BARAKA: MARABOUTISM AND MARABOUTAGE IN
THE FRANCOPHONE SENEGALESE NOVEL

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of the Ohio State University

By

Debra Boyd-Buggs, B.A., M.A.

* * * * *

The Ohio State University
1986

Dissertation Committee:                  Approved by
R. Bjornson                                
P. Astier
J. Kubayanda                               

Adviser
Department of Romance Languages and Literatures
To God my Creator,
my mother Mrs. Hattie C. Boyd,
my husband O. Stanley Buggs,
my son Jordan,
and to Professor Richard Bjornson
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I express my sincere appreciation to Professor Richard Bjornson, whom I was privileged to have direct this work, for his guidance, dedication, and encouragement throughout the research. Thanks go to the other members of my advisory committee, Professors Pierre Astier and Josaphat Kubayanda, for their assistance, support, and commitment to the realization of this project. I also wish to thank Professor Ronald Rosbottom, Chair of the Department of Romance Languages, and Dr. Frank W. Hale, Vice-President for Minority Affairs, for their support and for financial aid to travel to Senegal. Appreciation also goes to Professor Mbaye Cham of Howard University for support in providing research materials. Thanks go to Professor Nkem Nwanko who was among the first to encourage me and to Professor Thérèse Bonin, Mary Lou Neff, and others who recommended me for the Fulbright grant to Senegal. To my husband Stan and my son Jordan I offer sincere thanks for their love and for enduring with me the demands of my endeavors. Appreciation also goes to my mother, Mrs. Hattie C. Boyd; my parents-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. Orzil Buggs; and to my brothers and sisters (Leonard Boyd, Vera Johnson, Dr. Gerald Boyd, Marcia Witten, and Marshall Boyd) for the many times they provided personal support.

Thanks also go to the following persons who assisted me in Senegal: Oumar Willane for being a friend, arranging interviews, and
other assistance; Mame Seck Mbacké for her friendship and informative interviews; Cheikh Hamidou Kane for his kindness and the distinct privilege to interview him twice; Bocar Bâ for his friendship and arranging the interview with the Tidjanes; Roger Dorsinville for his insight and kindness, sending novels that were key to my study all the way from Senegai; Jean Brière who referred me to Mr. Dorsinville; Daouda Fall who accompanied me to Yoff and presented me to the Layennes; Babacar Loukoubar who escorted me to Touba and presented me to the Mouride marabout; Amar Samb for his consideration and informative interviews; Boubacar Barry, Madior Diouf, Alassane Ndao, Mohamadou Kane, and others at the Université de Dakar for providing encouragement, research materials, lodging, and general support; Al Hadj Abdou Aziz Sy, Jr., Serigne Lamine Sy, and Serigne Bassirou Laye, who not only provided lengthy interviews but hosted me as their guest; Aminata Sow Fall for the rare privilege of two special interviews; El Hadj Diakhité for his consideration in Touba; Annette Mbaye D'Erneville for personal assistance; Pathé Diagne, Carey Sembène, Mamadou Traoré Diop, Amadou Lamine Sall, and Jean Gerem-Ciss for their support and personal interviews. I also wish to recognize Albert and Albena Atkins, the Diallo family, Cheikh Tidiane Beye, Ndiawara Sarr, Will and Irene Petty, Ruby Clark, Geraldine Hamard, and the Chorale des Martyrs de l'Ouganda, whose friendship during my stay in Senegal facilitated my endeavors.

I would also like to thank my prayer partners and special friends for providing spiritual guidance, child care, typing services, emotional support, lodging, and other helps too numerous to mention here:
Bishop Smallwood E. Williams, Bishop William C. Latta, Catherine
Thornton, Markette and Leslie Thompson, Jacqueline Russell, Arlette
Willis, Bailene Buckner, Thelma Smith, Augusta Simon, Brenda Craft,
Diane Yates, Vendetta Brown, Lisa Chavers, Jack and Janet Taylor, Pat
Lowe, and Amadou Lamine Bâ. Thanks go especially to my typist, Mrs.
Lynn Hockader, for her excellent and dependable services.
VITA

January 8, 1949 ..................... Born - Washington, D.C.

1970 ............................. B.A., University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa

1972 ............................. M.A., Rutgers University, New Brunswick, New Jersey

1972-1976 ........................ Associate Director, Office of Veteran Student Services, University of the District of Columbia, Washington, D.C.

1976-1977 ........................ University Fellow, The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio

1978-1979 ........................ Coordinator of Academic Advising & Counseling, Developmental Education Program, Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, Ohio

1979-1981 ........................ Graduate Administrative Associate, Developmental Education Program, The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio

1983-1984 ........................ Fulbright Researcher, Dakar, Senegal

1981-1983, 1984-1986 .............. Graduate Teaching Associate, Department of Romance Languages & Literatures, The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio
PUBLICATIONS


FIELDS OF STUDY

Major Fields: French Language and Literature
             Literature of Francophone West Africa
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INTRODUCTION

Baraka, the Arabic word for blessing, is the term Senegalese Muslims use to describe what they believe is a marabout's ability to impart divine blessings to believers. This power that is attributed to him is one of the marabout's primary traits. The following study is an examination of the phenomena of maraboutism and maraboutage in the francophone Senegalese novel. Maraboutism refers to the existence in the Muslim world of religious personnel or marabouts who serve as intermediaries between God and men; maraboutic interventions that involve the syncretism of Islamic practices with elements of traditional African religion are called maraboutage. In Senegal, a country where nearly 90 percent of the population claims to be Muslim, marabouts exercise considerable influence, not only in spiritual affairs, but also in many other areas of social interaction: education, marriage, the family, politics, and the economy. These Muslim spiritual guides also affect the personal lives of individual believers and the public activities of the Senegalese people as a whole. The theme of maraboutism and the problems that it poses have repeatedly been treated in the Senegalese novel from its inception in 1920 to the most recent works of the 1980s.

In this study, the approach to maraboutism in the Senegalese novel has been historical and sociological. The scope of this work--
twenty novels and eight short stories published in Senegal between 1920 and 1984--permits one to compare novelistic depictions of maraboutism during all phases of Senegalese literary history. The image of the marabout character in earlier works has been compared with fictional portrayals of him in later works to determine what aspects of this image have changed and which have remained constant. The history of Islam in Senegal has had a profound impact upon Senegalese literature in that much of what happened to Senegalese culture and the practice of religion during the Islamization process continues to affect contemporary society. Marabouts were largely responsible for the Islamization of the Senegalese population, and their success was due in part to the way they adapted Islam to the cultural style of the masses. This historical fact is repeatedly illustrated by novelists who point out the marabout’s role as the preserver of cultural traditions such as the practice of fetishism. When addressing the effect maraboutism has had and continues to have upon Senegalese society, some novelists allude to the Muslim brotherhoods and to the teachings of the founders of these organizations. For that reason, the historical portion of the present study includes an examination of the doctrines of the major confréries (brotherhoods) and their relevance to an interpretation of the novels under consideration.

There is a reciprocal relationship between the structure of the fictional universe in the Senegalese novel and the structure of the actual society. The novel as a genre has always had a unique capacity to mirror the society that gives it birth, and when it was adopted by African writers in the twentieth century, it related to society
in much the same way it had done earlier in Europe. All African literature is said to incline toward realism and this is particularly true of the Senegalese novel. In fact, realism in one form or another might well be considered the primary characteristic of the Senegalese novel. Similar to the griot or traditional storyteller, the Senegalese novelist often creates his narrative on the basis of an historical truth, and since maraboutism is one of Senegal's historical and social realities, it has frequently become the subject of novels. Traditional oral literature was realistic and didactic; it always carried a message. A similar tendency can be observed in the novel for Senegalese novelists conceive of themselves as placing literature in the service of the people by depicting their society so realistically that truths about it become evident—truths that might otherwise have gone unperceived. The style of these works ranges from a naive realism in early novels to a more critical social realism in later works, but throughout the history of the Senegalese novel the focus remains upon a consciousness shaped by day-to-day reality. Indeed, one of the primary functions of the Senegalese novel, like other African novels, has been to raise the people's level of consciousness about social realities like maraboutism. Novelists seem to view maraboutism as an issue of social concern since marabouts often abuse their claims to possess baraka. Because they live these realities so intensely, they are often unable to observe the phenomenon from an objective viewpoint, and the novel offers them the perspective from which to do so. Mame Seck Mbacké once stated that the African writer is "la conscience du peuple." The use of realistic techniques allows the
novelist to fulfill this social function by portraying social problems in a fictional context that facilitates the readers' understanding of the problem and encourages them to draw a lesson or teaching from the narrative. As a result, novels have the capacity to alert readers to the need for positive social change.

Novelists' portrayals of maraboutism tend to coincide with the studies of sociologists, islamologues, essayists, and other observers. The fact that I was able to use sociological research in my analysis supports the thesis that the marabout in the Senegalese novel closely resembles his counterpart in the real world. Also, a significant number of the works in the study are autobiographical or semi-autobiographical, and because the authors of these works document their own personal experiences with marabouts, the impression of verisimilitude is heightened in their novels.

The present study has examined literary works as one part of evidence that allows us to decipher the influence of maraboutism and maraboutage upon Senegalese society. Whenever relevant, data obtained from sociologists, historians, literary critics, Senegalese novelists, and Senegalese marabouts have been used to cast additional light upon the subject. In order to place this examination of maraboutism into its literary context, I have sought to demonstrate the ways in which it relates to other literary themes that have been treated by Senegalese novelists.

Maraboutism is a phenomenon that is relatively unknown outside the Arab and African countries where it is practiced. In the early twentieth century, the subject of maraboutism began to receive serious
scholarly attention although earlier historians had alluded to the presence of marabouts in Senegalese society. Considerable information on the subject was amassed by Paul Marty in his *Etudes sur l'Islam au Sénégal--les Doctrines et les Institutions* (1917). The first volume of this monumental work discusses the influence of Islam upon all areas of social activity in the country; the second provides a history of nearly all the Muslim brotherhoods, including relatively accurate biographies of their founders. Not much new information on the subject was published until about 1960, when research on the marabout in Afro-Islamic society increased significantly. In 1964, for example, the French islamologue Vincent Monteil brought out his *L'Islam noir*. This work provides a systematic study of Black Islam (the term was coined by Monteil), and one section of it is devoted specifically to the role of the marabout. Lucy Behrman's *Maraboutism and Politics in Senegal* (1970) is useful in that it offers an analysis of the role played by Muslim brotherhoods in national politics and the influence they exercise over government policy. Originally a doctoral thesis, *La Société wolof, tradition et changement, les systèmes d'inégalité et de domination* (1981) by Abdoulaye Bara Diop is the most comprehensive research study done on Wolof society, the Islamization of the Wolof people, and the role that marabouts have played on the evolution of contemporary religion, politics, and economic structures in Senegal.

In his recent *Roman africain et tradition* (1982), the Senegalese literary critic Mohamadou Kane tangentially addresses the problem of the marabout in discussing religion as tradition in various African
societies and literatures. Ihechukwu Madubuike makes reference to the marabout in his thesis, "Le Roman sénégalais et le problème d'assimilation" (1973), when he analyzes the effect that the politics of assimilation has had upon religion in Senegal. Dorothy Blair's recent Senegalese Literature: A Critical History (1984) also alludes to the marabout character. However, none of these works examine in detail the role of the marabout in Senegalese literature, and the only existing study on the subject is Abdoulaye Berté's master's thesis, "Le Marabout dans le roman ouest-africain francophone" (University of Dakar, 1976). But Berté's study does not focus primarily on Senegal and he fails to investigate the way Islam and the marabout function in the literatures and societies under consideration. Although there are similarities between Black Islam in Senegal and Black Islam in other West African countries, the situation is far from being the same in all of them. Berté also does not examine the Senegalese marabout as he functions in the personal sphere. In particular, he pays no attention to the marabout's role as a practicing believer, husband, and father. Published ten years ago, Berté's thesis contained no Senegalese novels in which a marabout is the main protagonist. The present study treats eight works published after Berté's thesis, and in each of them the marabout is either the protagonist (Kaala-Sikkim, "Le Madihou de Pikine," Le Marabout de la Sècheresse, Au delà de la vertu, Un Trou dans le miroir) or a main character who exercises a significant influence over the outcome of the story (De Tilène au Plateau, La Grève des battû, Le Baobab fou).
The scope of the present study has been limited to the Senegalese novel because the literature of Senegal reflects a certain homogeneity. In *Senegalese Literature: A Critical History*, Dorothy Blair discusses the fact that Senegal, even during its early history, had more natural unity, and fewer internal conflicts based on religious, ethnic, or regional differences than did most other countries colonized by the French. Against this background of relative cultural homogeneity, there are similarities in the way Senegalese novelists have depicted the marabout as he functions in the macrocosm of the public sphere and the microcosm of his personal relationships. The present study represents an attempt to explain these similarities. It is divided into eight chapters, each dealing with a specific aspect of maraboutism. The first chapters are historical in nature and help to define the term "marabout" by showing how Senegalese society came to be Islamized under the strong influence of these religious leaders. This historical survey is followed by an overview of the evolution of the novel's history in Senegal. Brief descriptions of the works selected for this study are provided and the historical progression of the theme of maraboutism in the Senegalese novel is discussed. Particular attention has been paid to the unique characteristics of the Senegalese novel and the ways in which novelists adapt elements from their own pre-Islamic cultural traditions in presenting the theme of maraboutism. Successive chapters are devoted to the novelists' interpretations of the marabout as a practicing believer, the "marabout-maître" (the Koranic schoolmaster responsible for the religious education of the youth), the "marabout-prêtre"
(the facilitator of supernatural interventions known as maraboutage),
and the "marabout-vilain" (the charlatan who dupes the gullible for
money). The final section discusses the way in which maraboutism
affects other aspects of life in Senegal.

The appendix contains excerpts from personal interviews I con-
ducted in Senegal with intellectuals like Cheikh Hamidou Kane,
Aminata Sow Fall, Mame Seck Mbacké, and Roger Dorsinville as well
as with representatives from the major Muslim brotherhoods in Senegal
--El Hadj Diakhaté of the Mourides, El Hadj Abdou Aziz Sy, Jr.,
General Caliph of the Tidjanes, and Serigne Bassirou Laye, the Imam
of the Layennes.
CHAPTER I

MARABOUTISM IN ITS HISTORICAL DIMENSIONS

The Islamization of the Senegalese people was accomplished by marabouts or Muslim spiritual guides who were able to adapt successfully the Muslim religion to the cultural style of the country. In Senegal, as in other parts of Black Africa, Islam involves the syncretism of two world views: the first is based upon traditional African values and religious beliefs, commonly referred to as "animism," whereas the second reflects the fundamental duties and beliefs of Islam as defined by the Prophet Mohamed. The coming together of these two cultural currents has resulted in a phenomenon that certain islamologues and sociologists refer to as Black Islam. Black Islam is characterized by the existence of marabouts, religious men regarded as being so close to God that they can serve as mediators between God and men.

The marabout is a significant figure in the lives of the Senegalese people for whom Islam itself remains a vital force. Nearly 90 percent of the population claims to be Muslim, and although Islam is theoretically a religion without clergy, most Senegalese are or have been closely associated with a tariqa or Muslim brotherhood. These brotherhoods are headed by marabouts. The Koran, the holy book of Islam, speaks of the existence of saints or men who are close to
God (wali in Arabic) and of pious men (saleh), but it makes no reference to the existence of a clergy. However, everywhere in the Islamic world there exist religious power figures and in certain countries their presence is more widely felt than in others. In Senegal, the marabout's domain is not limited to spiritual concerns. The history of Senegal reveals that the marabout has exercised and continues to exercise social, political, and economic power as well.

A historical survey of maraboutism suggests that there are four basic reasons for the marabouts' strong influence there: (1) "Sufi" or maraboutic Islam was preached to the Senegalese masses by the Arab, Berber, and Toucouleur marabouts who introduced the religion to them; (2) marabouts are believed to possess "baraka" or the ability to impart blessings and some of these holy men are worshipped as saints; (3) marabouts assumed the tasks of the traditional religious leaders, incorporated pre-Islamic practices into their ministry, and thereby simplified Islam for the believers, most of whom were illiterate; and (4) during the French colonial regime, marabouts replaced the traditional chief and provided the direction that mobilized (there are those who would say "immobilized") the Senegalese masses. Moreover, the existence of maraboutism implies that, among Senegalese Muslims in general, individual believers feel that their solitary efforts to attain to the realm of the spiritual are either ineffective or not as effective as those of the mediator or marabout.
"Marabout" and "Baraka"

The word "marabout" is the French deformation of the North African term mrabot (the Almoravide al-murabit) which was a fortified camp or monastery. In Wolof, the dominant ethnic language in Senegal, the marabout is called serin or serigne, and he is referred to as tierno or tyeerno in the language of the Toucouleur. Before the fifteenth century a marabout was "one who is tied to God," the equivalent of a sufi shaykh or cheikh. The term also designated the early propagators of Islam who lived in fortified enclosures or rbat-s. Originally referring to a simple ascetic, the word "marabout" eventually became synonymous with "leader of a Muslim brotherhood." By the end of the fifteenth century marabouts came to be regarded as saints. It came to be popularly believed that, for temporal success, men had to attach themselves to marabouts, who, whether living or dead, had a special relationship to God, a relationship which placed them in a position to serve as intermediaries between human beings and the supernatural and to bestow God's grace or baraka upon them. The ability to impart baraka is for the most part considered to be hereditary. Baraka, the Arabic word for blessing, was adopted by the Africans to express the charismatic power or the magnetic flux transmitted to disciples through the saliva and the hands of their masters. This baraka implies a special spiritual grace, a special position with God, and it may include the power to redeem souls. But in mundane affairs it has also come to imply political and economic power as well; certain marabouts even hold a special position with the
authorities of the state. Senegalese marabouts came out of a historical tradition strongly influenced by North African clerics.

Influence of Moroccan Marabouts

Arab North Africa is where the notion of the marabout originated. Marabouts also played key religious, political, and economic roles in traditional North African society, especially in Morocco. Islam first came to Morocco in 681 with the raid of the Muslim general Uga
ben Nafi less than fifty years after the death of the Prophet Mohamed. Starting with the Almoravid dynasty (1061-1147), the period 1050-1450 was characterized in Morocco as the Great Age of Berber Islam. In this period Berber tribesmen or "Saints of the Atlas Mountains" used Islam as a symbol of Moroccan identity. In a similar manner, marabouts unified the Senegalese people under the banner of Islam during colonization.

From the middle of the ninth through the fourteenth century, most of the gold trade from Black Africa to the Middle East flowed through Morocco. Even at the end of the nineteenth century there was still significant trans-Saharan caravan traffic linking sub-Saharan Africa with major Moroccan cities. Morocco's commercial contacts were also influenced by the strong presence of Islam in that country. The Islamization of Senegal began during the eleventh century with the arrival of the Almoravides in the Foûta Toro region of northern Senegal. The ruler of Tekrur (seat of the Toucouleur tribe), a trading state that straddled the Senegal River, was among the first to be converted. In that same century the puritanical Almoravid
movement made its appearance among the Berber tribes of southern Mauritania. Although the Aimoravides directed their most important evangelistic efforts to the north, they left a strongly Muslim imprint on the area and Mauritanian marabouts introduced Islam to many areas south of the Senegal River. The Mali Empire, which was established in the thirteenth century and which controlled the River Gambia, also played a major role in Islamization, especially among the Mandinkas. The Islamization of the Wolof, the largest ethnic group in Senegal, was the work of Arab and Moor proselytes, warriors, and merchants who came from the north by way of the western Sahara during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

When the Portuguese arrived in the fifteenth century there were marabouts attached to most of the courts in Senegambia. These marabouts (serin lamb) prayed for the chiefs and handled correspondence since they could read and write Arabic. As a reward for their services they received land and were permitted to found villages. By the end of the seventeenth century these villages had been significantly Islamized.

It is Berber North African Islam (Islam of Sufi brotherhoods, maraboutic Islam) which was preached as the Koranic message to the Black African populations from the eighteenth century on. The Almoravides, though their movement was dynamic, preached a pure Islam and they never succeeded in converting the Senegalese masses. But Berber and Toucouleur (Senegalese) marabouts trained in the Sufi tradition accomplished what the puritans could not do. They successfully Africanized the Islamic priesthood and made it popular among the
illiterate masses. A key factor to note here is that, even before Berber marabouts brought Islam to West Africa, religious priesthoods were not unknown:

It is a widespread feeling among many African peoples that man should not, or cannot approach God alone or directly, but that he must do so through the mediation of special persons or other beings... Priests are reported in many societies. As a rule, they are formally trained and commissioned (ordained), they may be male or female, hereditary or otherwise. Their duties include making sacrifices, offerings and prayers, conducting both public and private rites and ceremonies, giving advice, performing judicial or political functions, caring for the temples and shrines where these exist, and above all fulfilling their office as religious intermediaries between men and God.

The concept of the mediary was not new. Native marabouts were aware of this fact and used it to their advantage to preach the new Muslim message. Islam in contemporary Senegal is brotherhood or Sufi Islam which was derived from the teachings of Sufi marabouts who evangelized in the area after the puritanical Almoravids. Sufi doctrines brought about the Africanization of the Muslim faith.

The Evolution of Sufism

When Islam was first introduced in Barbary, its formal rituals and mysticism (tasawwuf or sufism) were understood and practiced almost exclusively by an urban elite. Beginning in the thirteenth century, rural religious lodges began to complement those already existing in urban areas. Each religious lodge or zawya was directed by a sufi master called a cheikh. Each cheikh had an entourage of disciples known as foqra (sing. fqr), a term defined in sufi texts as "those who have abandoned everything in quest of God." The foqra
of each religious lodge were materially sustained by gifts and contributions made by the inhabitants of the surrounding regions.\textsuperscript{6}

Originally Sufism\textsuperscript{7} had no relationship to the idea of the mediary. The first Sufis were mostly concerned with achieving a state of union with Allah. With this goal in mind they developed a series of ascetic practices that each mystic had to execute in order to attain the desired state of moral purity and spirituality. There was strong emphasis placed on the moral and physical discipline of the individual as well as on mystical theology and ritual. Sufi mystics were influenced by foreign sources as diverse as the early Christian monastics, Hindu philosophy, Berber animism, and the Plotinian theory of ascension toward the Divine by the "emptying of the soul."\textsuperscript{8}

Later, however, mystical theology and ritual took precedence and ascetic discipline was de-emphasized. Among the Sufis, loose and voluntary associations of pious men often evolved around a teacher known for his piety and ability to perform miracles. Such teachers acquired disciples who sought initiation into the master's tariqa (voie in French) or way. A mystic would start off as a hermit and then his baraka would make him famous:


It appears that it was the people who urged the marabout to become more and more involved in affairs which were previously the domain
of traditional leaders. They prayed for rain, good harvests, and healthy herds; they cared for the sick, taught the Koran to the children, and intervened in all matters concerning the welfare of the community. Once his reputation was established, the marabout earned status in the brotherhood by way of marriage and position.

In Senegal marabouts have played a key role in education. The daara or Koranic school, headed by a Senegalese cheikh, resembles the zawya. Senegalese brotherhoods (in particular the Mourides which will be discussed later) are organized on the master-disciple principle. Disciples are required not only to learn from their masters but also to obey them. The ascetic Sufi mystic is thus responsible for the notion of the spiritual master or cheikh. He also organizes brotherhoods or Muslim orders whose fundamental rule is absolute obedience to a "saintly" man.

Often after complete initiation a disciple went forth to found a new community and to spread the master's teachings. Networks of religious communities developed, often extending from one end of the Islamic world to the other. In certain areas, alms permitted the sufis to form monastic organizations, freeing masters and their disciples from the necessity of working to earn a living and leaving them free to devote themselves to pious exercises and meditation. The tariqas were especially important to Berber North Africa:

Until the end of the 19th century, maraboutism was virtually without contest the prevailing form of rural and urban Islam throughout North Africa. The complex of beliefs surrounding marabouts was, and for many continues to be, a central and integral element in a coherent vision, both of realities of the social world and of man's relation to the supernatural.
Sufism, which began with the notion of mysticism and individual religious devotion to God, evolved into hierarchical associations based on the cult of the saints.

The Cult of the Saints

The cult of the saints in Islam is a concept that originated with the idea of descent from the Prophet Mohamed: "Les Chérifs ou descendants du Prophète de l'Islam sont ceux dont la baraka est la plus active." The more successful marabouts in Barbary claimed descent from the Prophet. Many tribes changed their names to indicate such descent. The descendants were called shorfa (pl.) or sharif (sing.) and their baraka was considered superior to that of other marabouts.

Saint worship also carried over into the Islamization of the Wolof. Cheikh Amadou Bamba and El Hadj Malik Sy, two of the most famous Senegalese mystics, were both believed to possess baraka and even today they are regarded as saints by their people. Cheikh Amadou Bamba is entombed in the great mosque of Touba. Many Mourides and other Muslims make pilgrimages to Touba to offer their prayers and petitions to him. The descendants of Bamba, Sy, and other well-known marabouts are believed to have inherited the baraka of their fathers.

The notion of saint worship implies that God has chosen certain men to govern His kingdom on earth and that there is a hierarchy of relations between God and men. In this hierarchy, marabouts such as Bamba and Sy would be closest to God and the simple disciple, who had
little knowledge of the Koran and who did not hold a position in the brotherhood, would be the furthest from God.

From Sufism to Maraboutism

During the early years of Sufism, orthodox Muslims disapproved of the Sufi because they viewed the relaxation of Muslim law and tradition, which Sufism seemed to condone, as a threat to the pure faith. As the mystical doctrines became more widely known, opposition began to slacken. By the end of the tenth century, orthodox theologians began to tolerate the Sufis, although the enmity between the two factions continued. By the twelfth century, Sufism had become so popular that its mystical concepts were incorporated into the orthodox Islamic doctrines.

Eventually Sufi brotherhoods appealed directly to the average uneducated man by accepting an emotional response to Islam on the part of the believer as proof of conversion and by adding flexibility to the strictness of Islamic rules. Not only did mystical orders popularize Muslim traditions by making them understandable to almost everyone, they tolerated pre-Islamic beliefs and practices, insofar as such beliefs and practices did not conflict directly with the ultimate goal of union with Allah. It is true that the changes permitted by Sufism vulgarized and distorted orthodox teachings, but they also enabled Islam to appeal to the lower classes. It did this by adapting the religious belief to their cultural peculiarities and by developing a terminology and symbolism to which they could relate, even though
they, for the most part, were illiterate, whereas Islam is a religion of the Book.

Early Sufis emphasized the importance of individual effort to reach union with Allah. In later stages Sufism placed emphasis on the ability of the leader of a brotherhood to act as an intermediary between God and man, stressing the idea that most men were incapable of achieving this union by themselves. It became characteristic for the disciples to obey unquestioningly the commands of their sheikhs, not only in religious matters but in secular concerns as well.

In Islam, Sociétés Africaines et Cultures Industrielles, Senegalese sociologist Mamadou Dia addresses the conflict between the original vocation of the brotherhoods and some of their current activities:

 Créées pour répandre la foi, développer la spiritualité et l'entraide musulmane par le rapprochement des riches et des pauvres avec des couvents fortifiés ou 'ribat' ses veilleurs fidèles ou 'morabi' [marabouts]... oubliant leur vocation glissèrent vers le "maraboutisme," mélange astucieux de spirituel et de temporel, de croyances religieuses et populaires fondé sur l'exaltation de la personnalité 'hors série' et de ses œuvres d'intercesseur.

Brotherhoods were created to teach, defend, and diffuse the Muslim faith. They were to develop spiritual values in their followers and to teach them to help one another without regard for economic status. However, the brotherhoods gradually began to forget their original commission and began to practice "maraboutism." Maraboutism implies that the spiritual guide mixes spiritual and worldly matters. As the marabout's responsibilities increased from religious leader to counselor, doctor, economic leader, and political representative, the
spiritual aspect of his vocation became secondary to his secular role.

Marabouts Replace the Chiefs and Magicians

In the era of the first conversions, the Wolof were infiltrated by Berber and Toucouleur marabouts who gained positions of respect. They began to assume the tasks usually performed by Wolof magicians. These included officiating at coronation ceremonies and at celebrations associated with the rites of passage. Among the Wolof the tyeddol4 (also spelled ceddol) was the group that most strongly resisted Islamization. Also, the bulk of the population held on to traditional pagan beliefs, mixed these beliefs with Islam, and freely purchased talismans from the marabouts. Consequently, Islamic prayers and rituals were added to traditional practices. Gradually the marabout also took over many of the roles once filled by the chief. During the colonial period, the French even facilitated this process, for they transformed the chief into a bureaucrat, a secular official, and deprived him of any official religious function; only in a few areas like the Sine15 did he continue to play his traditional role. Thus, the marabout assumed many of the social and religious functions formerly reserved to the chief. The marabout prayed for rain, performed ceremonies associated with death and marriage, and became the source of law.

Not only colonization, but war, famine, epidemics, and other disasters upset traditional society and contributed to the decline of the traditional leader, the chief. The marabout, one of the people,
took advantage of this phenomenon to adapt Islam to the cultural style and traditional beliefs of the masses:

... l'attitude des marabouts qui avait fait preuve de grande souplesse en s'adaptant au contexte socio-culturel de cette époque dominée par les croyances traditionnelles, avec le culte des ancêtres protecteurs (tuur) et les pratiques magiques pour se préserver des dangers de toutes sortes et réaliser ses vœux. Les marabouts avaient su répondre à l'attente des chefs du peuple--épidémies, épidémies, et la violence des hommes: guerres, pillages, razzios--en jouant un rôle comparable à celui des magiciens traditionnels (sorciers, guérisseurs, devins), notamment en confectionant des amulettes (gris-gris) servant de rémèdes à tous les maux, protégeant de tous les risques et rendant l'accomplissement de tous les vœux.

Thus, as a result of his ability to replace the traditional religious leader, especially in the making of amulets and gris-gris to protect people from danger and risk, to ward off evil, and to bring about the realization of desires, the marabout became sacred and news of his baraka spread even among non-Muslims. His reputation accorded him certain economic and social benefits. Many marabouts also understood that the best way to spread Islam was to link religious reform to political reform by showing that the tyranny of traditional leaders could be explained by their infidelity to divine precepts. This practice resulted, of course, in enhancing their own positions as well.

To secure the benefits of access to the supernatural, the clients of marabouts formed ties of obligation to them that operated according to the same underlying principles that governed all other ties in society. Relations between men usually involve some compensation for services rendered and belief in maraboutism postulates that relations between men and the supernatural operate in nearly the same way as do relations between men. Access to God is not free.
Disciples demonstrated their devotion to their leaders by making material contributions to their welfare. As a result, the brotherhoods, especially the leaders of the organizations, prospered.

**Structure of the Brotherhhoods**

Most West African Muslims have been affiliated with one of the major tariqas through their ties with a local marabout. The mass of followers in Senegal are known as taalibe or talibé, which means student or disciple. The believer is the talibé of his marabout, just as the marabout is the talibé of his teacher. The chain of initiation that ties the individual marabout to one of the more famous religious leaders is an important source of prestige. Membership in a tariqa requires accepting the guidance of the marabout, using a distinctive set of prayer beads, and participating in special religious exercises. The average member of a brotherhood, a brother at the lowest level, is initiated into the order by learning the dhikr or the special prayers and exercises prescribed by the founder. Only the select few could go beyond this through the various stages of progression of the soul to achieve ma'rifat or knowledge of God. The mass of lay followers and brothers were not even aware of the stages of mystical progress. As a result, marabouts and other disciples who had penetrated more deeply into the voie or way were considered by the less educated members as having greater access to the realm of the spiritual.

The highest leader of a branch of a brotherhood in Senegal is called the khalife or grand marabout. The word khalife is also
used to denote the head of each maraboutic family, and this practice can lead to a certain confusion for outsiders. Leadership supposedly is assumed by the most educated and devout individuals in the group. In actuality leadership positions are usually hereditary, and certain families have come to dominate the orders.

The Tidjaniyya: Omar Tall and Malik Sy

The brotherhood with the largest following in Senegal is the Tidjaniyya. It was founded by Sharif Ahmad ibn Muhammad al-Tijani (1935-1815) in Morocco in 1781 and was introduced into West Africa in the early nineteenth century by a Mauritanian cleric, Mohamed al-Hajes. Tidjaniem propagates a democratic conception of Islam; it is known for its relatively uncomplicated prayers, litanies, and exercises, the simplicity of which facilitated the understanding of its teachings and practices by uneducated followers. It imposes fewer obligations on the believer, although at the same time it is more puritanical, as in its prohibition of tobacco. Though not all branches of the Tidjaniyya were involved in the resistance to French expansion in Senegal, France's most vigorous opponents were almost all Tidjani, and many early French administrators feared the charisma of Tidjani marabouts, who were able to arouse their followers to resistance. Among those most responsible for the extension of tidjanism in Senegal were El Hadj Omar Tall and later El Hadj Malik Sy.

The son of a marabout, El Hadj Omar Tall was born in the Fouta Toro in 1797. He was a member of the torodbe, the Toucouleur society's Muslim aristocracy or clerical class which had overthrown the
denianke rulers of the Fouta in 1776 and created a theocratic state. (The denianke were members of a dynasty that had ruled the Fouta since the sixteenth century.) In the 1820s Omar made the pilgrimage to Mecca (a rare journey from the Western Sudan), and while he was in Arabia, he was initiated into the Tidjaniyya and appointed Khalife for the Western Sudan. After returning, Omar lived at or visited most of the major Muslim courts of West Africa—Kanem, Sokoto, Macina, and Fouta Djallon. Within a short time, the Tidjaniyya replaced the Xadiriyya as the dominant tariqa in both Foutas. Omar established a religious center at Dinguiraye, in the foothills of the Fouta Djallon, and from there he began his religious crusade in 1852. His desire was to create an Islamic empire that would restore the unity that the Western Sudan had had in the time of the Mali Empire, and he organized a volunteer army for this purpose. However, the rulers of the Fouta opposed him, and his failure to take Medina from the French in 1857 doomed his attempt to conquer the region where he was born. At the same time that French imperialism was becoming a powerful force in the area, the Tidjani phase of the Islamic revolution was beginning to emerge. El Hadj Omar's efforts were continued by another marabout, Ma Bâ Diakhou, and after several battles, he too was defeated by the French.

Born in 1855, El Hadj Malik Sy was largely responsible for spreading tidjanism among the Wolof. The Sy clan is of Toucouleur origin, but after several generations in the land of the Wolof, they now consider themselves as Wolof. The Malikiyya branch of the Tidjaniyya differed from the more militant and military Omariyya
branch in its more favorable attitude toward the French. El Hadj Malik was known to preach obedience to the French:

Adhérez pleinement au Gouvernement français. Dieu (qu'il soit béni et exalté!) a accordé tout particulièrement aux Français la victoire, la grâce et la faveur. Il les a choisis pour protéger nos personnes et nos biens. C'est pourquoi il nous faut vivre en parfaits rapports avec eux. Qu'ils n'entendent rien sur notre compte qui ne puisse les réjouir.

He told his followers that it was God who had shown his favor and grace to the French by giving them the victory. According to him, God chose the French to protect the Senegalese people and their property from tribal and civil wars. They, in turn, should learn to live in perfect harmony with the colonizers and not give them any trouble.

In his time El Hadj Malik was considered to be the most educated marabout in Senegal. Although he could have used his influence and power to exploit the people and enrich himself (the path chosen by many marabouts), he chose instead to dedicate himself to scholarship (he is the author of numerous theological works), missionary efforts, and discipleship.

The Mouridiyya: Cheikh Amadou Bamba

The second largest brotherhood in Senegal is the Mouridiyya, a Senegalese and largely Wolof phenomenon, a breakaway from the Xadiriyya. It was founded by Amadou Bamba Mbacké (ca. 1857-1927), also known as Serigne Touba, a pious Muslim, a scholar in the Sufi tradition, peace loving and ascetic, a man whose life was devoted to the improvement of his own religious knowledge and (at a much lower level) that of his followers. The Mouridiyya had its greatest success
with the ceddo and the peasants of the regions of Cayor and Baol, in particular those who had earlier resisted Islam.

Mouridism is characterized by a general militancy, by the importance of the marabout as an intermediary between God and the believer, and by a belief in the value of work; as Amadou Bamba himself declared, "le travail fait partie de la religion." He also strongly endorsed the sanctity of the marabout by encouraging the new convert to submit himself to "the necessary guidance of a cheikh like a corpse in the hands of the washer of the dead." The innovational force of the Mourides derives from the Mouride marabout's attitude toward work and discipline, rather than any emphasis on prayers and litanies.

Amadou Bamba's most famous disciple, Cheikh Ibra Fall, would neither fast nor pray, but he did display an exuberant devotion to hard physical labor on Amadou Bamba's behalf. Mouride disciples were organized into hard-working production units and became some of the largest producers of peanuts in Senegal. As a result, the Mourides have a strong economic and political base.

Amadou Bamba's brotherhood was feared by the French from the outset since Bamba's father had been a counselor and teacher to Ma Bâ and had married Lat Dior's sister (Lat Dior led the last major resistance to the French in Cayor). The order attracted numerous followers of Lat Dior, Ma Bâ, and other resistance leaders. The French watched Bamba carefully throughout his career, and on two occasions when rumors circulated that Bamba had plans to overthrow the French, they deported him. When they finally permitted him to return to Senegal, they denied him permission to settle in Touba, his chosen religious
center. Instead, he had to remain in Diourbel, the nearby administrative center, until his death in 1927. His periods in exile added to his reputation and drew a large following from among those who felt alienated from the French.

Supernatural Powers of Marabouts

A marabout can hold powers that few, if any, religious leaders in the West enjoy. According to Cheikh Amadou Bamba, the charisma of the saint or wali is equivalent to the miracle power of the Prophet because the saint is the Prophet's heir: "L'équivalent du miracle (mu'jiza) du Prophète passe dans le charisme (karama) du saint ou wali, car celui-ci est l'héritier de celui-là." 22 It is important to note, however, that neither of these two terms (mu'jiza and karama) can be found in the Koran. Still, some marabouts are commonly believed to have certain magical abilities that make them superhuman. Saint Naser ad-Dia, chief of a Mauritanian maraboutic tribe at the end of the seventeenth century, was said to be gifted with double vision and to be able to predict the future and the deaths of certain people; he was particularly well-known for his practice of mind reading. It was believed that nineteenth-century Moroccan marabouts could become invisible, walk on water, heal the sick, resurrect the dead, and remain invulnerable to bullets. Beliefs about the supernatural power of certain marabouts continued into the twentieth century and live on in contemporary society.

There are many popular legends about the life of Cheikh Amadou Bamba. 23 When the French had him cast into a den with a ferocious
lion, Amadou Bamba is said to have tamed the animal and survived without harm. He is also believed to have produced the springing of pure water in dry places; he is also said to have walked on water, traveled through the airways from Gabon back to Senegal, and performed countless other miraculous feats. Most people, including government officials, believe in the powerful magic of certain men. El Hadj Ibrahima Niass, grand marabout of the Tidjaniyya in Kaolack, was believed to talk to the trees, to call out devils to attack his enemies, and to readily communicate with God. Political leaders feared him. Stories about magical feats of the marabouts add considerably to their stature and sometimes influence government officials in their relations with the brotherhoods. As a result, marabouts, because of their claims to superhuman powers, are able to extort extra privileges and compromises from secular leaders. Another important aspect of this phenomenon is that the people will seek out certain marabouts who have reputations as miracle workers in hopes that these marabouts will intervene to work magic on their behalf.

Brotherhoods and the French Colonizers

The history of Sufism and the development of the brotherhoods as tightly disciplined groups help explain the brotherhoods' current political power and the strength of maraboutism in contemporary Senegal. The rise to power of the tariqas can be understood by analyzing the political, social, and economic condition at the time they emerged as leaders. Among the Wolof and the Toucouleur the significant point seems to be the role the orders filled as revitalization movements
during colonization. All dissatisfied elements (warriors and nobles as well as poor freemen and former slaves) turned to the brotherhoods to find a new life.

