Chalderash narratives to Jewish Scripture and the Christian Bible which Old Zanko declares to have been written first in “Turkish” or in a “Jewish language” (ibid: passage number 2: 41). He is most concerned that his audience not confuse the oral Tradition with written Scripture for he stresses the orality of the Chalderash Bible that comes “de la bouche de nos ancêtres” (from the mouth of our ancestors) (Zanko 1959: passage number 4: 41), and he insists that the Tradition could not be and should not be transcribed in the Romani language, refusing to recite it in Romani for Father Chatard and Michel Bernard.

Narrative Six is entitled, The Code and the (Magical and Christian) Ritual of the Tribes (ibid: 41). In it, Old Zanko states that the customs and the religious practices of the Chalderash
are orally transmitted by means of the *Sunto Lîl* (Holy Book) to children by their elders (“nos anciens”). Of note is the importance that Old Zanko attributes to the code and ritual saying, “And we always do what our Ancestors taught us to do, as we indicated to you in this book” (“Et nous faisons toujours comme nos Ancêtres nous l’ont enseigné et comme nous l’avons indiqué dans le livre” (Zanko 1959: 41).

In a seventh narrative labeled the *Epilogue* (ibid: 41-43), Old Zanko conveys the sacred and cultural importance of his oral text for the Chalderash, referring to its subject matter as “a secret” (“maintenant vous connaissez notre secret”). He informs Father Chatard and Bernard that the Chalderash *Tradition* had never been revealed previously to anyone non-Gypsy because Chalderash do not “like” to reveal it to outsiders (“Nous n’aimons pas le révéler”), and stresses that Bernard and Father Chatard alone have been granted this honor (“et vous êtes seul à le connaître).

Afterwards, Old Zanko enumerates the many countries in which he has travelled, “in all of Russia, in Asia, in Africa, in North and South America, in the Scandinavian countries, in England, in Corsica, in Italy, and now for a long time in France” (“J’ai voyagé dans toute la Russie, en Asie, en Afrique, en Amérique du Nord et du Sud, dans les Pays Scandinaives, en Angleterre, en Corse, en Italie, et maintenant en France depuis longtemps”) (Zanko 1959: 41).

Old Zanko then criticizes journalists who assume that Chalderash lifestyle is drastically different from that of non-Chalderash French in a humorous, one may even say, an ironic manner. He then explicitly states that when Father Chatard and his “friend,” betray by their facial expressions disbelief in what he has said, they are harboring a certain amount of contempt for his narratives (ibid: 41-42).
In the next paragraph Old Zanko insists that he is not revealing the *Tradition* for Bernard and Father Chatard to keep it to themselves continuing a legacy of secrecy, but he wishes that the *Tradition* be known so that his children and grandchildren will not suffer the same treatment that his generation had suffered: “Je ne veux pas que mes enfants et mes petits-enfants soient traités comme nous l’avons été” (ibid: 42).

It is not possible to gauge whether Old Zanko is being sincere or disingenuous in the next few paragraphs which attribute the best intentions imaginable to his interlocutors (Bernard and Father Chatard). He ascribes to them great moral rectitude and a spirit of justice for their interest and formulation of the project (*Zanko Chef Tribal*). However, Old Zanko’s sincerity is unmistakable when he states his own motives for revealing the *Tradition*. He is elderly and would like to see the Chalderash legacy preserved for future generations. Second, Chatard and Bernard have the power to preserve this legacy in written form having connections to the publishing establishment, therefore, Old Zanko feels justified in revealing the *Tradition* to outsiders. And finally, Old Zanko believes that his revelations will gain respect for the Chalderash people that is sadly lacking from outsiders. The *Epilogue* ends explaining that this lack of understanding and the persecution of Gypsy people are due to a “curse” which they are powerless to reverse without the assistance of “governing powers.” Here ends Old Zanko’s voice.

Many pages now follow containing Father Chatard’s notes about Old Zanko’s narratives interspersed with Bernard’s commentary (Zanko 1959: 44-73). These notes and commentary defining Romani words and concepts of the *Tradition* are a curious blend of qualification, re-interpretation, and hypothesizing not only about the narratives but also about the intellectual, moral, and social development of the Gypsies. For example, one section bears the heading:
About the Prelogical Mentality of the Gypsies (ibid: 44-46). Also in these notes and commentaries the authors examine minutely every nuance of what Old Zanko has said about the Gypsies and the Tradition, proposing a plethora of philosophical, religious, and theoretical surmises for Old Zanko’s discourses.

There is much important information contained in these notations about non-Gypsy attitudes as well as positive and negative stereotypes of Gypsies existing in French popular culture at the time, including the intellectual arguments which frame Zanko, Chef Tribal. These commentaries also include more of Old Zanko’s reflections (paraphrased by Bernard) concerning Chalderash religious, traditional, and customary practice which had not appeared earlier in the text. A final note concludes this section which apologizes for not having presented Chatard’s remarks and Bernard’s commentary as footnotes. By placing them after the narratives, they hope to spare the reader from becoming unnecessarily prejudiced against the subject matter of the Tradition, or against the Gypsies creative imagination of which the Tradition is a product (ibid: 72), a statement which seems a bit disingenuous given the negative or romantic stereotypes of Gypsies that are ubiquitous throughout Zanko, Chef Tribal.

Customs and Religious Practices is the title of Part II (ibid: 73-95). All the passages are numbered. Here, Old Zanko speaks of the Chalderash calendar, of family and religious obligations and taboos, of customary pilgrimages, of rules proscribing marriage, birth, the enculturation of children, of sickness, death, and the moral behaviors that are appropriate in various situations including that of travel. Old Zanko also discusses Chalderash symbols of authority which are religious and communal, describing the manipulation of sacred objects which also symbolize Chalderash authority. A portion of Old Zanko’s discourse concerns the Chalderash judicial institution of the kriss. After which, Old Zanko relates terms that connote
both religious authority and kinship relations (Zanko 1959: passage no. 95: 92), and he recites a chant to the New Moon (passage no. 96: 94) ending with a lament about the loss of these customs: “Aujourd'hui tout cela c’est perdu” (ibid 97: 94).

Part III, Cycle of Ancestors and Giants, or, The Cycle of the Suuntse, Sunto Proroc, and Sunto Ilia (The God of Thunder’s Vocation) (ibid: 95-125) seems to be familiar myth and legend derived from Egyptian, Greek, and Roman religions but personified as Chalderash characters, inspired by Chalderash traditions, preserving a largely magical and animist worldview, and mirroring Chalderash anxieties and concerns. This is but one level of this multi-layered oral composition. Part III is also a compendium and hierarchy of behaviors which violate Chalderash concepts of what is morally upright and just, also suggesting a system of punishment for transgressions. Indeed, Part III begins with a deadly joke of trickery that leads a Rom to commit the “greatest crime” of all: parricide. As in the narrative of The Divine Child and His Star, a miraculous intervention occurs that redeems the antihero, and his “punishment” becomes his “joy” (ibid: passage nos. 65-67). But The Cycle of the Ancestors and Giants has even a third layer of “significance” (Geertz 1973: 6-10): the theme of transformation composed of three easily discernable metamorphoses (Zanko 1959: passages nos. 1-86: 100-102: 103-110).

At this point the text is entitled, Commentaries of the Tribe (ibid: 1-86: 100-103) in which Father Chatard questions Old Zanko as to the name of Proroc’s wife, the name of the village in which the tale took place, and as to the nature of the Suuntse, the ancestors, the giants, Sinpetri and his Sinpetra, the Pouro Del, the Beng and the Mulé. Four short tales and one lengthier tale follow all in which the miraculous becomes intertwined with concepts of morality (The Legend of Potro and Stoika (Zanko 1959: 110-114); The Rom, the Sunto Del, or, the Nails of the Crucifixion (ibid: 115-117); The Bird of Resurrection (ibid: 117-119); The Dé Deveseski
and the Tortoise (ibid: 118-119); and Novaca, Grouya, and Tsell I Baro Grado, or, Tsell, the large city that was civilized by the Giants (ibid: 124). Father Chatard then briefly interrogates Old Zanko as to whether Boba the Giant featured in the last tale, is a “Horachai,” or a “Myreano,” or one of the “Suuntse,” to which Old Zanko replies that Boba and all the giants were men and “Myreano” (translated as either “noblemen” or “Christians” throughout Zanko, Chef Tribal), but none of them were Suuntse (Saints).

Part IV, The Epic of the Serpent (ibid: 127-160), named the “great Sherkano,” is similar to Part III in that it continues in the genre of the folk-tale. The protagonists are three horsemen who are also giants. They campaign to outwit and fight their adversaries, also three in number, the “charcoal burners,” so as to reveal the foes’ perfidy, and winning victory after victory against their criminal opponents by means of cunning, magic, moral rectitude, and honorable action. Again, there is something familiar yet unfamiliar about this epic. The myth of adventurous heroes who vindicate themselves in combat is widespread throughout the world, but the characters of this epic seem to embody Chalderash ideals, perspectives, and characters (i.e. the charcoal burners), who may represent perhaps the Gypsies themselves, an interesting twist that bears further study.

Two tales comprise Part V, Cycle of the Beng and the Benga (Zanko 1959: 161-172). The Mulo who Returns to Sleep with his Wife, and The Amorous Mulo are both ghost stories that revolve around the relationship between women and men, and the living with the dead. Both deal with birds as messengers of a spiritual realm (a motif repeated in many of Old Zanko’s tales). Both of these ghost stories are also rather irreverent, mocking of religious hierarchies, and apropos of the naughty and treacherous nature of the Benga (spirit-beings who are the
“opponents of men” much to be feared because their leader, the Beng, is “the companion of God”).

*Additional Notes about the Doctrine of the Mulé,* (ibid: 173-176) succeeds the ghost stories as an afterword that begins with Father Chatard asking Old Zanko whether or not he believes in the stories. Old Zanko (in the time honored tradition of Gypsy story-telling) insists that not only does he believe in them, but he also knew the people who had “survived” the ghostly encounters. In fact, one of the survivors was (significantly) his younger sister, “Miketa” (ibid: 173). He also reflects upon the spiritual nature of the Benga, the Mulé, how humans should regard and act toward them, and of Chalderash concepts regarding life after death.

Suddenly the voice of Bernard displaces that of Father Chatard and Old Zanko in order to describe the central theme of the ghost tales as revolving around “love, sickness, and the death of the young man followed by the hallucinations, or the illusions of the young girl.” Bernard notices here that these ghost stories are imbued with Chalderash concepts of the spirit-world, saying that they “ evoke” an “age old” image of “being under a tent at night in the vacillating light of torches” (ibid). Bernard then explains that Old Zanko employs the words Beng, and Mulo indifferently, but that the word “Beng” is synonymous with “Demon” (“Zanko employait indifféremment les mots Beng ou Mulo et plutôt Beng que Mulo. Beng est synonyme de Démon”) (Zanko 1959: 173).

Abruptly, Father Chatard is again questioning Old Zanko as to how many Benga (plural of Beng) there are, to which Old Zanko replies that there is only one. Father Chatard then asks the question in a different way inquiring if the Mulé are a category of the Benga. Old Zanko agrees with this characterization of Benga and Mulé and clarifies the differences between the two, entreating Father Chatard to try to understand the complexity of the matter (ibid).
Then, in complete contradiction to Zanko, *Chef Tribal’s* thematic unity, Bernard’s exposition suddenly receives numbers. Up to this point, only Old Zanko’s narratives had received this treatment. Furthermore, even though the passages are numbered, there is something puzzling about them. The identity of the voices, who is actually speaking at any given time, is sometimes unclear. Certain passages by their cadence and clarity of phraseology seem to be the words of Old Zanko (e.g. passage number 4, p.174) who always speaks in direct and simple French without literary complexities, and which could be direct quotations minus quotation marks. Other passages which digress into Egyptian and Sumerian religions, which refer to Father Chatard and to Old Zanko in the third person, which mention so-called “Chalderash mentality,” suggest, rather, that they are of Bernard’s authorship. But in general, the afterword consists of further explanations as to Chalderash views of life after death and describes the various spirits that issue from the “fissures” of the earth. It also asserts that Old Zanko’s narratives originate in the literatures of “Egypt” and “Sumeria” (passage no.1, 174), pointing out that in contrast to the Chalderash, the “Sinté” (another Gypsy lineage) could never conceive of such stories (Zanko 1959: 7: 175).

*Zanko, Chef Tribal* concludes with Part VI, the *Cycle of the Poor Man who Became King*, and continues commentary in an un-numbered *Forward* to the *Cycle* (ibid: 177-179). The *Cycle* consists of two narratives: *Poltro and Kalo, or, the Horse which Possessed the Power of God* (ibid: 180-198) and *The Little Golden Fish and the Daughter of the King, Djimbash ando Kash* (ibid: 199-206). One may categorize them as fables for both stories feature talking animals having great wisdom and magical power, “the Power of God” (ibid: 180).

In the story of *Poltro and Kalo*, it is Poltro’s “little horse,” Kalo, who has magical power. In *The Story of the Little Golden Fish*, it is a golden fish. The female counterpart of the “little
“golden fish” is a “beautiful fish of silver,” called “our queen, the fish, the beautiful fish of silver,” (“Notre reine, la louche, la belle louche d’argent”) (ibid: 204-206). Bernard characterizes the two narratives as “parables,” “maxims,” and “proverbs” that “orator and audience speak in turn” in order to “teach a lesson and the morality of diverse episodes” (ibid: 177). This implies that Old Zanko must have been narrating amidst a group of people who had heard these tales previously and who were as familiar with the story lines and characters as Old Zanko himself. Old Zanko as much as says so himself when he addresses “the problem of authenticity” and “the Tradition” (editorial emphasis). Old Zanko said to Chatard:

> You are worried that people will tell you I have invented all of this, and that I have told you a ‘story’ (Old Zanko’s emphasis). You have but to ask my sons, my daughters, and my grandchildren. You have but to ask the Chalderash in their respective countries. They may not be able to tell you the History in all of its particulars as I have told it to you, nonetheless, all are able to tell you a portion of it” (Zanko 1959: 70)

Michel Zanko and Gilles Eynard confirm that orator and audience indeed do speak in turn (email communications 3/13/2010). This particular convention of an orator who is answered by an audience at the crucial moments of a narrative is important because it is a distinguishing characteristic of traditional oral recitations everywhere (Basso and Selby 1976; Bauman 1977, 1992; Brunvand 1998; Hill and Irvine et al 1993; Ong 1999; Toelken 1996).

Another notable element in the above quote is Old Zanko’s statement that people of Chalderash lineages “in their respective countries” may not know the tales in their entirety yet can tell some portion of them. This indicates the widespread character of Chalderash society and a certain continuity of culture despite distances of time and space. This is not to say that there are not differences between Chalderash communities of the various countries as well, but neither must the similarities be discounted.

Bernard then notes that these stories are recited especially at funeral vigils and during “long, dark, winter nights” (ibid: 177). He next compares this portion of Zanko, Chef Tribal to
the *Magnificat* of Jesus’ Mother (*New Testament*) wherein it is said that the powerful will be dethroned and the humble will be elevated (“Tous les contes, au surplus, tournent autour d’un thème et pourraient porter en épigramme le verset du *Magnificat*: ‘il a détrône les puissants, il a élevé les humbles’”) (ibid 177). This is Bernard’s Christian interpretation of the *Poor Man* cycle. However, these tales also bespeak an unmistakable magical and pagan ethos.⁴

Bernard then states that “Poltro,” in the first *Poor Man* tale, and “the fisherman,” in the second tale “had the power of God.” However, to the contrary, it seems rather that the animals have “the power of God,” and the men involved are easy dupes and fools who constantly need animal counsel in order to extricate themselves from untoward situations. This is revealed in the dialogues between humans and animal mentors. Although I do not treat of these specific tales, other tales exhibit similar anomalies and contradictions which will be dealt with further on in this dissertation in the chapter which concerns folklore specifically.

The reader next learns en passant that Bernard and editor regret to say that two of Old Zanko’s narratives have been omitted from this publication: *The Widower, the Widow, and the Twelve Good Thieves*, and the story of *The Orphan and Zmovo*. The first tale, we are informed, is reminiscent of *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, the second tale reminiscent of biblical Tobias who marries Sarah after putting the demon Asmodeus to flight. However, readers are not in the position to judge whether this hypothesis has validity because these two stories are omitted from *Zanko, Chef Tribal*. The reason for this omission: substituted stories are “more typical of

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⁴ Here I use Jame Dow’s definition of magic as “casting spells, healing with superhuman power, and foretelling the future” (1986: 7). I use the term, magical ethos, (the distinguishing character of magic) to refer to the “mystical mentality that is universal to all human beings” as British anthropologist Susan Greenwood has pointed out (2009:9). Greenwood also remarked the fact that not only “non-Western peoples” think “mystically,” that is, “magically” (ibid). My reference to the “pagan” includes any non-monotheistic-Judaic, non-Christian, non-Islamic spiritual tradition as well as all contemporary manifestations of a belief in magic and/or “paganism.”
the Gypsy mentality” (ibid: 178). Be that as it may, the *Cycle of the Poor Man* is also Gypsy in its Chalderash ethos, moral standards and characters.

The text ends here. It feels unfinished somehow, the avid reader longs to read the stories of *The Widower, the Widow, and the Twelve Good Thieves*, and *The Orphan and Zmovo* which Bernard had decided not to publish. One marvels at the insight into Chalderash culture and values which Old Zanko’s folktales afford. But even more fascinating and more revelatory are Old Zanko’s expositions about the subject of religion and the customs and traditions pertaining to it (1959: 73-94). Also of particular interest are dialogues between Michel Bernard, Father Chatard and Old Zanko throughout the text which convey much about Gypsy/ non-Gypsy social relations.
The Actors

In both post-modern literary criticism (e.g. Cherciu 2008; Derrida 1988; Said 1978; Spivak 1988) and discourse analysis (e.g. Stubbs 1983; Holoquist 1990) besides the actual contents of a text, there is another unit of analysis. This unit of analysis or category refers to the authors of a text, sometimes referred to as the “voices.” In Zanko, Chef Tribal, these “voices” are that of Old Zanko, Father Chatard, and Michel Bernard. However, the present study is not simply an exercise in literary criticism or of discourse analysis. Rather, it is an ethnographic study because it is not solely concerned with the text but also with the people and the events that surrounded the text’s creation as well as the people concerned with the text in the present. Although Zanko, Chef Tribal remains the organizing principle of ethnographic analysis and an all important source of a Chalderash culture, the people who conceived of the project, who saw the project to its completion, and the people who continue to be interested in its rehabilitation as a respected classic of Gypsy studies, as well as those who opposed the project from the start, all have importance and are crucial to the understanding of Zanko, Chef Tribal as well as to a better comprehension of the history and the culture of a community of French Chalderash. In this regard, both anthropological “practice theory” (Ortner 1989) and interpretive, symbolic anthropology (Geertz 1973) refer to all those persons who interact as a particular group of individuals in a given society for various purposes (such as to preserve and perpetuate the group, or to achieve a goal etc.) as the “actors.” For this reason, a brief discussion of the people, or, the “actors” involved with Zanko, Chef Tribal follows.

Besides Old Zanko, Father Chatard, and Michel Bernard, in 1959 there were many “behind the scenes” actors (both promoters and detractors) of the book which only historical analysis reveals. For example, one critic of Zanko, Chef Tribal was the journalist Maurice
Colinon. He was not by any means a disinterested party but rather a spokesperson and promoter of another Chalderash writer, the late Matéo Maximoff (Maximoff 1946, 1955, 1982). Moreover, Colinon’s article critiquing Zanko, Chef Tribal, was published by Ecclesia: lectures chrétiennes (e.g. No. 128, Novembre 1959). This article couches allegations that Old Zanko was a fraud within a context of bland compliments. The organization, Études Tsiganes, also published articles about Zanko Chef Tribal that were sometimes derogatory and sometimes complimentary. These too will be examined carefully in the chapters dealing with political and religious considerations.

There was a third interested party, a Roumanian national calling himself Vaïda Voïvode III (real name, Lionel Rotaru), not a Gypsy at all, but one who devised a plan to petition Germany for war-time reparations for the nazi murder of Gypsy populations (Christischa 12/29/1961 Le Monde; communication of Michel Zanko 11/25/2009). Rotaru and the Roma concerned were never successful in acquiring German reparations for the deaths of family members (Communication with Gilles Eynard 3/6/2011). There will be more concerning Vaïda Voïvode III later in the dissertation.

The Gypsies themselves were not in the business of competing overtly with one another, but their promoters were jealous of the possible monetary gain resulting from the publication of such Gypsy spokespersons, for a European fascination with Gypsies makes them perennially profitable. These non-Gypsies, non-Roma, fanned the flames of controversy surrounding the publication of Zanko, Chef Tribal.

There were also governmental bodies that were concerned with Old Zanko’s family and other Chalderash. Father Chatard wrote letters to one André Join-Lambert, “Président de la commission interministérial pour les populations d’origine nomade, et Vice Président de
l’Association des Études Tsiganes” (Département des Archives Historiques à Paris Musée des Arts et Traditions Populaires). Father Chatard’s letters were written on behalf of Chalderash families protesting the inequities and contradictions of French law regarding “Gypsies,” “nomads,” “foreigners” and “travelling” populations. The twists and turns of this correspondence and governmental oversight of Chalderash communities will be dealt with more fully in a subsequent chapter.

Today, there is a broad base of interested parties. Besides those who attempted the unauthorized pirate edition, the legitimate owner of this intellectual property, Zanko Michel, would like to see Old Zanko’s narratives republished in English minus Bernard’s commentary. The Roma scholar, linguist, and activist, Gilles Eynard, has such an interest in the republication of this text that he travelled all the way from France to the United States to assist this researcher in the translation of both the Romani and the French languages in which the book is written. The daughter of the late Matéo Maximoff continues to agitate for acknowledgement of her father’s authority over that of Old Zanko (communication with Gilles Eynard 3/14/2010), even though the Chalderash maintain that no one man has the right to call himself “leader” of all the Chalderash, “I repeat: nobody can be leader of all the Roma people, this is not conceivable (inversement, ce trait n’est pas conceivable pour quelqu’un qui n’est pas de cette culture)” (communication with Gilles Eynard 11/04/2009). But the very fact that Maximoff’s daughter is engaged in this activity suggests the importance of Zanko, Chef Tribal in fulfilling Old Zanko’s desire to preserve his narratives for posterity despite such challenges to its authority. Certainly, Zanko, Chef Tribal has continued to influence Chalderash identity within certain lineages.

This researcher too has always recognized the importance of Zanko Chef Tribal, having seen it cited in so many works (classic and otherwise) about Gypsies. I too would like to see it
republished believing it to be of interest to folklorists, anthropologists, and other such scholars as well as to the general public for in a class that I taught, *Magic, Witchcraft and Religion*, my students were always captivated by short excerpts that I assigned from Old Zanko’s narratives.
Historical Milieu

*Zanko, Chef Tribal* was published only 14 years after the end of WWII, an important fact if we are to understand Old Zanko’s world-view, and that of his community. France was invaded by Germany in June of 1940 and labored under nazi occupation until August of 1944 when city after city fell to British, Canadian, Free French, and US forces (McInnis 1945).

Old Zanko and all of his family were trapped in France during German occupation. Some of the family escaped the notice of Pétain’s police by renting housing (Communication with Michel Zanko and Gilles Eynard: 9/3/10). This made them “sedentary” which, if one were lucky, made one invisible to Germans and nazi collaborators. If one were not lucky, one could be interred in French and nazi-run concentration camps as was the entire Zanko family at one point. Old Zanko’s son, that is, Zanko Michel’s father, Joseph Zanko, escaped from a French internment camp afterward joining the *Maquis* (French Resistance organization). Thousands of Gypsies were not so lucky. These people were deported to nazi death camps in Germany and Poland (Auzias 1999; Filhol 2001; Pernot, Asséo, and Hubert 2001; Sigot 1994). Understandably, the Gypsies were greatly embittered by this experience. Indeed, these events gave Old Zanko an all consuming desire to have his viewpoint and culture explicated by means of a book.

The racism that led right-wing French to join the nazis in the persecution of Jews and Gypsies did not end with the war. Negative attitudes to both populations remain and Gypsies continue to be targeted for government surveillance and intrusive social control. Placed in historical context, it is notable that many Vichy authority figures (those very persons who had persecuted their Gypsy neighbors) retained governmental posts and university positions, some to this very day, thereby making a successful transition from the Vichy nazi regime to a democratic
France. A more thorough examination of historical events, both private and public, including a
delineation of the political circumstances before and after publication of *Zanko, Chef Tribal*
follows in the chapters related to race, power, and authority.
Methodological and Theoretical Considerations

This dissertation is a joint effort. I would not have had knowledge of this particular French Chalderash community nor the complex set of circumstances that attended the publication of *Zanko, Chef Tribal* nor the comprehension of Chalderash language and culture without the assistance of Roma activist, Gilles Eynard, and without the authorization of Old Zanko’s grandson, Michel Zanko, who is also a Roma activist. Any scholar may go to *Musée des Arts et Traditions Populaires* at Paris and view the *Zanko Archives*, but those archives would be rather obscure without the guidance, concern, and historical knowledge (both private and public) of Gypsy consultants.

Our method of data collection has been manifold. First, the testimony and historical commentaries of Michel Zanko and Gilles Eynard (both French citizens) have been placed in written form and comprise a copious body of correspondence between the researcher and these two key consultants. All communications were a combination of French, English, and Romani. Certain important testimonials (such as that of Michel Zanko’s public address to the Chalderash families concerning his revived interest in his grandfather’s text, November 30, 2009) were sent to me in both French and Romani.

Secondly, based upon the needs of this dissertation, either the key consultants advised me to acquire a certain document, or I requested certain documents, and Messieurs Zanko and Eynard travelled many times to various historical archives to photo-copy and send them to me. When they were not permitted to photo-copy certain classified materials, Michel Zanko and Gilles Eynard copied them by hand and sent copies of their work to me.

Thirdly, these historical documents are augmented with literary research dealing with WWII and its aftermath specifically concerning the treatment of the Gypsies by the Vichy
regime, as well as their treatment after the reinstitution of French democracy. When researching history I took care to consult works both far from and close to the time in question. The reason for this strategy is that time and hindsight have blurred the immediacy of the subject and reinterpreted events so many times that a clear view of events is sometimes difficult to follow. The closer one is to the actual events the less commentators have had time to interpret events to their advantage. For example, one book that has been enormously helpful in pursuit of this goal was a six volume history of WWII by Edgar McInnis which was published in 1945 (Oxford University Press: London, Toronto, New York) the year when all WWII hostilities ended. For a clear delineation of events in France leading up to the nazi invasion, the war years, and the liberation, I have found no better source. In it, there is no or little attempt to interpret political events. The author confines himself to the major conferences that affected world peace, the political statements of world leaders, the promulgation of social and political policies that led to war, the statistical data that had been gathered by Army Intelligence and civil authorities etc. Many crucial historical documents in entirety were published in the index.

However, there are also many valuable historical works of recent publication. Raymond Aubrac’s *The French Resistance 1940-1944* (1997) is a short, concise delineation of the role of the Maquis in the liberation of France. Betty Alts’ and Sylvia Folts’ 1996 publication, *Weeping Violins: the Gypsy Tragedy in Europe* (Kirksville, MO: Thomas Jefferson University Press) is an historical examination of the Gypsy experience in Western and Eastern Europe. Emmanuel Filhol (2001), Mathieu Pernot, Henriette Asséo, and Marie-Christine Hubert (2001), and Jacques Sigot (1994) write of the French Gypsy experience under nazi occupation focusing specifically upon the concentration camps that were jointly administered by the Vichy police and the Gestapo. These works are but a few of the many recent publications that elucidate what was until
recently a taboo subject among the French populace, and many people are loathe to revisit the Vichy past even now for many powerful bureaucrats retain their government and academic positions and status today.

The purpose of this historical data collection is to situate the book *Zanko, Chef Tribal* (1959) in its historical context. My emphasis upon historical analysis is due to the “historical particularism” (Harris 1968) of American anthropologist, Franz Boas, a theoretical stance which continues as a valid, necessary, and essential component of all and any ethnographic analysis. Many anthropologists since Boas have continued to make historical research central to understanding human societies. For instance, the “political economy school” of anthropology, sociology, and history (Escobar 1995; Leach 1954; Spencer 2007; Wallerstein 1991) stresses the importance of historical analysis (Ortner 1984: 142). “Practice theorists” also make history a central concern of anthropology (Bourdieu 1977; Ortner 1984) for they regard the “individual actor,” the “historical individual,” as one of the primary units of ethnographic analysis and “the reference point for understanding a particular unfolding of events, as well as for understanding “the processes” involved in the reproduction or change of some set of structural features” (Ortner 1984: 149). In other words, the “actors” are “active agents and subjects of their own history,” although constrained by structures within and without (ibid: 143). Ortner has aptly stated the proposition:

History is not simply something that happens to people, but something they make – within, of course, the very powerful constraints of the system within which they are operating…Rather than fetishizing history, a practice approach offers, or at least promises, a model that implicitly unifies both historical and anthropological studies” (Ortner 1984: 159).

*Zanko, Chef Tribal* did not appear in a vacuum, but was conceived, shaped, and influenced by historic events as well as by historical persons. Indeed, historical analysis is not
only a crucial component of this study, but it is indispensable to any true understanding of the
importance of the text itself.

Historical analysis of *Zanko, Chef Tribal* dovetails with many issues in anthropology. For
each of these religious, political, and social issues as well as for literary and artistic
considerations, there are various theoretical criteria which permit analysis from various
positions, viewpoints, and conceptual levels. Thus this dissertation is not concerned with proving
the validity of any one theory or hypothesis. Instead, I utilize all possible theories which help one
to grasp the importance of Old Zanko, the Chalderash and other Gypsy peoples, and the inherent
value of *Zanko, Chef Tribal*.

The present study is organized around certain broad anthropological concerns that
coincide with the content of *Zanko, Chef Tribal*. First there is the issue of political and social
struggle which seems endemic to the human condition. To deal with the events that occurred
before and after the publication of *Zanko, Chef Tribal*, and so as to understand its political and
social import I use a cluster of anthropological theories that developed specifically to get at the
problem of how ethnicity, race, gender, identity politics, religion, and power relations impact
individuals and groups.

A seminal work that has inspired scholars from various disciplines including the social
sciences is *The Prison Notebooks* (1971) of Antonio Gramsci who originated the concept of
“hegemony.” Hegemony consists of the assumptions of everyday life, understandings of what
constitutes common sense in a given society, language, popular culture, the arts, and religion all
of which are part of the political process that maintains the social order. Gramsci inspired Pierre
Bourdieu’s “practice theory” (1977, 1990) that anthropologist Sherry Ortner adopted for the
analysis of data that appeared in her book, *High Religion: a cultural and political history of*
Sherpa Buddhism (1989). I apply this “active theory of culture” (ibid) to analysis of human relations which are represented by Zanko, Chef Tribal (1959).


Equally important to the analysis of Zanko, Chef Tribal is Orientalism (1978) authored by Edward Said in which he explicates how certain groups are marginalized by various discourses of difference which romanticize and exoticize one population to its detriment for the benefit of another. This is affected by means of various actions and discourses that define identity by comparison of itself with a perceived “alien other” (ibid). This concept of human distancing practiced cross-culturally by human beings serves to define ethnic and other sorts of identity. Edward Said applied his insights to Arabic populations in the context of colonial relations between Europe and the Middle East. This study extends his insights to include the Gypsies of France.

Another singular work is Benedict Anderson’s Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism (1991). This is an important treatise which demonstrates that “nation building” is a conscious and purposeful project of both governing elites and those whom they influence, not a primordial event. In constructing national identity the powerful and the like-
minded subordinated (“civil society”) exclude certain persons and ethnic groups by means of various rationalizations, discourses, and actions that engender “mistrust” among the excluded persons and groups (Williams 1989: 408; see also Balibar 2003). “Nation” building indeed has a negative side to its positive goal of creating social solidarity. This project of “nation building” taken to its extremity justified the genocide of millions of Jews and Gypsies by German National Socialists, and Old Zanko and his family were directly affected by the nazi invasion and occupation of France. One more intellectual has importance for the study of power relations. Michel Foucault expanded academic discussions of power with his concept, “technologies of power” (1977, 1978, and 1980).

Much of the content of Zanko, Chef Tribal is religious in nature. Thus, the anthropological study of religion is an important component of analysis. The anthropological study of religion has a long history of development and anthropologists do not necessarily agree with one another as to method. The present analysis is based upon several anthropological classics in the study of religion that allow one to look at religion from various perspectives ensuring against bias that unduly favors majority (in terms of number of adherents) religions over minority religions. Instead, according to these various levels of analysis, one perceives any religion as a product of the human imagination, and thus worthy of regard.

Bronislaw Malinowski’s psychological approach to the study of religion demonstrates that all religions, including Chalderash religious traditions, serve human emotional needs (1948). Since Malinowski, an entire school of cognitive (psychological) anthropology has enlarged our understanding of the place religion plays in the mental well-being of individuals (e.g. Veikko 2001; Light and Wilson, editors 2004; Corrigan, editor 2004).
Crucial to discussions of religion and identity, the doctrine of social evolutionism must be taken into consideration. In the same way that social evolutionism influenced race relations by ranking human societies from the “lower orders” to the “higher” which were always Western, Christian, and Caucasian, social evolutionism imbued the study of religion with notions of the “primitive,” “inferior,” polytheistic, non-Judaic, non-Christian, non-Islamic religions that are said to have “evolved” (in a linear historical and moral trajectory) into the “more advanced,” “monotheistic” (and thus morally superior) religions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. This way of viewing religion devalues certain religious concepts. This is demonstratively the case within the pages of Zanko, Chef Tribal, and social evolutionism may also be found in the commentaries which review it, but legitimate social scientists too such as certain psychologists have devalued animist and magical belief systems labeling them “irrational.”

One of anthropology’s greatest strengths as a tool of analysis lies in its interdisciplinary approach to the study of culture, and anthropologists regularly utilize various academic disciplines to elucidate ethnographic data. Therefore (as has been done with regard to politics, history and religion above) to perceive the literary and artistic import of Zanko, Chef Tribal, this dissertation borrows from theorists in the academic fields of folklore, socio-linguistics, and mythological studies.

Folklore studies have benefited exponentially from the scholarship of Roman Jakobson (1956, 1957, 1960, 1978 and 1987), Roger D. Abrahams (1972), and Richard Bauman (1972, 1974, 1977) whose body of work led to the development of “performance theory” (1977). Adopting insights garnered from anthropologist colleagues, they began to question the methodology of the academic practice called “folklore studies.” This resulted in an expansion of the very definition of folklore (Abrahams 1972: 17).
Rather than regarding the literature of folklore as “a static set of texts,” “genres,” or “material objects,” performance theorists identified the inherent “traditional characteristics of folklore and its word of mouth transmission.” “What folklore does and how it does it” became important (Abrahams 1972: 16). Furthermore, folklore is part of culture. One cannot simply abstract folklore from daily life to study it in isolation from the people and the culture from whence it comes. This in turn, led to the discovery that orality has its special hallmarks which differentiate it from written materials. Written texts are then studied in relation to oral texts as “communication.” For this reason, performance theorist term folklore “verbal art,” “oral literature,” “spoken art,” “a way of speaking” and a “mode of communication” in “a universe of discourse” (Bauman 1977: 4). The performance school of folklore is an important theoretical tool in a subsequent chapter wherein I examine the oral nature of Old Zanko’s narratives. Indeed, performance theory suggests referent connections between Old Zanko’s narratives and Romani social practice. There is also a precedent to analysis of Gypsy data by means of performance theory. Anthropologist Alaina Lemon (2000) utilized performance theory to analyze data gathered from the Chalderash and other Roma lineages of Russia.

In tandem with the development of folklore performance theory which inspired other folklorists such as Toelken (1996) and Brunvand (1998) to adopt its hypotheses applying them to their own work, linguistic anthropology and socio-linguistics also became concerned with the ways in which language and culture coalesce and how language is situated within a context of culture (Basso 1984, 1996; Boas 1940; Gumperz and Hymes (eds.) 1972; Hoijer 1954; Hymes 1974). Socio-linguist Judith Irvine discovered that a cultural foundation of language, specifically oral discourse, exists within a framework of moral responsibility (1993). Ruth Finnegan’s *Literacy and Orality: studies in the Technology of Communication* (1988), delineates the
interconnectedness of literacy and orality as does that of Walter J. Ong (1982, 1999). Kathleen Warden Ferrara concentrated upon the dream and dream telling as a genre of active, expressive speech that is a “culturally bounded activity” (1994: 14).

All of the above mentioned scholars have contributed to my understandings of how language and culture come together in *Zanko, Chef Tribal*, including, for instance, how the simple act of telling a dream to someone may be a significant speech activity and Old Zanko attests to the importance of dreams (1959: 86), how ethical and moral issues are conveyed by Old Zanko’s oral narratives, how the act of reducing Old Zanko’s words to written (thereby static) form has particular consequences, how authority and power relations inhere in his narratives and explains both their transcendent power, and, paradoxically, suggests reasons that *Zanko, Chef Tribal* may have been devalued by the French academic community.

This dissertation was also particularly influenced by the philosophical “phenomenology” movement. Since the goal of every cultural anthropologist is to produce cultural description called ethnography, the phenomenological approach seems appropriate for the examination of *Zanko, Chef Tribal*, for as defined by Edmund Husserl (1954, 1970), phenomenology is “a method of description.” Husserl had come to this method of viewing and describing reality upon examining the practices of “empiricism, psychologism, and behaviorism” concluding that scientists were no less free of presuppositions and ethnocentric bias than the general public, therefore, presuppositions must be identified, questioned, and scrutinized along with the physical and mental phenomena under investigation. Phenomenology has been especially important to religious studies (Lienhardt 1961, 1964; Ortner 1989), to ethnomethodology (Garfinkel 1967), to postmodern deconstruction literary criticism (Derrida 1978; Said 1978; Spivak 1988), and to
“practice theory” in general (Bourdieu 1977; Ortner 1984), as well as to this dissertation, illuminating many narrative passages of Zanko, Chef Tribal.

Another classic of anthropology, *Rites of Passage*, written by Arnold van Gennep, proposed that certain kinds of ritual celebrate a change of social status. There are many instances of such “rites of passage” (1960) in Zanko, Chef Tribal.

A school of anthropology that particularly influences this study is the “symbolic” or “interpretative” approach to the study of culture (Mary Douglas 1966; Clifford Geertz 1986; Susan Greenwood 2004; and Victor and Edith Turner (1978). Symbolic anthropologists explore the meaning that people give to their world. They see culture as a system of symbols including public emblems, language, and actions that have meaning for the people who have created the symbolic system. Symbolic anthropologists combine the insights of psychologists, sociolinguists, and historians to analyze the “symbolic action” in which people engage within the context of a particular culture and a specific historical milieu. This approach to the analysis of ethnographic data is termed “semiotics” (Geertz 1973: 5).

Symbolic anthropologists are also interested in the individual actor’s perspectives of what constitutes culture perceiving that individuals interact with one another to actively negotiate and mutually construct meaning embodying it by means of discourse and action. Inner life is conveyed to others by outward expressions of culture (public emblems, language, and action) (Geertz 1986: 373).

Symbolic anthropologist Mary Douglas (1966) has been particularly important for the analysis of concepts of spiritual purity and gender among the Chalderash, Manush, Roma and other Gypsy lineages, not only for this researcher but for many scholars interested in Gypsies (e.g., Miller 1994; McOwen 1994; Sutherland 1986; Sway 1988). Giving credence to Émile
Durkheim’s idea that religion mirrors society (1915), Douglas realized that notions of ritual purity map a society’s ethical and spiritual values onto the human body (1966).

At least two of Old Zanko’s folktales graft Chalderash rules of ritual purity onto familiar European mythic lore. In one story, a woman is punished severely for the sin of not having adhered to an ethical code of Chalderash motherhood after attending Easter Mass (Old Zanko 1959: 110-114). The Mystery of the Divine Child and His Star is the story of the birth of a divine child who is so beautiful that he causes a woman to violate rules of ritual purity regarding childbirth. The woman’s punishment for this sin is to have her hands cut off (ibid: 95-109). In respect to these two tales and others, the symbolic approach to the study of religion has been especially apt for examining the symbolic import of Zanko, Chef Tribal and for analysis of its cultural meaning.

A feature of symbolic, interpretative anthropology is that it allies itself with socio-linguistics and literary criticism following Edward Sapir (1921) who defined language as a symbolic system that conveys meaning. This understanding led Geertz to regard language as a “vehicle of culture” that creates “texts” whether of an oral or a literary character. Thus Geertz believed that culture can be “read as a text” that connotes meaning (1973). This perspective also overlaps with postmodern literary deconstruction theory which also regards culture as “text” comprised of competing discourses and actions requiring close examination (as discussed earlier in this introduction).

So as to familiarize myself with the symbolic content of Old Zanko’s mythic and folkloric narratives, as well as to differentiate classical mythological themes from those mythological themes that are specifically Chalderash in Zanko, Chef Tribal, analysis also necessitated a general study of mythology. Besides reading classics such as Aesop’s Fables

It also became essential to consult classic fairy-tales (the Brothers Grimm 2003; Lang 1889; Perrault 1697, 1964, 1989) because Zanko, *Chef Tribal* features the genre of the “fairy-tale” with its animist and magical belief system. And although I do not agree with child-psychologist Bruno Bettelheim’s formulation of the fairy-tale as an art form created primarily to appeal to the animist and magical worldview of children, or that animism and magical beliefs are childish, Bettelheim’s Freudian analysis of the fairy-tale reveals how the fairy-tale and its symbolic content are psychologically potent (Bettelheim 1977). Furthermore, fairy-tales may convey ethnographic data (Tatar 1987, 1991; Weber 1991; Zipes 1988, 2007) as well as assist one to resolve moral and ethical dilemma.

To summarize, the methodologies and theories which help to analyze Zanko, *Chef Tribal*, are historical research, Antonio Gramsci’s concept of “hegemony” which inspired anthropologists to formulate “practice theory,” Said’s study of “the Other,” Anderson’s insights into the ideology and rhetoric of nationalism, the focus upon power relations in human societies, the phenomenological, psychological, and symbolic anthropological approaches to the study of culture, folklore theory, socio-linguistic theory, literary criticism and the study of mythology. It
is notable and it testifies to the complexity and depth of the cultural knowledge represented by
Zanko, Chef Tribal that so many levels of analysis were necessary for realization of its import.
CHAPTER II RACE, POWER, LANGUAGE, AND AUTHORITY

The Chalderash, Social Darwinism, and Eugenics: Prelude to Persecution

Cultural anthropologists in the United States today are much concerned with the marginalization and the subordination of certain minority populations throughout the world. This marginalization and subordination is affected by political discourse and action that targets such groups for stigmatization (Goffman 1963: 6-7; Williams 1989; Balibar 1991, 1994). As a consciously enacted “technology of power” (Foucault 1977), stigmatization promotes a certain vision of “the nation” (Anderson 1991; Williams 1989; Balibar 1991, 1994) in exclusionary terms by contrasting a superior and desirable “us” with an inferior and undesirable “them,” or “other,” as Edward Said proposed (1978). In Europe, the Gypsies have been victims of such stigmatization and marginalization since medieval times (Crowe 1995; Hancock 1987). When Zanko, Chef Tribal was published in 1959, Old Zanko’s community had only recently sustained such stigmatization which led to their persecution and death at the hands of nazi German occupational forces and its Vichy collaborators (Auzias 1999; Filhol 2001; Pernot, Asséo, and Hubert 2001; Sigot 1994).

Since the end of World War II, thousands of books have been published that speculate as to how the nazis and their sympathizers came to rationalize the murder of millions of Jewish and Gypsy men, women, and children in the name of nation building. A common theme runs through them all, the doctrine of the superiority of one “race” or of one “ethnic group,” (variously described as “Caucasian” or “Aryan”), and of the inferiority, and “subhuman” status of certain others (the “Negroid”), and “Mongolian races” to which Jews and the majority of Gypsies were supposed to have belonged. The cause of such thinking may be attributed to the influence of

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5 Throughout this study I put the term “race” in quotes because it is a socially constructed category not a scientifically valid way of understanding human diversity.
Social Darwinism, more extreme forms of social evolutionism, and its offshoot, the eugenics movement a central theme of which were “racial origins” and “social evolution” (Black 1988; Gordon 1988; Kevles 1995; Mazumdar 1992; McKie 1988; Ordover 2003; Selden 1999; Spencer 1860; Wolin 2004). Social evolutionism was the pseudo-scientific basis for racial theory, while eugenicists proposed programs of social action for “race betterment” (Galton 1883) that included the sterilization of the “socially unfit,” and even their “elimination” (ibid; and Black 2003).

It is not in the scope of this paper to describe the entire historical and philosophical roots of social evolutionism and its offshoot, eugenics theory. However, because social evolutionism is a discernible subtext of Bernard’s commentaries in Zanko, Chef Tribal, and because the Gypsies of France (including the Zanko family) had narrowly escaped the active eugenicist “final solution” of the nazis, and because social evolutionism continues as a respected although often unacknowledged basis of not only radical right-wing politics in postwar France but also amongst certain academic and political circles in contemporary France, and finally because the ideology of social evolutionism and eugenics is creeping back into academia both in the United States and abroad in the guise of DNA research into “origins” (Gordon 1988; Kevles 1995; Lynn 2001; Mazumdar 1992; McKie 1988), a brief explanation follows of Social Darwinism and its development as social evolutionism into eugenics, especially in terms of how the exoticization and romanticization of an “alien other” leads to stigmatization, discrimination, and persecution (Said 1978). Zanko, Chef Tribal, and other postwar documents will then be examined for tell-tale terminology that serves to “signal” (Leach 1976) an adherence to social evolutionism and eugenics ideology.

Social Darwinists (Spencer 1860; Morgan 1877, 1985; Tylor 1871) erroneously applied Darwin’s theory of biological evolutionary change over time to non-corporeal constructions of
the human imagination (Berger and Luckmann 1966) such as culture, religion and society. Imagining society to be a “social organism” (even though it is not an organism but a concept), Spencer then applied Darwin’s biological evolutionary theory to society proposing that humanity and society “evolve” in a unilineal trajectory of “progress” from the “primitive” to the “advanced,” from a “lower” state of culture to a “higher” state of culture (1860).

According to this line of reasoning, because individuals comprise a society, it follows that individuals whose life-style exemplifies the less advanced hence “primitive” society are inevitably “less evolved,” “ignorant,” and have a “childish” and “irrational” understanding of reality compared to the “more evolved,” “advanced,” and “progressive” individuals who are educated Caucasian (white) populations having a mature and rational connection to reality. Persons, “nations,” ethnicities, societies, and “races” were then ranked according to this model of evolutionary progress or stasis.

British born Herbert Spencer first coined the phrase, “survival of the fittest” (1850), and he thought that the “fittest” humans (Caucasian and white) would therefore create a “more perfect” society. Poverty and ignorance were proof that one’s inherited nature was inferior and that one was “less fit” to survive than the wealthy, powerful, and educated. Furthermore, Spencer believed that the “unfit” would “naturally” become more poor, less educated, and less fit over time, and eventually “die off.” He thought too that “it is best they should die --- all imperfections must disappear,” thus he was suspicious of social programs that assisted the poor to overcome poverty, of health care which would allow the “less fit” to survive, and of education for lower “life forms.” This was Spencer’s vision of “progress” (Spencer 1860; Black 2003: 58-60, 289-290, 339-340). One may see incipient nazi superman ideology in Spencer.
The American, Lewis Henry Morgan, too believed that humans and society “progress,” but he described this progress as “universal stages,” “advancing” from “savagery,” to “barbarism,” to “civilization” of which Western European civilization was “the most advanced” (1877).

It is notable for the study of religion that the British scholar, Sir Edward Tylor (1871) adopted the language of Social Darwinism with its hierarchies of difference to describe religion, perceiving a unilineal trajectory of evolutionary development from “animism” to “polytheism,” to the “highest” form of religion, “monotheism” (Tylor 1871). He believed that animist religions throughout the world were, therefore, “survivals” from the “primitive past” (ibid). Such religious systems were then fated to eventual “extinction.”

Social Darwinism served to justify inequalities of social life and the dominance of one group over that of another. We can see this Western ethnocentric claim to cultural and racial superiority at work in Western Europe’s political dominance of the colonial world especially in colonial attitudes to indigenous populations of Africa, Asia, the Middle East, and the Americas who were looked upon as social and political inferiors to be used and abused at will (Enloe 2000; Fanon 1963; Said 1978; Wolf 1982).

However, the Social Darwinists themselves were mainly theoreticians enamored with Darwin’s synthesis of biology, botany, and what was then known of the archaeological record in order to explain physical variation among species. This enthusiasm caused Social Darwinists to adopt its tenets so as to explain social phenomena that were not corporeal entities. However, being “suspicious” of social programs to help the “less fit” because they should be left to die a “natural death,” is a long way from actually committing acts of genocide. A far more sinister outgrowth of Social Darwinism was the social evolutionism of the eugenics movement in Europe
and the Americas, and it was a first step in the direction of genocide for it presumed the political right to exert power over human bodies (Foucault 1975, 1977) advocating sterilization of the “racially inferior” and other “feeble-minded and unfit” persons. Carried to the extreme as in the case of nazi Germany, social evolutionism and eugenics also allowed for the “elimination” of “undesirable” populations.

But it was not only a matter of one’s “race” that concerned eugenicists. A refinement of eugenics was to define crime as inherited from one’s family, not by means of enculturation but due to biology, inherited traits, therefore certain families, “nations,” and ethnic groups could be viewed as “inbred criminal degenerates.” For example, the British, adhering to the social evolutionism of the day, stigmatized the non-Hindu indigenous Dravidian peoples of India as “the criminal tribes” (Kosambi 1965: 15), and like the perennial accusation against Gypsies, these so-called “criminal tribes” of India were characterized as being “beggars” and “thieves” (ibid).

As late as 1975 anthropologist Rena Cotten-Gropper proposes in the first few pages of her book (Gypsies in the City 1975) that Chalderash of New York are descendants of these “criminal tribes” (so-called by British colonial authorities). She also refers to her Chalderash consultants of New York as “pariah peoples” who supposedly had left India for the West during some hypothesized remote age of antiquity. The Indic theory of Gypsy origin is the most prevalent theory today although there are many problems with this theory, and there is anomalous data that refutes it. However, it is politically necessary to promote the idea of Gypsies as a “foreign element” coming from elsewhere and as being inherently and hereditarily “inferior” in order to justify discrimination such as the violation of their civil rights.
The founder of the eugenics movement was British intellectual Sir Francis Galton, a relative of Charles Darwin who coined the term “eugenics” for his “race betterment” programs (1883). The eugenics movement became entirely influential in all of the professions and academic disciplines (e.g. social work, medicine, education, psychology, urban development) in the United States and Europe. In fact, the eugenics movement became so widespread in the United States that many respected social institutions endorsed its protocols including. The US Department of Agriculture, Harvard University, Princeton University, Yale University, Stanford University, The American Medical Association, and the United States Department of State to name but a few (Black 2003), thus eugenics ideology became active state and federal policy. One result was that by 1940 more than 34,878 men and women had been either castrated or sterilized in the United States (Black 2003; Kevles 1995; Selden 1999; Wolin 2004).

Eugenics ideology practiced in both Britain and the United States then spread to continental Europe and became the nazi justification for committing genocide. In France and elsewhere, “Social Darwinism” (Nolte 1969: 51) was championed by many so-called “conservative” organizations having radical agenda for social change. In France, the most infamous of “conservative” right-wing political organizations was Action Française, a movement of the extreme Right that produced arguably the most influential fascist-like daily newspaper from its first publication in 1908 until 1944. Action Française was nationalistic and yet at the same time promoted the ideology of a Germanic (Aryan) “master race” (the French being depicted as of “Teutonic” extraction) and advocated the social engineering of eugenics. Action Française also incited violence against Jews and Gypsies as racial inferiors. It also condoned violence against Liberals who insisted upon the pre-eminence of democratic principles and individual civil rights (Nolte 1969: 51-189). It is the use of violence in all the fascist
movements throughout Europe which is the most striking historical development of the age characterized by street violence and the formation of right-wing vigilante groups and paramilitary organizations that terrorized governments and civilian populations.

In France, a famous case illustrates the murderous intent and ideology of the Action Française movement which occurred years before either World War I or II and which resembles the tactics and ideology of the Hitler youth movement with its call for physical violence against all opponents. Indeed, one branch of the Action Française was paramilitary. Because the young men who created this branch of Action Française were pro-Catholic royalists who advocated a return to monarchy with its privileges of “race and class” one may even say caste, they called themselves _Les Camelots du Roi_ (Nolte 1969: 128-130). As early as 1908 their actions resemble that of Hitler’s Storm Troopers who were also vociferously anti-intellectual, anti-Liberal, anti-Semitic, in other ways racist, and against all principles of the Enlightenment, especially the democratic principle of the rights of the individual.

One of the first victims of Camelot du Roi violence was a professor Thalamas lecturing at the Sorbonne (Nolte 1969: 100-102). Apparently he was anti-clerical as were most proponents of Enlightenment science for it was not until the separation of Church and State that science liberated itself from metaphysical considerations so that observation and empiricism could operate unfettered by Church dogma (Behrens 1974; Fellows and Torrey 1971; West 1966). In the winter of 1908, Action Française accused Thalamas of insulting Ste. Joan of Arc, and the Camelot du Roi led by Maurice Pujo, resolved to act upon the matter. Thalamas first lecture was disrupted by shouts of derision from Camelot vigilantes in the audience followed by objects thrown at the rostrum. Finally, one of its members slapped Thalamas in the face. A brawl ensued
that caused the university to engage police protection but outside the auditorium paramilitary action continued which included military style marching and street fighting (Nolte 1969: 101).

One day before the end of the course, despite police cordons, the Camelots succeeded in entering the auditorium and beat Thalamas severely (Nolte 1969: 101). The fact that they were able to circumvent the police presence suggests to this researcher that the police were perhaps quite in sympathy with this paramilitary youth group and they had allowed the Camelots vigilantes to infiltrate the hall. The possible collusion of the police also may signify that Action Française ideology and violence were not solely condoned by an extreme right-wing fringe but also by conservative mainstream majority French and such events prepared the way for Vichy collaboration with Germany.

Old Zanko lived in France during these horrendous ideological and political developments that targeted certain racial and ethnic “others” as the quintessential “enemy” of the socially constructed “nation.” Social evolutionism and eugenics as “sciences” served to justify slavery in the form of forced labor in concentration camps and genocide. The right-wing proponents of these “social programs” relied heavily upon social evolutionism and eugenicist principles before and during World War II. Old Zanko and his entire family were placed in a concentration camp in Montauban due to these pseudo-sciences, and, because they happened to be born into Gypsy families, they were declared to be enemies of the State. For some reason, they were let go in 1943. It is the opinion of Gilles Eynard and Michel Zanko that the family was released because Old Zanko became a citizen of France and went through a French civil marriage to his Gypsy wife of many years who was a French citizen. This enabled the family to rent a small house thus becoming “sedentary” and thus becoming eligible for release (Michel Zanko and Gilles Eynard Communication 9/3/2010).
It occurs to this researcher that there must have been more to the release of the family than what the ostensible facts convey. To become thus eligible for release from a concentration camp was by no means a common occurrence. Thousands of Gypsy families were not allowed this option whether immigrant to France or citizen. The question then arises, what then is the reason? Paradoxically, it may have been social evolutionism that allowed the Chalderash to be deemed “Aryan,” and thus subject to release. Indeed this theme of Chalderash “Aryanism” becomes a subtext of Zanko, Chef Tribal (see pp. 60-62, this thesis).
The Politics of Language and the Gypsies

Digression into the ideology of the Action Française and historical events show how the anti-democratic, pro-fascist forces were legitimated by social evolutionism and eugenics theories that targeted the Jews and Gypsies as “undesirable racial types” (as well as Liberal and Communist professors) for punitive actions (including physical violence and murder) before and during the nazi occupation of France. One very important way in which this was accomplished was through the use of language for a branch of Action Française was its daily newspaper (called by the same name) that directly influenced how Jews and Gypsies, Liberals and Communists were regarded by majority French society illustrating how language and power are connected. The insights of socio-linguist theorists have been invaluable in the elucidation of this process.

Certain classic sociological studies led to socio-linguistic theories of the politics of language. Georg Simmel (1950, 1900) viewed society as created by the interaction of individuals with one another, and he was one of the first social scientists to view society not as a corporeal “organism” but rather as an abstraction formed of interaction of individuals with one another. This insight led to the development of interaction theory and “ethno-methodology.” Ethno-methodology explores specifically how individual actors use language to formulate and uphold a certain perception of reality (Garfinkel 1967).

Karl Marx (1887, 1972) and Marx and Engels (1888, 1947) too had focused attention upon how language as ideology conveys meaning which serves to preserve the power of political elites. This perception has influenced many scholars of power relations. The Marxist school of thought about language in turn inspired French sociologists to also examine how language creates ideology. Michel Foucault is especially known for his description of the role of language in the maintenance of power advocating a close examination of political content in State
propaganda, various media presentations, and ideological rhetoric for an understanding as to how language creates reality and maintains power (Foucault 1970, 1972, 1977, 1980).

Anthropologists who interested themselves in language such as Franz Boas (1940) Keith Basso (1990, 1996) and Judith Irvine (1993) as well as socio-linguists such as Basil Bernstein (1971), Kathleen W. Ferrara (1994), Ruth Finnegam (1988), John Gumperz (1972), Harry Hoijer (1954), and Del Hymes (1974) noticed dynamics, that is, movement back and forth between culture and language. In other words, culture and language influence one another. This realization led many intellectuals to take note of power relations as something expressed by language (Bernstein 1971; Derrida 1978; Goffman 1963, 1973).

Although not a socio-linguist but a theorist of literary criticism in the context of English usage, Edward Said’s influential work “Orientalism” (1978) illustrates how language that may “exoticize,” and “romanticize” a targeted group creates an “alien other” (ibid: 3), a strategy used by elites to dominate and subordinate certain populations (ibid: 5). Said also realized that this method of human distancing serves to define ethnic and other sorts of identity by contrasting the dominant group with this “alien other” (ibid: 3) evident within the context of colonial relations between Western Europe and the Middle East. Building upon Antonio Gramsci’s (1971) formulation of “hegemony” as a “relationship of power,” and “of domination,” Said connects the propagation of hegemony to the “discourse” and the “vocabulary” of “Orientalism” in the maintenance of power relations (1978: 5). His work may be extended to include the Gypsies of France for the same process is at work within the very pages of Zanko, Chef Tribal.

Therefore, an examination is in order of the vocabulary and language usage of social evolutionism, eugenics theory, the nazi propaganda machine, and colonialism. All were masters at the manipulation of language to demean, dehumanize, and marginalize a population by
promoting a certain view of reality, and a certain view of ethnicity, “race” and “nationhood,”
borrowing from one another in “the enormously systematic discipline by which European culture
was able to manage, and even produce reality” (Said 1978: 3). In Said’s case, it was the Muslim
peoples of the “Orient” (the Middle East) who were targeted in this way. In this ethnography, the
Gypsies may be viewed as the “Oriental other” of France for a host of reasons including the most
popular theory of Gypsy origin as being India. Most important is the recognition of the particular
discourse of power which creates a “Gypsy other,” “politically, sociologically, militarily,
ideologically, scientifically, and imaginatively” (Said 1978: 3) which is borrowed from the
discourses and vocabulary of social evolutionism and eugenics which also informed colonial
practice as well as nazi racial theory and practice.

In the language of social evolutionism, eugenics, and racial theory, Jews and Gypsies and
the “criminal element” are “parasites” that “live off society,” “the body politic,” thereby by
means of language equating human beings with lice and other parasitical life-forms, advocating
the “extermination” of this “undesirable element.” Particularly usage of the words, parasites and
exterminate, are a case in point. Once used only to describe the eradication of cockroaches and
other noxious creatures, “exterminate” became the nazi term of preference for genocide, that is,
the murder of men, women, and children to completely annihilate an entire population (Kogon
1949; Mosse 1978; Lewy 2000). It is to the shame of the academic community both in the United
States and abroad that so many scholars continue to use this term “exterminate” exactly as did
the nazis, unreflectively, with little concern for the semiotic implications. In the opinion of this
researcher the use of this term applied to human beings is an inappropriate use of language that
has made its insidious way into common language usage.
Another eugenics and nazi way of speaking about their “racial enemies,” was to label the targeted group of “undesirables” as “a problem,” and “a question” (as to what to do about them), thus they referred to the “Gypsy problem,” and the “Gypsy question” for which there “must be a final solution” thus creating code terminology for genocide. When people continue to talk about the “Gypsy problem,” “the Gypsy question” or “the Jewish problem” etc., they use nazi ways of talking about minority peoples who were considered by nazis and eugenicists to be “subhuman.” This term “subhuman” implies that these people are not quite human which justified their murder.

Eugenicists were much concerned with the hereditary propagation of “low intelligence.” In fact, the ubiquitous I. Q. Tests still used in educational settings to gauge intelligence “levels” was first devised by eugenicists to gauge whether or not to castrate or sterilize a person. Eugenicists therefore speak of “cognitive deficits,” “cognitive handicaps,” “feeble-mindedness,” and “backwardness” as caused by inherited traits (Black 2003; Lynn 2001). But not only low intelligence, that is, “less of a mental capacity” is perpetuated hereditarily according to eugenics. “Immorality,” “crime,” “psychological and social deviance,” as well as “illiteracy” is determined by hereditary (Black 2003; Ordover 2003). Thus the nazis called for killing the mentally retarded, the mentally disturbed, and the sterilization of convicted criminals (ibid).

The representation of the “racial enemy” as a carrier of “hereditary disease” was also a prominent strategy of eugenicist and nazi. Thus they use the language of pathology to describe human failings of all sorts. Indeed, they carefully formulated a connection between “parasite” populations that “breed in filth like lice” as carriers of both hereditary and bacterial disease. People were not seen as diseased, but rather regarded as the disease itself (Black 2003; Gordon 1988; Kevles 1995; Mazumdar 1992; Wolin 2004), justifying the isolation of such populations in
concentration camps so that “the human disease” would not spread. This way of talking about certain ethnic groups continued even after World War II and the revelations of the Holocaust. Nazi ways of speaking about targeted “racial” and ethnic groups continued in 1959 when Zanko, Chef Tribal was published. Although the more obnoxious nazi terminology is missing from Bernard’s commentaries there yet remain many of the assumptions of social evolutionism. In the present, certain negative and racist assumptions of social evolutionism continue to inform academic writing about Gypsies.

One notable example is Svinia in Black and White: Slovak Roma and Their Neighbors (2005) by Canadian (?) anthropologist David Z. Scheffel, who uses nazi terms and makes the same nazi assertions. I write at length about his book in order to exemplify, within a specific context, how nazi and eugenicist discourse and vocabulary create negative images of Gypsies today, and not only during the Holocaust. So too I wish to demonstrate that becoming an anthropologist is no proof against either ethnocentrism or racism.

Just as do eugenicist and nazi ideologues, Scheffel speaks of the “backwardness,” and of “the degeneracy of the gypsy [sic] lifestyle,” He claims that Gypsies have a “cognitive deficit,” and “cognitive handicaps,” baldly stating that “gypsies could not pick up simple vocabulary… unlike village whites” (Scheffel 2005: 102-105). He mentions Gypsy children’s “criminal inclinations,” (ibid: 186, 187), refers to “the gypsy question” (ibid: 187) and “the gypsy mentality” (ibid: 189) with no reflection upon the history of such expressions as applied to Jews and Gypsies during the Holocaust. The very fact that he does not capitalize the word Gypsy is also symptomatic of his general lack of respect for the people themselves.

Scheffel also informs us that one of the complaints of a village council against its Roma community was that “they refused to report for sterilization” (ibid: 192) with no comment and
with no examination of the social and political implications of forced sterilization as though the Slovak State should have the right to sterilize Gypsy women. His silence on the matter speaks volumes for his own lack of sensitivity to the civil rights of the Slovak Republic’s Romani women citizens. Scheffel then writes: “Although the mayor elect and her council professed a desire to ‘do something’ about the evidently subhuman [sic] conditions prevailing in the Roma ghetto…” (ibid: 200). No matter what disingenuous lament about Romani suffering follows, nothing can change the fact that the term “subhuman” here is particularly odious when applied to a Romani community for there is a history of its use justifying their murder. Nazis referred to Jews and Gypsies as “subhuman,” that is, not quite human. Scheffel and/or his editors should have used the term “inhuman conditions” which would be a more appropriate use of the English language.

This is one example of the gross, unconscionable ethnocentricity of one so-called “anthropologist,” but there are many such instances in academic writing today proof that the assumptions and ideology of social evolutionism and eugenics theory have not gone away or disappeared and such terminology continues to marginalize the Roma and subject many of them to discrimination and low socio-economic status in Europe. All these considerations will now be brought to bear upon the text, Zanko, Chef Tribal itself, and also upon certain of the related documents.
**Zanko, Chef Tribal and Ways of Speaking about Gypsies**

The *Foreword of Zanko, Chef Tribal* (1959: 7) begins with a formulary chant in Romani having French text beneath it:

Ame sa le rom la lumeake.
Nous sommes nous autres dans le monde le people des Rom (des premiers hommes).
We are, we others in the world, the people of the Rom (the first men).

Ame sa le marturea la lumeake.
Nous sommes, dans le monde, les témoins.
We are in the world witnesses.

Ame sa le marturea so amare pure sarke sas e lumea e Romaie.
Nous sommes les témoins de ce que nos anciens nous ont dit sur ce qu’était le monde des Rom (le premier monde).
We are the witnesses of that which our elders have told us about the world of the Rom (the first world).

Ame sa le marturea so amare pure sarkai avileai e lume jakana.
Nous sommes les témoins de ce que nos anciens nous ont dit sur le devenir du monde jusqu’à nos jours.
We are witnesses to that which our elders told us about what became of the world until our day.

From the first two lines of this ritualistic Romani oral composition one gathers that the Chalderash see themselves as witnesses, and as somehow apart and different from other people (“nous sommes, *nous autres* [my emphasis] dans le monde”). The third sentence elaborates on the first two in that the Chalderash are represented as witnesses to that which their elders have told them about the world of the Rom. The last sentence carries the idea still further in that they pronounce themselves to be witnesses to the creation and the history of the world. Or, more literally, “what became of the world until our day,” connecting the past with the present (1959: 7).

But there is a problem with this French translation of the Romani. In the very first line the qualification, “we others” is not actually there. A literal translation is simply “We are in the world the people of the Rom.” Already at the start Bernard interposes his own point of view that Gypsies are “others,” (literally), and by implication, not “us” (French, Europeans) with the result that non-Chalderash readers are placed at a distance from the Chalderash. By this term “others,”
the Chalderash immediately become marginalized as somehow outside of French society and not a part of it. They are “exoticized” and made to seem the “alien other,” as Edward Said would say (1978).

Anna Lowenhaupt-Tsing, an anthropologist whose ethnography (1993) about marginality will be mentioned herein frequently, asks a salient question and answers it: “How do people become aware that they are strangers in their own lands? Someone must make them so” (ibid: 154). Bernard does exactly this for his discourses in Zanko, Chef Tribal construct Gypsies in general and the Chalderash in particular as strangers to France.

In the second line of the Romani chant appears a phrase, “(the first men)” which is equally problematic in that it does not appear in the Romani either, but also in that it directs our attention to remote antiquity rather than focusing upon the Chalderash narrator Old Zanko and the Chalderash people who recite this oral affirmation of ethnic identity in 1959. Furthermore, the phrase (that does not exist in the Romani sentence either) “the first men,” is suggestive of a “primitive” past which also distances Gypsies from other Europeans in terms of time.

In the third line there are also words that do not appear in the Romani: “(the first world)”. Later in the text, the ways in which the Chalderash divide time and space into two worlds is explicated by Old Zanko as he recounts the oral history of his people. But the phrase, “the first world,” placed here, at the very beginning of Zanko, Chef Tribal without an explanatory context, has the tendency to mystify and render obscure Old Zanko’s forthright Romani. Again the non-Gypsy reader is distanced from the Chalderash narrator and the Gypsies in general with words that in this instance do not actually exist in the Romani phrase. Moreover, these intrusions deflect attention from the very interesting Chalderash people’s self-ascription as “witnesses” to world history as well as to current events.
In the Romani language, words often have more than one connotation (as they do in all languages), and Gilles Eynard relates another connotation of the word “marturea” which neither Bernard nor Father Chatard mention. Besides meaning a “witness” the word also can mean “martyr,” and indeed the Roma who died in French and nazi concentration camps were witnesses and martyrs to nazi genocide (Communication with Gilles Eynard 3/13/2010).

The Roma’s perception of themselves as being witnesses and martyrs is rather striking because it is evocative of a legalistic ethos as well as of martyrdom. The cursory French translation of the Romani does not do justice to the cultural depth of the word “marturea” nor to this formulaic verse, but equally troubling is the intrusion of qualifiers into the Romani of Old Zanko where none exist. There seem to be both literary omissions and intrusions the effect of which is to alienate the Chalderash from French society at large.

Immediately after this Romani preamble, Bernard plunges into the following introductory statement:

The entire Gypsy adventure is held in these words. It is the great adventure of a wandering people who cross millennia without haste, the crumbling civilizations one after another. As a stream that flows from its source, the voice of the Gypsies streams through time and speaks to us of the world at its inception. For one day is as a thousand years in the fabulous memory of the wanderers. But does time exist for them? Such is the paradox. The nomad’s mobility maintains its civilization in absolute immobility. It is contemporaneous with each century, contemporaneous with civilization’s origins.

(Toute l’aventure tsigane tient dans ces mots. La grande aventure d’un people errant qui traverse sans se hâter les millénaire, les civilisations l’une après l’autre croulantes! Comme une fleuve qui remonte vers sa source, la voir des Tsiganes remonte les temps et nous parle du monde des origines. Car un jour est comme mille ans dans le mémoire fafuleuse des errants. Mais le temps, existe-t-il pour eux? Tel est ce paradoxe. La mobilité du nomade maintient sa civilisation dans une immobilité absolue. Il est contemporain de chaque siècle, contemporain des origines) (Bernard in Zanko 1959: 9).

The above paragraph immediately captivates the reader with a dramatic promise of “adventure.” Its natural imagery of streams and its evocation of “crumbling civilizations” are poetic and romantic. However, this statement is neither simply a literary device meant to arrest the attention of the reader, nor is it politically neutral and a reflection of reality. Rather, as a literary device it is to a political purpose in that it creates “ways of looking at Roma” (Guy 1998;
Willems and Lucassen 1998) that begins the process of marginalization from majority French. For this reason, it bears further study.

If it is true that subordinate populations have “hidden transcripts” of resistance to hegemonic power then it is equally true that dominant populations have “public transcripts of power” which disguise and obfuscate meaning and intent (e.g., propaganda) as James C. Scott maintains (1985, 1990). These transcripts buttress and augment a particular social order (as also Foucault and Said have abundantly illustrated). These transcripts of power are often presented in the guise of romanticism and the exotic which is difficult to fault because such transcripts of power are not overtly negative. What is remarkable is the similarity of transcripts of power which are applied to the many and diverse “subaltern” (Spivak 1988) populations by dominant majorities and elites of the various politically organized States.

Ethnographer Anna Lowenhaupt-Tsing’s treatise, In the Realm of the Diamond Queen: Marginality in an Out-of-the-Way Place (1993) is not about Gypsies, nor is it about urban populations. Tsing examines discourses of the majority populace, the State, and the media that marginalize the Tasaday of the Phillipines, the Penan of Borneo, Malaysia, and the Dayak Meratus of Indonesian Borneo. These discourses of power are nearly identical to Michel Bernard’s discourses about the Gypsy communities of France, although the Tasaday, Penan, and Dayak Meratus are thousands of miles away from the Gypsy communities of France in terms of geographical distance as well as in terms of cultural singularity.

For instance, Malaysian State discourses and Malaysian media discourses, in concert, depict the Penan as “encapsulated in their own timeless, archaic world” (Lowenhaupt-Tsing 1993: x). Tsing reasoned that the media represent Penan in this way specifically to invoke “the abyss between the primitive and the modern world” (ibid), and as a ploy to entertain its public,
but also to uphold the power of the State. This differentiation of a “them,” as representing an excluded “primitive,” “dying,” “threatened,” and “uncivilized” way of life, from an “us” of a dynamic and ever-changing urban “civilization” (the modern State) was also a tool of identity politics. The majority populace and the State affirmed its own identity by contrasting itself with an alien other for purposes of “nation-building” (ibid).

Bernard uses the same romantic and exoticizing strategy in his portrayal of the “adventure” of a “wandering” people who “cross the millennium without haste, the crumbling civilizations one after another” as “a stream that flows from its source” a hypothetical, omniscient “voice” of the Gypsies “speaks to us of the beginning of the world, for one day is as a thousand in the fabulous memory of the wanderers.”

This description of the Gypsies as nomads immediately implies the existence of a sedentary population to which the Gypsies do not belong. Bernard suggests that not only do the Gypsies wander through the geographical landscape, but they wander through spans of time wherein the rise and fall of various civilizations occurred, civilizations to which (also by implication) the Gypsies do not belong. The slow moving Gypsies are (again by implication) a contrast to the hurrying, bustling, urban and modern populaces to whom they do not belong. And like all “primitives,” the Gypsy mentality does not permit them to differentiate the past from the present “for one day is as a thousand in the fabulous memory of the wanderers.”

Bernard then asks a rhetorical question, “But does time exist for them?” The answer is no, that “a paradox” exists wherein “the mobility” of the Gypsy “nomad and his civilization remains in complete immobility.” In other words, Gypsy culture is imagined as belonging to a static, archaic, and dying world that is characteristic of a primitive past, not the world of the
modern reader. Interestingly this last feature -- nomadic mobility that is supposed to result in static culture -- was also attributed to the Dayak Meratus of Borneo.

The Dayak Merautus were shifting cultivators as well as hunters and gatherers who had to “travel” in order to look after their widely distanced fields as well as to sell the products of their horticultural and hunting-gathering forest expeditions. And although the Sarawak forests were the site of Dayak Meratus’ dwellings, the Indonesian media portrayed them as “nomads” without permanent abode (Lowenhaupt-Tsing 1993: 45-48, 150, 154-55, 164, 176-77).

This is also the way Gypsies are erroneously portrayed as nomadic when often they are not. Lowenhaupt-Tsing comments that portrayals of Dayak Meratus as “stuck in a timeless, archaic condition outside of modern history,” is “part of the same official framework” which makes an issue of “Meratus mobility across the landscape” (Lowenhaupt-Tsing 1993: 41). The representation of Meratus as “contemporaneous” with an “archaic” world is exactly how Bernard refers to Gypsy “civilization” as “contemporaneous with each century, contemporaneous with civilization’s origins” (Bernard in Zanko 1959: 9). Three themes then are common to stereotypes of both Gypsies and Meratus: that they are homeless nomads, they are “outside” of modern history, and they are contemporaneous with an archaic world.

In referring to the Penan, Dayak Meratus, and others, Lowenhaupt-Tsing comments that “they are neither mine nor anybody’s ‘contemporary ancestors.’” Indeed, “they share with anyone who might read this book a world of expanding capitalisms, ever militarizing nation-states, and contested cultural politics” (Lowenhaupt-Tsing 1993: xi). The same may be said of the Gypsies who are not usually the inhabitants of remote global regions but rather of major urban centers that generate the expanding capitalisms of so-called “nation-states”6 amidst

6 Here I speak of “so-called ‘nation states’” because there is no such thing as a pure nation-state. In fact, there is not a country on earth that is or ever was comprised of one “nation” or ethnic group. National Socialism promulgated
contested cultural politics, therefore, Gypsies are anything but our contemporary ancestors as Bernard maintains. Furthermore, the Gypsies take part in contested cultural politics throughout the world and as citizens of particular countries.

In regard to marginalizing discourses, one may easily substitute Gypsies for Dayak Meratus of Lowenhaupt-Tsing’s book and lose nothing of its accuracy in terms of discourses that stigmatize even though the French Gypsies and the Dayak Meratus are so very different in a number of ways. For example, the Meratus lived in a remote region hundreds of miles away from Indonesian urban centers whereas the French Chalderash dwell in urban centers and make a living there. However, the Gypsies and Meratus are similar in that both ethnic groups have had to travel for business purposes traditionally (indeed like international businessmen and corporate executives since the inception of capitalism).

As international artisans, the Chalderash lineages had long standing as coppersmiths throughout Western Europe (e.g. France) and Eastern Europe as well as in the Americas. This way of making a living required travel to remote regions in order to acquire the raw materials for metalworking (lumber for making the charcoal to fuel the small portable forge characteristic of the Gypsy metalsmith, as well as for the metals with which to fabricate copper vessels etc). The enterprise of collecting scrap metals for the forging of new tools also sometimes required long distance travel. Chalderash often travelled in a circuit of urban centers so as to sell the products

this fiction. Belonging to the body politic in a modern State is based upon citizenship not “blood” for anyone may become a citizen whether one is born in a particular country or not, and no matter what ethnic background. Usually, a person simply legally petitions for citizenship, attends citizenship classes, and then makes a vow of allegiance to the particular country. A researcher needs only to examine census statistics for confirmation of this fact. As I have published elsewhere, “A brief on-line search of census statistics illustrates that whether Brazil, Britain, France, Japan, Russia, or the United States of America” (indeed in all the countries of earth) “the citizenry is comprised of many ‘nations’ indigenous as well as immigrant populations from all over the world, many of whom intermarry. As for Europe, present majority populations are descendants of barbarian invaders as well as of more recent immigrants. Human populations were never completely isolated from one another, and there is always gene flow between populations of Homo sapiens by means of immigration, trade, slavery and conquest, as DNA research indicates (Kottak 2005: 230-8, 324-34; 2008: 305-14).” Furthermore, “as Benedict Anderson noted in Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism (1991), the enterprise of ‘nation-building’ is a social construction of human concoction and intervention rather than a primordial and natural event.
of their labor and to repair the tools and metal vessels for this specialized clientele of urban dwellers, servicing the rural populations along the way. French Chalderash were also famous as boiler-makers and boiler-repairmen (Clèbert 1967: 134). Chalderash women and children accompanied the men for the entire family was involved in the metalsmithing process (ibid; Hübschmannová 1998: 233-267).

However, by the time of the publication of Zanko, Chef Tribal, this type of metalwork had become largely obsolete because of the enormous expansion (before and after the two world wars) of heavy industry and commodity manufacturing. Although a few itinerant Chalderash metalsmiths continued to ply their trade, many Chalderash began to adapt their business acumen to other economic activities (and this began well before the world wars). At this time, they moved into cities to rent apartments and housing thus a significant number of French Chalderash were sedentary, not “nomads” and “wanderers” as Bernard portrays them. This is not to say that the Gypsies were never nomadic or that some lineages were not nomadic in 1959. I only wish to point out that large numbers of Chalderash and other Gypsy lineages had become settled in France.

However, France is especially problematic when one attempts to write of sedentarism. Firstly, because of the fact that the “Gypsies in France remain largely unknown” (Filhol 2011). This is partly due to French constitutional laws that forbid the state to collect data concerning ethnicity. Another difficulty is that in France all Gypsies are automatically referred to as being “travelers” and “nomads” whether they are actually nomadic or not. For example, a recent article by French anthropologist, Orsetta Bechelloni, is a description of a group of French Yénishes (a Gypsy lineage) entitled Bargaining to win: feminine dealing with outsiders in a group of settled ‘voyageurs.’ Settled Voyagers is a complete contradiction of terms, the reason that the term,
voyageurs, is placed in quotes. But rather than referring to the group as sedentary in the article, Bechelloni continues to refer to them as “travelers” even though she says that “they gradually settled in Burgundy in the 1920s and 1930s” and that “after the Second World War they started building houses near a small town, and have specialized in the second-hand and antique furniture trade since the 1960s” (2006 December: 5: 16: 2: 169-170). Further in the article she tells us that “boys and girls get engaged when they are between 17 to 20; they then begin to travel in order to buy furniture, and in this way they earn the money necessary in order to build a house” and that “the children of rich families do not have to buy a house when they get married because their parents have already built one for them” (2006 December: 5: 16: 2: 172). This illustrates that French Yénishes Gypsies who “travel” for business, nevertheless own and dwell in houses just as do non-Yénishes French second-hand and antique furniture dealers.

In 1959 Bernard referred to the Gypsies as “wanderers.” However, Chalderash were never simply “wanderers,” which implies that they had no purpose or goal and that travel was simply an arbitrary choice of wandering here or there as the impulse arose. In much of the literature about Gypsies the “travelling’ of Roma is usually described as a love of travel for its own sake, but most importantly, biologically determined, and “in the blood” as noted by Willems and Lucassen (1998: 290-91). Nothing could have been farther from the truth. The Chalderash always had a specific geographic territory and circuit in which they travelled (just as do many nomadic groups of earth). They also avow identity as citizens with their respective countries. For example, the Gypsies of Poland often refer to themselves as “Polska Roma,” and the Roma of Detroit who are descendants of Gypsies from Hungary call themselves, “the Hungarian Gypsies” and “Hungarian Roma.” My elderly Chalderash consultant called himself a “Serbian Gypsy” because his forbears had come from the Serbian lands of Yugoslavia. I do not think this is any
different from most Americans who say “my family originally came from Poland, or Hungary, or Serbia, or Germany, or France, or Spain, or Italy, or Portugal, or Mexico, or Canada,” and all of these representatives of ethnic identity express nostalgia for an “Old Country” that represents a certain idealistic notion of a perfect place (Anderson 1991). The point I wish to make here is that Bernard ignores Chalderash attachment to place in the same way that the Indonesian government ignored Meratus attachment to place, especially attachment to their forest horticultural villages (Lowenhaupt-Tsing 1993 150-155, 176-177), and in the same way that some majority French intellectuals continue to ignore Gypsies as citizens with attachment to their country in the present.

In the case of Old Zanko, he was an immigrant to France in 1911 (Colinon 1959: 32). This means that in 1959 when *Zanko, Chef Tribal* was published he had lived in France for forty-eight years becoming a citizen in 1943 (Communication of Michel Zanko and Gilles Eynard 9/3/2010). Therefore, Old Zanko must have had some sort of “attachment to place,” or he would not have become a citizen of France.

In regard to Old Zanko’s abode, when Old Zanko was interviewed by Father Chatard, he had lived in a small house. Nevertheless, the cover of *Zanko, Chef Tribal* does not situate Old Zanko either inside or outside of a house. He sits in profile wearing a black fedora and the traditional white shirt, black vest, black pants affected by Chalderash men. Behind him, and lower on the page at approximately knee level to Old Zanko, as though they are sitting upon the ground, two Gypsy women look at one another across a samovar. They wear traditional earrings, head scarves, and patterned clothing. The green background of the cover combined with the lower placement of the women, suggests that they are all outdoors and sitting upon the grass, an exotic image of the nomadic, a life-style which leads one to live out of doors. The book’s cover
also is representative of a far-away place, thus of a culture not quite Western European which is symbolized by the Russian samovar. Consequently, Old Zanko, who acquired French citizenship in 1943, is viewed as being still Russian and not a citizen of France, as well as being a member of a strange and exotic people alien to the experience of the majority French. It is an inaccurate but useful representation of Gypsies that assures the maintenance of a certain status quo and which upholds the asymmetries of power relations in France. The cover itself is symbolic of Bernard’s discourses in *Zanko, Chef Tribal*.

As this writer reflected upon the benefits and pitfalls of romanticism in *Zanko, Chef Tribal*, the realization came that I would not like to see the romantic in us die. I also enjoy ways of life different from that of my own and “exotic” foods, styles of dress, customs and traditions unlike those with which I have grown up; they are “exotic” that is, to me. I would not have chosen cultural anthropology as a profession otherwise. The romantic is attracted to and fascinated by all the cultural variation of which the human mind is capable being open to it, at times even adopting elements of it into one’s own life. In this sense, for example, the hippie movement of the 1960s was basically a romantic movement.

Lowenhaupt-Tsing too was troubled by the loss of the romantic viewpoint for it is not threatened by difference. She concludes that romanticism is a “discourse of hope for many Europeans and North Americans,” and that romanticism acts as a buffer “against the numbing monotony of regulated life” (1993: xi). She points out that there is “cultural richness in the cosmopolitan world” as “difference is continually constructed and deconstructed” (ibid). I, like Lowenhaupt-Tsing, do not want to do away with the romantic outlook altogether. However, it is possible to write interestingly about others without resorting to hierarchical ideologies (social
evolutionism, “racial theory”) that diminish persons by means of an unreflective romanticism which in the end obscures, by means of the “exotic,” inherently negative stereotypes.

To continue the discussion of ways of speaking about Gypsies, it is now necessary to return to Bernard’s Foreword, the message of which is rather obscure, but in it he seems to admonish the reader on behalf of the Gypsies (although he does not mention the Gypsies directly in this sentence) saying that “Prejudices are never appropriate” because “indeed, they ridicule the wise.” We know that he is referring to Gypsies as “the wise” because in the following sentence he informs us that the Gypsies, in turn, mock those who mock and despise them (1959: 8). As to the identity of those who mock and despise the Gypsies, Bernard does not say. However, it is reasonable to surmise that Bernard is referring to majority French who are guilty of “prejudice” and who “mock” and “despise” the Gypsies. We must give to Bernard the respect due to someone who is knowledgeable about the society in which he lives.

Bernard’s next statement waxes romantically maintaining that if the Gypsies befriend one, they will invite that person into their world: “But in intimacy, in the warm bosom of friendship it is their own world of which they speak (Mais, dans l’intimité, au sein d’une chaude amitié, c’est leur propre monde qu’ils racontent”) (Bernard in Zanko 1959: 8). Then again Bernard connects the Gypsies to nature for he ends the paragraph with, “they reveal the world upon which the seasons flow without leaving a trace.” This seems to suggest that the world inhabited by Gypsies is one that leaves no trace, as the seasons leave no trace when the weather changes. This is also reminiscent of a common assertion that Gypsies are “outside of history” (e.g. Fonseca 1996: 5) for if, like the weather, they “leave no trace,” (and this is only implied, not stated explicitly by Bernard) neither “have they a history” (for explication of this phenomenon see Wolf 1982). This is the world of the nomad who travels through civilization but is not a part
of civilization, belonging to a more “primitive,” or “primeval” mode of existence that is more characteristic of a prehistoric time “before cities, before towns, before people settled down from a nomadic way of life” as James Dow comments about the ancient antecedents of shamanism (1986: 6).

Bernard next denounces the “sedentary nations” for “the crime” of “repressing” the Gypsies explicitly characterizing the Gypsy as nomad by alluding to those who are not nomads, that is, the settled populations (“les sédentaires”) of French town and country. Bernard continues by saying that the “sedentary nations,” “wish to suffocate” Gypsy “civilization,” a civilization which was once common to all humanity “in some remote time” (“Elles voudraient étouffer une civilisation commune à tous les hommes en des époques reculée”) (Bernard in Zanko 1959: 8).

To be fair, Bernard does acknowledge that there is a shared common humanity of Gypsies and non-Gypsies which is one of the positive propositions of both the Enlightenment and Romantic movements. Nevertheless, he explicitly places Gypsies in an archaic world that is not part of the modern experience of majority French, and indeed it was hardly the modern experience of the majority of French Chalderash and Roma at the time either. Bernard then follows the above statement by representing Gypsy culture, and by implication Gypsies themselves, as the proverbial stranger: “une civilisation qui nous est devenue étrangère (a civilization which has become strange to us)” (Bernard in Zanko 1959: 8).

The characterizing of Gypsies (some of whom live in one locality and one country and have for generations, sometimes for centuries) as “strangers,” has a long history. This manner of representing Gypsies (and Jews) was duly noted by sociologists Max Weber and Georg Simmel many years before the Holocaust, predicting an outcome that materialized in some of the worst atrocities that the world has ever witnessed. Weber and Simmel were particularly interested in
strategies of marginalization used by the powerful to construct a collective scapegoat during the first thirty years of the twentieth century (Simmel 1950; Weber 1920, 1952). The insights of Simmel, Weber, and others (e.g. Levinson 1994) concerning the marginalization and persecution of specifically Gypsies and Jews became known as “middle-man minority theory,” in which both populations are described as “pariahs” (in that they are not only excluded from membership in the majority ethnic group but also regarded with contempt and loathing), “guest peoples” (Weber 1952: 3), and “strangers” (Simmel 1950: 402).

Middle-man minority theorists focused attention on discourses of dominant majority elites that portray Gypsies and Jews as “guest people” who “live off the body politic” of a “host nation” or a “host society,” inferring a parasitic relationship between “guest” and “host.” According to middle-man minority theory, such people are “never completely assimilated” to the “host society,” not because of any fault of their own, but because elites make certain that they will never be accepted with carefully concocted discourses of power designed to stigmatize, marginalize, disenfranchise, and render such populations powerless the better to use them for strategic purposes in the maintenance of power. These discourses that “scapegoat” Gypsies and Jews as the cause of society’s ills, are a diversionary tactic meant to deflect attention from the actual cause of economic, political, and social problems, problems which are often directly the consequence of governmental policies which are also purposefully constructed and promulgated by a majority elite to maintain its power. By blaming someone else, the real culprits, the people who have the money and the power to make economic, political, and social decisions and policy that actually cause the problems for the citizenry of a particular country, are thereby exonerated.

What strikes this researcher as troubling is that many academics who write about Gypsies today, continue to describe them as “guest people” of a “host society,” as though this were true
of Gypsy citizens of the various countries of Europe and the Americas, never mentioning that in the present only some Gypsies are immigrants, never explaining that this is a discourse of power, and never citing from whence this vocabulary and discourse come. Nor do these academics cite the middle-man minority theorists who first identified these discourses of power (prior to Foucault’s discussion of the subject) nor do they cite Foucault.

This particular discourse of power explicated by “middle-man minority theory” was borrowed and combined with more extreme racist discourses to become a major feature of the rabble-rousing and incitement to murder which preceded the Holocaust in Germany, France, Hungary, Romania, and elsewhere (Ioanid 1990). In short, contemporary academics who continue to write of Gypsies as “guest peoples” residing in a “host society,” do so in an unreflective way which is also an inappropriate use of vocabulary and discourse that abets the stigmatizing and marginalization of Gypsies (e.g. Glajar and Radulescu Eds. 2008; Asya 2008; for further analysis of Glajar, Radulescu, and Asya see Kirwan 2008: 204-211). Much of the same vocabulary and discourse is ubiquitous throughout the commentary of Michel Bernard in Zanko, Chef Tribal, although disguised by romantic and poetic prose.

Returning to the section of the Foreword which laments the suppression of Gypsy “civilization” mentioned above, Bernard also attempts to laud Gypsy civilization (by which he means culture). But in any case, at the same time he negatively stereotypes the Gypsies with an insult that indigenous populations the world over as well as African American civil rights activists have particularly mentioned and protested against which is the notion that as adults, certain ethnic minorities are “like children.” Bernard writes that Gypsy culture is “a sane and vibrant civilization,” and then goes on to characterize the Gypsies as “simple,” “naïve,” and “marvelously childish” (“…une civilisation saine et vivace pourtant dans sa simplicité dont les
The term “simple” as applied to certain individuals once meant that they were mentally retarded (today we would say “mentally impaired” or “handicapped”) from birth, and had not the mental capacity to attain adult maturity because of it. By labelling Gypsy culture as “simple,” Bernard suggests that Gypsies are not as mature as non-Gypsies for in propositions of modern psychology and discourses of popular culture adults are portrayed as complex beings who have lost the “simplicity” and “innocence” of childhood through socialization. The term “naïve” also means “to be simple” as in “to be lacking in informed judgment” and “credulous” (as Webster’s dictionary puts it). Also, referring to Gypsy “civilization” as “simple” adopts the tenet of social evolutionism in that society is seen as “evolving” from “simple, primitive, inferior” societies into “complex, advanced, superior” societies which emulate Caucasian (so-called) Europeans.

Bernard then completes his description with the charge that Gypsy culture is “marvelously childish.” The psychological effect of this particular discourse is to cause the reader to regard Gypsies as children, incapable of adult judgment and wisdom. One may look upon them indulgently, one may be amused by them, but one will not take them seriously as we seldom take children seriously since they do not have an adult experience and knowledge of the world.

This particular discourse of power also has been utilized by colonial authorities the world over to justify the subordination and exploitation of indigenous populations. The rationalization was that these populations had to be taught the benefits of Western civilization and disabused of their “childish” beliefs and traditions. Lownhaupt-Tsing noted, likewise, that the Penan and the Tasaday were described as “gentle innocents of the forest” by Malaysian and Philippine
majorities in the same way that children are referred to as being innocents. She also notes that the term “simple” applied to the Dayak Meratus was a term of derogation. Popular discourse alleged that Dayak Meratus’ “thought patterns are very simple, static, and traditional,” and in consequence, “their social system, economy, and culture are backward” (Lowenhaupt-Tsing 1993: 92). Edward Said also noted the depiction of the “Oriental” as “irrational,” “childish,” as representative of “arrested development” and therefore in need of direction from the superior, mature and rational Westerner (Said 1978: 40, 234). He also noted “theses of Oriental backwardness” (ibid: 206).

Social evolutionists and eugenicists were fond of the term “backward” to describe certain groups of persons (e.g. Galton 1883; for analysis of this pseudo-science see Black 2003; Kevles 1995; Selden 1999; Wolin 2004). The accusation of so-called “backwardness” served to justify surveillance and social control of certain others, including the sterilization of various groups so that the “inferior” other could not “breed.” Gypsy communities and culture continue to be described as “backward” and “tradition-bound” in both academia and the popular press (e.g. Fonseca 1996; Scheffel 2005; Eberstadt 2006) just like the Dayak Meratus (see Lowenhaupt.Tsing for an exposé of this process 1993: 92). The Gypsies also continue to be targets of sterilization (Scheffel 2005).

To label Chalderash culture as simple, naïve, and marvelously childish, Bernard ensures, despite his protestations of friendship, that Old Zanko’s narratives will be regarded with skepticism, incredulity, and even amusement. This particular discourse of the simple, naïve, and childish nature of the Gypsies is not a mere chance occurrence in Bernard’s commentaries, but rather it is so important to him that he devotes a separate section to it entitled *The Pre-logical Mentality of the Gypsies* (1959: 44-45).
The “prelogical” label did not originate with Bernard. Rather, the French anthropologist Lucien Lévy Bruhl was the first to refer to the “prelogical mentality” of people who are illiterate (1925), and Bernard was probably aware of Bruhl’s work although he never cites it. However, he betrays knowledge of it by his employment of its vocabulary and by his discussion of syllogism (Bernard in Zanko 1959: 44-45). This negative characterization of the Gypsies as being “prelogical” (or illogical) is done under cover of a romantic and humanitarian pose of concern:

The one who does not understand the pre-logical mentality of the Gypsies quickly doubts their sincerity and then takes them for liars or ‘pranksters.’ A great part of their misfortune comes from this incomprehension...irritating us with their perpetual contradictions, vainly [we] try to show them these contradictions which do not bother them. Or better to say that they don’t even see them. Their mentality is neither logical, nor analytical, nor rational, but purely successive... Principally intuitive they haven’t learned the way of syllogism, and are even incapable of grasping abstract notions. They proceed by means of pictures.

(Celui qui n’a pas compris la mentalité prélogique des Tsiganes doute rapidement de leur sincérité et les tient dèlors pour des menteurs ou des ‘farceurs.’ Une grande partie de leurs malheurs provient de cette incomprehension... nous irritant de leurs contradictions perpétuelles, essayant vainement de leur montrer ces contradictions qui ne les troublaient pas. Ou pour mieux dire, ils ne parvenaient meme pas à les voir. Leur esprit n’est ni logique, ni synthésiste, ni rationnel, mais purement successif...Principalement intuitifs, ils n’ont pas appris à manier le syllogisme et sont meme incapables de s’élever à des notions abstraites. Ils ne procedent que par images (Bernard in Zanko 1959: 44-45).

In this paragraph, Bernard expands the simple and naïve theme to depict the Gypsies as incapable of abstract thought in much the same way as indigenous peoples of the Americas and Africa were represented by their colonial masters as “savages” inherently incapable of abstract thought (Deloria 1995). As justification for this representation of subject peoples, the discourses of colonial administrators utilized the rhetoric and theories of social evolutionism and eugenics. Although Bernard never cites either social evolutionists or eugenicists, their theories are discernable in his way of speaking about Gypsies.

Bernard in his *Foreword* next addresses the perennial question that seems to preoccupy many Gypsiologists: from where did the Gypsies “originate”? It is a question that bears further analysis for in fact, where did any of us originate? This complicated matter will be dealt with in the section concerning race and power. However, in this portion of the *Foreword*, Bernard first reveals his obsession with racial identity, a theme that recurs often throughout his commentaries.
First he asks whether Gypsies originated in India, or the region of the Caspian Sea and the Caucasus, or in the Near East, suggesting that perhaps it was in all three places, or in a succession of places as the Gypsies migrate from one region to another. A footnote elaborates on this theme of migration in which the skin-color of the migrants is at issue. The lengthy, three part footnote is more than a simple speculation as to patterns of migration. Rather, it is a theory of race-mixing (for eugenicist “race mixing” theory see Galton 1883).

In the footnote, Bernard asserts that “at some remote time some nomadic tribes, probably conchite (brown)” spread from the Indic lands to the Caucasus and to the Near East and so “one counts among them some touranian and Mongol elements.” “Another group of nomadic tribes of Indo-Aryan roots came from the West and mingled with the first.” These “Indo-Aryans” are “less numerous but more dynamic” and thus “they quickly acquired hegemony” in diverse regions, “principally in the Subaru (north of Mesopotamia).” These nomadic peoples spread simultaneously in three directions: north, east, and west but it was in the “Indus Valley” where “they established their language (Sanskrit) and some other cultural elements of Mesopotamian or Aryan origin,” and that the establishment of “these tribes in the Near East constitute the prehistory of the ancient peoples of the region, and the prehistory of the Gypsies” (Bernard in Zanko 1959: 8, footnote 1).

Part two of the footnote explains that eventually these tribal peoples built “cities” which eventually formed “kingdoms” and then “empires” (á la V. Gordon Childe’s “urban revolution” hypothesis albeit unrecognized) during which time the “bronze industry” and the “raising of horses” developed which “caused certain of these nomadic tribes to evolve, white or brown, Aryans or Conchites (font évoluer [my emphasis] certaines de ces tribus nomades, blanches ou
brunes, aryennes ou conchites)” (ibid: 8-9, footnote 1, part 2). Part three of the footnote relates how the Gypsy professions became “usurped” by non-Gypsies about which Bernard is correct.

The body of Bernard’s text now maintains, “it is certain that all nomadic tribes were not of the same origin,” and that “the Chalderash of the white race, who constitute the true Gypsies, are distinguished from Sinti of the brown race who divide themselves into sub-groups: Manush and Gitans (Des Chalderash de race blanche, qui s’intitulent les vrais Tsiganes, se distinguent les Sinti de race brune eux-même divisé en deux sous-groupes: les Manouches et les Gitans)” (Bernard in Zanko 1959: 9).

There are two major factors of this discourse that are significant. The first is that race as revealed by skin-color is to be viewed as important when describing the Gypsies. The second is that a superior, white, Aryan race constitutes a valid analytical category for elsewhere Bernard avers that the Chalderash comprise an aristocracy among the other Gypsy nations based upon these two factors:

In principle meanwhile, exogamy is not permitted among the Chalderash. Rather as a race they constitute a caste, that of the myriane, noblemen.” (“En principe cependant, l’exogamie n’est pas admise chez les Chalderash. Plutôt qu’une race ils constituent une caste, celle des myriane, hommes nobles) (ibid: 48).

Bernard is alluding here to what is a well known point of conflict between nazi policy makers and implementers of the “solution to the Gypsy problem” wherever the nazis came to power, that is, the belief that certain of the Gypsy tribes are Aryan racial brothers of the Germans:

The racial-hygienicists regarded the personal traits of each individual Gypsy as hereditary. Gypsies whom they defined as ‘racially pure’ (Reinrassige) were given the romantic stereotype of an ancient and noble Aryan tribe. Other Gypsies, in contrast, were stigmatized as Mischlinge (half-castes; hybrids or mongrels) and stereotyped as dubious rabble (Margalit 2002: xvi).

This desire to divide the Gypsies into two “races” was also the case in fascist Rumania. For instance, Ion Chelsea, a journalist spokesman for the Iron Guard, thought that certain of the “nomadic Gypsies” ought to be “spared up to a certain point” from annihilation even though
these Gypsies “are impossible to assimilate.” And although he recommended killing some Gypsies he maintained that “a portion of them must nonetheless be set aside in a nature preserve so that the country may keep a rare species” (my emphases) (Chelsea 1944: 100-101 in Ioanid 1990: 216). The suggestion that Gypsies should be kept in a game preserve for rare species like animals is dehumanizing and criminal. However, it is illustrative of Aryan racial theory and its eugenicist legacy of discourse about Gypsies which separates them into two races, “white” and “brown” (or “black”) just as does Bernard in Zanko, Chef Tribal.

From the Foreword’s digression into racial theory, Bernard now goes on to chastise modern people of “the city” for being fickle and disloyal to a certain religion according to the pleasure of “princes and clergy” over the course of centuries (“Mais la cité a si souvent changé de religion au cours des siècles au gré des princes et des clergies”) (1959: 10). Nowhere does he mention to which religion the city people have been disloyal but since this book was published in France, and Bernard may have been Catholic, that the religion of his “city” was Roman Catholic is probable. He elaborates: the city is “fevered, always dissatisfied, ever-changing of form,” and he contrasts city folk with the Gypsies, again invoking the mobility that renders Gypsy culture immobile (nonprogressive):

…the wandering people in their perpetual movement remain immobile, their needs limited only to the essentials. And, the eternal testimony of the wanderers is turned against the city. [They] judge it and condemn it. (…le people errant dans sa perpétuelle mouvance demeure immobile. ses besoins se limitent aux biens essentiels. Et le témoignage éternel des errants se retourne contre la cité, la juge et la condamne) (Bernard in Zanko 1959: 11).

Here Bernard opposes modern city people of everyday France to the Gypsies, dichotomizing the population of France into two groups of persons. He portrays city people as representing sedentary civilization and modernity and contrasts them with the Gypsies who symbolize for him the nomadic, uncivilized nature, and times past. For Bernard, the city because of its changeability is everything that is sinful, while the Gypsies, because of their constant
loyalty to traditional and allegedly conservative religiosity that is supposedly unchangeable ("immobile"), are described as everything that is good and innocent of sin in a romantic depiction of the Gypsies that is nonetheless distancing:

Born from the hand of God, still close to its [the world’s] origins, they [Gypsies] advance across the world where here and there dark columns are raised up, the blasphemies and the miasma of condemned civilizations. (Nés de la main de Dieu, ils avancent à travers le monde proche encore des origines où s’élevent de loin en loin colonnes sombres, les blasphèmes et les miasmes des civilisations condamnée (Bernard in Zanko 1959: 11).

After this melodramatic portrayal of Danté-esque cities from which invisible evil blasphemies rise up to heaven in a miasma, Bernard’s Foreword now declares the reasoning behind the “city’s” “rejection” of the Gypsies. Set off with quote marks, the following passage typifies popular ways of speaking about Gypsies throughout Europe in 1959 and in right-wing political circles now:

And here is why the city rejects them and refuses their testimony: ‘We do not want these people. Their presence constitutes a grave danger to the public order. Our work is to defend honest people from them. (Et voici pourquoi le cité les rejette, et refuse leur témoignage: ‘Nous ne voulons pas de ces gens. Leurs présence constitue un grave danger pour l’ordre public. Notre devoir est de défendre contre eux les honnêtes gens’) (ibid).

Here it seems that an omniscient voice of a city administrator is speaking but the quote does not have a footnote. What is notable is that since the Middle Ages, the above accusation preceded various persecutions and expulsions of the Gypsies from cities and countries of Europe (Alts and Folts 1996; Crowe 1995; Kenrick and Puxon 1972). Here we can concur with Bernard that these are “cruel words” (“paroles cruelles”) (Bernard in Zanko 1959: 11). Although this quote mentions that Gypsies somehow constitute a threat to the public order, it does not state unequivocally just how they pose a threat, what they do that threatens “honest people.” That Gypsies are not honest people but thieves is implied. However there could be another interpretation for the suggestion that the Gypsies pose a “grave danger” to the public good.

From the 16th to the 18th centuries during which time Eastern Europe had struggled to free itself from Turkish Ottoman rule, and in Europe during World War I and II (Vichy France
included) this accusation that Gypsies threatened public order was linked to the idea that Gypsies were not only “asocial,” and “antisocial,” but potential “spies,” a “foreign element” in the pay of whichever invader was feared (e.g. the Ottoman Turks, the Hapsburgs, Romanovs, or the Allies) (Barany 2002: 90; Guy 1998: 20; Margalit 2002: 8-9, 31; Wedeck 1973: 424).