Propagated by marabouts who were also national heroes among the Senegalese, Islam served as a force to unify the people and to help them resist cultural assimilation. The French launched a program to end the marabouts' role as temporal leaders, to control their schools, and to prevent them from collecting alms from followers. They failed on all counts. There were not enough French administrators to fill all the temporal functions carried out by the religious leaders. Also the European leaders tended to feel superior to the Senegalese, and the latter in turn viewed the French toubabs (Whites) as alien to their way of life. In the pattern of relations between the French and the marabouts, the marabout had the advantage of being the natural leader.

However, by cooperating with the colonizers, some brotherhoods, at the same time, assisted them in subduing the Senegalese people. This was especially true after the defeat and deaths of the marabout warriors like Omar Tall and Ma Bâ, and the ruler Lat Dior Diop. If the maraboutic predication proclaimed the merits of Islam by preaching the Koran and exalting the Most High, it also praised the benefits of colonialism, preached unconditional submission to colonial authority, and in some cases exalted the system's power and grandeur. When Senegal gained its independence in 1920, brotherhoods continued to be significant political forces in national politics. Politicians knew that the people looked to the marabout for leadership. For this
reason, they realized that they needed to gain maraboutic support, if they hoped to be successful in bringing about any type of political reform. Even Senghor, Senegal's first president and a Catholic,\textsuperscript{25} recognized the extreme importance of the grand marabout's influence in society. Meetings with Muslim leaders to gain their support was a significant part of his agenda. Likewise, the marabouts also made their wants and wishes known, whether for the benefit of their followers or for their own personal gain.

This brief summary of the role of maraboutism in Senegalese history affirms that the marabout has been a strong presence in that country for centuries. Senegal is a Muslim nation largely due to the missionary and evangelistic efforts of marabouts. In contemporary Senegalese society, whether or not people are Muslim, maraboutism necessarily affects them in some way. Because Islam is an important force in the daily lives of the Senegalese and because the novel tends to reflect the society from which it springs, it is not surprising that Islamic practices, including maraboutism, play a significant role in the novels by Senegalese writers. Novelists will employ fictional portrayals of marabouts to comment upon the relationship between maraboutism and various social issues such as education, the religious attitudes of individual protagonists and the collective group, marriage and the family, and the political sphere. Writers also analyze the religious tendencies of the marabout characters themselves by examining their personal adherence to the religion Islam and their dual role as Muslim and traditional religious leaders who facilitate
in maraboutic intervention known as maraboutage. The themes of maraboutism and maraboutage are prevalent throughout the history of the Senegalese novel reflecting the nation's social and historical realities
CHAPTER II
MARABOUTISM IN THE HISTORY OF
SENEGALESE FICTION

An historical survey of Senegalese novels between 1920 and 1983 reveals that nearly all the novelists of this period have accorded at least some significance to the theme of maraboutism. Because these novels tend to be realistic, they coincide in general terms with the social image provided by Senegalese sociologists and historians. Rather than falsifying reality, the Senegalese novel completes the picture they have drawn, for it conveys a sense of the Senegalese consciousness that has its origin in day-to-day reality. Senegalese writers obtain the material for their novels from the experience of daily life and the marabout is a part of this experience. For this reason, we might say that the Senegalese novels have documentary value as socio-historical chronicles. However, to comprehend the role played by the marabout in these works of fiction, we need to place them in their literary historical context and to distinguish the differences that exist among them and their respective attitudes toward Islam.

There is a deep preoccupation on the part of Senegalese novelists, most of whom are Muslim, with the way in which Islam has affected all aspects of their daily existence. They are particularly
concerned about maraboutism, maraboutage (or maraboutic practices involving animism), and the marabout's strong influence in Senegalese society. In the novel much of the commentary on religion is critical. However, criticizing the marabout does not mean that one is finding fault with the basic tenets of Islam as a philosophy of life. The fundamental aspects of the Islamic faith (Allah, the Prophet Mohamed, the Koran) are never called into question. Nevertheless, the writers do address certain social consequences of the impact of Islam in Senegal, and the existence of the marabout is one of these consequences.

Maraboutism provokes various reactions among Senegalese novelists, and these reactions are conditioned by three factors: (1) the era in which the writer began his work (pre-independence or post-independence, pre-Negritude); (2) the novelist's attitude toward colonization and assimilation; and (3) the writer's attitude toward Islam as a strong social agent in the society.

The earliest novels in our study are the works of writers who were "assimilated"—writers who had adopted French standards of taste and value as their own. There are hints in these works that the authors recognize or respect a "double standard." For example, Amadou Mapâté Diagne (Les Trois Volontés de Malic, 1920) and Bakary Diallo (Force Bonté, 1926) both portray all whites as being good and humanitarian. In contrast, they infer that black people are savages who need the white man's constant guidance. According to these writers, colonization was positive in the sense that it supposedly brought an end to inter-ethnic conflict and saved Senegal from self-destruction.
Diagne's *Les Trois Volontés de Malic* was the first Senegalese novel; in fact, it was the first African novel to be published in French. The author wrote the book as a school reader for African pupils. In it, he tells the story of Malic, a young African boy who realizes three personal desires or wishes: to attend the French school in his village, to attend the French high school in the city, and to attend vocational school so that he might become a blacksmith in defiance of the caste system which defines him as the member of a superior group. Even though the title suggests a fairy-tale atmosphere, the story is devoid of fantasy elements and tends to remain on a strictly didactic level. The purpose of the novel is to sing the praises of the French educational system. Diagne himself was a Muslim, and the story in no way exhibits a disrespect for Islam. Yet the credibility of the marabout and the validity of the Koranic school are called into question. Other African traditions are devalued, while Faidherbe's relations with the Senegalese and the defeat of Lat Dior the Damel (king) of Cayor, are glorified.¹ It is perhaps ironic that the Negritude movement would be born from the generation of pupils for whom Diagne wrote *Les Trois Volontés de Malic*. In contrast to their predecessors, however, the Negritude writers and their disciples took pride in African culture and civilization.²

Although he was not a product of the French school system, Bakary Diallo wrote the first autobiographical novel in French West Africa. This novel, *Force Bonté*, was the forerunner in a long line of autobiographical novels from Senegal and other parts of West Africa. After providing an account of Diallo's frustration with his life as a
herdsman (the principal occupation of his tribe, the Peul) in his native village, it tells of his subsequent induction into the French army, where he learns to love the French people. Diallo learned the French language while he was in the military, and he wrote his novel while he was convalescing after having been wounded during the war. No matter how he is treated, he continues to believe in the goodness of man, especially the white man. A devout Muslim, he prays for the white man. There is certainly no irreverence toward Islam in Force Bonté, but there is an account of a maraboutic consultation, and Diallo discusses the power of gris-gris in Senegalese society. Before leaving his native land to begin his tour of duty as a combat soldier, he goes to the marabout to obtain some gris-gris (amulets) that will protect him from illnesses and wounds. The narrating Diallo never criticizes the marabout, but later in the story when Diallo is severely wounded, he does imply that the marabout's efforts were powerless and that such traditional religious beliefs are primitive.

The early pre-independence novelists Diagne and Diallo accepted the white man's version of the truth and did not contest the colonization process. Although not irreverent toward the Muslim religion, they tended to consider their own culture as inferior to that of the white man; as a result, they were not particularly sensitive to the problem of maraboutism. And since they did not adopt the realistic techniques of later West African writers, their works do not even seem to contain an implicit criticism of the existing colonial situation. On the contrary, their novels were written specifically to please a French reading public, and they themselves appear to have divorced themselves
from their people. For this reason, they were generally criticized and regarded as heretics by representatives from the later Negritude generation of writers.

Other early writers (those who wrote their novels prior to independence in 1960 but may have published them afterwards) were often acculturated without having been assimilated, for they still felt a strong attachment to their own people. These novelists were aware of the abuses of the colonial system, but they often remained pragmatic in their approach to it. Because these writers, whose works appeared between 1936 and 1965, treat the African setting in a realistic fashion, their works tend to achieve a compromise solution that allows them to please a French reading public while authenticating the African personality.

European writers had created false images of African society and Senegalese writers wanted to correct these false images, for they knew that white observers could not understand the more profound aspects of African traditions and the spirit of Black civilizations. They themselves, however, knew these traditions from the inside and wanted to present a more accurate image of them. In their fictional works, they thus sought to depict an authentically African culture and to defend it against the denigration of white writers who had described it from the outside. Their primary instrument in seeking to achieve this goal was a form of what has sometimes been called "social realism." Carey Sembène once justified the use of this term in the following manner: "... social because it is socially redemptive and reflects the society; realism because although the creative process
is nourished by the imagination, it frequently draws on the real. It is not a gratuitous realism, for the African novelist generally desires his work to function as a mirror of society and thereby correct the often false images of Africa propagated in a distorted and fragmentary fashion by the colonial novel.

In Karim (1948), for example, Ousmane Socé seeks to give a complete and objective portrait of Senegalese life. He carefully identifies the social structures, the traditions, the customary beliefs, the courtship practices, the dominant form of politeness, the nature of family relations, the various types of celebrations, and the religious usages of the Islamic and Catholic communities in the country. Socé and writers like him employed detailed descriptions to satisfy their propensity for social realism and their desire to write for Black people, while at the same time providing the exotism demanded by the French reading public. In this way, such writers often defended the theories of the Negritude movement. Socé in particular highlighted themes that are still evident in the most recent Senegalese fiction: the outdatedness of some traditional customs, and the problems of inter-caste and inter-faith marriages. However, as a product of the French educational system, Socé makes no overt criticism of the colonizer. In contrast, the Islamic religion figures significantly in Karim. The hero of the novel, Karim, consults a marabout to assist him in his quest to win the hand of Marième, the girl of his choice. The marabout is not criticized, and although he remains a minor character, his role is important to the dénouement of the story. Socé's other novel, Mirages de Paris (1964), deals
with the dilemma of a young Senegalese student in Paris who embraces French culture and marries a white woman; it contains only a nominal reference to a marabout. This novel is relevant to our study, however, in the sense that when Socé describes the childhood of its hero Fara, he alludes to the religious formation that the boy received in a Koranic school under the tutelage of a marabout.

Abdoulaye Sadji, the author of Nini, mûlâtresse du Sénégal (1954) and Maîmouna petite fille noire (1958), was a devout Muslim brought up in the Islamic faith from his earliest childhood. He also began writing after the birth of the Negritude movement during the colonial period. According to the critic A. C. Brench, Sadji was a prisoner of indecision, because he believed in the African's struggle for independence yet was never able to free himself from the "colonialist mentality." In Brench's eyes, Sadji tried to resolve the difficulties he encountered in life by creating distinctly separate categories of good and evil, and then molding his characters to fit into one or the other of these two categories. Brench attributes the literary shortcomings in Sadji's novels to the author's personal moral prejudices which demand an unquestioning acceptance of traditional conventions and beliefs.

Despite such criticisms of Sadji's literary qualities, one is obliged to recognize that he was avant-garde in his interpretation of some problems in his society, for he clearly depicted the dilemma of the mulatto or half-breed, the evolution of the Senegalese bourgeoisie, and the abuses of religion. In this sense, he was the
first Senegalese novelist to devote considerable attention to the topic of maraboutism.

In Nini, mulâtresse du Sénégal, the theme of maraboutism is linked to the question of the mulatto's Africanity. Old Hélène, the grandmother of the protagonist Nini, temporarily renounces her orthodox and true Christianity to undergo an interview with a Mandingo marabout. She requests the marabout to provide supernatural support in arranging the marriage of her granddaughter to the white Frenchman who has been coming to see her. Hélène pursues this undertaking to the point where she actually seeks the intercession of spirits. For her, the visit to the marabout is not only a means of obtaining a desired goal. It also becomes a way of attempting to reclaim her cultural heritage. Hélène had previously rejected everything associated with her blackness. Always yearning desperately to be accepted as white, she had to reach old age before a certain "prise de conscience" enables her to understand and to admit that she is African in her own being as well as in the eyes of the white man. The encounter with the marabout represents a recognition of her true religion, the black man's beliefs. Hélène also hopes to regain the favor of the African ancestors whom she has previously denied and who are believed to avenge themselves when they feel they have been wronged.

Marabouts and so-called religious men appear throughout Maïmouna. Like Hélène, the protagonist's mother in this novel seeks out a marabout on her daughter's behalf. In the world of Sadji's novels, as in real life, the marabout exercises a mystical power "qui domine les foules." He provokes fear and his knowledge and expertise are given
prestige above all other forms of wisdom. In the story, old Raki, the root woman, prepares a powder that cures Maimouna from what appears to have been a case of malaria. However, Yaye Daro, the heroine's mother, still feels compelled to consult a marabout. For Yaye Daro and countless others, the advice of the Muslim spiritual guide, and the talismans he fabricates, carry an authority that is nearly infallible. His influence is so intense that his followers believe his every word. Sadji is the first novelist to point out the existence of charlatanism and to link it with the institution of maraboutism.

Although Birago Diop is a storyteller rather than a novelist, his tales have become extremely well known, and because several of them contain depictions or satiric accounts of marabouts, he has been included in the present study. Like the rest of the writers whom we have discussed, Diop was born and brought up in the Islamic faith. His tales, which have some resemblance to La Fontaine's fables, are universal in their appeal, and they tend to ignore the conflicts of the colonial era. Any irreverence toward Islam on the part of Diop is mild in the sense that his object is not to criticize the religion or the marabout but to poke fun at the characteristic foibles of the human condition. Diop's satirical tales about the marabout temporarily rob the character of certain aspects of sanctity, reduce him to the level of an ordinary mortal person, and allows readers to laugh at the marabout's weaknesses and empathize with his strengths. Actually Diop describes a great variety of marabout personalities in his tales. In "L'Ose" Serigne-le-Marabout is pious but dynamic.
Madiakhâte-Kala, the fervent marabout in "Jugement," and Mor-Coki Diop, the learned marabout in "Dof-Diop," are both wise men. However, Serigne Fall in "Le Prétexte" is a glutton and a hypocrite, although he is also vibrant and alive. Serigne Khali is the trickster who out-wits a thief in "Serigne Khali et le voleur" and at the beginning of the tale "La Biche et les Deux Chasseurs" the storyteller tells about a marabout who journeys to visit his disciples in another country but nearly starves to death on account of miscommunications that result from language differences. 10 All of these portrayals, though comical, stress the basic humanity of the marabout; he is not a god but a man.

Cheikh Hamidou Kane's *L'Aventure ambiguë* (1961) is a classic example of French West African fiction. One of the few pre-independence writers who commanded the respect of Western critics, Kane was raised from birth in a strict Islamic community like the one he depicts in his novel. Similar to other "romans de formation" like Camara Laye's *L'Enfant noir* (1953) and Bernard Dadié's *Climbié* (1956), *L'Aventure ambiguë* is semi-autobiographical. Even though the question of colonial dominance is raised in the text, it is not at the center of Kane's preoccupation. He is far more concerned with the dilemma of a young black intellectual who finds himself torn between his cultural roots and the Western education he received at school. Within the context of this young man's experiences, Kane presents a philosophical argument in which the principles of Islam are represented by the protagonist's spiritual master, Maitre Thierno. These principles are then confronted with the pressures introduced into the boy's world by Western ideology and technology. As a militant defender of Islam,
Kane believes that the Euro-Christian culture is the invader of traditional stability and the catalyst which has produced societal conflict and ambiguity. At no point in the novel is there irreverence toward Islam, as Mbaye Cham points out:

Kane's account of cultural contact and conflict is aborted at the point of the Western incursion into Senegal and it does not go back any further to consider the process by which Diallobe society came to acquire its Islamic character. For Kane, Islam is Diallobe and Diallobe is Islam. He portrays the West and its materialist and individualist credo as the antithesis of Diallobe spiritualism and communalism.

Islamic penetration into Senegal occurred as early as the eleventh century A.D., and its point of entry into the area was the Foûta-Toro, the Senegal River region, which is where the Diallobe people of the novel are located. Diallo is a name from the Peuhl tribe, which along with the Toucouleur constitute a majority of the population in the Foûta.

Much of the region was Islamized by force and at the expense of many traditional religious beliefs and customs. However, for Kane and others from the Foûta, the region has been Islamized for such a long time that Islam is regarded as the religion of the people and a dominant trait of their culture. Also, Islam was introduced to the Foûta-Toro by Mauritanian and then Toucouleur marabouts, in contrast to Christianity, which was brought to the region by European missionaries, who were strangers to the ways of the people. In L'Aventure ambiguë, maraboutism is not portrayed as a social phenomenon. Thierno is never even called marabout. For Kane, this religious figure
represents a philosophy of life and living, the "straight and narrow" path of Islam which constitutes the base of the Diallobé tradition.

In Karim, Maïmouna, and L'Aventure ambiguë, a prediction by the marabout prefigures the outcome of the story. Samba, the honorable marabout in Karim, predicts that the hero will marry Marième, and the event indeed occurs at the culminating point in the novel. In Maïmouna, Serigne Thierno issues a warning that the heroine should beware of a certain woman who is constantly near her, because that woman's intentions toward her are impure. As the marabout forewarned, Yacine, Maïmouna's governess, engineers the girl's downfall. Maître Thierno's influence on Samba Diallo in L'Aventure ambiguë was such that even after the marabout's death, visions of him and echoes of his teachings continue to control the young man's mental life. Despite his encounter with the West, Samba could never be free of that part of him which constituted his cultural heritage and spiritual stability. His death at the end of the novel not only liberates him from inner conflict; it also reunitis him with his spiritual master.

Ousmane Sembène began writing before independence and has since published numerous works, including Les Derniers de l'Empire, the first two volumes of which appeared in 1983. In addition to his writing, Sembène is also West Africa's most prolific film maker. In some ways, he is in a class by himself, not just because he is a superior writer, but because his background and his philosophy of life differ from those of most of his contemporaries. Sembène is an autodidact, a self-taught man who never attended a French university. On the contrary, he received much of his education on the docks in Marseille,
where he worked for several years while writing his first autobiographical novel, Le Docker noir (1956). Sembène's primary desire was to serve as a witness to the events that took place in society and shaped the lives of individuals entrapped in it. He wanted to record these in the way that the traditional storyteller or griot had done. His technique consisted of remaining close to the perspective of the people and creating a realistic portrayal of life as he had observed it. He himself acknowledges this approach in the preface to his novel L'Harmattan:

Je ne fais pas la théorie du roman africain. Je me souviens pourtant que jadis, dans cette Afrique qui passe pour classique, le griot était non seulement l'élément dynamique de sa tribu, clan, village, mais aussi le témoin patent de chaque évènement. C'est lui qui enregistrerait, déposait devant tous, sous l'arbre du palabre, les faits et gestes de chacun. La conception de mon travail découle de cet enseignement: rester au plus près du réel et du peuple.

Like most of the other novelists in our study, Sembène was raised as a Muslim, but unlike those who limit their criticism of Senegalese Islam to contemporary social problems, he repeatedly points out how the Arab-Islamic culture played an important role in the earlier oppression of his people. Some Islamic scholars regard Sembène as a heretic who is misinformed about Senegal's history; one critic even labeled him an "apostate." Nevertheless, his brand of realism has the virtue of placing many Islamic practices and stereotyped notions in a new light—the light provided by his politically engaged social realism.

Maraboutism figures heavily in several of Sembène's novels and short stories, and one can discern a distinct evolution in his
criticism of the marabout, whom he attacks with increasing severity in his later works. As portrayed by Sembène, the marabout is always corrupt in some way. Islamic religious leaders in his works are invariably pretentious, oppressive, or exploitative. In _O pays mon beau peuple_ (1957), for example, an Islamic religious leader submits his entire family to his unethical behavior. Moussa Faye, the highly respected imam of the local mosque, withholds information about an inheritance from his son so that he may use the income to pay for his pilgrimage to Mecca. His selfish interests even take precedence over the needs of his son. _Les Bouts-de-bois-de-Dieu_ (1960) is based on the actual events of the Dakar-Niger railroad workers' strike in 1947. In this novel, the marabouts, anxious to protect their own privileges and interests, never consider the possibility that the workers' demands for a better life might have some validity. Instead they side with the agents of the colonial regime and aid them in oppressing their own people by preaching submission to colonial authority and a halt to the strike. A collection of short stories centering upon a concern for the humble masses, _Voltaïque_ (1962) also portrays Muslim spiritual guides in a negative light. In one of these stories, "Souleymane," the protagonist neglects his duties as caretaker of the mosque to chase after the young girls and sexually exploit them. In another story, "Mahmoud Fall," the protagonist is a charlatan who pretends to be a renowned marabout and uses his deception to extort money and material goods from the gullible. In the novel _Xala_, Sembène again takes up the themes of spiritual dependency and charlatanry on the part of marabouts and their followers. El Hadji Bèye,
the protagonist, falls victim to a curse of sexual impotency and then spends enormous sums of money to pay charlatan marabouts who prove unable to cure him. Sembène is exceptional also because his works cover the period before and after independence. Post-independence novelists no longer wrote for primarily European audiences, but they did focus their attention on raising the level of consciousness in their own people. At this time novelists began to present different perspectives of maraboutism, and criticism of the marabout became more acute.

One of Senegal's most provocative post-independence novels is Malick Fall's _La Plaie_ (1967). In this work, the protagonist, Magamou Seck, is reduced to the status of a beggar as a result of an accident that left him with an ulcerous leg. His festering wound not only cripples him; it also separates him from the rest of society because of its stench. Fall's main theme in the novel is a universal one: the individual versus the society. From his earliest childhood, Magamou had resisted pressures that pushed most people toward conformity. In fact, his wound serves as a metaphor for nonconformity, and his situation is reminiscent of that of Albert Camus' hero Meursault. Magamou, like Meursault, seeks the meaning for his own existence. He is not content to accept the role that society has defined for him. As a result he dies unable to fulfill his quest for individual freedom. In _La Plaie_ maraboutism is a prominent theme, for Magamou turns to a marabout for deliverance. Fall was probably the first writer to distinguish between the marabout as a spiritual
guide—the traditional medicine man—and the marabout as a diviner. Both kinds of religious figures are called marabouts. However, traditional medicine and divination were practiced in Africa long before the arrival of the Muslim spiritual guide or marabout. Fall seems to imply that the marabout's true role is to pray and teach the Koran and that healing and divination are not his true functions. As in many other Senegalese novels the marabout's actions in La Plaie are crucial to the development of the plot. Magamou had been under the illusion that people rejected him because of his physical condition; however, after the marabout cures him, he remains an outcast. Disillusioned, he comes to understand that individual rejection is not a physical problem, it is a social problem. Society often turns against and even punishes those who refuse to conform to its norms. Magamou's insight is important because it confirms the marabout's prediction that the healing of his ulcerous leg would not solve the problem of his social condition.

Amar Samb's semi-autobiography, Matraqué par le destin ou la vie d'un talibé (1973) is an echo of Kane's L'Aventure ambiguë. An Islamologue and the current director of Institut Fondamental de l'Afrique Noire (IFAN), Samb is more of a historian than a skilled literary craftsman. In this respect, he differs markedly from Kane. Samb is also far more critical than Kane about the way in which Islam is practiced in Sengal, particularly in terms of its role in the religious education of young people. However, Samb himself now attributes his earlier negative attitude toward Islam largely to his own youthful rebellion against the faith. Matraqué par le destin is of great
interest to anyone interested in Senegalese maraboutism because it is filled with factual details about the practice of Islam in Senegal prior to independence, and Samb's commentaries make it possible to distinguish between the various types of religious personnel in the country. In fact, Matraqué par le destin inspired the coining of the terms that will later be used to classify the different marabout characters treated in our study.14

Cheikh Aliou Ndao wrote two novels that are relevant to the present study: Buur Tilleen Roi de la Médina (1972) and Le Marabout de la sécheresse (1979). In both novels, Ndao portrays maraboutism as a societal problem and emphasizes the gullibility of the people who allow marabouts to manipulate and exploit them. There are no "good" marabouts in his narratives. In Buur Tilleen, for example, the marabout is seen through the eyes of female characters like Tante Astou, a strong-willed person who had resisted the marabout even when she was a young child at the Koranic school. The story itself centers around the plight of Astou's niece Raki, who has been educated in the modern way and becomes Ndao's spokesman in criticizing various aspects of maraboutism. Ndao was perhaps the first novelist to emphasize the tension that exists in the West African Muslim who "practices" Islam while continuing to "believe" in traditional African religious practices.

During the post-colonial period and especially after 1974, women novelists began to appear on the literary scene in Senegal. Like their male counterparts, these female writers are no longer preoccupied with the concerns of colonization. On the contrary, they are
primarily interested in addressing the issues that trouble contemporary Senegalese society. However, their presentations of the marabout tend to be generally favorable.

Nafissatou Diallo's autobiographical *De Tilène au Plateau une enfance dakaroise* (1975) is a delightful novel that traces the events in the author's life as she grew from a young girl into a mature woman in the city of Dakar. Islam is strongly present in the story, and Diallo makes it clear that she is a believer in Allah and the Prophet. There is an episode of maraboutic consultation during which the narrator's grandmother intervenes on her behalf. Also the leader of the Tidjane Brotherhood is depicted as a truly religious and compassionate man. Though Diallo makes reference to the existence of charlatans in the society and that people consult them out of ignorance, there is no portrayal of a charlatan. The author seems to respect the marabout and no irreverence is ever shown toward Islam or its leaders in this novel.

In *La Grève des battû* (1979), Aminata Sow Fall, Senegal's most prolific female novelist, also reveals herself as a defender of Islam. There are two significant marabout characters in the novel, and they advise the protagonist Mour Ndiaye to give alms so that he might be named Vice-President of the Republic. However, Mour has been commissioned to rid the city streets of beggars. When he asks the beggars to return to their places, they refuse and call a strike. This incident prevents Mour from following the marabout's instructions, and he eventually loses his bid for the vice-presidency. Sow Fall's objective is not to criticize the marabout but to show the Senegalese
people that the way they practice charity is a defamation of the true Muslim tradition. The marabout should encourage the people to give from the abundance of their hearts and not for the purpose of reaping a personal reward or benefit.

The film scenario for Njangaan, written by Chérif Adrame Seck and published in 1975, is an attack against the tradition of Koranic schools, where, according to the author, the parents abdicate their responsibility for their children and shift it to marabouts. Njangaan, the name of the principal character, means "student" in Wolof and the story of his experiences under the so-called care of a marabout reveals the brutality of the maraboutic educational system; in fact, Njangaan dies as a result of his exposure to this system while his own father looks passively on. The film scenario drew national attention to a serious problem by depicting it in such a way that even non-readers could critically appraise the situation. Koranic school marabouts are often guilty of child abuse.

Kaala-Sikkim (1975) is a collection of short stories by Mbaye Gana Kébé, and it contains satiric portrayals of certain customs and people, in particular the charlatan marabout. For example, in the story "Kaala" (the word means "turban" in Wolof), a pretentious marabout makes impossible promises to gullible clients who are supposed to pay him in advance. In burlesque fashion Gana Kébé uses wit and humor to strip the marabout of his credibility and to expose him as an impostor.

In 1975 the poet and literary critic Lamine Diakhaté published two long stories "Le Madihou de Pikine" and "Prisonnier du regard"
in a book entitled *Prisonnier du regard*. Both stories are based on factual events and real persons. "Le Madihou de Pikine" is a straightforward narrative based upon an actual incident that occurred when a man settled in the large village of Pikine and claimed to be the Mahdi or the Messiah of Islam. He is eventually unmasked as an impostor by several young scholars of the sacred texts. The story itself is a study of the power of charlatanry, and it shows how easily public credulity can be manipulated. Diakhaté tells the story without irony and records the historical facts of this event as a sociological phenomenon, but he clearly indicates that a healthy scepticism is necessary in the face of extravagant claims by marabouts.

The most recently published works in the present study include *Le Baobab fou* (1982) by Ken Bugul, *Au delà de la vertu* (1982) by Mamadou Dia Mbaye, and *Un Trou dans le miroir* (1983) by Ibrahima Sèye. They are the efforts of new young artists who display a remarkable talent for creative writing while manifesting a serious concern for the social consequences of Islam in Senegalese society. All these writers are under the age of forty, and each of them has published only one novel up to the present moment. Bugul, Dia Mbaye, and Sèye have clearly attained a fresh mastery of imagery, symbolism, and interior monologue, but they have also maintained a realistic approach to the portrayal of Senegalese reality. Focusing on the plight of the individual, their novels tend to move away from the theme of collective destiny that was so common in earlier Senegalese fiction.

Ken Bugul's autobiographical novel *Le Baobab fou* centers around a generational conflict which alienates the female protagonist from
her culture and causes her to be victimized by the false myth according to which Western values are supposedly superior to African ones. Maraboutism itself does not play a significant role in the story, but the main character's father is strongly Islamized and represents a type of Muslim mysticism that can only be found among Senegalese marabouts; in fact the father is so absorbed by his quest for the spiritual that he neglects the heroine's need for paternal affection and guidance. As a result she seeks acceptance through a life of immorality in Europe but ends up having to return to her own land to re-affirm her true identity.

Dia Mbaye's Au delà de la vertu is the story of the childhood of a Muslim mystic, Moussa Tine, and his father Modou Tine. It differs from many recent Senegalese novels insofar as the author describes the human side of individuals who truly desire to place their hearts and minds in the service of Islamic virtues. Moussa, the protagonist, matures into a mystic in the Sufi tradition after undergoing a strict religious education under the tutelage of marabouts, especially his own father. All his teachers were dedicated men of God. Au delà de la vertu also highlights the deep mutual love of Moussa and Modou. Islam, the Prophet, and the Koran are reverenced throughout the story, and the novel might well be regarded as an exaltation of the Muslim faith.

Sèye's Un Trou dans le miroir also centers upon the themes that can be found in other recent works of Senegalese fiction: the conflict of generations, caste distinctions, the search for identity, and the problem of religion. In the story, Mamour Diop is a fanatical
Mouride. As his son Doudou's marabout, he submits the young man to a process of emasculation by thwarting all his attempts to assert his manhood and become independent. Mamour's behavior is based in part on the Mouride teaching that a disciple owes complete obedience to his master. Doudou proves incapable of challenging his father's tyrannical authority and, as a result, becomes subject to a state of mental, emotional, and moral disequilibrium. The novel ends tragically when Mamour decides that the only way to help Doudou, who has studied Islam all his life and even attended the university, is to place him in the hands of another Mouride marabout who operates an elementary Koranic school. Using the examples of various marabout figures, Sèye calls into question the abuses of maraboutism and Mouridism as they are practiced in contemporary Senegalese society.

This brief overview of the novels to be treated in the present study reveals that pre-independence novelists tended to be assimilated or acculturated. Maraboutism as a social phenomenon worthy of investigation and criticism was not one of their major concerns. Although the marabout is part of their total picture of Senegalese society, they do not draw particular attention to his place in that society; the outstanding exception to this rule is of course Ousmane Sembène. After 1970 Senegalese novelists began to offer a more critical view of the marabout. No longer under the domination of a colonial situation, these writers feel free to address the most pressing concerns of their own people without worrying about whether or not their writings will please European audiences or the colonial authorities who used certain marabouts as a link to the natives. Most importantly,
their portrayals suggest a new brand of realism. These writers provide social commentary on the nature of maraboutism and analyze its consequences in the daily lives of the Senegalese people. The criticism of maraboutism emerges explicitly in their writings.

As portrayed in the novels maraboutism clearly implies a syncretic form of Islam. In addition, the world views of the authors of these works are themselves syncretic in the sense that they reflect the beliefs of an African elite which has been educated in the French system. As a result, they employ Western literary techniques and genres like the novel, while continuing to think as black men and to write from an identifiably African perspective. Though they may express themselves in the French language, they use it to convey African thoughts. Structurally, the Senegalese novel resembles traditional Western novels. Intrigues and characters are presented in similar ways. Dialogues, interior monologues, flashbacks, and "style indirect libre" can be found in Senegalese novels just as they are found in European novels. However, the Senegalese novel differs significantly from the Western novel in several important respects as Madubuike points out in his thesis, "Le roman sénégalais et le problème de l'assimilation":

Malgré la similitude de forme et de structure ces écrivains restent africains. L'écrivain sénégalais tire de sa tradition et de sa culture des éléments esthétiques qu'il insère dans son récit ... nous retrouvons des éléments du folklore africain, des contes, des proverbes, des chants et des danses ... On peut dire que l'insertion des éléments traditionnels dans les romans, ce syncrétisme littéraire, est une façon d'être authentique, de résister à l'assimilation.
According to Madubuike the Senegalese novel resembles its European counterpart in form and structure only. What he underlines here is a characteristic that modern Africanists call afro-centrism. African literature is afro-centric, in the sense that it reflects a peculiarly African view of the world.

Nearly all the more recent Senegalese writers discussed above do draw elements from their own cultural, traditional, and mythicai universe, and the result is a literary syncretism which enables them to establish authenticity and an unequivocal sense of identity while resisting assimilation and reaffirming their Africanity. For example, in the story "Mahmoud Fall," from the collection Voltaïque, Ousmane Sembène uses proverbs and Wolof folklore, such as beliefs about the cat, to insist upon the dubious character of the marabout. The Wolof regarded the cat as a lazy animal who likes to eat without working; it has no useful function. Villainous marabouts, like Mahmoud Fall, are of no real use to society but they exploit people to meet their material needs. Maitre Thierno, the marabout in Cheikh Hamadou Kane's L'Aventure ambiguë, speaks in images and symbols that are a part of the traditional Peuhl esthetic. For example, in referring to the Diallobé's conflicting desires to retain their traditions and to modernize their society, he compares them to the courge or gourd, which also has a dual nature. Initially the plant grows large and heavy but later it shrinks and becomes light enough to fly away. However, there are positive aspects to both phases of the plant's existence. The marabout Bara Niang is the storyteller who narrates the legendary tales about the life of Cheikh Amadou Bamba in Amar Samb's
Matraqué par le destin, and in Sèye's Un Trou dans le miroir the marabout Gora talks to the spirits and recites chants. He also narrates a tale in the novel to illustrate the Mouride work ethic. The story serves as a "mise en abyme" of the problem the author points out in the novel. In a way similar to the griot, Senegalese writers use traditional elements for didactic purposes, to clarify or emphasize key themes for the reader.

The desire to present accurate descriptions of African traditions causes some of the novelists to adopt simple and summarizing novel structures. This tendency is particularly evident in novels like Karim, Maïmouna, and Matraqué par le destin. The storytelling technique in the Senegalese novel also tends to reflect the traditional griot's manner of presenting the events in a linear manner without any digression. For example, Karim, Maïmouna, and L'Aventure ambiguë all follow the same basic narrative pattern: a thesis or a happy period is presented as a positive value, and it is usually related to the time when the hero is still living in the well-structured world of the village; an antithesis is then articulated or a problematic period is depicted as the protagonist, having left the village, finds himself in a city where he encounters conflicting values and suffers a personal crisis; at the end, a synthesis or period of resolution occurs when the hero returns to his point of departure or source of origin. Other novels like La Plaie and Mirages de Paris adopt a similar narrative sequence, but the anticipated resolution is aborted in the city where the hero dies before returning to the village. Even Ken Bugul's recent Le Baobab fou is organized in the same way as
Socé's, Sadji's, and Kane's novels, for in it the heroine leaves her village, experiences the corrupting influence of the city, and returns to the village, where she regains contact with her origins.

In some novels, especially those written prior to independence, the marabout is a part of the happy period in the protagonist's life. Samba in Socé's Karim, Serigne Thierno in Sadji's Maïmouna, and Maitre Thierno in Kane's L'Aventure ambiguë are all portrayed as honest, simple men of faith who have the protagonist's best interests at heart. The marabout's influence continues even after the hero or heroine has left the village. As stated earlier, the marabout's prediction foreshadows the outcome of Karim, Maïmouna, and L'Aventure ambiguë. However, in some works the initial thesis about the protagonist's life does not reflect a happy period. In these novels, a marabout figure is the source of a character's personal dilemma. Magamou in Fall's La Plaie is unable to forget the hardships of Koranic school and the cruelty of the master. This experience blinds him to anything that might be positive in his native village. In Le Baobab fou, Ken Bugul's childhood was marred by her desire for paternal love from an aged marabout-type father who remained aloof from family concerns. The sense of rejection that she suffers is one of the factors that leads to her downfall.

Not only do Senegalese novelists often use simple narrative structures but, again much like the griot, they have the tendency to intervene in their narratives. Frequently they employ omniscient narrators or protagonists who serve as spokesmen for their points of view. The prevalence of the autobiographical form fosters this
tendency, because it allows the narrator to intervene directly and appeal to the reader's discernment. On the one hand, the resulting narrator-reader relationship bears a certain similarity to the relationship between the oral storyteller and his audience in a traditional African setting. On the other hand, the use of the autobiographical form can be linked with the intrusion of Western individualism in the African consciousness. Many autobiographical narrators, for example, describe their awakening to a new political consciousness and their desire to break with the anonymity of oral literature. The Senegalese critic Mohamadou Kane perceptively discusses the role of autobiography in contemporary African fiction, and he explains the relationship between these two tendencies when he says:

La faveur de l'autobiographie plus ou moins déguisée ne doit pas être expliquée par l'émergence d'une littérature de contestation, même si l'on ne peut que constater la simultanéité des progrès de ce genre et de l'éveil de la conscience politique. Peut-être faut-il garder à l'esprit l'attention progressive des romanciers aux possibilités par l'écriture qui les met à même d'interrompre l'anonymat des littératures orales. On doit de même tenir compte, dans ce contexte de modernisation, des progrès de l'individualisme. Il reste cependant que l'autobiographie, en permettant à l'auteur d'intervenir directement, de prendre le lecteur à témoin, rétablirait les anciens rapports privilégiés, par exemple entre le conteur et son public en milieu traditionnel. Elle n'est cependant pas nécessairement liée au souci de réalisme et de présentation des traditions. Ce dernier aspect, à des degrés divers, se retrouve dans presque tous les romans.

In addition to the explanation given by Kane, the autobiographical form also has the advantage of establishing a level of credibility in regard to the depiction of social realities, because readers tend to accept the veracity of first-person narratives supposedly based upon the experiences of the individual who is telling about them.
For example, the marabouts in many Senegalese novels are not just fictional characters; they are reflections of the types of spiritual guides whom the writers had personally experienced. Because of this fact the resultant narratives seem more credible to the reader.

The Senegalese novel usually evolves around the destiny of a single person who lives an adventure that has a collective significance; whereas in the traditional French novel there is an intersecting of destinies (ex. Emma and Charles in Madame Bovary; Julien and Madame de Renal in Le Rouge et le Noir) or secondary intrigues. It appears that Senegalese novelists intentionally limit secondary intrigues to avoid confusion and to present the subject clearly. For this reason, the characters in their novels tend to have traits that can be easily identified with the group to which they belong or the group which they supposedly represent. This too is an element of the traditional storyteller's technique. Marabouts represent a collective group in this sense, for they are the most visible religious leaders in a predominantly Muslim society. Furthermore, they are constantly under the scrutiny of an educated Senegalese elite. When a novelist describes the attire of marabouts, their place of residence, and their general demeanor, he is likely to have recourse to features that accord with the vivid portrait of the marabout as he is recognized in the public imagination. Such portraits allow readers to reconstruct mentally the kind of real person who must have been in the author's mind when he conceived the fictional character. The result has been the characterization of a marabout stereotype.
The marabouts who appear in the Senegalese novels are bearded men who wear turbans, monks' habits, or traditional white boubous (the color testifies to their moral purity), hooded capes, and shoes made of Moroccan leather; they carry prayer beads, kettles for purifying water, umbrellas (to protect them from the sun), or canes. Frequently they possess holy objects from the Arabic countries. Samb describes a typical marabout in his *Matraqué par le destin*, when he attributes to Ali Guévane:

... une barbe longue et blanche, la tête ceinte d'un turban ou coiffée d'un capuchon, le corps drapé dans une ample robe d'apparat à la Ibn Seoud d'Arabie, les pieds chaussés de souliers semblables à ceux que portent les "Ulémas" marocains ou égyptiens. Il tenait dans sa main droite un gros chapelet et l'autre s'appuyait sur une jolie canne.