Apparently in 1959, the Gypsies were still thought of as being a threat to the State in some way for Bernard recounts how Father Chatard, as an advocate for the Gypsies, was once interrogated severely concerning Chalderash loyalty to the State. Exactly who subjected Father Chatard to “un interrogatoire sévère” and when, Bernard is not forthcoming but he is explicit that someone at some time had considered Gypsies to be a threat to the State and questioned Chatard concerning Gypsy loyalty to it, although in the inimitable way of Bernard, he disguises the import of this comment as a rhetorical statement:

One day had not P. Chatard been subjected to a severe interrogation for hours in which finally he was made to confess to one does not know what unimaginable Gypsy plots against the surety of the State! (Le P. Chatard, n’a-t-il pas dû un jour, subir pendant des heures un interrogatoire sévère, aux fins de lui faire avouer on ne sait quelle inimaginable complot des Tsiganes contre la sûreté de l’État! (Bernard in Zanko 1959: 11)

One may only speculate how the Chalderash and other Gypsy populations may have threatened the surety of the State and when. Perhaps this fear of Gypsies as spies is simply because of a perceived nomadic lifestyle that made it difficult for the authorities to keep Gypsies under surveillance as “enemies” of the State.

We do know that Father Chatard’s first contact with the Gypsies was during the war when he and a number of other religious succeeded in gaining entry to French concentration camps which started his career as an advocate for Gypsies (Colinon 1959: 32; Humbert 1964: no pagination). And we know from the Zanko Archives that Father Chatard wrote reports to government officials to protest the conditions which he had found there.
The Foreword now treats of the manner in which the text was collected, the terms of agreement for the publication of the text, what Old Zanko’s narratives are in brief, and sundry other matters. This content is dealt with in other chapters. We must move on to Bernard’s other commentaries which illustrate ways of speaking about Gypsies that stigmatize them with both positive (romantic) and negative (vilifying) stereotypes.

In Bernard’s introduction to the chapter entitled The Tradition of the Ancestors, the reader is again made to regard the Gypsies as coming from elsewhere. He points out in a proprietary manner that since “their arrival” in “our West” (“notre Occident”) at the end of the Middle Ages, the Gypsies had related fragments of their tradition to the sedentary occupants of Western Europe who did not understand the tradition: “A leur arrivée dans notre Occident, vers la fin du Moyen Age, les Tsiganes en contendaient encore des fragments; elle fut mal comprise” (Bernard in Zanko 1959: 17). The possessive adjective “our” modifying the noun “West” implies that the West belongs to “us” (Western Europeans) and not to “you” (Gypsies) who are a foreign incursion into Western Europe, arriving rather late at that. Again Bernard imagines the Gypsies as being aliens to and other than Western Europeans.

A major problem is that Bernard’s statement of certainty for a time-frame of Gypsy migration into Western Europe is not actually certain, and there is even the possibility that Gypsies may have always been a nomadic population of Eastern and Western Europe (Okely 1983; Mayall 2004). Also, there are authors citing anomalous data which suggest that the Gypsies may have been in Europe (Western and Eastern) before the production of medieval chronicles. In the West, chronicling events occurred some centuries after feudalisms beginnings, a form of governance that developed in the wake of the Roman Empire’s collapse under the so-
called barbarian onslaught. Be that as it may, not until the building of Christian monasteries was there a resurgence of letters and its production in Western Europe.

Medieval chroniclers of France who wrote of groups of nomads referred to them variously as “Faraon,” (“Pharaon”), “Saracens,” “Moors,” “Egyptians,” “Logipciens,” “Caraques,” “Tatars,” “Tataren,” “Rabouin” (in the 16th century), “Beurindins” (in Saintonge, France), “Camps Volants” (in Burgundy), “Hongrois,” and “Bohémiens” (Bernard in Zanko 1959: 9; Clébert 1967: 69-74; Fraser 1992), and were largely uncertain as to their origin. Therefore, neither can modern scholars be certain as to the exact identity of the various nomadic groups crisscrossing Europe at this time. Another problem with medieval chronicles is that they are often preserved in fragmentary form, and some of them even have been subsequently altered, others are outright forgeries (as to forgeries see Edwards 2008; Ong 1999: 98; Tisset 1933). Bernard himself mentions this problem en passant and obscurely in writing about “cities” having “mutilated or falsified parchments (parchemins mutilés ou falsifiés)” (Bernard in Zanko 1959: 7). However, if French medieval chronicles mentioning nomadic populations may be believed, many descriptions of these groups record details of dress, custom, and occupation that strongly indicate Romani ethnicity. The main point, however, is that the Gypsies may have been in Europe centuries prior to the writing of medieval chronicles.

Anomalous data published by Jean-Paul Clébert (1967) suggests a much earlier date for Gypsy presence in France than Gypsy Lore canon would have us believe. Although he also casts doubts upon the reliability of sources from which the data came. The reason that he regards the statements of these authors with skepticism is left to the imagination of the reader. That said, according to Clébert, the following are some people who present divergent data from that of the
medieval chroniclers of Gypsy presence in Europe: H. de Galier (1913), Albert Mousset (1958), Serboianu (1930), and Count Graberg af Hemsö (1813, 1817?).

De Galier writes in his book, *Filles nobles et magiciennes*, that “the South of France was for long infested (my emphasis) with them, and they used to attend the fair at Beaucaire from the year 1300” (de Galier 1913 in Clébert 1967: 55) which is two hundred years prior to the date cited by French chronicles of the 1600s. Note de Galier’s use of the word “infested” according to the widespread social evolutionary attitudes of the day suggesting that the Gypsies are vermin.

Clébert then records that in an article published by *Le Monde*, Albert Mousset (1958) said that the Gypsies may have inhabited their own neighborhoods of Paris from perhaps as early as the 1200s. City records (*Dit des Rues de Paris*) of “uncertain date” but from either “the 1200s or the 1300s” show that such streets as “Saint-Symphorien and Valette” were inhabited especially by “Logipciens” (Mousset 1958 in Clébert 1967: 55). That these Logipciens were actually Gypsies is a probability for to my knowledge there were no Egyptian Muslim communities in France at this time. These records would also suggest that some Gypsy lineages may have been a French sedentary population perhaps as early as the 1200s.

Clébert then also informs us that “Serboianu” records a letter from the king of Bohemia to Pope Alexander IV, in which it was stated that Bela IV (1206-1270) king of Hungary was the man responsible for the Christianization of Transylvania, and that he had “1,206 Gingari” among the ranks of his army. Conscientiously Serboianu then concedes that the word Gingari in another manuscript is substituted by the word *Bulgari* (Serboianu 1930 in Clébert 1967: 55). Therefore, whether the Gingari were Gypsies or not it is impossible to ascertain. Still, if the Gingari were actually Gypsies, the 1200s is a long time from the 1500s when the Gypsies (by the
canons of Gypsiologists) are supposed to have entered Bohemia and Transylvania (Hungary) (ibid: 1967: 54).

Count Graberg, in his *Dissertation sur les doutes et conjectures sur les Bohémiens et leur première apparition en Europe*, recounts that a Swedish scholar surname Rebenius may have proven that in the year 1303 the Gypsies were banished from Sweden (Graberg 1813 or 1817 in Clébert 1967: 55-56). This would mean that the Gypsies had been in Sweden before that date. One wonders if Rebenius stated for how long they were there. In any case, “official” records state that the Gypsies did not arrive in Sweden until 1515 (ibid: 55). Again there is a difference of some two hundred years just as in the anomalous data which de Galier presents for Gypsy arrival in France.

The point here is three fold. First, Gypsy origin is not known despite Bernard’s assertions, nor do we know for certain when they “arrived” in Europe or if they “arrived,” for anomalous data is simply put aside and those who present such data are denounced as discreditable without explanation (e.g. Clébert 1967: 55 who typifies proponents of the Indic theory of Gypsy origin). Second, to assert that Gypsies “arrived” in Europe but originate elsewhere can be shown to be a strategic political discourse, one that elites have used historically to justify the disinherit ing of indigenous peoples as well as for the periodic deportation of immigrants. Discourses of power will be dealt with more fully in the next section. Here we approach the subject as *a way of speaking about Gypsies* that presents them as the “Other” by focusing discourse upon an imagined origin that makes of them “foreigners” no matter how many centuries they have been sedentary (or nomadic) inhabitants of a particular region or country.
This particular discourse of power in Bernard’s commentaries also contains a racial component which upholds the French social order wherein “Blacks” are treated as second-class citizens, and “Whites” are treated as the privileged. This discourse of power with its racial overtone is discernible in Bernard’s commentaries throughout Zanko, Chef Tribal. It is neither a chance nor a neutral discourse but rather it upholds the social order in which Gypsies are never truly French in that they are “Black,” or French citizens in that they come from elsewhere even when deemed a “primitive,” form of “Aryan,” and in which they are depicted as perpetual “nomads” which further renders them second-class citizens, proof of which are the many punitive laws against “travellers” in France then and now. This too will be dealt with in the next section.

Third, all these ways of speaking about Gypsies that stigmatize, marginalize, and create a perennial Gypsy “Other,” are not necessarily overtly pejorative. Often negative stereotypes are concealed by a pose of humanitarian concern, condescension, and paternalism, as well as by an overlay of romantic and poetic prose that while gratifying to read, is nonetheless distancing, and to borrow a concept from psychology, subliminally disparaging of Gypsies.
Old Zanko, Race, Authority, and Power

The story of the genesis of Zanko, Chef Tribal is that of a struggle over power and authority that does not erupt in outright hostility and attack, but is rather maintained surreptitiously under the guise of concern and courtesy which overlies hegemonic discourses of power. When analyzing Zanko, Chef Tribal an immediate realization is that there are three “voices” featured which are not always in harmony with one another, but more importantly, the people whom the voices represent are differentially positioned politically and socially. Two voices dominate the one as difference and marginality are constructed and maintained. Lowenhaupt-Tsing succinctly states how marginalization of persons and groups occurs: “The cultural and political construction of marginality is a process in which people are marginalized as their perspectives are cast to the side or excluded” (1993: 5). This was the subject of Gayatri Spivak’s article, Can the Subaltern Speak? (1988) in which is advocated the deconstruction of discourse to uncover the hegemonic exercise of power.

Although not exactly cast aside, Old Zanko’s words are interpreted in a way that diminishes (marginalizes) the importance of them and of Chalderash Tradition. Bernard’s commentaries both precede and follow Old Zanko’s narratives. Bernard’s voice is always omniscient and definitive resonating with intellectual authority, a type of authority that the voice of Old Zanko never attains for it has not been permitted him.

However, as first Erving Goffman (1963), then James C. Scott (1985) and Lowenhaupt-Tsing (1993) have pointed out, discourses of power do not have unquestioned hegemony over a stigmatized minority ethnic group (Goffman 1967: 84, 91) for people belonging to such groups “respond, re-interpret, and challenge” these discourses of power creating “sites of discursive contestation” (Lowenhaupt-Tsing 1993: 8). Old Zanko illustrates this point for he seems to have
explicitly resisted the hegemonic control exerted by Bernard. Indeed, he seems to have been very much aware of unequal power relations and he addressed the problem. In the *Foreword*, Old Zanko tells Father Chatard that the Gypsies are often exploited and represented in such a way as to denigrate them:

> Your journalists, your photographers, certain of your writers exploit us in any case. They wish to go so far as to arrange these things in a manner to better amuse the public and in order to acquire more money. They are enriched therefore at our expense and they leave us to our misfortune which they often only aggravate. This is why I have never wanted to speak of these things to anyone during my lifetime.

(1959: 14)

Old Zanko goes on to say that for this reason the Gypsies have “revenge” on the journalists by fabricating stories for them meanwhile, “we laugh up our sleeves” (“nous rions sous cape”). Father Chatard’s reply to Old Zanko’s statement is to make an elaborate promise not to exploit him (as though conferring a special favor) saying that not “a single line” or “clause” of what Old Zanko has to say will be published in books or periodicals, and he also promises not to copyright them or to translate them for publication abroad without having the express permission of Old Zanko and that of his “tribe” (1959: 14).

While this was laudable of Father Chatard, Old Zanko was no fool, and although in the end he granted Father Chatard and Michel Bernard the right to publish his narratives, he is also very much aware of the implications inhering in such a pledge. It seems as though he does not wish to acknowledge the pledge as a special favor, nor does he actually say thank you for Bernard then writes:

> In thanking him, Zanko simply responded: ‘That is just. These things are our property. We have nothing else. It is normal that they profit us.” (Zanko a simplement répondu en le remerciant: “Cela est juste. Ces choses sont notre propriété. Nous n’en avons pas d’autre. Il est normal qu’elles nous profitent”) (ibid).

The above quote reveals competing discourses. Bernard’s discourse illustrates non-Gypsy French hegemony for he interprets Old Zanko’s statement as gratitude and thanks, whereas Old
Zanko’s discourse illustrates resistance to non-Gypsy majority French hegemony in that he refuses to express abject gratitude for something that is simply fair-play. It is possible to cite other instances of Old Zanko’s resistance to non-Gypsy hegemony:

Well, some journalists came to question me: ‘How do you live?’ How do we live? We work here and we sleep there. We eat meat and potatoes. How do we travel? Well, well! We take the train, and sometimes a boat. You remember my response to your friend who wanted to know how the Pouro Del and the Bheng made the world: ‘There was nothing but water. The Pouro Del wanted to cross over it. The Bheng said to him: ‘Hold on tight to my tail.’ Therefore the two of them left over the water. When they were tired, the Bheng stopped. Then the earth pushed up a lump from beneath which parted the water permitting them to sit down. These were the first mountains.” Your friend opened his eyes wide. You yourself made a grimace. This did not resemble history. But, I have told you the truth.

This quote is revelatory of resistance in a number of ways. First, Old Zanko is resisting the exoticing of the Gypsies as nomadic by saying that they act just like anyone else working in one place and having a home somewhere else. Second, he is resisting the well-known and constantly reiterated negative stereotype that Gypsies eat exotic things like “carrion” (e.g. Borrow 1841: 19; Leland 1882: 124; Wedeck 1973: 60, 228; Fonseca 1996). Thus Old Zanko brings up the subject of what they actually eat (meat and potatoes) like any majority French. Third, Old Zanko insists that Gypsies also travel in trains and boats just as do majority French. Here, Old Zanko denies stereotypes of Gypsies as traveling in horse-drawn covered wagons. His implied message is that the Gypsies live in the twentieth century just as do his interlocuters. Fourth, in regard to the tale of how the mountains were born, Old Zanko is obviously aware of how Father Chatard’s “friend” (probably Bernard) looked upon this narrative with skepticism for Old Zanko lets them both know that he has remarked their facial expressions (Zanko 1959: 41-42). Old Zanko’s last statement, that he has told them the truth, probably refers to the fact that it
is a well-known origin tale of the Gypsies which is truly recounted by Chalderash storytellers. In every instance of these paragraphs Old Zanko resists French hegemony which exoticises Chalderash.

Old Zanko also disputes that Gypsies divide themselves into “tribes” saying:

This is the Gypsy family. You call it *the tribe* (text emphasis), but this word does not exist among us. For us, this is nothing more than the family as we know it. (C’est cela la famille tsigane. Vous appelez cela *la tribu*, mais ce mot n’existe pas chez nous. Pour nous ce n’est pas autre chose que la famille telle que nous la comprenons (passage 51: 81).)

Even though Old Zanko’s last statement is resistent to majority French, non-Chalderash hegemony, his view does not prevail. Throughout the text, Bernard and seemingly Old Zanko persist in using the word “tribe” causing one to question whether if every time Old Zanko said “family” or “lineage,” Bernard instead rendered the word as “tribe.” In fact, Bernard hints at the possibility that subtle alterations to Old Zanko’s narratives may have occurred:

Sometimes we have been led to transpose the multiple pieces of information given by Zanko into a more logical order. But if we be tentative, we have dreaded to push the enterprise too far, to mutilate, to atrophy Gypsy thinking. Who knows whether sometimes we have not simplified to excess? We have wished first to give some reference points, some guidelines. May others make some more. (Nous avons parfois été conduit à transposé dans un cadre logique les multiples indications données par Zanko. Mais si tenté que nous soyons, nous avons redouté de pousser trop loin l’entreprise, ce faisant de mutiler, d’atropher la pensée tsigane. Qui sait si quelquefois nous n’avons pas simplifié à l’excès? Nous avons d’abord voulu donner quelques points de repère, quelques lignes directrices. Que d’autres fassent davantage) (Bernard in Zanko 1959: 46).

According to Bernard’s own admission, the editors took the liberty of altering the sequence of Old Zanko’s statements so as to place them in “logical order” implying that when Old Zanko spoke he was not logical. Unfortunately in some instances, this may have changed the meaning of Old Zanko’s words but this is something we cannot know for certain. Bernard’s rhetorical question “who knows” if “we” have gone too far seems a bit disingenuous for if the editors do not know what they have done who does? But more importantly, Bernard’s notion that the reading public requires “reference points” and “guidelines” for the reading of the text and that “others” should formulate still more guidelines to frame Old Zanko’s words seems rather excessive.
Despite the fact that Old Zanko sometimes resists hegemonic discourses of power, it is also true that Old Zanko himself seems to employ the term “race” to define “les Roma” (unless this term is Bernard’s substitution) (Zanko 1959: passage 1 p.28). For example, in passage 10, page 33, Old Zanko refers to the Chalderash as a “race.” He categorizes the “Manouche,” the “Sinti,” and the “Kalé” Gypsy lineages as of “mixed race” (“car leur race est mélangée”) (Zanko 1959: passage 13, p. 33), addressing the same subject in passages 14, 15, and 16 of page 13). However, Old Zanko may only be speaking in a way about Gypsies that had become ubiquitous for at least a century in popular culture, academia, and political circles of France since the wholesale adoption of the erroneous dictums of social evolutionism.

Gramsci refers to the political process wherein this paradox takes place as the “hegemony” by which persons internalize dominant discourses of power so that they become “internal cultural parameters” which “constrain” them by means of coercion and force (Ortner 1989: 13). Such internalized cultural parameters or understandings are instilled in the subordinate by authority figures of the dominant majority. A subtle factor of this subordination is that members of the targeted minority become so entirely indoctrinated by the dominant ideology (assertions, theories, and goals that constitute a political program) that the social order appears to be “natural law” rather than human invention and intervention.

At this point it becomes incumbent to ask from whence comes Bernard’s authority to speak in the way he does about Gypsies. His authority partially derives from his role as an academic and as a litterateur. This is not an inconsiderable basis of power. For this reason, French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu points out that researchers too are implicated in the research process urging social scientists to be aware that they possess the power to impact others lives, economically, socially, and politically, and to write and act accordingly (1977).
anthropologists adopted the stance of intellectual “reflexivity” in order to write in a more responsible manner about the people with whom they study. In 1959, French intellectuals had not the benefit of Bourdieu’s insights. Nonetheless, present in the writings of Bernard, Father Chatard, and others who wrote about Zanko, Chef Tribal, was the power to impact lives. In the case of Zanko, Chef Tribal, it never reached a wide audience as Old Zanko had hoped, sales were negligible, and in fact the Zanko family never received remuneration for the divulging of their oral Tradition, more evidence of the unequal power relations that obtained.

Besides authority derived from an academic and literary role, Father Chatard, Bernard, and others who wrote about Zanko, Chef Tribal had another source of power, one that derived from a “racial,” and ethnic identity which made of them members of the dominant non-Gypsy, “White” French majority with all the privilege accruing to that majority, whereas the Chalderash are a marginalized ethnic and imagined “racial” minority of France that despite being allegedly “White” are still considered as second-class citizens and foreigners. This too gives Bernard the power to include or exclude at will whatever he deems admissible or inadmissible about Old Zanko’s narratives. Every time that Old Zanko speaks, his words are preceded by pre-emptive commentary suggesting to the reader how Old Zanko and what he says is to be regarded, often placing him and Gypsies in an unfavorable light.

Bernard took every opportunity to exercise his power and authority to create Chalderash identities according to his own viewpoint that was formed of certain academic traditions. He can do this because he is not speaking merely for himself, but for all those who seek to maintain majority (non-Gypsy) French hegemony. This majority French hegemony is based in so-called “racial” as well as imagined “ethnic cultural difference” that is codified in academic and popular
discourses which are then simply taken for granted as the “nature of things,” and as “true,” never questioned, never examined.

Also behind Bernard in 1959 is all the power and authority of the vocabulary and discourse of social evolutionism which dove-tail with racial theory (e.g. Blumenbach 1795, 1969; Galton 1883). This includes supporting educational and political institutions with their attendant practices formed to enshrine this body of scholarship. For the above stated reasons, I believe that Bernard (perhaps inadvertently) and purposeful detractors of Zanko, Chef Tribal reduced its perceived import to academia and the French reading public despite its inherent value. At the same time, this vocabulary and discourse ensured that Old Zanko’s influence remained limited.

However, although there were efforts made to limit his influence, Old Zanko must have remained a man of power and authority, not only among his own community, for Father Chatard was impressed enough with him to conceive of the project which became the text, Zanko, Chef Tribal. Apparently the publishers and editors at La Colombe, or perhaps it was Father Chatard who thought Old Zanko’s words important enough to carefully differentiate them from those of either Father Chatard or Michel Bernard by means of a numbering system. Michel Bernard conceded that Old Zanko had a “profound knowledge” (“profonde connaissance”) of Gypsy oral traditions (1959: 12). Furthermore, the French ministry of culture thought the collection of his narratives comprising 20 files and referred to as the “Zanko Archives,” to be important enough to place them at the disposal of scholars in the Museum of Arts and Popular Traditions at Paris. As mentioned previously, the publishers of Édition de Prieuré thought the Zanko narratives to be important enough to risk a pirate edition of them.
Old Zanko must have been an important man, influential in his community for at his death in 1974 over two hundred Roma attended his funeral. That there seems to have been a concerted effort to undermine his authority and silence him implies that he was influential in some way. Bernard, for example, silences Old Zanko when he does not examine the Gypsy self-ascription as “witnesses” and “martyrs” (as revealed by Gilles Eynard) in any depth, ignoring the twofold connotation of the term “marturea.” Bernard diminishes the Chalderash when he fails to comment on the legalistic and basically egalitarian ethos of Chalderash culture (in keeping with the democratic principles of the French Republic) embodied by the institution of the Romani kriss, although Old Zanko is allowed to briefly describe it (1959: 83-84). Bernard also silences Old Zanko when he fails to tell us that Old Zanko had been appointed “man of the kriss” (judge) on numerous occasions. One must go to other sources to discover this information (Colinon 1959 November: 128: 32).

When discussing a conscious effort to reduce the power and authority wielded by Old Zanko, it is useful to examine colonial and neocolonial discourses of power which undermine the authority of traditional leaders. It was often a colonial practice referred to as “indirect rule” to confirm or appoint compliant individuals as “chiefs,” or “kings,” or “headmen” of the various ethnic communities in Africa, Asia, the Middle East, and the Americas. At times, these appointed leaders were not the hereditary or otherwise legitimate rulers of the various peoples. The sole criterion of colonial administrators was that the “leader” (legitimate or illegitimate) be someone who would co-operate and facilitate the surveillance and social control of these populations. Often the one who stepped forward to fill the place of a non-compliant legitimate leader did so for the monetary gain such a position would afford. Often, the result of this policy was to limit the power and authority of traditional rulers of hierarchical societies as well as to
limit the social influence of respected elders in egalitarian, non-hierarchical (“stateless”) societies. Old Zanko as an elder and Chalderash spokesperson may have been targeted by a similar policy and for the same reasons.

Among the Chalderash, the *kriss* is the source of communal power and authority which is based upon equality between men. The kriss is similar to a court of law which may be convened for various purposes one of which is to try and punish wrong-doing according to Romani principles of justice. It is a time when the elders gather and the entire community is permitted to witness the event. During the kriss, standards of truthfulness, fair-play (everyone may state one’s case), and notably restraint (“les paroles violentes, les injures, les cris, les manifestations de colère sont interdits”) are of paramount importance (Zanko 1959: passage 66: 84). The elders by consensus choose one man as a supreme judge at every kriss called “man of the kriss.” He is chosen specifically for his probity, equanimity, and wisdom (ibid). Although this man has the final say, he only pronounces judgment after consulting with everyone concerned, and it is his duty to listen with fair-mindedness to all who wish to speak. He arrives at a decision by means of consensus not by decree (Zanko 1959: 83-4). Old Zanko himself had been elected to the position of “man of the kriss” (Colinon 1959: 32), and his authority among the Chalderash and for Father Chatard partially derived from this position.

Perhaps the role of supreme judge whose final word is law gave rise to the myth of a “king” of the Gypsies. However, once the kriss is adjourned, the “man of the kriss” once again becomes a man among equals. Thus in reality there is no such thing as a “king of the Gypsies.” At the risk of being redundant, this point must be stressed; there is no “king” or supreme ruler in any sense of the Gypsies. There are two sorts of occasions when a Chalderash may be referred to
as a “king.” Sometimes to be referred to as a “king,” denotes that one is full of one’s own self-importance (Communication with Gilles Eynard 11/1/2009).

The second use of the term “king” by the Gypsies is illustrated by an admission of Bernard: “Zanko denies that there is a king of the Gypsies” (his emphasis) (“Zanko nie y ait un roi des Tsiganes”) (Bernard in Zanko 1959: 70). He then quotes Old Zanko in explanation:

Among ourselves, the word leader, king, and even emperor are equivalents and [mean] that [one] is married, that is to say, to become the head of a family. [it] also may signify to be crowned king (his emphasis). In a sense, every leader among us is a king, and more so if he is rich, intelligent, good, and devoted to his racial brothers but in this sense only. And never does he possess authority over any other than those of his family. No one else must [give him] obedience
C’est que chez nous, les mots chef, roi, même empereur, sont equivalents et que se marier, c’est-à-dire devenir chef de famille, peut signifier aussi être couronné roi. En un sens, tout chef chez nous est un roi, et plus encore s’il est riche, intelligent, bon, et dévoué à ses frères de race, mais en ce sens seulement. Et jamais il ne possède une autorité quelconque sur d’autres que ceux de sa famille. Personne d’autre ne lui doit obéissance” (Zanko 1959: 70).

First, did Old Zanko really say “racial brothers?” Or was “racial” another of Bernard’s interposed words? Certainly, the Gypsies I know speak of “the brothers” often, meaning fellow Gypsy men, but I have never heard the phrase qualified by “racial,” among either the Roma or the Chalderash. Michael Stewart also noted that Gypsy men of Hungary refer to other Gypsy men as “the brothers” but there is no use of the qualifier “racial” in his book (1997). Of course, the fact of the matter is that the phrase is there, in print, attributed to Old Zanko, therefore we must accept the attribution. However, given the readiness of Bernard to interpose his own viewpoint throughout the text (e.g., the use of the word “tribe” when Old Zanko denies its appropriateness) one’s suspicions are understandably aroused by the constant reiteration of “race,” and “racial,” in Zanko, Chef Tribal. However, the reiteration does prove one thing. Issues of race were important to everyone concerned with its publication for that was the social reality of France in 1959 and the Gypsies were seen as being of a different “race” than majority French.

Second, to return to the fiction of a king of the Gypsies, the myth persists from Europe to the Americas. It is a matter of power and authority that the fabrication of a king of the Gypsies
remains ubiquitous despite Roma statements to the contrary. In Romani culture, to be a “king” means to head a family. This differs from the usual connotation of the word. As a political head of state, to be a “king” is to be a male hereditary ruler of a bounded geographical unit. A king’s word is law and may not be contradicted. Once more, in Europe, kings were believed to rule by “divine right,” that is, believed to be chosen by God to fill the role of king. The king was always a man born to a certain aristocratic “royal” family. Genealogy determines social and political status in traditional monarchies. Although there is no such person as a king or ruler of all the Gypsies, non-Gypsy journalists and other interested parties are always quick to give credence to the notion of a king of the Gypsies. One may well ask, why does this fantasy persist?

It occurred to this researcher that perhaps one reason is that the notion of kingship has romantic appeal. In fact, certain Roma, realizing this romantic appeal, have been known to declare themselves as “king” for media attention. But among themselves, the self-declared “king” and the gullibility of the “gadja” (non-Roma) becomes cause for much hilarity.

However, as Said (1978) warns us, romanticism is often the flip side of stigmatization. The romantic notion of a Gypsy king in the end only serves to exoticize the Chalderash. Ultimately it prevents one from realizing the egalitarian traditions which are more characteristic of this society than a monarchy which, in reality, is a complete fiction promoted by non-Roma, first of all because Chalderash leadership is not hereditary and second it is not hierarchical in that all adult males are seen as equals.

But once Gypsies are imagined as a society a part from French society the idea of their political egalitarianism may seem rather like anarchism to those who assume that a society must have a state. It is less threatening to imagine a king rather than a society in which everyone has a say and no one must avow obedience to any one man. Nonetheless this society manages to
maintain internal social order. So too, it is less threatening to imagine the Gypsies as “children” in need of a father-ruler in which case it would be contradictory to admit them to be democratically self-governing.

Also, to believe that one man has moral and physical power over all the Chalderash prevents one from dealing with the individuals who comprise Chalderash society. One has no need to know or to seek the opinions of autonomous individuals if one person speaks for the many and if one man has the power to force his desires and commands upon others regardless of diverging opinion. Journalists and others have utilized this idea of a Gypsy kingship in order to perpetuate stereotypes of Gypsies. Some people have used the notion of “Gypsy kingship” to advance self-interest.

As mentioned earlier, governments have been known to appoint “kings” and “chiefs” as agents of surveillance and political control as did British and French colonial administrators. At times, these appointed leaders were not those who had been either elected by subjugated communities, or who were hereditary rulers. Rather, the appointees were men who were willing to co-operate with colonial powers in order to have authority over their own communities and to acquire property and other sorts of wealth. Such colonial dynamics may have been a feature of relations between the French government, the Chalderash community, and other so-called “nomadic populations,” for Father Chatard explicitly connected a French program of forced assimilation with colonial policy. This appears in one of Father Chatard’s brief, numbered, handwritten notes of incomplete sentences: “(1) at the same time that of neo-colonialism, the total assimilation of this ethnic travelling minority” (“En même temps que de néo-colonialisme, l’assimilation totale de cette minorité ethnique de passage”) (B151 – MS 64 20 1961).
Just as colonial “indirect rule” policy sometimes replaced legitimate leaders who were rebellious with appointees, there seems to have been an effort to replace Old Zanko as spokesman of the Chalderash with a non-Gypsy imposter by some very important persons in governmental circles as well as in the literary establishment. This was one Lionel Rotaru whose variation on the appellation “king” was “Voïvode of all the Gypsies.” In this claim, Rotaru had the support of the popular press, Études Tsigane’s monthly newsletter, a monthly publication of the Catholic Church (*Ecclesia Lectures Chrétiennes*), the French government, and even Father Chatard who should have known better.

The promulgation of the myth that this man was “Voïvode of all the Gypsies,” perhaps represented a purposeful scheme to undermine the authority of Old Zanko and that of other Chalderash elders (Communication of Gilles Eynard 7/30/2010). Lionel Rotaru called himself “Vaïda Voïvode III” in order to advance his own agenda by borrowing an aristocratic title of Slavonic feudalism. “Voïvode” in Slavonic literally means, “leader of an army” (*voï*, host, army; *voiditi*, to lead). In Eastern Europe (just as in Western Europe) to be awarded the lordship of a demesne meant that one had served one’s overlord or sovereign well in battle. Over time, however, the title “voïvode” became a very vague mode of address for it was applied at times to land-owners, at other times to governors, and variously to officials of lower degree depending upon in which Eastern European country the honorific appeared. Nevertheless, for the French reading public the term “voïvode” had an exotic ring to it and the foreign sounding name bestowed an aura of “authenticity” to Rotaru’s claim of authority over the Chalderash.

In reality, Lionel Rotaru was not a Gypsy at all but an imposter. He had fled Romania to France before WWII at the same that the Iron Guard had been outlawed for perpetrating various atrocities against Jews, Gypsies, Communists, and Liberals, also threatening the Romanian

A curious fact is that during this time in Romania a prominent fascist had come to power as Minister of the Interior and Prime Minister, “A. Vaïda Voïvod.” The Romanian writer, Radu Ioanid, in his book about the Iron Guard (*The Sword of the Archangel, Fascist Ideology in Romania*) stated: “Like a leitmotiv, the name of Vaida Voïvod appears everywhere…he helped the legion with his advice and financial aid” (1990: 43), and he “thus declared himself ‘the godfather’ of the legionnaires” (ibid: 41). Romanian fascists of the Legionnaire movement deported the Gypsies to concentration camps in Transnistria where “tens of thousands of Gypsies” (ibid: 199) died of exposure, starvation, and mistreatment. Why Rotaru decided to call himself this particular name is not clear. It is equally cause for puzzlement that Rotaru continued as the French authorities’ preferred contact for dealing with the Chalderash (e.g. the pirate edition of *Zanko, Chef Tribal*). As far back as 1961, Rotaru’s claims were declared fraudulent by *Le Monde* in an article entitled, *The Fraud of Vaïda Voïvode III: the Gitans of France don’t want an island or a king* (Christischa 1961).

Rotaru used his knowledge of the Romani language to lend an aura of authenticity to his pretensions, and he came from a country (Romania) having the largest number of Roma citizens of any country in the world (Barany 2002: 126) even after the persecutions of World War II which means that Romanians have an opportunity to interact with Gypsies quite frequently. Gilles Eynard has spoken with Rotaru who told him that even though non-Gypsy he had learned to speak Romani in his natal village during daily contact with Roma.
Rotaru and Old Zanko had met once at Lyon which fact Rotaru also used to lend legitimacy to pretentions of being Voïvode of all the Gypsies. Even Father Chatard seems to have been taken in by Rotaru for when Rotaru organized a conference in the Salle Condé at Lyon, Father Chatard wrote of it in an article entitled, “A question mounts to the sky above Lyon: Lyon, world capital of the gitans [sic] and the Gypsies? (Un point d’interrogation est monté dans le ciel de Lyon: Lyon, capital mondiale des gitans [sic] et Tsiganes?)” This article confirming “Vaïda Voïvode III’s” status was published in Le Figaro (4/12/1963). Because Father Chatard was renowned as knowledgeable about Romani culture and as being an advocate of the Gypsies, his recognition of Rotaru gave additional credence to Rotaru’s pretentions still in 1963.

Rotaru’s wish for legitimacy did not stem from a desire for recognition from the Gypsies per se. Rather, Rotaru set himself up as “Voïvode” hoping for monetary gain in a scheme to demand war reparations from Germany for those “stateless” Gypsy refugees to France who had suffered irreparable health problems due to their incarceration in concentration camps (Communication with Gilles Eynard 10/17/2010). Although an admirable goal, his efforts were ultimately unsuccessful, although people in high places enabled him to make application to Germany, and government officials as well as media persons continued to treat with him as though he were spokesperson “for all the Gypsies.” Thus, Rotaru’s claim to leadership of all the Gypsies, including the Chalderash, tended to undermine the actual Chalderash authority figures, the elders who were esteemed advisors to their respective communities, men such as Old Zanko and Matéo Maximoff.

Both Old Zanko and Maéo Maximoff descended from the same Chalderash families that had first fled Romania after the end of Romani slavery (1855-1856) to Russia and thence to
France (Communication with Gilles Eynard 11/4/2009; for Romani slavery in Romania see Barany 2002: 85-86). Perhaps, given French colonial practices of the past, Rotaru may have been a government agent of surveillance, as were many such leaders “recognized” by colonial administrations. The competing discourses created by this rival Gypsy “leader” also made it appear to the non-Gypsy French majority as if Gypsy communities were torn apart by dissention, that they were never able to agree with one another as naughty children who constantly fight with one another. In reality, the Chalderash did not regard Rotaru as their “leader” at all.

Even before *Zanko, Chef Tribal* was published, Rotaru and his promoters attempted to discredit Old Zanko as a Chalderash authority figure, and it is of some note that Rotaru had written a book published in 1958, *Rhaphsodie romaine* (Éditions du Scorpion), about the poor Gypsies who lived on the outskirts of Bucharest (Colinon 1961: 184) putting himself on par with other Gypsy writers such as Matéo Maximoff. However, it must be remembered that Old Zanko was illiterate (Communication with Gilles Eynard 11/8/2010) and that *Zanko, Chef Tribal* represents a much older oral “Tradition of the Ancestors,” a distinction which cannot be attributed to the writings of either Rotaru or even Maximoff as will be explored further on in this dissertation.

Who were Rotaru’s promoters? They were none other than the French government and its agents acting in concert with the popular and academic press. Rotaru gained pre-eminence especially through the auspices of one André Join-Lambert, an important, influential bureaucrat and a personage of note for this ethnographic study.

Join-Lambert was named French “Counselor of State” in 1931 subsequently becoming “Secretary of State to the Accountancy Court” and placed in charge of “nomadic populations” as “Head of the Commission for Migrants.” He continued in this capacity under the Vichy regime.
Unlike many French Liberals and Communists who had openly opposed the tenets and ideology of fascism and nazi racism ultimately leading to their dismissal from government posts and academic positions (Humbert and Mellor 2008; Marnham 2002), Join-Lambert neither resigned nor was dismissed from his post during Vichy’s willing collaboration with nazi Germany, and he carried out its terms and policies. In the eyes of many French patriots who fought in the Resistance, this alone condemns him.

Vichy’s collaboration with the nazis caused hundreds of thousands of Gypsies and Jews to be interred in French-nazi administered concentration camps where they perished of hunger, exposure, beatings, torture, and daily executions. After the war, the politically correct assessment of French camps was that they were not death camps as were those in the East (Germany, Poland etc.), nor were French concentration camps as hellish. However, Monsieur Gilles Eynard (Roma activist and scholar, and chief consultant to this dissertation) for many years has researched the experience of the Gypsies of France during World War II. Thanks to the declassification of WWII archives under Mitterand’s mandate of the 1980s, as well as to the auspices of Jacques Lang (Minister of Culture), Gilles Eynard received permission to view various documents pertaining to his inquiry. He found that the treatment of Gypsies was just as harsh in France as it was in other countries of nazi occupation.

One document made it clear that Gypsies were often the victims of reprisal executions, hung from the balconies of mairies (mayoral offices) and left there for days as a warning to Resistance partisans. The names of these victims were inscribed in monuments to the dead erected in French communes (villages) after the war although those of Gypsy descent were not designated as such. Another example of what treatment Gypsies could hope for at the hands of nazi and Vichy military police was the Struthof concentration camp that was situated on French
soil near Strasbourg. “The Gypsy who entered there did not remain alive for more than 48 hours” (Communication of Gilles Eynard 3/13/2010).

Yet, after the declassification of such information in the 1980s, when the French government commissioned a confidential study (not meant for the French public) from a Monsieur Denis Peschanski to look into the matter of Vichy crimes against Gypsies, he claimed that on the whole, the French Gitans and Roma were well-treated by the French administration, despite the fact that he himself had collected first-hand testimony to the contrary from many Romani individuals. After reading Peschanski’s confidential report to the French government and learning of the first-hand testimonials which he had collected, Gilles Eynard and other Gypsy activists attempted to speak with him but were rebuffed. Needless to say, “he had not wished particularly to speak with us” (Communication of Gilles Eynard 11/2/2009).

Peschanski’s “findings” which were published in book form years later (1994) are demonstrably and patently false. For example, Donald Kenrick and Grattan Puxon (1972) wrote that 30,000 French Gypsies were interred in French concentration camps and 15,000 were deported to death-camps whereas Peschanski says there were only 3,000 Gypsies interred in the camps or deported (1994: 39). Recent research proves that this is a gross underestimation for many concentration camps existed on French soil of which at least 30 were designated especially for Gypsies (Filhol 2011). Peschanski also seems to imply that Vichy France and the nazi occupational authorities “marginalized” the Gypsies but did not systematically murder (“exterminate”) and deport them. Research by Henriette Asséo (1994, 1997), Claire Auzias (1999), Francis Bertrand and Jacques Grandjonc (1984), Isabelle Debilly (2001), Christian Eggers (1995), Marie-Christine Hubert (2000), Mathieu Pernot (2001), and Jacques Sigot (1994) proves beyond doubt that in France (as elsewhere in occupied Europe) the Gypsies were targeted
for annihilation, many of them first sent to Drancy and then shipped by means of cattle car to death camps in “the East.” It would seem that Peschanski’s study exists so as to absolve the French nazi collaborators from crimes against Jews and Gypsies.

Moreover, even now, it is dangerous for Gypsies to raise questions about who was responsible for the trauma and death inflicted upon them the reason being that many a guilty party living in France today had made a successful transition from nazi collaborator to official of the French democratic Republic, and if they are dead their families are not. Join-Lambert was one such official who, after the war, made a successful transition always retaining his oversight of Gypsies and “nomadic populations.” As an official of Vichy, having direct control over programs that targeted them, he was certainly aware of the persecution of Gypsy populations and he may have been partially responsible for carrying out the nazi “solution” for the so-called “Gypsy problem.”

Join-Lambert was by no means ever pro-Gypsy. Neither was he sympathetic to their sufferings. In a Bulletin of Études Tsiganes five years after the war he wrote:

“From the start of the war the French government had to forbid travel to the wanderers, a certain and inevitable necessity with the invasion of France. The fate of numerous Gypsies was tragic and heroic. This [fate] was the concentration camps” (29 July 1949: 5: 17).

Join-Lambert’s suggestion that the French government “had to” place Gypsies in concentration camps, that it was “a certain and inevitable necessity,” in other words, that there was no choice but to imprison Gypsies in concentration camps, makes his use of the phrase “tragic and heroic” seem disingenuous to say the least. Even given the fact that Vichy was under pressure from the nazis to persecute Gypsies and Jews, certain other European governments such as the Danish and the Bulgarian successfully saved many Jews during the nazi occupation of their respective countries. If there was ever a like attempt by governments to rescue the Gypsies, no literature exists on the subject to my knowledge.
In contrast to Denmark and Bulgaria, the Vichy police willingly arrested whole families of unarmed men, women, and children, Gypsies and Jews. The entire Zanko family was interred in a camp in the Montauban region. Moreover, Vichy did not incarcerate only so-called “stateless” Gypsy peoples, and “nomadic caravan dwellers,” but also Gypsies who dwelt in apartment buildings as well as in houses either rented or owned outright, also arresting Gypsies who were French citizens. Some families had lived in France for hundreds of years and they never had known any other place of origin (Asséo 1994, 1997; Bertrand 1982; Filhol 2001; Pernot, Asséo, and Hubert 2001; Sigot 1994). The Gypsies were imprisoned because of imagined “racial inferiority” and “alien” status (Asséo 1997). It is also doubtful that the nazis could have known who were the sedentary Gypsies of France without Join-Lambert’s co-operation and facilitation of the task. We know that Father Chatard was horrified by what he found in French concentration camps and ministered to the people in them (Humbert 1964: 5879: 13: no pagination; LaFay 1963: 4: 16-17).

One realizes the political power wielded by Join-Lambert over the Chalderash and other Gypsy populations from correspondence found in the Zanko Archives written by Father Chatard to Join-Lambert and dated from January 21, 1956 to 1961 (Reference: B151-MS 64 20). In this correspondence, Father Chatard protests how the Gypsies are being treated in France due to the law of July 16, 1912 which was still current and enforced, and which defines every Gypsy as a “nomad” and a “vagabond” (Clébert 1967: 257) by virtue of birth. Father Chatard opens his letter by stating his contempt for this law, its inherent racism, and the racism of Join-Lambert’s administration in no uncertain terms:

The attitude of the legislature, of the administration, and of certain social classes vis-à-vis these populations, seems to me to constitute a typical case of racism: ‘anti-Gypsyism.’ The comportment of this population in effect cannot suffice to explain it. Their ‘petty thievery’ and their ‘lack of hygiene’ is far from being as frequent as some claim. They [conditions] are very often forced upon them by forbidding them a stopping-place and access to water.

Further on in this communication, Father Chatard informs Join-Lambert that not all Gypsies are itinerants:

…not all the individuals of the tribal regime or of nomadic origin are itinerant, foreign, or nomads. There are among them Sedentary [people], workers and merchants.

(…tous les individus du régime de la tribu ou d’origine nomade ne sont pas des ambulants, forains ou nomads. Il y a chez eux des Sédentaire, ouvriers ou commerçants) (ibid).

And then Father Chatard explains that when some people are itinerant it is due to their occupation, not simply to vagabondage, and he cites the Law of 1912 specifically:

…articles II and III of the law of 16 July 1912, all its odious and unjust consequences, notably the compulsory abstinence from voting and the infamous label ‘without domicile’ and of ‘nomad.’ These two decisions or Regulations must sufficiently resolve the problem of itinerants, foreigners, and nomads on the professional level.

(…les articles II et III de la loi du 16 Juillet 1912 toute leur séquelles odieuses et injustes, notamment l’abstention électorale force et les titres infamants de ‘sans domicile’ et de ‘nomade.’ Ces deux decisions ou Réglements suffiraient à resoudre le problem des ambulants, forains, et nomads sur le plan professionnel) (ibid).

Father Chatard also stresses that people whose occupation demands constant travel do have domiciles adapted to their profession (e.g. the mobile home):

All these professions possess their own fixed domiciles adapted to their condition of life. But the law is obstinate in ignoring it. The only domicile that the law recognizes is that of the sedentary [person].

(Toutes ces professions possèdent un domicile propre et fixe adapté à leur condition de vie. Mais la loi s’obstine à l’ignorer. Les seuls domiciles que la loi connaisse est celui des sédentaires) (ibid).

Given this brief outline of Join-Lambert’s role in the Vichy regime as well as afterwards when he still retained his position of power in the French administration, it is a matter of particular note and surprise, that after the war in 1949, it was none other than Join-Lambert who was the founder of Études Tsiganes (the French version of the British and American Gypsy Lore Society) which became Union Nationale des Associations Tsiganes (UNISAT), and today exists since December of 2004 as Fédération Nationale des Associations Solidaires d’Action avec les Tsiganes et les Gens du Voyage (FNAST). However, it is not surprising that not a single member
of *Études Tsiganes* cum UNISAT cum FNAST was, or is, of Romani descent (Communication of Michel Zanko 11/30/2009).

*Études Tsiganes* was (and is under the rubric FNAST) directly connected to the French government which subsidizes it by means of government grants that were obtained and administered by Join-Lambert. Today, Join-Lambert’s son, who is an employee of the state budget control office, continues to assist FNAST in obtaining the same government grants for “Gypsy studies” in which there are no Gypsy participants (Communication of Michel Zanko 11/30/2009).

Join-Lambert was a promoter of “Vaïda Voïvode III” (Lionel Rotaru). Under Join-Lambert’s administration, Rotaru was given help in applying for German reparation payments. Even application for reparation payments was not possible without the approval of the French government and the oversight of Join-Lambert. It was rumored among the Gypsies that Join-Lambert assigned a member of the *Renseignements Généraux* (an organization similar to the Federal Bureau of Investigations in the United States) to work with Rotaru. It is also a fact that Rotaru was a member of the Free Masons and that many French police belong to this esoteric society (Communication with Gilles Eynard 10/17/2010). Rumor also has it that it may have been Join-Lambert’s agents (e.g. Rotaru) who organized a smear campaign against *Zanko, Chef Tribal* prior to its publication with the result that it was received with reservation by academics and journalists as though it were not completely “authentic” (Eynard communication 10/30/2009).

In 1987 when Gilles Eynard and Michel Zanko discovered that a pirate edition of *Zanko, Chef Tribal* was being published and distributed by Éditions du Prieuré, they learned that one of Lionel Rotaru’s syncophants called “Vanko Ruda” (not his legal name) had been the one to tell
executives of Éditions du Prieuré to “go ahead” and publish it because “nobody will care.” This suggests that, for some unknown reason, Rotaru and Ruda were seen by the aforementioned publishing authorities as having more rights over republication of the text than did the Zanko family. Indeed, the Zanko family was never consulted at all.

Vanko Ruda also appears in Father Chatard’s obituary that was published in 1964 by Les Études Tsiganes, the year of his death. We learn from the obituary that Ruda had pride of place in the front pew sitting next to Lionel Rotaru, the erstwhile Vaïda Voïvode III, during funeral services for Father Chatard at the Church of the Holy Name of Jesus. And it was Lionel Rotaru, the “Gypsy Voïvode,” who had been chosen by Father Chatard’s Dominican Order to give the eulogy rather than legitimate Gypsy spokespersons such as Old Zanko, or Matéo Maximoff. Colonial policies designed to exercise surveillance and authority in conformance with government projects, and “to divide and conquer” by means of an appointed “chief,” seem to have had their counterpart in “Vaïda Voïvode III.”

Clearly, Old Zanko and the Chalderash did not have the same political power as did Father Chatard and Bernard. Nor did Old Zanko have the same sorts of political ties to the government in the person of Join-Lambert as did Lionel Rotaru. Old Zanko did not have the publishing clout of Colinon and Bernard who had the backing of a literary establishment comprised of the academic press, the popular press, and Catholic Church publications. In regard to the last authority, one particular detractor with the power to harm deserves special mention, Maurice Colinon, who was a Catholic zealot and journalist.

Colinin wrote a review of Zanko, Chef Tribal for Ecclesia Lectures Chrétiennes (1959) entitled “What Zanko, Chef Tribal had to say (Ce que raconte, Zanko Chef Tribal)” in which praise alternates with devaluation. There is also a discernible effort to be picturesque at the
expense of the Gypsies. The article opens with a description of Old Zanko sitting beneath “his tent” (“sa tente”) in the middle of the “many Gypsy encampments” that harbor “60,000 nomades.” Colinon then maintains that “we others, the sedentary, refuse to see” these camps (“que nous autres, sédentaires, nous refusons à voir”). The next part of the description is picturesque but odiously so:

It was in May of 1959. The open sewer was beginning to dry up which every winter fills and overflows under the feet of the wanderers. The old chief, his eternal hat screwed down on his head, was having a discussion with his wife, ‘the Mami’ and a third personage…On était en mai 1954. Le cloaque qui, tout l’hiver s’alourdit et s’englue sous les pas des errants commençait à sécher. Le viex chef, son éternel chapeau vissé sur la tête, s’entretenait avec sa femme, la ‘Mami’ et un troisième pesonnage… (Colinon 1959: 31)

These opening statements are marginalizing and negatively stereotype the Gypsies in a number of ways. First, Colinon immediately dichotomizes and opposes Gypsy “nomads” to his “sedentary” readers, homogenizing all Gypsies as “nomadic,” all non-Gypsies as “sedentary,” and then by his use of the phrase “we others,” distances the Gypsies still more from the French majority non-Gypsy population. The focus upon the overflowing sewers through which the Gypsies must walk (and one imagines children also having to play in the filth) reiterates a much repeated negative stereotype that Gypsies are “dirty.”

I too have heard this particular stereotype reiterated during my teaching career. To illustrate the concept of ethnocentrism in anthropology courses, usually on the very first day of class, I tell the students to take out a piece of paper, leave it unsigned, and then I urge them to be completely honest. I then ask, “When you hear the word ‘Gypsy’ (and I write it on the board) what do you think of?” Inevitably, a few students write down the words “dirty” or “filthy” as descriptive of all Gypsies. In the second part of this exercise, I tease out the elements of truth in stereotypes from the totally erroneous and negative.

In regards to alleged dirtiness, the Gypsies, especially the Chalderash, are quite fanatical about cleanliness, indeed they have rules of cleanliness that are strict and carried to great lengths.
For instance, during fieldwork with Chalderash of the metropolitan Detroit area, I learned that they use two wash cloths when bathing. One is for the body above the waist whereas the other is for below the waist. Women’s clothing is washed separately from that of men and children. Laundry is never folded upon the table where people eat. Neither men nor women ever speak of bodily functions in mixed company. If kitchen cutlery falls upon the ground, it is thrown away. Many Chalderash will not eat in the home of a non-Gypsy. Their homes, whether apartment or house, are always spotlessly clean. When taking children shopping, Chalderash parents dress them in the newest and the cleanest clothing possible, girls dressed most formally, boys a bit less so but still more formally than non-Gypsy Detroiter dress.

Chalderash laws of cleanliness do not simply apply to physical dirt but directly link cleanliness with spiritual purity in that one reflects the other, telling us much about Chalderash society at large. As anthropologist Mary Douglas amply demonstrated, religious ideas about purity and pollution are symbolic of society as a whole (1966). Many anthropologists who have studied with the Gypsies were inspired by Douglas’ seminal work to focus on Gypsy perceptions of impurity (termed *mahrimé*) beliefs in order to understand their societies (e.g. Miller 1968, 1998; Sutherland 1975: 255-287; Budilova and Jakoubek 2006: 1-29). Old Zanko’s narratives include some of the cleanliness rules related to women and birth (1959: passages 25-28, p.77) but not completely, and otherwise he does not treat of it, possibly because this topic remains taboo among Gypsy men for it pertains to women’s sexuality and *mahrimé* rules forbid its discussion. It is something one learns of from either female or male relatives depending upon one’s sex (Miller 1998).

Also many of the French Chalderash observe mahrime regulations but by focusing attention on the open sewers, as mentioned above, Colinon sacrifices the truth about Chalderash
standards of cleanliness to the picturesque and an exoticism that is negatively rather than positively expressed, as Said insists, the two sides of the same coin (1978). If one still is tempted to give Colinon the benefit of the doubt (perhaps these were indeed the adverse conditions in this particular camp), one is less so inclined to do so after reading the entire sentence which concentrates attention upon Old Zanko’s hat. There is something contemptuous in the tone of it. I wondered if he sneered as he wrote: “his eternal hat screwed on his head” (Colinon 1959: 31). Here he is mocking Old Zanko in an unnecessarily snide manner. More importantly however, is that once again Colinon suggests dirtiness symbolized by an old, constantly worn (“éternel”) thus dirty hat, the dirtiness being implied.

Once again, as in Bernard’s commentaries, at the very outset the reader is directed to have a certain view of Old Zanko and his narratives which is far from positive. These negative views are interwoven with the more positive. For example, a positive romantic view of the Gypsies is that they have a “natural talent” for predicting the future, a characterization which is based in an element of truth, for Chalderash women traditionally foretell events for non-Gypsies, thus Colinon refers to them as the “prophetic tribe” (“tribu prophétique”) (ibid). However, whether this talent is biologically transmitted or learned by means of enculturation is debatable for not only Gypsies claim to have such powers as research into psychic phenomena makes clear. Many a non-Gypsy has capitalized on the gift of prophecy, for example, many “New Age” psychics.

The rest of Colinon’s article is not only indicative of a basically negative view of Old Zanko, Zanko, Chef Tribal, and the Chalderash but it is also often inaccurate. He maintains that the only time that the Chalderash were not “wanderers” in France was during the nazi occupation and that since the war all Gypsies have returned to nomadic lives (ibid: 32). In reality, many
Chalderash were sedentary before and after World War II, at least as “sedentary” as French non-Gypsies (salespeople, musicians, researchers) who “travel” for business or pleasure. It has also become unnecessary for the entire Gypsy family to travel in pursuit of a livelihood. Roma men often travel with one or two business partners leaving the family at home. Even many journalists writing for the popular press have noted this en passant (e.g. Fonseca 1996; Eberstadt 2006).

Another inaccuracy is to maintain without reservation that the Gypsies have been in France for “five centuries” living “unknown among us” (Colinon 1959: 32). In reality the Gypsies of France may have been there earlier and neither are they so insular or unknown to the French. By 1959 there were most certainly intermarriages between Gypsies and non-Gypsies of France as DNA evidence suggests (Iovita and Schurr 2004: 6).

It is also an inaccuracy to say that Old Zanko had been a tribal chief for “well past eighty years” (“A quatre-vingts ans bien sonné, Zanko demeure le chef incontesté d’une tribu de chalderash”) (ibid). This is impossible for leadership among the Chalderash is not hereditary and a person only reaches such a position after attaining full adulthood, as well as after having had years of experience as a husband and father. Chalderash society is somewhat egalitarian and it also may be compared to gerontocracies (Miller 1994: 5: 4: 2: 81). Old Zanko would not have been able to attain to any sort of familial leadership until young manhood, and if Old Zanko was a tribal chief for eighty years, then he must have been at least 100 years of age which he certainly was not. In fact, Old Zanko was not in his 80s in 1959. He was 71 years of age and he died in 1974 at the age of 86.

Despite many inaccuracies however, Colinon did remain faithful to Old Zanko’s insistence that to be a “leader” meant simply to be the patriarch of a family (Colin 1959: 32). He also mentions that Old Zanko was designated “a man of the kriss” who “listens to all of the
viewpoints,” and that “the men of both parties may assist in giving their opinions” (ibid). Men of the kriss are generally elderly men having years of experience as fathers and grandfathers.

One thing that stands out in Colinon’s writing and that seems to make him something of a racist is that he continually refers to “race”:

And what he decided to tell was the tradition of his race… (1959: 32), Gypsy cauldron makers, the aristocracy of the race… (ibid), of the wandering race… (ibid). Now, History with a capital ‘H” of the Gypsy race does not exist… (ibid: 33), the men of this race… (ibid), in the hope of helping us to better understand therefore, and perhaps to better judge his racial brothers… (ibid: 36).

Et ce qu’il se décidait à conter, c’était la tradition de sa race… (1959: 32), Tziganes chaudronniers, l’aristocratie de la race… (ibid), de la race errante… (ibid), Or, il n’existe pas une Histoire (avec un H majuscule) de la race tzigane… (ibid: 33), les hommes de cette race… (ibid), l’espoir de nous aider ainsi à mieux comprendre, et peut-être à mieux juger ses frères de race… (ibid: 36).

Colinon seems to go out of his way to mention the so-called “race” of the Chalderash. Also present is the nazi fiction proposing there to be “Aryan” and “non-Aryan” Gypsy tribes which makes an aristocratic caste of the former and “mongrels” of the latter (Margalit 2002: xvi). Gilles Eynard, however, insists that there are no prejudices of this sort between Gypsy lineages. My research among the Roma and Chalderash lineages of Detroit seems to confirm this. The most these consultants are willing to say of one another is that the Chalderash are “more traditional” and the Roma are “more assimilated.” Neither one of them mention an “aristocracy” of the Gypsies. Nor do they say that the Chalderash and Roma comprise a “race.” In fact, Gilles Eynard informs me that there is no word for either “race,” or “nation” in Romani (Communication 6/21/2010), and when Roma need to refer to these concepts they must borrow from the vocabulary of other languages to do so (ibid).

In terms of the actual content of Zanko, Chef Tribal, Colinon chooses to reiterate but one tale, that of “The Nails of the Crucifixion,” which only serves in this context to stigmatize and marginalize the Gypsies still more. Indeed, this is one of Old Zanko’s own tales (Zanko 1959: 115-17) which portrays a Gypsy as forging the nails with which the Romans crucified Jesus. As a legend, it seeks to explain the reason that “Christians” persecute the Gypsies. The point is that
it should have been made explicit when recounting this tale that it is a legend, that is, a fiction and a parable formulated by the Gypsies themselves in order to explain their persecution. What should have been stressed is that a legend may not be necessarily factual. But Colinon does not make this point. He plants a possibility in the reader’s mind that the Gypsies really may be somewhat responsible for the death of Jesus, and therefore, the Gypsies are “cursed” to perpetual persecution as this legend maintains. The implicit subtext of Colinon is that they should be persecuted because “they killed Our Lord,” in the explicit statements of many a religious anti-Semite (for examination of anti-Semitic religious discourses see Warren 1996).

Colinon seems to go back and forth between believing and respecting what Old Zanko has to say and doubting him. Elsewhere in his article he accuses Old Zanko of great falsehood going out of his way to point out that the narratives are simply a creation of Old Zanko’s imagination. For instance, Colinon writes:

Zanko knew what he wanted someone to write down. Father Chatard, with an extreme scrupulousness, respected the message that was confided to him, even in the most questionable of passages. And they are numerous. (Zanko sait ce qu’il veut qu’on écrive. Le R. P. Chatard, par un scrupule extrême, respecte le message qu’on lui confie, même dans ses passages les plus contestables. Et ils sont nombreux) (Colinon 1959: 33).

As to which numerous passages are questionable, and in what way, Colinon does not say. In the next paragraph Colinon both accuses Old Zanko of being a liar, and then equivocates:

Let us say this clearly. What Zanko says is not always true. Or, rather, it is truth for a Chalderash chief, that is, something which is not completely true or completely false... In this regard, the judgments that he makes about all the other Gypsy tribes (Sinti, Tchurara, Luli etc.) are debatable. They are highly imaginative.

Disons-le nous net: ce que raconte Zanko n’est pas toujours vrai. Ou plutôt, c’est sa vérité à lui, chef chalderash (Colinon’s emphasis), c’est-à-dire, quelque chose qui n’est ni tout à fait fidèle, ni tout à fait adultéré. Les jugements qu’il porte sur toutes les authres tribus tziganes (Sinti, Tchurara, Luli, etc.) sont à cet égard, probants. Ils relevant de la plus haute fantaisie (ibid: 33).

Yet, Colinon has just said elsewhere that there are “Aryan” and “non-Aryan” tribes as Bernard maintains in Zanko, Chef Tribal, and that the “Aryan” Gypsies, who are “the Chalderash” are the “aristocracy” of the “race,” just as does Bernard who purportedly came to this conclusion based upon what Old Zanko had to say. To employ a colloquialism, Colinon
cannot have it both ways. He agrees with some of Old Zanko’s statements which seem to mirror his own racism, but otherwise Old Zanko’s pronouncements are debatable. So in what way are they debatable? Colinon does not explain himself.

The next paragraph casts aspersions upon both Old Zanko’s religion and his mastery of the French language attributing alleged “incoherence” and “contradictions” to his Orthodox religious tradition and the fact that French is not his “mother-tongue.” Colinon then chastises Father Chatard for not insisting that Old Zanko correct his “inexact” statements:

Moreover, Zanko is from the Orthodox tradition; French is not his mother-tongue. These are things that should be known before one reads his story. It explains the incoherence and the contradictions of the narrative. One indeed supposes that Reverend Father Chatard felt these to be weak points before we did. He should have attempted to convince Zanko to rectify such manifestly inexact judgements. The old chief had his ideas, no one could change them. (De plus, Zanko est de tradition orthodoxe; le français n’est pas sa langue maternelle. Ce sont des choses qu’il faut savoir avant de lire son histoire; elles expliquent les incohérence et les contradictions du récit. Ces points faibles on devine bien que le R. P. Chatard les a sentis avant nous. Il a dû tenter de convaincre Zanko de rectifier tel ou tel jugement manifestement inexact. Il a dû, aussi, se heurter à autant de refus. Le vieux chef avait son idée; personne ne l’en ferait changer) (Colinon 1959: 33)

From this paragraph one learns more about Colinon’s mindset than that of Old Zanko. To anyone who has read Zanko, Chef Tribal in its entirety, this paragraph is remarkable for its own inaccuracies. In regard to Old Zanko’s command of the French language, when Chatard had requested that some of the narratives be recorded in the original Romani, Old Zanko had refused to do so preferring to recite them in French, for at that time the Chalderash did not divulge their language to non-Gypsies. Furthermore, Old Zanko’s mastery of French was total. Bernard states this unequivocally:

These texts were collected by dictation and in French. It was preferred, more or less, that certain documents, in particular the Tradition of the Ancestors, be recorded in the Romani language. That was impossible. Zanko always refused to do so.

‘Our language is not written down,’ he said, ‘In our correspondence we ourselves use the language of the sedentary, we know not how to read nor write our own…’

Zanko had wanted the French language to be the direct and official language of this transcription. This is not, in effect, a translation. Zanko speaks current French in the manner of a man of the people. He himself directly dictated his narrative in French. Our job then was nothing more than a work of proofreading.

(Ces textes ont été recueillis à la dictée et en français. D’aucuns auraient préféré que certains documents tout au moins, et en particulier la Tradition des Ancêtres fussent pris en langue romanès. C’était impossible. Zanko s’y est toujours refus.)
'Notre langue ne s’écrit pas,’ dit-il, “Nous même, dans nos correspondances, nous utilisons les langues des sédentaires, nous ne savons ni lire, ni écrire la nôtre…”


Colinon’s assertion that Old Zanko is a stubborn old chief who cannot change an opinion is undeserving of notice. As to Old Zanko’s French, in that language to say that someone speaks it as would a “man of the people,” also is to say that the person speaks the language as though it were a “mother-tongue,” that is, learned from birth. Colinon is then quite mistaken in his assessment that Old Zanko did not speak correct French and he contradicts Bernard’s explicit statement.

As to Old Zanko’s supposedly “Orthodox” religion, first, a careful reading of Zanko, Chef Tribal reveals that he may not have been strictly Orthodox in many ways, and Gilles Eynard agrees with my estimation as to the extent of Old Zanko’s Eastern Orthodoxy. Secondly, that Old Zanko’s narratives do not conform in every respect to the teachings of the Catholic Church does not invalidate how Old Zanko and the Chalderash have viewed the various religions of the world traditionally, nor does it invalidate their Christianity necessarily.

Therefore, the perception that Old Zanko’s narratives are incoherent and contradictory may have been due to Colinon’s prejudices which do not permit of any religious belief system other than that of the Roman Catholic Church. Granted, to anyone who is dogmatic about Judaic and Christian scriptures, the narratives will seem incoherent and contradictory. But if one takes the narratives at face-value, keeping an open mind, reserving judgement, and allowing for the fact that all religion is a product of the human imagination, as cultural anthropologists have pointed out, there arise interesting possibilities for Old Zanko’s narratives. This relates to the fact that since certain other religious belief systems seem to be comprised of more than one religious tradition, perhaps Old Zanko’s narratives concerning various religions and religious history also
represent an amalgamation of more than one religious tradition. This subject will be dealt with more fully in the next chapter of this study.

Colinon ends his review of *Zanko, Chef Tribal* with mention of anonymous “spécialistes” (experts), who, he says, “will bitterly debate this book about which we, ourselves, have certain reservations” (‘Les spécialistes discuteront âprement de ce livre, sur lequel nous faisons nous-même certaines réserves) (Colinon 1959: 36). What his reservations are, however, Colinon never explicitly spells out.


One thing that Colinon and Bernard have in common is a tendency to discount what Old Zanko has to say if it contradicts or casts doubts upon their own views of reality. As a cultural anthropologist inspired by such luminaries as “the father of American anthropology,” Franz Boas (1962), and symbolic anthropologist Clifford Geertz (1984: 123-126), as well as by the practice theorists (Ortner 1989; and Bourdieu 1977) and other contemporary ethnographers, I regard the emic (insider) viewpoint to be of more importance than the etic (outsider) viewpoint for the people who know about a culture best are the people who create it. Only they, in the end, are truly the “experts.” Colinon’s “reservations” about *Zanko, Chef Tribal* most assuredly do not extend to Bernard’s racist commentaries for, it seems, Colinon’s attitudes mirror them. To this anthropologist at least, Colinon’s “reservations” which imply that he knows more about the Chalderash than do Old Zanko and the Chalderash, seems rather presumptuous.
Of course, Colinon was not an anthropologist and at the time even cultural anthropologists were unduly influenced by a pervasive social evolutionism. Indeed, it was certain French anthropologists inspired by their German cohort’s social engineering projects who were responsible for legitimizing the notorious “carnet anthropométrique,” a document that helped the French Administration keep the Gypsies under surveillance. The “carnet anthropométrique,” was a pass-book which was required of all “nomads” in France. In it, were recorded the person’s full name, country of origin, date and place of birth, as well as other references “to establish identity.” This document would have delighted the notorious nazi psychiatrist Robert Ritter, head of the Third Reich’s department of “Research for Racial Hygiene and Population Biology” (Margalit 2002: 34) for besides other identification, the French carnets anthropométriques also gave the “anthropometrics” of the person including “height, chest measurement, breadth of head, bizygomatic diameter (quadrangular bones of the cheek), length of right ear, length of fingers (left middle and little fingers), length from middle finger to elbow, length of left foot, color of eyes…fingerprints and two photographs (full face and profile)” (Clébert 1967: 257).

The minute surveillance of the body (Foucault 1977) did not end here. On arrival at or departure from a city or town, the “nomad” had to present his personal carnets to the police superintendent, or if that were not possible, to “the commandant of the local Brigade of the Gendarmerie,” or to “the mayor” (Clébert 1967: 257). In addition, “the head of a family was obliged to show a ‘collective’ carnet in which are described ‘all persons attaching to the family head by bonds of law’” (ibid).

It is also interesting that Clébert in his [1961] 1967 publication Les Tsiganes, mentions Join-Lambert as doing “his utmost” to “regularize” the situation in France that relates to “the Gypsy problem,” which made this carnet a necessity (ibid: 256-257). As this study has
illustrated, Join-Lambert was not one who would particularly care if the Gypsies were outraged by this oppressive legal document, and Father Chatard had had to write lengthy letters protesting Join-Lambert’s administrative policies (see herein pp. 86-92) that were facilitated by the *carnet anthropométrique*.

The *carnet anthropométrique* remained in full force until 1971 when it was replaced by the *carnet nomade* which is more liberal in that it is not based upon ethnicity but whether or not one has a “fixed domicile,” that is, one does not live in a mobile home. A person living in a mobile home must have this document stamped at the local gendarmerie every three months and this is a social reality of France today. We have no such laws here in the United States. However at present, a debate is going on among “les Gens du Voyage” (“Travelling Peoples”) of France concerning the *carnet nomade*. Some Roma who travel for business and who consequently live in mobile homes, think that the *carnet nomade* only helps the police to harass them, believing it to be as stigmatizing to Gypsy identities as prison garb. Others tolerate the *carnet nomade* because it permits them to continue the itinerant trades which would otherwise cease to exist if the French government decided to outlaw the lifestyle altogether (Communication with Gilles Eynard 8/2/2010). Because a portion of the Chalderash engage in such itinerant trades today, sedentary Chalderash continue to be concerned about this issue and lend their support to activists who criticize the need for any French citizen, whether Gypsy or otherwise, to possess such a document or to be compelled to submit to such surveillance (ibid).

In summary, a struggle over power and authority surrounded the publication of *Zanko Chef Tribal*. To deconstruct the text and to situate it within the context of its historical milieu utilizing archival research including negative reviews of it, is to uncover majority French hegemonic discourses of power that stigmatize and marginalize the Gypsy “Other” as “racially”
and culturally inferior. These hegemonic discourses of power are couched in romantic prose concealing (by a pose of humanitarian concern for the Gypsies) the exercise of power. Indeed, a subtext of Zanko, Chef Tribal is uncovered which is based upon the tenets of social evolutionism, an obsolete and erroneous pseudoscience that maintains a certain social order.

Zanko, Chef Tribal contains three “voices” representing people who are positioned differently politically (some have more social and political power than do others). Especially the voice of Michel Bernard (editor at La Colombe publishers of Paris) dominates the voices of both Father Chatard and Old Zanko providing a framework for the interviews and recitations. The authority of Bernard’s voice in Zanko, Chef Tribal comes from the fact that it is representative of viewpoints shared by governmental and literary authorities” such as André Join-Lambert, Maurice Colinon, Lionel Rotaru, and Denis Peschanski, the popular press, the academic press, and certain authors published by the Catholic press. Clearly the proverbial “playing field” was unequal in the sense of which individuals had wielded the greatest political power, and it certainly was not Old Zanko or the Chalderash. This partially accounted for the unfavorable reviews of the text which ensured that it would never become a “best seller” nor allow power, authority, and social prestige to accrue to Old Zanko and the Chalderash. Another factor that accounted for unfavorable reviews was the unconscious racism of the reviewers (one would hope it is unconscious, that is).

A new reading of Zanko, Chef Tribal will show it as a great classic in the annals of Gypsy research. The last two chapters of this study dealing with the book’s cultural, religious, and folkloric content will amply support this statement. I propose that any “problems” with the text are due to the “hidden transcripts” of majority French hegemony, social evolutionism, and “racial” theory which frame Old Zanko’s narratives (Goffman 1956, 1961, 1981) creating for the
reader “internalized cultural parameters” (Ortner 1989: 13) that when expressed in written form stigmatize and marginalize Old Zanko and the Chalderash.
CHAPTER III RELIGION AND ZANKO, CHEF TRIBAL

The Rationale and Hypothesis

Zanko, Chef Tribal is largely religious in content. Twenty-two pages into the book begin seven narratives comprising: (1) a cosmogony; (2) an eschatology followed by a new cosmogonic order; (3) the division of space into the Raio and the Hiardo; (4) a tale of a divine child and his star; (5) a comparison of Judaic and Christian Scriptures with the oral religious tradition of the Sunto Lil (Holy Book of the Chalderash); (6) a two sentence affirmation; (7) an “Epilogue” (1959: 22-43). Coutumes et Pratiques Religieuses, is the chapter dealing specifically with religious practices and customs of the Chalderash (ibid: 73-94). In this chapter, Old Zanko’s narratives (ibid: 95-172, 177-206) are formulated in the genre of the classic “fairytale” as defined by Bruno Bettelheim (1977: 12-19, 25-6, 35-7, 39-40, 45). Old Zanko’s fairytales have a sacred character. This sacredness of Chalderash tradition and lore even in the fairytales relates to a specific moral and ethical stance that is validated by “a mystical consciousness” (Greenwood 2009).

The Chalderash attitude to religion is eclectic, that is, it is capable of “encompassing,” that is, of including more than one religious tradition within a sphere of activity as Brazilian anthropologist Roberto A. DaMatta proposed for similar phenomena (1991; Hess and DaMatta 1995). Old Zanko did not find it necessary to reject those ideas that were contrary to those of orthodox Christianity even though he was Christian. Rather animism, Judaism, and Christianity intermingle in his narratives which are comprised of many religious traditions. Some spiritual beliefs are specific to to the Chalderash.

Michel Bernard certainly seems to have had some difficulty in comprehending and accepting Old Zanko’s attitude to religion and his narratives that deal with religious concepts.
This misunderstanding seems to create competing discourses within the pages of Zanko, Chef Tribal. Bernard says that the narratives seem “confused” and “contradictory” (1959: 45-46). He attributes the confusion and contradictions to a hypothesized “late” conversion to Christianity (“la christianisation tardive”) and also to the “prelogical mentality” of the Gypsies:

It is certain that if the Gypsies had a mind that was a little more logical, a little more Aristotelian, they would not have been able to continue enunciating these contradictory facts for this long a time. (Il est certain que si les Tsiganes avaient eu l’esprit un peu plus logique, un peu plus aristotélicien, depuis longtemps ils n’auraient pu continuer à énoncer des faits contradictoires), (Bernard in Zanko 1959: 45).

However, the hypothesis of the present study is that if certain concepts seem incomprehensible and inadmissible to Bernard it is due to two factors. First, Michel Bernard was a Roman Catholic who believed it to be the “one, true religion” as any catechist must avow at first Communion and at Confirmation of the faith, two major rituals of the Catholic Church, the first performed at the age of seven, the second performed at approximately nine to ten years of age. In Bernard’s case, this prevented him from seeing the complete value and a great deal of the significance of these particular narratives. The second factor is (once again) social evolutionism and its influence upon the study of religion. This portion of the dissertation will deal first with the content of Old Zanko’s explicitly religious narratives, second with Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy, and third with the social evolutionism which “frame” them (Goffman 1956).
Narratives and Religious Concepts in Zanko, Chef Tribal: the preliminary recitations

Old Zanko’s first recitation is a cosmogony. It is not monotheistic and Judaic nor Christian. In this tale, God is not the only creator of the world and of himself. There is a creatrix as well, the “Divine Mother” (Dé Develeski) who is the Earth:

In the beginning there was Phuv amari Dé, that is, the Earth our Mother. She is Dé Develeski, the Divine Mother. Next there came the Pouro Del that is, the old God and the Bheng... All of us are born from the Earth, amari Dé, by the action of Pouro Del Sinpetra or Saint Peter, her spouse and our Father. (Au commencement il y avait Phuv, amari Dé, c’est-à-dire la Terre notre Mère. Elle est Dé doveleski, c’est-à-dire, Mère divine. Puis sont venus le Pouro Del, c’est-à-dire le vieux Dieu et le Bheng) (Zanko 1959 passages 1-2: 22)... Nous sommes donc tous nés de la Terre, amari Dé, par l’action du Pouro Del Sinpetra ou Saint-Pierre, son époux et notre Père) (ibid: passage 53: 27).

In these passages the Earth was not created by God but the reverse. Furthermore, at the beginning of this narrative when Bernard identifies major figures of the cosmogony, the reader learns that “the Divine Mother Earth” was “uncreated” and “the universal mother of gods and men” (La Dé develeski: la Terre Mère divine, incréée, mère universelle des dieux et des hommes”) (ibid: 22).

The Pouro Del is Amaro Sunto Sinpetra, our ancestral God, Saint Peter, with his beard and large staff. He was born from the earth like the Bheng, for the earth is the mother of all that is, and it was not he who made the Bheng. Both of them came at the same time from the earth, at the beginning. (Le Pouro Del, c’est Amaro Sunto Sinpetra, notre dieu ancêtre saint Pierre, avec sa barbe et son grand baton. Il est né de la terre comme le Bheng, car la terre est la mère de tout ce qui est, et ce n’est pas lui qui a fait le Bheng. Ils sont venus tous les deux de la terre, dans le même temps, au commencement) (Zanko 1959: passages 11-12: 23).

Rather than contradicting Judaism and Christianity, this narrative most probably bespeaks an animistic worldview for the earth as inspirited and creatrix. The earth then gives birth to a sky God, for Old Zanko connects the Old God (le Pouro Del) with the sky via the thunder and lightning motif as the Old God chases the Bheng “on high” for various misdeeds:

This is what happens when there is a thunderstorm then in a rage the Pouro Del chases him [the Bheng] with his thunder-bolt. He searches for him on high until he strikes him. At this moment the storm is calmed and beneficial rain begins to fall. (C’est ce qu’il arrive quand il y a un orage, alors le Pouro Del en colère le cherche avec sa foudre. Il le cherche d’en haut jusqu’à ce qu’il l’ait touché. À ce moment l’orage se calme et la pluie bienfaisante commence à tomber (ibid: passage 7: 22-23).

There is much evidence of the “encompassing” of religious systems in Zanko, Chef Tribal, by others. For instance, Old Zanko personifies the “Pouro Del,” “our Ancestral God
“Sinpetra” as a Christian saint, referring to him as “Saint Peter with his long beard and large staff,” with which he strikes down the Bheng by means of thunder and lightning (Zanko 1959: passage 7: 22-23). This equation of Gods and saints was early noted by anthropologists.

Melville Herskovits (1937; 1938) and Zora Neale Hurston (1938) were two anthropologists to first note the identification of African Gods with Roman Catholic saints in the Haitian Voodoo religion. Hurston, a student of Franz Boas, collected data about the Voodoo religion (rendered also *Vieux Dieux* and *Vodun*) of Louisiana and other southern states (1935, 1936, and 1978). More recent writers on the subject include, for example, McCarthy-Brown (1991), Rouget (1985), Sered (1994), and Lovell (2002). Others, such as Roger Bastide (1960) and Carvalho (1992) noted the phenomenon in Macumba, Umbanda, and Candomblé religions of Brazil which also merge Roman Catholicism with Traditional African Religions. The Otomi people of Mexico also equate ancestral Gods with Christian saints (Dow 1986: 10, 25) as do the faithful of the religion of “Santería” in Cuba (Brandon 1997: 5, 45-51, 76-77, 89, 170; de la Torre 2004: 13, 54, 70; 214; Wedel 2004). Old Zanko’s identification of Saint Peter with a Father God of Heaven conforms to a surprising degree to religions that merge Catholic saints with African or other sorts of ancestral deities. In Old Zanko’s case, he merges Judaism and Christianity with Chalderash Gods such as Sinpetra, the Pouro Del, and the Dé Develeski.

An improtant element of *Zanko, Chef Tribal* which indicates the presence of an animistic worldview is the place to which he gives animals in stories of the supernatural. It is animist in orientation because animals too are seen as inspired. Provocatively, Bernard alludes to Chalderash stories of humans who have been transformed into animals by “the Pouro Del Sinpetra.” According to one of Old Zanko’s narratives, these men were changed into animals as
punishment. Apparently, Bernard and his publishers chose not to include some others of these particular stories in Zanko, Chef Tribal for Bernard writes:

One must not forget that the Gypsies have a very vague notion of the progression of events and are unaware of history. Quite a lot of things, according to Zanko came to pass in the First World which cannot be placed in the story. “And so Sinpetra changed these wicked men into bears, lions, tigers which are perhaps the ancestors of these animals. Thus was the adventure of the Maimouna monkey. (Il ne faut pas oublier que les Tsiganes ont une notion très vague de la succession du temps et ignorant l’histoire. Bien des choses, selon Zanko, se sont pasées dans le Premier monde qui n’ont pu trouver place dans l’histoire. “Ainsi ces hommes méchants que Sinpetra a changé en ours, en lion, en tigre, et qui sont peut-être les ancêtres de ces animaux. Ainsi l’aventure du singe Maimouna!” (Bernard in Zanko 1959: 57)

Aside from the directive not to forget that the Gypsies cannot cognicize history, this particular narrative which “cannot be placed in the story,” deals with the transformation of men into animals. But in a totemistic and incarnate reversal; men were the ancestors of the animals, not animals the ancestors of men (as in Native American myth and the theory of biological evloution).

Another characteristic of Old Zanko’s cosmogony is that the Old God (Le Pouro Del) and the Devil (Le Bheng) seem human in that they possess definite personality traits as in many ancient and modern non-Judaic, non-Christian, and non-Islamic belief systems. For example, the Bheng, who Old Zanko equates somewhat with the devil, is not quite like the devil portrayed in the New Testament:

The Bheng is the one whom you call “the devil,” but he is not as wicked as they say…The Bheng is not the Pouro Del’s enemy. He is not good to human beings. The Bheng is the Pouro Del’s companion. But the Bheng takes pleasure in vexing the Pouro Del for the Bheng would like to take his place…The Bheng and the Phouro Del also enjoy challenging one another to see who is the most powerful. However, the Pouro Del always wins…The Bheng is more mischievous than wicked to men. (Le Bheng, c’est celui que vous appelez le diable, mais il n’est pas aussi méchant qu’on le dit… [Zanko 1959: passage 4: 22]. Le Bheng n’est pas l’ennemi du Pouro Del. C’est surtout avec les hommes qu’il n’est pas bon. C’est le compagnon du Pouro Del. Mais il le fâche souvent car il cherche toujours à lui prendre sa place… [ibid: passage 6], Souvent aussi le Bheng et le Pouro Del se provoquent pour voir qui sera le plus fort, mais le Pouro Del l’emporte toujours… [ibid: passage 8], Pour les hommes, le Bheng est plus malicieux que méchant… [Zanko 1959: passage 9: 22].

The above quote portrays the devil rather as though he were an exuberant young man who is a mischief maker when it comes to human beings, but when it comes to God, he is a friendly rival who saves them both from boredom by contriving various contests as does the
Pouro Del. And like men, the Bheng is neither all good nor all bad. In Chalderash tradition, the Bheng is not the incarnation of all evil as is the Devil in the New Testament.

Moreover, the Bheng is capable of friendship as are men. He is the “companion of God.” He is also an artistic “creator” having a trade as men have for he is a “potter,” (Bernard in Zanko 1959: 22) who forms the first woman and man of clay, although he is “powerless” when it comes “to giving life” to his creations: “Le Bheng...compagnon de Dieu et ‘créateur’ potier [potter], mais impuissant à donner la vie” (ibid). Indeed, the first woman and man resulted from a contest between the Bheng and the Pouro Del when they were walking along the banks of the “river-sea” of “Marea.” One is reminded of young men daring each other to do impossible feats.

They stop to look into the depths of the river-sea as people might do, and the idea suddenly occurs to the Pouro Del to challenge the Bheng to touch its bottom. The Bheng accepts his challenge and plunges in to swim to the bottom bringing up clay in proof that he completed the feat. Then the Old God said to him:

“I see you have touched bottom. And now, make two popusha, two statuettes of Roma with this earth. See if you can do this too.” And he therefore provoked him anew. But the Bheng met the challenge again saying: “I can do it.” And he made the two popusha, two statuettes of people... “Now try to make them speak. Let’s go. Show me from where you get your power.” The Bheng responded to the Pouro Del saying: “No. That I cannot do. I am incapable of that.” And he had to admit defeat. (“Je le vois. Tu as touché le fond. Et maintenant, fais deux popusha, deux statuettes de Roma avec cette terre. Fais voir si tu le peux aussi.” Et ainsi, de nouveau, il le provoqua. Mais le Bheng le brava encore, et lui dit: “Je le peux.” Et il fit les deux popusha, les deux statuettes d’hommes... [Zanko 1959: passage 20: 24], “Maintenant essaye de les faire parler. Allons. Montre-moi jusqu’où va ton pouvoir.” Le Bheng répondit au Pour Del et lui dit: “Non, cela je ne le ferai pas. Je n’en suis pas capable” Et il dut s’avouer vaincu [ibid: passage 22]).

There is something charming about this creation story. The two protagonists are humanly appealing in their walk along the sea together as they look into its depths. This activity gives God the idea to challenge the Bheng to one of their many contests, and like a “good sport,” the Bheng willingly concedes himself vanquished when he cannot give life to the statuettes of clay. This very charm comes from the depiction of Gods as anthropomorphic.
Aside from the myth’s charm, however, the portrayal of the Bheng as a potter may be a matter of some consequence for the making of clay bricks was once intimately connected with metalcraft. Ovens and forges of clay bricks were a necessity for producing the great heat needed to melt metals (Aitchinson 1960; Craddock 1995; Herbert 1993; McNaughton 1988; Mitchell 1961). The Chalderash were, and some still are, both makers of clay bricks and metalworkers. In fact, the Chalderash were noted for their metalwork from England to Russia to the New World, and there is even documentation that the making of clay bricks by Gypsies was always an auxiliary craft to their metalworking.

For instance, there are specific Chalderash families who traditionally fabricate clay bricks in Slavic lands of Eastern Europe. Czech anthropologist Milena Hübschmannová who collected data from the Czech Roma, found that in the Czech and Slovak Republics certain families are referred to as “Valki,” which is also the term for the clay bricks that they make. The Valki were “semi-itinerant,” leaving their villages during the summer to travel to various agricultural communities that purchased their services along with that of the semi-itinerant blacksmith Roma who fabricated and repaired farm tools and cookware (Hübschmannová 1998: 257). The entire family took part in brick-making including children as young as four or five years of age (ibid). Women of these families also specialized in smearing the farmwives’ ovens with adobe (ibid: 241). Hübschmannová also found a direct link between Gypsy brickmaking and Gypsy metalsmithing for “adobe-brick” families continue to refer to themselves as “chartiko fajta (blacksmiths)” even though in post-world-war-two Europe they only fabricate clay bricks for a livelihood and no longer engage in metalwork (1998: 247).

Old Zanko’s narrative of the Bheng who is a potter includes reference to brick-makers as Chalderash, although he refers to Chalderash brick-makers by different terminology. He states
that there are Chalderash families who specialize in the making of bricks (tsigli) by the same method as related by Hűbschmannová (1998) and Lačková (2000):

The Tsiglarea fabricate bricks. We say of these last: “These are the Djimbasha,” that is people of the race which was born in the caves of the mountains of Zagrebo. They converted the natural caves into habitations and they hollowed out some themselves. They are nomads as we are. They fabricate the tsigli, the bricks, by mixing and pressing the clay with their feet. These bricks are used in construction. All, Chalkaverea, Kowatchi, Grastarea et Tsiglarea belong to the Chalderash race. (Les Tsiglarea fabriquent des briques. Nous disons de ces derniers: “Ce sont des Djimbasha,” c’est-à-dire des gens dont la race est née dans les grottes des montagnes du Zagrebo. Ils aménageaient les grottes naturelles en habitations et ils creusaient eux-mêmes. Ils sont nomads comme nous. Ils fabriquaient les tsigi, les briques, en malaxant et pressant de l’argile avec leurs pieds. Ces briques servaient à la construction. Tous, Chalkaverea, Kowatchi, Grastarea et Tsiglarea appartenaient à la race des Chald era) (Zanko 1959: passage 10: 33).

Two features of the above quote may give insights in regard to Chalderash history. First, Old Zanko depicts the Bheng as a potter responsible for making Adam and Eve (Damo ha Yewah) of clay. Second, by referring to Tsigareaa and Djimbasha as Chalderash, he links them to the metalworking Chalderash. He tells us that the Tsiglarea, also known as Djimbasha, are Chalderash who once lived in caves and they converted these caves into habitations. It is cause for speculation as to why the Gitanos (Gypsies) of Spain (also originally metalworkers) live in caves to this day.

Gypsies are the undisputed proprietors of the caves of Spain. No one really knows for how long the Gypsies have inhabited these caves, but no Spaniard denies that cave-dwelling is unique to Gypsies of that country. Inside, the caves are smeared with adobe and coated with lime (crushed chalky rock mixed with water) to even the cave walls. The outside facades of these caves are constructed of brick and hung with ceramic plates (also a product of fired clay and customary to the Gitanos of Spain alone) that are painted in brilliant colors which are specifically and “typically,” of “Gypsy design” (conversation with Manuel and Solédad Martín Cobo, proprietors of the Carmen de la Alcubilla del Carocel Hotel on the Alahmbra Hill in Granada, Spain during this researcher’s residence there from 9/7/2005 until 9/13/2005).
Old Zanko’s cave-dwelling Gypsies are *Djimbasha* which Gilles Eynard identifies as a *vitsa* name (lineage of Chalderash families) (Communication of 12/21/2010). Man-made caves may have been produced by the mining of metals for metals are found mostly in mountainous regions (Aitchison 1960; Craddock 1995; Mitchell 1961). Therefore, Old Zanko’s “myth” about the existence of “Djimbasha” native to the caves of Zagrebo may have a basis in real Chalderash history. Old Zanko’s narratives in 1959, Hűbschmannová’s data published in 1998 and 1999, and data from Spain directly link clay pottery and brick making to the traditional Gypsy crafts of metalworking. In short, the Bheng as potter and Old Zanko’s statements about the Tsiglarea (Djimbasha) are important data that possibly point to actual historical facts as well as to Chalderash conceptions of deity.

There is one more facet of Chalderash brick manufacturing and metalworking that has not been addressed. This is the awe and dread in which both professions were held by the people to whom these specialized craftsmen Chalderash offered their services. Ilona Lačková tells us that the Czech Gypsy valki-makers are shunned as “unclean” by other Roma. Czech Roma accuse them of both eating dogs and selling the fat of dogs to pharmacies, hence Roma not of these families call brick-making Roma “the Rikoňara,” (“Dog-eaters”). She also connects them with a legend about a beautiful golden-haired countess who fell in love with a handsome Rikoňaro youth and ran away with him. They married and she lived in the way of a Rikoňari and joined him in making valki by pressing weeds and clay together with her bare feet (1999: 185-187). Whether these people actually eat dogs is doubtful. Lačkova did not find them eating dogs. However, what these stories convey is a certain fear of the valki-makers which may have been expressed as stories of their “impurity” as dog-eaters.
Certainly in my own fieldwork I noticed that Hungarian Roma of Detroit evinced a certain fear and contempt for the Chalderash (coppersmiths, blacksmiths) even though they recognized them as being “truly Gypsy.” They call the Chalderash “the more traditional metalworking Vlakwa” and refer to them as “ignorant” and “wild.” One of my consultants stated explicitly, “we are afraid of them.” But when I asked him the reason why he is afraid, he was rather vague referring to the fact that Chalderash and Hungarian Roma do not marry but “know about” one another, and sometimes Hungarian Roma are hired to play music at Chalderash weddings, but they “leave before the fights start.” This is not to say that the Chalderash actually “fight” during weddings. Some years ago I studied with Chalderash and never witnessed “fighting.” Rather, I found that people of Detroit Chalderash lineages are tremendously conciliatory in disagreement as are Detroit Hungarian Roma, and they strongly disapprove of incivility in any form. Nonetheless, an ambiguous relationship does seem to exist between Chalderash and other Roma in the US as well as in Europe today. Belorus Gypsy scholar and poet, Valdemar Kalinin residing in London, England expressed this relationship: “There are not friendly relations between our Roma and Calderash” (Communication with V. Kalinin 3/12/2011). This fear and mistrust between Chalderash and Roma lineages in the metro-Detroit area may relate to the traditional metalsmithing of the Chalderash, the awe of which extended to their wives as spiritual advisors and shamanic healers.

Moreover, fear of metalworkers is a worldwide phenomenon and relates to their perceived spiritual power. Anthropologist Eugenia Herbert noticed the fear with which metalworkers are regarded in Africa where knowledge of metalcraft is also kept secret and transmitted by means of initiation (Herbert 1993). The same may be said of Chalderash metalworkers, for their knowledge of metalsmithing too was transmitted from generation to
generation and kept secret (Hûbschmannovà 1998: 238-239) and they too were regarded with fear by peasant populations of Europe as well as by Roma lineages who are not metalworkers. Herbert also records that African metalworkers are regarded as magicians and their wives as witches. Herbert’s data also includes the curious practice of treating the clay forges for smelting metals as though they were women. Rituals of the forge are decidedly sexual in content and expression which may relate to the Earth (clay) as a feminine spiritual force that through men’s labor “gives birth” in a magical transformation which produces metal artifacts surrounding metalsmiths in an aura of mystery and magic (Herbert 1993). So too the wives of Chalderash metalsmiths were regarded with awe and fear by the European peasantry (and perhaps by the Roma as well) for their ability to work “magic spells”.

Anthropologist Frederik Barth, who collected data from an ethnic group of Persian metalsmiths known as Ghorbati describes them as “Gypsies” and as a “guest population” saying that they are regarded with “distrust” and “suspicion” by their Basseri “hosts” as “a despised pariah group” (Barth 1961: 91-92). Barth reveals by the use of vocabulary that he was familiar with the middle-man minority theory discussed previously herein (see also Simmel 1950; Weber 1952). But the point which I make here is that Ghorbati status as a feared and marginalized ethnic group is due to their metalworking trade (ibid). It seems that everywhere metalworkers and their brick-making cohorts exercise their skills they are feared and marginalized (even by their own people) as are the Chalderash metalsmiths and brick-makers of Europe.

An important basis for the fear in which metalworkers and potters are held is their reputation as magicians and sorcerers. Eugenia Herbert’s African data confirms this (1993) as does that of the Nigerian writer Camara Laye whose people were goldsmiths and jewelers and whose mother was honored yet feared as a sorceress (1954: 27, 83-91) because of the hereditary
metalcraft practiced by men of the family. Mircea Éliade (1962) also relates that metalworkers are feared as magicians throughout Europe.

That Chalderash women are particularly known for having divinatory skills, as herbalists, and as workers of magic spells (e.g. Clébert 1967: 190-200; Yoors 1967, 1986; Tomaševič and Djurič 1988: 9) comes then as no surprise for Chalderash are metalworkers and potters. Moreover, Chalderash women’s knowledge of herbs also may stem from knowledge of metals for certain plants indicate that deposits of metallic minerals lie in the ground beneath them. Some plants tolerate high concentrations of metals such as copper and lead and may even flourish in soils contaminated with these minerals whereas other plants would die. Such herbs as Saxifraga hypnoides, Thlaspi alpestre, and Minvatia verna (common Sandwort and Leadwort) are lead-tolerant (Craddock 1995: 30-31). Vioa lutea indicates the presence of zinc in the soil; Silene rupestris grows above copper (ibid: 31). Sometimes plants will have blackened foliage when certain minerals lie beneath them (ibid). Knowledge of herbs is a concomitant of gathering metals.

Lačková’ refers to the spiritual power wielded by certain families the main subsistence activity of which was the collection of wild medicinal herbs (1999). One such family by the surname of Cibrikan “were experts on medicinal herbs and knew how to interpret dreams” connecting herbalism with a form of divinatory practice (Lačková 1999: 29). Old Zanko too specifically mentions the importance of dreams among French Chalderash metalsmiths:

We also attach a great importance to dreams. It is the Del or those of our ancestors who come to warn us. It is necessary to make certain [that we] understand that which they wish to say to us (Nous attachons aussi une grande importance aux songes. C’est le Del ou ce sont nos anciens qui viennent nous avertir. Il faut tâcher de comprendre ce qu’ils veulent nous dire) (Zanko 1959: passage 73: 86).

In discussing the above quote with Gilles Eynard, he informed me of the especial significance given to the appearance of a dead person in dreams among the Chalderash and how
such an appearance of the dead may constitute a preliminary to healing, recounting the story of a man whose dead brother had appeared to him in a dream and told him that he had a serious medical condition which was entirely unknown to the man himself. This dream caused this man to seek medical attention at which time he found that the apparition of his brother had saved his life. Gilles Eynard directly links dreams that reveal a need for healing to Chalderash shamanism (Communication of 10/25/2010; 12/10/2011).

All the above mentioned skills: metal work, brick-making, and herbal knowledge, as well as the special powers attached to divination by means of dreams apparently were once and still are intimately related to one another in French Chalderash culture. Bearing all of the above in mind, let us now return to Old Zanko’s cosmogony wherein the Bheng makes clay figurines but cannot make them live.

Old Zanko relates how the Pouro Del makes the two popusha (“statuettes”) of clay come alive by striking each of them with his baton. Immediately two trees spring up behind the statuettes, an apple tree behind the woman popusha and a pear tree behind the man popusha which envelop them in their branches:

Each tree in touching and enveloping its statuette had given it human flesh and it lived. And therefore, they became man and woman, Rom and Romni, that is Damo ha Yewah (Chaque arbre, en touchant, en enveloppant sa statuette, l’avait mise en chair humaine et elle vivait. Et ainsi sont venus l’homme et la femme, Rom et Romni, c’est-a-dire Damo ha Yewah) (Zanko 1959: passages 23-24: 24).

This is the story of Adam and Eve but uniquely Chalderash in its formulation and detail. It is not quite biblical but important ethnographically.

A section now follows explaining how the earth came to be peopled by Damo and Yewah which is similar to Scripture but specifically Chalderash in outlook and divergent of detail. In brief, this tale relates that man and woman eat different fruit. The man begins to eat a pear, and the woman approaches a tree to eat an apple but finds in its branches “le Sap, the Serpent” which
guards the tree. Yewah recoils in horror but God orders her to eat the apple and the Serpent graciously nods its head to the woman in acquiescence to the Pouro Del’s command. By the man eating the pear and the woman eating the apple “chamalpa” was created between them “c’est-à-dire, l’amour” (ibid: passages 25-30: 24-25). And so the Earth was peopled (ibid: passages 31-46: 25-26) which also caused stars to appear in the heavens:

And it is from this that there came to be so many stars in the sky for men all have lesti tchalai ando tcheri that is their star in the sky. It is their Huréale, that is, their sign, their halo, that which mounts on high at their birth and which stays there during their life. But when they die, their star falls. (Et c’est de là aussi que sont venues tant d’étoiles dans le ciel, car les hommes ont tous lesti tchalai ando chéri, c’est-à-dire leur étoile dans le ciel. Elle est leur Huréale, c’est-à-dire leur signe, leur aureole, ce qui monte d’eux là-haut dès leur naissance et y demeure pendant la vie. Mais quand ils meurent, leur étoile tombe) (Zanko 1959: passages 47-49: 26).

This narrative diverges from Scripture considerably. The Serpent is not an evil tempter which makes Eve eat of “forbidden” fruit that she also gives to Adam thereby disobeying God who banishes them from Paradise. Rather, the Serpent is the guardian of the apple tree, and it is God who commands Yewah to eat the apple to which the Serpent then accedes. There is no “sin” of disobedience. There is no depiction of banishment from a Garden of Eden or of woman as the evil temptress of man. Instead, God caused mutual desire in them for one another.

Furthermore, the myth explains the presence of stars in the sky for each star represents a human being on earth which also explains falling stars as people who have died, thus Chalderash would never wish upon a falling star. In another narrative pertaining to a “Divine Child,” we will learn that he too has his star, or sign in the heavens which is the greatest of stars.

However, this narrative does depict woman as being more libidinous than man for each time Damo makes “chamalpa” with Yewah she cries “again!” until God becomes annoyed saying that making love three times is “enough” which three then becomes a sacred number:

Three is enough. Three, in effect, is the measure for man in all things and is the benediction. Three is the cross (Trois c’est assez. Trois c’est en effet la mesure pour l’homme en toutes choses et c’est la benediction. Trois c’est la croix) (ibid: passages 33-43: 15-26).
But Yewah and Damo do not take heed, and so in disgust, God leaves them to their
lovemaking: “Then the Pouro Del abandoned them to their desire outside of the measure and the
benediction. (Alors le Pouro Del les a abandonée à leur desire hors de la mesure et de la
benediction). (Zanko 1959: passage 45: 26) Rather than commanding the man and woman to
multiply, God seems to be telling them to restrain themselves, another divergence from
Scripture.

I must now bypass the second narrative which recounts the war or “revolt” of the
Pharavunure against the forces of Sinpetra and in which the eschatology of a great flood occurs
inundating the world during which time only a few of the Pharavunure (ancestors of the Roma)
escape into the mountains of Zagrebo (ibid: 28-32), and a new world is created. I must go on to
other narratives even though there are important historical implications that may be derived from
this story. I leave this particular narrative to a forthcoming analysis by Gilles Eynard. He has
travelled around the world visiting Roma communities in researching this narrative wherever Old
Zanko’s words have led.

Neither will this exposition include the third narrative which tells of how the Raio (world
of the good dead) came to be divided from the Hiardo (world of the evil dead) (Zanko 1959: 28-
35) despite its importance. It is possible to give only a few exemplary narratives for the purpose
of illustrating import, genesis, and specificity to the Chalderash of religious traditions. The next
recitation to be analyzed is the fourth: The Mystery of the Divine Child and his Star, the Final
Disposition of Our World (ibid: 35-40). I have purposefully chosen this narrative for the fact that
it addresses issues of spiritual power, gender, and society.
Spiritual Power in Zanko, Chef Tribal

The narrative of the Divine Child is prefaced by Bernard’s definitions of people and the “brightest star” called “the Netchaphoro.” This preface relates important information. Dé Develeski is “identified” with “Sunto Mario, Holy Marie, or the ancestress Marie.” “Sinpetra” was “her father,” and the “Sunto Del, the Holy God” is his “child.” Bernard tells us that the “the names of Jesus and of Christ are unknown in this tradition” (“Les noms de Jésus et de Christ sont inconnus dans cette tradition” (Bernard in Zanko 1959: 35).

The appellation “Cretchuno,” appears in this story. According to its sound and spelling, one might think that it refers to “Christ,” but it does not. We learn from the preface that it is Saint Joseph who is called “Cretchuno,” not the divine child, and that he is “the godfather.” We are also told that the divine child has the right to his godfather’s name (“Et l’Enfant a droit aussi à ce nom (Cretchuno) de son parrain” (ibid: 35). Thus far, Bernard’s preface has conformed to Old Zanko’s narrative.

But when Bernard defines the Netchaphoro, he does not adhere to what Old Zanko actually says in the pertinent narrative:


Nowhere in the narrative, however, does Old Zanko refer to the Netchaphoro as “Lucifer,” nor does he allude to the Egyptians in any way. He very definitely says that it is the essence of Mary’s child. Although there are passages in Zanko, Chef Tribal that may be shown to parallel certain features of Egyptian mythology, here the Netchaphoro is the essence of the divine child who is the Sunto Del (Holy God), and definitely not the essence of Lucifer (demiurge). Besides which, if Old Zanko had been speaking of the Egyptian “Divine Child,” he probably would have been referring to Horus but Old Zanko does not mention Horus. Therefore,
it is better not to make assumptions based on a lack of evidence. We will look at the narrative for what it is, not for what it is not.

The narrative of a divine child may be partially Christian but adapted to specifically Chalderash concerns and beliefs about spiritual power. At this point it becomes useful to bear in mind the insights of French sociologist Émile Durkheim, who pointed out that religion often mirrors human society (1915). It is therefore remarkable how this particular narrative reflects Old Zanko’s Chalderash society, the narrative becoming a symbolic “vehicle” of culture (Geertz 1973) by which concepts about spiritual power and ritual purity regulations are transmitted.

Old Zanko begins by saying that the master of the Netchaphoro is “Our Lord, the Sunto Del” (“the Holy God”) and “amaro Del” (“our God”) who is “God of the world of the Ancestors” (“Dieux du monde des Ancêtre”). He was born a long time after Damo and Yewah (Zanko 1959: passage 1: 36). Cretchuno was his godfather and Cretchuno’s wife, Marie, was his godmother.

But this Marie was not the mother of the divine child:

There were in effect three Maries: the wife of Saint Joseph, the other Marie who clung to the foot of the cross, and Holy Marie. They were three sisters. They lived in the city of Porsaïda. It is there where the Child was born and where it all came to pass. (Il y avait en effet trois Marie: la femme de saint Joseph, l’autre Marie qui tenait au pied de la cross et saint Marie. C’étaient trois soeurs. Elles habitaient dans la ville de Porsaïda. C’est là que l’Enfant est né et que tout s’est passé) (ibid: passages 2–4).

Already the story has changed from that of any of the gospels. That the three Maries were sisters is certainly a new addition to the plot. That St. Joseph is the godfather of the divine child also seems quite different. The sisters vaguely resemble the Marys of Scripture. One may be the mother of Jesus, perhaps one is Mary Magdalene, and perhaps the third Mary was the sister of Martha in the biblical tale of Lazarus but one cannot be certain because this divine child is not called Jesus or referred to as Christ and because other personages do not appear in written Scripture, therefore it is quite difficult to equate unequivocally personages in Old Zanko’s
narratives with those in the Bible. In short, to decipher the symbolic and semiotic content of this narrative poses problems.