Similar attributes recur in nearly all the Senegalese novels that contain portrayals of marabouts. El Hadj Mabigué in Sembène's *Les Bouts-de-bois-de-Dieu* wears a turban and carries an umbrella; Mahmoud Fall in *Voltaire* wears a turban and has a beard; Maître Thierno in Kane's *L'Aventure ambiguë* wears a white turban. In Seck's *Njangaan* Serigne Moussa Drame wears a white robe and a turban, and in Dia Mbaye's *Au delà de la vertu* the impeccable Maître Makhtar has a mustache and a beard which give him a serious, scholarly look, a long robe, a turban, and shoes made in Morocco. Similarly, old Brama Sylla in the same novel sports a well-kept beard and carries a cane.

Senegalese novelists usually draw attention to the peculiarity of the marabout's residence. Rural marabouts usually have a secluded hut on the outskirts of the village. For example, in *Au delà de la vertu* even after Moussa and Modou have descended from a bush taxi,
they must still walk for an hour and a half in the heat to reach the marabout. A similar situation occurs in Njangaan. In contrast, urban marabouts often reside in the midst of densely populated slums. Although they may resemble the rest of the poor people around them, they usually manage to satisfy all their physical needs and desires. In general the marabout's residence serves him as a living room, bedroom, and office. It is here that he receives all his visitors, whatever their status in life may be. Samba in Socé's Karim has such a residence in the slums of Saint-Louis, and Serigne Touré in Diallo's De Tilène au Plateau occupies a similar house in the slums of Dakar.

The evolution of the Senegalese novel indicates that the problem of maraboutism is of great concern to Senegalese writers and that it has been a constant and recurring theme in their works. As writers began to write for African audiences rather than for the European readership that was implicit in the works of pre-independence novelists, they increasingly addressed the concerns of their own people. At this time, the social consequences of the Muslim religion and the phenomenon of maraboutism received greater attention and became the object of more intense scrutiny and criticism. The marabout is a dominant figure in Senegalese society, and his influence clearly extends into other areas of social and political interaction. Thus, novelists concerned with presenting a realistic portrayal of Senegalese society have repeatedly related maraboutism to other important themes. The implied rhetoric of the selected literary texts, most of which are not widely known, depends upon an understanding of
Senegalese society while at the same time the novels enable readers to gain insight into the historical reality of that society.
CHAPTER III
MARABOUTISM AND THE TENETS OF ISLAM

Frequently using material drawn from their own experiences or even adapting episodes from their own lives, many Senegalese novelists describe the personal religious behavior of marabout characters and examine the degree to which such marabouts adhere to the basic tenets of Islam. Like any dedicated Muslim, a marabout should be one who: (1) believes in the shahada, the creed of Islam which states that there is only one God, Allah, and that Mohamed is His Prophet; (2) observes salat, the five daily prayers; (3) honors the sawm or seasonal fast of Ramadan; (4) gives the zakkat or alms to the poor; and (5) has made or desires to make the hajj or pilgrimage to Mecca.

In outward appearance, the marabout character is nearly always a practicing Muslim. However, there are relatively few portraits of sincere marabouts who live according to their convictions. In the novels where the marabout is portrayed as a true man of the faith, the author's intent is usually to mark a distinction between heartfelt commitment on the part of the man of God and most other people's routine practice of the religion. In their relationship to the basic tenets of Islam, marabout characters range from model mystics who are truly "submitted" (Muslim means "submitted one") to what we might call "tenet deviants" or marabouts whom the novelists employ to point out
the hypocrisy of so-called men of God who distort Islamic truth and defame the original purposes of the pillars of the faith.

The Model Mystics

One of the most flawless examples of Islamic virtues is Moussa Tine, the marabout hero of Mamadou Dia Mbaye's *Au delà de la vertu*. Dedicated to God at an early age, Moussa was raised in the virtues of Islam by a father, Modou Tine, who is also a model mystic. Early in the story certain details suggest that Allah had a special call on Moussa's life from the moment of his birth, this in answer to his father's prayer that Moussa be allowed to attain spiritual perfection. That his prayer might be answered is suggested by the fact that Moussa was born on Good Friday, the day when Christ was crucified. It is almost as if God had chosen this holy day to give once again something positive to the world.

Prayer is an integral part of Moussa's life style and he looks forward to these moments of communion with God. However, for him, prayer is not just a series of rituals and motions:

... où que tu sois, sache que la prière ne se résume pas simplement à des récitations liturgiques ou à des genuflexions; car, le menteur qui compte à son actif le plus grand nombre de prières sera toujours plus éloigné de la miséricorde de Dieu que le véridique, quand bien même celui-ci ne fait que le minimum s'agissant du respect de ses obligations religieuses.

Moussa prays in order to have fellowship with his Creator; his greatest desire is that the motives behind his prayers are sincere and therefore acceptable to God. His father had instructed him that the liar who prays frequently will always be further from God's mercy
than the honest man who was slack in fulfilling his religious duties.

When he grows up Moussa's actions are always motivated by his love for divine precepts. The Koranic discipline that he imposes upon himself spiritually spills over into other areas of his life; for example, his room and his clothing are kept clean and arranged in an impeccable order. He is a model student in a secular school, and he passes his exams with honors. But the important point is that Moussa thirsts after God and desires to become one with Allah in the Sufi sense of mystical union. That is his reason for living. A true ascetic, he separates himself from the world:

Il n’aimait guère se soucier, ni dans ses activités, ni même dans ses pensées, des biens de ce monde... Les cérémonies le dérangeaient; le spectacle l’ennuyait; le faste et le superflu l’incommodaient. Toute chose qui ne l’intéressait pas avant tout pour son utilité, le laissait indifférent. Seules, la pensée et l’activité religieuses et morales parvenaient à occuper pleinement sa jeune âme qui, telle une fleur précoce, avait été très tôt ouverte sur le domaine du Sacré et de l’Absolu.

As the above passage makes clear, Moussa is neither interested in the goods of this world nor activities designed simply for human divertissement.

Even as a child Moussa ignored games and did not actively seek the company of other children. That which is spiritual along with what is useful and necessary receive priority in his life. Islam is the source of his joy and ecstasy. When he places his hand upon the Koran, the book that inspires his life, and meditates upon his love for God, Moussa enters into a trance where his entire body seems invaded by the mysterious fire of the divine Word:
Soudain, il ressentit comme une décharge électrique lui paralyser le corps. Un instant après, un fluide étrange le parcourut, faisant se décrisper ses muscles et ses membres. Il eut l'impression que son esprit et sa chair brulait de la chaleur vivante et mystérieuse de la parole divine, par le contact mystique de sa main et du meuble. Moussa était au bord de l'extase. Un bonheur indescriptible le submergeait. Le moment qu'il traversait était sublime. Ce qu'il vivait à l'instant, inoubliable et merveilleux. Tout en sueur, il balbutiait: "3... C'est trop beau... Trop réel... Trop vrai..."

In the above passage, the author uses terms like "une décharge électrique," "voluptueusement," "extase," and "sublime" to suggest that Moussa is involved in an intimate relationship where he and God make love to each other. Moussa worships God intensely with his entire being. During these moments of ecstasy, a climax is reached where Moussa is empowered with divine inspiration that reinforces his love for God and he experiences the unforgettable sensation of oneness with his Creator.

The object of Moussa's daily communion with God is to cultivate humility and to learn to love his neighbor. He frequently retreats into his private quarters:

Dans cet endroit pauvre et sec, Moussa venait cultiver l'humilité et l'amour de son prochain, en s'exerçant à la solitude et à l'abstinence... C'est au cours de ces retraits spirituelles assidues que Moussa apprenait à découvrir, partant, à connaître son prochain afin de mieux l'aimer, et, à travers ce dernier, Dieu, pour mieux l'adorer. Ces moments de solitude et de retour spontané à Dieu lui procuraient une paix intérieure et un bienfait qu'aucune satisfaction physique ou matérielle n'aurait jamais pu égaler.

Moussa is convinced that nothing in this world is equivalent to the blessings and the peace he experiences during the time he spends in prayer and meditation. But even more important than his personal
worship is the fact that, when Mbaye's hero leaves his private chambers to walk among men, he lives what he believes. Described as being generous and free-hearted, Moussa turns the other cheek if offended, and he never harbors resentment or hatred in his heart. Like his father, he believes that he is in part responsible for the ill feelings that others might have toward him. For example, when his uncle scorches him and spreads the false rumor that Moussa had cried during circumcision, the young man chooses to remain silent rather than exposing his uncle publicly as a liar. For the same reason, he does not denounce the children who played a trick on the Koranic schoolmaster and then blamed it on him, an act for which he was severely punished:

Il pensait simplement, selon sa logique, qu'après tout, le mal était déjà consommé. Et du moment qu'il avait payé, il était inutile d'en sacrifier d'autres. Poussant plus à fond ses scrupules, il reconnaissait avoir quand même quelque responsabilité dans ce qui venait de se passer.

Moussa's logic transcends normal human behavior. Rather than seeking revenge, he chooses instead to forget the incident and to not hold it against them. He forgives his enemies.

Moussa's fasting is also exemplary. After the harvest, for example, he retreats for several days into his place of personal devotion; during this time he eats almost nothing. Like his prayers, his fasting is a means of denying his flesh that he might become more spiritual and develop a character pleasing to Allah.

Yet Moussa is human; as an introspective man, he realizes that the attempt to approach God necessarily entails a battle between the flesh and the spirit. For example, during a moment of religious
ecstasy, Moussa is overcome by a fear of pride, because he knows that pride separates man from God:

Il fit un effort surhumain pour échapper à l'envoûtement de l'étrange bonheur qui le possédait. Une fois de plus, la peur d'être victime de l'orgueil--aux yeux de Dieu, le pire des pêchés--s'empara de lui. Dans un élan désespoir, presque sauvage, il s'écria en pleurant: "J'exulte! et Dieu, en vérité, n'aime pas les exultants."

Moussa does not want to offend God. He wants to be as sure as possible that his motives are pure and unselfish. Moussa realizes that the blessings he receives are not the result of his own human goodness and self-sufficiency; rather, he is the recipient of God's mercy and grace. With tears of repentance Moussa reaffirms that the believer is nothing apart from God and therefore he should not exalt himself. Moussa is also human in the sense that he relishes moments of affection shared with his parents, especially his father. Finally, he shows his human side in his extraordinary sensitivity and tender-heartedness. His inner wounds cause him to shed tears, and he is deeply moved by the pain of others. He himself would never intentionally harm any other creature, even an ant. Instead, he studies the ant to see what lesson he can learn from the insect. Moussa does not deny his human flaws and imperfections but he puts his humanity into the service of what is most positive in life.

Another aspect of Moussa's exemplary character is his love for truth and his consistency in the standard of conduct that he has prescribed for his own moral purity. He would remain silent before he would tell a lie. In this way, he is emulating his god—a god who is sometimes silent but who also serves as the source of truth.
Moussa's life thus clearly reflects the virtues which, according to the sacred texts of Islam, would make him eligible to teach others the way or to be called "marabout" in the Sufi sense of the word. Indeed, Moussa is obviously a man tied to God.

Apart from Moussa, two other fictional marabouts warrant the title of model mystic: Modou Tine, Moussa's father in *Au delà de la vertu*, and Maître Thierno in Kane's *L'Avventura ambigua*. There are many similarities between Modou and Moussa; the son was raised in the image of his father, whom the text presents as having been a worthy role model. Modou practices what he preaches at home and in society. He is courageous, virtuous, and good. He asks God to make his son exceptional, and he always prays that Moussa will surpass him in excellence. So Moussa's call to the ranks of a spiritual elite can be attributed in part to his father's petitions on his behalf. However, Moussa's spiritual maturity and consistency in the faith amaze his father, who begins to wonder if Moussa is really his child. The observation of the daily prayers is of utmost importance to Modou who never neglects his duty to acknowledge the presence of Allah. According to Modou, the believer should pray consistently and fervently for this is his only hope that God will hear and answer him.

Modou has a single wife and he loves her deeply. However, he realizes that he is a man and therefore subject to temptation. When his sister-in-law, Sally, an attractive woman, faints and falls to the ground, he wants to help her, but he refuses to touch another woman, lest he be tempted to desire her. This action reflects that Modou would rather avoid any risk that might cause him to offend God.
However, his admiration of Sally's beauty causes him to take inventory of his own attractiveness. When he realizes that he is being vain and boastful, he asks God to forgive him and curses Satan who is the author of sinful thoughts. Modou wants to be morally pure, therefore he resists the temptation to defile himself and as a result displease Allah.

Modou repeatedly affirms his faith in God, an affirmation which is based on the Koran. An evangelist, his desire is to help assure that all men, not only his immediate family, follow the path of Islam. Most importantly, Modou is aware that the true race of the servants of God is almost extinct, and he is convinced that there is a need for new souls to serve as receptacles for God's divine light and blessing. This is why he asked God to make his son the instrument of righteousness that he himself had always wanted to be. As he watches his son grow in integrity and in dedication to the virtues of the Muslim faith, he is overjoyed that God has answered his prayers. Unselfish, Modou is content to see his son succeed in areas where he may have failed.

Maitre Thierno, the master of the Diallobé people in L'Aventure ambiguë, affirms, "je tèmoigne qu'il n'y a de divinité que Dieu, et je tèmoigne que Mohamed est son envoyé..."7 He also upholds the shahada until the end of his life. Like Moussa and Modou Tine he is a model mystic whose life is exemplary of Islamic virtues. During the confrontation between those who want to save man and those who want to save God, he is on the side of those who want to save God at all costs.
Thierno lives a life of constant prayer; in fact he hardly sleeps because he is incessantly engaged in prayer. According to the narrator in the novel, no one prays as often as Thierno, who had recited the shahada at least a million times during his lifetime, reaffirming his faith with each repetition. Much like Moussa Tine, Maître Thierno places the highest priority on satisfying his spiritual hunger while limiting the nourishment of his physical body to the bare essentials. For that reason, he appears maigre et émacié. Indeed, Maître Thierno spends just enough time farming to obtain a necessary minimum of food for his frugal meals. He dedicates most of his time to study, meditation, prayer, and the formation of the young people entrusted to his tutelage. Preoccupied with the spiritual and not with the physical, Maître Thierno is an example of the self-discipline that he endeavors to instill in his pupils. Even marabouts from other countries come to consult Thierno, and when they leave his presence, they feel edified.

Maître Thierno is an extremely rigid individual who never laughs. As in the case of Moussa Tine, the only thing that brings him pleasure is the sensation of an intimate contact with the Divine:

Les seuls moments d'enthousiasme qu'on pouvait lui voir étaient ceux pendant lesquels, plongé dans ses méditations mystiques, ou écoutant réciter la Parole de Dieu, il se dressait tout tendu et semblait s'exhausser de sol, comme soulevé par une force intime.

Thierno shares an intensely close relationship with God. For him joy is feeling God's presence while he is meditating or listening to the recitation of God's Word.
While struggling with himself to be a genuine Muslim believer, Thierno recognizes his human limitations. For example, he realizes that his body is decaying: "Son corps, chaque jour davantage, accentuait sa facheuse propension à rester collé à la terre." Yet he fights the stiffness of the joints in his body to assume the various positions of prayer. For Thierno even the process of aging and the pain of arthritis cannot excuse a devout Muslim from his duty toward God. When he reflects upon the grotesque scene of his legs and knees refusing to bend, he perceives it as comical, but he is so devout that he feels compelled to resist an impulse to laugh at himself:

Cependant que la douleur le pliait, il avait peine à maintenir son sérieux, comme si le grotesque qu'il observait n'était pas le sien propre. De nouveau, ce rire en lui se retenait d'éclater. À ce moment, le maître qui avait levé les deux bras face à l'Est, pour commencer sa prière s'interrompit, assombri soudain par un soupçon. Ce rire n'est-il pas impie? "Peut-être est-ce une mauvaise vanité qui me gonfle ainsi."  

He does not want to laugh, because he fears laughter may be impious or disrespectful to God. After a moment of further reflection, he concludes that the urge to laugh at his decrepit body does not really impair his desire to do the will of Allah. The marabout accepts the reality of his human condition but he is careful to consider all his actions in light of his respect for Allah.

Maître Thierno is also exemplary in his manner of self-examination and repentance. When he realizes that he has harbored a special love for Samba Diallo, his best disciple, he asks God to forgive him. The Diallobé regard Maître Thierno as their guide, the
man who for them represents God on earth. Since God is no "resister of persons," he feels that he too must have no preferences at his hearth. Evaluating his own sincerity, Thierno saw a conflict between his human tendency to favor Samba and his efforts to be a godly leader. He resolves in his heart to pursue an attitude of impartiality which he believes will be pleasing to God.

Thierno's perspectives are based on eternal not temporal values. Samba Diallo perceives that though many things in life are finite, Thierno possesses qualities that transcend death. He has the Word, which, although not tangible, can last forever; he has the fire of the word which burns his disciples and lights his hearth; and he has insight into God's overall plan. The mysticism of Thierno's presence thus leaves an aura that endures in the sense that it lives on in his disciples, especially Samba Diallo.

In the Senegalese novel, the rare marabouts who are model mystics seem generally to follow the Sufi tradition. They lead austere, disciplined lives in which spiritual matters take precedence over physical or secular concerns. Model mystics sincerely believe in Allah and His Prophet. They rigorously observe the daily prayers and would rather fast than eat because their hunger is for the spiritual food of God. Generous, they often give away what they have. In any case, the riches of this world do not interest them. There are other praiseworthy marabouts in the Senegalese novel, but I have focused upon Moussa and Modou Tine and Maitre Thierno; Kane and Mbaye examined these characters in sufficient depth to illustrate the qualities that marabouts are expected to display. Such figures can serve as a
standard against which other marabouts can be measured. However, the
tenet deviants, or those marabouts who transgress against the true
spirit of Islam's principles, are more abundant in the novels.

Prayer Deviants

There are certain Muslim religious figures who hold titles and
who have functions that are peculiar to Islam, functions which center
around prayer and the mosque. These men may or may not be marabouts.
Among them are the bilal, the mosque's maintenance man, the
muezzin who calls the people to prayer, and the imâm who leads
the daily prayers at the mosque; they too are portrayed and often
criticized in the Senegalese novel. The reason for this criticism
is frequently their deviation from the purpose of prayer; in fact
these marabout characters may not pray at all, although they may be
responsible for leading others in the execution of this Islamic duty.

In his short story "Souleymane" from the collection Voltaïque
(1962), Ousmane Sembène portrays a corrupt bilal. Caretaker of the
local mosque, Souleymane is responsible for everything pertaining to
the edifice: "nettoyage, réparations, entretien, quêtes pour cette
maison sainte."¹¹ To perform such duties, he obviously doesn't need
a profound knowledge of the Koran, but he is admired and respected
by the faithful who frequent the mosque. For them he is everything
a good Muslim should be: "un être exemplaire, pieux, modeste . . .
d'apparence tout au moins. Un homme discret . . ."¹² The term
"d'apparence" alerts the reader of this story to the irony with which
Sembène depicts the bilal. Beneath surface appearances, Souleymane
is revealed as having a "Dr. Jekyll-Mr. Hyde" personality. At home, away from the mosque, this polygamous husband with three wives changes into a human beast. He frequently beats his wives during their respective aaye (each wife of a polygamous man gets three consecutive nights with him in rotating order) because they are not able to satisfy the insatiable lust that has developed in him as a result of watching the young girls who meet at the fountain in front of the mosque. This lust drives him to the unacceptable practice of sleeping with more than one of his wives in a single night. In vivid details, Sembène describes him as a man overcome by sexual desire when he looks at the young girls:

Notre Souleymane restait à l'affût comme un chasseur de marais, les paupières pincées, les yeux fendus, le bout de la langue en pointe entre les lèvres. Comme un assoiffé il passait la main à son cou, se l' étirait, avalait sa salive. Son esprit se meublait de la possession d'une de ces gazelles.

A slave to passion, Souleymane is not truly a man of God. His actions are dictated by fleshly desires. But outsiders, ignorant of the existence of the "other" Souleymane, the man of vice, still look upon him as a good and religious man. They even blame his wives for any problems he might be having with them. A significant index of Souleymane's lack of piety is the fact that, although he spends a large portion of his time at the mosque, he is never shown in the act of prayer.

Souleymane's sexual desire leads him to abuse some of the young girls sexually and to rape others who are afraid to complain about his actions because he is a respected bilal. When he begins to
neglect his work at the mosque, his change in behavior is noticed by
some of the men, and they decide to find him a fourth, younger wife
in the hope that he will resume the conscientious performance of his
duties. But when he marries Yacine, who is about the same age as his
oldest daughter, Souleymane himself becomes the victim. Having aged,
he becomes incapable of satisfying his young wife's sexual appetite;
she, in turn, takes a lover. Unlike Souleymane's other wives, Yacine
is not afraid of him and at the end of the story she is granted a
divorce that allows her to keep the dowry and her children, although
a wife who leaves must usually surrender all such possessions to her
husband. By portraying the carnal side of a supposedly religious man,
Sembène demonstrates how religious leaders are often held in a high
esteem they do not deserve because their moral character is not sub-
jected to careful scrutiny. For him and other Senegalese novelists
the novel becomes an instrument to unmask the hypocrisy and deception
of such so-called religious personnel.

The muezzin's role in Islamic society is a crucial one. He goes
to the mosque five times a day, mounts to the top of the minaret and,
with the aid of a bullhorn or loudspeaker, cries as loud as he can,
issuing the call to prayer. The muezzin's leadership is also required
during the yearly season of penitence or the fast of Ramadan, the
ninth month of the Muslim lunar calendar. During Ramadan it is the
muezzin's duty to wake the faithful, because everyone who observes
the fast must wake up to eat the only meal of the day before dawn.
The muezzin also goes through the streets of the village singing
verses from the Koran and warning the believers. Although carefully
selected by the people, the *muezzin* is like the *bilal* in the sense that he does not have to be trained in the Koran to perform his duties.

The *muezzin* is frequently mentioned in Senegalese novels in conjunction with references to prayer and the mosque. However, the *muezzin* is not a main character in any of the Senegalese novels although he does play a central role in the works of other West African writers like Seydou Badian, who depicts the *muezzin* Fadiga in *Sous l'orage* (1963), and Ahmadou Kourouma, who introduces the *muezzin* of Togbola in *Les Soleils des Indépendances* (1970).

The *imam* is another religious figure who is carefully selected by the villagers. His position demands that he be strongly grounded in a knowledge of the Koran. He is also supposed to be a man of prayer according to the tenets of the faith. In *Karim* (1948) Ousmane Socé provides a fairly accurate description of the *imam*'s role in Islamic society. When the *muezzin* has finished the call to prayer, the *imam*'s job begins. He performs his official functions inside the mosque, where he appears on the podium before the crowd of believers. The *imam* leads the five daily prayers (*f adiar* 5:48 A.M., *tisbar* 2:15 P.M., *takusaan* 5:00 P.M., *timis* 7:49 P.M., *guéwé* 8:49 P.M.) and he presides over prayers on special holidays like *tabaski* (l'air el kēbir, feast of the lambs) and *korité* (l'air el ftr, the end of Ramadan). After greeting the crowd, the *imam* preaches the love of God, love for one's neighbor, justice, piety, and honesty. At the end of his message, everyone leaves. The *imam*'s presence is especially significant at the Friday afternoon prayer of *tisbar*, which
is when all Muslims in the world pray together. Not only does he
preach for various religious ceremonies, but when there are "nights
of the Koran" or Koran readings, as on "Maouloud" (the birthday of
the Prophet Mohamed), the imam is expected to answer all the theologi-
cal questions that the faithful might ask him. He also leads funeral
prayers and ceremonies and pronounces marriage banns.

As in the case of the muezzin, the imam has been portrayed less
frequently by Senegalese writers than by authors from other West
African countries. In Masseni (1977) by Tidiane Dem of the Ivory
Coast, for example, the imam is a marabout. He makes gris-gris, he
is a seer, a sorcerer, a healer, and above all a counselor and a
judge. In the Senegalese novel, the imam may be mentioned but not
given a central character to play. The reason for the relative lack
of attention paid to muezzins and imams in the Senegalese novel is
probably the fact that they tend to present Islam to the faithful in
an orthodox fashion within the Senegalese social context; when they
finish their jobs, they return home to live as ordinary men. In con-
trast, the independent marabout tends to be more syncretic in his
methods. Novelists seem particularly interested in the marabout who
combines the practice of Islam and traditional African religion.
Islam tends to be a profit-making venture for such figures, and Sen-
egalese novelists have focused upon them to reveal the hypocrisies and
contradictions in their behavior.

In O pays mon beau peuple (1957) by Ousmane Sembèné, the hero's
father, Moussa Faye, is the imam at the local mosque. Yet it is not
Moussa Faye's role as imam that is examined; on the contrary, it is
his role as father in the encounter with a son who is estranged from him. Having lived and studied in France, his son Oumar displeases his father by returning to Senegal with a white wife and abandoning his father's views on the role of Islam in the life of an individual.

Highly respected and admired in the community, Moussa Faye appears to be a good man, a practicing Muslim. But Sembène, who consistently denounces Muslim spiritual guides, reveals another side of the imam's character--his self-interest. Oumar had inherited some property from his grandmother, but Moussa withholds this information from Oumar because he sees the property as a means to realize his own personal desire to undertake a pilgrimage to Mecca. To raise the money for this enterprise, he decides to lease the property for thirty years and to appropriate the money for his own use. Oumar is upset, because his father had made such an important legal decision with property that did not belong to him and did not even inform his son about his intentions. But Moussa feels no remorse for his actions, because according to him, a father's desires are paramount. He even tells Oumar, who is in need of money, that God will pay him. Despite his anger, Oumar understands why his father had summoned him to inform him about the property:

... Faye savait pourquoi son père l'avait appelé. Il est écrit dans le livre sacré: "On ne part pas à La Mecque sans la conscience tranquille." Dieu lui-même a dit: "je peux vous pardonner les affronts que vous me faites, mais les affronts que vous vous faites, il n'y a que vous qui puissiez les laver."

Moussa knows that his father, realizing the unethical nature of his action, needs Oumar's approval so that he can go to the Holy Land
with a clear conscience. According to Muslim belief, God forgives one's trespasses against Him but the brethren must regulate any offenses they commit against each other.

To avoid further discussion of his offense, Moussa suggests to his son that he too make the pilgrimage to Mecca. However, Oumar doubts his father's integrity and retorts that, because God is everywhere, he has no need to ever go to a place where even the shade from a tree carries a price tag. In this passage, Sembène is implying that the pilgrimage to Mecca has become so commercialized that its spiritual value has been greatly reduced. To counter this argument, Moussa accuses Oumar of atheism and attributes his son's apostasy to his long stay in the white man's country. With such attitudes he feels certain that Oumar will not be able to enter heaven. Unmoved by his father's preoccupation with the hereafter, Oumar urges Moussa to look at what man has accomplished:

... Je te demanderai seulement une chose ... Oh! cela ne coûte pas beaucoup de drachmes ... Regarde tous les pays que tu traverseras, observe bien les gens que Dieu mettra sur ton chemin, n'oublie pas, dans ta hâte, de lever la tête pour contempler les maisons et les mosquées, alors, père, tu verras des choses. Toutes ces choses ont été faites par la main de l'homme ... J'ai pas besoin d'entrer au paradis. Je désire mon paradis ici ... 18

In short, Oumar would prefer to have his heaven here on earth. Oumar Faye can be considered as the author's "porte-parole," he is actually establishing a materialistic perspective from which Moussa can be judged. His position as imam may command admiration from others, but Sembène clearly reveals how his spirituality and love for the Koran
serve to camouflage his reactionary and fundamentally unethical attitudes.

Souleymane is a prayer deviant in the sense that he does not pray, and nothing about his inner character reflects a true belief in Islamic virtues. Had he been preoccupied with the spiritual realm in a manner similar to that of the model mystics, his carnal nature might not have gripped him so tightly. However, Sembène's chief criticism of Souleymane revolves around the fact that he wasn't what people thought him to be, and the unfortunate aspect of his social position is that no one had the courage to unmask him for fear of being condemned for having attacked a religious man who was considered to be sacred. Moussa Faye is also a prayer deviant in a different sense: his lack of consistency. He seemed to be full of integrity, justice, and piety toward the community of believers, but the commandment to love one's neighbor should also extend to members of his own family. In deceiving his son, he knows that his action is unethical, but he refuses to repent and even asks for his son's blessing so that he might go to Mecca and pray with a clear conscience. Sembène's portrayal of Moussa Faye suggests that this imam places the fulfillment of personal desires above his duty to obey the precepts of Islam.

Alms Deviants

In the Senegalese novel marabouts are for the most part on the receiving end of the alms-giving process. They seldom refuse gifts offered to them. Rarely are they portrayed as generous although they do encourage their talibés to honor the zakkat, which is similar
to the tithe and involves the giving of alms to charity. Giving to charity and sharing a portion of what one has is also a pre-Islamic aspect of Senegalese culture. Beggars are a very visible sector of the population and it is not surprising that they appear frequently in the Senegalese novel as well.

In Senegalese society, marabouts often encourage their followers to make sacrifices and offerings, when they are primarily concerned about realizing their own personal desires. Such activity is obviously a distortion of the Muslim virtue according to which the giving of alms is one way of obeying the will of Allah. The perversion of the zakkat is the theme of Aminata Sow Fall's La Grève des battû (1979). Madame Sow Fall, who is a practicing Muslim, attacks the abuse of certain Islamic principles: the abuse of the zakkat, the abuse of maraboutism, and the abuse of polygamy. In her attacks upon maraboutism, however, she never criticizes the marabout characters themselves. Nevertheless, a maraboutic conflict determines the outcome of the story, and maraboutism is presented as being the catalyst behind the abuse of the zakkat.

Mour Ndiaye, the protagonist in La Grève des battû, is seeking the vice presidency of the Republic. He has been commissioned to rid the city of beggars, but the people need the beggars to fulfill their duty to give alms to the poor (miskin in Wolof). One of these beggars, Nguirane Sarr, recognizes that the people do not give because giving is godly or because they empathize with the destitute; they only give in order to get something in return:
... Notre faim ne les dérange pas. Ils ont besoin de donner pour survivre, et si nous n'existions pas, à qui donneraient-ils? Comment assureraient-ils leur tranquillité d'esprit? Ce n'est pas pour nous qu'ils donnent, c'est pour eux! Ils ont besoin de nous pour vivre en paix!

In other words, he is pointing out that the people give to meet obligations that will assure them of some personal gain. Sarr formulates this realization after the beggars have been harassed by the police and one of them has been killed. When he announces it to the other beggars it prompts them to go on strike. They become aware of their power in society. Everyone has need of them—the boss who wants to safeguard his position, the sick people who desire to be healed, ambitious individuals or convicts in need of mercy. As Sarr declares in his exhortation to them:

D'ici peu de temps vous verrez que nous leur sommes utiles comme l'air qu'ils respirent. Quel est le patron qui ne donne pas la charité pour rester éternellement patron? Quel est le malade, réel ou imaginaire, qui ne croit pas que ses troubles disparaîtront en même temps que l'aumône sortira de ses mains? Quel est l'ambitieux qui ne pense pas ouvrir toutes les portes par l'action magique de la charité? Chacun donne pour une raison ou pour une autre. Même les parents des futurs condamnés se servent de la charité pour fausser le raisonnement du juge!

In this passage all segments of the society seem to be obsessed with the material. This obsession leads to social, moral, and political implications as the people exchange the spiritual purpose of the zakkat with a commercial value. Aminata Sow Fall makes an indictment against those people, in particular the new Westernized Senegalese bourgeoisie, who use the religion Islam as a profit-making venture.

Serigne Birama Sidibé is the marabout chosen by Mour Ndiaye as his spiritual advisor. Throughout the novel, Birama stands for the
ideals of Islam, and Sow Fall uses him as the expositor of the authen-
tic meaning of the zakkat. Described as unselfish, wise, and full
of knowledge, he is obviously a man worthy of respect, a practicing
believer who not only teaches (he is a Koranic schoolmaster) but who
prays and reads the Koran faithfully. When Mour consults Serigne
Birama concerning his official commission to combat the beggars and
to drive them from the streets, the marabout is immediately full of
concern and reproach: "--Cey yalla! La Ville est en train de vous
deshumaniser, d'endurcir vos coeurs au point que vous n'ayez plus
pitié des faibles. Attention, Mour, Dieu l'a dit: 'il ne faut pas
éconduire les pauvres."20 The marabout cannot understand why Mour
would want to menace the beggars. According to him, the plan to rid
the city of beggars is a means of dehumanizing the people and harden-
ing their hearts against the less fortunate. He warns Mour that God
has decreed that the poor must not be driven away. Mour answers that
the beggars will be chased from the streets in order to force them
to work. Then, turning from the real issue, he asks Birama to pray
that he will be selected as Vice-President of the Republic. Birama
prays for him and advises him to make the sacrifice of a white ram
with his own hands, to divide the flesh into seven heaps, and to then
give the meat to the beggars. If it pleases God, he concludes, Mour
will have the position.

The protagonist's wife, Lolli Badiane, has consistently inter-
vened on behalf of her husband also by consulting Serigne Birama.
Both Mour and Lolli have considerable confidence in Serigne Birama
because they have been successful even since he became their marabout.
As a result they offer him gifts on a regular basis. In these scenes, the author is not criticizing Muslim believers for consulting marabouts. What she is doing is to unmask the hypocrisy of the bourgeoisie who reverence the marabout and shower him with gifts to further their own interests. Within her frame of reference, the marabout is a guilty party insofar as he consciously or unconsciously encourages the distortion of the zakkat principle.

Mour Ndiaye becomes so desperate in his quest for the vice-presidency that he consults other marabouts. He ignores Birama's advice to pray and to wait patiently. Instead, he engages marabout after marabout until he encounters a certain Kifi Bokouli. In Wolof, the name Kifi Bokouli means "the one who does not belong here" (one who is not of this world), and in the story he is considered to be the most powerful marabout for miles around. He is said to converse with spirits and to have the power to make them execute his commands, even those which seem impossible. No one has ever seen Kifi Bokouli's face for it is always covered, revealing only his red, steel-like eyes. Legend claims that Kifi Bokouli, whose mother was barren for seventeen years, had been conceived as the result of intervention by the spirits after his father had made sacrifices to them. It is for this reason that he is called Kifi Bokouli.

After seven days and seven nights of seclusion and one meal a day consisting of couscous in water, Kifi Bokouli comes out of the guest room to pronounce his verdict. At this moment Aminata Sow Fall's use of irony becomes apparent. The marabout assures Mour that he will become Vice-President, but only if Mour follows his
instructions to the letter. Kifi Bokoul instructs Mour to sacrifice a solid-colored bull in the courtyard of his house, to divide it into seventy-seven pieces which he should then distribute to beggars holding battū or calabash bowls, beggars in the streets who have absolutely nothing. Mour must give to beggars in all four corners of the city and in every neighborhood. Kifi Bokoul reassures Mour that his word is infallible. He then suggests that if Mour adds twenty meters of white cloth, three hundred red cola nuts, and four hundred white cola nuts to the sacrifice, his desire will be made manifest in exactly eight days. Kifi Bokoul's advice to Mour provides a clear example of the misuse of the zakkat, for in effect the protagonist will only be giving to receive. The situation is ironic in the sense that Mour is so happy to be assured of success that he temporarily forgets that he has rid the streets of beggars. In this situation, Mour's goal is material gain and prestige, for he has never displayed the qualifications or public commitment that might justify his appointment to the vice-presidency.

When Mour senses that he will not be able to fulfill the prescriptions of the marabout Kifi Bokoul, he returns to Serigne Birama. At this point Birama explains to Mour in clear terms why one should make sacrifices and give alms:

> Il est toujours bon de faire un sacrifice. C'est une façon de remercier le Créateur qui t'a confié ce que tu offres aux pauvres pour les aider à supporter leur misère. C'est bien, chaque fois que tu le peux, il faut donner. La fortune n'a pas de domicile fixe, Dieu ne l'a pas attribuée d'une manière définitive. Il ne fait que la prêter. Cela, il faut toujours y penser.  

In other words, the giving of alms is a way of thanking God for
having given people what they in turn give to the poor. One should always give because God is the source of all wealth and He loans it to whomever He pleases. Serigne Birama once again reproaches Mour for having fought against the beggars and suggests that he find another way of giving to charity. However, Mour’s obsession with a desire for prestige and material wealth deadens his sensitivity to his true friend Serigne Birama and pushes him to inform Birama of his encounter with Kifi Bokoul. After Birama discovers that Mour has consulted another marabout, he is offended and retreats from assisting him further. Mour subsequently loses the bid for political office. His defeat represents a type of poetic justice whereby the author illustrates to those who abuse the zakkat that Allah will not always tolerate the perversion of His precepts. The protagonist reaped his downfall from the selfishness and greed that he sowed.

In La Grève de battû, Sow Fall contrasts two kinds of marabout. Serigne Birama makes no promise to Mour except to say he will pray and that, if God wills it so, Mour will ascend to the vice-presidency. Birama is always conscious of the Koran when giving advice to his talibés. Though Mour credits him with his previous success, Birama realized that it is through the mercy of God that men are blessed. Birama is thus a true man of God. In contrast, Kifi Bokoul enters the story mysteriously and remains a mystery. Details are provided about Mour’s first encounter with Birama and about the nature of their longstanding relationship, but the reader is never certain that Kifi Bokoul is an authentic religious figure. He conceals his face; he isolates himself; he gives no information about his background. From
the few details provided in the narrative, he appears to be more of a sorcerer than a man of God. He never mentions Allah, and he never prays. He bases claims to authority on his own word, not the Koran, for he asserts that "ceux qui me connaisssent savent que ma parole ne s'est jamais perdue dans la nature."22 Kifi Bokoul is so confident in the power of his own word that he tells Mour, "si tu fais la charité comme indiqué, et qu'on ne te nomme pas huit jours après, crache sur ma chêche, traine-moi dans la boue, prends même ma vie si tu le peux."23 Such a grandiloquent claim predisposes the reader to suspect that Kifi Bokoul is either a spirit who is truly not of this world or a fraud. In any case, Sow Fall uses the intrusion of Kifi Bokoul as the actant, the element that determines the outcome of the story. Mour proves unable to carry out Kifi Bokoul's prescription which he believes would have assured him of success.

Kifi Bokoul is an alms deviant in that he urges Mour to make sacrifices to the poor solely for the purpose of bringing certain desires to fruition. Serigne Birama knows the Koran and understands the purpose of the zakkat, but he unconsciously supports Mour in the misuse of the zakkat principle, because he also advises him to give to charity with the hope of obtaining the vice-presidency. The main difference is that he adds prayer to the process and he humbles himself before God. Mour's loss of Birama's trust and the bid for the vice-presidency should enable him to reflect on his responsibility to his government as well as his Muslim responsibility to be compassionate toward the poor and the lame.
Fasting Deviants

Senegalese novelists often make a striking contrast between the physical frailty of some marabouts and the obesity of others. Marabouts portrayed as spiritual-minded are usually frail and temperate concerning food, whereas the more secular-minded marabouts tend to be overweight and guilty of gluttony. Although none of the novels take place specifically during Ramadan, the annual Muslim fast and season of penitence, the implication is that there is a relationship between spirituality and fasting.

El Hadji Mabigué, a so-called religious man who sides with the oppressor in Sembène's Les Bouts-de-bois-de-Dieu (1960), wears two grand boubous (flowing garments), talks while lifting his hand (which is plump and soft like a woman's), and resembles a pelican about to fly away.24 He also eats very well and walks the street with his ram (also well-nourished), while his relatives and fellow countrymen go hungry during the railroad workers' strike. Considering his total lack of compassion, his claims to be spiritual are viewed as a sham by the entire community. The reader perceives almost immediately that Mabigué is a selfish man whose first priority is the satisfaction of his own flesh.