But suddenly the story seems familiar once again. Old Zanko says: “But holy Mary, the mother of the Child, did not have a husband (Mais sainte Marie, la mère de l’ Enfant n’avait pas l’homme”) (Zanko 1959: passage 5: 36). In the gospels this was cause in a family for both consternation and shame. And yet St. Joseph of the New Testament stays true to his espousal of Mary who was impregnated by God. At this point, it became obvious to the researcher that it might not be completely useful to always compare the two stories. Rather, it was decided that sometimes to take the Chalderash narrative at face value might yield more comprehension of the narrative’s message. Indeed, the Chalderash story unfolds not only in a way that reveals conceptions of deity and the spiritual world, but these mythic narratives also reflect the Chalderash social world.

According to Old Zanko, in those days, Mary, just as all women, had to bring water from a well to the household. She arrives at the well to find three pigeons flying about her head. In Chalderash tradition birds have a very important place in the spiritual world as messengers of God. In fact, Old Zanko mentions a Chalderash taboo against the eating of pigeon (ibid: passage 53: 82). God sends three pigeons to Mary to ask her if she will accept God’s “duko,” (“breath”) (ibid: passages 9-10: 36), “for three makes the cross and that is the sign of wisdom and benediction” (“car trois font la croix, et c’est le signe de la sagesse et de la benediction”) (ibid: passage 8). But Mary does not understand the pigeons’ message and she goes to her relatives for advice, to “Sinpetra” (her father), to “Abraham and Yacchof” (Hebrew for Jacob) (ibid: passage 12). They tell her to return to the well which she does and the pigeons ask her the same question. Again she does not understand and goes back to the three patriarchs who tell her to return
third time but this time she is to tell the pigeons “lau” (“yes”). Again the pigeons fly to her “car il faut toujours trois pour faire la croix de la benediction” (ibid: passage 17). And they ask her, “Marie, acceptez-vous le duko, le souffle du Pouro Del Sinpetra?” (“Mary, do you accept the duko, the breath of the Pouro Del Sinpetra?”) (ibid)

The sacred number three repeats throughout this narrative unifying it thematically with Old Zanko’s cosmogony. First in the number of pigeons, second in the number of times Mary returns to the patriarchs for advice, third in that there are three male relatives to whom she goes for advice, and fourth in the number of times that the pigeons ask her if she will accept the breath of God. So Mary returns to the well the third time and accepts the breath of God:

And she found herself pregnant. And this is how our Lord the Sunto Del [Holy God], the son of the Pouro Del [Old God] and of Holy Mary came into the world. And this is also how the young girl Mary became the Dé develeski, the divine Mother. Et elle se trouva enceinte. Et c’est de là qu’est venu au monde notre Seigneur le Sunto Del, le fils du Pouro Del et de sainte Marie. Et c’est de là que la jeune fille Marie est devenue aussi Dé develeski, la Mère divine (Zanko 1959: passages 19-20).

The story now changes scene to the birth of the divine child, and Mary’s sister (the wife of St. Joseph) the godmother, comes to assist at the birth. Afterwards, Mary, the mother of the child, lays him in the manger of a stable where he is surrounded by animals (a cow, a donkey, and sheep). The child’s head is surrounded by an aureole of light but suddenly the aureole of light becomes a Star and ascends to the sky. The star “was his reflection, his emanation, his heart, his sign, not only his sign, but something of himself. (C’était son reflet, son émanation…son coeur, son signe, et pas seulement son signe, mais quelque chose de lui”) (ibid: passages 21-23). This star is the Netchaphoro:

It is the most brilliant, the largest star in all of the sky. It is the one which is the first to shine when the new moon appears and which stays near to the moon. It directs the moon and the moon directs it. It is the one that shines brighter than the others and which shines after the others. It is the one which dominates and reigns over all the Tcheri, over all the sky of stars. You call it the Pole Star. It is the Netchaphoro. (C’est l’étoile la plus brillante et la plus grosse dans tout le ciel. C’est celle qui brille la première dès qu’apparait la nouvelle lune et qui tient près de la lune. Elle dirige la lune et la lune la dirige. C’est celle qui brille plus que les autres et qui brille encore après les autres. C’est celle qui domine et règne sur tout le Tchéri, sur tout le ciel des étoile. Vous l’appeliez l’Étoile Polaire. C’est le Netchaphoro) (Zanko 1959: passages 24-25: 37-38)
At this point the story becomes imbued with Chalderash concerns about ritual purity related to birth, women, and family. Mary, the wife of Saint Joseph and the godmother of the child, admires the beauty of the infant to such an extent that she ardently desires to touch him. In traditional Chalderash custom this is forbidden after the birth of a baby for a set amount of time until Christian baptism. There are only two people who may touch a newborn, the midwife and the mother. Therefore, the godmother cannot touch him. The godmother then pretends that hay is pricking the baby’s skin using this as an excuse to do what is forbidden. In Romani, this act is referred to as “mahrimé” (“impurity”). Afterwards, the godmother returns to her home and tells “Cretchuno, c’est-à-dire Saint Joseph, (Cretchuno, that is to say, St. Joseph”) that she touched the child because he was so beautiful.

But Cretchuno who had an axe was angry because of the impurity, for it is an impurity to touch a newborn child… and with the axe he cut off the two hands of his wife (Mais Cretchuno qui avait la hache, fut fâché à cause de l’impureté, car c’est une impureté de toucher un enfant nouvellement né… et avec la hache il coupa la deux mains de sa femme) (Zanko 1959: passages 29-30: 38)

Mary (St. Joseph’s wife, the godmother) then returns to Mary (mother of the child) who asks her what has happened to her hands. When Mary learns what has been done to the child’s godmother and why, she tells Mary the godmother, to place her “stumps” beneath the child. Saint Joseph’s wife does so. On pulling them back from beneath him, she finds that her hands have been restored, and she runs to tell her husband:

The wife of Saint Joseph went to her husband. She showed him her two hands which had been restored and she said to him: “Behold the power of Marie and her Child.” (La femme de saint Joseph alla vers son homme. Elle lui montra ses deux mains qui étaient revenues et elle lui dit: “Voilà le pouvoir de Marie et de l’Enfant” (ibid: passage 35).

This brief episode warrants analysis on a number of levels. First, In regard to the spiritual power of women and gender relations among the Chalderash, when St. Joseph’s wife shows him her restored hands she does not attribute the miracle to the power of the divine child alone but also to his mother who is called “divine” throughout the narrative. This is an important nuance
because a fine point of Christianity which distinguishes the myriad Protestant sects from the Roman Catholic Church and the Eastern Orthodox Church is the way in which saints and the mother of Jesus (God’s son) are regarded. Saints are never “divine” in Roman Catholicism, Eastern Orthodoxy, or Protestantism. On earth, they were especially good people who were rewarded with heaven after death. However, in most Protestant religions only the apostles are regarded as “saints,” and saints (including Mary, Jesus’ mother) were only mortal beings having nothing of “divinity” about them. They are not “Gods” in all three religions.

In regard to Mary, the majority of Protestants never offer prayers to her, and very rarely to other saints, especially to women saints. Furthermore, most Protestants denominations do not recognize the existence of Catholic and Orthodox saints but regard them as fabrications. Thus, most of Protestant Christianity has been purged of the feminine nearly altogether. There are no powerful women saints whom one may address for protection and help in the temporal world. Women saints, including Mary the mother of Jesus, have no spiritual power. According to Protestant theology, Mary was simply the human vehicle for God’s birth in human form, and no special regard or respect is due to her, therefore.

Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy, however, include the idea of feminine power. In Roman Catholicism there are hundreds of saints, including many women saints who are virgin, married, or widowed, and who may be entreated for aid during one’s earthly existence. Indeed, there is a saint for every day of the year, and many of them are women. In Eastern Orthodoxy there is also special devotion to the saints (men and women) and every home includes a niche for icons in front of which are burned sacrificial incense and candles and before which prayers are said. No such home altar is complete without its image of “The Blessed Mother of God” who receives special reverence in both of these Christian theologies.
Mary is offered a very special devotion in Catholicism called *hyperdulia* which is different from the reverence given to saints (Hoever, Editor 1956). Mary is more important than the other saints and her titles include that of “Queen of Heaven,” and “Vessel of Devotion” (ibid; Buckley 1986). When Catholics address prayers to Mary they do not address them to Mary as only “Mother of God,” but also often address her as “our Mother” (ibid). Old Zanko identified himself with Eastern Orthodoxy and Catholicism in this regard, both in the honor he gives to the mother of the divine child who also becomes Dé Develeski, and in his narrative about Chalderash icons. I quote here at length in order to illustrate the great spiritual power that the Chalderash attribute to icons:

We have among ourselves a profound cult of the “*iconi.*” This is what we call the holy images, painted, engraved, or sculpted. For us, the *icona* is not simply a picture or a representation. It is a holy sign which marks the presence of the Del, of the Dé Develeski or of a *sunto.* It is something which brings their presence, we are made to feel it, it permits us to see them in some way, to speak, to pray to them, and by which we are protected by them.

Also, many of the Chalderash burn a votive light day and night before the *iconi* of the tent as you do before the Sunto Del or the *Sunto Patradioro* (Holy Eucharist) at the Changheri (Church). Many Chalderash and Sinti also keep iconi in a chest or in their wallet. I believe this may be said for ‘all’ [of them] or nearly all [of them]. They safely store them there in order to look at them often, to pray over [them], kissing them with love, confidence and respect.

The Chalderash and also the Sinti both place iconi with prayers in little packets which we suspend around the necks of our children in order to protect them and in order to cure them in case of sickness. We do the same with ‘medals’ which are also for us iconi. We avoid profaning the iconi by allowing them to drag upon the ground or to fall upon it. This would be a sort of sacrilege. The iconi that we like are those which represent the face of the Del, of Sunto Maria and of a saint. Images that represent stories, even the stories of saints are not truly iconi. (Nous avons un culte profound pour les “*iconi.*” C’est ainsi que s’appellent chez nous les images saintes, peintes, gravée ou sculptée. Pour nous, l’*icona* n’est pas simplement une image ou une répresentation. C’est un signe saint qui marque la présence du Del, de la Dé Develeski ou d’un *sunto.* C’est quelque chose qui amène leur presence, nous la fait sentir, nous permet de les voir en quelque manière, de leur parler, de prier et qui nous protège par eux.)

Aussi beaucoup de Chalderash font brûler jour et nuit une veilleuse devant les iconi de la tente, comme vous le faites à la Changheri devant le Sunto Del ou le *Sunto Patradioro.* Beaucoup de Chalderash et Sinti possèdent aussi des iconi dans un coffret ou dans leur portefeuille. Je crois qu’il faudrait dire ‘tout’ ou à peu prés. Ils les y conservent précieusement les regardent souvent pour ‘prier dessus,’ les baisent avec amour, confiance et respect. Les Chalderash et aussi les Sinti, placent également des iconi, avec des priers dans de petits sachets que nous suspendons au cou de nos enfants pour les protéger et pour les guérir en cas de maladie.


This is not dogmatically Catholic wherein statues and images of the saints only concentrate attention but do not have spiritual power. In Old Zanko’s belief, however, the icons
actually attract the spiritual power possessed by various saints which animates the images. Thereby the owners of the icons are protected. Old Zanko’s narrative about icons definitely bespeaks a Catholic, an Eastern Orthodox, and an animistic frame of reference.

It therefore appears that Old Zanko was neither completely Eastern Orthodox nor completely Roman Catholic, but his Christianity incorporated (encompassed) both viewpoints blending animist Chalderash beliefs with Christianity that includes the recognition of feminine spiritual power for the Dé Develeski is both the Earth and the powerful mother of the Divine Child. The veneration of saints embodied by the icons is both Catholic and Orthodox and Old Zanko insists upon his Christianity:

Our fathers told us that we were the first Christians in our Bonat and we believe them. We were Christians even before all the countries of the West that we travel through. Without doubt it is because of our nomadic life and the absence of Rashai [priests] among our tribes that we are less instructed than others in the religion. Our old ones explained to us as much as they were able to what they had learned and perhaps they had mixed what they had learned from missionaries with what they previously knew about the Del and about religion.

(Nos pères nous ont dit que nous avons été les premiers des chrétiens dans notre Bonat et nous les croyons. Nous étions chrétien bien avant tous ces pays d’Occident que nous traversons. C’est sans doute à cause de notre vie nomade et de l’absence de Rashai dans nos tribus que nous sommes moins instruits que d’autres dans la religion. Nos anciens nous ont expliqué, comme ils ont pu, ce qu’ils avaient appris et peut-être ont-ils mélangé ce qu’ils avaient appris des missionnaires avec ce qu’ils savaient auparavant du Del et de la religion!) (ibid: passage 93: 91-92).

Old Zanko’s assessment of the Chalderash belief system seems to be rather insightful. In the same year as the publication of Zanko, Chef Tribal, Alfred Métraux wrote of a similar amalgam of religions exhibited by the New World religion of Haiti known as “Voodoo.” Métraux noted that adherents to this religion insisted they were Catholics seeing no contradiction in doing so (1959, 1972: 323). Twenty-two years prior to Métraux’s study, Melville Herskovits writing of Voodoo had said the same (1937). So too Macumba priestess, María José, insisted to French journalist Serge Bramly that she was “a good Christian” (1975, 1977: 95). This attitude resembles that of Old Zanko.
Old Zanko also addresses the blending of Catholicism with Eastern Orthodoxy in the Chalderash belief system:

There are many Orthodox and Catholics among us. But we do not see the difference between the Orthodox and the Catholics and we do not make one. We say: “Sunto Maria was Catholic,” because we see many churches of Saint Mary among the Catholics from Poland to Spain. We say: “Sunto Sinpetri was Orthodox,” because we see many churches of Sinpetri among the Orthodox. But previously, we did not know that the greatest church of Saint Peter is in Rome.


This is all that Old Zanko says upon the subject of how the Chalderash reconcile Catholicism with Eastern Orthodoxy. The only religious traditions that are not a part of Old Zanko’s narratives are Islam and dogmatic Protestantism. Of dogmatic Protestantism, anthropologist Jane Schneider (1990) says that it has purged itself of feminine power and animism in all of its forms. This may also be said of many Islamic religions.

Zanko, Chef Tribal is fascinating to read because of the amalgamation of at least three identifiable belief systems: Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, and Chalderash that together create a different way of viewing the world and religion. The pioneering efforts to understand the blending of religions (e.g., Voodoo) by Métraux and Herskovits provide a template by which to analyze Old Zanko’s narratives. One of the hypotheses of this paper is that Old Zanko’s narratives are neither confused nor due to ignorance but rather to this blending of religions.

The blending of religious belief systems may also be seen in the story of the Divine Child. Specifically, the role of godparents in the Chalderash belief system parallels and yet diverges from Christian orthodoxy in a significant way represented by the cutting off of the godmother’s hands. Ritual purity is a distinctive Chalderash concern which complicates and adds another dimension to the story of the birth of a divine child. This dimension is agonistic in tone for it is shocking to think a man would cut off the hands of a woman for touching a new-born,
and the image it creates in one’s imagination is horrifying. In effect, a catharsis takes place for the woman concerned, both physical and psychological (Bohart 1980; La Barre 1964; Nichols and Zax 1977).

Reading these passages, one has a sense of not only observing and experiencing the traumatic event followed by a miraculous transformation but one also feels as though one has sustained a catharsis oneself. Aristotle (1895) wrote concerning the emotional impact of tragedy upon an audience maintaining that tragedy’s very purpose is to excite the emotions of the spectators thereby allowing a release from human anxiety by evoking the fearful conditions of everyday existence. In other words, one is compelled to confront directly that which is feared thereby being purified (the catharsis) of it. Old Zanko’s narratives do exactly that.

They confront Chalderash concerns that ritual purity be maintained by means of a ritual “purification” of the most drastic sort, a mutilation (Bettelheim 1955; Durkheim 1915; Girard 1977; de Heusch 1985: 23; Hubert and Mauss 1964) that would have been tragic indeed if the miraculous had not intervened to transform the outcome. Suddenly pain, horror, and loss of limb are converted into joy and wholeness by means of spiritual power. Listeners to the narrative would experience the woman’s horror and the woman’s joy as renewal occurs (the restoration of hands). One’s empathy is excited and one identifies with the woman at a deep psychological level (Ehrenwald 1966; Haley 1963; Kellerman 1980; Tyler, editor 1969). Thus, the story conveys the importance of ritual purity. Ritual purity is so important, such a serious matter, that the most drastic action is permissible. The narrative is memorable specifically for this reason.

Again Émile Durkheim’s insights are particularly helpful. In hypothesizing that all of social life may be dichotomized into a “profane” or secular realm (domain) that may be differentiated from a “sacred” realm, Durkheim observed that sacrifice connects the two. Both
the sacrificer and the victim (be it human, animal, or plant) which have their being in the temporal (secular) world thereby become transferred to the sacred realm, and, for a time, are transformed into “gods” (Durkheim 1915).

Although Old Zanko’s narrative is not a “rite” in the sense that it is not a formal and directed ceremony of symbolic transference, it nonetheless transports the actors of the sacrificial event to a sacred realm where miracles occur proving that Mary and the Divine Child have the spiritual power to restore life and limb. Once more, the sacrificial event took place between the godparents. Among the American Chalderash, for example, the godparents of children are considered to be “like God” (Miller 1994).

In the chapter of Zanko, Chef Tribal that is devoted to religious customs and practices, Old Zanko educates us concerning birth and ritual purity still further. He says that at birth the infant is not only “impure.” The child is not yet a Chalderash or even human:

The child at its birth is impure, that is, it is not yet “ours.” One does not know who it is. One does not know what it is. Because of this one must not touch it. Our God defended it Even the father does not have the right to touch his child. This impurity includes the mother who is herself obliged to touch it and to stay with it. (L’enfant à sa naissance est impur, c’est-à-dire qu’il n’est pas ‘propre.’ On ne sait pas ce qu’il est, on ne sait pas ce que c’est. A cause de cela il ne faut pas le toucher. Notre Dieu l’a défendu. Même le père n’a pas le droit de toucher son enfant. Cette impureté englobe la mère qui, elle, est obligée de toucher et de rester avec lui). (Zanko 1959: passages 26-27: 77)

Old Zanko then elaborates the idea that the child is not yet one of them. This is because the child has not been baptized:

The child is not ours because it is not baptized, not myreano. Then one does not know what it is but it is not a human being (L’enfant n’est pas propre parce qu’il n’est pas baptisé, pas myreano. Alors on ne sait pas ce que c’est mais ce n’est pas un être humain) (Zanko 1959: passage 30: 77).

Zanko goes on to explain that this state of ritual impurity when the child is not yet fully human continues forty days in principle (“en principe”) but in practice sometimes lasts only fifteen days or until the baptism which preferably takes place “as soon as possible” ((ibid: passage 28). The belief that a baby is not fully human until after the purification of baptism is not
a dogma of either the Roman Catholic Church or of the Eastern Orthodox Rite. This is certainly specific to the Chalderash belief system. However, that the child is regarded as not quite human prior to a ritual cleansing is not unique to the Chalderash. Many traditional societies in Asia, Africa, and elsewhere have similar beliefs and practices (e.g., Van Gennep 1960; Leach 1961; Turner 1968).

The anthropologist Arnold van Gennep is well-known for the discovery that such rituals of transition marking a change of social status are recognizable cross-culturally by means of three stages. There is first a ritual separation from the group. This is then followed by a time period in which one is regarded as being in a state of “liminality,” that is in the midst of a change of social status, in a state of becoming something other than what one is. The third step involves integration or re-integration with the group with a celebration of the new social status (Van Gennep 1960). Old Zanko’s baptismal rite follows this model in that the newborn and mother are regarded as “unclean” and separated from the group for a certain number of days. During this time the infant and mother are in a state of liminality. Old Zanko expresses this concept by the phrase “the child is not ours,” “it is not a human being,” and the mother, because she must share the fate of the child is also ritually unclean. The rite of baptism marks the change in the baby’s status from being non-human to fully human after which a great celebration follows. Old Zanko also stipulates that the baptism take place in a church with ritual officiants of Christianity, the priest and godparents (Zanko 1959: passage 34: 78).

The godmother and godfather have a special role among the Chalderash that expands their realm of activity in a way which orthodox Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy does not. Because the godparents are the first to touch the child after the days of liminality have ended, they are then considered to be the child’s parents even more so than the biological parents:
It is the godfather who is the father of the child and the godmother who is his mother more so than his biological father and mother because it was they who were the first to touch him at the baptism in making him into a man (C’est le parrain qui est le père de l’enfant et la marraine qui est sa mère plus que ses père et mère naturels, parce que ce sont eux qui le touchent les premiers au baptême et en font un homme) (ibid: passage 31: 77).

The ritual importance of the godparents is stressed in that the names of “mother,” “father,” “son,” and “daughter” are not only honorifics. The godparents are considered to be the child’s adoptive parents as well:

Also the child may call them “my father,” “my mother,” also kirvo, kirvi and they may call [the child] “my son,” “my daughter” in all truthfulness…It is in the sense that Saint Joseph was the father of the Sunto Del, for he was his hirvo [kirvo] (Aussi l’enfant peut leur dire “mon père,” “ma mère,” aussi bien que kirvo, kirvi et ils peuvent lui dire “mon fils,” “ma fille” en toute vérité…C’est en ce sens que saint Joseph était le père du Sunto Del, car il était son hirvo [kirvo]) (ibid passage 31, 33: 77-78).

That Joseph is the godfather of the Divine Child now becomes comprehensible. According to the Chalderash belief system, St. Joseph was the adoptive father of the Divine Child precisely because he was the godfather. Therefore, what may have seemed to Bernard to be confusion on the part of the Chalderash caused by their misunderstanding of Christian doctrine may not have been confusion at all but may have rather been indication of the merging together of two belief systems (Christian with Chalderash) evinced in another rite presided over by godparents who must be man and wife (not required in Catholicism or Eastern Orthodoxy) in order to give the newborn their joint name. This rite follows baptism only if the child has ill-health:

But if the child is sickly after baptism we say that the godfather was unlucky in giving him his name; then the godfather renounces his title, then we carry the child to the middle of a field, we abandon him there for a while after which another godfather takes him into his arms and lifts him three times in his arms towards the sky giving him his name. The godmother does the same. (Mais si l’enfant demeure souffreteux après le baptême nous disons que le parrain a été malchanceux en lui donnant son nom; alors le parrain renonce à son titre, puis nous portons l’enfant au milieu d’un champ, nous l’y abandonnons un moment, après quoi un autre parrain va le prendre dans ses bras et il l’élevé trois fois dans ses bras vers le ciel en lui donnant son nom. Il en va de même pour la marraine) (Zanko 1959: passage 34: 78)

In the case described above, spiritual power heals sickness and is affected by the actions of two sets of godparents which may be described as the cutting of social ties to stop the flow of bad luck (the child’s ill health). To abandon the child in a field symbolizes a return to a pre-
social state of nature. After this time period, a new set of godparents take up the child lifting it towards the heavens three times at the same time giving the child a new name that is the surname of the two godparents. The ritual number three again appears, the seal to vows made by the godparents to protect the child during his or her lifetime, and the newborn becomes human once again as well as being reintegrated into human society.
**Animism and Zanko, Chef Tribal**

An important hypothesis of this study is that Old Zanko’s belief system was partially animist in concept and *Zanko, Chef Tribal*, often reveals an animist subtext. Discussed in the beginning of this chapter is the importance of the earth in the Chalderash belief system. Old Zanko speaks of the earth as a deity, attributing to it a sentience which is a characteristic of animism. Bernard even marvels over the way in which Old Zanko talked about the earth with the sort of “filial affection” (Bernard in Zanko 1959: 48-49) that one would attach to a real person such as one’s mother which is apparently still the case among “the most traditional Roma” who to this day do not purchase apartments or housing in conformance with the tradition that as “Divine Mother,” the earth “cannot be bought or sold” for the earth “does not belong to anyone or belongs to everybody” (Communication with Gilles Eynard 10/17/2010).

The birds in *Zanko, Chef Tribal* are also animated by spirit and hence they are able to talk. In the tale of the *Divine Child*, pigeons ask Mary if she will accept the breath of God (1959: 35-40). Pigeons tell Ilia how to bring his parents back to life in *Sunto Proroc et Sunto Ilia (ou La Vocation du Dieu de l’Orage)* (passages 49-59: 99). In *Les Cycles des Géants: Novaca, Grouya et Tsell I Baro Grado*, Grouya becomes so drunk in his wandering from tavern to tavern thinking about how he will “civilize” the city at issue that he falls from his horse to the great amusement of the very people who he has come to civilize. They tie him up and throw him into a deep hole. His savior is “the great Kurungano,” the “leader” of a band of crows who is also a sentient being. He discovers Grouya, and at Grouya’s request, brings a message to Novaca, Grouya’s father, who comes and releases Grouya from the ropes with which he is tied (1959: 121-123). Also horses are sentient beings who talk. In the story, *Poltro and Kalo ou le Cheval qui Possédait le Pouvoir du Del*, the hero of the story is “a little horse” named “Kalo” who has both intelligence
and magic power. This intelligence allows him to speak with Poltro and warn him against various dangers including Poltro’s own ignorance and foolishness, and Kalo’s magic power saves Poltro from himself and his antagonists on many an occasion (1959: 180-198).

The Moon is also animated by spirit according to Old Zanko. First, Old Zanko tells us that the Chalderash celebrate the appearance of each new moon:

At the appearance of each new moon, we salute the moon, uncover [our heads] and we address vows to her for the new month that has begun, as you do for each new year, so that the new moon will be auspicious, for it is the moon which regulates time. (À l’apparition de chaque nouvelle lune, nous saluons la lune en nous découvrant et nous lui adressons nos voeux pour le nouveau mois qu’elle commence, comme vous le faites vous-même pour chaque nouvelle année, afin que la nouvelle lunaison soit bonne, car c’est la lune que règle le temps (Zanko 1959: passage 6: 73-4).

Nineteen pages later we learn of a staff that was once wielded by the patriarch of the family on ceremonial occasions. It was decorated with five symbols one of which was the “sign” (“semno”) of the Moon: “the face of Shion or Shonuto, the moon in the form of the crescent in its first quarter (la figure de Shion ou Shonuto, la lune sous la forme du croissant en son premier quartier” (ibid: passage 96: 3: 93).

And finally we learn that there is a special prayer addressed to it every month:

We say Shonuto nevo anklisto, the new moon has come out, Tal aminghe bachtalo = that we may be lucky; Alacl-ame bilovengo = she has found us without money; Te mukel ame bashtasa = May she leave us with good luck; Ai sastimasa = and with good health; Ai lovensa = and with money. (Nous disons Shonuto nevo anklisto: la lune nouvelle est sortie; Tal aminghe bachtalo = qu’elle nous soit chanceuse; Alacl-ame bilovengo = elle nous a trouvés sans argent; Te mukel ame bashtasa = qu’elle nous laisse avec la chance; Ai sastimasa = et avec la santé; Ai lovensa = et avec de l’argent). (Zanko 1959: passage 96, 5: 93-94)

The belief that the Moon listens to and answers one’s prayers presupposes an intelligence or spirit animating it.

At one point in the text an exchange takes place between Father Chatard and Old Zanko about the natural world:

Zanko said again: “the sky is Del, the fire is Del, the wind is Del, and the rain is Del.” [Chatard]: “How is that, are they each a Del?” [Old Zanko]: “No!” [Chatard]: “Are they the Del?” [Old Zanko]: “Neither! They are Del (that is to say they are not created by God but they are with God, come with him, in him, as his form, his face, his breath. They came with him, in the same way, they are Del. They are inseparable in some way from the substance of God),” [Chatard]: “Is water Del?” [Old Zanko]: “No.” [Chatard]: “Why?” [Old Zanko]: “It did not come with him. It was before. It was a part of the Phu (the Earth).”
((Zanko a dit encore: “le ciel est Del, le feu est Del, le vent est Del, la pluie est Del.” [Chatard]: “Comment cela, sont-ils chacun un Del?” [Old Zanko]: “No!” [Chatard]: “Sont-ils le Del?” [Old Zanko]: “Non plus! Ils sont Del (c’est-à-dire ils ne sont pas créé par Dieu, mais ils sont avec Dieu, venus avec lui, en lui, comme sa forme, son visage, son soufflé. Ils sont venus avec lui d’une même venue, ils sont Del, inseparables en quelque sorte de la substance de Dieu).” [Chatard]: “L’eau est-elle Del?” [Old Zanko]: “No.” [Chatard]: “Pourquoi?” [Old Zanko]: “Elle n’est pas venue avec lui. Elle était avant, elle fait partie du Phu (la Terre).” (Zanko 1959: 49)

Here, Old Zanko is quite eloquent as he reiterates that the sky, fire, wind, and rain are “the Del.” He states that God did not create these elements. They “came with him.” When Father Chatard asks Old Zanko if the water is Del, he responds that it is not. Father Chatard asks why not, and Old Zanko answers that it did not “come” with the Del but it is rather “part of the Earth,” which, as he had said previously, “came first.”

One thing becomes manifestly clear in these verbal exchanges: spirit animates all of nature not only humanity. This is basically and essentially the animist way of regarding the natural world. It is possible that any sense of confusion which a reader may experience may simply be due to an ethnocentric monotheistic outlook that regards God as the creator of all things natural, none of which are animated by spirit except humankind.
Magic and Zanko, Chef Tribal

Magic is a prominent feature of Zanko, Chef Tribal. A belief in magic includes the idea of second sight, love charms, cursing spells, magic potions and magic spells. Moreover, a belief in magic is not necessarily a thing of the past for Catholics today practice a form of magic when they purchase small plastic statues of St. Joseph (who was a carpenter hence a symbol of the house) in order to bury him in the ground feet first when they wish to purchase a house and head first when they wish to sell a house. This is such common practice in the Detroit metropolitan area that when customers ask Catholic supply house or gift shop clerks for statues of St. Joseph, they automatically ask if the statue is being purchased to either sell or purchase a house in which case they recommend a cheap plastic statue of St. Joseph for the purpose.

Because of a belief in magic, many people still go to Chalderash women for “spiritual advising,” at which time they may also request a magic spell to attract love or money. In fact, Chalderash women were renown throughout Europe as workers of magic spells (Clébert 1967; Sutherland 1975; Cotten-Gropper 1975; Miller 1994; de Ville 1953; Bataillard 1844, 1849; Bloch, J. 1953; Block, M. 1936). Indeed, all of Old Zanko’s fairytale narratives incorporate a belief in magic.

For example, when Old Zanko describes devotion to the icons, he also speaks of a belief in amulets (objects containing magical power) for the icons are placed in little pouches that are hung around the necks of children as protection from danger and illness. So too “magic” words, ritual events, and the belief in “sorceresses” (witches) figures prominently in Old Zanko’s fairytale narratives. In the Epic of the Serpent, three heroes consult sorceresses prior to taking any action, also receiving magical swords from their father prior to leaving on a quest for fame.
and fortune. In return for the three magical swords, each of the heroes gives a handkerchief to his mother saying:

Mother, this is a magic handkerchief. It is a handkerchief which has the power of Del. Mother, when you unfold this handkerchief you will see everything that happens to the one who gave it to you whether he has joy or sorrow. If life is good for him, mother, the handkerchief will be white and clean, if life is bad for him, the handkerchief will be red and touched with blood. Mother, it is a magical handkerchief. It has received the power of Del. (“Mère, c’est un mouchoir magique. C’est un mouchoir qui a le pouvoir du Del. Mère, quand vous déplierez ce mouchoir, vous verrez tout ce qu’il advient de celui qui l’a remis, s’il est dans la joie ou dans la souffrance. Si la vie est bonne pour lui, mère, le mouchoir sera blanc et net, si la vie pour lui est mauvais, le mouchoir sera rouge et taché de sang. Mère, c’est un mouchoir magique. Il a reçu le pouvoir du Del”) (Zanko 1959: 132-33).

The story of *Balo and the Seven Brothers* also includes belief in magic and witchcraft and in which the only sister of seven brothers weds a mysterious stranger called Balo. When her eldest brother comes to visit her, she hides her brother because she fears that her husband, Balo, will be angry at his unannounced appearance. However, she does not conceal him in any mundane place such as behind a curtain, or in a closet, or an attic. Rather, she hides him by means of her magic power, turning him into a flea and then concealing him in a nut:

Here she took an Akor. Here she took a nut. She divided the nut in two halves. Then she made her brother turn a sort of summersault. At the end of this movement, as he came down on his feet, the boy lost his human form. He was nothing more than a tiny little flea. The woman took the flea, put it in the nut, closed the nut, and placed it before the Icôna, the icon, on the plate that held old and precious objects. (Voici qu’elle prend une Akor. Voilà qu’elle prend une noix. Elle la partage en deux moieties. Puis elle fait faire à son frère une sorte de saut périlleux. Et au terme de ce mouvement, quand il se retrouva sur ses pieds, le garçon avait perdu sa forme humaine. Ce n’était plus qu’une toute petite puce. La femme prend la puce, la met dans la noix, referme la noix et dépose celle-ci devant l’Icôna, l’icône, sur la planchette qui la supporte, avec la veilleuse et les objets précieux) (ibid: 106)

Here it is significant that “the Sister” of the story places the nut before the icons on a plate that holds “old and precious objects.” This is a description of important ritual objects that were placed on Chalderash home altars. The ritual objects represent the past and a connection with the ancestors evidenced by the linkage of “old” with the term “precious.” But there is no description in the narrative of what the objects were or what they represented specifically. However, by placing the nut which holds her brother upon the altar, she connects magic with religious devotion as well.
When the Sister (she never receives a name in the story) finally feels that her eldest brother is safe from Balo’s ire, she releases him from the nut, all three then sit down to a meal. Here Old Zanko specifically connects the practice of magic with the ancestors by means of dialogue between Balo and his wife:

“Ah, my Romni, I did not know that you were so skillful. I did not know that you could put a man in a nut and make him come back out of it. I am delighted, my Romni, by your magic power.” And the woman, humble, answered: “It is nothing. It is but a secret of our ancient ones.” And according to his desire, she described how it was done. (“Ah ma Romni, je ne vous savais pas si habile, je ne vous savais pas capable de faire entrer un homme dans une noix et de l’en faire sortir. Je me réjouis, ma Romni, de votre pouvoir magique.” Et la femme, humble, répondit: “Ce n’est pas rien. Ce n’est qu’un secret de nos anciens.” Et sur son désir, elle lui décrivit sa manière de procéder) (Zanko 1959: 107).

The above quote exemplifies a magical transformation. But there is also another sort of magical transformation which occurs frequently in Zanko, Chef Tribal. Like dream sequences that suddenly change scene without warning or logical progression, in Old Zanko’s fairytale narratives real time and place transform into otherworldly time and place where miracles occur and misfortunes are remedied by the magic force inhering in all of nature, a magic force by which mortal human beings may be changed into Gods. In this regard, Sunto Proroc and Sunto Ilia (or the Vocation of the God of Thunder), is the narrative which most exemplifies this dream-like quality that attends the transformative power of magic.

The story begins with “a peasant” being tormented by a group of Benga into believing that his wife has remarried. He rushes home in a rage, and kills two people who lie in a tent outside of his house. Imagining this tent to be “the marriage tent” (incidentally a traditional Chalderash custom), he is maddened with jealousy, invades the tent and with an axe chops in two the man and woman sleeping there together. He then goes into his house to sleep but lies awake groaning and lamenting all that has transpired. Suddenly he hears his wife in a nearby room asking what is wrong with him saying that he woke her with his moaning. Her husband then leaps from his bed demanding to know the identity of the tent’s occupants. His wife comes into
the bedroom to answer that his mother and father, finding the house too warm, had set up a tent in which to sleep in the garden.

The man becomes so wild with horror and remorse that he cannot reply to his wife’s increasingly hysterical queries as to what is the matter with him. Finally he regains his speech and tells her the entire story of the Benga and what he has done. On hearing her husband’s story, the woman becomes possessed by the same horror and loathing as her husband, and she cries out that he has committed the greatest crime known to exist: parricide. At this point, both of them become prostrated by grief and consumed with weeping. Still shedding copious tears, they bring the bodies from the tent placing them upon a table and they light two candles as they continue to lament the dead.

But just when all seems lost, the magical intervenes to transform sorrow into joy and death into life:

Then, here it was that some pigeons were seen reflected in the closed window pecking at it. They pecked, they pecked and at first the man and woman paid no attention. They pecked, they pecked, and the woman looked at them. They pecked, they pecked and the woman said to the man: “Look at these pigeons, my Rom they have come to give us some message.” The man went to the window and opened it. Immobile, near the window, they looked at him. Then the man said to them: “What do you want, my pigeons?” And the pigeons said to him: “Why do you weep, Ilia?” (Or, voici, que des pigeons se mirent à frapper du bec contre la fenêtre fermée. Ils frappaient, ils frappaient et l’homme et la femme n’y prêtaient pas attention d’abord. Ils frappaient, ils frappaient, et la femme les regarda. Ils frappaient, ils frappaiet et la femme dit à l’homme: “Regarde ces pigeons, mon Rom, ils veulent nous dire quelque message.” L’homme alla vers la fenêtre et l’ouvrit. Immobiles près de la fenêtre, ils regardaient. Alors l’homme leur dit: “Que voulez-vous mes pigeons?” Et les pigeons lui dirent: “pourquoi pleures-tu, Ilia?”) (Zanko 1959: 99)

Just as in the story of *The Divine Child and his Star*, pigeons are depicted as messengers from a spiritual realm who call the man by the name of Ilia and then ask what ails him. Ilia attempts to tell the pigeons his story but they interrupt him saying:

It is nothing, Ilia do not weep. Do not weep Ilia but take some feathers from our wings and pass them three times over the two bodies. He did as they said, passing the feather over the two bodies. He passed them one time, he passed them a second time, he passed them a third time. The third time, the father and mother rose up. They sat up on the table. Alive! (Ce n’est rien, Ilia. ne pleure pas. Ne pleure pas Ilia mais tire quelque plumes de nos iles, et passé-les trois fois au-dessus des deux corps.” Il fit ce qu’ils disaient, passa les plumes au-dessus des deux corps. Il les passa une fois, il les repassa une seconde fois, il les passa trois fois. A la troisième fois, le père et la mere se soulevèrent. Ils s’assirent sur la table. Vivants!) (ibid)
Not only can the pigeons speak, they also possess magic power which transforms death into life and which causes severed bodies to become whole. This transformative healing power is symbolized by the pigeons’ feathers and the magical number three that is a sacred number throughout Zanko, Chef Tribal. Suddenly we are in the realm of miracles.

Bewildered, Ilia’s father asks him what has happened, why he and his wife are stretched out on the table as though dead, and the reason that Ilia weeps. Ilia recites the particulars of the entire drama again to which his father listens “attentively” afterwards saying:

Because of your sorrow and your love, my son, ask me for anything you like.” Then Ilia jumped with joy. He wept no longer, he laughed, his face glowed, his eyes shone with light, his hair sparkled like the rays of the sun. “I ask nothing but one thing, my father,” said he, “it is that you give me thunder and your pike with which to chase the Benga who wanted you to perish.” Proroc, the father, said to Ilia, “I agree, my son.” Ilia seized the thunder and the pike and immediately departed in pursuit of the Benga. He was seized with extreme ardoir. He leapt over the clouds…he flew with the wind. (A cause de ta douleur et de ton amour, mon fils, demande-moi ce que tu voudras.” Alors Ilia bondit de joie. Il ne pleurait plus, il riait, son visage rayonnait, ses yeux lançaient des éclairs, sa chevelure étincelait comme les rayons du soleil. “Je ne vous demande qu’une chose, mon père,” dit-il, “c’est que vous me donniez la foudre et votre pique, pour faire la chasse aux Benga qui ont voulu vous faire périr.” Proroc, le père, dit à Ilia, “Je te l’accorde, mon fils.” Ilia saisit la foudre et la pique et aussitôt partit en chasse contre les Benga. Il était saisi d’une extreme ardeur. Il sautait par-dessus les nuages…il volait dans le vent) (Zanko 1959: 100).

And each time Ilia strikes one of the Benga, “a great explosion accompanied by lightning fills the earth with fear (une grande explosion accompagnée d’éclairs emplissait la terre de frayeur)” (Zanko 1959: 101). The earth’s very equilibrium is threatened by Ilia’s power (ibid: 102).

The magical transformations of the story are now complete. No longer is the peasant a mere mortal, nor are his mother and father, for they have changed into divine beings who control natural phenomena (thunder and lightning), fly through the air, and by magical utterances make arms, legs, and eyes disappear to modify the power of an irate God. Indeed, Ilia is depicted as shining like some celestial star or sun and as being so powerful that he can make the earth shake on its very axis, causing it “to plunge about in the heavens” (ibid).
Notable is that there is very little transition from a mundane realm to a spiritual realm, from one state of being to another. At first depicted as mere mortals, Ilia and Proroc are exposed as Gods as though their mortality was simply a disguise which was suddenly stripped away to reveal their true identities. Like a dream sequence that suddenly changes from one set of circumstances and mood into another completely different set of circumstances and mood, the entire circumstances of plot, the identity of the actors, and the mood of the narrative changes from the mundane world of peasants, mills, crime and death, to the spiritual realm of miracles and all-powerful Gods.
Shamanism and Zanko Chef Tribal

Ever since Mircea Éliade dignified study of what came to be known as “shamanism,” definitions of what constitutes “shamanism” (as a generic term therefore not capitalized) has been cause for debate among anthropologists. I do not wish to become mired down by discussions of how to identify and divide shamanic practitioners by means of difference. Rather I choose to record similarities and commonalities between various sorts of shamans cross-culturally (Mandelstam-Balzer, Editor 1991) in order to provide a generalized model by which to identify and describe Chalderash shamanism.

The word “shaman” is not a Romani word. It is a Tungus word for a Tungus religious expert serving the indigenous Tungus people of Siberia (Éliade 1964; Dioszegi 1968; Mandelstam-Balzer, Editor 1990; Yamada 2000). The term, shaman, subsequently came to refer to religious specialists in other parts of the world whose practices parallel those of Tungus shamans. For example, wherever shamans comprise the religious experts of society they act as genealogists, ritual experts, healers, seers, and community leaders (Dow 1986).

Despite the fact that “shaman” is not a Romani term, Gilles Eynard who is a Rom himself is convinced that the Chalderash practice a form of shamanism especially in the belief that “certain chosen people” who have “vanquished death” (by which he means that they return to earth after death and appear to relatives) then “have magical powers” and may come to people in dreams (Communication of 10/19/2010). Old Zanko too mentions the importance of “dreams” as vehicles by which God and the ancestors warn people of danger or illness (passage 73: 86).

Old Zanko also speaks of “old women healers” who cure by means of herbs and “powder of serpent” (passage 53: 82) mentioning that such practices are dying out. I am happy to say that based upon what my consultants say in France, shamanism has not died out completely among
French Chalderash for Chalderash women continue to tell fortunes and “work magic spells to heal” (Communication with Célia Eynard 3/31/2011). Telling fortunes is a preliminary to healing among Chalderash. Telling fortunes (divination) is a skill exercised by every type of shaman including Chalderash women shamans.

Gilles Eynard’s daughter, who is a healer, divides French Gypsy healers into two categories both of which are defined in terms of divination. The first category is comprised of the most numerous of Chalderash fortune-tellers who work “on the streets” of French towns and cities serving non-Chalderash. These have a “small gift” for prophecy and are called by both the Chalderash and the non-Chalderash public, “diseuses de bonne aventure” (tellers of good fortune).

In France, telling fortunes on the streets is stigmatized as “begging” and criminalized as it once was in the United States. Now it is legal in all states of the Union since approximately ten years ago, and it was legal in most states far before that time for the New Age movement (which proponents have swelled into millions of Americans) has had great impact upon the acceptance of fortune-telling, healing by means of herbs, spiritual envisioning by means of drugs (used in certain segments of the New Age public and not in others because of its illegality), working magic spells, and other types of shamanistic practice. As for France, however, this acceptance has never taken place. As Célia Eynard succinctly states the case, “French are rationalists you know, Descartes is alive!!” (Communication of 3/31/2011) Indeed, many scientific “rationalists” deem any belief in a spiritual world as immature and irrational.

The second type of French Romani healers, Célia Eynard refers to as “the true ones” who, she says, “are rare in Romensa” (Romani term for culture and tradition). “They used to call those good advisors with a real gift from god drabarni or drobarni that means one who drinks
drugs” (ibid). Célia Eynard further informs us that this is an “honorific title” and that now “the usage of drugs remains only in name.” The Chalderash women *drabarna* (plural of *drabarni*) “practice at home or in the patient’s home” and she mentions its “obvious parallel with shamanic practice” (ibid). Moreover, “often the *drabarni* used to cure by magic [to] protect the community and [its] members.” In “extreme cases” the people call upon the *drabarni* “to speak” because like a “diplomat,” she is a “respectable, loyal, honest and sure person” (Communication with Célia Eynard 3/31/2011).

The above statements are remarkable for a number of reasons and give us new insight into both Chalderash spiritual tradition and society. It is especially interesting that the word *drabarni* refers to one who drinks the drugs herself which means that *drabarna* must have practiced drug-induced trance in the past. This directly connects *drabarna* to other types of shamans from other traditional societies who achieved visions by this means. (Czigány 1980; Dow 1986 [also conversation with Dr. Dow sometime in the 1990s when I studied with him]; Éliade 1964; Harner 1973; Lewis 1971; Pinchbeck 2002)

There is also data from Rumania at the turn of the twentieth century which describes a “Gypsy dance” to cure sick children of the non-Gypsy peasantry which was called “dance of the *kalus*” (sticks) (Clébert 1967: 152). After performance of this ritual, the dancers were paid with bottles of *absinthe* (ibid), the reason for which is obscure, but it is well known that this herbal decoction causes hallucinations when imbibed to excess which is why it eventually became illegal to make or dispense it in France (its illegality recently has been overturned by the French courts).

The above statements by Célia Eynard also affirm that the Chalderash and Roma are aware of the connection between their traditional healers and shamanic traditions elsewhere.
especially because of the use of “magic.” That this magic is practiced in the home (either of the “healer” or “patient”) too connects Chalderash healing practice with other shamanic traditions which are practiced both privately (in the home) and publicly for Célia Eynard specifically mentions the drabarni’s obligation to “protect the community” (Communication of 3/31/2011). And finally, Célia Eynard writes of the high status of women drabarna in Chalderash and Roma societies which is demonstrated by the fact that a drabarni is sometimes called upon “to speak” publicly to the community because she is considered to be a “respectable,” “loyal,” and “honest” person (ibid).
Chalderash Society, Gender Relations, Ethics, and the Sharing of Spiritual Power

The above discussions of Old Zanko’s narratives, animism, magic, shamanism and its manifestations among the Chalderash of France today, permit further analysis of Zanko, Chef Tribal in regard to gender relations in which case we return once again to the story of The Divine Child and the miraculous restoration of the godmother’s hands by the power of the divine child and the Dé Develeski (passages 1-54: 36-40).

Two of the central characters in this would-be tragedy are man and wife, the godparents of the divine child. The purification involves an act of violence by the man against his wife. There is no censure of the man in the story for his wife’s hands represent a ritual sacrifice. His anger is justified because it upholds the Chalderash belief system and Chalderash tradition, and also the dominance of men. This last, the dominance of men over women although varying in degree from society to society, is nevertheless, a cross-cultural phenomenon that cuts across state boundary lines, class-lines, and ethnic boundaries (Wrangham and Peterson 1996).

In many respects, Chalderash society is greatly patriarchal although there are contradictions of this gendered power dynamic within Chalderash society itself. For example, spiritual power is often expressed as “magical power” including the ability to prophesize and the power to heal (the province of Chalderash women). Old Zanko treats of this in another of the narratives especially devoted to Religious Customs and Practices (Coutumes et Pratiques Religieuses) (Zanko 1959: 73-94):

When the man’s work does not suffice, the wife goes to do the lines of the hand. She has learned this art from her mother. Men know nothing of it. This is not a secret nor is there a second view about it. The woman alone learns very early to divine the past of the one who consults her and his present cares by observing, by discretely questioning, by perceiving with much finesse what is revealed in the eyes, the reactions of the hand which she holds in her own, the fluid which escapes from it and that she knows how to perceive.

Then, when she feels forming within herself the words that it is necessary to say in order to render peace, to return hope to him, to direct him on the right path or to warn him against danger, the lines of the hand and their general significance serve her to put into form that which she has to say to him and to say it clearly.

(Quand le travail de l’homme ne suffit pas, la femme va faire les lignes de la main. Elle a appris cet art de sa mère. Les hommes n’y connaissent rien. Il n’y a pas de secret ni de seconde vue pour cela. La femme a seulement
We learn much about women’s role in Chalderash society from this narrative of women’s spiritual power which is also an art form cultivated from one’s childhood. Chalderash women refer to this activity as “spiritual advising” in the United States (Cotten-Gropper 1975; Sutherland 1986) and in France Chalderash women say “drobarav” (which means both “to read” and “to heal”) (Communication with Gilles Eynard 4/2/2011). Old Zanko is very emphatic that only women engage in this activity, only women have knowledge of it (passage 52: 81).

Spiritual advising is also an economic activity that often takes Chalderash women outside of the home (the domestic sphere) into the public sphere (the streets) in order to offer this service to non-Gypsies. Free movement in the public realm of market relations is allowed only to men in the most patriarchal of societies. Fortune-telling also opens up a Chalderash woman’s home to the non-Gypsy public (Communication with Célia Eynard 3/31/2011). This gives Gypsy women both a great deal of personal autonomy and also authority based upon her economic worth, public presence, and spiritual power.

In denying the high status of women and in labelling the practice of fortune-telling a fraudulent means of “extracting money” equating it with “beggary” and “theft” (e.g. Brown 1924; Sutherland 1975 and French law), certain academics claim that the Gypsies do not believe in the possibility of foreseeing events themselves. Therefore, they see no reason to recognize Chalderash women’s spiritual power. However, both Old Zanko’s words and those of Célia Eynard belie the assertion that the Chalderash “do not believe” in woman’s occult power. It is true that both Old Zanko and Célia Eynard (Communication of 3/31/2011) attribute some of a
woman’s skill at fortune-telling to her knowledge of human nature and to the physical manifestations of a certain state of mind, as well as to direct questioning skills which parallel those of a good psychologist (ibid). However, Célia Eynard also said that there are “true ones” who are rare (ibid) whereas Old Zanko mentions a “fluid” that “escapes” from the hand which the fortune-teller is able “to perceive,” (“sa main qu’elle tient dans la sienne, le fluide qui s’en échappe et qu’elle sait percevoir”) (Zanko 1959: passage 52: 81). This would seem to be a spiritual emanation rather than any psychological acuity on the part of the fortune-teller.

My own research also contradicts the assertion that Gypsies do not believe in the women’s ability to prophesize. When I brought Dr. Trajko Petrovski who is a Macedonian Rom himself to meet a Chalderash fortune-telling family in Detroit, he immediately, in the Romani language, asked the mother of the family to read his cards listening respectfully to her, and agreeing enthusiastically with many of her statements about the past and the present situations of his life.

Also, many women of the Hungarian Roma musician community of Detroit (who do not traditionally tell fortunes) go to Chalderash women for that service. In a nightclub of the area where a woman regularly read the cards for patrons, this researcher witnessed the reservation of long tables where were seated at least two dozen Hungarian Roma women of related families who had come to have their fortunes told.

Furthermore, a man will offer his wife’s services as a fortune-teller to visitors as a mark of respect and hospitality, and I am not the only one to have remarked this fact for when Luc de Heusch visited the family of writer Matéo Maximoff in France, the host offered his wife’s fortune-telling services as a mark of respect to his guest (de Heusch 1966: 36-38). This was also a mark of respect for the talents of his wife, and I have witnessed men bragging about their
wives’ success in its exercise in the Detroit metropolitan area. Célia Eynard’s statement that women healers are asked to speak in public also affirms their high social status. The spiritual power of women will become even more evident in the analysis of Old Zanko’s folk-tales which assume the form of fairytales. In them, women wield spiritual power often and one begins to perceive that Chalderash society may be described as somewhat egalitarian in certain respects although patriarchal in others. This causes academics who study Gypsy culture to be divided as to whether the Roma are patriarchal or matriarchal (e.g. Clébert 1967: 165-66; 206-207; 210-216).

Anthropologists have charted a myriad of cultures that are matriarchal, patriarchal, or a combination of both and to various degrees (Bonvillain 2009; Leacock 1978; Van Beek 1987), and there are definite features differentiating patriarchal cultures from the matriarchal and egalitarian. Chalderash society has evidence of both social systems in a framework of complementarity that is expressed in a number of ways.