When the corrupt marabout Serigne Diobaye is introduced in Mbaye Gana Këbë's Kaala-Sikkim (1975), he enters the scene eating his "first" chicken of the day and wearing four boubous which give him the appearance of a giant onion.25 Këbë repeatedly uses wit, humor, and sarcasm to draw attention to Serigne Diobaye's bent for gluttony.
The marabout eats a chicken in the morning, a chicken at noon with shrimp, a chicken at twilight, and at times, one at midnight. To rationalize his unethical behavior, Diobyé claims that the excessive consumption of poultry enhances his supernatural powers. Upon finishing his chicken, Serigne Diobyé thanks his marabout, his father, and then God and the Prophet. Kébé underlines the fact that God occupies the last position in this sequence. In Diobyé's use of reasoning, God is an afterthought; that which is carnal comes first. In contrast to Moussa Tine and the other model mystics, Kébé's marabout is preoccupied with the physical, has little self-control, and places God last in his list of priorities, but Diobyé's lack of discipline is not limited to food; he is also a trickster who adopts the profession of a charlatan to satisfy his insatiable desire for material wealth. A fasting deviant, Diobyé's god is, in a sense, his belly which grows larger and larger throughout the course of the story.

In "Le Prétexte," a short story in Birago Diop's Les Nouveaux Contes d'Amadou Koumba (1958), the sin of gluttony becomes the sign by means of which a false marabout is exposed. Fusing the written and oral tradition, Diop characterizes Serigne Fall from the beginning in unequivocal terms:

Serigne Fall était de ces éternels talibés gravitant de loin autour de nos vrais marabouts, de nos grands marabouts. Ne connaissant ni khala, ni kassirane, presque souvent guère plus de cinq ou sept sourates en plus de la Fatiha, abondamment nourris de bida, ils se disent à leur tour marabouts auprès du profane crédule, et, "sans bûcher ni tailler," veulent vivre et mener grand train, payant le gite et la vêture, le boire et le manger en prières; en prières marmonnées intelligiblement (et pour cause) et en salive copieusement aspergée sur les mains tendues des grandes personnes et sur le crâne tondu et teigneux des enfants.
Nous les appelions "petits seringues," vous les qualifiez maintenant de "grands fainéants." L'espèce est toujours la même: pleine de fausse onction et insinuante, parasite-type, inconstante et vagabonde.26

In this description, it is clear that this marabout subordinates spiritual concerns to the material benefits he can draw from his position in society. Diop emphasizes the fact that there are true marabouts in Senegalese society, but he also points out that there are others, like Serigne Fall, who merely go through the motions and do a poor imitation of the real marabout. Serigne Fall is a parasite, a vagabond who moves from one location to another to obtain food, clothing, and lodging in the homes of unsuspecting believers who are convinced that his prayers (which are unintelligible because he doesn't actually know the Koran) and his saliva are blessed.

Serigne Fall decides to visit the wealthy and generous Mar N'Diaye who is also widely known for his hospitality. Mar N'Diaye grants him hospitality and treats him royally. Although Mar's griot, Guéwel M'Baye, recognizes Serigne Fall as an impostor, his master forbids him to accuse the marabout openly. Time passes and the marabout continues to stay. One night, after an exquisite dinner, he walks to the marketplace, where he cannot resist the temptation to purchase several cookies, although his stomach is full to the point of bursting. When Serigne Fall returns to the house, his host is praying. Uncouth and unlearned, he takes a position behind Mar N'Diaye and begins to crunch upon his cookies. The noise disturbs Mar's prayer, and when the host realizes his guest is consuming cookies at night, he orders the false marabout from his house. At the very beginning
of the tale the griot Ahmadou Koumba had announced the point of the
story in citing a proverb: "point n'est besoin d'un gros appât pour
attraper une grosse bête." By repeating the phrase "des biscuits
la nuit" Diop creates a catch phrase to characterize unscrupulous but
petty-minded Serigne Fall. A big bait is not necessary to catch a
big beast. The idea of fasting never occurred to Serigne Fall. Cor-
rupt marabouts like Serigne Diobaye, El Hadji Mabigué, and Serigne
Fall do not have the discipline nor the spiritual attitude necessary
to fast; in fact they hardly care for the things of God. Their
general greed for material possessions drives them to fill their
bellies in over-consumption.

Marabouts and the Hajj

The pilgrimage or hajj to Mecca and the holy sites of Islam
is the fifth pillar of the Muslim faith. Each Muslim is required to
visit the Holy Land at least once in his lifetime. Those who make
the pilgrimage are given titles when they return and are highly
respected in the Islamic community. Male pilgrims are called el
hadji and the women are referred to as adja. In times past the
title el hadji evoked esteem and respect. Some of the founders of
the Muslim brotherhoods in Senegal sacrificed all they had to make
the trip; some even went from Senegal to Mecca by foot. When they
returned, their faith had increased and the result was an even greater
diffusion of Islam within the country. When the hadj returned from
his pilgrimage, he tended to be distinguished by his piety, and other
believers looked upon him as an example to be emulated. However,
the nature of the pilgrimage has changed such that everyone who is a \textit{hadj} is not necessarily a man of faith. A marabout may be a \textit{hadj}, although in Senegal most of them are not.

The \textit{hadj} do not escape the criticism of Senegalese novelists. Most of them underline the fact that the term \textit{hadj} is no longer synonymous with piety. Instead, it evokes the image of rich men, especially big businessmen who can afford the expenses of the trip. Others save or borrow to make the trip, but there is always the question of their motivation. Are they going on an excursion, or are they seeking to fulfill the requirement of Islam so that they might be cleansed and forgiven? Some writers have examined the motives of those who undertake the pilgrimage in modern times. In most cases the motive they depict is not a desire for spiritual transformation but a yearning for the prestige that such a trip will afford them when they return. This prestige involves preferential treatment and financial benefits. It can also mean that a person has acquired the eligibility to be called marabout.

Ousmane Sembène is outspoken in his attacks upon the \textit{hadj}. Moussa Faye in \textit{0 pays mon beau peuple} (1957) already holds the title of \textit{imam}, but he is so desirous of acquiring the title of \textit{el hadji} that he is willing to compromise his integrity by deceiving his son to obtain the money to make the trip. In \textit{Les Bouts-de-bois-de-Dieu} (1960), El Hadji Mabigué is dressed like a religious man, but his behavior is not worthy of his title, for he uses his position of authority in the community to further his personal interests which include his collaboration with the colonizer. As he grows richer,
El Hadji Mabigué becomes more and more insensitive to the needs of his fellow countrymen and their struggle for human rights. While he is supposed to be a spiritual guide, he is actually a hypocrite and the enemy of his people. El Hadji Bèye, the protagonist in Sembène's Xala (1973), also undertook the holy trip solely to elevate his own status in society. He has the title "hadji" printed on his calling cards. Bèye, who is obviously not modest, uses his rank to acquire wealth and wives. Like Mabigué, he is corrupt, using Islam only to further his own ends. Sembène's heroes deviate from the original purpose of the hajj; whereas they should return from Mecca with more spiritual grace, these characters abuse this pillar of the faith to engage in the deception and exploitation of those who trust them.

In Sembène's story "Communauté" (Voltaïque, 1961), Islam is again revealed to be on the side of oppression. Having just returned from Mecca, El Hadji Niara the Cat (among the Wolof, the cat, called muus in Dakar and woundou in Saint-Louis is believed to be Muslim, but in spite of his religiosity, he still remains a cat: selfish, artful, and greedy28) undertakes a suspicious campaign to convert the rats (les dieunahs) and to create a large Muslim community in the country. With this purpose in mind, he invites the rats to a meeting under a tree. The Chief Rat Inekiev (whose name means both cunning and sly) is able to see through El Hadji Niara's scheme and devises an alternative plan: the rats will dig holes from their residences to the tree trunk. In case of trouble, they will disappear into these holes. As Inekiev suspected, when El Hadji Niara's authority is challenged, he orders his tribe of cats to attack the rats. Only those rats who
had followed Inekiev's advice survive. At the end of the story Sembène suggests that the rats' rejection of religion is what saved their lives. As dieu-nahs they say "nah" (no) to dieu (god). From that day forward they refuse all notions of belief and religious community: "Depuis ce jour-là, les dieunahs se refusent à toute croyance, et à toute communauté; et aussi, c'est depuis, qu'ils font des trous."29 This ending equates the repudiation of religion with progress for by digging holes to escape the tyranny of a cat who called himself a hadji, the rats learned to employ a new form of technology.

In his tale "Woundou El Hadji" (Contes et Lavanës, 1963), Birago Diop also uses the cat metaphor to expose the religious hypocrisy of those who unscrupulously use religion to further their own interests. As stated earlier, anyone who returned from Mecca was believed to possess additional spiritual grace and a changed nature. Diop's tale satirizes the el hadji who returns from a pilgrimage to the Holy Land only to revert back to his former vices. When Djinakhe-la-Souris, the mouse, barely escapes from El Hadji Woundou, who attempts to capture her while feigning prayer, she argues that "La Mecque n'a jamais changé personne."30 She uses this formula to justify the cat's inability to resist springing upon the enticing prey (the rats) in front of him. Even though he has been to Mecca, El Hadji Woundou, like El Hadji Niara the Cat, retains his corrupt nature.

Abdoulaye Sadji, the author of Maïmouna (1958), refers to hadj as wealthy people who organize themselves into circles or clubs based on the number of pilgrimages they have made. Sadji makes a satirical
analysis of the attire and mannerisms of these would-be marabouts, referring to their clothing, for example, as a "get-up" that they wear strictly to attract attention:

... Un groupe plus homogène arriva bientôt, la société des "jeunes Hadji." Encore des gens du cadre supérieur qui avaient eu le mérite d'épargner la moitié de leurs grosses soldes pour aller visiter les "Lieux saints de l'Islam." Ils portaient tous la même culotte marocaine, la même veste, étaient tous coiffés et couronnés à la Haroun-al-Raschid, mais point de chapelets ni de bouilloires pour les ablutions. Ils avaient la réputation de gagner partout le suffrage des femmes, ce qui multipliait les pèlerinages à la Mecque et grossissait la Société des jeunes Hadji ... Eux aussi furent reçus dans le salon où leur attifement mit une note bien orientale.

These hadj want to pass for religious men by cultivating outward appearances; in private they scarcely pay any attention to the practice of their religion. Sadji indicates that such people have neither prayer beads to recite the holy verses nor kettles to wash themselves for purification, but they never miss an opportunity to make a grand entry at the big receptions in Dakar. Tradition mandates that the hosts permit them to enter because the members of these societies belong to the old nobility. While the people and even members of the religious brotherhoods are kept outside on mats, the society of hadj is received in the salon during the reception that Bounama (the heroine's brother-in-law) organizes during the Maouloud. Such a portrayal is Sadji's way of making a mockery of their behavior.

The main purpose of the multiple pilgrimages made by these hadj is to impress women. At the reception, all these hadj express a desire to win the beautiful Maîmouna. The heroine's brother-in-law jokingly tells one suitor that he may marry Maî after he has made
three pilgrimages to Mecca. The Hadj publicly declares by way of his griot that he will go to Mecca ten times if that is necessary for him to win Maïmouna.32 Each of these hadj also has a griot to accompany him and sing his praises. At one point the reception turns into a duel of griots, each trying to outdo the other in lauding his hadj who in turn distributes money to the griot as a means of flaunting his wealth. The religious conviction of these hadj is strictly superficial; they are opportunist who use Islam as a means to become rich and respected in the society.

Sadji goes even further to address the issue of how these hadj acquired the wealth which allows them to have villas, large homes, livestock, and cars. His implication is that they must be dishonest since the salaries they earn as government employees would hardly enable them to support their current life styles. Pursuing this investigation further, the author demonstrates one of the procedures they use to acquire property. Galaye Kane, a rich young hadj who becomes Maïmouna's fiancé, bought houses that were being liquidated to pay the former owners' debts:

Sa fortune s'était développée comme un mauvais champignon. Un peu partout, à Dakar, il possédait maisons ou villas. D'autres disaient même que toute maison en liquidation le trouvait debout sur son seuil. Toujours acquérir, ce Kane!33

He used the misfortune of others to earn his fortune which the author describes as developing like a bad mushroom. Everything he owns is tainted with the unscrupulous methodology that he used to obtain it. Corrupt, Galaye uses his status as hadji to satisfy his bent for the
acquisition of material things with no respect or compassion for those less fortunate.

From the earliest portrayals of the el hadji, such as those in Ousmane Socé's Karim and Sadji's Maïmouna, the hypocrisy of the hadj pilgrims has been a recurrent theme in Senegalese fiction; however, not every hadji is portrayed as being insincere. In De Tilène au Plateau une enfance dakaroise (1975), for example, Nafissatou Diallo uses her own father as an example of a true believer who makes the pilgrimage because of his religious conviction. When he returns, he is dressed in hadj attire, and there is a great reception to receive him. Some people come to benefit from his baraka, but as the story progresses, Samba (Safi's father) returns to his state of simplicity as a Muslim believer and dedicated father. The title of el hadji is not emphasized in this portrayal. On the contrary, the essence of Samba's pilgrimage and the experience that he subsequently shares with his family are depicted as being an integral part of the simple man's faith. There may be two sides to the hadj question in fiction but, unlike Safi's father, most of the fictional hadj pilgrims are depicted as deviants who distort the true purpose of the pilgrimage.

Marabout Characters and the Jihad

Jihad or Islamic holy war is considered by some to be the sixth tenet of the Muslim faith. For the most part, novels in our study deal with contemporary social issues, and although jihad has become a modern issue in Muslim countries such as Iran, Libya, and Lebanon, Senegal has remained a relatively peaceful country in recent times
and this state of affairs has been reflected in its literature. The jihad has thus not been a major theme in any of the novels under consideration. However, in "Tara ou la légende d'El Hadj Omar" by Ousmane Socé in his collection *Contes et Légendes d' Afrique noire* (1948), the author alludes to some of the popular beliefs that surround the founder of Senegalese Tidjanism, El Hadj Omar, and Omar did wage jihad against all the neighboring peoples who refused to convert freely to the Muslim faith.

According to legend, while Omar was in Mecca, the Prophet appeared before him. Later in Jerusalem, the angel Gabriel also appeared before him and informed him that his every wish would be granted. When Omar reached the Foûta, local masters who were jealous of his intelligence tried to poison him, but although he became ill, God protected him from death. As soon as he recovered, he began to preach Tidjanism, gaining many disciples and forming them into an army. He then set out on the bloody, forced conversion of the entire Foûta. He and his army defeated several kings and even beheaded some of them. As portrayed by Socé, Omar Tall was also thought to be under divine guidance and he carried on his master's work in a particularly merciless fashion as he converted the Foûta and neighboring regions to Tidjaniic Islam.

El Hadj Omar's prayers were supposedly so efficacious that the spirits obey him. For example, he ordered one of the spirits to bring the powerful monarch Mamadou Kandia to him. In the twinkling of an eye Kandia appeared. The marabout asked Mamadou Kandia if he desired to convert to Islam. Kandia never affirmed his desire in this
regard, but he did say that he would convert to the religion of whoever had transported him, if that person would send him back to his own country. Kandia also said that he would return and give his capturer seven hundred white horses. El Hadj Omar told the monarch to close his eyes; instantly Kandia found himself back in his homeland. He had been humiliated; the griots and his wives encouraged him to fight El Hadj Omar, referring to him as "un simple marabout." But a fearful Kandia kept his word, took the horses to El Hadj Omar, and converted to the tidjane rite. El Hadj Omar used the threat of jihad and his supernatural powers to force Kandia's conversion.

Socé's story continues the tale of El Hadj Omar's other miraculous conquests until he was betrayed by one of his own warriors and taken from the earth by God so that the enemy could not kill him. Accounts such as "Tara" add considerable support to the mysticism that already surrounds historical marabouts such as Cheikh Amadou Bamba, El Hadj Malick Sy, and others. The fact that El Hadj Omar was a violent warrior who killed his own people in the name of Islam has no bearing on his greatness. Written by an assimilated Senegalese author, "Tara" emphasizes the marabout's brutality and disrespect for other people's rights. It thus serves as an attack on the Islamic jihad and an implicit criticism upon the way in which the Foûta region became profoundly Muslim.

El Hadj Omar and other marabout warriors who followed in his footsteps succeeded in conquering regions where people practiced traditional fetishistic forms of religion. They used brute force to make the people kneel before them, but nowhere in "Tara" is it mentioned
that Islam won the hearts of the people. Warrior marabouts killed many people and forced many conversions but it is doubtful that most of these people were sincere converts. Since Islam was imposed upon people in this fashion, early converts often continued to practice their fetish beliefs while wearing the cloak of Islam. The spread of an authentic Islam was also impeded by the fact that it is essentially a religion of the book, whereas most people in the region were incapable of reading the Koran.

Yet, El Hadj Omar's empire continues to exist in the sense that certain Muslims in the Foûta never refer to the history of the area prior to Islamic penetration. Cheikh Hamidou Kane, the author of L'Aventure ambiguë and a native of the Foûta, equates the culture of the Diallobë with the religion Islam, as if a previous form of religion had never been practiced there.

The fanaticism that marabouts generate in believers as a means of pushing them into a holy war finds its origin in a promise made by the Prophet Mohamed: every believer who dies in a jihad will supposedly receive pardon for all his sins and go directly to heaven. Fanatics have always considered their marabouts as the Prophet's replacements; thus these believers submit themselves to the marabout and obey his every command, even the command to wage war against innocent people, because the marabout promises that God will reward them. However, according to Maitre Thierno in L'Aventure ambiguë, the authority and power that marabouts acquire unethically in the name of God are serious sins; more serious than the fanaticism of the faithful. He points out that certain marabouts serve God only out
of a desire to control other men. When the people initiate war against this type of marabout, some believers judge their actions as a revolt against God, but Thierno regards a war against the unethical marabout as the "holiest of all the holy wars."

In most instances when Senegalese novelists describe the personal religious life of the marabout and his adherence to the basic requirements of Islam (creed, prayer, alms, fasting, or pilgrimage), their portrayals depict men whose motives are questionable and whose behavior does not reflect Koranic principles. They usually have enough outward trappings to link them with the Islamic faith in the public eye, but their ability to inspire spiritual growth in others remains limited because they tend to be poor or false representatives of the religion in society as in the fiction that mirrors it.

In addition to scrutinizing the marabout's spirituality, writers often provide a critical view of the marabout's role in Senegalese society. We have distinguished three basic types of marabout characters, although a marabout may possess traits of more than one of these types: the marabout-maître (the Koranic schoolmaster); the marabout-prêtre (the priest who facilitates in marabout practices involving traditional religious practices); and the marabout-vilain (the charlatan or false marabout). In the remaining chapters, the distinguishing characteristics of these marabout types will be discussed as they appear in the novels which serve as commentaries upon marabouts who exist in the real world.
CHAPTER IV
"LE MARABOUT-MAÎTRE": MARABOUTISM AND
THE PROBLEM OF EDUCATION

For Muslims, traditional education is not limited to the home. It also takes place in the Koranic school or "daara." The problem of education in this context has repeatedly been posed in Senegalese fiction ranging from the earliest novel in our study, Diagne's _Les Trois Volontés de Malic_ (1920), to Sèye's recent _Un Trou dans le miroir_ (1983). When describing the childhood of fictional protagonists, a Senegalese author generally depicts the religious formation they received. This education often begins as early as age four, when they are placed under the tutelage of a marabout reputed for his religious knowledge. Many of these fictional accounts are based on autobiographical or semi-autobiographical data. Many novelists point out the cruelty, incompetency, and exploitative tendencies of certain marabouts and suggest that the French school system was superior to Koranic school and more beneficial. Few writers portray the marabout-maître in a positive light, but when such portrayals do appear, they almost always focus upon an exemplary figure. Some novelists also point out the conflict that the intrusion of the Western school brought about between the youth and their elders.

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The "Daara"

During the time of the Wolof empire, there were several different types of marabout. One was the "serin fakk tal" (serin means master in Wolof; fakk tal refers to branches cut from forest trees). The serin fakk tal carried out essentially religious functions and had virtually no relations with those who held political power. His main role was that of schoolmaster or "boroom daara" and his responsibility was to establish a daara (Koranic learning community), where he would teach the Koran to pupils (ndongo) and disciples (talibé). These Koranic schools represented the first attempt to achieve literacy for the masses in the area, for writing systems existed in Africa before that time, but only a minority of the people knew how to use them. The curriculum placed primary emphasis upon recitation of the Koran, but it also included grammar, exegesis, theology, and law. The method of teaching was classical, for the child was expected to read and recite the Koran from memory. He was not allowed to ask questions or challenge the master. He generally had to beg for his daily bread, and he often worked in the master's fields. At daybreak and in the evening, the disciples often started a fire from dead branches that had been cut from the trees (fakk tal). They would then seat themselves around the fire and use its light to study the lessons they had transcribed on wooden chalkboards or tablettes. This explains why the marabout-maitre or boroom daara (master or owner of the daara) is also called serin fakk tal (master of the fire).
The scene of disciples seated around the hearth is carefully documented in both Kane's *L'Aventure ambiguë* and Samb's *Matraqué par le destin ou la vie d'un talibé*. Although both Kane and Samb are devout, practicing Muslims, they differed sharply in their views toward Koranic school methodology at the time they wrote their respective novels.

*L'Aventure ambiguë* opens with the disciples seated around the hearth. The marabout, Maître Thierno, is drilling the hero Samba Diallo, to oblige him to make a perfect recitation of particular Koranic verses. The reader senses the presence of the fire, since Thierno is holding a piece of burning wood in one hand:


  Le maître qui tenait maintenant une bûche ardente, tirée du foyer tout proche regardait et écoutait l'enfant.

Thierno might use the burning log as a disciplinary measure if Samba fails to recite his verses flawlessly. But fire is also used in a symbolic sense as a metaphor for God's Word. It often serves and suggests purification, for God's Word is thought to purify the soul. Maître Thierno's main purpose in life, after cultivating his own spirituality, is to shape the souls of his talibés. As a result, he uses rods, burning logs, or whatever else he has at hand to obtain an impeccable recitation of God's Word.

Samb too recalls the difficulties of the hearth experience and the dangers it implied. Before returning from the fields, each "talibé" had to search in the darkness for a large bundle of wooden logs (*fakk tal*), which were to be transported on the top of his head.
back to the daara. One danger arose from the fact that there were snakes crawling among the dead branches. Once the talibé returned, they were not allowed to rest. On the contrary, they had to light a fire around which they sat to read their lessons under the threat of the marabout's whip:

Il fallait allumer un grand feu de bois autout duquel nous prîmes place, en nous tenant accroupis, pour lire, à la faveur de la lueur avare de l'âtre, les versets coraniques gravés sur nos tablettes ... En plus, l'oncle tenait également à entendre nos voix, de sa case, faute de quoi, il venait avec une grosse branche d'arbre à la main nous prendre et distribuer généreusement, tout autour, des coups bien sentis ... Samb's portrayal here suggests that the marabout-maître was unconcerned about the children's safety or their need to rest. However, he himself would rest while he forced them to study and demanded absolute obedience. Ironically, he would leave his hut only to come and whip them, if he could not hear them reciting although he didn't feel that their recitations merited the assurance of his physical presence.

A serin fakk tal's importance could be measured by the number of pupils who followed his teaching. These pupils could be sent to him by their parents, but they also included disciples who came on their own, drawn by his reputation. A dedicated master who realizes that his reputation and honor require a great expenditure of energy in serving God and teaching the words of God to his disciples, Maître Thierno concerns himself as little as possible with the necessities of his physical life. If the marabout-maître's role is first of all to be a living example of the essence of Islam and then to disciple others, Maître Thierno is indeed a role model who had become known
throughout the land for his passionate dedication to Islam and the teaching of the Koran.

Unfortunately, the idealized image of Maitre Thierno and his daara are not characteristic of most Senegalese literary portrayals of marabouts and the Koranic schools they directed. Many Senegalese novelists challenge the severity of the boroom daara, and autobiographical accounts by former pupils of Koranic schools often recall the austere discipline that reigned in them. Some of the schoolmasters depicted in these accounts even display a severe brutality toward the children, especially when they are carried away by their anger toward them. In general, Senegalese fictional depictions of the Koranic schools focus upon the unpleasantness of the individual's experiences there.

"Boroom Daara" and the Physical Abuse of the Talibés

The traditional system of education was particularly unsuitable for Magamou, the hero of Fall's La Plaie. Magamou's experiences at the hearth of the marabout are all negative and lead him to revolt not only against the Koranic school but also against the village in which he lives. According to Magamou, the pedagogy of his marabout could be summed up as the unlimited use of all types of corporal punishment:

Ce qu'en fait, je détestais, au plus haut point, c'était l'école coranique, surtout mon maître, une brute dont toute la pédagogie se résumait à l'emploi immodéré de coups de toutes les sortes. Ah! je me souviendrai toujours de la morsure des cravaches pleuvant sur nos échines, de leurs rafales nos meurtrissant les orgilles, de leurs bourrades nous labourant les flancs . . .
At the daara in Fall's novel the marabout's blows to all parts of the boys' bodies suggest mistreatment rather than the discipline that helps young people to learn. For Magamou, the marabout-maitre is not a teacher, but a child abuser.

Cheikh Aliou Ndao also calls the methodology of the boroom daara into question from the point of view of a female character, Tante Astou, the sister-in-law of the protagonist in Buur Tilleen Roi de la Medina. Astou condemns the sadistic, perverted behavior of the marabout, who loves to pinch the thighs of his girl pupils. From the beginning, she rebels against such treatment by questioning the marabout and by showing her disdain for the corporal punishment delivered by the master himself or his assistants:

Tante Astou n'aime pas le marabout dont elle condamne les gestes sadiques, pervers, équivoques. Le bonhomme prend un malin plaisir à pincer les cuisses des fillettes en fermant les yeux . . . Dès le début, Tante Astou se rebelle; précoce, elle pose des questions . . . Elle déteste le punitions corporelles généreusement distribuées par les assistants ou le Maître lui-même.

In this sense Ndao is also portraying the marabout as a child abuser. In fact this marabout consciously makes physical contact with the children entrusted to his care even to the point of abusing them sexually. Such a strong emphasis on the physical aspects of the marabout's treatment of his pupils prevents Astou from seeing any spiritual significance in the Koranic school.

Amar Samb's novel also contains many accounts of a marabout's brutality toward his pupils. Sent by force to the daara of his Uncle Tolé in the village of Badar, Omar Guévane, the protagonist in Matraqué par le destin, refers to the entire village as "l'enfer."
Omar is taken from the loving care of his mother and the familiar surroundings of his native village of Kédémer only to be placed in the hands of a malicious uncle who dislikes him. Days and nights are unpleasant in Badar, and there is no relief from the hunger, sickness, and fatigue that reign in the lives of the talibès. For this reason, he uses expressions like "le paradis" and "le terre promise" in referring to his intended destination during the several attempts he makes to escape from Badar.

In Au delà de la vertu, Mamadou Dia Mbaye presents a more positive portrayal of a boroom daara, although he does not neglect to mention the rigid discipline and unbending attitude of the marabout-maitre. The hero of the story, Moussa Tine, is one of the most virtuous Muslims ever portrayed in the Senegalese novel, but even he does not escape the master's whip. The marabout, Maître Makhtar, punishes him for the least mistake, even when the child is innocent. Some of the pupils decide to play a joke on the master, whom they refer to as l'oustaze (master of the Koran), by placing chewing gum in his seat. Moussa, trying to remove the gum, is caught by the master, who relentlessly brutalizes him to punish him for a crime he did not commit:

Scandalisé par tant d'effronterie, Maître Makhtar fonça résolument sur l'audacieux. Arrivé à sa hauteur, il le vit effectivement s'acharner sur du chewing-gum. Lors, il ne chercha plus à comprendre. Moussa n'eut que le temps d'entendre le claquement du fouet. La seconde d'après, il ressentit comme une lame lui "labourer" le dos. Pris au dépourvu, il se retourna et reçut une gifte qui l'envoya rouler de l'autre côté de la chaise. Voyant le Maître foncer de nouveau sur lui, Moussa cria son innocence. Mais "l'oustaze" ne voulut rien entendre. Il envoya à l'enfant cinq autres coups de fouets qui lui flétrirent les lobes
de l'oreille. Le corps ensanglante, Moussa s'accroupit aux pieds du maître en implorant pitié. Fatigué de le frapper, "l'oustaze" lui donne de violents coups de pieds dans les flancs, dont le dernier, particulièrement brutal, le projeta quelques mètres plus loin. Fou de colère, il hurla à Moussa de se redresser et de reprendre sa tablette. Terrassé par la douleur, l'enfant fit un effort surhumain pour s'exécuter ...

Maître Makhtar's intentions are probably to demonstrate that the marabout-maître's authority is never to be challenged and that he himself is to be respected at all times. However, his behavior suggests that he is a man who harbors some type of hostility of which Moussa accidently becomes the object. Maître Makhtar refuses to listen to the boy's pleas of innocence, and the severity of the punishment administered implies that he is a man who has lost control of himself. In contrast, when Moussa's father, Modou Tine, consults him about the wisdom of enrolling Moussa in secular school, Maître Makhtar appears to be of sound mind and sincerely interested in the boy's welfare. He reassures Modou that the Prophet encourages believers to learn and to obtain knowledge in all areas of life, and he declares that Moussa should definitely attend school. However, in his role as schoolmaster, Makhtar is depicted as a child abuser.

Although such descriptions seem to portray the marabout as a man who abuses children, it is not entirely appropriate to employ Western criteria in judging his actions. To understand his approach to education, we must first examine the Muslim concept of "la Parole" or the Word of God. According to Islamic belief, God's Word created the world and is the world. It is not to be tampered with or changed. For this reason, translations of the Koran are unacceptable to the
devout Muslim. A true disciple must repeat the Word as it exists in the original Arabic text without modification. The goal of the marabout is therefore to assist (or oblige) the disciple to eliminate all obstacles that might prevent his mind from achieving a perfect absorption of the "logos." Furthermore, his severe and rigorous discipline enables his pupils to develop the ability to meditate and to concentrate. These abilities are important because it is only through the process of meditation that the logos penetrates into the soul of the believer and allows him to commune with God.

According to the marabout Maitre Thierno, God in His mercy sent His Word down to man, who is no more than a miserable piece of earth. Using Thierno as his porte-parole in this instance, Kane contrasts the greatness of God and the insignificance of man. God's Word is pure, mystical, and beautiful. Thierno's pupil Samba Diallo loves and values the Word and he agrees with his master that whoever fails to repeat this Word properly should have his tongue cut a thousand times, for even such a punishment seems better to him than spiritual death. This idea is clearly present as Samba Diallo reflects back upon one time when Thierno chastized him for having garbled a passage from the Koran:

Et toi, misérable moisissure de la terre, quand tu as l'honneur de les répéter après lui, tu te négliges au point de les profaner. Tu mérites qu'on te coupe mille fois la langue . . .

Une fois encore, tremblant et haletant, il répeta la phrase étincelante . . . C'était une parole que jalonnait la souffrance, c'était une parole venue de Dieu, elle était un miracle, elle était telle que Dieu lui-même l'avait prononcée. Le maître avait raison. La parole qui vient de Dieu doit être dite exactement, telle qu'il Lui avait plu de la façonner. Qui l'oblitére mérite la mort . . .
Maître Thierno sees Samba as "un don de Dieu," and he has a special affection for him. In the hope that Samba will attain the highest level of spirituality and maybe someday replace him as the spiritual master of the Diallobé, he demands a mechanical and precise repetition of the Koran from him. In actual fact, Thierno is successful in educating Samba. The boy learns to "dominer la vie et la mort." He learns that the Muslim must submit himself body and soul, that he must be willing to die to the flesh. He must live his death in order to know the truth about the Word and its relation to the world of illusion in which he is living.

When Samba is taken from the marabout to be trained in the French school system, he eventually goes to France, where he studies Western materialist philosophy, but he soon perceives that he is no longer "living his death." Although Maître Thierno dies while Samba is in France, his impact on Samba remains so strong that even after his death he serves as the young man's alter ego. In a Paris street, the master's face appears to him:

... là en face de lui, dans la lumière jaune et parmi la foule entassée, le visage du maître des Diallobé avait surgì. Samba Diallo ferma les yeux, mais le visage ne bougea pas.

"Maître, appela-t-il en pensée, que me reste-t-il? Les ténèbres me gagnent. Je ne brûle plus au coeur des êtres et des choses."

Le visage du maître ne bougeait pas. Il ne riait pas, il ne se fachait pas. Il était grave et attentif, Samba Diallo, de nouveau, l' invoqua.

"Toi, qui ne t'es jamais distrait de la sagesse des ténèbres, qui, seul, détiens la Parole, et as la voix forte suffisamment pour rallier et guider ceux qui se sont perdus, j' implore en grâce ta clameur dans l' ombre, l' éclat de ta voix, afin de me ressusciter à la tendresse secrète..."

Mais le visage avait disparu.
This apparition reinforces the idea that Maître Thierno is the reflection of the Word that lasts forever; it also implies Samba's knowledge that Thierno will never leave him. In Thierno's mind, corporal punishment accomplishes two noble goals: (1) it fixes the pupils' undivided attention on the Divine Word and (2) it shapes their bodies and souls for the "dure école de la vie" so that they might attain "aux niveaux les plus élevés de la grandeur humaine." The charisma and generous-hearted nobility of this marabout help explain how Samba could undergo the daily cruelty (smacks, the whip, burning logs, etc.) without losing his enthusiasm for learning or his admiration for the master.

Many marabouts undoubtedly wanted to teach well and dedicated themselves to forming model disciples, but unlike Kane, most Senegalese novelists focus not upon the success but upon the shortcomings of the boroom daara they depict. Most marabout-maîtres depicted in their works lack a profound understanding of Arabic. In some instances, a marabout may have had no intention to teach others, but because he was reputed to know the Koran by heart, parents might ask him to take their children as ndongo. A lack of sufficient preparation for teaching and a disinterest in the educational process probably bred the frustration that drove some marabout-maîtres to mistreat their talibés.

Pedagogical Incompetency

The pedagogy of the marabout generally consists of teaching the young talibé by means of rote memorization and a recitation of the
Koran. This method ignores the critical spirit, and no effort is made to have the child rationally understand what he or she is reciting. After seven or eight years of schooling, the ndongo who began at the age of five or six is expected to know the Koran by heart. No exam is ever given. Most marabouts do not teach the pupils the liturgical process of prayer, and they do not take their disciples to Friday tisbaar (second of the five daily prayers), nor do they make the disciples go to the mosque on their own. The children do not have Arabic books. During the lesson, the master writes the first lines of the first hizb (verse) on the writing board. He then reads it to the child, and the child sings it for several days until he knows it perfectly. The master never draws a general rule, and he never encourages critical thinking on the part of his disciples. According to a study in 1917, 95 percent of the children who had completed the Koranic school could neither read, nor write, nor understand Arabic, and the situation has not changed appreciably since then.¹⁴

There exists a hierarchy of serin or boroom daara. There are scholars (savants or boroom xam-xam, owners of knowledge) and saints (boroom barke, owners of baraka or blessing). The boroom xam-xam includes three subdivisions: kaan (those who have a literal knowledge of the Koran in that they can recite all the verses by heart), foore (those who have done advanced study in either theology, ritual and law, or Koranic exegesis), and the tamsiir (the title of a marabout who is truly learned in all the sacred texts). If the tamsiir becomes well known or founds a brotherhood, he moves into the category of the boroom barke.¹⁵
The Senegalese novelists were critical of the marabout's methodology because apparently few of them ever had an advanced scholar for a master. The "petits marabouts" or kaan, who themselves only had a literal or rote knowledge of the Koran, were incapable of explaining the meaning of the texts to their talibés. This fact of course does not go unnoticed by the writers, who point it out repeatedly.

Samba Diallo, who starts Koranic school at the age of seven, loves the verses that he recites, for he is impressed by their mysticism and their beauty, although he does not understand them. The marabout makes the boy suffer so that he might appreciate the Word, but as of yet there is no connection between his mind and his spirit. Samba senses a meaning in his spirit; however, the master has not initiated him into the verbal understanding of what he feels.

Fara, the hero of Socé's Mirages de Paris, stated Koranic school at the age of six. He loves the music of the Koran, and he passionately recites the verses, but he too is profoundly ignorant of their meaning:

Ses parents l'avaient mis à l'école coranique à l'âge de six ans. Dès qu'il avait su lire l'arabe, il avait aimé réciter vertigeusement, passionément, les textes sacrés, d'autant plus mystérieux qu'il n'en comprenait pas la signification.

La musique merveilleuse du Coran!  

Fara's marabout probably emphasizes a sensual mastery of the verses. It is quite possible that he never provided or even suggested a meaning that the talibé could articulate in his own words.

Malick Fall's hero, Magamou in La Plaie, describes the marabout as a cowherder incapable of explaining anything: "Nous ne comprenions
rien aux leçons d'un vacher incapable de quelque explication que ce fut. Nous nous égosillons toute la journée, ressassant n'importe quoi.\textsuperscript{18} The master's incompetency explains the talibés' failure to learn; according to Magamou they shouted loudly as if mad in a meaningless exercise. Many pupils, like Magamou, resented the marabout for making them recite the Koran day after day with no comprehension of its meaning.

Tante Astou in Buur Tilleen Roi de la Médina asks questions because she wants to understand the Arabic characters she has written on her chalkboard. She is tired of memorizing "des formules que seul le rythme aide à retenir."\textsuperscript{19} Astou found the process to be boring and unstimulating, for the short, meaningless formulas meant nothing to her, as more practical guidelines to spiritual growth might have done.

In Matraqué par le destin, Samb describes his Uncle Tolé as a farmer who had gained a reputation because of his ability to recite the Koran. Yet, Samb tells us, Tolé does not understand a single word of what he recites. His ignorance leads him to become the tormenter of the children placed in his care by fanatical fathers:

\begin{quote}
Tolé cultivateur, son violon d'Ingrès c'était la récitation du Coran par cœur, il passait pour le plus grand réciteur de ce livre dans toute la région. Il récitait le livre comme s'il buvait de l'eau.
Cependant il n'en savait pas le sens, il n'y comprenait absolument rien, pas un seul mot; il se contentait de photographier mentalement et d'ingurgiter les versets ...
Sa violence, sa stupidité, son esprit borné, son manque de charme faisaient de lui un bourreau d'enfants. Sous prétexte qu'il savait par cœur le Coran, des pères fanatiques lui confiaient leurs enfants. Mais Tolé, au lieu de les ménager, de les traiter comme des petits élèves, des "dongos," les frappait comme des ânes ...
\end{quote}
According to Samb's portrayal of Tolé, this marabout-maitre's greatest error is not that he does not know the Koran, but that he does not try to improve his knowledge. Tolé lacks the finesse necessary to provide a positive role model for the young people entrusted to his care. Because he has little concern for his own education and even less commitment to his pupils, he resents and mistreats them.

One author, Cheikh Hamidou Kane, points out a positive value in the marabout's use of physical force in teaching the Koran; for him it challenges the talibé to learn the self-discipline necessary for spiritual growth. However, other novelists suggest that corporal punishment in Koranic schools is related to the marabout's lack of knowledge and inability to teach effectively; as a result the marabout takes out his frustration on his pupils. Corporal punishment is not the only criticism directed against Koranic school education by Senegalese novelists, who also focus upon the practice of making children beg and work in the fields. Some marabouts did not teach at all and merely exploited the children.

**Begging and Parental Abdication**

To learn humility, the ndongo often go about the village from door to door, improvising litanies to exhort the faithful and to beg for food and money. Since giving to charity is a significant element of the Islamic faith, those who practice the religion generally comply with pleas directed toward them by the talibés. However, the disciples are obliged to bring back what they have collected to the marabout, and he would usually take the best of everything, leaving
only the most undesirable portions for the talibés. Since the living conditions at the daara are extremely poor, most disciples never get enough to eat. Many die from malnutrition, and others die from wounds inflicted upon them during Koranic sessions or while working in the fields. Instead of humility the ndongos often learned only suffering and deprivation.

The hero of Fall's La Plaie, for example, is horrified by the need to beg. He describes the humiliation of the daily rounds and the reactions of the villagers. According to his account, all the talibés wore rags and were exposed to the morning cold; they had to eat the suspicious-looking leftovers of meals offered to them by the people. Magamou himself was often emotionally wounded by the cruel behavior of the housewives, who treated him with snarls, reprimands, and humiliating silences. As for the rich, they rushed to stare at the little beggars. Magamou's inferiority complex was heightened by the actions of people who gave to him, when it was obvious that they would have preferred not to. At the same time, he understood that some of the villagers, who felt sorry for him and therefore gave him a farthing, would have thrown money in the trash before giving it to his master.21 It appears that many of the people resented the fact that they were compelled to give. Such people considered the daily rounds of the talibés to be an annoyance. Others had a negative attitude toward the marabout who commissioned children to beg for him, because they knew that he was the one who would profit from their gifts. Within this context, it becomes apparent that begging on the part of the ndongos often did little to improve their
humility; furthermore, it did not help the faithful to develop a positive attitude toward the zakkat (alms).

Begging even brings about the death of Seck's protagonist in the film script Njangaan. At the age of six, Njangaan is taken far away by his father to the Rip region, where he is to be trained in the Koran by the marabout Serigne Moussa Drame, a man of dubious character. The serigne, who stays in seclusion, rarely teaches, living on his reputation, money and gifts from parents, and the collections of the ndongo. At the daara, Njangaan is whipped and mistreated. He runs away, but his father forces him to return. After several years the marabout's oldest son, who is Njangaan's schoolmaster, feels drawn to the big city of Dakar. Because Njangaan is so gifted at improvising litanies, the son asks the father Serigne Moussa to let him take Njangaan with him. Njangaan is sent into the streets of Dakar to beg. He is even given a quota that he must fill each day. One day Njangaan is crushed to death by a passing car. The episode shows how the marabout feels that he owns Njangaan and can do anything he pleases with him. According to many novelists' depictions, this is exactly what happens when a child becomes a boarder at the marabout's residence or when he or she is given to the marabout for several years; in such instances, the ndongo is often treated like a prisoner. Instead of being portrayed as a teacher, the marabout-maitre is depicted as a jail warden. However, the marabout is not alone in his guilt. One critic, Mbaye Cham, has pointed out the culpability of the child's parents:
In Njangaan begging no longer functions as a means of instilling humility in the talibe. Instead it is transformed into a meal and money-producing activity for the benefit of the Serigne and his family. . . . Cherif Adramé Seck questions the unconditional transfer of parental authority in the name of religion to the Serigne. Such "abduction" absolves the Serigne of any responsibility whatsoever and leads to the prevalence of excessive physical abuse, malnutrition, and dangers to which the talibe are exposed.22

Njangaan's father's primary concern for him was that he become as Islamized as possible and follow the traditions of the Muslim faith. So, against the pleas of the child's mother he "gives" the child to the marabout, a man about whom he knew very little. When Serigne Moussa comes to the village to announce the boy's death, Modou's fatalism and resignation are ironic. Passively accepting the marabout's proposition that Njangaan's death "is the will of Allah," he asks no questions about the details of his son's death and is not concerned about the fate of the other children. The key factor in the death of Modou War's only child is his fanaticism which leads to his refusal to see and hear the truth about child abuse by marabouts, although he himself was probably once a victim of it. But Allah, the God of Islam, is the one who receives the blame.

Again it is Cheikh Hamidou Kane who seems to glorify the perspective of parental abdication and the virtues of begging as a means to cultivate humility in the ndongo. For over forty years, Maître Thierno has dedicated his life to teaching. In the land of the Diallobé, the most distinguished families disputed the honor of sending their sons to him. For Thierno, the honor is to be able to "ouvrir à Dieu l'intelligence des fils de l'homme."23 Teachers like Maître Thierno only agree to accept the child after having seen him.
He can apparently discern at first sight whether the child has an aptitude for the mystical, and that is why he takes the unusual step of asking Samba's father for permission to educate the young man. Under normal circumstances, people beg him to accept their sons into his school, but the Master saw immediately that Samba was exceptionally gifted and regarded him as "de la graine dont le pays des Diallobé faisait ses maîtres." Confident in Thierno's wisdom, Samba's father agrees to the proposal and sends Samba to him when the young boy reached the age of six.

Begging poses no problem for Kane's hero. His only irritation comes from the jealousy of his fellow ndongos. No one is better than Samba at captivating the villagers by the ringing of his voice, for he knows how to make it particularly moving during his rounds. Of all Thierno's disciples, Samba was indeed the most gifted. He could find words to shake the hearts of all believers, even those who were selfish and uncommitted. However, most talibés do not have Samba Diallo's gift for the improvisation of edifying litanies. Novelists, excluding Cheikh Hamidou Kane, suggest that when a parent shifts the responsibility for his child to a Koranic schoolmaster, he is in fact abandoning the child and exposing him to all sorts of risks. Fictional accounts document that marabouts who have complete control of other people's children often mistreat them. Since these boroom daara do not have the means to adequately feed and clothe the ndongos they force them to beg under the pretext of teaching them humility. However, he is the primary benefactor of what they receive because the talibés have no personal rights; in essence they are
begging to provide for him. This practice is criticized by novelists, many of whom claim to have actually experienced such treatment from marabouts, and who now challenge the crimes marabouts commit against children while feigning to cultivate spiritual virtues in them.

**Youth Labor Exploitation**

In some novels, physical labor also combines with begging to discredit further the Koranic school system. Rural talibès are more likely to suffer from the strain of child labor than are their counterparts in the city. In the city, the daara meets in the courtyard under the trees, under the veranda of the house, or in the open air, and when a village child lives at home, his experience of the Koranic school resembles that of city children, but when the daara is in a rural setting, one of the marabout-maître's aims is supposedly to foster a sense of hard work and self-reliance by requiring the talibé to do agricultural work. However, the application of this ideal often results in the talibé serving as free labor in the fields of the Serigne.

Samb records the talibé's schedule in *Matraquê par le destin*. Little time is allocated for real teaching. As soon as the talibès awaken in the morning, they must rise and go to the fields or scour the bush to look for bamboo and other materials that the marabout uses in building huts and making baskets to be sold at the village market. At noon when the disciples return they take their bowls (*battû*) and go around the concession to beg for something to feed the marabout
and themselves. After they have eaten, they study until three o'clock in the afternoon, at which time they return to the fields. In this situation, studies are depicted as a sort of break in the work routine, a recreation period during a time schedule organized around labor for the marabout's profit. The marabout is the only one who benefits from this system. In fact, the description suggests the relationship between the slave and the slave master. Talibés spent the least amount of time fulfilling the purpose for which they are sent to the daara, for they are given little or no time to learn the Koran.

Magamou in Fall's La Plaie was horrified at everything that reminded him of the Koranic school. As soon as he was old enough, he left the village where it was located. In Matraqué par le destin, Omar's attempts to escape from the daara are repeatedly foiled. Each time he is forced to return and submit to a severe whipping. He is only rescued from this situation when he develops an eye disease and his mother intervenes and sends him to the French school. Most protagonists in these novels display a heartfelt dislike for Koranic school and are driven by the desire to escape from the marabout-maitre's reign of terror. In the Senegalese novel, the original purpose of the Koranic school is often perverted such that its educational function is relegated to a secondary status after working in the fields for the master's benefit. For characters who are wards of the marabout, the Koranic school is depicted as a type of penal institution where they are punished and used as forced laborers and from which their deepest desire is to escape.
Cultural Conflict: Koranic vs. French School

From the birth of the Senegalese novel to the most recent works of Senegalese fiction, a principal thematic concern has been cultural conflict, which centers around education and juxtaposes the _boroom daara_ with the Western schoolmaster. Senegalese novelists repeatedly draw parallels between the French form of education and the method used in the Koranic school. In most instances the French school is depicted as superior to traditional education.

In _Les Trois Volontés de Malic_, for example, Diagne pays homage to the French educational system. Himself culturally assimilated, he actually wrote his book as a school reader for African pupils. Drawing upon local situations to illustrate his thesis, he sought to encourage younger and older Senegalese to accept the colonizer as a friend who had saved them from barbarism. When the secular school is established in Malic's village, his cousins are among the first chosen to attend, and they constantly boast about their new learning environment. Madiop, one of the cousins, contrasts the marabout with the teacher at his new school:

... l'instituteur n'est pas comme le marabout. Il ne torture pas les petits enfants: il ne connaît pas Manitoni et auprès de lui on ne voit ni cravache ni martinet ne baguettes de tamarin. L'instituteur est l'amis de ses élèves, il est leur grand camarade, il cause avec eux, leur explique tout, et leur apprend des choses utiles et très amusantes.

According to Madiop's testimony, the marabout was remembered for having tortured the children and using whips, scourges, and tree rods to discipline them. Unlike the _boroom daara_, the French schoolmaster is the pupils' friend not their executioner. He talks with them,
explains things, and even laughs with them. Diagne is implying here that the marabout's personal contact with his students is all negative.

Like Malic, nearly all of the heroes and heroines who experienced both Koranic and French schools have defended the superiority of the French system. What seems to impress them most is the fact that the secular teacher is concise and easy to understand. According to Samba Diallo in L'Aventure ambiguë, Maître Thierno took time to explain the meaning of the Koranic verses, as if he had all the time in the world. Unfortunately, Samba's Koranic schooling was interrupted precisely at the point when the Master was about to initiate him into the meaning of the verses that he had for so long recited without comprehension. No such frustration is experienced at the school of the colonizer. In the French classroom he says, "j'entrais de plain-pied dans un univers où tout était, de prime abord, compréhension merveilleuse et communion totale..." The colonizer's alphabet and his language initiated Samba immediately into the world of logical reasoning and satisfied his thirsting intellect. However, this immediate comprehensibility was not necessarily positive, for a people's culture and philosophy are enclosed within their language. To take on their language is to penetrate into their world; if one plunges completely into the "world of the other," one risks losing himself in it. Samba himself suggests that the white man's strength lies in his alphabet and that something in this alphabet enabled him to conquer the Diallobé.
In Matraqué par le destin, Samb contends that the French school is not only the children's salvation, but also a godsend for all Black people in the former French colonies. Even though Arabic had been taught in West Africa as early as the ninth century, the overwhelming majority of the Toucouleur, the Peuhl, the Wolof, the Serere, the Malinke, the Mandingue, and the other peoples of Senegal had remained illiterate until the French occupied the area and began to offer opportunities for instruction in the French language. Senegal should have had an indigenous literature in Arabic, Samb believes, and he blames the marabouts for the vacuum which exists instead:

... par la faute des marabouts, cette richesse en puissance, ces dispositions inutilisées se sont volatilisées. Heureusement qu'il nous reste le Français. C'est qu'il était nécessaire dans un pays comme le Sénégal dont la majorité de la population est islamique et ne comprend pas l'arabe d'avoir tout au moins un minimum d'explication et de pratique ...

The marabouts had centuries to teach the Senegalese people the Arabic language. However, most of the marabouts did not know the language well enough themselves to teach it properly. The small number of specialists did not freely share their knowledge of the language. Senegal should have had a double literature in French and Arabic, but because the marabout-mâtres did everything but teach, the opportunity has disappeared. Ironically, it was the colonial occupation of the French which endowed Senegal with a national language and a national literature. Most Senegalese are Muslim but they don't understand Arabic. As a result, the French language serves them as a vehicle for communication and explanation.
Whether assimilated or militantly anti-colonialist, Senegalese novelists tend to agree that the introduction of the French language, the direct result of Western schooling, was a positive result of Senegal's subjugation to France. They themselves write in French, manipulating the white man's language and using it as a literary and political tool. It provides the people with a form of written communication since their own languages, for the most part, remained untranscribed until Senegalese linguists who speak French began to transcribe them. This development has led to the increased use of Senegalese languages, particularly Wolof, in the area of written communication.

The Marabout-Maitre and the Conflict of Generations

The conflict between Islamic and Western forms of education is paralleled by a conflict of generations. Parents steeped in traditional ways are repeatedly challenged by offspring who are being educated in the new way. These conflicts in turn reflect the opposition between a desire to respect African traditions and a desire for material progress. Within this context, the problem of the old Wolof caste system often surfaces. In the novel, as in real life, parents agree to send their children to Western schools, but they seldom fully understand the implications of this decision. In this setting, the tradition of maraboutic Islam stands in opposition to progress. Children either abandon the daara altogether, or the marabout is faced with the task of religiously educating young people who are now under the strong influence of Western acculturation and the appeal of modern technology.
Malic's first wish in *Les Trois Volontés de Malic* is to attend the French school, and he becomes obsessed with this desire. Sokhatile, his mother, wants to send him to a marabout to learn the Koran. She would prefer that Malic become a marabout and safeguard the traditions of his people. As a marabout, he could earn his living from offerings. Also, to be a marabout is an honorable vocation for someone of his caste. Yet Malic's desire is so strong that he threatens to drown himself in the ocean if his mother will not allow him to attend the new school. To resolve the conflict, the old griot Yakham suggests the Malic be permitted to attend the French school as long as he maintains his enrollment at the marabout's hearth. This pattern, already suggested in Diagne's 1920 novel, continues as a common practice in Senegalese society today. Children enrolled in public schools often report to the daara after school, on holidays, or on weekends. After his wish is granted, Malic chooses to defy tradition on other levels as well. His third wish, for example, is to become a blacksmith, even though the smithing profession is reserved for members of an inferior caste. Malic is not preoccupied with the traditions of his people but wants to make his own choices. His decision to become a blacksmith brings about another conflict between him and his mother, who abhors the idea.

In *L'Aventure ambiguë* the spiritual training that Samba Diallo received under the tutelage of Maître Thierno and the fact that it opposes the intellectual pursuit of Western knowledge results in a poignant psychological drama. Samba's ambiguous adventure ends in death and the return to the marabout-maître who preceded him to the
kingdom of the ancestors. Samba's father is a deeply religious man, and he clearly understands the dilemma that his son will ultimately face, for he realizes from the beginning that traditional African values (in this case Islam and the marabout) are pitted against Western materialist ideology in a struggle for the allegiance of his people. Wanting to "save God," he initially sends Samba to the marabout. However, once it becomes evident that young people will have to learn to "mieux lier le bois au bois" in order to survive, the older man cannot resist the inevitable. As a representative of the noble caste, he is well-educated, and like Kane himself, he is a modern man who has succeeded in balancing the spiritual with the natural. Yet, unlike some of the other parents in the Senegalese novel, he fully understands the implications of placing Samba in the hands of the white man. After their exposure to Western thought and culture, young protagonists call traditional values like Koranic school into question and even reject them. Torn between two cultures, some end up alienated from their elders and their heritage. The result is an even greater intrusion of Western values into Senegalese society.

Revolt against the Maître

The bitter tone that characterizes many fictional depictions of marabouts seems to derive from a resentment against social mechanisms that encourage people to submit to exploitation, dupery, and abuse. In their analyses of the relations between marabouts and talibés at the daara some novelists counter these tendencies by endowing
their characters with an inner strength which allows them to retaliate against the system. On rare occasions a cruel marabout even receives a deserved punishment. For example, Cheikh Aliou Ndao uses the technique of interior monologue to narrate the facts of Tante Astou's childhood experience at the daara. She ironically evokes the shady actions of the boroom daara, whom she calls a pervert. Under the pretext of punishing the pupils, he would order the girls to massage his legs. When they were doing that, he would close his eyes as if in ecstasy. He pinches the thighs of the girls and not their ears, as he does for the boys. This marabout is even guilty of corrupting fillettes for he attempts to seduce them on his prayer mat, which is supposed to be a sacred object. In this way he reveals his lack of respect not only for the children, but for God as well. He is obviously a hypocrite. Ironically, this same marabout is adored by adults, who believe they are sending their sons and daughters to a wise and holy man, when they enrol them in his school.

The implicit revolt of Tante Astou against the ignorant and lustful boroom daara was brewing for a long time. One day when the marabout is about to strike her, Astou explodes. When the whip reaches her cheek, she whacks the marabout across the head with her chalkboard. Bathed in blood, he collapses. This act humiliates the marabout and makes him look ridiculous in front of the talibés, who no doubt are glad to see him experience some of the pain that he had so freely inflicted upon them. On a humorous note, the author concludes, "ainsi elle a brisé l'aurore de respect rayonnant autour du Maître." The reader’s attention is drawn to the fact that there
is a very short lapse of time between the lash to Tante Astou's cheek and her response with a blow to the head of the vicious marabout. The author uses the conjunction "lorsque" to emphasize the simultaneity of the two actions and to clearly show the depth of Tante Astou's hostility and resentment against her master. The other talibés probably shared her feelings.

After the incident, Tante Astou runs away from the school, the marabout's curses still ringing in her ears. Even though Astou, who started Koranic school at the age of seven, is now a mature woman, her sleep continues to be haunted by the marabout's voice saying: "Qu'Allah t'éloigne de Lui." In the religiosity of her African consciousness, Astou remains sensitive to the marabout's curse, even though he himself is clearly corrupt. As an adult she may be attributing her failures and the unhappiness that she has experienced to an act that she committed as a child. Astou now fears that her niece Raki, who resembles her in many ways, is headed for destruction by violating certain traditions. Raki challenges the practice of endogamy in Wolof society when she becomes pregnant by a young man of an inferior caste whom she plans to marry. She too openly criticizes the marabout's strong influence in the society and the gullibility of the people. Like her aunt she is strong-willed and stubborn. However, revolt against tradition is not without consequences; any pleasure derived is usually short-lived. Astou's daily existence is plagued with guilt and her niece Raki's plight ends in premature death. Traditional beliefs mandate that the marabout is spared. This
is why many Senegalese people tolerate his unethical behavior and are afraid to rebel against him.

**Le marabout-maître exemplaire**

In *Matraqué par le destin*, Samb describes the exploits of villainous marabouts, but he also briefly refers to a good Koranic schoolmaster, who had all the virtues that his Uncle Tolé lacked. Makhari N'Diaye becomes Omar's *serigne* after his mother rescues him from Badar and returns him to his native Kébémer. This marabout approves of discipline when it is necessary, but he does not feel that it is right to inflict severe physical abuse on a *talibé* for little or no reason. Omar feels fortunate to have a marabout who is a city dweller, a marabout who knows and understands the Koran, speaks some French and Arabic, and, most importantly, deals honestly with his pupils. This marabout never spanks the *talibés*, except for a good reason. He knows how to appreciate and encourage them. Unfortunately, Makhari Ndiaye dies shortly after Omar begins to know and admire him. Samb is suggesting here that a good marabout can be kind to his pupils and still not lose any of his authority, if he is qualified to teach and if he dedicates himself to his profession. The insertion of Makhari Ndiaye into the narrative assures us that Samb is not anti-marabout when the marabout is a man of integrity who limits his role to spiritual training. However, he repeatedly emphasizes throughout his novel that marabouts such as Makhari Ndiaye are rare.
Maître Thierno in Kane's L'Aventure ambiguë is probably the most positive portrayal of a Muslim spiritual guide in any Senegalese novel. His whole life is a prayer, a tribute to God. He is a type of saint. Kane's characterization of Thierno brings him closer to being the main protagonist than is true for any other marabout character in Senegalese fiction. Although the story centers around the dilemma of the hero Samba Diallo, everything in the narrative emanates from Maître Thierno. In a way, he is like God, for everything, including the hero, reverts back to him in the end. He is constantly referred to or sought out by the other characters. As mentioned earlier, he dies in the physical sense, but lives on in the consciousness of Samba Diallo. The memory of Maître Thierno haunts the young man's mind, orients his actions, and influences his decisions or attitudes to the point that readers suspect that Samba is not free at all. After his father, Le Chevalier, gave him to the master, the marabout took possession of Samba, "corps et âme."³³

In such a setting Islam might be viewed as an obstacle to individual freedom of consciousness. Thierno totally dominates Samba's mental life. At the end of the novel when Le Fou stabs Samba in front of the master's tomb, it is almost as if Samba was being sacrificed to Thierno. Death then brings an end to Samba's anguish and allows him to be reunited with the Maître. Many critics have assumed that Samba had lost his faith, because the Fou killed him for his refusal to pray at the master's grave. However, Kane himself maintains that his hero never really loses his faith; in refusing to pray, he was merely exercising his freedom to choose.³⁴ Because freedom of choice
and action are not respected in a strict Islamic community, Samba actually falls victim to an overly rigid society, not a false religious belief.

Thierno is more than a teacher; he is a community leader. He is the spiritual guide of all the people in the land of the Diallobé. Similar to the Muslim leaders in contemporary Senegal, he disposes of considerable political power for this very reason. The Chief of the Diallobé refers to Thierno as "mon vieux compagnon et maître" and consults him in all major decisions that affect the Diallobé people. When the issue of whether or not the Diallobé children should attend the French school becomes a matter or urgency, the burden of proof lies on Maître Thierno. In his dialogue with the Chief of the Diallobé, he is the spokesman for tradition and the partisan of Muslim conservatism. As the master speaks, Kane uses images and symbols from his own Peuhl heritage to sketch and debate the school problem in philosophical terms.

The Diallobé people, living in the misery of dilapidated housing and suffering from inadequate nourishment, want and need to learn to "mieux lier le bois au bois." The word bois (wood) means school to the Peuhl. The expression "lier le bois au bois" is a general symbol for building and "mieux lier le bois au bois" would refer to advanced learning. At the white man's school they will learn new techniques, "ils y apprendraient toutes les façons de lier le bois au bois que nous ne savons pas." But Thierno also debates the theme of poids (weight, substance). For a mystic like him, weight or matter opposes the spiritual. His body, which is matter, gets in
his way when he wants to pray. Matter also inhibits his efforts to train his disciples. However, the Diallobé want more weight, more substance, and the Maitre understands their desire. The absence of the material leads to misery, and misery is God's enemy. The dilemma resides in the fact that industrialization and prosperity may wipe out the foundation of the Diallobé culture which is based on the spiritual. According to him materialism weighs down and despiritualizes the white man, for he says:

J'ai appris qu'au pays des blancs, la révolte contre la misère ne se distingue pas de la révolte contre Dieu. L'on dit que le mouvement s'étend, et que, bientôt, dans le monde, le même grand cri contre la misère couvrira partout la voix des muezzins. Quelle n'a pas dû être la faute de ceux qui ne croient en Dieu si, au terme de leur règne sur le monde, le nom de Dieu suscite le ressentiment des affamés?

Thierno also compares the Diallobé's dilemma to that of a woman who wants to have a child while at the same time maintaining her virginity. In order to become pregnant, he says, she has to give herself:

"Au fond, ils [the Diallobé people] ont déjà choisi. Ils sont comme une femme consentante. L'enfant qui n'est pas encore conçu appelle. Il faut bien que l'enfant naisse. Ce pays attend un enfant. Mais, pour que l'enfant naisse, il faut que le pays se donne... Et ça... ça... Mais, aussi, la misère, à la longue, ne mettra-t-elle pas l'amertume dans nos coeurs? La misère est ennemie de Dieu..."

The marabout perceives that, deep inside, the people have already made their choice; a change must and will take place. They are uncomfortable with facing the consequences of their decision. They must forfeit some of their most precious values or continue to lead lives of economic misery. Rather than choose definitively and independently, they prefer to be told what to do, for that would ease their own
consciences. As a result, they decide to seek the advice of Maitre Thierno.

On the eve of his encounter with the Diallobé delegation, Thierno is disturbed. He has always prayed; he hardly sleeps because he devotes his time to praying, but suddenly he can no longer find consolation in prayer, and he reduces his devotional activities to a minimum. His authority is such that a word from him can determine the conduct of the Diallobé representatives, because they place him on an equal footing with the chief. However, he refuses to take a stand on the matter. His reaction is paradoxical. For years he has exercised a monopoly over the education of the youth. He represents an assurance and an unshakeable faith in their beliefs. But now, when his society is desperate and needs him, he takes refuge in a politics of "all or nothing":

Paradoxalement, c'est au moment où l'on met en cause le monopole qu'il exerçait sur l'éducation de la jeunesse, la société tournée vers la quête du salut qu'il a aidé à construire, qu'il refuse de se prononcer. Peut-être n'estime-t-il pas être à même d'arrêter, d'endiguer ou d'orienter le progrès. Si on peut comprendre son refus ascétique du monde, on ne peut le sujeter dans son refus de combattre qui confine au défaïtisme.

Thierno refuses to fight to save the society that he has helped to create. Even if he had voted against progress or suggested alternatives, one would have had to respect his opinion. The victory of the intruder would have been total. But it seems that, at the most critical point in the story, Thierno seems more concerned about himself than about the needs of his people.
Thierno's defeat is in a sense the defeat of Diallobé Islam. The arrival of the white man had already caused a great confusion, similar to that which was taking place on most of the African continent at that time. The white man's school had challenged the natural order of Diallobé society, and when Thierno loses Samba Diallo, his prize pupil and chosen successor, to the French school, the collapse of the old order is predictable. Thierno chooses his disciple Demba, the anti-Samba Diallo, to become his new successor. Unlike Samba, Demba laughs for the sake of laughing and his mannerisms are crude. Demba has hardly assumed his duties before he changes the hours of the Koranic school to allow the pupils to attend the new French school. In this way he marks the victory of progress over a traditionalism that had been symbolized by Thierno.

Although it is clear that Kane had enormous esteem for the master, he calls the **boroom daara** into question on two issues: the practicality of Koranic school methodology and the need for equilibrium. Maître Thierno is opposed by La Grande Royale, the chief's sister, Samba's aunt. A dominant figure, she has a significant influence in matters pertaining to all the people, an exceptional role for a woman in the African novel. To her, the marabout's ideology, based on death values, is impractical, and she fears that it is sapping the life out of her nephew. She vigorously advocates progress and takes on the task of convincing the other villagers to send their children to the new school. Samba is a member of the first family in the land, and she wants him to pave the way for the others. Thus, the Grande Royale demands that he be withdrawn from the marabout's hearth.
The question which arises from this conflict involves the possibility that Thierno's teaching really did not deal with the whole man. The Grande Royale contends that man is not all spirit. At this point, the theme of equilibrium comes into play. Thierno's teaching over-emphasizes the spiritual while ignoring the physical needs of the Diallobé people:

Pendant que le maître niait la rigidité de ses articulations, le poids de ses reins, niait sa case et ne reconnaissait de réalité qu'à Ce vers Quoi sa pensée à chaque instant s'envolait avec délice, les Diallobé, chaque jour un peu plus, s'inquiétaient de la fragilité de leurs demeures, du rachitisme de leurs corps. Les Diallobé voulaient plus de poids.

The problem then becomes how to "keep God": "Il faut construire des demeures solides pour les hommes et il faut sauver Dieu à l'intérieur de ces demeures. Cela, je le sais."

The author offers no solutions because there is no simple answer to the dilemma of Samba Diallo, Thierno, and millions of other Africans who would like to safeguard their culture from the all-encompassing poids of a decadent Western attitude toward life. After having lived in Paris, the Fou explains in a simulated address to his master that people in European society are being consumed by their own system of belief:

- Maître, ils n'ont plus de corps, ils n'ont plus de chair. Ils ont été mangés par les objets. Pour se mouvoir, ils chaussent leurs corps de grands objets rapides. Pour se nourrir, ils mettent entre leurs mains et leur bouche des objets en fer...

In the eyes of the Fou, every aspect of human activity in the West has been invaded by materialism. Instead of using their bodies to transport themselves, they drive cars. Instead of using their hands, they eat with metal objects. The simplicity of human activity has
been replaced by "things." This dilemma is also an existential problem in that all men spend their lives in search of meaning. Thierno has found this meaning, and it is incorporated in the honesty, insight, knowledge, and experience that make him a character worthy of the reader's respect and admiration. In this case, the marabout serves as a positive standard of value, even though he and his world are defeated.

After Maitre Thierno, the most positive portrayal of a good marabout-maitre is probably that of old Brama Sylla in Mbaye's Au delà de la vertu. After Moussa Tine, who started Koranic school at the age of five, has undergone circumcision and excelled in public school, his father, Modou Tine, feels he should be placed under the tutelage of a spiritual master. He chooses Brama Sylla who lives as a hermit far from the city. Brama has created a little village in the bush and settled permanently there with his family and a few disciples. A true savant, his extensive knowledge and great wisdom are based on the Koran, the teachings of the Prophet, and on his personal experiences. For this reason, Brama is able to impart true science to Moussa, the kind of knowledge that nourishes the intelligence, fortifies the faith, and sheds light upon the obscure aspects of existence.

Brama Sylla is nearly ninety years old and, like Maitre Thierno, he wrestles with le poids of his body and refuses help in getting up, although his joints are brittle and stiff. The author refers to him as one of those African sages whose death will signal the loss to world civilization of an essential forefather. Brama embodies spiritual treasures, but despite his knowledge, he remains humble.
Modou and Moussa are both fascinated to the point of ecstasy with the old man's person and his teaching. Modou even wants to drink from the marabout's cup to profit from his baraka. For Moussa, Brama is an "élément physique de sa religion." One might even say that Brama is a concrete, living example of the essence of Islam, an example to be emulated.

Maitre Brama preaches a form of human existence that gives priority to spiritual matters but is not devoid of secular concerns. He credits modern society with having bettered man's life on earth, but he underlines the fact that this evolution has resulted in selfishness, theft, lies, perversion, bad manners, impurity, rejection of God, disregard for man, and other forms of moral degeneration. Such behavior contrasts with the African's world view, which has always centered around God and the good of the collective group. The loss of these values is clearly evoked when Sylla mourns the disappearance of African civilizations based on beauty, songs, dances, and ancient traditions of wisdom, courage, purity, mutual respect, and solidarity. In today's African society, Brama argues, these values have been stripped of their traditional frame and emptied of their spiritual nourishment. He points out the same problem that concerned the Chief of the Diallobé in L'Aventure ambiguë: it might be good for societies to evolve, but if the overriding effects of that evolution are negative, it might be necessary to question the assumptions on which it is based. To learn the white man's knowledge, the African has also had to forget his own traditions, and he cannot help but asking
whether the sacrifice of what he has forgotten is worth the advantages he has acquired.

Brama also points out that by neglecting his traditional values, the African has lost some of the extraordinary powers that the ancestors possessed. The forefathers had had a sharp gift of observation. With it, they had been able to discern secrets in Nature, and through experience in this realm they learned to know and use the trees, plants, and herbs in many different ways. Traditional medicine utilized this knowledge to good effect:

... Savez-vous, par exemple, qu'à l'époque, l'on avait déjà compris que l'arbre est un véritable "poteau indicateur du sous-sol". En ce sens que c'était par la présence de telle ou telle plante, dans tel ou tel endroit, qu'on arrivait à déceler la présence de tel ou tel minéral... Savez-vous, enfin, que tous les bienfaits de la pharmacopée se retrouvent dans le miel--qu'il s'agisse des vertus curatives de la plante, de la feuille, de l'écorce ou de la racine--?

Brama is somewhat of a sociologist in this passage, for he has catalogued his observations of the old Africa and compared them with his impressions of the new Africa. His knowledge of life, history, and culture constitutes the primary reason why Modou brings Moussa to be initiated as one of the old man's disciples. The father desires that his son have a total picture of what a true man of God is like. To be a Muslim does not mean that one has to be cut off from his heritage. In parting, Brama consecrates Moussa, who has now sat under his instruction, as his talibé by breathing on the boy's head and on the father's outstretched hands.

The marabout-maitre or boroom daara in most Senegalese novels is a character who provokes disapproval. He is not generally learned
in the Koran, and the awareness of his own incompetence frustrates him. He abuses and exploits children for personal gain under the pretext of teaching them about God, humility, and hard work. Although good serin fakk tal are few in number, those who are portrayed in the Senegalese novel are dedicated to the religious education of the young people entrusted to them, and they do devote their time to the teaching of the Koran. Most importantly, they cultivate their own spirituality and endeavor to reflect the qualities of honesty, integrity, and a true knowledge of God's Word and their own culture.

In this chapter, we have examined the marabout-maitre, the marabout who is responsible for the religious education and guidance of the community. For the most part, these boroom daara only used prayer and the Koran in their dealings with the talibés. However, there are other religious figures who function under the auspices of Islam and carry the title of marabout; they may even be boroom daara, but these men combine Islam with traditional beliefs and practices such as sorcery, fortune-telling, traditional medicine, and fetishism. They tend not to instruct but to act as intermediaries between men and all phases of the supernatural realm. The existence of this type of marabout, whom we have labeled "le marabout-prêtre" bears testimony to a phenomenon known as Black Islam, and it is the subject of the following chapter.
CHAPTER V

THE "MARABOUT-PRETRE": BLACK ISLAM AND MARABOUTAGE

The marabout-prêtre in the Senegalese novel embodies in human form the syncretism between traditional African religious practices (fetishism, sorcery, divination, magic, traditional medicine, polytheism) and certain elements of Islam (prayer, the Koran, monotheism). His main function is to facilitate the accomplishment of supernatural operations commonly known as maraboutage. In reality Senegalese people have sought and still do solicit the marabout to intercede for them by undertaking some form of maraboutage. Many of the novelists seem to suggest that it is the marabout's role as traditional religious leader and not his role as the representative of Islam that provides the impetus for his strong influence in Senegalese society.

In traditional society priests and medicine men had a domain that was reserved for them and their practices, but this domain was in balance with other aspects of communal life. In modern Senegalese society, there has been a cultural upheaval, and most of the characters in the novels have been subject to this upheaval in the sense that they are torn between two and possibly three cultures: traditional African culture, the Arabo-Islamic culture, and a constellation of Western values that are not necessarily grounded in religious principles. This situation is extremely complex, and in attempting to
depict it in fictional terms, novelists tend to emphasize various
forms of syncretism that reconcile traditional African religion with
other religions, in particular Islam. Senegalese Islam is by its
nature syncretic, and it appears in this form in the novel. The
intermingling of traditional African religious practices with the
Muslim faith has resulted in the evolution of a phenomenon known as
Black Islam. It is an Islam that has been adapted to the black man's
way of thinking—a Muslim superstructure supported by pillars of
animism or traditional beliefs. As J. C. Froelich declares:

Il existe un Islam noir, Islam repensé, répété, négriifié,
adapté aux caractères psychiques des races noirs . . . Chez
tous les peuples noirs islamisés se découvre un véritable
dualisme religieux où un animisme sous-jacent est surmonté
par une superstructure musulmane . . .

This religious dualism causes no problem for the people, since, for
the most part they only know Islam in its Africanized form, as
Froelich testifies, "... les peuples sont peu conscients de ce
dualisme et ne se sentent nullement déchirés." 2 The marabout-prêtre
serves as the intermediary who bridges the two religious systems.
In many respects, the marabout is Black Islam because without his
presence, religious syncretism as it developed in Senegal would have
been unthinkable. When the people want a maraboutage, they seek an
intercessor; that is, they turn to the marabout. The phenomenon of
maraboutage in this sense has repeatedly been depicted in the Sene-
galese novel.

For the Senegalese, maraboutage is a magical operation, that may
involve customary sorcery, Muslim practices, or the two of them to-
gether. Such magical operations were formerly the property of the
bilédio or sorcerer's doctor. The marabouts, who believe in the sorcerer as intensely as do their compatriots, attributed to themselves the power to destroy manifestations of evil. In doing so, they sought to replace the bilédio, although they did not hesitate to borrow a number of his techniques. The bilédio himself, facing a widespread infatuation with Islam, in turn took recourse to maraboutic practices: the use of Arabic talismans, the citation of verses from the Koran, the wearing of amulets, the calling upon spirits and angels. In this cross-fertilization process, marabouts made fetish and magical gris-gris, just as traditional bilédio sold Islamic talismans. All these sorcery operations, whether derived from the Muslim spiritual practices or those of the traditional fetish priest, came to be known under the common name of "maraboutage."³

The "Gris-Gris"

Fetishism is probably the most important aspect of maraboutage; in fact, the marabout is often a fetish priest. He is part of a world where characters struggle against "djinns" or evil spirits, where one fears the evil spells of sorcerers, where the real and the supernatural exist side by side, where everything is symbol, where man and nature exist together peacefully. It is also a world where certain men and women have the reputation of being able to communicate with supernatural forces in order to heal physical ills or to harm other men. These people can "fouiller à loisir dans le passé, le présent, ou l'avenir, la clef d'une vie humaine et détourner le cours d'une existence."⁴ In traditional Senegalese society they are
designated by the term "féticheurs" or fetish priests. Fetish priests were known for making talismans and amulets which are now known collectively as gris-gris ("xondiom" in Wolof).

In Force Bonté, Bakary Diallo describes the variety of objects from which they can be made: rare herbs, sought-after roots, mistletoe, crushed hearts of wild boars killed in the villages, blades of straw that the fire did not burn, monkey tails, elephant and rat hairs in the crevice of a hoof or wrapped in a rag or the tanned skin of a goat or rabbit. The French sociologist Paul Marty discovered that gris-gris contain all the elements named by Diallo as well as nails, claws, stones, pieces of skin, rings, wooden pegs, bird heads, antelope feet, muskrat pockets, tail and tips of a giraffe, tail and nose of a hyena, seashells and fragments of gum. The way Diallo’s description of gris-gris corresponds with the one provided by Marty lends force to the contention that Senegalese literature does provide an accurate picture of the country's social reality. The marabout in the novel is a fabricator of gris-gris just like his counterpart in the real world. After the implantation of Islam in Senegal, the use of gris-gris became even more widespread than it had been before because in adopting these amulets, the marabouts transformed them by endowing them with enhanced intricacy and power.

The Muslim amulet differed from the traditional talisman in the sense that it had a written inscription in Arabic. According to some islamologues, this feature captured the Black man’s admiration. Because most African languages were not written languages at this time, the knowledge of individuals was limited by what could be passed on
orally from one person to another. After the introduction of the Arabic script, chiefs, merchants, and common people often resorted to marabouts ("serin lamb" or masters of the drum) or other literate Muslims in order to read and write letters. It was marabouts who islamized the amulet. The Muslim amulet usually consists of a square piece of paper, the size of a human palm. On this paper is inscribed a request to the divinity or an invocation to supernatural powers. The request usually contains four parts: (1) a prayer, verses from the Koran; (2) a description of the purpose of the amulet; (3) a prescription that must be carried out in order for the amulet to serve its purpose; and (4) mysterious formulas or a cabalistic portrait.

This paper is then carefully enclosed in fabric or another paper and then inserted into a leather sachet (tiny pouch) or, sometimes, in a little copper, iron, or silver-plated box. It can be worn around the neck or another part of the body, or it can be attached with black or red leather strips to the object to be protected. This leather must be made from lamb skin. The practical uses for the amulet are innumerable, since requests for prayer vary. Practical application of these amulets varies from the attempt to realize a desire or ward off evil, to the pursuit of fortune counseling (advice as to when or whether to do certain things).

In Force Bonté, Diallo reports how he went to the marabout for some gris-gris to protect him from sickness and gunfire during the European wars in which he is going to fight as a combat soldier. The day after his visit the marabout, Thierno Samba, has already prepared the hero's gris-gris. He blows his baraka upon Bakary and tells him
that God will take care of him and that he will return home safely. However, Bakary is severely wounded in battle, and must undergo thirteen operations. Disillusioned, he questions whether these "preuves éclantantes d'imagination" have any real power. In a brief section entitled "Gris-Gris," he describes the phenomenon and suggests that people create such fetishes and trust in them when they should be placing their hope in the principles of love. For Diallo, the principles of love are demonstrated by the charitable actions of the white people who take care of him. They are, he says, the surest gris-gris. After he attains this realization and acknowledges that the marabout had been wrong in predicting that the hero would return home safely, gris-gris in the usual sense of the word no longer figures in his story. Not only does Diallo reject traditional beliefs as foolishness, but he elects to stay in the white man's country after the war is over.

To enhance his chances of winning a rivalry for the hand of the woman he loves, Ousmane Socé's hero in Karim turns to a marabout and a gris-gris after he becomes convinced that he has exhausted his own efforts. According to the author, "tous croyaient au pouvoir des amulettes." Serigne Samba, the marabout, refuses to prepare a gris-gris for Karim, explaining:

- Mon fils, je n'écris jamais de gris-gris concernant l'amour, cette chose insignifiante; mais comme c'est dans l'intention louable d'épouser la femme que tu aimes, je vais prier Dieu pour toi. Dans Sa bonté infinie, il peut te rendre plus puissant que ton rival!