One feature of the enculturation of girls seems egalitarian for they are socialized to be as aggressive and as out-going as are Chalderash boys. This is in contrast to the most patriarchal of societies where women may be neither seen nor heard by anyone but close family members. Also women are never spiritual experts in the most patriarchal of societies. Sutherland tells us, however, that a “strong, forceful wife is a political asset to an ambitious man and can exert great influence on his behalf with the kumpania.” On the other hand, a “meek, passive wife” has little chance of assuming leadership (Sutherland 1975: 168) indicating that women do take leadership positions among the Chalderash. Furthermore, Chalderash women are the responsible party for the economic well-being of the family: “She is expected to earn the money for the family and handle it as a bank” (ibid). It is therefore significant that Old Zanko’s wife, Anna Schauenotz
Zanko, was a participant at all of the narrative sessions, including those which were dedicated to confirming and improving the text. Just as in brick-making and metalworking the entire family assisted in this editorial work including Old Zanko’s wife, Old Anna Zanko:

It was only in the first months of 1955 that Zanko and Father Chatard again invoked the Tradition. One evening, Father read the text that he had gathered by dictation, to Zanko, his wife, and eldest son and made a fair copy of it. With extreme attention, Zanko, his wife and his son listened to this reading. They approved it phrase by phrase or sometimes substituted a word which seemed to translate their thoughts.

That Old Zanko’s wife’s acted as an advisor in an area unconnected to fortunetelling seems additional evidence of women’s high status in Chalderash society. Considering Bernard’s illuminating comment about Old Anna’s presence and participation in the editorial sessions as well as Old Zanko’s pointed statements about the spiritual power of women as seers and healers, as well as Célia Eynard’s statement that sometimes women are asked to speak to the community on public occasions, it makes the hypothesis of a strictly patriarchal Chalderash social structure highly improbable. Anthropologist Carol Miller, a scholar who studied with Chalderash and Mačvaia (as I have) is more sensitive to gender relations among the Gypsies than many social scientists. Collecting data systematically, she discovered the great spiritual power which is attributed to Chalderash/ Mačvaia women within their own society (Miller 1994).

Miller also discovered the Chalderash/Mačvaia custom of “giving respect,” which is a formalized ritual activity (Goffman 1963, 1967: 84, 91) that dictates every nuance of behavior and which determines one’s social rank and moral status. Miller writes: “Respect is a central precept relating to important ideas about power, purity, luck, and rank” (Miller 1994: 76), moreover, this precept dictates gender relations. The custom is so important, in fact, that Miller’s Chalderash/Mačvaia consultants call themselves “the people of respect.” This everyday practice of giving respect constitutes an ethical system that is the very basis of Chalderash/Mačvaia social
life: “Evidence of respect is taken as indicative of other qualities, evaluated as estimable or not. Public demeanor can confirm or deny moral value, lineage reputation, the merit of family status” (Miller 1994: 75-76). As a determiner of moral value, “respect” is connected to religious concepts as well (ibid). I have noted the same giving of respect in my relations with my French consultants.

Thus Old Zanko by his attitude to Father Chatard demonstrated that he was admirable and respectable. This is the purpose behind the elaborate praise he gives to Father Chatard and Michel Bernard. Indeed, Old Zanko explicitly states that he gives “respect” to Father Chatard because Father Chatard “respects” the “Tradition” in a reciprocal relationship. Old Zanko sometimes refers to this “Tradition” as the “Sunto Lil” (“Holy Book”) (1959: 40) of the Chalderash. We now may understand that Old Zanko’s elaborate praise of Father Chatard was ritualistic, part of a religious and ethical system, neither dissimulation nor mere flattery:

But to you I have told the truth. You know all. You know as much of it as we do now, and even much more than a great number of our own…because you do not seek to know in order to enrich yourself at our expense and leave us in misery…because you take us seriously whereas many others mock us…because you respect the history and will never change it. (Mais à vous j’ai dit la vérité. Vous savez tout. Vous en savez autant que nous maintenant, et même beaucoup plus qu’un grand nombre des nôtres…parce que vous ne cherchez pas à savoir pour vous enrichir grâce à nous et en nous laissant dans le malheur…parce que vous nous prenez au sérieux alors que tant d’autres se moquent de nous…parce que vous respectez l’histoire et n’y changerez rien) (Zanko 1959: 42).

In the above quote, Old Zanko praises Father Chatard for “knowing” as much about the sacred tradition as do the Chalderash, sometimes more. Then he explains to Father Chatard the reasons that he has honored him with this knowledge. It is because Father Chatard has the loftiest of motives. But in attributing the highest motivation to Father Chatard he is also giving the reader of Zanko, Chef Tribal a Chalderash model of morality.

The ritualistic behavior of giving respect is also related to having “good luck.” Giving respect brings that which is “auspicious.” One is rewarded with good luck by giving respect to
others. Respect is a matter of “proper” behavior towards one’s family and other people. Among the Chalderash/Mačvaia good fortune is brought about by proper behavior as well:

Respect, as the Machvaia use the term, glosses obedience (padja) and trust (padja ma) (Gjerdan and Ljunberg 1963: 307) which is synonymous with the auspicious. When I asked what trust had to do with obedience, and obedience with respect, the answer was, “Who would you respect? Your parents because they gave you life, your grandparents who borned them, your godparents because they are ‘like God.’ These are the main ones. But anyone you trust and would obey is respected” (Miller 1994: 77).

The above quote illustrates the intermingling of respect behavior with religious concepts. That godparents are worthy of great respect because they are “‘like God’” reminds us of the great importance attached by Old Zanko to the role of godparent (discussed previously), and it demonstrates how both the sacred and the secular may be “encompassed” by a single set of ritual behaviors (Hess and DaMatt, Editors 1995). In effect, these ritual behaviors represent an underlying code of ethics that applies to both men and women in Chalderash society:

“But nothing counts more than “the thought in the heart.” Respect should express the most elevated intentions. Each person is responsible for his or her thoughts and feelings which should be sensitive to and perceptive of the thoughts and feelings of others. Respect is taken as evidence of good will. Failure to show respect, on the other hand, is conceived as discourteous and unkind… To be liked, admired, and shown respect, it is advised to be generous… Service and hospitality, selfless gifts of money, worship, advice are considered devotional. Although both parties accumulate virtue, the one who gives accumulates the most (Miller 1994: 78).

In the above paragraph, two ideas combine which demonstrate the ways in which spirituality may be expressed in everyday life. First respectful behavior means that one must be kindly, think of others, and treat them courteously. Second, respectful behavior is not simply a code of etiquette but it is also a spiritual code. Selfless behavior is regarded as “devotional,” that is, it constitutes a means by which to attain high spiritual status not only social status. Or, perhaps to be more precise, high spiritual status translates into high social status.

There are various ways of showing respect but generosity is mandatory and acts of generosity accumulate spiritual power. Old Zanko expressed the importance of generosity among the Chalderash when speaking of a man’s right to his own earnings and proper behavior to family:
That which he earns belongs to him. But in the big Gypsy family the well-being of each is the well-being of all. If one day, one of them does not have [anything] to eat, he comes on his own to sit at the table of his brother. If he lacks money and if his brothers have a surplus of it, that surplus is given to him according to his needs. (Ce qu’il gagnera lui appartiendra. Mais dans la grande famille tsigane le bien de chacun est le bien de tout. Si un jour, l’un d’eux n’a pas à manger, il vient de lui-même s’asseoir à la table de son frère. S’il manqué d’argent et si ses frères en ont en surplus, ce surplus lui reviendra la mesure de ses besoins) (Zanko 1959: passage 49: 81).

The social capital conferred by generosity is also demonstrated in marriage custom:

The father of the bride is at the height of joy and pride. He will defray the costs of the feast still lasting several days, and showers his daughter with gifts. All of his fortune will be spent down to the last centime. (Le père de la fiancée est au comble de la joie et de la fierté. Il fera les frais de la fête pendant plusieurs jours encore et comblera sa fille de cadeaux. Toute sa fortune y passera jusqu’au dernier centime) (ibid: passage 44: 80).

In the two cases above the demand to be generous applies to men. But this mandate also applies to women. Old Zanko addresses how Chalderash women are expected to be generous by means of a religiously based narrative entitled The Dé Develeski and the Tortoise (1959: 118-119). This narrative is very short but important in this regard for it begins:

In the holy city of Porsaïda there was a woman who was not kind of heart. She never wanted to give to the less fortunate… The Dé Develeski asked her (just as she asks others) to be good and to go to the aid of those who are in need. One day, the Dé Develeski, being preoccupied with the fate of the unfortunate, entered the home of this woman. But this woman could not be seen. (Il y avait dans la ville sainte de Porsaïda une femme qui n’avait pas bon coeur. Elle ne voulait jamais rien donner ni faire pour les malheureux…Un jour donc la Dé devesleski se preoccupant du sort des malheureux, entra chez cette femme. Mais cette femme l’avait vue venir) (ibid: 118).

The reason that the Divine Mother could not see the woman was because the woman had hidden herself beneath a large overturned basin used for bathing. The Divine Mother calls out to her three times, the third time saying: “Madame, it is important that you answer me! I have come to ask that you help the unfortunate (Madame, reprit la Dé develeski, répondez-moi, c’est important, je viens vous demander votre aide pour les malheureux!”) (ibid)

Although the woman remained motionless beneath the basin, the Divine Mother knew that she had hidden herself and where. For her recalcitrance in answering, the Divine Mother punishes her saying,

Since you refuse to speak, madame, you will always remain thus. You will be deprived of speech and you will walk on all fours on your hands and knees, and you will always carry that basin on your back…Therefore the tortoise came to be…Many animals were created in a similar fashion. They were evil people. Del changed them into beasts who must suffer. (Puisque vous refusez de répondre, madame, vous resterez toujours ainsi. Vous serez privée de parole et vous marcherez à quatre pattes sur vos mains et vos pieds, et vous porterez toujours cette bassine sur
This is certainly illustrative of a Chalderash mandate that women be “kind-hearted,” that is, generous. Anne Sutherland studying with the Chalderash of California also noticed how women are expected to honor and respect others by means of generosity. Furthermore, they must be treated with respect in return:

In public, a woman must obey her husband and show respect to his family, but if he mistreats her she can leave him. She is expected to earn the money for the family and handle it as a bank, providing him with money when he asks for it. Tilly’s mother-in-law criticized her for not dressing her husband better, and for not going out to tell fortunes” (Sutherland 1975: 168).

Needless to say, in the most patriarchal societies women are never allowed to handle the finances let alone earn their own money or dispense it to the men. What is striking, however, is that obedience to a husband and showing respect to his family is only necessary if her husband shows her respect in return implying reciprocity between women and men and egalitarianism in gender relations. The woman’s generosity is demonstrated by the money she spends on her husband’s clothing, and the willingness with which she goes out to work to earn the money for displays of generosity. Generosity is a form of “giving respect” and its moral value accrues to Chalderash men and women alike.

Proponents of the patriarchal theory of Chalderash society point to the fact that most domestic work is ascribed to Chalderash women just as in other patriarchal societies. It is unpaid work, and that it is unpaid work indicates low status for the one who does such work in the family hierarchy. For example, as in many patriarchal societies, Chalderash women are expected to do the domestic work of preparing food for the family. But among the Chalderash of France, men often cook the food during certain ritual occasions (Communication with Gilles Eynard 10/19/2010).
Furthermore, this task is by no means a simple gender division of labor. The preparation of food may also be a work of magic and depending upon the intent of the cook (whether men or women), the food may bless or curse the recipients. Anne Sutherland writes: “Last year, over breakfast, Rachel who had patiently answered my questions for nearly three decades and served me innumerable meals, explained with obvious complacence, “Eating my food puts you in my power. Did you know that?” (Miller 1994: 78) Therefore, by the act of preparing food both men and women wield spiritual power. This folk belief, which attributes magical power to the one who prepares food and to the food itself, may be found throughout the world. Hence, just because women may perform a certain domestic task does not necessarily denote that lowly social status is attached to the performance of that work. The opposite may be the case as we see in Sutherland’s data.

It may be somewhat significant that when Old Zanko speaks of what is commonly referred to in American society as “women’s work,” he does not mean either cooking or cleaning but the reading of palms and healing. He never mentions a woman’s obligation to cook for her family, although he does speak of the women’s role in raising children. But this last category of women’s work, the raising of children, is so important that one of the fairytale narratives treats of mothers’ role and what may happen if a woman does not live up to that role. This tale about an unjust curse and its punishment also illustrates the power of a mother’s words and what the misuse of this power may bring about.

Children are the result of marriage and Chalderash marriage custom is also revelatory of women’s social standing and testifies to the high status of Chalderash women even though the most honored form of marriage is by arrangement. However, contrary to arranged marriages in a
patriarchal society wherein the bride (and sometimes the groom) has no choice in the matter, Old Zanko insisted that both future partners have a say:

It is the father or the mother who proposes to the son or to the daughter a young woman or a young man after being well informed. They [the young couple] are not imposed upon. The son or the daughter may say if the [other] party pleases them or not. (C’est le père ou la mère qui proposent au fils ou à la fille une jeune fille ou un jeune homme après s’être bien renseignés. Ils ne l’imposent pas. Le fils ou la fille disent si le parti leur plait ou non) (Zanko 1959: passage 40: 79).

This statement again reveals egalitarianism among the Chalderash in that either the father or the mother may propose marriage and in that both the young woman and the young man are consulted in the matter having the right to say yes or no. This is not the case in the most extreme of patriarchal societies (Leacock 1978: 247-275). Furthermore, the French Chalderash practice the custom of “bridewealth” which is different from “dowry” in that money and services “are paid by the boy’s family” (Communication with Gilles Eynard 10/19/2010) whereas dowry is paid by the girl’s family. “Bridewealth” is a feature of matriarchal society not patriarchal (Bonvillain 2001; Leacock 1978; Van Beek 1987).

In regard to bridewealth there is a glaring omission in Zanko, Chef Tribal. Old Zanko mentions nothing about bridewealth (“daro”) which is a custom among them (Sutherland 1975: 232-236; Clébert 1967: 210-215; Cotten-Gropper 1975; Eynard 10/19/2010 and my own research). One may only speculate as to the reason for this omission and so we will move on to another feature of matriarchal and egalitarian societies, that is, the ease with which divorce is affected.

Among the Chalderash, a woman may request divorce proceedings from the kriss as readily as does a man (Sutherland 1975: 168, 184, 229). Gilles Eynard does not dispute this fact in regard to the French Chalderash. Furthermore, once divorced a woman returns home to her parents with her children. In the most patriarchal societies children remain with the father.
Old Zanko only alludes to divorce in discussion of the headscarf. As in many patriarchal societies, Chalderash women are traditionally differentiated by their dress after marriage whereas men are not. Old Zanko devotes two passages to the head-scarf which is the sign that a Chalderash woman is married. She never removes the head-scarf for when she does it is the sign that she has divorced her husband, or he has divorced her:

Once married the bride takes the head-scarf of the married woman and never takes it off anywhere, not even in the tent. This head-scarf is the sign that she lives dependent upon her husband. Taking it off would be a very great dishonor for her and her husband. It would be to assert in some way that she is emancipated from him and that she has become once again a free woman. Meanwhile she arranges this head-scarf according to her taste and fancy. There is no fixed way [to wear it]. The essential [thing] is that the hair does not float about freely. By contrast, a young girl is rendered ridiculous in wearing the head-scarf. It is not even possible if the idea comes to her in the matter of a game or of a disguise.

(Aussitôt mariée la fiancée prend la voile des femmes et ne le quitter nulle part, pas même dans la tente. Ce voile est le signe qu’elle demeure sous la dépendance de son mari. Le quitter serait un déshonneur très grand pour elle et son mari. Ce serait affirmer en quelque sorte qu’elle s’est émancipée de lui et qu’elle est redevenue une femme libre. Elle arrange d’ailleurs ce voile selon son gout et sa fantasie. Il n’a pas de forme fixe. L’essentiel est que les cheveux ne soient pas flottants et libres. Par contre, une jeune fille se rendrait ridiculule en portant le voile. Cela ne peut même pas lui venir à l’idée sinon par manière de jeu et de déguisement) (Old Zanko 1959: passages 45, 46: 80).

The headscarf is then the symbol of a woman’s willing submission to her husband.

And yet, Anne Sutherland records a curious facet of Chalderash family law. A woman’s testimony is automatically given more credence than that of a man, and even if a man is exonerated of wrong-doing such as brutalizing his wife and children (Sutherland 1975: 168) or in another case when a father-in-law made inappropriate sexual advances to his son’s wife (ibid), the community continued to look upon the men with suspicion from that time forward (ibid: 207). Gilles Eynard concurs with Sutherland, for upon reading this dissertation he did not contradict Sutherland or say that the French Chalderash would regard matters any differently.

Matriarchal and egalitarian societies differ from patriarchal social systems especially in regard to the legitimacy of children. “Illegitimacy” is an unknown concept among matriarchal and egalitarian societies (Leacock 1978). There are no “illegitimate” children among the American Chalderash according to Sutherland: “The legitimacy of children is not an important
issue...Illegitimate children are in fact favoured and are more valuable to a grandparent” (ibid: 254). As to the French Chalderash, Gilles Eynard agrees with Sutherland pointing out that neither does “illegitimacy” have a stigma attached to it among the French Chalderash as it does among conservative majority French (10/19/2010). This may also be the reason that Hungarian Detroit Roma and Chalderash maintain that one is not “Gypsy unless your mother is Gypsy.” A mother knows who her children are, thus none are “illegitimate.”

In the past, a common misconception of Western scholars who are themselves patriarchal in enculturation and experience (Leacock 1978) is that men are subordinated in a matriarchal society as are women in a patriarchal society. But this is not the case. Men also have power and authority in these cultures but as brothers, uncles, and matrilineal kin, not as fathers per se. However, this does not mean that fatherhood goes unrecognized or is without obligation for in such societies the father may periodically give prescribed gifts to the mother and his children even though he may or may not live with them and he may have other duties in respect to them as well (Leacock 1978; Van Beek 1987). In this instance, however, Chalderash society is patriarchal for the father of the family is of utmost importance and he lives with his wife and family to oversee their safety and well-being.

Chalderash men have authority and power in that they deal with the males of majority societies, contribute to the economic well-being of their families, and act as officiants at family events. But Chalderash women also have power and authority as mothers and grandmothers, ritual experts, and bread-winners within the family, but also outside of the confines of family as diseuses de bonne aventure to a non-Gypsy public, and as drabarna (drobarna) to their own communities. This division of labor is gendered yet it cannot be categorized as taking place in a private domestic sphere of women in contrast to labor that takes place in a public market-place
sphere of men (Rosaldo and Lamphere, Editors 1974). Indeed we learn from many sources that the whole Chalderash family takes part in economic activities, for example, during metalworking and brick-making, and during the editing of Zanko, Chef Tribal. This dual form of social responsibility seems more egalitarian than either completely matriarchal or patriarchal.

And yet there are also many features of Chalderash society characteristic of patriarchal societies. At all feast days, and on ceremonial occasions such as weddings and funerals, Chalderash men officiate. At American Chalderash/Maçvaia weddings, for instance, men make the toasts, and the fathers of the bride and groom are the masters of ceremony. Men always take precedence at these events. For example, at weddings in the Detroit-metropolitan area the guests are seated together at tables in family groups, and the father of each family rises in turn to toast the newly weds. Even if the father of a guest family is not present (because of death) the eldest son makes the toast, not his mother. In regard to the seating arrangements at weddings, French Chalderash conform to an older, patriarchal tradition in that men and women sit separately from one another, the men being served first and the women and children afterward (Zanko 1959: passage 53: 81-82; Communication with Gilles Eynard 10/19/2010). Incidentally this seems to indicate that there has been some culture change among American Chalderash.

Men also control proceedings during the celebration of religious feasts, pilgrimages, and in the taking of communal religious vows:

In effect, we make vows frequently, be it to obtain a favor from the Del, be it to thank him, be it to expiate a fault. Often these vows are for the purpose of a celebration or a pilgrimage. It is the father who takes the responsibility for all the family. We prepare for these feasts by fixed days of fast on the Wednesday and the Friday which precede it. One must never eat what has had life in a terrestrial animal. But one may eat what has come to us as aquatic animals. The preparatory fasts for the feast of Sunto Patradji are longer and more severe. All these days of fasting are also holy days. They are named Sunto Tetradji (Holy Wednesday) and Sunto Parashdui (Holy Friday).

(Nous faisons un effet fréquemment des voeux, soit pour obtenir une faveur du Del, soit pour le remercier, soit pour expier une faute. Ces voeux souvent ont pour objet une fête ou un pèlerinage. C’est le père qui en prend la responsabilité pour toute la famille. Nous nous préparons à ces fêtes par des jours de jeûne fixés aux mercredi et vendredi qui les precedent. C’est le Père qui, la veille, proclame que le lendemain sera jour de jeûne. L’on ne devra rien manger de ce qui a eu vie dans un animal terrestre. Mais l’on peut manger de ce qui nous vient des animaux aquatiques. Les jeûnes préparatoires à la fête de Sunto Patradji sont plus longs et plus sévères.)

As in many small, unspecialized, traditional cultures around the world, the patriarch of the Chalderash family becomes the ritual expert for the household during communal religious events. But it also seems that in a private matter between God and a man, the fast followed by its feast are communal practices. The father both announces that a ritual event of the family will take place and he supervises it. Everyone joins him in both the fasting and the celebration. As illustrated by the above quote, Chalderash make vows for a religious purpose (e.g. “to expiate a fault”), or to visit a holy place of pilgrimage, and the entire household concerns itself with the endeavor not only the man involved. The family obeys the patriarch of the family and the necessary expenditures commence. This is an exercise of men’s spiritual authority over their families.

It was shown that in the affiancing of a young woman and young man, marriage custom seems to be egalitarian in some ways, but there are patriarchal practices as well. For example, Chalderash marriages do not require either a church service or priest but they do require the fathers of the bride and the groom to act as officiants. Old Zanko does not specify whether matrilineal or patrilineal kin act as marriage officiants but Gilles Eynard elucidates the matter: “the Xanamik, the two fathers-in-law,” are the ritual experts who preside over marriage vows (10/19/2010). If the two fathers cannot be present at the wedding due to their demise (the only possible excuse for not attending the marriage of their offspring) that duty is taken over by the fathers’ brothers, the uncles, the “Kaké” (Communication with Gilles Eynard 4/1/2011).

According to Old Zanko, the spiritual power to marry a man and a woman is symbolized in a ritual act of submission to patriarchal authority: “The groom advances on his knees to the head of the family or the one who has been designated to preside over the marriage. (Le fiancé
s’avance sur les genoux jusqu’au chef de la famille ou celui qui a été désigné pour prêside au mariage”), (Zanko 1959: passage 42: 79).

The sacred character of the Chalderash marriage is symbolized by the partaking of bread and salt and represented by ritual phrases:

The one [who presides] then gives bread and salt to the two espoused in the manner of a sacrament, saying to them: “Salt is not distasteful to anyone in the world and bread is not either. When everyone has distaste for salt and bread you may have distaste for one another, but always think of salt and bread.” The two espoused respond: “Because you have entreated us by salt and bread, if we do not listen to these words of God may God punish us forever.” Then they eat the bread and salt together. From then on they are married and the feast takes place.


Notice how Old Zanko speaks of the bread and salt as a “sacrament.” It seems then that whoever presides over the wedding is in control of great spiritual power. Therefore, Chalderash have no need of an outside source of spiritual power to validate the sanctity of their marriages for in the Chalderash family the father is the ritual expert who embodies that power.

There is another patriarchal marriage custom that is common to many traditional cultures. Proof of virginity was and in more traditional families still is an integral part of marriage celebrations. This practice serves to assure the new husband and his extended family that children resulting from the union will be his. In this way, paternity is validated with its attendant rights of descent and inheritance. However, the person who officiates at this rite is not the father of the family but an elderly woman. Old Zanko tells us that she places a cloth of white linen on the marriage bed and awaits consummation of the marriage. Blood on the linen proves that the young woman is a virgin and the elderly woman then announces the outcome to the wedding guests as a signal to commence celebrations anew. If there is no blood, the marriage may be cancelled (Zanko 1959: passage 44: 79-80). This custom that ensures paternity is a world-wide
phenomenon. It is notable that men must show no such proof of virginity because they do not bear the children. But this practice also seems to contradict the saying that one is not a Gypsy unless one’s mother is a Gypsy, and that the concept of illegitimacy does not exist suggests that the Chalderash may be ambilineal and egalitarian.

There is an important consideration when analyzing expressions of gender and power in Chalderash society including spiritual power: culture never remains static. It is not a thing but a process of on-going negotiations of identity and status (Goffman 1961; Ortner 1989). There is always a continuous constructing and deconstructing of customary ways of behaving to fit present circumstances (Lemon 2000; Lowenhaupt-Tsing 1993; Ortner 1989).

Old Zanko was aware of such culture-change which he mentions on a number of occasions. First he tells us that women healers are dying out as more and more Chalderash resort to medical doctors (passage 53: 82) and he also mentions culture-change in regard to women’s dress:

Our women’s way of dressing, much remarked by the sedentary, is simply an age-old way of dressing as are your old fashions, and like them, is in the process of disappearing as is seen among the Sinti. It is never obligatory at this point (La mode vestimentaire de nos femmes, tant remarquée par les sédentaires est une simple mode ancestrale comme les vieilles modes de chez vous et, comme celles-ci, elle est en train de disparaître ainsi que cela se voit chez les Sinti. Il n’y a rien d’obligatoire sur ce point) (ibid: passage 47: 80).

However, although now not obligatory, many Chalderash women (Both French and American) may voluntarily conform to traditional dress wearing long skirts that reach to the ankles, and a headscarf, or their hair tied up in some way. Anthropologist Lila Abu-Lughod points the way to understanding this conservation of traditional garb, for during her research with Bedouin women she found that traditional gender differentiation and standards of modesty expressed by dress may be a way of laying claim to a specific ethnic group and social status (1986, 1999). So too Chalderash women who continue to conform to age-old ways of dressing also seem to be those women who strongly identify with Chalderash ethnicity (from metro-
Detroit data). Often these women willingly bow to patriarchal custom and the traditional power relations between men and women not only as an expression of identity, but also as a way to access spiritual power and the high status that goes with it.

In summary, there is a combination of both matriarchal/egalitarian and patriarchal features that characterize French Chalderash society demonstrated by the spiritual power attributed to both men and women in Zanko, Chef Tribal. Spiritual power is shared by men and women although Chalderash men and women display this spiritual power in different ways, and at different occasions. Yet both sexes have access to spiritual power. If Chalserash women have the power of spiritual advisors and healers and even as speakers at public events, Chalderash men wield the spiritual power of ritual experts at community celebrations, as genealogists, as recouters of sacred stories, and as judges of ethical questions at convenings of the kriss. Old Zanko was one of these spiritual leaders of the Chalderash community. As the father of the family, he presided over familial and community celebrations. He was a genealogist and a recounter of sacred stories. He was elected as a judge (the “man of the kriss”) on numerous occasions. It is evident that just as the “true” Romensa healer presides over her spiritual realm, men of great mental ability for both memorization and innovation, having great wisdom and experience of human nature, men like Old Zanko, are the men chosen by the community to direct proceedings of the spiritual realm allotted to them by Chalderash custom and tradition. It is evident that both men and women share the authority of spiritual power.
Social Darwinism, Religion, and Zanko, Chef Tribal

Shamanism and animism are characterized by a belief in magic which Bernard seems to devalue. I use the word “seems” because Bernard never explicitly mentions either animism or the magical components of Old Zanko’s narratives. However, it may have been this non-Christian, animist, magical worldview that caused Bernard to refer to the Gypsies as having a “prelogical mentality” (Bernard in Zanko 1959: 44-45). One may only surmise that it is Bernard’s estimation of animism and the magical worldview as irrational (“prelogical”) and the people who believe in this way as naïve and childish which caused him to ignore this basis of Old Zanko’s narratives. Bernard merely states that the many contradictions and confusions in the text were caused by an inability of the Gypsies to reason in the way that non-Gypsies do (ibid).

Bernard does suggest that he had problems with the “pre-Christian” content (animistic, shamanic belief in magic) of certain of the narratives in attributing “confusions” and “contradictions” about “the Del’” (God’s son) and the “Dé Develeski” (Divine Mother) to “the late Christianization of the Chalderash Tradition (La christianisation tardive de la Tradition”) (Bernard in Zanko 1959: 45). This implies that he was aware of non-Christian religious concepts in the narratives but did not choose to either examine them closely or to expound upon the subject. More troubling is the fact that Bernard tried to change what Old Zanko said to conform to his own belief system.

For example, after Old Zanko had spoken at length of the “Earth” as the “Divine Mother” (“Dé Develeski”) stressing that she was the creatrix who “came first” (Bernard himself even having commented that Old Zanko had expressed a “filial” devotion to her), he then attempts to convince the reader that Old Zanko did not really believe this for in complete contradiction of Old Zanko’s clear and pointed statements, Bernard writes:
That does not imply necessarily for the Chalderash that God had been created or born from the Earth or that it was a divinity superior to God. They do not adore the Earth, they are content to vow a respect for her and love like a child. According to their reasoning, this implies the divine Principle existed in the mass of matter which constituted the Earth at the beginning, for it is indeed God who, afterwards “arranges” it. Then this Principle is manifested for they never say “God is born from the Earth,” but simply: “He comes from the Earth,” as if he existed before, but was not revealed yet.

(Cela n’implique pas nécessairement pour les Chalderash que Dieu ait été créé ou enfanté par la Terre ni que celle-ci soit une divinité supérieure à Dieu. Ils n’adorent pas la Terre, ils se contentement de lui vouer un respect et un amour d’enfant. Cela peut implique, d’après leurs explication, que le Principe divin existait dans la masse de la matière qui constituait la Terre à origine, car c’est bien Dieu qui, par la suite, l’a “arrange.” Puis ce Principe s’est manifesté. Ils ne disent jamais “Dieu est né de la Terre” mais simplement: “Il est venu de la Terre,” comme s’il existait avant, mais ne s’était pas encore révélé) (Bernard in Zanko 1959: 49).

It is astonishing that Bernard can state the above after Old Zanko has explicitly characterized the Earth as a divine mother, insisting that she “came first,” and after Bernard himself has described the emotion with which Old Zanko had spoken of the Earth although Bernard disparages that emotion as “childish.” Furthermore, Old Zanko has said nothing of any superiority or inferiority in regard to God and the Earth. Rather, it seems to be Bernard who is insisting upon this value judgement. His convoluted reasoning strongly suggests an attempt to reinterpret Old Zanko’s words in accordance with his own philosophical and religious orientation.

In the chapter concerned with “ways of speaking about Gypsies” it was proposed that social evolutionism and the pseudo-science of eugenics caused Bernard and other French intellectuals to view and to speak of Old Zanko and the Chalderash in certain negative ways that devalue Old Zanko’s narratives. I propose that social evolutionism too had an undue influence upon the study of religion so that the animist and magical subtext of Old Zanko’s narratives were ignored or re-interpreted in conformance with Judaism or Christianity. To identify the overwhelming influence of social evolutionism in the history of scholarship it is necessary to examine the writings of various scholars including psychologists, sociologists, and anthropologists from the late 1700s until the present time.
Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel was not a social evolutionist for he was born in 1770 and died in 1831. He was a German philosopher who believed that one could arrive at truth by the dialectical process of reasoning wherein a primary thesis is contrasted and compared to an anti-thesis and then both become combined into a final synthesis causing movement from one state of being to another “higher level” of being, at which stage “truth” becomes perceptible. He also attributed historical change to dialectic movement and then applied this way of reasoning to the historical study of religion.

Hegel describes religion as developing chronologically in three dialectical stages conceiving the first stage (thesis) as “immanent” religion. This was the earliest notion of religion wherein the divine is perceived as being part of all of nature. Hegel categorized magic as belonging to this historical stage of development that he describes in negative terms as “the oldest, rawest, crudest form of religion” (Hegel 1987: 272). However, he acknowledged that magic continues in the present yet extended his negative assessment of magic to the people who adhered to this belief system. For example he writes: “The religion of magic is still found today among wholly crude and barbarous people such as the Eskimos” (ibid: 541).

Hegel’s next historical development (stage/antithesis) of the reasoning powers of humankind resulted in “trandescent” religions wherein supernatural powers are seen as being outside of the natural world. Moreover, these powers, Gods, or “spirits” have dominion over physical matter. Greek, Roman, and Jewish religions were Hegel’s examples of transcendent religions.

Finally, the reasoning powers of humankind brought together both sorts of religious expressions in a synthesis (third stage) wherein humans perceive the divine as both inhering in nature and yet as above and beyond mere earthly existence. In Hegel’s estimation, only
Christians had reached this pinnacle of mental development, and he termed Christianity the “consummate religion” (1985: 162).

Hegel’s dialectical process is based upon a set of ethnocentric assumptions that cause him to make value judgements for he sees the development of religion not only in terms of linear historical movement but also hierarchically from a supposed undesirable lower state of consciousness to an hypothesized desirable and highest state of consciousness that is only exemplified by Christianity. Many of Hegel’s assumptions reappear in the writings of Christian religious experts.

Hegel’s theory supports the analysis of religion by social evolutionists. Hegel’s way of looking at religious development also had an impact on the way in which psychologists often interpret religious phenomena. For example, Bruno Bettelheim (1903-1990), in his study of fairytales, attributes animism with its underlying belief in magic to the “fantasizing” of children and their “animist thinking” (1977: 45-7), agreeing with Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) who maintained that a child’s thinking remains “animistic” until puberty (1913,1985: 146). The implied message is that magic and animism are childish and naïve, and a product of immature logic despite the fact that it is the underlying belief system of millions of adults throughout the world.

Freud even went so far as to say that a belief in magic and animism are signs of mental disturbance (Freud 1985: 145). He placed human psychic development on an evolutionary continuum from the earliest magical/animist belief system of “primitive man” which is “narcissistic,” that is, formed of “self-love” (ibid: 141), to religion typified by “totemism” which originates in love of the father (ibid: 202, 206), to science which Freud saw as the equivalent of having attained adult maturity (ibid: 148). Thus, social evolutionism seems to be a subtext in
Freud and Bettelheim although they make no explicit reference to it. However, their negative assessment of magic and animism implies a familiarity with ideas of “the evolution” of religious thought.

Henry Lewis Morgan, saw religion as “the evolution” of the imaginative and emotional faculties (as did Freud and Bettelheim). He proposed that religion evolved from the “earliest” and the most “primitive,” “savage stage” of religious thought (exemplified by “magic” and “animism”) to a progressively “more rational” form of religious thought writing that “all primitive religions are grotesque and to some extent unintelligible” (1887 Morgan in McGee and Warms Editors, 1996: 42), a statement that is inherently ethnocentric and biased for it attributes inferiority and primitivity to these forms of religion.

E.B. Tylor (1832-1917) was also a social evolutionist who did not attempt to hide his basically racist viewpoint. He too attributes a belief in magic to “a less rational evolutionary stage” terming it “savage religion” saying that it chiefly appears among “the lower races.” Furthermore, he writes: “Animism characterizes tribes very low on the scale of humanity,” and it sometimes remains as a “survival” in “high modern culture” which is characterized by “enlightened Christianity” (Tylor 1871 in McGee and Warms Editors, 1996: 39). Although it is true that Tylor does not resort to “dogmatic theology” (ibid) in differentiating religions from one another, nevertheless his own Christianity is the unacknowledged standard by which he judges the “savage” belief in magic and animist religions as being less enlightened than Christianity (ibid).

Sir James George Frazer (1854-1941), like Lewis Henry Morgan and others, maintained that religion represents “the evolution” of mental processes saying that “magic” belongs to the “ruder and earlier phase of the human mind through which all races of mankind have passed or
are passing on their way to religion” (1990: 56). In Frazer, we also first have the dichotomizing of magic as “coercion” and religion as “propitiation” (ibid: 50). The final and “highest” stage in the mental evolution of humankind results in “science,” which in time, according to Frazer, would cause religion to disappear (ibid: 712).

Karl Marx (1818-1883) and Friedrich Engels (1820-1895) too were impressed with social evolutionism, thus they linked human evolutionary development with historical trajectories of change in the economic relations of production. They saw all religion as a social construct and a manifestation of false consciousness. Magic as religion appeared with the first and “earliest evolutionary stage of the reasoning faculty and its economic basis” to which they attributed negative value. For example, Engels wrote:

These various false conceptions of nature, of man’s own being, of spirits, magic forces etc., have for the most part only a negative economic element as their basis; the low economic development of the prehistoric period is supplemented and also partially conditioned and even caused by the false conceptions of nature (Engels 1957: 281-2).

Marx and Engels have had enormous impact upon the materialist schools of modern anthropology termed “cultural ecology” or “neo-evolutionary” theory. Such academics as Julian Steward (1955), Leslie White (1959), and Peter Murdock (1959) reintroduced social evolutionism into the study of anthropology by depicting religion as “adaptation” to an ecological environment. These men in turn inspired anthropologists such as Marvin Harris (1974, 1979) to regard religion too as basically an economic form of “adaptation” to an ecological environment to the exclusion of other considerations such as religion as imaginative, artistic expression or as a standard of morality.

Of course, Marx and Engels influenced Soviet intellectuals who criticized an interest in “folk religion” as “a flirtation with the irrational,” and they portrayed folklorists interested in folk religion as “immature” (Schneider 1990: 53). Marx’ and Engel’s social evolutionism caused
Soviet social policy to outlaw religion including shamanism (with its magical and animist worldview) practiced by indigenous peoples of Siberia and Soviet Mongolia. The evolutionary continuum that proposed science to be the highest and most desirable outcome of human evolution caused Soviet social scientists such as ethnographer Vilmos Dioszegi (1923-1972) to declare that shamanic healing systems are no longer necessary: “Not only do they [shamans] interfere unnecessarily with the work of the physician but they often cause trouble and damage too” (Dioszegi 1968 in Mandelstam and Balzer Editors 1990: 10). Moreover, he insists that “shamanism already belongs to the past” because “due to the propagation of science it had become extinct” (ibid: 11).

Indeed the Soviets made certain that shamanism would become extinct with a program of unrelenting vilification and persecution. Shamans and the people who resorted to their healing practices faced public denunciation as practitioners of “fraudulent medicine” as well as accusations that they are “perpetrators of outdated religious beliefs in a dawning age of science and logic” (Mandelstam-Balzer Editor 1990: vii-viii). Soviet oppression of shamans included the confiscation of property, internment in labor camps, and sometimes they were executed if they could be shown to be traitors to the Soviet Union (ibid).

Indeed, social evolutionism mars a great many Soviet studies of shamanism that are otherwise full of interesting ethnographic data. It is important to read this corpus of work, not only for the ethnographic data, but because it is necessary to the understanding of the role of social evolutionism in prejudicing analyses and thereby hindering a real understanding of this spiritual belief system (e.g. Alekseev 1990; Basilov 1990; Dioszegi and Hoppel, Editors 1978). But it was not only Soviet scholars who exhibited the racism and ethnocentrism of social evolutionists. Western colonial powers too persecuted shamans in the Americas, Africa, and Asia.
and for the same reason: the ubiquitous influence that social evolutionism had and has upon the social sciences.

One Western social scientist, sociologist Max Weber (1864-1920), is known for an “interpretive approach” to the study of religion, and he is usually not thought of as coming from a social evolutionary orientation for he thought magic and animism to be part of all religion in the past and in the present. However, he does betray a certain bias by assigning less value to magical and animist belief systems when comparing and contrasting them to religious belief systems as did social evolutionists. In writing of the origin of religion and its development, he describes magic and animism as the “earliest types” of religion which he claims had not reached as yet their “full development” as demonstrated by “later” religious systems. He ascribed various qualities to magic and animism in contrast to religion employing ambiguous vocabulary that often suggests negative connotations for magical, animist beliefs in contrast to suggested positive connotations for the subsequent development of religion.

For instance, in describing religion as “supplicatory” and magic as “coercive” (1978: 422), he affectively characterizes religious ritual as more polite and less demanding than magical ritual. The term “coercive” is not a politically neutral term having the negative connotation of being made to act against one’s will. Therefore, magicians are depicted as somehow less ethical than priests who represent a later development of religion (ibid: 419-20). In Weber’s estimation only religion “gives meaning” to life, whereas magic’s sole purpose is to acquire “material ends” (Weber 1991: 271). Again, religion acquires positive value whereas magic acquires the negative value of being motivated by self-interest alone. As in paradigms of social evolution, magic always suffers in the comparison as somehow lacking, in the above case, in altruistic and philanthropic sentiment. Even more illustrative of a certain bias in Weber’s thinking is his
characterization of religion as worship of “gods” representative of good and creative force, but magic as worship of “demons,” representative of evil and the powers of destruction. Although Weber never examines his own religious biases nor does he mention social evolutionism per se, by placing magic and animism on a continuum of development that suffers in comparison to later developments, his thinking runs parallel to social evolutionary models, and his own religious values and traditions also seem to have had a part in shaping his vision of what constitutes religion.

French sociologist, Émile Durkheim (1858-1917) is another academic who is not usually connected with social evolutionism and yet his work suggests knowledge of it. His interest in magic and religion caused him to examine the work of scholars such as E. B. Tylor. Durkheim was dissatisfied with Tylor’s definition of religion as a belief in supernatural beings noting that certain forms of Buddhism do not require belief in such entities. Rather, Durkheim chose to see religion as the human attempt to separate all of reality into two major divisions: that of a “sacred” realm and that of a “profane” (1915, 1976). But Durkheim also followed an historical trajectory for the development of religious thought linking human technological innovation to it. Thus there were earlier “elementary” (simple) forms of religion and technology and later “more complex” religious forms and technology (ibid). This comparison was similar to Herbert Spencer’s hypothesized “social organism” (culture/society) that was supposed to have “evolved” from the simple to the complex.

The most “elementary” of religious forms, according to Durkheim, was totemism characterized by the worship of plants and animals as representative of the “clan.” Although he also believed both magic and religion to stem from the same human tendency to dichotomize reality into the sacred and the profane realms, Durkheim assigned magical beliefs and an animist
worldview to the earliest and simplest manifestation of religious thought. Therefore, Durkheim too saw religion as a progressive development of human mental capacities, and magic and animism as “primitive” thought.

Durkheim attempted to differentiate magic and animist thinking from religious modes of thought (as did social evolutionists) assigning superiority by implication to religion and inferiority to magical, animist beliefs which are always somehow lacking in the comparison. For instance, he maintains that religion binds a social group into a “single moral community” (1915, 1976: 47) whereas magic does not (ibid: 44). Religion punishes wrong doing in two ways “misfortune and condemnation,” but magic sanctions it in only one way, “misfortune” (ibid: 300). There “is no sin in magic” (ibid: 301). Thus Durkheim sees magical belief as basically amoral. In terms of religious “prohibition” (taboo), those things and behaviors “forbidden” to the moral community create a sense of the sacred, whereas magical prohibition creates only “a lay notion of property” (ibid). This meant that the avoidance of sacred things and behaviors by believers in magic was simply utilitarian, whereas the avoidance of sacred things and behaviors (following further religious development) was rather due to “respect” and the “fear that they might be profaned” (ibid). Religion creates social solidarity, but magic is individualist and inimical to “collective” thoughts and actions (ibid: 44).

However, Durkheim is not always disparaging of magical, animist belief. He says that both magic and religion stem from the same source, human consciousness, thus there is “continuity” between both modes of thinking (ibid: 301, n.2). But notice that there are two modes of thought as in oral/literate dichotomies (see Ong 1999). Durkheim also writes that magic was the first attempt to classify the natural world, and like religion, eventually led to scientific enquiry (ibid: 142, 429). Nonetheless, there is always the underlying assumption in
Durkheim that religious belief and practice are more ethical and socially binding than magical belief and practice which dovetails nicely with social evolutionism.

French anthropologist Marcel Mauss (1872-1950), Durkheim’s nephew, was also interested in magic writing *A General Theory of Magic*, published in 1904 (1972). He too separates magic from religion describing magical rituals as “private,” “secret,” and “mysterious” which differs from “public” (non-secretive), explicit, and socially organized, thus socially “binding” religion (1972: 24). Breaking with Durkheim and others, however, he thought that religion preceded magic because of its collective character, whereas he thought magic to be characteristic of the later development of an individual identity (ibid: 90). He did not judge magic to be necessarily coercive and he also maintained that a belief in Gods and spirits was just as much a feature of magic as it was of religion (ibid: 21). As did Durkheim, he thought of magic and religion as classificatory systems that were based in empirical observation both of which led in time to the development of science (ibid: 143).

Although Mauss agreed with Durkheim that religion’s goal is to integrate a society, he was one of the first scholars to be troubled by the separation of magic from religion, and even though he did so himself at times, his divisions did not impute morality or lack of it to the two modes of worship. In his work, one may see that he struggles with himself on this point (differentiating magic from religion) for he goes back and forth upon the subject, finally deciding that since both magic and religion are characterized by ritual both should be studied for the symbolic import of the respective rituals. Mauss inspired many later anthropologists of interpretative schools (e.g. Douglas 1970; Geertz 1960, 1973, 1993; Tambiah 1984; Turner 1961, 1967, 1979; Van Gennep 1909, 1960) to focus more upon ritual and its symbolism which
describes magic/animism as religious practice rather than focusing upon imagined differences between magic and religion.

Specifically in the recent writings of Stanley J. Tambiah, early dichotomizations of magic and animism from religion are criticized as biases caused by a scholar’s own enculturation into a particular religious tradition. He identified two factors which cause bias against magic. The first cause of prejudicial thinking was “Jewish Scripture” which differentiated “monotheist Judaism” as true religion from “polytheism” as false religion. The second cause was “the Protestant” characterization of magic as coercive and religion as supplicatory (Tambiah 1990: 19). Tambiah advocates eschewing such negative Judaic and Christian assessments of magic (as well as negative views of magic as “bad science”) to instead define magic as “rhetorical art” (ibid: 82). Thus Tambiah allies himself with “performance theorists” such as Roman Jakobson (1956), Richard Bauman (1977), Richard Bauman and Charles I. Briggs (1990), and Alaina Lemon (2000). Of the above mentioned scholars, anthropologist Alaina Lemon specifically used performance theory to examine the symbolic content of discourse gathered from the Gypsies of Russia (2000).

Although Tambiah is leery of the separation of magic and animism from religion, he never mentions that social evolutionism may have played a part in negative assessments of magic in contrast to positive assessments of religion although en passant he mentions the undue influence of scientific definitions of magic as faulty science. However, social scientists from the middle of the nineteenth century onward employed theories of social evolution to hypothesize the nature of magic and religion of which Tambiah is aware. In the estimation of social evolutionists, magic was not religion and religion to be religion had to purge itself of magical beliefs with its animist worldview. Therefore social science welded itself to Christian values but
Tambiah only discusses Christianity’s role in the discrediting of magic and animism and not social evolutionism.

Anthropologist Jane Schneider (1990), followed Weber’s and Tambiah’s lead in identifying Protestantism and the pursuit of capitalism as the impetus by which magic and animism came to be discredited. According to Schneider, this prevents not only clerics but also social scientists from viewing magical belief systems equitably. Schneider emphasized the interaction between the marginalization campaign of Christian churches, scientific empiricism, and the development of capitalism (ibid) but she never mentions the role that social evolutionism may have played in the demonization of animist belief although she attests to a feeling of unease with its precepts when she states: “I distrust ideas of the first ‘stage’ or ‘primordial base line’ and attempt to ascertain historical developments” (Schneider 1990: 25) which is the only time she alludes to social evolutionism, and very vaguely at that. Therefore, I extend Tambiah’s and Schneider’s analyses to include the spread of social evolutionism as a rationale and buttress for the marginalization and elimination of animism, shamanism, and belief in magic along with its practices.

Anthropologists had begun to question assumptions about magic and religion as early as the 1930s. For example, Bronislaw Malinowski insisted that “magic” is rational every day practice (1982: 32) as did Evans-Pritchard (1965: 20). But in other ways such as the use of such terms as “primitive” and “savage” both Malinowski and Evans-Pritchard may be shown to have been swayed by the underlying racism of the social evolutionists. Therefore, it would be foolhardy to underestimate the sheer weight of the influence that the combined discourses and narratives about magic, animism, and religion by social evolutionists and other scholars (from Hegel to Marx to Mauss) had on the way in which such writers such as Michel Bernard and
Maurice Colinon viewed Old Zanko and his religious narratives in 1959. This influence is discernible in the commentaries of Bernard and in the statements made by Colinon in his literary review of Zanko, *Chef Tribal*. Becoming aware of the impact of social evolutionary models upon the study of religion as well as paying attention to more recent developments in the anthropology of religion (e.g. Asad 2003; Schneider 1990; Tambiah 1985, 1990) allows analyses of Zanko, *Chef Tribal* to be more equitable.
CHAPTER IV ORALITY OF MYTH, LEGEND, and FAIRYTALE

The Oral Genesis of Old Zanko’s Narratives

This chapter is dedicated to Old Zanko’s narratives which may be described as “folklore” in the generic sense of the word, but more precisely as “fairytales” for there is an element of magic in all of them, unlike folktales that may or may not treat of magic (Ben-Amos, Ed. 1976; Edmonson 1971; Propp 1968; Toelken 1976). Old Zanko’s fairytale narratives comprise the second half of Zanko, Chef Tribal beginning with The Cycle of the Suuntse (1959: 95-102) and ending with The Little Golden Fish and the Daughter of the King (ibid: 199-266). Both the content of these stories and the ways in which they unfold bear all the hallmarks of orality. Particularly the oral nature of these narratives and their magical content are indicative of antiquity. Thus, it is necessary to delineate the clues to orality in the fairytales of Zanko, Chef Tribal.

Particular features differentiate literature based in oral traditions from that of literature derived from wholly literate cultures. The latter genre of literature is usually linked to either the seventeenth century with the first diarists (Boerner 1969; Ong 1982, 1999: 1902) or to the beginning of the Romantic movement when oral traits began to be carefully and purposefully purged from prose and poetry for a variety of reasons (see Abrahams 1968; Bright 1981; Bynum 1967; Cully 1967; Derrida 1978; Finnegan 1977, 1979; Foley 1977, 1980; Goody 1968, 1977; Jousse 1925, 1978; Parry 1928 etc.). However, Walter J. Ong’s book, Orality and Literacy: the Technologizing of the Word (1982, 1999) was most useful in the analysis of Zanko, Chef Tribal, because it synthesizes this corpus of work identifying nine specific aspects of orality the first of which is an “additive oral style.”
Ong cites the ubiquitous “and” of Genesis (I: 1-5) as illustrative of additive oral styling. Other additive terms in the Bible include “when,” “then,” “thus,” and “while” (Ong: 1999: 37). In the narratives of Zanko, Chef Tribal, a prevalent additive term is “then” (“alors,” “et puis”) which is a constantly recurring means of moving from one event to another. This additive oral styling appears throughout Zanko, Chef Tribal beginning with the Prologue and continuing throughout the text as the following passages exemplify:

“Then, my grandfather spoke” (1959: 21); “Then the Pouro Del (the Old God) drowned him (Pharavono) and all of his followers” (ibid); “The Pouro Del then spoke to them” (ibid); “Then the Sap bowed his head” (ibid: 25); “Then the Pouro Del spoke to them saying” (ibid); “Then the man rose” (ibid); “Then the Pouro Del was angry” (ibid: 26); “Then the Pouro Del abandoned them” (ibid); “Then came the Pharavono (ibid:28); “All the men were then nomads” (ibid: 29); “Then there came the moment when the Pharavono and his men no longer wished to follow Sinpetra” (ibid); “Then he directly crossed the water” (ibid: 30); “Then the Pouro Del Sinpetra made a passage open” (ibid: 31); “Then there was thunder and a great storm” etc. (ibid) (emphases mine).

The above oral patterning of Zanko, Chef Tribal, appears in Jewish Scripture and the New Testament (Ong 1999: 37, 44), in Homer’s Iliad and Odyssey (Parry M., 1971), as well as in many other traditional texts from the Middle East to China (Foley Ed. 1981).

The second feature of orality is what Ong terms its “aggregative” quality. That is, parallel terms, phrases, clauses, and epithets are constantly repeated. For instance, rather than simply stating “a soldier,” oral narratives will qualify “soldier” as “the brave soldier” (“the beautiful princess,” “the sturdy oak,” “the rosy fingered dawn” etc.) throughout the recitation until it becomes something of a cliché (Ong 1977: 188-212; 1999: 38). The narratives of Zanko, Chef Tribal also exhibit this aggregative quality. In Balo and the Seven Brothers (1959: 103-110), rather than giving the eldest brother a name and referring to him by that appellation, Old Zanko almost invariably identifies the character as “the eldest of the seven brothers” throughout the narrative, rarely as simply “the eldest,” and never by nomenclature. The “Sister” featured in this story never receives a name but is always referred to as the “Sister” or “Balo’s wife” (ibid).
This aggregative trait is even more pronounced in the *Epic of the Serpent* (1959: 131-160). The heroes of the story are three giants mounted on horses, and although they have names, they are most often referred to as “the three giants” or “the three brothers” or “these three young men,” the number three as the constant qualifier of the phrase. When the sorceress of the story addresses the giants, she always calls them “my handsome boys,” never simply “boys.” So too the giants are constantly referred to as “the handsome cavaliers,” not often as just “cavaliers.” Furthermore, these “handsome cavaliers” always ride upon “beautiful horses” whenever their horses are mentioned and never ride upon just a “horse.” Moreover, the prowess of the three handsome giants is assured by their possession of “three shining” and “magical swords” which vanquish all rivals.