Samba uses the term "cette chose insignifiante" to refer to love or affairs of the heart; since love in this sense usually reflects human
folly, to him it does not merit prayer. The purpose of prayer is to seek God's will about honorable concerns. Nevertheless, Serigne Samba does begin to fabricate a gris-gris for Karim. Socé describes the process in some detail. Karim is supposed to wear the gris-gris on his right arm. If it pleases God, he will marry Marieme. To display his honesty and sincerity, Samba refuses to take money from Karim and suggests that Karim return when the prophecy has come true. 12 He emphasizes that the power is in the prayer and not in the gris-gris of itself: "J'ai adressé une prière à Dieu pour toi. J'espère que, dans Sa clémence, Il l'exaucera; mais Il pourrait aussi ne point y accéder. Un gris-gris n'a pas de puissance intrinsèque, c'est une prière." 13 This marabout makes a distinction between an object, the gris-gris, which has no intrinsic power, and God who has the power of divine intervention. The gris-gris represents a petition to God, and God may or may not grant the prayer request. The story itself culminates in a fairy-tale, "happy-ever-after" ending, for Karim, who has succeeded in marrying Marième, offers gifts and money to the marabout. "Mon père, vos amulettes ont produit leur effet," he says. "Votre prière a été exaucée: je suis le mari de Marième." 14 Even though Serigne Samba accepts the gifts, he gives God the credit, for his only reply is, "Dieu soit loué." Socé offers no real criticism of the marabout in this episode. In fact, Serigne Samba might well be classified as a good marabout, because he appears to be more interested in answered prayer than in material gain.

In Abdoulaye Sadji's Maïmouna, Yaye Daro, the heroine's mother, never ceases to worry about her daughter's welfare when the young girl
leaves Louga to live in Dakar with her sister Rihanna. Yaye Daro consults her marabout Serigne Thierno on a regular basis and she refers to him as "le saint homme." When the marabout discerns through divination, that Maïmouna is in danger, he prepares two talismans for Yaye Daro to send to Maï. These talismans are designed to protect Maï from evil spirits. To differentiate between them, he incises red khatims (words in Arabic characters) on one and not on the other. When a marabout issues a talisman he gives strict orders about how it is to be used. The black talisman is to be left in water for a specified period in order to absorb the writing (probably from the Koran). Every morning before looking at the sun, Maïmouna is to put some of the holy water or safara on her face, neck, and arms. She is also supposed to drink a small amount of it. When the level of the holy water gets low, she is to add regular water. The other talisman is to be fixed to Maïmouna's right arm. The marabout assures Yaye Daro that this last talisman alone will suffice to protect Maïmouna from evil spirits or from people who harbor had intentions toward her.

A marabout can have at least two types of followers who refer to him as "mon marabout." Followers are talibés or disciples of the marabout if he has trained them in the Koran and perhaps continues to serve as their spiritual guide. Other followers are clients. Clients come to the marabout strictly for services, for some form of maraboutage. Since gris-gris are carefully and meticulously fabricated, the marabout often asks the client to claim the talisman on a return visit, usually the next day. This procedure is repeatedly
portrayed in novels like Force Bonté, Maîmouna, Matraqué par le destin, De Tilène au Plateau.

In most novels gris-gris seldom seem to achieve the desired results. Such depictions reflect the fact that literate Senegalese generally display a doubtful or unbelieving attitude toward gris-gris, and writers of course belong to the sceptical class. In Force Bonté, Bakary is critically wounded. Maîmouna bears the shame of an illegitimate pregnancy, the pain of a miscarriage, and the horror of smallpox. In Sembène Ousmane's Xala, El Hadji Bèye was covered with gris-gris, but they could not prevent a sorcerer from casting a spell upon him. Why then does the use of gris-gris remain so popular in Senegal? Part of the answer lies in the philosophy that "even if it doesn't help, it won't hurt." Another explanation is that even educated Muslims believe that gris-gris have some sort of magical power, even though the Koran offers no support for such practices.

Al Hadj Abdou Aziz Sy, Jr., the "Xhalife Général" (grand marabout) of the Malikiyya branch of the Tidjanes in Senegal, admits that traditional African religious practices remain deeply rooted in the Senegalese mentality, despite the fact that the vast majority of them are Muslim. El Hadji Malik Sy, the founder of the Malikiyya branch of the Tidjanes, was a purist who condemned gris-gris and other unorthodox practices. However, because the people strongly held to these practices, even the grand marabout was not able to stamp them out:

Le fait de mettre des amuletts et autres pratiques ne fait pas partie de l'Islam pure. C'est hérité précisément des religions traditionnelles. El Hadji Malik Sy a écrit beaucoup sur ces pratiques-là, tels que les amuletts. Il n'était pas d'accord. Il les a interdits. Mais c'est une
According to Sy, any marabout who would prohibit gris-gris usage risks to lose his credibility among the people. This fact supports the notion that it is the traditional aspect of Black Islam that is the dominant force of this religion. Novelists tend to verify this theory in works such as Force Bonté, Karim, Ninï, Maimouna, La plaie, Buur Tilleen, Xala, De Tilène au Plateau, and other novels where characters seek the marabout, not for prayer and a word from the Koran, but for gris-gris and other forms of maraboutage.

**Maraboutage and Sorcery**

Sorcery is another characteristic of maraboutage, for the marabout-prêtre is sometimes a sorcerer, a counter-sorcerer, or both. El Hadji Abdou Kader Bèye, the protagonist in Xala, is the victim of a xala or curse of sexual impotency placed upon him by an unknown enemy. The title "el hadj" implies that Bèye is a religious man. A wealthy member of the new Senegalese bourgeoisie, he is also supposed to reflect the synthesis of two distinct cultures: traditional African and Western:

> El Hadji Abdou Kader Bèye était, si on peut dire, la synthèse de deux cultures. Formation bourgeoisie européenne, éducation féodale africaine. Il savait, comme ses pairs, se servir adroitement de ses deux pôles. La fusion n'était pas complète.

In reality however, Bèye, like other bourgeois Africans, is awkward in applying what he has learned in these two opposing schools of
thought; the result is a type of cultural tension. When he is in difficulty, Bèye resorts neither to prayer, nor to the white man's medicine. Instead, he turns to traditional African means in his search for an answer to his impotency. In this way he is essentially no different from the average Senegalese. To confront such problems, many Senegalese, regardless of economic or social status, still consult marabouts. In the case of Bèye, he turns to Serigne Mada, the marabout of his chauffeur Modu, after several other marabouts have proved unable to cure him. Serigne Mada is a bilédio or sorcerer's doctor. According to the traditional belief systems upon which his practice is based, sickness in general does not come from natural causes; on the contrary, it is the result of a spell that has been cast by an evildoer. For this reason, it is thought that the best course of action is to call a sorcerer's doctor whose power can counterbalance the malign influence of the sorcerer. Serigne Mada tells Bèye that he specializes in countering such spells but he also cautions him that God will have to intervene, if he hopes to be successful. Like the sorcerer, the bilédio has techniques that are only known to him. In this case Serigne Mada has El Hadji Bèye undress completely, remove his gris-gris, and lie down. He covers Bèye with a pagne (fabric wrap) that he had supposedly obtained from a saint who lived near the Atlas mountains (the inference here is that the pagne is holy). As Serigne tells his prayer beads, El Hadji Bèye is slowly but surely delivered and the spell is broken:

... Accroupi près de la tête du couché, il égrenait son chapelet. El Hadji prêtaient l'oreille au bruit des perles qui, régulièrement, chutaient sur les précédentes ...
Brusquement . . . Une sensation, oubliée depuis longtemps, le fit frissonner par saccades . . . - C’est fini! Le sort est brisé, lui dit Serigne Mada. El Hadji s’habilla. Il était plein de gratitude pour le maître.

Although El Hadji Bèye is grateful and happy to be rid of the plague, the marabout warns him that he is a paying client and that if Bèye’s check bounces, he is capable of recasting the spell. This incident reveals that Serigne Mada is a businessman whose main interest is money. To him, Bèye is a "client" and not a "talibé." Even though Serigne Mada refers to Yalla (Allah) and tells prayer beads, his actions are not done in the true spirit of Islam. The introduction of money changes the practice of religion and in this episode it turns Islam into a type of profit-making activity. Mada’s words forewarn readers that Bèye’s problems are far from over (his bank account is overdrawn). However, Bèye is temporarily delivered of his malady-curse, and after leaving the marabout he is able to make love with one of his wives. Destiny still prevents him from consummating his most recent marriage because the wife is having her "empêchement de salaam" (Muslim women are not allowed to pray during their menstrual cycles).

At the end of xala, the reader discovers that the beggar cast the spell on Bèye because years ago Bèye and others had stolen his people’s land and then had him arrested and put into prison. Later he had suffered a crippling injury that forced him into a life of begging. The theme of the beggar and his song runs throughout the story. Ironically Bèye must turn to the beggars for mercy in order to be finally delivered of his xala after he himself had expressed
disdain for them and argued that they should be put away for the rest of their lives. As Serigne Mada had him strip naked when he originally requested the aid of the sorcerer, Bèye will again be forced to take off his clothes in front of the beggars. Only this time, he will be doing it so that all the beggars may spit on him. Sembène creates this situation and satirizes the use of sorcery and maraboutage to reveal the hypocrisy of Bèye, who represents the new Senegalese bourgeoisie.

In the works of Abdoulaye Sadjji, we learn that sorcery is hereditary. Even though the sorcerer may look like everyone else, he or she is extraordinary and can be distinguished by physical attributes, an exceptional gift of intelligence, or some idiosyncratic behavior.

When Maïmouna's sleep is plagued by nightmares, Yaye Daro consults marabouts and seers for advice. The poor girl's body eventually becomes loaded with gris-gris. The consensus of the fetish priests is that Maïmouna should stop associating with one of her playmates, little Karr, who, like the rest of her family, is exceptionally beautiful and reputed to be a sorceress. Later in the story the reader learns that a young man had once eaten an omelet at Karr's house, became very ill, and would have died, had it not been for the efforts of the marabout Serigne Thierno. Because he had the powers of a bilédio or counter-sorcerer, he was able to intervene and save the young man. Episodes such as this one illustrate an extremely common belief in Senegalese society—the belief that all misfortunes can be traced to some form of sorcery and that only the marabout has the power to remedy the situation.
Maraboutism and Divination

The marabout-prêtre is often a "seet-katt" (seer or diviner in Wolof). Divination (neocromancy, fortune telling, reading, seeing) is another element of traditional religion in Senegal and it operates in close conjunction with fetishism. In many societies, people have sought to read their destiny in the sky by questioning or interpreting the position of the moon, the sun, and the stars. In Africa, diviners have employed cauri shells, sand, water, and footsteps to penetrate the secrets of the future. Islam limited these "recherches du lendemain" (inquiries into the day after) by reminding believers that God's plans are impenetrable and that no one can escape his destiny.22

One of the most frequent forms of divination in Senegal is "tanni" or the reading of cauri shells to reveal hidden knowledge: "Le Tanni qui promet les trônes aux princes, annonce les désastres et pénètre les secrets des amoureux? Le "Tanni" aussi est un langage de coquillages qui s'enchevêtrent au s'étalent comme une constellation d'étoiles."23 Referred to as "la magie blanche" or white magic (the shells are white), tanni or the reading of shells frequently appears in Senegalese novels. It can even be used as a literary device. For example, in Maïmouna Abdoulaye Sadji uses divination as a means of enabling the reader to foresee what is going to take place in the protagonist's life, thereby creating suspense and building interest in learning how a known outcome will be brought about by the narrator. This technique is employed in conjunction with Serigne Theirno, who is not only a fetish priest but also a seer, "un homme extraordinaire qui voit."24 When Maïmouna's obsessive desire to go to Dakar causes
her to become physically ill, Yaye Daro consults Theirno who uses sand as a means of transmitting his word and casting a prophecy about Maïmouna's future. He begins by drawing some Arabic letters in the sand. Then he gives a fistful of the sand to Daro and tells her to spit into it the number of times that she wants to ask questions that can be answered "yes" or "no." She spits three times and gives the ball of sand back to the marabout, who places it back into the letters he drew previously. After a period of silence, he correctly identifies the questions and responds to them. First, why is Maïmouna ill? second, should Yaye Daro let her go to Dakar? and third, what fate awaits the young girl in Dakar? He attributes Maïmouna's illness to the maturation process. It will pass, he says, for it has been caused by neither the devil nor a sorcerer. Nevertheless, he recommends a gris-gris to protect her beauty. To the second question, he answers that Daro is right to be hesitant about letting Maï go to Dakar. But she should permit the trip, for otherwise the problem will only get worse because Maïmouna's desire is tormenting her and she is too young to understand. He proposes to give Yaye Daro some safara (holy water) that may help the girl to forget about Dakar but he cannot promise that it will. As for the third question, he announces that Maïmouna will be well received, but he warns that she will have to be on guard and watch out for someone who is frequently near her. If her older sister watches over her, all should go well. However, he also mentions the character Yacine, the governess, who will play a major role in Maïmouna's downfall, for Maïmouna's happiness will be short-lived. This procedure prepares the reader by suggesting what will happen
to Maïmouna, but it maintains suspense insofar as it does not reveal how her fate will be brought about.

In an article on this subject, Moussa Ben declares that "all women, even the most evolved, believe in the revelation of the cauris shells." In Maïmouna, during a seance of tanni that takes place among a group of women that includes the heroine and her sister, Sadji uses divination again to predict Maïmouna's pregnancy:

Au milieu de salon, sur le tapis ciré: séance de "tanni" ... Elles étaient quatre: Rihanna, Maïmouna, Silvy, la grande amie de Rihanna, et Kodou, une autre amie très réputée pour son art d'interpréter le "tanni." Penchées sur l'aire du tapis où les cauris venaient de tomber, elles écoutaient, réfléchissaient, faisaient des commentaires ... -Aïh! Une grossesse, une grossesse de femme. - Amine, dit Rihanna, qui prit les cauris annonciateurs et les promena sur son front. - Eh bien! Une autre grossesse ... de jeune fille, cette fois.

First, a woman's pregnancy is announced, to the consolation of Maï's sister Rihanna, who is childless. But when a young girl's pregnancy is also prophesied, the reader immediately suspects Maïmouna, the youngest in the group. Later in the story when this revelation comes to fruition and everyone knows that Maïmouna is pregnant, it is the marabout Serigne Thierno who receives the credit for having foreseen and warned her of the possibility of a catastrophe.

Another use of tanni occurs in Fall's La Plaie, where Koné le Devin employs it to predict the future of the hero Magamou. Because Koné is truly gifted, he is always surrounded by a crowd. One day at the marketplace he has an encounter with Magamou during which he makes three predictions. Here Fall, like Sadji, uses the traditional storyteller's technique. Instead of dialogue, he uses divination
by tanni as a literary technique to create suspense. First of all, Koné tells Magamou that his plaie (wound) will be healed. Next, he predicts that Magamou will leave the marketplace and his friends, that he will have lodging and food without spending any money, and that, living or dead, he will find peace. Because all Koné's predictions come to pass, the episode effectively constitutes a foreshadowing of Magamou's fate. Magamou's wound is healed. He is sent to prison, where he is separated from his friends (the animals and the other outcasts). In prison, he is taken care of by the State. Most importantly, however, Magamou's psychological drama—that of being on the outside of society because he cannot conform to the collective ethic—ends in death thus giving him the peace he seeks. By announcing this destiny in advance, Koné prepares readers for what will happen to Magamou, while the ambiguity of his statements piques their curiosity about the manner in which the prophecies will be fulfilled.

In Nafissatou Diallo's autobiographical novel, De Tîlène au Plateau une enfance dakaroise (1975), the marabout also makes use of tanni. Mame, the grandmother of the heroine Safi, takes her to Serigne Touré, the marabout, and asks him to predict the young girl's future before she begins to attend the French school. Like other marabouts closely associated with traditional religion Touré is covered with gris-gris made of cauri shells; his clothing is more African than Arabic. Wearing a red cap garnished with cauri shells, he has many rings on his fingers, a gris-gris necklace on his neck, scarifications on his face, and teeth reddened from eating kola nuts. Portrayed as the type of mystic who remains silent and
meditates before saying anything, he finally announces that the spirits predict only the best for Safi. We know that Touré is using tanni because not only are cauri shells all over his dwelling, in this case those he has cast are pointing in five directions. According to him, this constellation of shells means that Safi will change schools five times.\textsuperscript{29}

But even though the cauri shells have already predicted that Safi will be a success in school, Touré insists that she still must make sacrifices and give to charity. For the moment he directs her to give a white chicken to an old lady seven days before the start of classes. In addition, the day school starts, she is to give seven candles, seven red kola nuts, and seven white kola nuts to the first person she meets when she leaves the house.\textsuperscript{30} He also declares that Safi will need a gris-gris to fight off the evil eye: "Tu reviendras dans quelques jours, j'aurais le temps de lui préparer un gris-gris qu'elle portera autour des reins contre le mauvais-œil."\textsuperscript{31} For Serigne Touré to ask Safi to make sacrifices and offerings is common to Islam as well as to the traditional belief system of the Senegalese. Sacrifices and offerings constitute one of the commonest acts of worship among all African peoples. Such sacrifices involve the ritual killing of an animal to present it, in part or in whole, to God, supernatural beings, spirits, or the living dead (those who have recently died). Offerings do not involve the killing of animals.\textsuperscript{32}

In this case, Serigne Touré appears to be more of a fetish priest than a man of Islam. He doesn't mention prayer; he talks to the spirits, and "his" cauri shells never lie. The element of Islam
that he emphasizes is the zakkat (alms to charity), which he relates
to the traditional practice of sacrifices and offerings. However,
he does not specify that Safi give to the miskin (the poor and the
beggars) which is what might have been expected on the basis of usual
Islamic practices. Yet there is a certain simplicity about this mara-
bout in that he does not appear to be exclusively interested in his
own gain, although he willingly accepts the money that Mame offers
to him.

According to Moussa Ben, journalist for the newspaper Takusaan
in Dakar, certain seers never give bad news. Others admit that they
occasionally make mistakes, but they insist mistakes attributed to
them most often result from the fact that their clients did not under-
stand their messages. If the cauris err, the seer substitutes good
advice which is worth a good prediction. Generally those who read
cauris are very gifted, whereas those who read on the sand seem to
be more reposed, more thoughtful, and more serious like Serigne
Thierno in Maimouna. The last category of seers, whose who read on
water, is tending to disappear. They rarely appear in the novels.
Tanni, however, is still popular in contemporary Senegal and remains
a frequent element in maraboutage as portrayed by Senegalese
novelists.

Maraboutism and Traditional Medicine

A dying Omar Guévane, the hero in Amar Samb's autobiographical
novel Matraqué par le destin ou la vie d'un talibé (1973), is saved
by the methodology of a famous "facc-katt" of marabout-healer. Hints
in the text suggest that he is a marabout of Islam: he is called *serin*, and he is associated with the Mbacké, the maraboutic family descended from Cheikh Amadou Bamba Mbacké, the founder of the Mouride brotherhood. However, the author refers to him as a "guérisseur," healer or traditional medicine man. It is this aspect of his dual role that interests us in the present context.

African medicine has an ontological and religious meaning. This is due to the fact that any psychological disturbance is associated with a supernatural phenomenon. An offended ancestor could cause trouble for a member of the family; children who abandon the customs of the country could attract the anger of the gods, as do Oumar Faye in *Pays mon beau peuple* or Raki and Bounama in *Buur Tilleen Roi de la Médina*. The traditional African healer uses two techniques to promote the healing of a sick person: he chases away evil spirits by chants and sacrifice; he also treats the sick person with curative herbs and trees. The greatness of African medical practice resides in the fact that it unites psychology, empirical medicine, and the science of the occult. Each healer always attributes the success or failure of his operation to God.  

Serigne Mbacké uses incantations, gestures such as snapping his fingers, and a tendering of his *baraka* (in this case in the form of saliva) to treat his patient. He massages Omar's lifeless and nearly naked body. The operation is successful and he does not leave Omar until the boy is completely delivered. In a sense, he has worked a miracle, but maraboutages are not only cures; they also serve as a form of immunization. To complete the healing process, Serigne Mbacké
bathes Omar in a special liquid that immunizes him against all sorts of sicknesses. Most importantly, this marabout healer has confidence in his powers and he guarantees Omar that this particular sickness will never afflict him again. He even swears to it: "Mais ce dont je me porterai garant, c'est que jamais de ta vie, cette maladie qui a failli t'emporter au pays d'où on ne revient jamais, cette maladie, dis-je, ne t'atteindra plus. Je le jure." In the entire proceeding, Serigne Mbacké does not refer to Allah, the Prophet, or the Koran, suggesting that, in fiction as in real life, traditional African practices are often more prominent than Muslim beliefs in the area of maraboutic intervention.

Khar l'Ancien is the guérisseur who heals Magamou's ulcerous leg in La Plaie. In this instance, the marabout tells Magamou to put his infected leg in the salt water of the ocean every morning. Little by little, he assures Magamou, the leg will get better, but because the tissues have decomposed, he warns the afflicted man that it will be a long process. After each washing Magamou is to put some "Dame Samba Laobé" powder (named after a famous hero) on his wound and to bandage it with a paftane leaf. According to Khar l'Ancien, in two or three months Magamou will be strong enough to fight the legendary wrestler Pâté. In his parting advice to Magamou, Khar admonishes him not to forget the prayers of Serigne Massall. It is the marabout Serigne Massall who refers the protagonist to Khar l'Ancien after offering to pray for him. If Magamou had gone to the hospital, doctors would undoubtedly have amputated his leg, but by scrupulously following Khar's instructions, his wound is healed. Like Serigne
Mbacké, Khar makes no pretentions to be a man of Islam. However, his knowledge of the herbs entitles him to be considered as a _serin tarikh_ (master of knowledge) or marabout.

The intervention of the healer leads the story to its climax and falling action. Khar has observed Magamou and seems to have some insight into his client's delusion. The text states that he wiped his twinkling eye and said to Magamou, "Le passé porte l'avenir... Va et guéris." Khar knows that outward healing will not change Magamou's destiny. He will remain a social outcast in need of inner healing.

In general, novelists do not criticize the existence of marabouts, nor do most of them make direct comparisons between Islam and traditional Senegalese religion to imply that Islam is superior. Traditional religion constitutes the very foundation of their culture and heritage; it has influenced their lives and shaped their world view. Although the majority of these writers are Muslims, they are not preoccupied with theological concerns. The marabouts discussed in this chapter were primarily genuine religious figures who are depicted as operating on the basis of a belief system that may draw more heavily upon traditional sources than it does upon its Islamic roots. The nature of Black Islam has been profoundly influenced by the existence of these priestly mediators who practice a synthesis of Islam and traditional Senegalese religion during their maraboutages. Novelists do not generally criticize marabouts because they make _gris-gris_ or employ divination. In other words, they tend not to attack the fundamental nature of maraboutage. What does seem to
concern many of them is the prevalence of a religious disorder that was born out of maraboutism and maraboutage. For this reason, an understanding of maraboutage is crucial to an understanding of this religious disorder, which will be discussed in the following chapter.
CHAPTER VI
THE "MARABOUT-VILAIN": RELIGIOUS DISORDER AND CHARLATANRY

The particular nature of maraboutism in Senegalese society causes Muslim believers to feel spiritually dependent upon marabouts for salvation. In conjunction with the ambiguity of the term marabout, and the anxious quest for efficacious maraboutic interventions, this spiritual dependency complex has provided fertile ground for the emergence of "marabouts-vilains" (or villainous marabouts) who exploit the gullible to extort money from them. In the affairs of certain marabouts, the new gods of money and power replace or take precedence over Allah and the precepts of the Koran. Many Senegalese novelists regard this situation as part of a larger religious disorder and seek to expose it for what it is.

Maraboutage seems, in part, to survive because many marabouts either truly possess supernatural power, or have experienced enough success to keep their reputations strong. In many instances, marabouts only retained the permissive aspects of Islam or those elements that did not openly oppose fetish beliefs and practices. They then offered a mixture of Islam and fetishism to the people as the new religion, and they were successful because they understood the cultural style of the illiterate masses.
By coming to Islam, the African was of course not stripped of his ancestral traditions, the roots of his civilization. For example, Islam did not attack the cult of the ancestors. On the contrary, it reinforced it with the cult of the saints. Being unable to suppress the use of gris-gris, the marabouts islamized it by replacing the animal particles used in traditional gris-gris fabrication with verses from the Koran enclosed with names of archangels and prophets like Abraham, Moses, Azraël, and Mohamed.¹

**Ambiguity of the Term "Marabout"**

The word "marabout" means "one of the people." In its original usage, it signified a cultural leader, a conserver of tradition.² As we explained in Chapter I, marabouts replaced the traditional chief in many situations, but if most people have no problem understanding the role of the chief, even though he is no longer functional in the society, they tend to be confused by the term marabout. In contemporary Senegalese society, there is no distinction made between the marabout, the Muslim spiritual guide, the fetish priest, and the miracle worker who may have little or no knowledge of the Koran. Any man who deals with the occult forces is commonly known as a marabout.

During an interview, Al Hadj Abdou Aziz Sy, Jr. (the Khalife général of the Malikiyya branch of the Tidjaniyya brotherhood) declared that in Senegal there are "marabouts" and "marabouts":

Le problème du marabout est un problème complexe au Sénégal parce qu'il y a "marabout" et marabout, les vrais marabouts, les vrais mystiques, et les faux marabouts. Il y a naturellement les véritables marabouts qui étaient mystiques et le faux marabout qui n'est pas mystique. Voilà
une distinction. Et de les distinguer est un peu difficile ici au Sénégal. Ce n'est qu'au Sénégal qu'on voit quelqu'un qui ne sait rien et qui a prétention de guider spirituellement les gens. Nous acceptons cet état des choses parce que nous sommes dans un pays démocratique, un état laïque où chacun exprime librement ses pensées: vous êtes libre. C'est pourquoi le problème du marabout est d'abord un problème pour nous les marabouts.

According to Sy, some of those passing for marabouts are opportunists and frauds who have little or no knowledge of the Koran. These marabouts do not serve the people out of dedication to Allah, for they are primarily motivated by the pursuit of their own self-interest.

Some novelists attempt to clarify the difference between genuine spiritual leaders and fraudulent marabouts. In *La Plaie* by Malick Fall, for example, there are three maraboutic figures who deal in the supernatural: the Muslim spiritual guide Serigne Massall; the traditional medicine man Khar l'Ancien; and the seer Koné le Devin. The novel's hero Magamou decides that he wants at all costs to live and to enter the society of men. To do so, he knows he must be rid of his ulcerous leg and its stench. He first consults Serigne Massall, who has the reputation of being a great man of God. Serigne Massall refuses to give Magamou a gris-gris for his wound and announces that his job is to pray for the unfortunate. According to him, some people have the gift of healing, whereas others have a faith that does not heal the body but purifies the soul. ("Aux uns, leur don, leur science. Aux autres, leur foi, qui ne soigne pas, qui purifie."4) For this reason, he advises Magamou to see a doctor.

Massall preaches fatalism and predeterminism to Magamou in hopes of convincing the beggar to accept his lot as the will of God. According to him, Magamou has absolutely no control over his own
destiny since God is free to cut off his breath even at any moment. Reminding Magamou once again that he is not a fetish priest, he invites the suffering man to pray with him, but when Serigne Massall perceives that Magamou is determined not to consult a medical doctor, he refers him to the healer Khar l'Ancien who "knows everything" about traditional medicine. It is interesting to note here that Massall recognizes the cultural assimilation that threatens the fetish priests' existence since, he himself admits that younger people have abandoned him for the white man's medicine. Although he acknowledges that the white man's medicine is good, he nevertheless encourages Magamou to try the healer, and he sends his prayers with him.

Each of Fall's priestly characters has a specific ability and a certain role to play at a given point in the story. Koné le Devin neither prays nor heals. However, he pronounces Magamou's fate and creates suspense in the mind of the reader. Massall is a man of Islam; he does not profess to be a prophet or a healer. Instead he prays, he addresses Magamou's spiritual state. Khar l'Ancien is a traditional healer. He does not pray for Magamou but he does tell the hero to rely on Serigne Massall's prayers.

**Religious Disorder and the Theme of Efficacy**

The religious disorder that many Senegalese novelists have identified is directly related to the cultural conflict that the African has experienced as a result of colonization and modernization. Some of these novelists see animism or traditional religious beliefs as being the fundamental trait of the African cultural personality.
For them, it represents the one element that survived colonization. In the works of these writers, traditional African religion serves as the cement that provides for the moral, social, and intellectual cohesion of the group. In traditional African societies, the individual's role as part of the community takes precedence over his individual desires and religion in this context involves a collective, participatory experience that links the group to the gods and to the ancestors. However, in modern Senegal, individualism is gradually replacing the collective ethic.

Though there is nothing unusual about spiritual leadership in a collective society (collective society has always had its priests), the marabout reflects a religious disorder in the sense that the true nature of his function has many conflicting interpretations among those who follow him and use his services. When people seek out a marabout, what seems to be most important is not the marabout's methodology—whether he uses prayer, animist practices, or both—but rather the results he obtains. Novelists often depict protagonists who are less committed to a specific religious philosophy than to the desire for an efficacious intervention of some sort. In the case of Islam, they tend to ignore the holiness of Islam or the manner in which the principles of Sufism apply to their own lives, for as Roger Dorsinville intimates, they want to know how they can be aided by the absolvements of Islam: "Ce n'est pas la sainteté de l'Islam; ce n'est pas le soufisme appliqué à leurs vies. Ce sont plutôt les tolérances par lesquelles l'Islam ne diffère pas pratiquement de n'importe quelle religion en pays noir." What counts is not the
spiritual potential of these religions but the concrete benefits that the individual can receive from them. This situation reflects a serious religious disorder, in the sense that religion has lost its spiritual meaning and vocation. The question that the client directs to the marabout is rarely if ever "What would Allah have me to do?" Instead, the client wants to know "What can you do? What outside force can you exercise to change or better my situation?" Under these circumstances religion is no longer considered a way of life, no longer a question of adherence or conversion. It no longer assures the cohesion of the group. On the contrary, it is viewed as a means of achieving individual progress in the most materialistic sense of the word. This situation implies a crisis of religious values, and it enters the Senegalese novel in the depictions of marabouts who no longer give spiritual advice, but facilitate the attainment of goals that people covet for themselves--money, position, status, success in affairs of the heart, and other similar desires.

In the novel Karim, Ousmane Socé's hero experiences a period of anguish after having been defeated by his rival for the hand of the lovely Marième. When he consults Serigne Samba, he is looking for a fetish priest who will promise him what he desires; instead, he finds himself doing business with a man of God who does not profess to have any particular power. Later in the story when Karim suffers a malaria attack, Socé tells his readers that Karim suddenly takes refuge in religion. Previously he was indifferent to Islam and would even blaspheme God, but during his convalescent period he prays, and reads the Koran. In terms of religion, Socé presents his hero as
being an opportunist. He turns to God only when he has need of an intervention that will help him attain a private goal. He seeks the marabout, prays, and reads the Koran, but Muslim duties are not a part of his daily routine.

In the episode about Maïmouna's sickness, Sadji describes a world characterized by the superposition of cultures. In a moment of disarray, the modern African knocks on all doors. His beliefs have ceased to be deep, unified, and coherent. Thus, he can adhere to all forms of thought, resort to all sorts of methods, recipes, ingredients; the only rule to which he attaches any importance is efficacy. Situated during a time when the cultural disorder of Senegalese society was in its initial stages, Sadji's novel contains characters who do not entirely turn away from their people's beliefs, although they tend to favor a certain cultural heterogeneousness. ³

In La Plaie, Magamou's desire for results is intense. When he consults the marabout Serigne Massall, he, like Karim, is only interested in obtaining a gris-gris. He appears to be uninterested in prayer. Islam without its traditional African aspect is useless to him. Khar l'Ancien, the marabout-healer, recommends prayer and uses an African pharmacopeia to treat his clients. Magamou adheres strictly to the facc-katt's prescription because what counts is not how Khar will heal him but that Khar will heal him.

In Xala, El Hadj Abdou Kader Bèye's primary motivation is to be rid of the xala that has called his sex life to a halt. When he seeks out the various marabouts who have been recommended to him, he is so preoccupied with getting results that he is victimized by charlatans
and loses sight of the fact that he is rapidly depleting his financial resources.

It is also a concern for efficacy that pushes Gorgui Mbodj, in Cheikh Aliou Ndao's novel Buur Tilleen Roi de la Médina (1972), into the path of animism. When his only child Raki, whom he had earlier denounced and evicted from his home, is near death, he knocks on all supernatural doors:

... Le soir Gorgui ne prend pas le chemin de la mosquée... il retire un objet rouge, oblong, couvert de cauris, terminé par une queue de singe. Gorgui a reçu ce talisman de son père. Il s'en sert en période de désespoir, lorsque les versets coraniques ne lui paraissent pas offrir assez de garantie... Il lève le talisman vers les quatre points cardinaux, compte sept pas dans chaque direction. Il sait ce que la dynastie Mbodj doit à l'Esprit des Ancêtres... Bien que musulman, Gorgui se livre à des prières animistes.

Having sensed that Islamic prayers are not working, Gorgui resorts to traditional methods and takes out the talismans of his ancestors that were given to him by his father. Though he is supposed to be a militant Muslim, he does not hesitate to align himself with obscure forces in the hope of saving his daughter.

When news of a marabout's baraka spreads, he may acquire a reputation even among non-Muslims. White men have been known to confide in the powers of such men. For example, in La Plaie, Beauteau (the French administrator whom Magamou reproaches for his orgies and his constant search for young African girls) believes in traditional religious practices, such as gris-gris, and one night he asks Magamou to sacrifice a ram that he had gotten on the advice of a quack marabout. Bernardy, the white medical doctor who is supposed to be treating Magamou's wound and who suggests that the leg be amputated, also
believes in marabouts. He doesn't have any confidence in the marabouts of that region, but if he were in Bambey, he would take Magamou to a certain marabout-healer with whom he had relations in the past.\textsuperscript{10} Bernardy sees the benefit of coordinating modern medical science with traditional practices, although he only trusts marabouts who have been tried and tested. Magamou is shocked to learn that a white man, a doctor, wears gris-gris and consults marabouts, healers, and seers. However, the marabout's influence often transcends racial and cultural borders.

In some instances Christians have also been known to turn to the marabout. For example, in _Nini_ (1954) by Abdoulaye Sadji, the mulatto women in the story ignore their Christian upbringing to seek a maraboutage in hopes of realizing their individual desires. Neither Grandmère Hélène nor Tante Hortense was able to marry a full-blooded white man. For this reason, Old Hélène desires to see her granddaughter Nini succeed where she failed:

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Une idée est née derrière le front de la vieille Hélène, la grand-mère de Nini. Sa petite fille est en amitié depuis cinq mois avec ce M. Martineau qui a l'air si comme il faut. Pourquoi ce Monsieur n'épouserait-il pas sa petite fille? Cette idée la hante comme un remords ... Mais que faire? ... Elle songe au maraboutage.
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Despite her Christian background, she turns to a Mandingo marabout as a means of fostering Nini's marriage with her white lover Martineau. This example of marabout consultation is even more significant considered in light of the fact that she and Nini both belong to the mulatto community that turns its back on black Africa. In
America, they might be called "oreos" or, as Frantz Fanon once said, those who have a peau noire but wear masque blancs. 12

Nini also desires the realization of her dream to marry Martineau, but her attitude differs from that of her grandmother. For Grandmère Hélène, seeking the marabout is not only a means to obtain a desired goal; it is also an attempt to reclaim her cultural heritage. As for Nini, she assails and rejects anything that does not come from Europe:

Nini, "jeune fille blanche," n'aurait jamais eu affaire à un marabout noir sans le problème posé par sa liaison avec le Blanc. D'ordinaire elle se moque à grands éclats de rire des sacs de "gris-gris" qui pendent au cou des Noirs; et quand elle est avec des Européens, elle est incapable d'imaginer comment on put croire à une chose comme l'existence de diables et de sorciers mangeurs d'âmes.

However, she is quite willing to make a pact with the devil to assure the advancement of her plans. Consequently, she submits herself to all the animist rites prescribed by the Mandingo marabout. In a way similar to other protagonists such as Karim, Magamou, and Bèye, Nini will concern herself only with the results of the maraboutage and not with the process itself. In this context, characters show no allegiance to a belief system adhered to by a group but are preoccupied with their individual wants. All sectors of the society, regardless of class, race, or religion seek the efficacious interventions of marabouts.
Religious Disorder: Charlatanism and the Complex of Spiritual Dependency

A serious consequence of the religious disorder that maraboutism implies is that it opens the door to charlatanry. The marabout may knowingly or unknowingly use his influence to exploit the talibés. Although the people might be aware that a particular marabout is a charlatan, many still feel compelled to seek his services or to overlook his misdoings.

Most reformist Muslims and scholars of Islam attribute the continuing strength of traditional maraboutic practices to an ignorance of "true" Islam on the part of many Muslims both now and in the past. However, many supporters of marabouts are aware of the interpretations of Islam presented by scripturalists, but they continue to hold to maraboutic Islam as a meaningful religious experience.

This aspect of the religious disorder undoubtedly stems from the way Islam was taught to the Senegalese. During the colonial period, they were trained to seek the marabout, and leaders of the Muslim brotherhoods often told them to be submissive and resigned. In part as a result of this background, a complex of spiritual dependency has become deeply ingrained in many believers, who feel helpless when they are confronted with a problem. A believer may think that his only solution is to turn to the marabout, for the marabout may be able to help him; otherwise, he must face despair alone. In some cases the talibé may practice Islam while continuing to believe in the African religion of his forefathers. Furthermore, the marabout's advice is almost always imprecise and vague, and regardless of the outcome
of his interventions, Allah or the gods are either praised or blamed. In other words, the spiritual dependency complex is marked by a certain fatalism, and the marabout can retain his reputation for efficacy, even when his actions and pronouncements reflect no actual knowledge of the future.

In Maïmouna, Yaye Daro makes no independent decisions concerning Maïmouna's future though she is uneasy about her daughter's being submitted to the corruption of city life. She breaks up friendships upon the advice of marabouts; in fact, she does whatever Serigne Thierno and other mediaries tell her to do. According to Moussa Ben, every woman in Senegal has her special spiritual father who also looks out for her children's protection against evil doing. When Maï's pregnancy is discovered, Rihanna sends her back to Louga. Once Yaye Daro learns the details about how Maï's governess arranged her clandestine meetings with a certain young man, she exclaims: "- Ainsi, c'est donc cette 'mbinedane' . . . Ah Dieu! mon marabout l'avait dit, une femme effacée qui vit très près de Maïmouna. Serigne Thierno ne se trompe jamais Maï. Il l'avait dit." Serigne Thierno, Yaye Daro's marabout, had prophesied Maïmouna's fate, when he predicted that a woman would cause the young girl's downfall. Already confident that Serigne Thierno never makes a mistake, she became even more dependent upon him when this prophecy was fulfilled.

In La Grève des battû, Mour Ndiaye depends on Serigne Birama for guidance. He makes no major decisions without first informing his marabout; in fact, his use of the phrase "mon marabout" is a key to the spiritual dependency syndrome. The desire for efficaciousness
also applies to Mour who seeks other marabouts so as to be certain of his election to the vice-presidency. However, as in the case of Yaye Daro and Serigne Thierno, Mour Ndiaye's relationship with Serigne Birama has stood the test of time and Birama has proved himself to be a man of integrity.

Although he has been constantly exploited by villainous marabouts, El Hadji Bèye (Xala) does not give up his search for a cure of the curse that afflicts him. He doubts these marabouts and realizes that they only desire his money, but he still allows his chauffeur Modu to convince him to try again:

... il réfléchissait. Il doutait de tous ces charlatans. Tous ne faisaient que lui soutirer de l'argent. Il ne savait plus combien il avait dépensé ... Lorsque Modu l'avait entretenu de Serigne Mada, il n'avait eu qu'appréhension pour ces guérisseurs. Mais les arguments de son employé étaient de taille.

Not once does Bèye think to examine himself to see if there is a reason for his xala. In the Islamic sense, his spiritual depth is insufficient, because he has not made a genuine commitment to Allah. Yet his spiritual dependency allows marabouts to extract money from him by making false promises and giving vague advice. Although he recognizes their intentions, El Hadji Bèye feels so helpless that he ties himself to a network of religious personnel whose god is money. It is the charlatan, the marbout-vilain, who profits from the protagonist's instability. The spiritual dependency syndrome provides the momentum for charlatanism. Characters in the Senegalese novel, such as Yaye Daro, Mour Ndiaye, El Hadji Bèye, and others appear to be more committed to the marabout than they are to Allah. Their spiritual
dependency hampers their ability to make independent decisions so they consistently rely on the marabout to intervene on their behalf. Even if his interventions fail, the marabout knows that fatalistic clients will continue to consult him. As a result, con artists and fraudulent marabouts have access to a situation where they can easily exploit popular belief in maraboutage for their own personal gain. Novelists repeatedly point out this phenomenon.

Charlatanism or the "Marabout-Vilain"

Charlatanism has reached all of the social groups in almost all areas of Senegalese life--political, economic, social, sports, etc. The xondiom or gris-gris is well-established in the moeurs and habits of the people. Athletes go to the marabout before wrestling matches and the marabout promises each of them an easy victory over his adversary. Marabouts use their gris-gris to make promises to all sorts of people, as Amar Samb points out in his Matraqué par le destin:

Aujourd'hui même cette tradition subsiste d'une façon plus ou moins latente: les hommes politiques qui veulent garder leur place, les fontanarios qui désirent se concilier les faveurs de leur supérieur ou monter en grade, les jaloux et les envieux qui souhaitent voir terrasser les rivaux, les lutteurs d'arène qui aspirent à la défaite de leurs adversaires, les amants qui ne sont pas payés de retour et qui veulent rendre docile, folle d'amour leur bien-aimée récalcitrante, tous ces gens vont voir le chef spirituel, pour se faire des gris-gris, bref de maraboutage.

The charlatan marabout makes gris-gris but promises to bring the most personal desires to fruition; he even fabricates talismans designed to make an indifferent lover go mad with passion. Though important, the effectiveness of the gris-gris does not appear to be as important
as its role as part of a latent, unwritten, socio-religious code that prompts people to consult mystifiers.

Abdoulaye Sadjio frequently refers to "marabouts and charlatans" as if there was no difference between the two terms, although he does contrast Serigne Thierno, Yaye Daro's marabout in Louga, with Serigne Elimane in Dakar. Serigne Thierno is an authentic marabout, a man of faith and prayer with real and efficacious knowledge. For Yaye Daro and her people, he is at the same time a confidante, guide, and the protector of their destinies. A man of action, he is dedicated to the people during the smallpox epidemic. In contrast, Serigne Elimane incarnates the type of worldly marabout. He lacks spiritual knowledge but he understands the religious disorder and exploits it to take advantage of a gullible clientele. Where Serigne Thierno is reserved, Elimane likes to be noticed. The author even arouses the reader's suspicion when he says that Elimane has "tout à fait l'allure d'un marabout." He is wearing a white hood and carrying a big rosary, he greets everyone in a lengthy and religious manner. Fully aware that Maïmouna's illness is an opportunity for him to gain exposure to some prospective clients, Serigne Elimane does not wait for Galaye to ask him to examine Maïmouna, he offers his services.

The charlatan needs elegance and charm to earn the esteem, friendship, and confidence of everyone he treats. In order to do this he must be courteous, likeable, well-educated, respected, attentive, and at times, pleasant. The long prayer beads with impressive pearls and the turban add the finishing touches to the portrait of this psychologist who knows how to ask learnedly little questions to get the
client to trust in him. Elimane has his speech all prepared upon arrival. Using sand as a vehicle of divination, he reveals that Maîmouna has become the victim of evil spirits and evil tongues that burn everything they name: "La jeune fille, d'après lui, était le jouet des esprits malins en même temps que la victime des langues. Les langues aux propos infernaux qui brulent tout ce qu'elles nomment." After feeling the sick girl from head to toe and covering her with saliva, he has her drink a mixture and promises Maîmouna two talismans: one for her hair and one to put around her waist. Now that Maîmouna's healing is supposedly assured, he begins to talk about her future with her fiancé Galaye, affirming that their marriage will take place. Surely Galaye compensates him for coming and for the consultation. The entire scene is brief but ironic.

This passage underlines the paradox of the charlatan. Elimane is a charlatan, a man of the city who did not know how to detect the "sickness" from which Maîmouna was suffering. It is a midwife who gives the exact diagnosis, which confirms the message of the cauris shells, she is pregnant. Lacking genuine knowledge in both the spiritual and natural realms, Serigne Elimane impersonates a marabout for selfish reasons. Like the typical charlatan, he only says and does what is necessary to extort money and gifts from Galaye and to further his reputation as a "man of God."

The Mandingo marabout in Nini is supposed to be a fetish priest. Mandingues are believed to be from fetishist dynasties and, like sorcerers, they claim a power called corté which may provoke sickness and death:
Tout le monde sait que les Mandingues descendent directement des grandes dynasties fétichistes. Aussi bien sont-ils considérés outre mesure comme des hommes à la science dangereuse, toujours prêts à se venger ou à jeter la perturbation dans les idées et les sentiments d'un individu. On leur attribue par exemple de porter sur une partie de leur corps un talisman qui les garantit de tout geste agressif. Le pouvoir de ce talisman est tel que si vous brutalisez un Mandingue digne de ce nom vous tomberez immédiatement et le mal qui vous frappe se manifeste par des coliques suivies d'effets honteux. Un Manding peut encore vous jeter la maladie ou la mort à une distance que l'imagination ne peut concevoir. Ce pouvoir mystérieux est connu sous le nom de "corté." 22

These popular beliefs about Mandingo marabouts and their infallibility help to explain why those who seek out mystifiers hold special esteem for them. Considered to be the most powerful and vengeful of all marabouts, the Mandingos are feared by many. As a result, charlatans will often claim Mandingo descent to enhance their credibility.

Not only does the Mandingo marabout's person evoke fear; his place of residence is likewise a source of awe. Grandmère Hélène is terrified when she arrives there at the home of the Mandingo marabout. His hut reminds her of a cemetery and seems to be occupied by invisible things. Even this mulatto woman cannot hide the superstitious aspect of her Africanity. The marabout claims to work with the djinns (spirits) and to converse with the Ravanés (spirits of the ancestors). He promises Nini, by way of Grandmère Hélène, that the White man Martineau will be hers and that only death will be able to separate them. 22 However, in order to assure this desired outcome, the marabout will go into a period of seclusion, known as khawla, for seven nights. Afterwards he will give flasks of holy water, safara, to be used according to his directions. Nini is told to bathe
herself with the contents of one flask and sprinkle herself daily with
the contents of the second one. She must also find a way to get her
white lover to drink the love potion contained in the third flask.
Then all that remains is for Nini to wait for the marriage to take
place. "Simply a question of days" the marabout affirms. Sadjji's
use of irony resurfaces. From all appearances the Mandingo marabout
is indeed a fetish priest who is well-acquainted with the procedures
of maraboutage. However, by promising positive results, he uses
Hélène's pursuit of an efficacious intervention to his own advantage.

The Mandingo marabout, who usually says little, is suddenly
loquacious when old Hélène asks him the price of his khawla and his
love potion. He explains in detail all the trouble he took in making
the potion. He declares that in previous times marabouts had only
gone into khawla for princes and kings who paid in slaves, cattle,
or goat herds. Since the traditional price has no equivalent in the
modern era, Hélène will have to pay bags and bags of money. The char-
latan's psychological ploy works, because the mulatress is completely
flustered by his analysis of the situation. At this point, Khady,
Hélène's Black relative, intervenes and enters into a tête-à-tête
first with the marabout and then with Hélène. After a drawn-out
scene, he manages to obtain 5000 CFA and twenty meters of bazin
fabric, all the while assuring the old woman that she is paying the
minimum. Gullible, Hélène thanks the marabout for allowing her the
opportunity to benefit from "votre science." 23 Here money is assumed
to have the power to alter destiny supernaturally. In actuality, the
marabout's demand for compensation is an element of corruption, since
all he has done thus far is to make predictions and promises which have yet to be fulfilled. Hélène is so anxious to see her desire brought to fruition that she does not perceive immediately that the Mandingo is preoccupied with money and that he is probably a charlatan.

The attempt to put a spell on Nini's French lover, Martineau, fails. A few days after the dinner during which Martineau consumes the love potion, the government office in Saint-Louis is closed and Martineau must return to France. At this point Nini revolts against maraboutism. Full of contempt for black Africans and their culture, she had previously dismissed maraboutage as legend and superstition. Now she has her personal experience to support her claims:

Nini tient maintenant le secret d'une revanche certaine contre sa grand-mère et sa tante qui croient encore à la légende des marabouts noirs. Elle n'a jamais voulu croire à ses superstitions, mais elles l'ont toujours fait taire au nom de leur vieille expérience. Maintenant à elles la parole. Martineau s'en va, dit Perrin. À elles, sa grand-mère et sa tante, aidées du marabout nègre, de le retenir. Quant à elle, Nini, elle s'en lave les mains comme irresponsible.24

She accuses "Hélène's" marabout of being a charlatan who had seen nothing at all about her destiny.25 Traditionalists might attribute the ineffectiveness of the love potion to Martineau's European origins, which enable him to resist the action of occult forces and the spirits of the Ancestors. If les Oreilles Rouges (Senegalese epithet for white men) are resilient to the sorcery of Black science, it is because they themselves are sorcerers:

D'ailleurs si le Blanc est refractaire aux effets de sorcellerie de toutes sortes c'est que lui-même est un sorcier. Sa peau claire le rapproche de l'ange, son
Thus, when a charlatan is unsuccessful in performing a maraboutage against a white man, the traditional belief system has already provided him with a convenient justification for his failure.

Later in the story when Grandmère Hélène falls ill she asks for the Mandingo marabout. Whether he is a charlatan or not does not matter to the old woman at this point. Reexamining her life she realizes that she has lived an illusion by denying her Africanity in an attempt to adopt the white man's values. Thus, by committing herself to the traditional healer, she is returning to her roots and seeking to be reclaimed by the Ancestors. She revolts against the white man and his medicine: "- Plus de Blanc ici, s'écrie-t-elle . . . Ils [les Blancs] nous ont mentis, violées, déclassées, ils ont rendu jaloux et méchant envers nous nos parents noirs et génies tutélaires. Et maintenant ils veulent venir me soigner?" Hélène's hostility, due to Nini's failure to marry Martineau, is directed toward the white man and the crimes he has committed against the mulatto; for her, the white man and not the Mandingo marabout is responsible for their dilemma. Nini opposes Aunt Hortense's return to the marabout, for she knows how ineffectual his intervention was in her own case, but Aunt Hortense persists in defending the marabout. In this confrontation, Sadji illustrates a generational conflict. Nini, far more alienated from her African roots than her elders, rejects the marabout whereas Hortense allows the charlatan to continue
his activities because she perceives that he may be able to at least provide a sense of hope to Hélène in what may be a hopeless situation.

When the Mandingo marabout arrives in Saint-Louis, he isolates himself in a slum that reminds him of his hut in N'Diolofène. At this house, he attributes Hélène's illness to her failure to recognize the Ancestors on her mother's side (the blacks). In order to heal the mulatress, this same charlatan orders Hortense to:

... acheter un taureau noir ou rouge dont la robe n'aura aucune tache différente; l'immoler un lundi ou un jeudi: do son sang abreuver la malade et lui en enduire le corps entier de la tête aux pieds; employer toute la chair de l'animal à la préparation d'un même plat qui sera distribué comme aumône aux pauvres ou voisins. Battre ensuite le tam-tam pendant huit jours de suite, soit dans la maison de la malade, soit dans celle d'un parent à elle appartenant à la même lignée."

Aunt Hortense explains to the marabout that this prescription will be impossible to carry out. Even though she wants to save Hélène, she understands the precariousness of their situation. Mulattoes are excluded from certain traditions because they are neither black nor white. She then asks the marabout for an alternative.

The marabout finally recommends prayer and says that he will pray every night until Hélène recovers. He assures the old woman of her healing and adds that he will pray free of charge:

Par reconnaissance pour ce que Madame a fait pour moi, je passerai toutes mes nuits à prier pour elle jusqu'à ce que Dieu la remette debout. Mais je ne vous demande rien, absolument rien. Je veux faire ça par gratitude et par fidélité à mon amie Khady.

Aunt Hortense accompanies the Mandingo marabout to the door and slips him a piece of money which he at first obstinately refuses to accept.
although he eventually puts it in his pocket. After this encounter, Hortense calls in several other marabouts.

The Mandingo marabout, a charlatan, could neither bring about Nini's marriage to Martineau nor heal Grandmère Hélène. However, through his role in the story there is an attempt to bridge the gap between the mulatto women and their black heritage. His failure to bring about their desires reflects the strength of the illusion that they lived in their struggle to be white. Nearly all societies consider mulattos to be black and no marabout has the power to change that fact. Sadjji's portrayal of this marabout and his failure suggests that some seek mystifiers in order to avoid facing up to the unalterable realities of their human dilemma. In these cases, it is the charlatan who thrives.

The unveiling of a false prophet is the subject of "Mahmoud Fall," a story in Ousmane Sembène's Voltaïques. Like the griot, Sembène immediately brings out the most important facts. Mahmoud Fall does not and will not work. He would prefer to live off someone else. He has studied the Koran in Mauritania and has a powerful voice which distinguishes him. When Mahmoud comes to Senegal, he changes his name and the natives, thinking he is from the royal family of the Aïdra, make him the imam. He does not eat with the others but imparts his saliva to those who serve him. They believe they are being blessed. He goes from house to house for meals because he knows that no Senegalese can refuse a stranger something to eat. Ungrateful, he begins to complain about the food and demands special dishes. As his reputation grows, so does his pocketbook, which had been empty when he
arrived. Mahmoud is successful at hiding his true origins and his plan. One day, without notifying anyone he leaves Senegal to return to the Atlas region. In attempting to avoid robbers, he travels night and day, hardly resting. He decides to take a detour to the north, unaware that he is entering the kingdom of the Tièdes, who are atheist fetishists. Instead of praying at the appointed hour, he decides to sleep under a tree that was green and shady in the midst of dryness and barrenness. After thinking he saw someone, he buries his money and goes back to sleep. Then, during what he thought was a dream, he is carried away by one of the Tièdes who shaves him all over, takes his money, and leaves without a trace.

An important aspect of the story is the theme of the relationship between the Mauritanians and the Senegalese. Mauritanian clerics played a great role in the Islamization of the Blacks or Bilals. According to certain accounts of Islamic history, Bilal, a slave, was the first Black converted to Islam. The Moors, remnants for the most part of the earlier invasions into Walo and Fouta-Toro from across the Senegal River, have never intermixed with other tribes or races. Moors working in all the major towns of Senegal have retained their own identity and customs and are considered with suspicion if not hostility. References to them often bear emotive connotations like those to Jews in Western writings. They are often stereotyped as selfish and avaricious. For example, Mahmoud's philosophy for living is, as the author states in the first lines of the story: "Mon bien est à moi; le tien rien n'empêche de se le partager." Tired of doing nothing and penniless, Mahmoud decides to go to the land of black
men, whom he considers to be inferior and ripe for being duped. When his reputation as a preacher spread throughout the region, holy men and other marabouts began to refer to him as **souma narr** ("my Moor" in the Wolof language). Mahmoud, who internalized their use of the possessive adjective "my," thought they were crazy since according to his cultural assumptions, a Black man could never "own" a Moor. It was Moors who enslaved the Blacks. In his eyes all Blacks are "fils d'esclaves."

The Bilals display a consistent gullibility that Sembène attributes to the black man's religiosity and zeal for the sacred. All Mahmoud needed to do was to know the Koran and profess some association with the Atlas, and he suddenly became worthy of praise. But the only thing he ever gave the people was his spittle which they were glad to receive. Anything he told them they believed: "Pour accroître encore son prestige, il alla même jusqu'à déclarer en public que son corps était banni de Finahri Dianan . . . de l'enfer. Ils gobèrent cela comme le reste."\(^{31}\) Still it is the old people in most societies who, because of their wisdom, are able to analyze a situation from a different perspective. When Mahmoud leaves the country without bidding the people adieu, the old people say: "Un étranger qui t'a donné le soleil couchant, ne le cherche pas au soleil levant."\(^{32}\) This Wolof proverb suggests that a stranger like Mahmoud, who arrives when the sun is setting is looking for something. When the sun rises he'll be gone because he will have obtained whatever he was after.
By his behavior, Mahmoud is indifferent to the religion Islam and the teachings of the Prophet. In no way is he like our model mystics, Maître Therno (L'Aventure ambiguë) and Moussa Tine (Au delà de la vertu) who would rather pray than sleep. He sleeps instead of praying and that precipitates his inevitable downfall. While he is sleeping he will be stripped of his disguise and robbed. Sembène points out that there is no difference between the so-called religion of the marabout Mahmoud Fall, the false man of God, and the atheist Tièdes. Mahmoud was proud of his mastery of the art of taking other people's belongings for himself and had even attributed this power to God. However, he learns that "il n'était pas besoin de croire en Allah pour être voleur!"33 He is not the only one who knows how to steal and not leave a trace. The atheist Tiède uncovers Mahmoud to be exactly what he is, an unbelieving thief.

In Matraqué par le destin, Amar Samb provides several detailed accounts of persons who have been duped by marabouts. Each case involves selfish men who prefer to receive rather than to give—men who are only seeking to protect their own interests. For example, the hero in this novel has a brother-in-law who had been a prosperous merchant until he became involved with one of the most important grand marabouts of Senegal. According to Samb this particular marabout has a network of disciples who register the names of the wealthy in every city, seek them out, try to discover their weak points, and make friends with them. All the while they are working for their marabout. If the wealthy person is not particularly perceptive, he falls into their trap and his fortune often changes hands.34 Instead of training
his disciples in the Muslim faith, this grand marabout exploits his talibés by sending them out to recruit new members to enlarge his empire and his bankroll. Even sincere individuals can be duped by such charlatans and confidence men. For example, Oumar's brother-in-law spent all of the profits from his business to receive the false prophet and his entourage for several days a week. After he had spent all of his savings, he began to build a large dwelling for the marabout and a mosque to go with it. When he had almost finished this project he got a nail stuck in his hand; as a result he became afflicted with a severe case of tetanus. The marabout, whom the author describes as one of the richest and most influential in the country, never inquired about his brother or even took the trouble of recommending a treatment to him. When Oumar arrived, his brother-in-law was near death and unable to pay for his medicine. However, no one protests or assails the marabout, because to do so is to come under condemnation. The sincerity of his clients and talibés does not affect the charlatan marabout's exploitative tendencies; he only cares about himself.

Samb also tells the story of More Guëye, a working man who "a trop aimé son marabout." More's marabout lived in the Baol region and always came to Dakar unannounced to see his talibé. When the marabout visited, More paid all the expenses: lodging, food, local travel, tea, etc. Finally, carried away by fanaticism for his intercessor, More quits his job and leaves Dakar to devote himself entirely to his spiritual master. After a few months More's body is found in a miserable straw hut that belonged to the marabout. He had been
dead three days before anyone noticed his body. This incident shows how much care the marabout had been providing for his disciple. In the marabout's mind, More's death occurred the moment that the talibé relinquished all his worldly possessions to serve him. Similar to Omar's brother-in-law, More is victimized by a self-seeking charlatan who exploits him to the maximum and then discards him as useless.

What attracts the charlatan marabout to his victims is their wealth. Once he has drained them of their financial resources, the marabout-vilain moves on. Samb felt that it was the responsibility of the government authorities to deal with the problem of charlatanry by instructing the masses about the existence of false prophets and con artists in order to dissipate the veil of mysticism that surrounds such people.

When Omar falls ill and there is no room for him at the hospital, a marabout shows up at the house and claims that he can cure the boy. However, he also asks for a large sum of money, half to be paid before the treatment and the rest after the healing. Desperate, Omar's relatives accept his offer only to discover that he is a charlatan. He has them fetch a jet black chicken whose throat he cuts while reciting "on ne savait quoi." Oumar's sister-in-law put the chicken in a pot with its feathers and without salt, the way that the marabout had directed. Once the chicken was well done, the marabout ordered them to feed it to the sick boy. Omar could only eat the right thigh and his condition worsened. However, the fact that this charlatan failed, as in the case of Beye in Xala, does not deter the hero from wanting to try another healer. Fortunately, the next facc katt is a true
traditional medicine man who is able to cure him. Samb obviously believes that there are some authentic healers, serin tarikh, although they may be few in number. The African pharmacopeia does have a well-established reputation, occupying a nearly religious place in the mentality of the people. Genuine medicine men, whether concerned with the compounding of herbal remedies or inspired by the Koran, regret the emergence of charlatans, who have neither faith nor shame. 35

This attitude characterizes the work of many Senegalese prose writers. Mbaye Gana Kébé, for example, derisively satirizes the unscrupulous marabout who promises his clients the impossible in return for excessive payment. The kaala in his story of that name in the collection of satirical short stories Kaala-Sikkim (Beard of the Turban) focuses upon the ostentatious turban worn by the pretentious and unprincipled marabout, Serigne Diobaye. Having lost his turban, his credibility, his income, and his wife, the marabout finally loses his wits.

The author first draws the reader's attention to the physical attributes of the charlatan. Serigne Diobaye is an overweight, incontinent glutton who has no sincere commitment to the faith. He is concerned only with the search for material gain. The turban or kaala which originated in the Arab countries, was worn by many marabouts to indicate their holiness and their knowledge. It has now become part of the attire of the charlatan and often serves as a symbol for maraboutism. Diobaye's kaala is larger than the largest parasol of the grand marabout of Dakar. Marabouts are also known for their beards and his beard is so full that it resembles one belonging to
a great patriarch. However, this exaggerated flaunting of these objects associated with maraboutism is part of Diobaye's disguise.

Serigne Diobaye is a charlatan in all respects. Devoid of any real gift in the art of tani, Diobaye casts the cauri shells to predict Galaye's destiny. His first four revelations are all wrong, and Galaye repeats successively: "Tu ne m'as pas encore vu." Finally, on the fifth attempt and only with his client's assistance, he arrives at the problem: Galaye's wife is childless. Immediately the marabout asks for money and promises a child during the next rainy season. He swears to it by the belt of his grandfather Sagogno! Allah doesn't even enter into the agreement. The gullible Galaye gives the marabout 15,000 CFA for two flasks of a questionable potion, some roots, and some gris-gris. With précision maraboutique Diobaye then orders Galaye to return in exactly three days after the first rain.

To further discredit the marabout the author continues to make a mockery of his comportment. Asleep, Diobaye snores like an old diesel engine. Awake, he recites verses that are unkoranic, a mixture of vernacular barbarism and Arabic that is not broken but "tortured." This charlatan is neither a man of Islam nor a traditional animist. He is not even a combination of the two; he is simply an impostor. The author focuses on this point, because he is not criticizing genuine religion; he is attacking charlatanism and portraying to the reader the tragi-comedy of a society where mystifiers are not censored and therefore allowed to do as they please.
Kébé also highlights the gullibility of the client Galaye. Already he knew the marabout's reputation as a charlatan and even after verifying that the marabout was not a gifted seer, he still enters into an agreement with Diobaye and meets all of the marabout's demands. The reader learns that, during the next few months, the marabout sent his son, his cousin, and his talibé to Galaye to ask for more money and animals. Galaye acquiesced in every request. However, Galaye's wife did not conceive. Angry, he demands that Diobaye reimburse him. At this point the marabout threatens to turn Galaye into a monkey: 

"- Outrage au maraboutisme! Sacrilège! Galaye demande vite pardon au ciel ou tu seras transformé en singe sans queue!"\(^{38}\)

The crucial point here is that the marabout is concerned not with a sacrilege against God, but against the institution of maraboutism. The genuine concern for Islamic belief has thus disappeared even from his use of words.

Galaye ignores the marabout's threats. A former wrestling champion, he punches Diobaye, collars him, and strips him of his turban, which he takes for all the village to see. To describe the marabout's plea for mercy the author uses the image of a drunk fly kicking in a bowl of buttermilk: 

"- De grâce, laisse-moi de kaala! supplia Diobaye qui se débattit comme une mouche ivre dans un bol de lait caillé."\(^{39}\)

This kaala was his strength, his prestige, all his propaganda: 

"Mon kaala! C'est ma force! C'est mon prestige! C'est toute ma propagande!"\(^{40}\)

The reader is amused to imagine the whereabouts of Diobaye's supernatural power at this time. Like Mahmoud Fall in Voltaïque, charlatan marabouts are itinerant. Thus, after
his humiliation and exposure, Diobaye moves to a city where he changes his name and reestablishes himself. However, Galaye finds him and again asks for reimbursement. Actually Galaye had come to avenge himself on the marabout by showing him what had become of his precious kaala, for Galaye's wife had turned it into a little white pagne. As Galaye bursts out in laughter, Diobaye faints; his own wife takes his money and leaves. Unable to bear the thought of having lost everything, Serigne Diobaye loses his mind and can now be found in front of Hypersahm (large supermarket in Dakar) asking all passers-by for information about his wife, his money, and especially his lost kaala. Kébé's depiction of Diobaye symbolizes his attitude that the fraudulent marabout deserves to be stripped of his disguise, exposed, and mocked before the public.

In his short story "Le marabout de la sécheresse" (1979), Cheikh Aliou Ndao also suggests that the people themselves are partly responsible for the persistence of charlatanry in Senegalese society. His implicit argument is that, if the con man had no clients, he would eventually have to close shop. The story revolves around Bakkar, a practicing Muslim who is now retired. Desirous of obtaining a certain job, Bakkar's son-in-law Ousmane has found a marabout and asks Bakkar for permission to host the religious man for awhile. Ousmane assumes that the marabout is a Mandingo because of his accent, and, as mentioned above, Mandingo marabouts were believed to possess a unique power. Although he has reservations, Bakkar agrees to entertain the marabout who calls himself Sa Niëbé, isolates himself from everyone, and wears a turban that leaves only his eyes uncovered. The old man
becomes curious about this mysterious marabout, but when the marabout persists in keeping his distance, he becomes bitter toward Ousmane thinking that the young man wants to bring charlatans to his home.

Bakkar himself believes in fetishism:

. . . je crois aux forces occultes, au pouvoir des versets. De mon temps, c'était différent; devant un obstacle nous avions recours à un véritable homme de Dieu, un ascète reconnu pour sa piété. Que dire de nos universitaires à l'esprit cartésien, prêts à nier tout ce qui n'est pas scientifique, et qui, nuitamment, offrent des sommes colossales à des devins qui les assurent de faire aboutir leurs desseins.

His question about young men is extremely important, because the well-educated Ousmane is fascinated with the marabout and even has the women prepare Sa Niébé's favorite meals.

One hot night Bakkar is unable to sleep, so he comes out for air. He sights the marabout, who is not wearing his usual attire, on the way to the toilet and believes he has seen him before. Finally, it comes clear to him. The so-called marabout is a famous Wolof juggler from the Baol region. Bakkar confronts the charlatan and threatens to report him to the police, but Sa Niébé breaks into tears and tells his story: he had been honest, but during the drought, people had turned against juggling and called it a heresy. Having heard that there was money in being a charlatan, he decided to disguise himself as a marabout.

Aware that Sa Niébé exploited him, his son-in-law, and others, Bakkar is nonetheless impressed by the man's story. Did the marabout do wrong? Who should be condemned--the naive who spend their money carelessly or Sa Niébé who profits from their gullibility to feed
his family? Bakkar makes a philosophical analysis on the premise that
Sa Nièbé's actions reflect a certain revenge on the city by the vil-
lage. If an unlearned, new convert can fool highly educated people,
then he must be intelligent. After listening carefully and evaluat-
ing the marabout's story, Bakkar allows Sa Nièbé to leave peacefully,
probably to continue his career as a con artist.

Sa Nièbé is so skilled in the art of deception that he appears
unable to do wrong; he can transgress the laws of God and the law of
respect for others, exploit those who aren't able to think as quickly
as he can, and baffle Bakkar as to whether his actions were right
or wrong. Had Bakkar not recognized him, Sa Nièbé would have con-
tinued to use him. Yet Sa Nièbé's psychology obviously worked.
Bakkar even releases him to go about exploiting others. For Bakkar
to suggest that Sa Nièbé should be pardoned because charlatanry
allowed him to feed his family and because those persons who were
duped by an unlearned man "should have known better" may seem logical
but it implies a permissive attitude in regard to the doctrines of
Islam. Nevertheless, Ndao succeeds in raising the question: is the
marabout the only culprit or is the society that allows charlatanry
also guilty of complicity? Ndao is concerned about the people and
the authorities who do nothing to deter the charlatan from his corrupt
ways. The inference is that the prevalence of the charlatan is the
sign of a society in disarray, especially when educated people choose
to be spiritually dependent, even to the point of allowing themselves
to be exploited.
The sécheresse in the story refers not only to the drought in the Baol region; Sa Nièbé himself represents a spiritual drought that has placed many Senegalese in a state of religious disorder—a state in which religion no longer involves the commitment to a way of life. Religion has often become a tool to be used for the realization of secular and carnal aspirations. Novelists document the fact that in Senegal, all sectors of the society seek out charlatans who promise them the impossible and issue gris-gris in a profit-making venture. Some writers such as Sadji do not denounce the false marabout but they emphasize his relationship to beliefs that constitute the black man's religiosity. Other writers, especially Sembène and Kébé, mock the marabout-vilain by stripping the impostor of his disguise and exposing him. While Samb attributes charlatantry to the people's lack of discernment and need to be educated, Cheikh Ndao goes further to point out the religious disorder in the society whereby people, though they are being exploited by the charlatan, are at the same time his accomplices.

Maraboutism and the Younger Generation

The conflict of generations which has its roots in the transfer of the education of young Senegalese from traditional methods of schooling to the Western form of education extends to all aspects of culture and customs. Certain young people who consider themselves éclairé will call maraboutism and traditional religion into question. When Yaye Daro writes to Rihanna to inform her about the marabout's prophecy concerning Maîmounam, for example, Rihanna, who is
the older sister and more attuned to tradition, is alarmed. According to Serigne Thierno, a woman who keeps close to Maîmouna is endangering the girl's safety. However, Maîmouna reminds Rihanna that their mother is very superstitious and that, as a result, marabouts are able to take her money. In Maîmouna's opinion, her mother consults marabouts and charlatans too often and for no reason. Unfortunately, Maîmouna takes the warning lightly, and, as time passes they remain unable to identify the dangerous woman who would supposedly prove fatal to Maîmouna's destiny. Yet within the context of values established by the novel the heroine rejected traditional beliefs all too quickly for Serigne Thierno had actually demonstrated a gift for prophecy. Maîmouna does not share her mother's beliefs in marabouts. However, had she at least given her mother's concern some reflection, perhaps the young girl would have exercised the caution necessary to avoid the predicted pitfall.

In Buur Tilleen Roi de la Médina, Raki, the daughter of the main protagonist, has been educated in the new way. She is outspoken and a free thinker who calls into question many outmoded traditions. The gullibility and religious superstition of the people became evident since they are described through the eyes of Raki. For example, at one point, she converses with an artist who affirms that the Senegalese were conquered by two temptations: the turban (the Arabo-Islamic influence which had some similarities to Senegalese culture) and the altar (the Christian influence which came by way of merchants, soldiers, and machines). Within this context, she describes what she had experienced at a so-called Muslim rally that she left in disgust.
She cannot understand why the people have not been able to unmask marabouts who disguise themselves as preachers and mystify the crowds. She refers to the whole scene as a comedy staged by a comedian and his swindler assistants. She focuses in on the physical portrait of the marabout. Instead of a turban, which normally commands respect, he has a bald head and a thick black mustache that shines as if it has shoe polish in it. While preaching, he eyes the women who are dressed in seductive clothing, and he directs much of his message to them. Using flattery he refers to them as the future "gazelles" of heaven, and his oratory pays dividends since these naive women give him gold pieces and jewelry in such abundance that it piles up in front of him. His preoccupation with money is underscored by the fact that he hurriedly pushes this pile toward his assistants so they can secure the booty. In this case, the charlatan's operation is not a private affair but a public operation. The fact that Raki sees through his charade suggests that the author sees the perceptiveness of educated young people as a potential weapon against the reign of charlatan marabouts.

Young people actually do expose the charlatan in Lamine Diakhaté's "Le Madihou de Pikine," one of two long stories in his Prisonnier du regard (1975). The plot was inspired by the true story of a charlatan marabout who settled in Pikine during the colonial era, claiming to be the Madihou, the redresseur of Islam, the one who will right all the evil in the world. In "Le Madihou de Pikine," the central character mystifies the people for six months before he is revealed as a fraud by some genuine scholars of Islam. Diakhaté
uses historical fact to illustrate how the spiritual dependency complex is a significant aspect of religious charlatanry. The author's direct approach in relating the details of the events reflect the griot's technique; for like the griot, he keeps his audience well informed while at the same time maintaining a high degree of suspense.

Before introducing the characters, Diakhâté dedicates the first part of the story to the description of the social conditions that set the stage for the charlatan and explain why a large village like Pikine was ripe for plucking by this type of religious personality. Pikine was a government-zoned area, where city dwellers and migrants from other regions could settle because land was available there.

As the city grew, it attracted people from all walks of life. From time to time an homme de Dieu came to Pikine. Usually he was well-received and hosted by those who came to hear him. The number and reputation of these wise men grew and they began to attract large crowds. Since Dakar was considered polluted, the boroom xam-xam (masters of knowledge) chose to reside in Pikine, which gradually became the center of mysticism. The residents of Pikine grew accustomed to receiving marabouts whose origins they did not know. Diakhâté tells us that fanatical followers of these marabouts would spread propaganda about their masters, each claiming that his marabout was unique, uninterested in money, and particularly powerful because he was a Socé (of Mandingo origin). The phenomenon of maraboutism grew in importance, in part because it represented one area in which Africans could still exercise leadership and control, despite European colonial dominance in most other areas of life. Islam had already proven to be
a refuge, a point of unification, and a means to resist the colonizer. Yet because the people really did not know the contents of the sacred texts of Islam, they were receptive to the claims of anyone who pretended to preach in the name of Islam.

The story itself begins when two men take up residence in Pikine. The master, a stately, strong, and well-preserved man with piercing eyes, isolates himself in a hut, supposedly praying all the time, while his spokesman, Samba Diop, who is a jack-of-all-trades, sits in front of the hut to receive visitors and to take advantage of the opportunity to talk about the holiness of his master, Serigne Mor. Diakhaté uses language as a tool to forewarn the reader that Serigne Mor and his comrade Samba Diop are fakes. Both Mor and Samba constantly repeat the phrase "que Dieu me pardonne," when speaking or praying as if they have done or are about to do something that God will have to forgive them for. The author uses adjectives like feinte (feigned) and invariably places the words "saint homme" between quotation marks. By adopting such techniques the author is suggesting that he does not believe in the authenticity of these men.

In a bizarre sequence of events Samba initiates the first group of listeners as the Compagnons de Madihou. Shock, fervor, delirium, and hysteria accompany the new conversions; the news spreads quickly as many claim to have seen the Madihou, and crowds flock to Pikine in search of the Mahdi. However, Samba Diop is serving as imam and orchestrating the entire operation. Up to this point no one had asked to see the Madihou. People came, mixed in with the ever-increasing crowd, participated in the emotionalism, and returned to their homes,
convinced that the Madihou had come and that the end of the world was near. Their appetite for the mystical is so great that they seem to relish the excitement that accompanies the announcement of the Madihou's apparition without making any effort to verify his authenticity. The colonial authorities were hesitant to react, and Muslim dignitaries chose not to become involved. Meanwhile, Pikine became the most heavily populated center in the country.

Finally, at the urging of his first followers, Serigne Mor agrees to make a public appearance. When he comes out of his barracks, he is surrounded by an entourage and dressed in standard marabout attire: a white boubou and an immense white turban. He leads prayer, gives a short, vague speech, and then returns to his quarters. The crowd is moved, and even more convinced that he is the Madihou. Here Diakhaté points out what earlier novelists had also indicated. Marabouts, especially charlatans, rarely give specific details. Serigne Mor gives no indication as to how his mission will be accomplished. Also, similar to other charlatan marabouts, Serigne Mor's operation is based on considerable financial gain. The marabout's bodyguards hold a large white pagne to receive bills, coins, jewelry, fabric, and other contributions. When the pagne is full, they take away the loot. In this passage we hear echoes of Raki's observations of a Muslim rally in Ndao's Buur Tileen Roi de la Médina.

Meanwhile, in Dakar, a group of young people become concerned about the claim of the so-called Madihou of Pikine and decide to investigate the marabout's authenticity. Having studied abroad in the Arab world, these young men were well-versed in Arabic and
Islamic studies, and they sincerely desired to see changes in the methods of education and religious instruction in Senegal. Three of the more radical members of the group decide to travel to Pikine.

When Serigne Mor comes out to lead prayer, he directs his message to these three young men, whose attentiveness pleases him. Yet his downfall begins when he invites one of the young militants, Amadou B., to the microphone. Amadou greets the elder in Arabic and then continues in Wolof so that all the people can understand what he is about to say. He never refers to Serigne Mor as Madihou; he calls him "the elder." He expounds on his findings concerning the Madihou in the Koran and the sacred texts. According to the texts, the Madihou would be an educator, a mulatto, a twin, a hadj, and a warrior; he would wear a diamond ring, pray with Jesus, and have no successor. Moving away from the microphone, Amadou asks "the elder" to tell him what he thinks of these predictions. Serigne Mor remains calm, but abruptly rises and returns to his barracks, followed by his spokesman Samba Diop. Realizing that six months of a smooth operation is about to end, Serigne Mor decides not to punish the young men, although he does commission Samba to tell them that they had better leave before he comes out again.

Instead of quietly asking the young men to vacate the premises, Samba announces the marabout's threat through the microphone in front of the whole crowd. Awakening to the reality of the situation, the people in the crowd feel compassion for the skeptics and advise them to leave. However, after this attack on Serigne Mor's credibility, his charisma wears off, and the crowds grow thinner. Eventually
the marabout and his spokesman Samba Diop leave Pikine for another country where "les gens seraient semble-t-il plus réceptifs que les foules sénégalaises." The story ends on an ironic note because the reader wonders where Serigne Mor and his companion can go to find a crowd more gullible than the Senegalese. However, charlatan marabouts are almost always itinerant. Like Serigne Diobaye in Kaala-Sikkim and Sa Nièbé in Le marabout de la sécheresse and other fictional religious con artists, Serigne Mor finds it necessary to relocate in order to find candidates for dupery.

A small band of courageous youth put an end to this particular false preacher's theatrics. In this way, Diakhaté implies that the educated youth of Senegal can contribute to solving the problem of a religious disorder that manifests itself in the marabout-vilain. Those who are educated can act in behalf of those who are less learned and teach them what they do not know about Islam. Amadou B. did not challenge the so-called Madihou on the basis of suspicions or vague feelings; he went straight to the facts. The facts are that Islam has no intermediaries and that when the Madihou of Islam makes his appearance he will not need a spokesman and believers will not have to speculate upon his true identity because his person will conform to Muslim prophecy. By pointing out this fact, Amadou was directly involved in educating the masses. Here Diakhaté joins forces with writers like Amar Samb, Cheikh Aliou Ndao, and others who affirm that education and a valid Islamic formation for all of the people are central to the solution of the charlatan problem in Senegalese society.
The Revolt against the Marabout

In many Senegalese novels, the revolt against the marabout may bring momentary relief from charlatanism, but it does not have sufficient momentum to deter the proliferation of unethical religious men. Writers seem to be suggesting that only a change in the people's attitude toward marabouts and maraboutism will bring about meaningful reform.