This parallelism occurs throughout the story for the enemies of the “three handsome cavaliers” are “three criminal charcoal burners,” and the heroines of the story are “three beautiful princesses” whom both the “three handsome cavaliers” and “the three criminal charcoal burners” seek to marry, and when the three giants disguise themselves as “three beggars” and go to the marriage of the three beautiful princesses to the three criminal charcoal burners, they are to clink glasses with the king and queen three times before the dénouement of the charcoal burners’ criminality is affected.

Not only is the aggregative parallel patterning indicative of orality, but the constantly occurring number is as well for repeating a number in this manner is ever the mnemonic device of reciters of tales throughout the world. Repetition of phrases and numbers assists the narrative performer in recall of the plot line and other details of the recitation (Ong 1999: 70). In present literary practice, this constant repetition of numbers and parallel patterning is considered to be unnecessary, even quite unacceptable thus all modern writers resort to the use of a thesaurus so
as to eliminate repetition. This brings us to the next oral trait as formulated by Ong, “the redundant, or the copious” character of oral recitation (1999: 40).

In reciting narratives before an audience, the narrator must take care not to lose track of the story-line. Everyone (not only the professional performer) has experienced this human tendency to forget momentarily what one is speaking about for one easily may become distracted by extraneous noise or audience reaction. For instance, who at a communal celebration of one sort or another has not paused in relating an anecdote to fellow party-goers saying, “Now, where was I? Oh yes, I was just saying...” To repeat what one has just said keeps both the one who recites and the one who listens connected to plot and characters. In other words, repetition preserves continuity of thought: “The public speaker’s need to keep going while he is running through his mind what to say next also encourages redundancy. In oral delivery, though a pause may be effective, hesitation is always disabling” (ibid). Therefore, “it is advantageous for the speaker to say the same thing, or equivalently the same thing, two or three times” (ibid).

Allied with aggregative styling is Ong’s third feature of orality: redundancy. Schools of the rhetorical arts called this peculiarity of orality “copia” (ibid: 41), and Ong notes that written texts of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance retained not only repetition of the just said, but also details that “bloat” such manuscripts “unnecessarily” (ibid). Old Zanko’s fairytales and other narratives possess this aspect of orality. One notable example is the story of *Holy Proroc and Holy Ilia (or the Vocation of the God of Thunder)* (1959: 95-102) in which the protagonist is a peasant who is on his way home after having had his wheat ground at a mill some distance away. He is met on the road by what seems to be a group of young men. However, these are not actually human beings but a band of “Benga” (mischievous supernatural beings in league with the Beng, who is somewhat equivalent to the Christian Devil). They appear to be
drunk for they sing and dance cavorting merrily. The peasant stops them to ask from whence they come and they tell him that they come from a wedding in the peasant’s village. The peasant avows amazement for he had known of no forthcoming wedding saying that surely he would have been notified of the event. But the Benga insist that a wedding took place, “Yes, yes, they said to him, there was a wedding in your village, a very beautiful wedding, and we laughed much, drank much, danced much and were well amused.” The man questions them further, “But who indeed was married?” (Zanko 1959: 96) Rather than answering him, the Benga burst out laughing saying mysteriously, “Ah! If you knew, if you knew!” and they left him, “saying nothing more” (ibid).

Old Zanko then cleverly allows himself to repeat the just said in great detail by describing the Benga as taking a circuitous route to confront the peasant head-on once again, and the peasant imagines them to be yet another and different band whom he queries in the exact manner of the previous encounter:

Thus he asked them, “From where do you come therefore?” The Benga answered him, “We come from a wedding.” Then the man said to them, “But where is this wedding?” And the Benga responded, “It is in your village.” The man was astonished, “A wedding in my village? That surprises me a great deal. I would know of it. So who is married?” The Benga looked at him laughing, “Who, who? You ask who? You really do not know? The man said, “No I do not know about it.” Then the Benga said, “But it was your wife. Your wife was remarried. She remarried another suitor” (ibid).

After telling the peasant where to find his wife and her new spouse they go away singing and dancing. Thus, Old Zanko manages to recite the exact details of the peasant’s Benga encounter twice and in nearly the same way as he did the first time in that the man is confronted twice by the Benga. That they come singing and dancing is reiterated twice. The peasant evinces astonishment twice. He asks them twice just who is being married. Twice they mock him. Twice they make him admit to not knowing of a wedding before revealing to him who was married. Finally they tell the peasant that it is his wife who has remarried, and when the Benga divulge this fact their speech pattern too is repetitious in that “wife” is repeated twice, as is the word
“remarried.” This property of redundancy in Zanko, Chef Tribal exactly demonstrates how “oral cultures encourage fluency, fulsomeness, volubility” according to Ong, the rhetorical “copia,” or “amplification” in written texts which retain this property of orality, and which seems “annoyingly redundant by modern standards” (1999: 40-41). Another feature of orality that goes hand in hand with redundancy is Ong’s fourth evidence of orality, its “traditionalist” and “conservative” orientation.

He explains that in a wholly oral culture (which he terms “primary oral culture”) if conceptual knowledge is not repeated over and over again, it will disappear entirely from memory. This body of knowledge, codified in proverbs, tales, poems, and formulae, are passed down to succeeding generations by word of mouth. Children must learn all information gathered over the years and even the centuries by hearing narratives recited over and over again, year in year out until they themselves can transmit it one day to their children. Thus the continuity of the culture is maintained and orally learned knowledge is preserved for posterity. According to Ong, this need to preserve knowledge orally is buttressed by a conservative and traditionalist worldview that upholds the importance of tradition and which therefore discourages innovation (ibid: 41).

Ong admits that it is debatable whether or not “primary oral” cultures alone appeal to and conserve the traditional (ibid). One example of the opposite is the fact that American Republicans call themselves “conservatives” because of their “traditional values” which they conceive as having ancient roots in the Bible. Therefore, it is necessary to foster respect for such traditional knowledge if that knowledge is to be preserved by future generations. Just as in wholly literate societies professionals must inspire youth to follow in their footsteps else those professions will cease to exist, so too elders of oral societies must inspire youth with the desire to
know and value that which they have to teach or society as a whole risks losing that knowledge. Thus, oral narratives (but not exclusively so) constantly refer to “Tradition” as verification of the narrator’s authority and as proof of the authenticity and truthfulness of the transmission.

Since all such knowledge is perceived as coming out of the past, sometimes as coming from the remote past, primary oral cultures privilege the elderly as having the necessary experience of many years for the accumulation of traditional lore. The “wise old man” and “wise old woman” are thus integral to and an expression of the conservative and traditional nature of oral societies:

Knowledge is hard to come by and precious. And society regards highly those wise old men and women who specialize in conserving it, who know and can tell the stories of the days of old. By storing knowledge outside the mind, writing, and even more, print downgrade the figures of the wise old man, and the wise old woman, repeaters of the past, in favor of younger discoverers of something new (Ong 1999: 41).

Although oral cultures also possess originality at times in that narrators must fit recitations to the tastes and expectations of various sorts of audiences, also there are often different versions of myths and other genres, moreover new information sometimes must be introduced into traditional narratives in order to deal with present economic or political situations, yet these innovations “are seldom if ever explicitly touted for their novelty but are presented as fitting the traditions of the ancestors” (ibid: 41-42).

In Chalderash culture the term “old” is a term of great respect, therefore Old Zanko’s grandson, Michel Zanko, and Gypsy activist, Gilles Eynard, prefer the appellation of “Old Zanko” to any other formal title demonstrating the conservative nature of Chalderash society in France today. In fact, Old Zanko himself was one of the wise old men who have specialized in conserving Chalderash tradition. Indeed, he styles his narrative “The Tradition of the Ancestors.” This appeal to an ancestral tradition makes Zanko, Chef Tribal rather notable in the annals of literature either about Gypsies or by Gypsies.
As a researcher who has been reading books about and by Gypsies for the last twenty years, I cannot cite any other text that exhibits so many features of orality including its traditional and conservative belief system. I offer, in contrast to the narratives of Old Zanko, the compositions of Matéo Maximoff with whom I have corresponded. Maximoff was not only a contemporary of Old Zanko but actually distantly related to him (Communication with Gilles Eynard 11/4/2009). He was quite a bit younger than Old Zanko and as a consequence the Chalderash do not seem to have addressed him formally as “Old Maximoff.” But Matéo Maximoff was different from Old Zanko in another way: he was literate and wrote fiction for a largely non-Gypsy French readership having Gypsy characters and themes that are set in the present.

Old Zanko was not a writer of books aimed at the French majority readership nor does Zanko, Chef Tribal consist of modern day plots and dramas. Old Zanko was illiterate (Communication with Gilles Eynard 1/11/2010) and a traditional story-teller of narratives that are situated in a long ago world of Gods, saints, giants, kings and queens, cavaliers and princes, witches, monsters and talking animals as in medieval epics. The sole exception to this ancient universe is Old Zanko’s ghost stories in which he claims to have been acquainted with the protagonists. Because Old Zanko was not a writer or even literate but a master of oral art, Father Chatard was compelled to tape-record Old Zanko’s narrative performances or take notations during these recitations that had never been committed to writing. Furthermore, Old Zanko’s recitations were not staged solely for Father Chatard, Bernard, and a majority French readership but were specifically intended for the Chalderash community, an audience of listeners who interacted with Old Zanko during recitation, a most important and time honored feature of orality (Ong 1999: 5-15).
There is another major difference between Old Zanko and his religious narratives and Matéo Maximoff and his treatment of religion. Old Zanko remained loyal to a religious system that included along with Eastern Orthodoxy and Roman Catholicism an uncritical belief in magic, animism, and shamanism. Old Zanko and the Chalderash families which had lived in Romania and then Russia were specifically Eastern Orthodox as their veneration of icons demonstrates. Matéo Maximoff, however, was a convert to Protestant evangelism. Protestantism is the only Christian system of belief absent from Zanko, Chef Tribal.

As a writer, Maximoff was not concerned with preserving Chalderash traditional religious beliefs and practices. Rather, he was a force for change. His novel The Seventh Daughter (1982) is particularly illustrative of Maximoff’s Protestant Christian evangelical repudiation of magic and animism. Anthropologist, Sung-Deuk has studied this evangelical repudiation of the magical in the context of North Korean shamanism (2010).

In Old Zanko’s narratives, magic, prophecy, and the healing arts are depicted in a positive light, and sorceresses (a witch is always a woman) who wield these powers are described as benevolent characters seeking to do good (1959: 81, 82, 106-107, 133-134). In the Epic of the Serpent, for example, the “three handsome giants” consult two sorceresses. They consult a sorceress for the first time seeking help in their quest for fame and fortune. She advises them to go to a kingdom where the young people are menaced by a serpent monster with seven heads, telling them that on arrival at a certain city they should first go to the house of the sorceress’ sister and her husband to receive shelter and aid. The sister of the sorceress is also a sorceress:

And the sorceress continued by saying, “You will go into the city without worrying unduly about doing so. At the first house that you encounter, dismount and enter it. It is there that you will live, and there my sister lives with her Rom. All in all, my sister will teach you well. Always inform my sister and her husband what you think about doing, and my sister and her Rom will give you their instructions.
(Et la sorcière leur dit encore, “Vous pénétrerez dans la ville sans vous soucier du logement. A la première maison que vous rencontrerez, descendez de vos montures et entrez. C’est là que vous demeurez, et là qu’habite ma soeur avec son Rom. Et ma soeur vous renseignera bien en tout et pour tous. Informez-vous, auprès d’elle et de son Rom, pour tout ce que vous pensez faire; et ma soeur et son Rom vous donneront leurs instructions”) (ibid: 134).

The giants go to the city and find the house of the sister sorceress. Old Zanko characterizes sorceress and husband in conformance with orality’s traditionalism in that Chalderash social values are explicitly expressed which honor and respect the elderly for their great wisdom accumulated orally and experientially during a long lifetime. Age and wisdom go hand in hand in traditional oral cultures:

And as the the sorceress had said, two very old people lived in the house, a Rom and a Romni (a husband and a wife) of a great age, and of very great wisdom (Et, comme l’avait dit la sorcière, deux personnes très âgés habitaient la maison, un Rom et une Romni d’une grande vieillesse, et d’une grande sagesse.) (ibid)

About the sorceress’ benevolence, Old Zanko is unequivocal:

The Mami [the Grandmother], the good sorceress, was already aware of everything. The three cavaliers saw her smile (La Mami, la bonne sorcière, est au courant de tout. Les trois chevaliers la voient sourire) (ibid: 154).

To contrast Old Zanko’s narrative with Matéo Maximoff’s novel, *The Seventh Daughter* (1982) is enlightening. In this text, the skills of a sorceress (magic, prophecy, and the healing arts) are depicted as somehow nefarious, and Maximoff’s sorceress is an evil character who wishes to inculcate the seventh daughter, “Silenka,” (a mere baby of approximately 3-4 years old) with her wicked and impious magical arts, mesmerizing Silenka into coming to her thus putting her in dangerous situations against Silenka’s will as though she were a zombie, and against the wishes of Silenka’s relatives, especially the wishes of her male relatives. This is totally in keeping with Protestant Christian evangelical ideology, but very far removed from the traditional Chalderash belief system explicated in *Zanko, Chef Tribal*.

While Maximoff treats of magical Chalderash tradition among present-day Chalderash (e.g., a sorceress is one of his characters), his novel yet places Chalderash tradition in opposition to itself in his attempt to supplant the traditional belief system with another, that of Protestant
Christian evangelism. Furthermore, his novels are devoid of the many other oral characteristics laid down by Ong (1999) such as additive and aggregative styling. Moreover, although Maximoff sometimes affirms traditional and conservative Chalderash values, he is selective as to which of them are acceptable.

References to tradition and ancestors are abundant in Zanko, Chef Tribal. The same cannot be said of recent monographs which purport to be written by “authentic” Gypsies and based in “Gypsy tradition.” While these may be valuable in some ways, they are utterly lacking in the features of orality delineated by Ong and other scholars although such features are ubiquitous in Zanko, Chef Tribal. It is also noticeable that in these recent monographs details of Gypsy tradition remain vague and indefinite despite their claims to being based upon Gypsy customary practice and spiritual beliefs (e.g., Lakatos 1975; Lee 2000).

In Zanko, Chef Tribal, the continuity of Chalderash belief and practice is maintained throughout as The Tradition of the Ancestors, and it is full of the particulars of Chalderash custom and practice still current in modern Chalderash communities of France and the USA. Indeed, Zanko, Chef Tribal includes numerous appeals to the authority of religious and cultural traditionalism. In the Prologue, Old Zanko invokes traditionalism and its orality when he tells Father Chatard:

Then my grandfather spoke, and he remembered the words of his father… And my grandfather told the story. I’ve listened to it countless times, always with the greatest attention, as have many who have gone before us, as do our sons. These stories are so much a part of me that every time I think of them, it is as though the events took place before my very eyes. I am there.

(Alors mon grand-père a parlé, et il a rappelé les paroles de son père… Et mon grand-père a raconté l’histoire. Je l’ai entendue depuis je ne sais combien de fois, toujours avec la plus grande attention, comme beaucoup d’entre nous, comme mes fils eux-mêmes. Ces choses sont tellement fixée dans mon esprit que chaque fois que j’y pense, c’est comme si je les avais sous les yeux, je les vois). (Zanko 1959: 21)

The chapter Coutumes et Pratiques Religieuses (ibid: 73-74) also contains much reference to ancestors whom the Chalderash propitiate. On All Saints Day the custom is to visit family graves in order to partake of a meal at the graveside:
When the time of All Saints Day comes, travel is principally dedicated to visiting all the graves of family members buried along the road. One eats a meal on the tombstone and each person casts upon it a small piece of what is being eaten (Quand vient le temps de la Toussaint, le voyage est consacré principalement à visité toutes les tombes de la famille, semée au long de la route. L’on prend un repas sur la tombe et chacun jette sur elle un peu de ce qu’il mange) (ibid: passage 59: 83)

The food cast upon the grave-stone is an offering to the ancestors. The Chalderash also believe that the ancestors come to them in dreams in order to tell of future good so as to advise a person how to attract and secure it, or to warn of bad luck in order to prevent it as was discussed earlier in the section concerning Chalderash religion.

Over and over again Old Zanko invokes the authority of the ancestors in authenticating his narratives: “Our fathers told us that we were the first Christians in our Bonat and we believe them (Nos pères nous ont dit que nous avons été les premiers des chrétiens dans notre Bonat et nous les croyons”) (Zanko 1959: 91) He constantly refers to a remote antiquity conceptualized as the “First World” (ibid: passages 1-25: 22-35; passage 94: 92-93) as well as to “the past” as when he speaks of the “silver staff” of the head of a family:

The sign of the head of the tribe in the past (my emphasis) was the bareshti rovli ripui or ‘silver staff of the chief’ (Les insignes du chef de tribu jadis étaient le bareshti rovli ripui ou ‘bâton d’argent du chef’) (Zanko 1959: passage 96: 93).

Old Zanko also speaks of the Nijako which is either engraved upon this silver staff or made of a separate piece which is then attached to it and he tells Father Chatard, “This is our most ancient and most authentic insignia (C’est notre insigne le plus ancien, le plus authentique”) (ibid). In other words, to Old Zanko, it is the most authentic of signs precisely because it is the most ancient and traditional of signs (or symbols). When Old Zanko describes how the Nijako is used, he first speaks of it as connecting the living with dead ancestors:

Also, the Nijako with its five figures or signs is placed on the grave of a Gypsy so that in passing one knows that a Gypsy was buried there. (Le Nijako avec ses cinq figures ou signes, se plaçait aussi sur la tombe d’un Tsigane. De la sorte le passant savait”) (ibid: passage 97: 94).

Further on in the same passage he refers to ancient times once more:
Now in very ancient times when we did not know Del (God), for us, Cham (Sun) and Shion (Moon) took the place of Del and represented him.

(Or Cham et Shion remplaçaient pour nous le Del et le représentaient dans les temps très anciens où l’on ne connaissait pas le Del.”) (ibid)

Old Zanko is saying here that the Chalderash remember a time when the Sun and the Moon were worshipped as Gods, These few examples (there are many more) suffice to illustrate the traditionalism and conservatism of Old Zanko’s narratives.

Traditionalism and conservatism cause genealogies to be of great import to oral societies. In oral cultures, genealogical knowledge of the narrator and his community becomes part of and situated in the genealogy of the world, that is, the oral culture’s genealogical knowledge remains “close to the human lifeworld” and “the present.” This feature of the genealogical knowledge conveyed in Zanko, Chef Tribal comprises the fifth clue to its orality (Ong: 1999: 42). Such genealogy is never a mere list of ancestral surnames. Rather, oral genealogy is always situated in the context of human relations, discourse, and events, past and present.

Just as in orally generated Jewish Scripture, Old Zanko’s cosmogonic narrative is conceptualized as a genealogy which commences with the “Beginning of the First World” and the creation of humankind. So too, in Zanko, Chef Tribal, Chalderash genealogy is a part of and situated in the narrative of humankind’s creation. In other words, Chalderash genealogy becomes part of the genealogy of all humanity, past, present, and future. Thus it is always “close to the human lifeworld” of the present-day genealogist story-teller as well as to the communal audience:

The Roma were the first men. The first men were all Roma. They were but of one race, that of a nomadic people along with Sinpetra, and everyone spoke the same language, the language that we still speak. Then came the Pharavono, Holy Abraham, Holy Moishel, Holy Cretchuno and Holy Yacchof. These are the Suuntse (saints), the ancient ones, the great ancestors of all men. But the Pharavono did not remain with the Suuntse. The Pharavono had many more men behind him than did the others. Then there were two clans of Roma: on one side, the Pharavunure with Pharavono, on the other the Horachai with Sinpetra, Holy Abraham, Sunto Moishe, Sunto Cretchuno, and Sunto Yacchof. There was therefore on one side the Horachai, that is to say, the Turcs who are also called Jews and Christians. They were mixed together, and on the other side there were the Pharavunure.

(Les Roma sont les premiers hommes. Les premiers hommes était tous des Roma. Ils ne faisaient qu’une seule race, qu’un people nomade avec Sinpetra, et tous parlaient la même langue, la langue que nous parlons encore.)

This genealogical narrative contains much evidence of orality. First as already mentioned, in reference to the way in which genealogy stays close to human actions and events, Old Zanko’s genealogy is not simply a list of peoples’ surnames. It relates the human actions of two men, Pharavono and Sinpetra, as well as that of their followers. Second, the Chalderash themselves are featured in the genealogy as comprising two clans from whom originate everyone in the world: “These are the Saints (Suuntse), the ancient ones, the great ancestors of all men” (Zanko 1959 passage 2: 28). Third, this narrative genealogy stays “close to the human lifeworld” of Ong’s orality in that it links the past with the present for “all men” are conceptualized as not only speaking one language, but that language is Romani, the same “language that we [the Chalderash] still speak” in the present (ibid: passage 1: 28).

This feature of orality, the connection of the past with the present which allows narrative to stay close to the human lifeworld, was probably one of the causes of Bernard having viewed Old Zanko as lacking in a sense of history. However, this feature is characteristic of remaining close to the human experiences of the present for in these passages the past and the present are collapsed into one another so that ancestors of a former time such as Pharavono, Sinpetra, Holy Abraham, Holy Moïshel, and Holy Jacob appear with personages of a later age nearer to the present in the persons of Holy Cretchuno, Turkish Jews, and Turkish Christians who are depicted as though they were all contemporaneous with one another. This is not a feature of the lack of historical sense or of being “prelogical.” Rather, it is a feature of orality. The above quote also typifies additive, aggregative, redundant, and the conservative traditionalism of oral narrative style (as previously discussed).
The sixth clue to orality is that its “tone” is “agonistic” (Ong 1999: 43-45). What Ong means by this is that in oral cultures, knowledge is situated within a context of human struggle thus oral narratives are characterized by “verbal combat” as well as by physical violence (ibid: 44). Ong’s example of intellectual battle are proverbs that challenge the audience “to top it with a more apposite or contradictory one” (Abrahams 1968; Ong 1999: 44). Also bragging about one’s prowess at arms coupled with the “tongue-lashing” of an opponent signals the agonistic worldview of oral cultures. “This reciprocal name-calling” is an agonistic trait of the *Iliad* and *Beowulf*, of European medieval romance, of the African *Mwundo Epic* (Okpewho 1979; Obiechina 1975), and of the *Bible* (e.g. David and Goliath I Samuel: 17: 44-47)” (Ong 1999: 44).

Reciprocal name-calling is termed “flyting” by linguistic theorists (ibid).

Verbal combat is very much a part of Old Zanko’s fairytales. In *Balo and the Seven Brothers* (Zanko 1959: 103-110) when Balo comes to claim the brothers’ only sister as his bride, Old Zanko portrays the events in terms of argument:

They had not finished speaking when a cart was heard to stop before the door, and a voice cried from without, “I ask for the girl in marriage.” The eldest responded, “Enter then if you wish to be the husband. Be welcome. You will sit at the head of the table and we will be bound quickly in friendship.” “No!” cried the man from without, “First give me your answer, yes or no.” “First enter,” said the eldest, “We will take counsel afterwards.” But the other replied, “No! I will not enter until I have heard either yes or no. And know who I am. I am Balo (that is to say a pig). But I am myreano. (Ils n’avaient pas fini de parler que l’on entendit s’arrêter un char devant la porte, et une voix cria du dehors, “Je demande la fille en mariage.” L’aîné répondit, “Rentrez donc si vous voulez être le mari. Soyez le bienvenu. Vous occuperez la première place à table et nous lierons vite connaissance.” “Non!” cria l’homme du dehors, “Donnez-moi d’abord la réponse, oui ou non.” “Rentrez d’abord,” lui dit l’aîné, “Nous aviserons ensuite.” Mais l’autre lui répliqua, “Non, je n’entrerai pas tant que je n’aurai pas entendue oui ou le non. Et sachez que je suis. Je suis Balo (c’est-à-dire porc). Mais je suis myreano (Zanko 1959: 103-104).

Back and forth they argue about when Balo may enter. A modern reader would tend to regard such an argument as petty, even puerile. But such seemingly petty arguments characterize the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* and medieval epics as well.

After some time passes, the eldest brother visits his sister at Balo’s palace beneath the ground. Dialogue between sister and brother is agonistic in that she speaks of Balo as likely to
“do harm” to his brother-in-law, and the eldest brother is somewhat annoyed with his sister for trying to instill fear into him thus discourse places them at cross-purposes with one another. He evinces displeasure with his brother-in-law as well feeling somewhat antagonistic toward him, and he blames his sister as a consequence. An argument is narrowly avoided between brother and sister by the sister’s conciliatory and placating manner:

“Your brother-in-law is not here and it is better so. He would wish to do you harm if he saw you arrive suddenly. He travels so much. He is so impetuous that he is truly wild when he returns. But do not be afraid, my brother, I will fix it. Do not be troubled”… The eldest said to her after a moment, “Why do you wish to frighten me in this way on the subject of your husband? Is he not my brother-in-law? That really surprises me that he would wish to do harm to his brother-in-law. He should rather be happy to see me.” His sister continued to reassure him, “I have said this to you so you would not be afraid.”

(“Votre beau-frère n’est pas là et c’est tant mieux. Il aurait pu vous vouloir du mal, s’il vous avait vu arriver tout brusquement. Il voyage tellement, il est tellement impétueux que c’est un vrai sauvage lorsque’il rentre. Mais soyez sans crainte, mon frère, j’arrangerai cela. Ne vous inquiétez pas”… L’aîné lui dit au bout d’un moment, “Pourquoi veux-tu m’effrayer ainsi au sujet de ton mari? Ne suis-je pas ton beau-frère? Cela m’étonnerait fort qu’il veuille faire du mal à son beau-frère. Il devrait être plutôt satisfait de me voir.” Sa sœur le rassura encore, “Je t’ai dit de ne pas avoir peur” (ibid: 106).

This does not the end the verbal sparring. The sister hides her brother, just in time, so that she will be able to inform Balo of his presence when the “great traveler” enters the scene and another agonistic exchange takes place. There is psychological tension between man and wife:

Ilia made his entrance. He closed the door and went toward his wife. His breathing was labored. “O my Romni,” said he, “I sense a strange presence. What have you done? You have received a stranger?” “My Rom,” his wife said to him, “You have not even embraced me yet, and already you reproach me. You will have to wait, my Rom, for me to speak of this. First, be appeased. Regain your calm. Put aside your work. Afterwards, we will speak of it. I will explain everything when you are calm.


Aside from this scene’s resemblance to that of the famous Jack and the Beanstalk tale which also features agonistic dialogue between a giant and his wife, it is notable that Balo’s breathing was laborious as when someone is experiencing great rage. He does not seem happy that his wife may have given hospitality to a complete stranger. The question (“what have you done?”) is accusative. The wife’s reproaches are also accusative. Balo must be appeased and
calmed down as one who suffers from great ire with an opponent. In order to return him to equanimity, Balo’s wife then requests that he sit down to eat, and presently Balo begins another agonistic conversation with her:

“Look, my Romni, I am calm. See, I am appeased. If we have a stranger in the palace, who prevents us from inviting him to our table?” “It is not a stranger, my Rom, it is a very close relation.” “If it is a very close relation, you are a fool, my Romni, not to have presented him to me.” His wife replied to him, “You travel too much, my Rom. You see too much of the world. When you return you are too excited. I was afraid that you would do harm to my brother without even recognizing him.” “Ah! It is my brother-in-law. It is my brother-in-law and you hid him from me. That is bad on your part.”

(“Voyez, ma Romni, je suis calmé. Voyez, je suis apaisé. Si nous avons un étranger dans la palais, qu’est ce qui nous empêche de l’inviter à notre table?” “Ce n’est pas un étranger, mon Rom, c’est un parent très proche.” “Si c’est un parent très proche, vous êtes une folle, ma Romni, de ne pas me l’avoir présenté.” Sa femme lui répliqua, “Vous voyagez trop, mon Rom. Vous voyez trop de monde. Quand vous rentrez vous êtes trop excite. J’ai eu peur que vous ne fussiez du mal à mon frère sans même le reconnaître.” “Ah! C’est mon beau-frère. C’est mon beau-frère et vous me le caché. C’est mal de votre part”) (ibid: 107)

Just as Ong points out, oral narratives are framed by means of the antagonism of verbal combat. That Balo is portrayed as exciteable and belligerent exemplifies this trait. Furthermore, the dialogue between Balo and his wife is always argumentative. So too, man and wife are critical of one another. Balo even engages in name-calling telling his wife that she is a fool. Such “name-calling” is evidence of the agonistic character of orality.

Part and parcel of the agonistic verbal battle is bragging. Many of Old Zanko’s narratives contain the bragging of protagonist and opponent. In the Epic of the Serpent (Zanko 1959: 131-160) braggadocio is a feature of the antagonism between the three giants (the heroes) and their enemies (three charcoal-burners). Both sets of actors engage in it. For example, when the charcoal-burners terrorize not only the three princesses but also all the denizens of the king’s palace they end by bragging that they are the strongest:

The charcoal-burners began to raise their voices, “Who are these three strangers who come here to give us orders? Why do these men come to mingle with people who have never seen them before?” The eldest of the charcoal-burners addressed himself to his two brothers, “Let them enter. Also allow all those to enter to whom they call. Do not be upset, my brothers. In these parts we are famous for our great strength. Be calm, my brothers. We are the strongest in all of the country.”

(‘Les charbonniers commencenc à élevé la voix, “Qui sont-ils ces trois étrangers qui viennent commander ici?” De quoi viennent se mêler ces gens que personne n’avait jamais vus?” L’aîné des charbonniers s’adresse à ses deux frères, “Laissons-les entrer. Et laissons entrer aussi tous ceux qu’ils appellent. Ne vous inquiétez pas, mes
frères. Nous sommes renommés dans les parages pour notre grande force. Soyez calmes, mes frères, Nous sommes les plus forts dans tout le pays. Laissons s’attabler ces trois inconnus et leur suite” (ibid: 135)

At this point, the giants prepare to fight their antagonists and they yell for someone to close all the window-shutters of the hall in which everyone has gathered. Not to be outdone, the charcoal burners also clamor for someone to secure the shutters. The order is carried out and then one of the giants calls out to his brothers, “Who wants to guard the door?” The eldest charcoal-burner shouts, “I will guard it.” At which time, another of the giants contemptuously cries out, “Puny one, you are too small! Vania (one of the giant brothers) will take charge of it!” (ibid) illustrating how bragging and name-calling are allied with verbal and physical combat in agonistic settings.

Towards the end of the story near a great body of water, the giants kill the Sherkano, the Great Serpent of Seven Heads who eats human beings, and they bury its remains rolling a heavy boulder on top of it. The charcoal-burners have meanwhile concealed themselves in order to watch what takes place sneaking away when the princesses leave the scene to return to the palace. They follow the girls but midway they accost the princesses ordering them to tell lies to their parents. They are to say that the charcoal burners vanquished the Sherkano, and thus it is the charcoal burners who should marry the princesses. The charcoal-burners even threaten to murder the princesses if they dare to defy them (Zanko 1959: 142-150) heightening the agonistic tension. Afterwards, the charcoal-burners rush home:

Here the three charcoal-burners returned to their home. They went home very proud, all boastful, for indeed they counted on marrying the three daughters of the king. They entered singing full of vigor and rejoicing, they came to recount the adventure to their father and mother.

(Voici que les trois charbonniers s’en retournent chez eux. Ils reviennent chez eux, très fiers, tout farauds, car ils comptent bien épouser les trois filles du roi. Ils rentrent en chantant, pleins de vigueur et d’allégresse, et ils vont raconter l’aventure à leurs père et mère) (ibid: 151).

But their father and mother do not believe them. The discourse of the actors continues to be agonistically expressed for when the boys brag about their deeds, their parents reprimand
them for being both overly pleased with themselves and also for speaking with derision of the traditional and orally transmitted craft of the charcoal-burner, two sets of behaviours which are inimical to Chalderash values and practice. Also, Ong points out that in oral cultures, trades are learned by means of spoken directives, observation, and imitative action, not by means of printed instruction manuals (Ong 1999: 43). Such manual skills are passed down from the elders to offspring in an oral society, and so this trait of Chalderash culture (the importance of traditional occupations) is driven home to the listener:

And all three boys answered, answered at the same time: “Do not ask us what we have done. These are extraordinary things that we have accomplished. Indeed, in a little while, we will no longer be charcoal-burners, we will no longer need to dirty our hands, we will no longer live in dirt.”

The father and mother reprimanded them: “Do not be so proud, boys. We ask indeed what you have done to make you so proud of yourselves, and therefore causing you to ridicule your trade! From father to son, from generation to generation we have exercised this trade. One must never ridicule one’s trade.”

The three replied: “Father, today we can ridicule it. We can do so because we will no longer exercise it. We will no longer be charcoal-burners. It transpired that we saved the three daughters of the king. Soon we will be the sons-in-law of the king. He said so. Soon he will inform us when and we will take the three girls as wives.

Mother and father shook their heads. “I do not believe you, my sons,” said the father.

(And les trois garçons répondent tous les trois, répondent en même temps: “Ne nous demandez pas ce que nous avons fait. Ce sont des choses extraordinaires que nous venons d’accomplir. Si bien que d’ici peu, nous ne serons plus charbonniers, nous n’aurons plus besoin de nous salir les mains, nous ne vivrons plus dans la saleté.”)

Le père et la mère les réprimandent: “Ne soyez pas si fiers, garçons. On se demande ce que vous avez bien pu faire pour être si fiers de vous et pour dénigrer ainsi votre métier! Votre métier nous l’avons exercé de père en fils, de génération en génération. Il ne faut jamais dénigrer son métier.”


Le père et la mère hochent la tête. “Je ne vous crois pas, mes fils,” dit le père. (Zanko 1959: 151)

The constant repetition of words and phrases within three brief paragraphs, the agonistic bragging of the charcoal-burners, the argumentativeness of the conversation between parents and sons, the mention of trades which are passed down from generation to generation by word of mouth as a sacred trust, all bespeak of the narrative’s genesis in an oral culture that is old and venerable.

Moreover, it is no mere accident that charcoal-burners appear as characters in Old Zanko’s narratives. Most likely they represent the Chalderash themselves. One sign of this is that although the young men are cast as villainous, their parents are not, which is the cause of
agonistic conversation between parents and sons concerning their traditional craft. Furthermore, charcoal-burning was a prerequisite of certain kinds of Chalderash metalworking. Charcoal is used to fire the forges required for smelting metal. Milena Hűbschmannová’s Slovak Roma data includes descriptions of the metalworking process. The Roma metalsmith began by choosing trees that made the best charcoal and then made it (1998: 258), molded bricks and constructed a forge of them, collected ground or scrap metals to melt for the fabrication or repair of tools and weapons, manufactured the final product, and finally sold that product to non-Roma (ibid: 236-241). The entire family took part in the process, men and women, boys and girls from a very young age (ibid).

The argument over the denigrating of an ancestral trade in the context of familial relations exemplifies two features of Ong’s orality: agonistic verbal struggle and appeal to a Chalderash occupational tradition which the charcoal-burners’ parents regarded as a sacred legacy. Rebellion against this traditional way of life represented by the parents is depicted in the end as causing the young charcoal burners’ criminality and misfortune.

Agonistic discourse is accompanied by agonistic behavior in oral narrative represented by the “enthusiastic description of physical violence” (Ong 1999: 44-45). It is this very “portrayal of gross physical violence” which is so striking in Zanko, Chef Tribal. Nearly every one of Old Zanko’s fairytales recounts acts of physical violence in graphic detail that is rather shocking given the fact that fairytales as genre were erroneously believed (according to early folklore and psychological canon) to have been composed for the amusement of children. More recent research of “the fairytale” questions this assumption (e.g., Tatar 1987, 1999; Zipes 1988, 2007).

In the tale of The Mystery of the Divine Child and His Star (Zanko 1959: 35-40) a man cuts off the hands of his wife with an axe for having touched a newborn child. The narrative,
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*Holy Proroc and Holy Ilia (or the Vocation of the God of Thunder)* (ibid: 95-102), also features violent acts. When the miller who had been deceived by the Benga to think that his wife had remarried returns home, he chops both of the “the lovers” in two with an axe (ibid: passages 21-35: 97). Further on, the God of Thunder, Holy Proroc, gives thunder and a weapon to his son, Holy Ilia, so that he may chase the Benga and “strike them down” in punishment for the trick they had played on the miller which had caused him to murder his parents. This particular narrative also seems to be the recounting of some cosmological and catastrophic event for Holy Ilia’s violence against the Benga is described in terms of geological turbulence, human turmoil, and death:

He [Ilia] was seized with an extreme zeal. He sprang over the clouds, he jumped over mountains. He walked on the sea. He traveled through space flying with the wind. His passion never cooled. When he saw a Benga, he threw himself in pursuit of him, thundering from afar, transfixing him with his pike. Each time, a great explosion accompanied by lightning filled the earth with fear. Then the female animals miscarried. Women stopped on the road, doubled in two and dropped their foetus. Fires illuminated everything but nothing could stop Ilia’s zeal.

(Proroc dit à sa femme, “Je le veux bien, ma Romni, je suis de ton avis.” Et il prononça cette parole, “Qu’il Ilia ait une jambe en moins!” Aussitôt il en fut ainsi”) (ibid: passage 80: 101).

But still there are explosions and the earth shakes. This time it is Ilia’s mother who pronounces the magical formula, “May Ilia have one less arm (Qu’il Ilia ait un bras en moins!)” (Zanko 1959: passage 79: 101)

The storms now become less violent, but Ilia’s mother and father deem the turbulence to endanger earth’s creatures still: “Then Proroc pronounced these words, ‘May Ilia have one eye
less’ (Alors Proroc prononça cette parole, ‘May Ilia ait un oeil en moins’” (Zanko 1959 passage 84: 102), and Ilia pursues the Benga with thunder and lightning to this day:

One eye, one arm, one leg, Ilia nevertheless continues his war against the Benga and there are still storms. But the equilibrium of the world was re-established. The earth no longer plunges about as before in a tempest without end (Œil unique, bras unique, jambe unique, Ilia continue néanmoins sa guerre contre les Benga et il y a encore des orages. Mais l’équilibre est rétabli dans le monde. La terre n’est plus plongée, comme auparavant dans un tempête sans fin (ibid: passage 85: 102).

This is not the last narrative to be characterized by agonistic violence in Zanko, Chef Tribal. In Balo and the Seven Brothers, the brother-in-law is escorted by Balo on a tour of the latter’s extensive domains in which some lands and people are happy and prosperous, whereas others are not. The reason that some of Balo’s domains prosper is because “their proprietor is a just and good man (leur propriétaire est un homme juste et bon)” (ibid: 108). In domains that suffer, the evil deeds of men have brought their proprietors to such a pass. Ilia said to his brother-in-law, “The proprietor is unjust and evil. Blessings do not descend upon his beasts. Such is his punishment. (Le propriétaire est injuste et méchant. La benédiction ne descend pas sur ses bêtes. Tel est son châtiment)” (ibid)

There now follows a graphic (agonistic) description of a man being tortured:

They came to a third field. There, a stove was constructed. It was aflame and burned perpetually. A man was stretched upon it and grilled endlessly. A black sheep lay in front of the stove. From to time it went to submerge itself in a putrid pond. Then it returned and shook itself before the stove. The eldest of the seven brothers was horrified. (Ils parvinrent à un troisième champ. Un four à boulanger y était construit. Il était allumé et brûlant perpétuellement. Un homme y était étendu et y grillait sans fin. Devant le four se reposait une brebis galeuse. De temps à autre, elle allait se tremper dans une mare putride, puis elle retournait se secouer devant le four. L’aîné des sept frère était horrifié)’ (ibid: 108).

Balo tells his brother-in-law that the man “had an evil heart (un mauvais coeur),” because he had given a poor man but one sheep and that one black. But because there was “one ounce of goodness in this gift (une once de bonté dans ce don),” the sheep was allowed to cool the burning man now and then with rank water (Zanko 1959: 108). As well as being agonistic, this narrative also transmits standards of Chalderash morality another trait of orality that links the past with the
present, and connects the characters with Chalderash listeners, causing them to identify closely with personages of the narrative. Significantly for Chalderash standard of ethics generosity is again at issue and a lack of generosity becomes the raison d’être for punishment. That the punishment is so severe would indicate the seriousness of the Chalderash mandate to be generous, and one would have a tendency to remember the story whenever tempted to be parsimonious.

The violence of *Balo and the Seven Brothers* is mild in comparison to that of some of the other tales in *Zanko, Chef Tribal. The Legend of Potro and Stoïka: the Serpent of One Hundred Years* (1959: 110-114) is violent in the extreme. In brief, a mother, Stoïka, “after forty days of Lent,” leaves her six months old baby, Potro, at home in order to attend Easter vigil services which cause her to be absent from home for some hours. On return, she hears the screams of her famished baby and she takes him to suckle. The baby is so hungry that he bites on her nipple causing her to cry out in pain, and she calls down a curse upon him: “When you have attained twenty years of age, may you be taken by the Serpent of One Hundred Years and carried for forty days in its stomach (Puisses-tu, quand tu auras vingt ans, être pris par le Serpent de Cent Ans et porté quarante jours dans son ventre)” (ibid: 111). She then promptly forgets that she has called down a curse upon her own son, Potro, and goes on about her daily life.

Because of the Chalderash belief that women have the magical power to affect events by the utterance of blessings and curses (in this case a curse), what she has wished for comes to pass and one day twenty years later when Potro is strolling through the forest, he meets up with the Serpent of One Hundred Years who swallows him, but not completely, for Potro’s head protrudes from the serpent’s mouth and they walk about in the forest like this for forty days, at the end of which time, Potro’s grandfather happens upon them while hunting. A conversation
takes place between Potro and his grandfather who learns for the first time that Potro’s mother had cursed his grandson. In order to free his grandson, the grandfather slits open the serpent’s stomach.

But the grandfather is not content to let the matter rest and he demands “a kriss” (the Chalderash court of customary law and practice) so as to put the woman on trial. The kriss finds her guilty of a great crime for which the punishment is a violent, bloody, and traumatic death administered by her own son:

The son took his mother; he attached his mother to the tail of a horse. He whipped the horse and it took off at a gallop. The horse ran, ran, and the mother’s breasts were opened and shredded on the stones of the road, but the eyes remained open and seeing. The horse ran, ran, and the mother’s flesh was stripped away, bit by bit, and remained sticking to the trunks of the trees and the rocks, but her eyes remained open and seeing. The horse ran, ran, and all the mother’s body was dismembered limb from limb, the bushes and shrubs were scattered with her limbs, but the eyes remained open and seeing. The horse ran, ran, and finally the two eyes of the mother no longer remained always open and seeing.

(Le fils a pris sa mère; il a attaché sa mère à la queue du cheval. Il a fouetté le cheval et celui-ci est parti au galop. Le cheval courait, courait, et les seins de la mère se sont ouverts et déchirés aux pierres du chemin, mais les yeux restaient ouverts et voyaient. Le cheval courait, courait, et les chairs de la mère s’arrachaient, morceau par morceau, et restaient accrochées aux troncs des arbres et aux rochers, mais ses yeux restaient ouverts et voyaient. Le cheval courait, courait, et tout le corps de la mère se détachait lambeau par lambeau, les buissons et les arbustes était parsemé de ces lambeaux, mais les yeux restaient ouverts et voyaient. Le cheval courit, courit, et à la fin il ne restait plus que les deux yeux de la mère toujours ouverts, et qui voyaient)” (Zanko 1959: 114).

The story ends with an omniscient pronouncement:

For the Kriss had said: “The woman must suffer at the tail of the horse and she must see until the end the misfortune that she merited” (Car la Kriss avait dit: “La femme doit souffrir à la queue du cheval et qu’elle voie jusqu’à la fin le malheur qu’elle a mérité”). (ibid)

One may discern a decided patterning in such narratives of Zanko, Chef Tribal. The agonistic, “enthusiastic” description of violent scenes “in exquisitely gory detail” (Ong 1999: 44) are always connected with moral tales. Such narratives make clear that among the Chalderash, it is a crime to wish evil upon one’s own offspring. The very terror evinced by the violence of the punishment allotted to a mother who has done so is a mnemonic device in itself. Thereby, the story and its moral content are never forgotten by listeners. Furthermore, Ong insists that the agonistic world is “highly polarized” into “good and evil, virtue and vice, hero and villain” (ibid:
45). Old Zanko’s narratives are polarized in just this way as all of the above mentioned tales illustrate.

The seventh trait of orality is the “empathetic and participatory rather than objectively distanced” orientation of oral narrative. The empathetic and participatory nature of Old Zanko’s narratives is revealed in a number of ways. First, as already mentioned, when Old Zanko related these narratives, it was before a communal audience that (1) already knew the tales and strongly identified with both narrator (in that he was a Chalderash as were they) as well as with the story’s characters in that they often act in ways specific to Chalderash tradition and customary practice. The narratives are representative of Chalderash familial relations and concerns. As Ong succinctly states, “for an oral culture, learning or knowing means achieving close, empathetic, communal identification with the known” (1999: 45; Havelock 1963: 145-46) This state is achieved in Zanko, Chef Tribal by depicting characters as adhering to Chalderash standards of morality and to Chalderash traditions and customs.

(2) This communal audience participated in Old Zanko’s narrative sessions. Old Zanko stated this in answering a question as to how the narratives are preserved:

Sometimes, the elders recite them at night, and especially during funeral vigils. The young listen. The elders make them recite in their turn, and repeat them if someone makes a mistake. Thus, they are transmitted. (Les vieux la racontent parfois le soir, et surtout aux veillées des morts. Les jeunes écoutent. Les vieux les font raconter à leur tour, et les reprennent s’ils se trompent. C’est ainsi qu’elle se transmet) (Zanko 1959: 19).

All the community participates in the memorization and recitation of such narratives, young and old, men and women, near and distant relations. Thus the narratives also connect the living to the dead ancestors in that the narratives are especially recited during funerary vigils which gather relatives from near and far.

Bernard comments that “orator and audience speak in turn” (ibid: 177) which also illustrates the participatory character of Old Zanko’s recitations. The audience often chimes in
with his formulary phrases. Thus the formula which appears at the very beginning of the *Foreword* (ibid: 7) states, “We are the witnesses” (referring to the entire Chalderash community) and not for example, “I am the witness” (referring to Old Zanko alone as narrator). The formulary composition of the *Prologue* is one such oral verse with which listeners would have recited along with the orator (Communication with Gilles Eynard 3/13/2010).

The eighth feature pointing to an oral genesis of any given text is “homeostasis” (Goody and Watt 1968:31-41; Ong 1999: 46-49). Homeostasis is characterized by two major traits. First, in oral narrative, past seems to collapse into present. As mentioned elsewhere, Bernard noted that in Old Zanko’s tales, the present was “contemporaneous” with “the past.” He attributes this feature to a “lack of a sense of the historical,” and to the “prelogical mentality” of the Gypsies. However, scholars such as Goody, Ong, and Watts (ibid) discovered this trait to be typical of orality.

Specifically, vocabulary and its usage collapse past and present in the oral narrative. For this reason, archaic expressions co-exist with the colloquialisms of today, and the discourses of the various characters seem disconcertingly modern in tone and phraseology. This is one of the most striking features of *Zanko, Chef Tribal*, that is, archaic Romani words are seen side by side with modern terms, and the modern phraseology of discourse appears in the context of a feudalism which in 1959 no longer obtained in France, or only nominally so. Old Zanko’s characters were peasants and knights, kings and queens, princes and princesses, witches and charcoal-burners but sometimes they speak as one would in modern society. Although disconcerting, this same modern phraseology makes Old Zanko’s narratives immediate and peculiarly amusing at times. It also gives them a certain charming grace such as in scenes of the Old God walking along the shores of a lake with the Beng in a remote antiquity whereas their
conversation is characterized by the off-hand, nonchalant, and slightly bantering manner of a modern speaker. There are many such examples of discursive modernisms in Zanko, Chef Tribal.

When Potro’s grandfather encounters the Serpent of One Hundred Years walking about in the forest with Potro’s head protruding from its mouth, he says, “Potro, what are you doing there (Que fais-tu lá, Potro)” (Zanko 1959: 113) The tone is mild, nonchalant, as that of a Chalderash who lived in 1959 might have been when happening upon someone (e.g. a child who conceals himself from an adult) in a place in which that person should not be. In The Epic of the Serpent, when the three giants invade the hall where the three charcoal-burners dictate everyone’s actions, the musicians hesitate to pick up their instruments, and one of the giants says to them, “So, what are you waiting for (Qu’attendez-vous donc)” (ibid: 136) as would a modern Frenchman. When the Sherkano of Seven Heads encounters the princesses with their three giant escorts at the beach, one of the heads says to the others:

These three horsemen did not come just to see us, believe me. They did not come to contemplate our beauty. No one in the world can stand to look at beauty like ours. We are not called the beast of seven heads for nothing! (Ces trois chevaliers ne sont pas venus pur nous voir, croyez-moi. Ils ne sont pas venus pour contempler notre beauté. Notre beauté est telle que personne au monde ne peut en supporter la vue. Ce n’est pas pour rien qu’on nous appelle la bête à sept têtes!”) (ibid: 144)

The parts of this speech that have a curiously modern cadence and phraseology are the “believe me,” and the expletive, “We are not called the beast of seven heads for nothing!” In fact, upon reading this I had smiled. The “for nothing” reminded me of similar speeches made by the cartoon character, Pop-eye. This sort of near slang must have amused Old Zanko’s modern Chalderash audience just as it had amused me, and it would have caused the audience to identify more closely with a story’s characters. There may have even been a hint of sarcastic bantering implied by the Sherkano’s reference to its own “beauty,” which also would have had a tendency to amuse a modern Chalderash audience.
Besides the curiously modern discourses of characters portrayed in *Zanko, Chef Tribal*, homeostasis also occurs when Old Zanko’s depicts the characters as being Chalderash. For this reason, men and their wives address each other as Rom and Romni, interposing the Romani mode of address during recitations which were otherwise said in French. In the tale of *The Child and His Star*, the characters and their relations to one another are framed in terms of Chalderash kinship relations, Chalderash moral standards and religious rituals, Chalderash beliefs and practices so that the story would have had an immediacy for the Chalderash listener. This would have a tendency to cause narrator, characters, and audience to identify more closely with one another. Depicting the characters as Chalderash is a feature of all Old Zanko’s fairytale narratives.

Another instance of homeostasis occurs as the queen waits for news of the giants’ fight with the Sherkano (*The Epic of the Serpent*) for she goes to burn a candle before the “icon of Holy Mary” to pray for her daughters’ deliverance (Zanko 1959: 149) as any anxious Chalderash mother might do. In the tale of *Stoïka and Potro*, Potro’s mother attends the Easter vigil (ibid: 110-11) as might a modern Chalderash woman. Especially notable in regards to this homeostasis is the story of *Tsell, the Great City Civilized by Giants* in which the dialogue between “Grouya” and his father “Novaca” is similar to one which might take place between modern-day Chalderash men.

Father and son sit down to eat a meal together, and Novaca notices that his son seems downcast. Novaca tries to joke about girls with his son, Grouya, as a Chalderash father today might attempt in similar circumstances:

*So my son, what’s with you, and what are you thinking about? In all my life, I have never seen you with such a sad look. Tell me. Don’t you like girls anymore? The girls don’t like you anymore? (Qu’as-tu donc, mon fils, et à quoi penses-tu? Jamais, de toute ma vie, je ne t’ai vu un air si triste. Dis-moi. N’aimerais-tu plus les filles? Les filles ne t’aiment-elles plus)?”* (Zanko 1959: 120)
“So… what’s with you?” is modern slang. Grouya’s interest in girls too is rather modern although attraction to the opposite sex is as old as the human species. However, in the most patriarchal traditionalist societies in which marriages are arranged, the sexes are kept strictly segregated and young men and women feign indifference to the opposite sex. Therefore, this conversation about girls between Novaca and Grouya has a decidedly modern impact on the listener or reader (as the case may be).

Grouya replies to his father that it’s not girls that trouble him but a city where people live like beasts which he would like “to civilize.” His father tells him that there is nothing Grouya can do about them living like beasts trying to dissuade him from such an “impossible dream” and calling the project “foolish” (ibid: 121). Grouya, however, does not give up the project and goes to a bar to have a drink so he can think about how to go about it, just as might be done by a modern Chalderash in pondering some project. In fact, Grouya does the equivalent of modern “bar-hopping” as might any modern Frenchman and eventually becomes completely inebriated.

The theme of Grouya’s womanizing continues as well:

He enters the first bar. He demands a bottle of wine. The wine is good but the woman who serves is repulsive. He rises and he leaves. (Le voici qui entre dans le premier cabaret. Il commande une bouteille de vin. Le vin est bon mais la femme qui sert est répugnante. Il se lève et il sort) (ibid: 121).

He enters the second bar and orders another bottle of wine. This time the girl is “pretty (belle)” but the wine is “bad (mauvais).” So again he rises to leave and goes to another bar. He orders a bottle of wine and the woman who waits on him is neither pretty nor ugly but “pleasant (avenente)” (ibid).

In this passage, Old Zanko also tells us that the third bar had a “good reputation,” and that it was “frequented (fréquentaient)” by “the father and grandfather (le père et grand-père).” That Old Zanko makes it a point to link the drinking establishment’s good reputation with its being frequented by Grouya’s father and grand-father is the agonistic appeal to conservatism and
traditionalism typical of orality as well as of Chalderash society in 1959 and now. That the character is portrayed engaging in the modern practice of “bar-hopping” in a long ago time when giants walked the earth is another feature of orality wherein present and past are collapsed so as to strengthen identification between the characters and a modern Chalderash audience.

This brings us to the ninth, last (and controversial) feature of Ong’s orality. He claims that “the conceptual thinking” of people from oral cultures is “situational rather than abstract” (Ong 1999: 49-57) and “unanalytical,” being essentially different from the mental processes of literate persons. This feature of orality seems to resuscitate French anthropologist Lévy-Bruhl’s theory that “primitive thought” is “prelogical” and not yet “evolved” in oral peoples, as is the case among “modern,” “more advanced,” and literate persons (1923). In fact, Ong does seem to be saying much the same thing albeit without the vocabulary of social evolutionism: “Oral cultures tend to use concepts in situational, operational frames of reference that are minimally abstract in the sense that they remain close to the living human lifeworld” (Ong 1999: 49).

Ong maintains that when “the oral mind” attempts to describe objects in terms of concepts, it relates concepts to concrete objects rather than by means of abstraction. In proof of this, Ong gives us data from the work of Soviet psychologist Aleksandr Romanovich Lurriia who found that when non-literate Uzbekistan peasants were asked to describe such geometric figures as the circle, they never describe it by means of geometrical vocabulary, but by means of concrete objects. For instance upon being shown a drawing of a circle, they described it as “a plate, sieve, bucket, watch, or moon” (Lurriia 1976: 32-9; Ong 1999: 51).

Another time, Lurriia asked a peasant to define a car. The man gives a credible explanation of what a car is, and then concludes, “I’d say that if you get in a car and go for a ride, you’ll find out” (Lurriia 1976: 87; Ong 1999: 54) which Ong attributes to the respondent’s
return “to personal, situational experience” (Ong 1999: 54). He then comments that the respondent’s “definition, however, was not sharply focused description of visual appearance --- this kind of description is beyond the capacity of the oral mind” (ibid). Ong seems to be asserting that oral peoples think essentially differently than do literate peoples (ibid: 50).

Ong extends his proposition that illiterate peasants are incapable of analytic thought saying that they are not capable of self-analysis (Ong 1999: 54). His proof of this is that when these peasants were asked to describe themselves they described not themselves but “externals.” For example, a peasant was asked, “What sort of person are you, what’s your character like, what are your good qualities and shortcomings? How would you describe yourself?” His answer was to tell the interlocutor where he had come from, that he had been poor at the time, that he had married and had children. The interrogator asked him again if he were satisfied with himself and the peasant answered that he would like to have more land. He was pressed to answer more fully being prompted with “Well, people are different --- calm, hot-tempered or sometimes their memory is poor. What do you think of yourself?” The peasant answered, “We behave well, if we were bad people, no one would respect us” (Lurriia 1976: 15; Ong 1999: 54-55). Ong comments, “self evaluation modulated into group evaluation (‘we’) and then handled in terms of expected reactions of others” (Ong 1999: 55).

Ong provides a second instance of the self-identification problem. When asked the same questions another man had answered, “What can I say about my own heart? How can I talk about my character? Ask others; they can tell you about me. I, myself, can’t say anthing” (ibid). Ong was impressed by the peasant’s “touchning and humane directness,” nevertheless interpreting the response as an inability of the peasant to describe and “analyze” himself.
There is a problem with this whole line of academic reasoning, and Ong, himself, points to it: “Luria’s (Lurriia) questions are schoolroom questions associated with the use of texts” (ibid: 51, 55), and then he goes on to ignore the implications of his own statement. What it implies, however, is that for the peasant to have been able to give the correct geometrical term “circle” to a drawing of one, he would have had to go to school and taken a class in geometry for people are not born knowing the vocabulary of geometrics. If the man had been educated from childhood on (as are most literate people), he would have learned such vocabulary from teachers who would not have found it necessary to refer to the advanced science of geometry per se to have inculcated their students with some of its more simple concepts. A lack of schooling was probably the crucial factor in peasants calling the “circle” a “moon” rather than using the geometrical term “circle,” and not necessarily because such concepts are “beyond the capacity of the oral mind” (ibid).

The same could be said of the peasant who had been asked to describe a car to someone who had never seen one. That someone had never seen a car may have caused him to limit his own already limited vocabulary (since he was not an automotive expert) concerning cars, as it probably would have caused even an auto mechanic to do if he attempted to explain the concept “car” to someone who had never seen one. The only difference between the Soviet peasant and the hypothesized auto-mechanic is that one does not have the specialized vocabulary of auto-mechanics and the other does. However, both persons (real and hypothesized) might be tempted to limit vocabulary as a logical solution to the problem of a person never having seen a car.

The self-description issue is problematic too. When asked to describe himself, one peasant spoke of “externals” (his origin, family, economic situation), but when pressed specifically about his “inner” character, he described himself in the terms of a “we” who “behave
well,” saying that if the “we” were “bad people,” no one would respect “us.” Ong says that this caring about what others think is symptomatic of the more communal oral society. However, people in literate societies also care very much about what others think of them expressed in US society, for example, as “keeping up” with the proverbial “Joneses.” And caring too much about what people think of one is a perennial problem of the teenage years in contemporary societies everywhere. A person does not have to be from an oral society to care what others think of him or her as Erving Goffman’s research demonstrates (1956).

One feature of the way in which Lurriia’s peasants expressed themselves was striking. They did not deem it necessary to elaborate statements. Their answers were always brief, to the point, and actually answered the interlocutor’s questions in a logical and reasoned manner. However, they did not do so in the way that was expected of them, that is, according to the categories of the psychologically trained interlocutor. Again the problem seems a lack of academic training, not a lack of abstract “thinking.”

As for the peasant who answered so modestly about his own character saying that for an answer as to his own character another person’s opinion of him must be sought, it was probably less due to a lack of abstract thought than to the mores and values of the society in which the peasant had been enculturated. Not all societies choose the individual’s well-being over that of the group. Not all societies value the promotion of self. In such a society, the praising of oneself is viewed in a negative light and people who have grown up with a set of values that forbids such self-promotion are often modest in the way of the peasant who “cannot describe” his “own heart.” Certainly this gracious speech of an illiterate Soviet peasant may simply indicate that the people of his culture value reticence and modesty concerning self rather than forwardness and self-praise.
Ong also claims that Anne Amory Parry’s (1973) findings concerning the archaic Greek epithet *amymōn* prove that men of Homer’s time thought in terms of the “operational” rather than in “formally conceptualized ways” because the term is translated into English by one word “blameless” (“a tidy abstraction,” according to Ong) whereas it actually means in archaic Greek, “beautiful-in-the-way-a-warrior-ready-to-fight-is-beautiful” (Ong 1999: 49). But is this really due to the supposed operational thought process or to the agglutinative nature of the archaic Greek language?

For instance, in some languages when one word is translated into English, it becomes many words such as when the Western Apache language is translated into English. This is demonstrated by Western Apache place-names that are formed of an elaborate system of affixes. For example, *Tséé-Biká-Tú-Yaa-Hi-Lj-Né*, when translated into English and reduced to writing becomes many separate words: “Water flows down on a succession of flat rocks” (Basso 1996: 46). Basso comments, “Notice how thoroughly descriptive these place-names are and how pointedly specific in the physical details they pick out” (ibid: 47).

But Ong has specifically said that the Uzhbekistan peasants were poor at description using the agglutinative character of archaic Greek to prove that they were “situational,” not “conceptual” thinkers. He ignores the descriptive quality of the archaic term *arymōn*, which is much more descriptive, in fact, than the term “blameless.” Indeed, “blameless” seems something of a mistranslation.

Basso’s discussion of Western Apache place-names is interesting for another reason. He defines the descriptive character of Western Apache place-names specifically as a “situating device,” which allows for the “locating” of “narrated events” (ibid). Thus he links situational
(operational) thinking to detailed description in contradiction to Ong’s claims that operational thinking impoverishes description.

The antidote to Ong’s psychological prognosis that peasants from oral societies lack the ability to think analytically is Franz Boas’ early suspicion of social evolutionary theory as applied to the psyche, orality, and literacy (Boas 1922). As Ong himself mentions, Boas “maintained that primitive people think as we do but used a different set of categories” (1999: 50). Other anthropologists became uneasy with all such dichotomization of the oral versus the literate. Bronislaw Malinowski recognized empiricism at work in non-literate societies (1925, 1954), and Evans-Pritchard found that the Sudanese Azande demonstrated “logic” despite the fact that they believe in magic and were an oral society (1937). Jack Goody thought such a dichotomization of “the mythical thought of primitives” and “logico-empirical thought of civilized man” to be “untenable” (1981: 43). Noam Chomsky’s work also refutes the idea that literates and illiterates think differently or that different languages shape reality differently (1986; 1988).

Reviewing Lurriia’s data in the light of the findings of the above named scholars, it becomes apparent that the Uzhbekistan peasants were in possession of their own categorical system and were logical as well. However, they were lacking in the education and the specialized vocabulary that their scientifically minded and trained interlocutor expected them to know. When Ong writes that “oral culture simply does not deal in such items as geometrical figures, abstract categorizations, formally logical reasoning processes, definitions, or even comprehensive descriptions, or articulated self-analysis” (Ong 1999: 55), it could be for practical reasons. All of the above supposed deficiencies in Uzhbekistan peasants’ mental ability may have been due rather to a lack of psychological, geometrical, mathematical, and literary
knowledge (e.g. vocabulary) that is only be acquired through formal education, and not to any lack of reasoning power. The insights of Boas et al. who posit that subject and scientific researcher have the same mental processes but different sets of mental categories causes one to be less inclined to differentiate an “us” that are “literate” and therefore “more advanced,” from a “them” that are “oral” and therefore a “less advanced,” and “primitive other” (Said 1978).

In mentioning Greek culture and the development of geometry, mathematics, and logic, Ong also proffers evidence that the oral mind is essentially different from that of the literate mind by its supposed incapacity to understand syllogism (Ong 1999: 52-53). Michel Bernard too refers to syllogism in Zanko, Chef Tribal, saying that Chalderash are “principally intuitive, they have not learned the way of syllogism and are not even capable of abstract notions (principalement intuitifs, ils n’ont pas appris à manier le syllogisme et sont même incapables de s’élever à notions abstraits”) (Bernard in Zanko 1951: 44-45).

Whereas Bernard attributes this supposed incapacity to instinctual thinking (intuition), Ong attributes the incapacity to the “operational” and “situational” wiring of the oral mind finding a different way to express the same evolutionary supposition. Unfortunately, it is not until his final chapter that Ong explicitly defines orality in terms of an evolutionary model but his entire book has been leading up to this, it would seem erroneous conclusion:

Since at least the time of Hegel awareness has been growing that human consciousness evolves...the way in which a person feels himself or herself in the cosmos has evolved in a patterned fashion over the ages...The evolution of consciousness through human history is marked by the growth of articulate attention to the interior of the individual person...The highly interiorized stages of consciousness in which the individual is not so immersed unconsciously in communal structures are stages which, it appears, consciousness would never reach without writing...Orality-literacy dynamics enter integrally into the modern evolution of consciousness toward both greater interiorization and greater openness” (Ong 1999: 178-179).

This writer cannot agree with Ong’s proposition that “operational (situational) thinking” evolves biologically after the inception of writing into “literary thinking,” despite the otherwise useful analysis his book offers for understanding the oral nature of Old Zanko’s narratives.
However, it was necessary to examine Ong’s exposition about operational, situational orality closely so as to uncover a certain commonality shared by Ong (1999) and Bernard (1959). Especially the use of “syllogism” to prove that one group of people is “less evolved” than other sorts of people illustrates how all pervasive are the doctrines of social evolution which stigmatizes and marginalizes an “alien other” (Said 1978). Social evolutionism with its basis in biological evolutionism is discernible in Zanko, Chef Tribal and it is problematic because Bernard’s social evolutionary language prejudices readers against Old Zanko and the Chalderash from the outset causing the text to be devalued. So too Ong’s conclusions prejudice our view of people from oral societies (e.g. Soviet peasant society) as lacking in basic human rationality. Yet, we need not accept Ong’s conclusions to appreciate his many insights about the signs of orality in written texts. In fact, Ong’s work has been most helpful with the analysis of Zanko, Chef Tribal, especially in regard to his discussion of the power that oral peoples attribute to the spoken word.
Orality and the Historic in Zanko, Chef Tribal

One aspect of orality omitted by Ong but very important to the analysis of Zanko, Chef Tribal, is how orality relates to the historical. Alessandro Portelli’s ethnography, however, discusses not only oral history, but also the intrinsic problems confronted by the academic enterprise of researching oral history. One of the problems of researching oral history is due to the very nature of the thinking process itself, not just for illiterate people but for the literate as well in that people assign meaning to their lives, and to the objects around them. In contrast to the academic practice of historical research which focuses upon events and what people did, oral history “tells us less about events than it does about meaning” (Portelli 1991: 50, his emphasis) for in addition to relating what people have done in the past, consultants reveal what they “wanted to do, what they believed they were doing, and what they now think they did” (ibid).

Furthermore, what consultants believe is historical fact, in that it is “a fact that they believe it” (Portelli 1991: 50). Oral history is subjective, but this very subjectivity has validity in a psychological sense: “The importance of oral testimony may lie not in its adherence to fact, but rather in its departure from it, as imagination, symbolism, and desire emerge” (Portelli 1991: 51) thus, “there are no ‘false’ oral sources,” in that “‘wrong’ statements are still psychologically ‘true’” (ibid: 51) as “memory” actively creates meaning (ibid: 52). Bearing this in mind, Old Zanko’s narratives may be regarded as an expression of his own psychological truths and those of the Chalderash community for whom he was a spokesperson.

A criticism leveled at Old Zanko’s narratives is that there are other versions of them. However, this is one of the hallmarks of oral history in that oral testimony is never the same twice (ibid: 55). Narrations may change for a number of reasons. Sometimes changes are a result of a narrator’s effort “to make sense of the past” (ibid), or a narrator may be conforming to what
he or she thinks a questioner wishes to hear. This last is an especially important point, for the consultant and the researcher are always engaged in a joint project which creates reality as much as it records it. Sometimes, researchers introduce into an interview distortions by means of questions and dialogue. Also, the personal relationship that exists between consultant and researcher may change what the consultant says or does not say (ibid: 54).

This seems to have been the case with Zanko, Chef Tribal, for the text continues to refer to “Gypsy tribes,” although Old Zanko clearly states that they do not regard themselves as comprising “tribes.” So too there is no word in Romani for the term, “race.” Nor is race a concern of the Gypsies, for the only differentiation of people they make traditionally is between Gypsy and non-Gypsy (Communication with Gilles Eynard 11/7, 11/8, 11/13, 11/29/2010). Therefore, Old Zanko’s explanations and comments about various “races” of Gypsies and others may have been (1) a projection of Bernard, and (2) Old Zanko responding to Bernard’s expectations and concerns about “race.” In other words, he may have expressed himself in an entirely different way if he had been responding to a person who was not racially motivated, thus varying his response according to the identity of the researcher-audience.

There are other reasons that oral testimony may vary in the retelling of it. A consultant may remember details that had eluded memory in a previous interview or in the recounting of a tale (Portelli 1991: 54). Sometimes a consultant recreates experiences and versions of history or narrative to be nearer to his or her psychological state or perspective in the present, the consultant having had time for further reflection upon what had been previously said. These are processes of the human memory and the imagination for everyone, literate and nonliterate. At other times a consultant may be recounting a version of the past or a narrative tale that is based on what someone else has said concerning a specific event or tale (Portelli 1991: 49, 57). Oral
history may convey a multiple of perspectives and viewpoints, not always that of the narrator alone.

All this is true of Zanko, Chef Tribal. When Gilles Eynard and Michel Zanko examined the Zanko Archives they discovered different versions of the same tales. These may have been based upon narratives which Old Zanko had heard from others, or perhaps he remembered additional details in retrospect that made him change a certain passage from one telling to the next.

Another oral history interview problem is that tightly structured interviews often exclude relevant material of which the researcher knows nothing. Specifically in regard to the reconstruction of history, oral history “often reveals unknown events or unknown aspects of known events.” Thus, oral history “always casts new light on the unexplained areas of the daily life of the nonhegemonic classes” (Portelli 1991: 50). This is the reason that oral testimony should not be discounted simply because it differs from official accounts of events. Thus for Portelli, as well as for numerous ethnographers, “the first requirement is that the researcher accept the informant and give priority to what he or she wishes to tell, rather than to what the researcher wants to hear” (ibid: 54).

Bernard seems to have thought the opposite. His commentaries about Old Zanko’s historical and legendary narratives often record what Old Zanko has to say but then discounts them as mistaken, confused, incomplete, or imaginative, but never as having validity historically. Meanwhile, most of Bernard’s reconstruction of “Gypsy history” and Gypsy religion is purely speculative. But let us suppose for a moment that Old Zanko’s narratives combine the purely imaginative with some “unknown” (because discounted by professional historians) factual events of historical import. Perhaps then, Old Zanko’s Tradition of the Ancestors and other narratives
which propose an entirely different version of the creation of the world, the history of humankind, and the identity of Roma, Chalderash, and Sinti and other peoples, deserve more attention, for the Gypsies have been virtually excluded from historical analysis until very recently.

Indeed, only in the last twenty years have there appeared historical texts about Gypsies. There is no telling how much information has been lost that would have been preserved if early scholars had cared about what the Gypsies had to say about themselves. Even now that some historians have begun to explore the Gypsy experience, the texts which result concern Gypsies as isolates so that these texts comprise in effect their own literary ghetto. Meanwhile, texts of world history and of particular countries and eras published by historians continue to omit all mention of Gypsies.

For example, I know of no archaeological texts concerned with Gypsies even though they had a virtual monopoly on metalcraft for centuries in Europe. The same may be said of anthropology texts used in college courses. They never present ethnographic data pertaining to the Gypsies except to mention them en passant along with other groups to illustrate some point of anthropological theory or cultural commonality with other social groups, and without a vital piece of information: they are an ethnic group, not a “lifestyle.” This dissertation proposes that a careful reading of Zanko, Chef Tribal although it may not remedy the problem of this absence of the Gypsies from conventional historic research, nevertheless may offer at least some clues to follow and some food for thought.

At the very beginning of Zanko, Chef Tribal, Bernard asks Old Zanko for how long his narratives have been recited to which he answers:

For twenty centuries perhaps or forty, I do not know, since these things happened, since the beginning of time. (Depuis vingt siècles peut-être ou quarante, je ne sais pas, depuis que ces choses sont arrivées, depuis le commencement du monde”) (Zanko 1959: 19)
In an oral society there are no calendars and no history books to record exactly when and where events occur so that all of history takes on a mythological aspect. Old Zanko knows that his narratives are of great antiquity but he cannot pinpoint exact times and dates because they were orally generated and transmitted. This does not mean that they haven’t any historical validity as well. However, mythological (sacred) and historical events become intermingled in oral narratives so that it is difficult to differentiate one from the other (Ben-Amos 1974; Portelli 1991: 49). It is difficult, but not impossible for the historical data is there if one knows how to recognize a different sort of historicity (ibid). Old Zanko’s narratives contain both imaginative and factual information, but the way in which they diverge is not easily discernible. Yet, there may be some historicity conveyed by *The Tradition*, and even by Old Zanko’s fairytales.
Comparing European Fairytales to Old Zanko’s Fairtales

So as to differentiate European genres of “the fairytale” from that of the Chalderash fairytale it was necessary to read the classic fairytales collected by such scholars as Perrault (1967) and the Grimms brothers (1823). In comparing them with the fairytale narratives in Zanko, Chef Tribal, two major differences become apparent. The first difference between the two is that Old Zanko’s narratives express the stories in terms of distinctive Chalderash ethos, cultural practice, and recognizably Chalderash characters. This differs considerably from the ethos, cultural practice, and cast of characters featured in the fairytales collected from the majority European populations in the Grimm and Perrault collections. The second major difference is that nowhere in Old Zanko’s narratives do “fairies,” “gnomes,” “elves,” “little people,” or “trolls” appear. This may be an important omission.

In terms of social practice, recognizable Chalderash themes related to childbirth, marriage, spirituality and ethics motivate action. Furthermore, Chalderash moral standards are enacted by characters subscribing to recognizably Chalderash traditions and worldview. Chalderash modes of address are used when fairytale characters speak to one another. For example, married couples habitually refer to each other in the Romani language as “my Rom” (‘my Husband”), or “my Romni” (“my Wife”) in many of Old Zanko’s fairytales.

Moreover, certain omissions characterize Old Zanko’s narratives that are striking. For instance, in his narratives, there are no children who are left to starve as in Hansel and Gretel and like stories. Possibly the reason for this is that it is an unthinkable practice among the Chalderash. Eugen Weber hypothesizes that this practice of child abandonment may have been the response of French peasant populations to famine (Weber 1990: 80-81). Certainly, the American anthropologist Nancy Scheper-Hughes demonstrates a like phenomenon in Brazil
among hungry populations (1985, 1992) as does Colin Turnbull among famine stricken African populations (1972). Famine and hunger’s absence in Old Zanko’s fairytales is perhaps due to the traditional mobility of the Chalderash which may have mitigated against starvation from famine. In any case, the ubiquitous theme of hunger which is present in European peasant tales is nearly absent from Old Zanko’s narratives. Nor is it graphically represented as it is in European fairy tales, although poverty is often a motivating factor in character behavior.

The wicked step-mother theme is also missing from *Zanko, Chef Tribal* fairytales. Eugen Weber (1990) proposes that the omnipresence of wicked step-mothers in fairytales collected from the French peasantry was due to the many women who died in childbirth often because the need for cleanliness was not understood (ibid: 89) and because of ignorance of modern medical procedures and medicines (ibid). The considerable fatality rate of women at this time seems to have compelled men to remarry more than one time so as to have a woman to care for their children, and these women may have been more concerned with their own biological progeny than that of another woman (ibid: 76-77). Among the Chalderash, such fatalities may not have been so much an issue perhaps because extended family groups could absorb the care of motherless children whereas the nuclear family household characteristic of French peasant populations could not. It is rare, in fact, to read of extended family households in French fairytales.

Another theme entirely absent from the fairytale narratives of Old Zanko is that of the “wicked witch.” The magic of witches is not seen in *Zanko, Chef Tribal* as the doing of evil, but rather as the doing of good. In *Zanko, Chef Tribal* the sorceresses are always benevolent characters who help and never hinder the good, and whom one may trust to act in the interest of
human beings. This is very different from the way fairytales of the European populations portray witches as posing a constant threat to individuals and communities.

However, the most notable omission of *Zanko, Chef Tribal* is the total absence of “fairies,” “gnomes,” “elves,” “little people,” “brownies,” “pixies,” or “trolls.” This is both surprising, and may be of great significance. For example, could it be that all such mythological entities represent the Gypsies themselves? Could these various appellations be non-Gypsy terms for them, hence the Gypsies would not refer to themselves by these terms? Could the appellation “fairy” relate to the words, *fer, ferrier*, and indicate a member of a nomadic iron-working people who belonged to a different ethnic group (the Gypsies) than those who wrote of them, as Margaret Murray suggests (1958)? Good fairies are present in so many traditional oral tales and literatures of Europe, the Middle East, and Asia that their absence in Old Zanko’s narratives seems rather striking. Clearly the genre of the fairytale is transformed by Old Zanko’s treatment into a vehicle of Chalderash culture as distinct from any other.
CHAPTER V A FEW BRIEF CONSIDERATIONS, IDEOLOGICAL AND TECHNICAL

Bernard’s commentaries which frame Zanko, Chef Tribal were unduly influenced by social evolutionism, and this in turn unduly predisposed readers to view Old Zanko and the Chalderash in a negative light. Nevertheless, I must be indulgent of Michel Bernard for in a letter housed in the Zanko Archives Father Chatard mentions that Michel Bernard was a “young student.” Surely the editing of a text meant for publication must have been a heady experience for an inexperienced (intern?) editor at La Colombière, which may account for the lengthy editorializing of the text. That a young student was given oversight of the book also would seem to indicate that Bernard’s superiors at La Colombière did not think this was the most important of its publications. Second, because much of academia was enamored with social evolutionism at this time, not only this one publishing neophyte, we must forgive Bernard his errors in judgement. Also, Zanko, Chef Tribal, is rife with fluctuation in the spelling of names and Romani words which may also have been due to Bernard’s inexperience. However, when various journalists criticize the text, they never mention these editing flaws. Instead, they concentrate upon exposing Old Zanko’s narratives as the product of one man’s imagination thereby denying the book as an embodiment of a community’s cultural heritage.

Zanko, Chef Tribal still had an additional hurdle to face. As a book which for the most part is written in the genre of “fairytale,” it automatically has inferior status accorded it by the French academic community. Susan Carol Rogers who has made a study of the academic system in France tells us that folklore studies have never attained the high status as an academic discipline in France as it has in the United States. Nor have French academics ever adopted ethnographic theory and technique characteristic of US anthropologists who were specifically inspired by the four field approach to the study of culture pioneered by Franz Boas. Rogers says
of anthropology in France that it is “not a four-field discipline” (2001: 485). She also elucidates the French practice of anthropology, which would be described in the USA rather as “ethnology” (the comparison of cultures) not “ethnography” (the study of a particular culture). Rogers informs us that in France, “ethnography” as such, has “lost its association with a specific discipline” (Rogers 2001: 481-505). The lowly status ascribed to folklore studies and ethnography in France was and perhaps still is another barrier to acceptance of Zanko, Chef Tribal as an important literary classic. Perhaps this was yet another reason that an inexperienced young editor was given oversight of its publication rather than a more experienced editor.
CHAPTER VI THE ONGOING WORK OF ETHNOGRAPHY

The Zanko lineage of the French Chalderash continues to create and recreate the history of *Zanko, Chef Tribal* as an effort to retain a precious heritage: the actual words of a grandfather and great-grandfather of a family, the words of a man as knowledgeable about the spiritual and religious traditions of his people as was the Reverend Father Chatard knowledgeable of his. In fact, *Zanko, Chef Tribal* could be described as the coming together of two spiritual leaders, each representing a community and its religious concepts.

Prior to the publication of *Zanko, Chef Tribal*, the Chalderash *Tradition of the Ancestors* had never been committed to writing. Old Zanko could neither read nor write. He was a master of the oral art of performance but not simply as an entertainer. Old Zanko’s art was a means to conserve and disseminate the beliefs and the way of life of a particular people. Old Zanko was himself the repository of Chalderash legend and myth, custom and tradition, religion and ethics. Old Zanko knew that much of his knowledge would have died with him if it were not conserved in written form for he had pointedly remarked to Father Chatard that most Chalderash now could only recite “fragments” of *the Tradition* (1959: passage 2: 70). Thus, this important Chalderash spokesman and conservateur of tradition resolved to have it recorded. In this endeavor he had the assistance of another remarkable person, the Reverend Father Chatard. This was the primary relationship that launched *Zanko, Chef Tribal* but it was not to be the last.

As this dissertation demonstrates, the book was the point of reference for a host of human discourses and activity at the time of its publication, and now it has become a *cause célèbre*, a *raison d’être* of Chalderash activism. For the French lineages related to Old Zanko, this dissertation represents a vindication of *Zanko, Chef Tribal*. But the writing of ethnography entails on-going human relations. Just when I think work is completed another human being
appears on the scene having crucial information. Indeed, this entire dissertation represents a series of on-going human relationships hence its tone will now shift from the impersonal formal language of scholarship to more informal language represented by my use of personal pronouns and experience, and what practice theorists refer to as “the exercise of reflexivity” (Bourdieu 1977; Lemon 2000; Ortner 1984, 1989) as I discuss the human relationships which caused this dissertation to be written.

Having been born in Detroit and having married a classical musician and composer, I am immersed in the musical life of the city with its amazing ethnic diversity that fostered the promulgation of traditional music genres (e.g. blues, jazz, calypso, reggae, czardas, polkas, flamenco, mariocchi etc.), all symbolic of the many communities which comprise Detroit. My story of friendship with certain persons of Gypsy descent begins in the 1980s at a time when an affluent Metro-Detroit was filled with small supper-clubs where one could go to hear jazz and ethnic genres of music. People who frequented these 1940s style cabarets could eat while a live (usually jazz) band played for “listening and dancing pleasure.”

I first came into contact with some Hungarian Roma, when I worked with them at one such supper-club. Its clients were largely drawn from the Hungarian Jewish community of recent immigrants as well as of those descended from immigrants who had arrived at the turn of the twentieth century. This community specifically supports the Hungarian Roma musicians with their patronage.

The well-known leader of the all Roma dance orchestra in this particular suburban nightclub was Billie Rose. In fact, it was due to the auspices of Billie Rose that I was hired by the supper-club in the first place. Working with the Roma as a fellow employee gave me the opportunity to learn about their culture for it is something that Roma never tire of discussing. But
at the time, I had no idea that I would one day study anthropology and become an ethnographer. However, I have always been of a curious nature and immensely interested in my fellow human beings. I was always delighted to learn about Hungarian Roma language and culture. I met family members and friends. I was invited to homes, and was visited in mine. Two close Roma friends took me with them when they played at weddings introducing me to the people who kept them in business. They took me to “Gypsy bars,” places where they spent leisure time themselves. There I met many other Roma, men, women, and families, so that it was possible to grasp something of this culture by mingling socially with people and listening to them describe their culture and worldviews.

I remember with some chagrin my naïve fascination with the Roma and Romensa (the Romani word which is inclusive of language, custom, tradition, belief and what it means to be Roma) and that I went so far as to regret not having been born into a Roma family! But one cannot simply declare oneself to be “Gypsy” because the Gypsies comprise ethnic communities into which one must be born or to which one may be related by marriage. The term “Gypsy” does not refer to a lifestyle but to a people possessing such ethnic markers as a language, their own musical genres, art forms, dance forms, oral traditions, customs and practices, and now written texts that define identity. That identity is kinship based.

But this fact only became evident to me gradually over time. At first, I was not collecting information systematically. I was but enjoying intellectually stimulating conversation about many subjects, including Romensa. Then a chance occurrence led to the academic discipline and profession that would permit me to research the fascinating subject of “culture.” The chance occurrence was that a Roma friend, interested in the many genres of Gypsy music, was teaching himself to play a repertoire of flamenco compositions on guitar which he practiced constantly
causing me also to become enamoured with flamenco. I decided to study flamenco dance with a local artist, Christina Smith, who went each year to Spain to study flamenco dance from the Gitans who originated the dance form. We became friends, and she invited me to attend with her the annual meeting of the International Gypsy Lore Society which that year was hosted by the Anthropology Department of the University of Michigan thanks to the sponsorship of Dr. William Lockwood (Emeritus). Afterward, I met and spoke with Dr. Lockwood privately. This meeting inspired me with the desire to study anthropology, an academic discipline most suited to my natural curiosity about humanity in all of its diversity as well as to my desire to learn more about the Gypsies and their various cultures. And so, I began to study anthropology.

As an anthropology undergraduate student familiarizing myself with the literature concerning Gypsies, I came upon constant reference to the book *Zanko, Chef Tribal* (1959). For instance, Jean-Paul Clébert (1967), as I mentioned previously, quotes from the text no less than eleven times and sometimes takes whole passages nearly verbatim from it. For this reason, I thought it might be a very important book, and although it was unavailable in the United States, I contacted a British rare books dealer who located a copy of it for me. As a hobby, I had been studying French with a private tutor for some years, and this book gave me the opportunity to both practice my translation skills and learn about the Chalderash.

From the first pages of Old Zanko’s orally generated narratives I recognized their importance deciding to translate and record the entire text word for word. Then a series of “mistakes” and coincidence in 2005 (five years after having received a Masters in anthropology from Wayne State University) led to an acquaintanceship with first, the Roma activist Gilles Eynard, and then with Old Zanko’s grandson, Michel Zanko. These series of “mistakes” (including an academic glitch that prevented me from receiving financial support that year)
nevertheless permitted me to go to Spain to present a paper at the annual Gypsy Lore Society meeting in Granada (2005 September 9th and 10th). Arriving at the Cartuja campus at the University of Granada, I was assigned to a lecture hall and given the time of my address. By mere chance, I was placed next to the Roma linguist and activist, Gilles Eynard, and to the Belarus-Lithuanian Roma scholar and poet Valdemar Kalinin (1997, 2000, 2005, and 2010 etc., see references).

Again by sheer chance, all three of us had and continue to have doubts about the Indic theory of Gypsy origin, and all three of us proposed in our respective presentations that scholars, especially anthropologists (as well as other social scientists), give more credence to what the Chalderash, the Roma, the Gitanos, and other Gypsy peoples have to say about themselves, their histories, and their diverse cultures. I did so because it is recommended by symbolic and interpretative anthropologists (e.g. Geertz 1984) as well as practice theorists (e.g. Bourdieu 1977; 1990; Ortner 1989). I had noticed that Gypsies differ in beliefs as to their “origin.” Mr. Eynard and Mr. Kalinin recommended that Chalderash and Roma should be heeded because they are activists who are in the process of reclaiming the right to define their own culture and identity, the right to use their “cultural capital” (Bourdieu 1977) to benefit themselves, and the right to write their own history. They addressed the Gypsy Lore Society as experts on the subject of their own respective cultures.

When it came time for me to speak, Gilles Eynard and Valdemar Kalinin left the platform to sit in the audience. Throughout my address they encouraged me with murmurs of “Chačimos, chačimos” and “Chachipen, chachipen” (“true, true”) in their respective dialects of Romanes (Romani). After my talk, as the lecture hall cleared, Gilles Eynard approached me to make my acquaintance due to similarity of attitude and opinion. We agreed to correspond and exchange
information. Incidentally, our conversation was briefly interrupted by the woman who had acted as moderator apologizing for my having been “put in the wrong room,” a “mistake” in human relations that turned out to be fortuitous.

Upon return to our respective countries, Gilles Eynard and I began to correspond and share data. However, it was not until one year later (September of 2006) that we discovered our mutual interest in Zanko, Chef Tribal at which time I learned that Gilles Eynard is a close friend of the Zanko family and had actually assisted the grandson of Old Zanko, Michel Zanko, to stop a pirate edition of the book. Thus, a dissertation was born. But more importantly, friendships have been created between Gypsy persons of the French Chalderash and Roma communities and an anthropologist of the United States.

We have collaborated to retranslate Zanko, Chef Tribal into English in light of Gilles Eynard’s greater knowledge of the French and Romani languages, and because of his greater familiarity with majority French and French Chalderash and Roma cultures. Our ultimate goal is to publish an updated US edition of Zanko, Chef Tribal. This updated version is to have a summary co-authored by Gilles Eynard and Valdemar Kalinin which brings another person into the orbit of Zanko, Chef Tribal, thereby creating on-going human discourses and interactions.

Moreover, this classic of books about Gypsies continues to bring more people into its sphere of intellectual activity even as I write. For instance, I have just recently received communications from Madame Régine Chatard, Father Chatard’s niece, which along with personal information concerning her uncle, includes two revelatory obituary articles published in the Journal du Lyon at the time of his death (1964). Furthermore, Gilles Eynard and Michel Zanko went to visit Madame Chatard and her elderly sister in April of 2011. She entrusted them with carefully preserved correspondence from “Oncle-Père” to François Chatard (their father)
and other family members concerning Zanko, Chef Tribal. The news-clippings and the letters given to Michel Zanko together with the letter and articles I have only recently received reveal just how remarkable were the two spiritual leaders who conceptualized and brought to fruition Zanko, Chef Tribal.

This material contained a great revelation. Zanko, Chef Tribal, the tribute to a people’s culture, was viewed as a real political threat to majority French hegemony which had repercussions the details of which will follow in the proper sequence of events. This was not simply mere speculation on my part.

From Madame Chatard I learned that Father Joseph Chatard was born to an agricultural family in 1894 at Pont Salomon as the 4th child of 5 (François, her father, was the eldest), and that at the age of eight years Joseph Chatard was already certain as to his religious vocation. Becoming a Dominican priest, he studied first at Fribourg in Switzerland and then in Holland returning to France where he was posted to Poitier, then to Clermond, and finally to Lyon where he developed “a fierce loyalty to these destitute people,” the Gypsies (Communication of Madame Chatard 4/8/2011). Madame Régine Chatard was born in 1934, and she was ten years old at the end of the German occupation of France. She remembers her uncle as “always smiling” although he had long suffered from scoliosis.

Father Chatard’s first contact with the Chalderash and Roma was during the war. One of the articles that Madame Chatard was so kind as to send to me published in the Journal du Lyon (no day or month 1964) states that during the occupation of Poitier, the Chalderash, Gitanos, and Roma, “men and women, languished behind barbed wire” with their children. Father Chatard was appalled by the conditions in which they were forced to live, the squalor and hunger. Somehow, the article describes it as an “amazing feat” (“ce tour de force”), Father Chatard
confronted the Vichy police and occupational military authorities to “regularly bring the children from the camp” (de sortir régulièrement les enfants du camp”). Unfortunately, the article’s author, Lucien Pegon, does not explain any further what this meant to the children other than to give them a “little” taste of “freedom.” Moreover, Madame Chatard’s remark that Father Chatard did not write to her father about the concentration camp, saying “mon oncle était très discret,” suggests dangers and the need for secrecy that must have attended his frequenting it and his work there. Indeed, the arbitrary and extreme cruelty of the nazi regime in all of the occupied countries is infamous and he would have had to be very careful not to jeopardize in any way his work in the camp. After the war, Father Chatard remained advocate for the Chalderash and Roma and their respective cultures. From these facts of personal history we begin to understand what a remarkable person Father Chatard must have been, the reason that the Chalderash loved him, and the reason that the Chalderash leader Alexander Zanko (Old Zanko) entrusted him with the *Tradition of the Ancestors*.

I had always suspected that *Zanko, Chef Tribal* was an important book about Chalderash culture (as mentioned previously), and that there was a political dimension suggested by Michel Bernard’s commentaries which caused the text to be viewed at times in a negative light, and which prevented it from being valued as it should have been as discussed earlier in this dissertation. Also, I knew that Father Chatard had written to French bureaucrats in order to protest the oppression of Gypsy communities also discussed previously. However, it had never occurred to me that the book, *Zanko, Chef Tribal* might have been viewed as subversive and as a real political threat to majority French hegemony. Yet this is exactly what correspondence and journal articles given us by Régine Chatard document.
Upon reading one of the *Journal du Lyon* articles by Lucien Pegon, something began to trouble me. Eulogy of Father Chatard at the time of his death also contained oblique and not so oblique references to some hypothetical and extremely vague guilt that anonymous persons should have felt who attended Father Chatard’s funeral:

I recognized some faces in the crowd; was this an occasion for an examination of conscience? I had wanted to write with some venom, but the *rashaï* prevented me from doing so. Some said to be my associates deceived me. What does it matter? their [sic] lies indirectly will serve the cause of my gitans [sic]. Yet I know that some betrayed him, that some plundered him and that still some individuals without scruples have even used his work and his name to further their ambitions. Let them do it! Their personal interest will be confused with that of their people. (*J'ai connu quelques visages dans la foule; était-ce déjà l’occasion d’un examen de conscience? J’aurais voulu écrire avec du vitriol, mais le rashaï m’en aurait empêché. Certains, qui se disaient mes collaborateurs, m’ont trompé. Qu’importante? leurs [sic] mensonges serviront indirectement la cause de mes gitans [sic]. Pourtant, je sais qu’on l’a trahi, qu’on la pillé et que déjà des individus sans scrupules s’apprestent à se server de son oevre et de son nom de satisfaire leurs ambitions. Laissez-les faire! Leur intérêt personnel peut se confondre avec celui de leur peuple)*!

Who could Pegon have been referring to, who had he wanted to castigate in some way? Was it Lionel Rotaru (Văïda Voïvode III)? If it was Rotaru, he was not actually Gypsy therefore it is unjust to say that the Gypsies “betrayed” Father Chatard. However, we do know that Rotaru was an opportunist who claimed to lead the Gypsy communities of France. If it was Lionel Rotaru, and it is known that he did attend the funeral and spoke to the assembled mourners in the church, what does it mean that he “betrayed” Father Chatard, betrayed him to whom, and to what purpose? But then again, perhaps Pegon was not referring to Rotaru. Who then was the guilty party or parties?

Although the beginning of Pegon’s article begins very fancifully as he strolls about the galleries of the cloister where he has the impression that the deceased Father Chatard is walking with him and talking to him about what he should write, the literary device transmits some important information. He tells us that these galleries were the place where Father Chatard used to come for a few moments of peace between “two struggles” (“se recueillir entre deux luttes”). The dilemma, however, is a surprising one. The question is whether to present one’s actual
findings or to lie about it ("après une recherche, ou une déception?") Why would Father Chatard have had to lie about his findings concerning Gypsies?

The answer lies in French policy concerning the Gypsies in the 1960s during which time the obituary article was written. The French government’s policy regarding the Gypsy peoples was one of forced “assimilation.” This seemingly neutral term concealed a program calling for the suppression of Chalderash and Roma cultures and persons in the name of “nation” building. This was done by means of laws that mandated the surveillance of Gypsy communities in a way that would have outraged majority, non-Gypsy French if they had been subjected to the same regulations, which they were not. For example, a law was passed requiring all Gypsies both nationals and immigrants to possess a *carnet anthropométrique* which first directly mapped Gypsy bodies as a means of social control (Foucault 1977), and then entailed constant interaction with local police who, in effect, had untoward power over their lives. Father Chatard had been very vocal about his disapproval of this particular law, both privately and publicly, and he had written to governmental departments in order to protest it.

Besides the promulgation of punitive laws against Gypsies, government assimilation policy was also pursued by means of discourse. To make Gypsy persons relinquish distinctive traditions and language it was first necessary to make them see those very traditions and language as undesirable markers of marginality and inferior social status. Assimilation policy mandated that all such social stigmas must be shed before entrance could be attained into hypothesized “majority French society” and “the body politic” of France. So-called assimilation was not a choice but rather an imposition of the State.

For government assimilation policy to succeed, French majority persons also would have had to view Gypsy persons in certain ways, that is, view Gypsy persons and culture as
undesirable and foreign to “traditional” French standards of morality and right living. Both needs of the State were served by the press and other sorts of media for news articles and literature from that period abound in both negative stereotypes of Gypsies which also include positive stereotypes disguised in romantic imagery. These frame even Old Zanko’s narratives in Zanko, Chef Tribal. Indeed, the book is symbolic of the very cultural traditions that the French government required Chalderash to give up. In essence, Zanko, Chef Tribal encodes and perpetuates Chalderash culture including Chalderash distinctiveness, and also Chalderash connectedness to the history of humanity. For these reasons, the French government ruled that Zanko, Chef Tribal could not be allowed to be viewed as an important or valuable work.

In pursuit of the goal to discredit this book, the French police were given leave by the French Administration to harass Father Chatard. This fact has only just become apparent thanks to the letters Madame Chatard entrusted to Michel Zanko and Gilles Eynard. A letter from Father Chatard to Madame Régine clearly states the political pressures that were brought to bear on him because of the publication of Zanko, Chef Tribal:

The struggle with the party of assimilation (his emphasis) of the Gypsies is purely and simply the effacement of the distinctive character of this people. This is the party of the Association of Gypsy Studies, the Interministerial Commission for the Gypsies, the Administration and the Chaplaincy. A long time ago they stripped away the truth of “Zanko” in practice. They are furiously against this book. This struggle is not just happening today. It goes back to the time of the war in 39 – this would take too long to tell you about…1956: the whole polemic epistle with the president of the Commission, then his unofficial visit, then the police investigation ordered against me by the Minister of the Interior. This continues to stand in the way [prejudice] public opinion against “Zanko.”

There were indeed formidable political forces ranged against publication of Zanko, Chef Tribal, and against Father Chatard personally. Yet, neither Father Chatard nor La Colombière caved in to political pressures, and La Colombière went on to publish the book in spite of police
interrogations and media attacks on it. What gave Father Chatard the strength to face humiliation, physical intimidation, and defeat?

In an effort to understand Father Chatard as a Dominican priest and Gypsy advocate, and so as to understand the moral imperatives which would cause him to defy the powers of the State, I contacted the Dominican chapter house in New York hoping that they could answer pertinent questions and put me in touch with the appropriate authorities in France. Father Brian Mulcahy O. P. assisted me in this endeavor sending me the address of the Province of France Dominican website. The website presents an obituary of Father Chatard written by Frére Jean-Michel Potin O. P., Archiviste-adjoint de la Province dominicaine de France. From it, I learned that Father Chatard’s “name in religion” was “Gonsalve” although he was born Joseph Chatard, and that he entered the Dominican Order at 20 years of age. However, the most important consideration when writing of Father Chatard did not appear on the website, but was rather suggested to me by Father Mulcahy. Father Chatard’s moral imperative “to go out and work with the people,” the “common man,” may have come from the philosophical stance of “Nouvelle Théologie.” whose major proponents were French Dominicans at the very time when Father Chatard was allying his destiny with that of the Gypsies of France.

Nouvelle Théologie stresses the importance of Dominican engagement with contemporary issues that relate to working people. There is a direct connection between Nouvelle Théologie as practiced by Catholic religious in France and the Jeunesse Ouvrière Chrétienne (Young Christian Workers movement). For example, one of the foremost proponents of Nouvelle Théologie was the priest, Henri Godin, who had been active in the Jeunesse Ouvrière Chrétienne, and who published an important book in 1943 upon the subject of Nouvelle Théologie. Nouvelle Théologie may have provided Father Chatard’s moral imperative to take up
the gauntlet of social justice for the Gypsy peoples of France. Although, I know of no such documents which refer to “Nouvelle Théologie” in the Zanko Archives, Gilles Eynard and Michel Zanko were not looking for points of Catholic theology and so any such reference to it may have gone unnoticed, which brings me to the admission that I have much research to do. For example, Michel Bernard, the editor of Zanko, *Chef Tribal*, is a French intellectual who remains virtually unknown to me. My Chalderash and Roma representatives in France could not identify any such person who lives in France today. One Michel Bernard publishes monographs upon various subjects in France, but not on the subject of Gypsies, and all communications sent to him by Gilles Eynard have gone unanswered. Therefore, it is unknown if this Michel Bernard is the same Michel Bernard who wrote the commentaries to *Zanko, Chef Tribal*. A visit to France might unearth more information about the man who actually prepared the manuscript for publication.

Nor is anything known of *La Colombière* publishers except that they are “out of business,” and they have been “out of business” since no one seems to know for how long. A trip to France is necessary to interview elderly persons who may have once been employed by this publisher. To date, I have not been able to find any information about this publishing house, nor have Michel Zanko and Gilles Eynard. It would also be interesting to speak with any Dominican religious who may have personally known Father Chatard, perhaps his younger religious colleagues. One of Father Chatard’s obituaries names as mourner, “Sister Marie-Albert Duche, le Président du Comité pour la Femme et l’Enfant gitan.” A journey to France might facilitate the finding of such persons or their living relatives who could tell us more about themselves and the man who published Old Zanko’s narratives. So too there may be living Gypsy persons who were
once children in the concentration camp at Poitier whom Father Chatard assisted. Again, a trip to France would be necessary to find such persons if they exist.

Alexander Zanko, Old Zanko, also called “Yoshka,” was born in 1888 in Russia. We know that he traveled extensively before settling in France. Gilles Eynard says that besides being a superb storyteller he was “a good dancer” (Communication 12/23/2010). We also know that he was a widely known Chalderash figure not only among his own people but among other ethnic groups. Just this last winter, for example, a group of Turkish Roma came to the Zanko family to ask permission to mourn at Old Zanko’s grave and “to ask for his blessing” (ibid). The Zanko family did not ask any questions as to who these people were or of how they had come to know of Old Zanko for it is considered rude to do so among the Chalderash. Whoever these people may have been, one thing may be said for certain: both Old Zanko and Father Chatard were believed to be spiritual experts and holy persons by the Gypsies of France.

Moreover, Old Zanko and Father Chatard seem to have been very close friends. According to one Journal du Lyon article, when Father Chatard died Old Zanko became so ill and distressed by the news that he took to his bed and could not attend the funeral. However, Old Zanko’s wife was there. Lucien Pegon reports her as saying, “Zanko, my husband, is very sick, you understand. The death of the rashaï [priest] much upset him.” (“Zanko, mon mari, est très malade, vous comprenez. La mort du rashaï l’a beaucoup frappé”). Pegon comments that he can well believe it for when he had gone to interview Old Zanko with a television crew the day before, they had found Old Zanko to be so sick as to require his sons’ help in dressing. Yet, Old Zanko had insisted upon getting up to speak of his “ami” (“friend”) saying of his death, “we have lost all” (“nous avon tout perdu”). When Pegon informs Old Zanko that he has brought a lot of strangers with him, Old Zanko answers that it doesn’t matter, “For the priest, I will speak”
(“Pour le rashaï, je parlerai”). Ironically, and rather maddeningly, Pegon tells us not one word of what Old Zanko had to say about his friend.

What does it mean that this dissertation is “ethnography”? Most of all it means that as a collection of data, it does not stand once and for all time. Human discourses and actions do not cease because a portion of the data appears in written form. Ethnography is not a product but an on-going process that grows a network of friends and colleagues. As an on-going process it stretches into the future as well as into the past.
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ABSTRACT

ZANKO, CHEF TRIBAL: ETHNOGRAPHY OF A TEXT

by

SUSAN KIRWAN

August 2011

Advisor: Dr. Barry S. Lyons

Major: Anthropology (Cultural)

Degree: Doctor of Philosophy

The book Zanko, Chef Tribal: Tradition, Coutumes, Légendes des Tsiganes Chalderash (1959) is a classic in literature about Gypsies. The book resulted from the collaboration of a Dominican priest, the Reverend Father Chatard, and a leader of the Chalderash Gypsies of France, Alexander Zanko. “Old Zanko” could neither read nor write but he was a master of the oral art of performance. His narratives conserved and disseminated the beliefs and the way of life of a particular people for Old Zanko himself was the repository of legend and myth, custom and tradition, religion and ethics. He knew that a great deal of his knowledge would die with him and so he resolved to have it recorded. In this endeavor he had the assistance of the Reverend Father Chatard who by means of interviews and recitation sessions recorded The Tradition of the Ancestors which had never before been committed to writing.

At the time of publication, Zanko, Chef Tribal, was misunderstood by the literary establishment of France. However since that time, such theorists as sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1977), literary critic Edward Said (1978), psychologist Walter J. Ong (1999), anthropologist Sherry Ortner (1989) and a host of other social scientists permit a new understanding of this text.
This dissertation analyzes the book by means of these various theories to demonstrate its literary importance and its ethnographic significance.
AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL STATEMENT

Susan Kirwan’s B.A. was awarded by Honors College, Oakland University in Rochester, Michigan from where she graduated cum laude with a major in cultural anthropology and a minor in sociology. She received her Masters degree (cultural anthropology) from Wayne State University. She was awarded a Doctor of Philosophy degree in August, 2011 with a major in cultural anthropology and a cognate in English.

Susan Kirwan’s publications include the articles: Mining and Metallurgy (10,000-4,000 BCE); Tools and Technologies of Early Modern Humans (100,000-10,000 BCE); Innovations in Ceramics (10,000-4000 BCE); Jomon in Japan; Emergence of Watercraft and its Implications (10,000-4000 BCE); Death and Early Modern Humans to 15,000 BCE; Early Village in Ancient China (10,000-5,000 BCE); What Can Lice Tell Us About Clothing (100,000-10,000 BCE), World History Encyclopedia (2011 Santa Barbara, CA; Oxford, England: ABC-CLIO). Brazil; Miami Indians; Omaha Indians; Tswana Bantu, Encyclopedia of Anthropology (2006 Thousand Oaks, California; New Delhi, India; London, UK), and a literary review of “Gypsies in European Literature and Culture,” (2008 Palgrave and MacMillan), Romani Studies December 2008: 5: 2: 204-211.

She is currently teaching anthropology at Macomb Community College.