In the early days of the Senegalese novel writers were cautious not to attack the maraboutic system too brutally; however, criticism of Muslim spiritual guides has become increasingly severe, especially in the period after Senegalese independence. The writer in Senegalese society has a much different relationship with those in power than writers in the West have. Most of the living novelists in the present study--Cheikh Hamidou Kane, Aminata Sow Fall, Cheikh Aliou Ndao, Amar Samb, Ken Bugul, and others--all work for the Senegalese government in some capacity, a government that is aware of the strong influence of the marabouts. A writer who openly attacks maraboutism risks trouble from fanatics and pressure from the authorities. So in a sense the artist in a predominantly Muslim country dominated by marabouts is not free to say anything he pleases about maraboutism without opening himself to retribution. For example, Amar Samb's hero, Omar Guevane, realizes that, if the lines he wrote were to fall under the eyes of the Mourides, they would destroy him.

Arguing from a Marxist-materialist position in regard to social change, Ousmane Sembène is one of the few Senegalese writers who is unafraid of the system and what it could do to him. A success in
his own right and a writer who is engaged on behalf of the people, he uses literature as a political tool and describes reality as he sees it. His portrayal of maraboutism conforms to his overall political engagement in this respect. He even criticizes the grand marabouts through the character of Serigne Ndakarou in Les Bouts-de-bois-de-Dieu. Having turned to film as a more effective way to reach the illiterate masses, Sembène has seen some of his films such as Ceddo banned in Senegal, because they carry such a controversial message about Islam and Senegalese history. Despite the fact that he is an independent artist, not even Sembène can escape retribution.

For the most part, the corrupt marabout figures in the novel appear to go unpunished for their unethical actions before God and against their disciples. In the texts under consideration, there is not a single instance where a marabout repents of his wrongdoing or even acknowledges that he has made a mistake. However, protagonists in some of these novels do challenge the marabout or gain revenge upon him.

The revolt against the marabout starts early in the history of the Senegalese novel and becomes more and more pronounced as the genre evolves. Protagonists rebel in a variety of ways. In Les Trois Volontés de Malic, Diagne's hero Malic abandons the marabout's hearth to attend the French school, since the master is cruel and his methodology is inferior. Bakary in Force Bonté and Nini in Nini mulâtresse du Sénégal both become disenchanted with the marabout-prêtre when his science fails to bring about the desired results. Bakary rejects fetish objects after he is wounded in the war, and his repudiation
is an indirect accusation against the marabout who fabricated them. Nini, the mulatto girl, supposedly never believed in marabouts or any of the black man's religious practices. Yet she is angry when the Mandingo's prediction about her marriage to Martineau does not come to pass; she calls him a charlatan. Ironically, she too is an impostor, pretending to be what she is not.

One of the best examples of the revolt against the marabout occurs in Sembène's *Les Bouts-de-bois-de-Dieu*, where the supposed representatives of Islam are revealed as traitors to the cause of the Senegalese people. In this novel, Ramatoulaye publicly calls El Hadji Mabigué a liar, a fornicator, and an old hag. She also humiliates Serigne Ndakarou, the grand marabout, at the police station. When Ramatoulaye kills El Hadji Mabigué's ram, she is symbolically killing Mabigué. Her actions are an appropriate expression of the people's feelings against this marabout and his collaboration with the colonial authorities. Yet neither El Hadji Mabigué nor Serigne Ndakarou ever shows remorse for the misdeeds they have committed.

Some revolts against the marabout bring pain and even death to the protagonist. In *Buur Tilleen*, Tante Astou's satisfaction is short-lived after she cracks the cruel marabout across the head with her chalkboard, because the event haunts her for the rest of her life. Like Seck's hero Njangaan, Omar Guévane in *Matraqué par le destin* runs away from the daara. However, both characters are returned to the master. They both suffer beatings, and Njangaan eventually dies. Galaye in *Kaala-Sikkim* is one character who does obtain revenge against an unscrupulous marabout. He physically assails
Serigne Diobaye and then puts an end to the marabout's activities by exposing him to the public. Diobaye, who is supposed to be a man of God, would rather lose his mind than repent. In Xala, the beggars humiliate El Hadj Bèye by spitting on his naked body. They also get a temporary satisfaction. However, Bèye does not ask their pardon and at the end of the story we do not know that Bèye will not return to his old ways. Also Bèye was just one member of the economic elite. Only social reform will truly improve the plight of the beggars.

The most sophisticated face-to-face encounter between a marabout and a challenger comes when Amadou B. and his companions make a case against the so-called Madihou of Pikine in Prisonnier de regard. There is no fanfare, just the dissemination of facts that exposed the charlatan marabout and left him more or less defenseless. However, Serigne Mor never admits that he is a fraud. In Un Trou dans le miroir, Doudou Diop revolts against the marabout by ruining Serigne Ablaye's marriage to Ngoné. Doudou robs the young girl of her virginity so that the marabout will reject her. However, his actions carry consequences that are even more serious for him than they had been for other revoltees who underwent physical beatings or periods of anger. Not only is his family disgraced and Ngoné's life shattered, but this event leads his father to place him in the hands of a marabout who subjugates Doudou for the rest of his life. Doudou is not strong enough to revolt against his marabout father, and the mental disorientation that he suffers makes him release his frustration in the most negative manner. This suggests of course that the
far-reaching psychological effects of maraboutism can be extremely damaging to the individual.

Some novelists imply that the strength of charlatanry derives from several factors: the spiritual dependency complex and a moving away from a true religion based upon a prescribed set of principles; the progress of individualism over the collective ethic; and the invasion of the new gods of money and power. According to the critic Mohamadou Kane, the position of certain novelists on this question is ambiguous. On the one hand, they denounce the servants of the revealed religions, such as marabouts and priests, and accuse animist chiefs of charlatanism. On the other hand, these same writers work to show the relationship between cultural originality and traditional religion. In the novel, a religious mentality exists everywhere, for it is portrayed as being inherent in the social structures and in the traditional way of thinking. However, it no longer implies an unlimited adhesion to the beliefs of the social group. For the individual in search of new gods like money and power, religion is relegated to a subordinate status. In the Senegalese novel villainous marabouts often serve their own personal interests and seem indifferent toward Allah's commandments. To control others and to extort their worldly goods is their vocation in life.

Just as the marabout represents the syncretism between Islam and traditional religion, certain protagonists are also syncretic. They only retain from the various religions those elements which seem most functional to their purpose. Of progress, only the material aspect is kept. Of traditional religion, characters are only interested
in that which is efficacious. In general, novelists attribute the spread of charlatanism in Senegal to the religiosity of believers (who prefer the services of priests and intercessors over personal salvation), the lack of commitment to a specific religious philosophy, and the lack of a solid foundation in the Muslim religion. Villainous marabout characters in the novel perceive that those who lack understanding and therefore lack commitment will try anything to obtain the desired results. By exposing the marabout-vilain, Senegalese novelists illustrate that charlatanry is indeed a societal problem that must be dealt with; at the same time they are attempting to dissipate the veil of mysticism that surrounds such marabouts. They also point out that it is the Senegalese people themselves who actually have the power to destroy the charlatan marabout's strong influence in that society.
CHAPTER VII
MARABOUTISM IN THE PERSONAL SPHERE:
MARRIAGE AND THE FAMILY

As in real life, maraboutism affects the institutions of marriage and the family in the Senegalese novel. Consulting a marabout is not just an individual affair, it is a family affair. Many families have their special marabout. In time of trouble, some families go together to consult mystifiers. The marabout himself is a family man, and some writers examine the marabout's role as a family member. As a father he can be tyrannical, absent, or permissive; his influence upon his children can be positive or negative. Most marabouts in the novels are polygamous, and their sexual appetites hardly differ from those of other men. Some novelists point out the hypocrisy of religious men who use Islam as a pretext for accumulating wives.

Maraboutism and the Family

The marabout character in the Senegalese novel is often attached to particular families; he knows personal details and secrets that other outsiders may ignore. Not only is he a Muslim spiritual guide and/or fetish priest, he is often also a confidante as indicated by the frequent use of the expression mon marabout. In the context of the family this term suggests familiarity and intimacy; in an even
more committed fashion, the tabibé often feels himself personally involved with the marabout.

Abdoulaye Sadji points out the family marabout phenomenon in Maïmouna and in Nini. Even though Yaye Daro (Maïmouna) consults other marabouts, Serigne Thierno is "her" marabout because, through her years of raising two daughters, he has consistently proved himself worthy of her confidence. In Nini, the Mandingo was at first the marabout of Khady, one of the mulatresses' Black relatives. He later becomes the marabout of the rest of the family.

Almost all of the characters in Sembène's Xala have "their" marabout. Just before the wedding celebration of her marriage to El Hadji Bèye, young Ngoné is at home getting gris-gris from the family's marabouts. When the news of El Hadji Bèye's xala spreads, everyone recommends their man to him. The President of the Chamber of Commerce suggests his marabout, Ngoné's father takes Bèye to his seet katt (seer), and finally Bèye's chauffeur Modu leads him to his marabout, Serigne Mada, who temporarily removes the spell. Modu obviously knows Serigne Mada well, because, when the marabout disguises himself and comes to tell Bèye that his check bounced, Modu recognizes him although Bèye did not.

Safi's grandmother, Mame, in De Tilène au Plateau, has her marabout, Serigne Touré. However, the whole family consults marabouts. When the heroine's father falls gravely ill, her sister and aunts run from marabout to marabout in hopes of finding a cure for him. Healers make extravagant promises and all claim to be able to heal Safi's father, while encouraging desperate family members to spend all they
have, including their jewelry and expensive clothing. Even the author, who considered herself to be enlightened, admits that in her despair she sought marabouts as a last resort, like the less learned: "Et moi, la 'scientifique,' je me mis à courir les charlatans, comme les ignorants." But although their efforts are futile, the incident demonstrates how family members stick together and willingly sacrifice their possessions to help one another, even in the solicitation of charlatans against whom their better judgment might have warned them.

In *La grève des battû*, a husband and wife share the same spiritual master. Both Lolli Badiane and Mour Ndiaye consult Serigne Birama Sidibe, who knows all of their private business. Considering himself an integral part of their existence, Serigne Birama never entertained the idea that Mour could or would seek advice from anyone else. He was their marabout plain and simple.

Maïmouna, the mother of the protagonist in Sèye's *Un Trou dans le miroir*, does all she can to save her son Doudou from the spirit that plagues the young man. She exhausts her financial resources to pay all of the marabouts and seers she knows; she even sells all of her beautiful pagnes.

Maraboutism in the novel is thus frequently a family affair in which one or more family members are involved in procuring a maraboutage. The serigne is also included in major family events, especially during the rituals surrounding birth, marriage, and death. In addition to gris-gris for protection, many babies also receive the marabout's name. For example, in *Un Trou dans le miroir*, Woli and Mamour name their son after the marabout Serigne Ablaye. Even the
rebellious Raki and her fiancé Bounama in Buur Tilleen look for a marabout to bless their marriage despite their parents' disapproval. In De Tilène au Plateau, Safi's family calls for their marabout when her father dies and the serigne takes charge of the funeral ceremonies. In general, the marabout is consulted because people have confidence in his ability to solve family problems and to deliver the protagonist or his family member from evil. Only in a few novels like Au delà de la vertu does a family member embrace a marabout for his Islamic teaching. In that instance, Modou Tine takes his son Moussa to become a disciple and advisee of Serigne Brama Sylla because this marabout is wise in his knowledge of the Koran and human affairs. However, novelists still portray marabouts as corrupt figures who exploit the gullible for profit, even in their relations with families who trust them. In Nini, Matraqué par le destin, and De Tilène au Plateau, families spend enormous sums to pay chariatan marabouts. Maraboutism and the religious disorder that it implies is therefore depicted in the novel as making a strong impact upon the family much in the same way that it affects individuals and other social groups in the society.

The Marabout as Father

When we examine portraits of the Muslim family in the novel we find that the father is the dominant religious figure and in some instances he is a type of marabout or he is a marabout. It is the father who is the spiritual head of the household and he nods approval to the child's departure on the road to faith via the daara or Koranic
school. He also approves or disapproves his son or daughter's enrollment in the French school. Oftentimes the father concerns himself only with the religious development of his offspring; the meeting of emotional needs is left to the mother. As required by Islam, the Muslim father is frequently a man of prayer. Often revered and considered to possess baraka, he has the ability to bless his family.

In Ousmane Socé's *Karim*, for example, the hero's father is a holy man who is continually praying. Before the hero leaves Saint-Louis to go to Dakar, his father prays that God will bless him and bring him home again:

*Ils se placèrent l'un vis-à-vis de l'autre; le père jambes croisées à la musulmane, le fils, agenouillé. Chacun tendait les mains; et le vieillard murmura une prière arabe implorant Dieu d'être clément pour Karim, à l'étranger, et de le ramener un jour au berceau. Il aspergea légèrement les mains du jeune homme de salive sainte. Karim s'en frotta le front.*

In this passage, the father imparts baraka to his son by way of his spittle. Meanwhile Karim's mother has procured the gris-gris that is regarded as necessary for his protection.

In *L'Aventure ambiguë*, Samba Diallo's father the Chevalier is an authentic believer. He is committed to Islam, and he realizes that the maintaining of a strong spiritual consciousness is a serious matter that demands constant attention. His efforts do not go unnoticed by his son, who says: "Mon père ne vit pas, il prie." The Chevalier loves Samba, disciplines him, and teaches him to share his value system. Even after Samba has reached manhood, the older man feels it is his responsibility to monitor his son's spiritual condition. When the Chevalier realizes that Samba, now in France, has forgotten
the merits of practicing Islam he becomes deeply worried and calls him back home. By obeying his father's command, Samba meets his fate at the hands of the Fool and thus rejoins his teacher, the marabout Maitre Thierno.

The devout Modou War in Njangaan is a rigid Muslim father. He prays faithfully and is revered by his wife and son. Modou loves Njangaan, and in his mind love means making sure that Njangaan follows the way of Islam. His saliva is also holy: "Njangaan ... courut embrasser le patriarche qui cracha sur la tête de l'enfant après avoir murmurer une prière." However, Moudou is so inflexible that despite his wife's opposition, he sends his only son, a six-year-old boy, far away to the Rip region to be trained in the Koran by the marabout Serigne Moussa Drame.

In Njangaan the author contrasts two marabout-fathers: Modou, who seems insensitive to his child's needs, and the marabout Serigne Moussa, who spoils and favors his own children. Although permissive and lenient with his own sons, Serigne Moussa is cruel and inconsiderate of the children who have been entrusted to him by unsuspecting parents. Serigne Moussa deprives Njangaan of his new clothing, which he gives to his own child as soon as the talibé's father leaves. However, when Njangaan runs away and returns home, Modou refuses to listen to him and forces the boy to return to the daara. He is a tyrannical father who chooses to ignore the pleas of his child, and although he loves Njangaan, the boy dies as the result of his decision. He accepts the marabout's contention that Njangaan's death reflected the will of Allah, because, in order to accuse Serigne
Moussa he would first have to accept his own guilt, and he does not want to do that.

Ken Bugul's father in Le Baobab fou is a Muslim mystic. He is so devoted to matters of the faith that he is spiritually an absentee member of his family. The narrator was in need of love, acceptance, and paternal love during the absence of her mother. However, she could not turn to her father, because he remained silent and engrossed in prayer:

Et je ne pouvais rien tirer du père qui conservait un mutisme total. Père n'était pas le genre disponible pour les situations de ce monde. Père était toujours concentré sur son chapelet ... Le vide laissé par le départ de la mère ne se comblait pas. Le père, vieux et entièrement consacré à la prière, ne pouvait pas s'occuper de moi ... Lors du départ de la mère, pourquoi père ne m'avait-il pas serrée fort dans ses bâtons? Ce père entièrement consacré à la prière et à Dieu.®

Ken's marabout-type father ignores her feelings, her need to be comforted, and to be reassured that the mother would return. As far as Ken is concerned, she has no father. He is le père, not mon père. The impact of these events mark her entire childhood and adolescence; she seeks to fulfill her dream of love and acceptance according to the false values of the West. Although Islam is perhaps not the direct cause of Ken Bugul's father's failure to address her emotional needs, it is clear that, in the later years of his life after he went blind, he belongs to the faith, not to his family. Like the baobab tree that grows in front of the house, he is an ever-present silent witness to Ken's dilemma. It is as if he is using prayer as a means to escape from his paternal responsibilities. In the text he is described as being kind and generous to everyone. However, the narrator
feels that she had been excluded from his world and that he was not only blind in the physical sense, but in the emotional sense as well.

We cite Muslim mystics as marabout figures, because, even though they may not be boroom daara or fetish priests, they are close to the original definition of the marabout as "one who is tied to or fastened to God." The first marabouts were monks and hermits who dedicated themselves totally to the pursuit of spiritual knowledge and oneness with God.

In Au delà de la vertu, Modu Tine is a Muslim evangelist. He begins to train his son Moussa religiously when the boy is five years old. The two of them share a deep mutual love, and Moussa prefers his father's company to spending time with his friends: "Prématurément s'était développé en lui un amour quasi-mystique pour cet homme dont les qualités morales forçaient l'admiration." And Modou has to restrain himself to keep from physically showing his affection for the child since such displays of emotion are not considered manly. As we discussed in an earlier chapter, Modou and Moussa are both exemplary of Islam's virtues. They are also the model father-son relationship in the novel.

By way of Isma, Modou's brother-in-law, readers learn that Modou is a marabout. Modou and Isma are good friends, but Isma is a free-thinker who has adopted Western ways and has no plans to follow the narrow paths of Islam, despite the fact that Modou has for years conducted a campaign to convert him. Isma loves to tease Modou and when Modou offers him a bottle of cold lemonade, Isma smacks his lips and recalls the alcoholic beverages he had enjoyed in Europe. He tells
Modou that marabouts should not abuse a good thing, and Modou replies that marabouts do not detest good things as long as they are permissible. When Isma senses a sermon coming on he quickly disappears. But Modou remains confident that he will get the "rascal" one day. Modou also stands in sharp contrast to his brother Oumar. Modou is a man of God, whereas Oumar seeks to satisfy his carnal desires. But Oumar feels a certain comfort in his brother's presence, because he believes in Modou's purity and in the sincerity of his faith. Oumar admires his brother; at the same time, he is jealous of Modou's success as a father, for he recognizes that Moussa is an exceptional child. At the end of the story, he reforms his life style and brings his newborn son to Modou and Coumba in the hope that they will raise him to be another Moussa. Modou is recognized by all as a father to be commended, for despite his human flaws, he raises his son to be a man of God, first by setting an example and then by praying for the boy.

Mamour Diop in Sèye's Un trou dans le miroir is a fanatical father who, similar to Modou War in Njangaan, means to do well by his family but unwittingly brings about negative results. When he reproaches one of his wives (Maïmouna) for raising her voice to him, he reminds her that she is not his equal and that only he has the right to talk loudly. He attributes her behavior to Satan. As her husband, he should be also a father, a marabout, almost a god to her. According to Islamic teaching, God has entrusted him with the souls of his wives and children. His wife's behavior toward him will eventually determine whether she will go to heaven or to hell. As he
himself says to her:

- Que Dieu me préserve de l'influence de Satan! Mais oublies-tu que tu es devant ton mari? Comment osest-u éléver la voix ainsi? ... Dieu m'a confié ton âme et celle des enfants ... "Un mari n'est pas un égal. C'est un père, un marabout, un dieu même" ... Tu sais très bien que c'est ton comportement à mon égard qui te conduira soit au Paradis soit en Enfer.

A devout Muslim, Mamour is a Mouride or member of the Muslim brotherhood founded by Cheikh Amadou Bamba Mbacké. He is also a successful booth operator at Sandaga market. His friends attribute his good fortune to his obedience to his marabout. Mamour's oldest son Doudou is viewed by all as the black sheep of the family, since he has not followed in his father's footsteps. But Doudou's behavior is not inexplicable.

When Doudou was a child, Mamour restricted him. Doudou was not allowed to play with other children, and he was forbidden to laugh. Even after he started school, Mamour forced him to study the Koran night and day. Doudou's mother convinced her husband to let him attend the university, but Mamour still made the boy continue simultaneous studies in Islam and Mouride teachings. Although all appeared well on the surface, Doudou is actually undergoing a crisis. At the university, he meets and falls in love with a girl of the jeweler's caste. (Endogamy is one of the most tenacious survivors of the old Wolof caste system, and it is still respected today. The teugg, blacksmiths and jewelers, in particular are the object of these beliefs; close contact or sexual relations with women of this caste is thought to bring bad luck, sickness, poverty, and other misfortunes.) Displeased, Mamour humiliates Doudou and forces the young man to
leave school to take a job. Not only is he Doudou's father; he is also the marabout who enforces his authority on a spiritual level. Mamour controls Doudou's earnings by exploiting the Mouride teaching, according to which a disciple owes total submission to his master:

Le véritable "talibé" [disciple] doit travailler pour son maître... Moi, je ne suis pas seulement ton maître, je suis ton père, je t'ai nourri et élevé en musulman et "talibé" jusqu'à maintenant, je t'ai appris le Coran et la loi musulmane, Tu ne peux me payer cela. Seul, Dieu me recompensera.

In an attempt to assert his manhood, Doudou revolts against the system represented by his father. He quits his job, isolates himself, and neglects the Koran in favor of secular books. Unable to stand up to his father and openly challenging the stigmas of the old caste system, he loses his girlfriend, who marries someone else. Frustrated, Doudou deteriorates morally and succumbs to a life of alcohol, drugs, and illicit sex; eventually he becomes emotionally and mentally disturbed. Mamour decides that the only way to help Doudou is to place him in the hands of another marabout.

The reader is baffled to find a young man who has attended the university and studied the Koran all of his life being led by the hand back to the daara or Koranic school. Like Modou War of Njangaan, Mamour's only concern is that Doudou be Islamized as much as possible. He is blind to the emotional needs of his son, and he lacks understanding in raising his son. He also refuses to accept the Koranic teaching that all men are equal before God, for he holds to the old tradition of the caste system. Mamour uses Islam as a reason for denying his son the right to individual freedom, and in doing so,
he becomes the author of his son's dilemma. Doudou realizes that he has lost himself. He cannot adopt his father's characteristics, so he finds himself facing "un trou dans le miroir." When Doudou looks into the mirror, he cannot see his own reflection; instead he finds a hole (trou) in place of his identity. In Mamour Diop we have a case of a marabout-father, highly respected in the community as a generous man and a doer of good deeds, but he is also a person who emasculates his own son.

Like other fathers, marabout fathers display various reactions toward their children. Almost all of them are rigid disciplinarians. Many Senegalese novelists point out the dichotomy that probably exists in most religious leaders, regardless of their affiliation; the man in the private sphere is often quite different from the role he is obliged to play in the public sphere. In public he might be kind, generous, and accessible. He might be sensitive and understanding to the needs of those outside his family, or at least appears to be so, and this attitude may well earn him the respect and confidence of his followers. However, when it comes to his own children, he may be so severe that he is unkind, selfish, inaccessible, and/or insensitive to their needs. In pre-independence novels like Les Trois Volontés de Malic, Maïmouna, and Nini, there is no father figure. In others like Karim and L'Aventure ambiguë, the marabout-father is kind and sensitive to his family and others. Sensitivity on the part of the marabout-father character means that he allows the child a certain freedom and seeks to help the child find a viable identity for the modern world in which he is obliged to live. Sembène points
out the contradiction between the marabout in private and the marabout in public when he portrays Moussa Faye in *Pays mon beau peuple*. Moussa is the *imam*, highly respected by the faithful, but his son has observed aspects of his character that call his integrity into question. After independence, portraits of the marabout-father become increasingly critical, particularly in the film scenario *Njangaan* and in narratives such as *Buur Tilleen*, *Matraqué par le destin*, *De Tilène au Plateau*, *Au delà de la vertu*, *Le Baobab fou*, and *Un Trou dans le miroir*. Yet Nafissatou Diallo's father Samba in *De Tilène au Plateau* is a godly man who establishes a meaningful relationship with his daughter, and the novel itself might be regarded as the account of a happy childhood. And *Au delà de la vertu* is Mamadou Dia Mbaye's portrayal of a model religious formation which a marabout-father provides for his son. However, in many other Senegalese novels, writers portray an unresolvable conflict between the marabout-figure and the child. The conflict usually centers around the marabout-father who, in the name of Islam, inhibits his children's self-realization and forbids them the right to call certain traditions and practices into question.

**Maraboutism and Marriage**

Several of the marabout characters in our study are polygamous: "Souleymane" in *Voltaïque*, Uncle Tolé in *Matraqué par le destin*, El Hadji Bèye in *Xala*, Serigne Birama in *La Grève des battû*, Ken Bugul's father in *Le Baobab fou*, Mamour Diop and Serigne Ablaye in *Un Trou dans le miroir*, and Old Brama Sylla in *Au delà de la vertu*. Since
the number of wives is synonymous with wealth and status in Senegalese society, some marabouts seek to obtain many wives, using Islam as a pretext to legitimize actions that are motivated by essentially secular desires.

In Xala, El Hadji Bèye deliberates about whether he should tell his wives about his decision to take a third, younger wife who is almost being pushed on him by her paternal aunt. The latter is interested in the marriage, because it offers her the opportunity to gain financial security for herself and her niece’s parents. To resolve his dilemma, Bèye declares that, since he is a Muslim and the son of a Muslim, he need not resist the will of God. He is not a tubab, so he doesn’t feel the need to consult his wives: "Je suis musulman! J’ai droit à quatre femmes. Je n’ai jamais menti à aucune sur ce point."  

Although Bèye proclaims that being a Muslim "entitles" him to four wives, he appears insecure about a decision that is based on the permissive aspects of Islam. Actually the Prophet’s words about polygamy in the Koran do not "entitle" a man to four wives:

Si vous craignez d’être injustes envers les orphelins, n’épousez que peu de femmes, deux, trois ou quatre parmi celles qui vous auront plu. Si vous craignez encore d’être injustes, n’en épousez qu’une seule ou une esclave. Cette conduite vous aidera plus facilement à être justes.

This passage from the Koran clearly states that if, and only if, a man has the financial means to equally love and provide for more than one wife, polygamy is permissible. In one sense, these words of the Prophet suggest that most men should restrict themselves to a single wife, since few men, if any, can love several women on an equal basis. They will almost always prefer one over the others. Also,
in the novels, the marabouts, like their lay counterparts, are always avid for "new flesh." The new wife is always younger and not prematurely aged from the burden of successive pregnancies. She usually becomes the favorite wife.

For El Hadji Bèye, Ngoné has the savor of a fresh fruit, a savor that his wives had long lost: "la chair ferme, lisse, l'haleine fraîche . . . Ngoné était la paisible oasis de la traversée de désert . . . Ngoné était aussi un élément de fierté. Tomber une jeune fille! . . ."14 As these reflections indicate, El Hadji Bèye is driven by sexual desire, not by any duty to Islam.

Souleymane the bilal in Voltaïque already has three wives who are unable to satisfy him sexually, and like El Hadji Bèye, he has a strong appetite for new flesh: "Ce spectacle de la chair fraîche . . . vis-à-vis de ses vieilles et anciennes épouses . . . esquintées par les maternités trop rapprochées."15 As he neglects his duties at the mosque to chase after the young girls, some of the men who frequent the mosque, ignorant of the bilal's real problem, blame his wives for his troubles, and they are the ones who find him a fourth, younger wife, Yacine Ndoye.

Yacine's father feels honored that the bilal, a marabout, would favor his daughter and he is willing to offer her to the marabout. Yacine herself, however, is not thrilled about marrying ce vieux, although her father reminds her that a bilal can offer her what younger men cannot—"l'honneur, le rang, la réputation." The father also knows that Souleymane will probably always have the means to support his daughter, and when a child prospers in African society,
the parents will also prosper, since children are expected to take care of their parents. Similar to many young women in non-Western cultures, Yacine marries Souleymane to please her parents.

In _Au delà de la vertu_, Modou Tine is stunned at the child bride of the marabout, Old Brama. Brama explains later that she is his fourth wife—a wife who had been "offered" to him by one of his fervent disciples who wanted to demonstrate his loyalty and his recognition of the marabout:

Il explique également que la jeune femme partie chercher de l'eau était sa quatrième épouse, et qu'elle lui avait été "offerte" en mariage par un de ses fervent talibés qui tenait ainsi à lui manifester sa fidélité et sa reconnaissance...

The author emphasizes the word _offerte_ as if to stress the fact that his child bride had no say in her lot. She was an object to be passed on. Senegalese women writers have identified the _chosification_ (treating of the woman as an object) of the female in African society and pointed out how she has been victimized by certain traditions of courtship and marriage. Polygamy might have been justifiable in a rural setting, but it is hardly suitable for educated women in urban areas—women who refuse to regard themselves as objects. Yet when the talibé in _Au delà de la vertu_ offers his daughter to the marabout, he is still treating her as an object.

In _Un Trou dans le miroir_, the marabout Serigne Ablaye, Mamour's master, is seeking to add Ngoné to his collection of wives. This Ngoné is the young cousin of Wolimata, the third and most recent wife of Mamour Diop. Wolimata's hope is that Ngoné will make an excellent fourth wife who will remove the marabout's need to take a fifth wife
(Mourides believe in more than four wives). She will also become the preferred wife, a position which will entitle her to certain privileges from which Wolimata can also draw a profit.

In addition, Sëye alludes to the notion that cohabitation with a marabout is something holy, because it constitutes a direct participation in his baraka. A marabout who already has four wives may honor a family by temporarily taking a young girl whom he will eventually pass on to a talibé gradé (high-ranking talibé), thus allowing the talibé to profit from his grace. Serigne Ablaye had not yet attained this status; however, once he marries Ngoné, he will be closer to it. In a sarcastic tone, the author is suggesting that the marabout would in effect have the pleasure of sexually exploiting young girls for his own pleasure, while at the same time profiting from the notion that he is so holy that another man should be honored to take a woman, simply because the marabout had sexual relations with her. In this context the notion of baraka is perverted to include an indirect sexual sharing and to imply that holiness is transmitted, not just to one's offspring but also to one's partners through sexual intimacy. The implication here is that such ideas only provide the marabout with more freedom to do as he pleases sexually while using the Muslim religion and distribution of his baraka as a pretext.

When Ngoné is offered to Serigne Ablaye, she refuses to answer when asked if she wants to marry the marabout. She obviously does not want to marry the marabout, but she also feels that she has no choice in the matter. Meanwhile, Wolimata is worried that the girl's silence means that she may back out at the last minute:
Wolimata does reassure herself that Ngoné will not disappoint her, but her reflections are devoid of concern for Ngoné's happiness. In the past she has always exploited Ngoné, and even now she thinks only of how she herself can profit from the young girl's marriage to the marabout. The reader understands that Ablaye is a member of "cette illustre famille," the Mbacké of Touba (the descendants of Cheikh Amadou Bamba Mbacké). To marry Serigne Ablaye will give Ngoné rank and reputation, but it will not assure her of love; she can anticipate only further exploitation. Like the Ngoné in Xala, she is forced into a marriage where she is expected to become a marabout's sexual pastime. Like other men, marabouts are weak and susceptible to the desires of the flesh, but as men of God they are expected to demonstrate self-control. Their inability to do so in novels like Un Trou dans le miroir is a telling commentary upon the corruption of marabouts in Senegalese society.

The "virtuous" Mamour Diop in the same novel is a ripe candidate for a third wife. Not only is he a marabout, but his business is geared toward women; he sells women's clothing and accessories. One day a certain Adja Déguène Fall enters his boutique and immediately begins to flatter him, calling him el hadj, although he has never been to Mecca, and by telling him all that she has heard about him, how he is so généreux et pieux. On another occasion she returns with a
tantalizing young divorcee named Wolimata Guèye. Afterwards Wolimata returns again and again but alone. Mamour ultimately takes her as his third wife. The author contrasts the marabout's true motives for marrying Woli with the reasons that Mamour suggests for marrying her:

C'était un homme qui n'admettait la réalité profonde d'un désir que toutes les conditions réunies pour rendre effectif son exaucement. Alors le désir se détachait de lui, entrait dans ce qu'on appelle "l'ordre des choses," ou plus commodément "la volonté divine." 18

As usual Islam serves as a pretext for a man's desire to satisfy his flesh. Mamour refuses to admit that he desires Wolimata and that everything has come together in a way that allows him to have what he wants. Thus, he translates the realization of his desire as "the way things are supposed to be" or "the will of God." Among his justifications are the fact that men with less money and less faith already have a fourth wife chosen from among the school girls, whereas he has only two "old" wives. Furthermore, he reflects that Wolimata is poor and already has two children. Marrying her would, he rationalizes, be like performing a good deed. 19

Again there is a contrast between the religious figure who is admired in public as pious and sincere and the private man who would rather be untrue to himself than to admit his sexual desire for a young woman. It is also significant that the author places the word musulman in quotation marks. For Mamour, how Muslim one is can be measured by one's polygamous state. Such a perspective reveals the hypocrisy of a Muslim who is believed by outsiders to have spiritual depth. In fact, Mamour is no different from any other man; his motives may even be more questionable because he is insincere.
Few marabouts in the Senegalese novel are celibate. A marabout remains a man, and in African society he must have descendants to carry on his family line after he joins the ancestors. However, what seems to interest novelists is the way in which marabouts accumulate wives solely to satisfy their carnal lusts and then rationalize their actions by calling them "the will of God."

Such behavior is not within the spirit of true Islam, although the Prophet Mohamed himself had nine wives and several concubines. One of the difficulties he had to face in his ministry was the strife between them. Emile Dermenghem, in his book Muhammad and the Islamic Tradition, explains that Mohamed's nine wives were divided into three factions and that there were frequent disputes among them. At the end of one dispute, Mohamed almost divorced all his wives. Even though the Koran authorized him to find other, and better, wives, the Prophet chose not to do so. He also decided to limit the number of wives a man may lawfully have to four. In other words, he did not set himself up as a model. Polygamy was only permitted if one was capable of being perfectly fair to all, and concubines could only be obtained as the result of a holy war, not from the purchase of slaves. Most importantly, daughters could not be married without their own consent, and this proviso should have done away with the right of jabr or arranging marriages for minors. Instead of taking advantage of these rules to move in a liberal and progressive direction, however, Islamic jurisprudence and moral codes have tended to make them more rigid.20
In Senegal, the different brotherhoods disagree on the number of wives that a Muslim may legitimately have. Although the Koran explicitly allows men to take up to four wives, the Mourides and the Layennes believe that the number is unlimited. During an interview, Serigne Bassirou Laye, the imam of the Layennes in Yoff, Senegal, told me that the Koran does not limit the number of wives to four and that this particular verse of the Koran is open to interpretation:

D'ailleurs la polygamie reste sans limites. Il n'y a pas de limites. Vous venez de dire que le Coran dit que l'homme, le musulman peut avoir jusqu'à quatre femmes. Ceci est une de plusieurs interprétations... Chez des Layennes il y a la polygamie mais ceci reste avec des conditions. L'imamu Laye nous dit que celui qui a la possibilité d'avoir deux, trois, ça dépend de ses possibilités physiques, morales et financières, il peut les avoir.

Although marabouts like Serigne Bassirou Laye willingly discuss the laws of Islam in regard to polygamy, none of them contacted by us would respond directly to questions about women's attitudes toward the practice.

In Senegalese society, people often bring unmarried and sterile women to the marabout so they can be healed from the consequences of their continence or sterility. But sometimes the cure occurs so rapidly that the pregnancy comes about before the conclusion or consummation of the marriage. Under such circumstances it sometimes appears that the marabout has done his job too well and that it was not only his baraka that had a hand in the therapy. This situation does not arise in the Senegalese novel, but the Malian writer Ahmadou Kourouma devotes considerable space to such an incident in his _Les Soleils des Indépendances_. In this novel, Salimata, the wife of
the protagonist Fama, consults a marabout, Serigne Abdoulaye, to heal her of her sterility. After several consultations with Salimata, Serigne Abdoulaye one day feels enticed by her charms. He tells her that Fama cannot impregnate a woman, and that he himself knows the most effective means to help her. According to the marabout, God will not disapprove, and because he lives in an isolated area, he assures her there will be no witnesses. When he reaches to pull off her pagne, her memory flashes back to the time when she was raped by the fetish priest Tiecoura right after her incision ceremony. Unfortunately for Abdoulaye, Salimata grabs a knife and stabs the false marabout. In this episode, Kourouma allows the unscrupulous marabout to receive the punishment he deserves. Allah is, in a sense vindicated because He cannot be blamed for the marabout's unethical behavior. Kourouma portrays the marabout as a sexual incontinent whose life is not controlled by religious principles and as a man who would abuse the confidence of those who put their trust in him. He also implies that it is up to the people to take action against charlatans who commit crimes in the name of Islam.

Like Kourouma, most Senegalese novelists seem to present a micro-cosmic view of marabouts who, despite their claims to baraka, are mere men. In their personal lives they are full of the same contradictions and face the same problems that other men face. Their image in the society at large, however, is important because they are supposed to be representative of what is good in Islam, models of the Muslim life. Yet in many fictional accounts, they fail as fathers and are portrayed as lacking self-control, especially in the area of sexual desire.
It is these unethical marabout-figures who want to serve as intermediaries and use their baraka to control others. In contrast, genuine marabouts recognize and acknowledge that they are human and they seek God's help in their struggle to be the type of family man that Islam prescribes. The depictions of the marabout in the Senegalese novel seem to confirm the notion that the marabout's public image, whether he is a character who earns our admiration or an unscrupulous religious figure who provokes our disdain, is a reflection of his lifestyle in the personal sphere.
CHAPTER VIII
THE IMAGE OF BROTHERHOODS IN THE NOVEL

Muslim brotherhoods have considerable political and economic influence in Senegal and this influence is reflected in fictional portrayals of Senegalese society. There are two main brotherhoods in Senegal, particularly among the Wolof: the Tidjanes and the Mourides. The founders of these brotherhoods are considered to be saints (waliyu in Wolof). Novelists never criticize them. Certain saints, especially Cheikh Amadou Bamba, are given nearly equal status with Allah and the Prophet, since their lives are shrouded by popular beliefs about their supernatural powers. Staying close to reality, novelists generally do not fictionalize the identity of these brotherhoods. On the contrary, they tend to weave drama and tension from reality without distorting the principles of mouridism and tidjanism in their works.

Although the Mouride founder, Serigne Touba or Cheikh Amadou Bamba, is highly respected by writers, Mouridism itself comes under attack by most of the novelists who address it. Mouride marabouts, including the grand Cheikh, are portrayed as fanatical believers in the mouride work ethic and the supremacy of the marabout. In contrast, writers depict Tidjane leaders as being sophisticated, tolerant, and orthodox. Ousmane Sembène is somewhat an exception to
the general rule, since he examines the role of Muslim leaders as political agents and unequivocally condemns their corruption. He even goes so far as to reject the notion of organized religion as a hindrance to progress. Among others, he has pointed out numerous ways in which the Senegalese economy is influenced by maraboutism. One of the most common accusations is that marabouts dispose of great wealth which they have accumulated at the expense of the faithful, yet they use their financial resources to further their own ends instead of helping their followers.

Waliyu: Serigne Touba

In Matraqué par le destin, Amar Samb, himself a Mouride, documents many of the miracles that Cheikh Amadou Bamba is believed to have performed. These accounts of Cheikh Amadou Bamba's activities take place in Touba during the Magal, the annual pilgrimage of Mouride believers and other Muslims to the holy city to honor the marabout's return to Senegal after seven years of exile, and they are told by a marabout-griot named Bara Niang. Such stories help explain why the Mourides consider Serigne Touba to be divinely elected (may u Yalla). According to Bara, Bamba's exile lasted seven years, seven months, seven days, seven hours, seven minutes, and seven seconds. The fact that seven is the number of perfection lends sanctity to the image of the Mouride brotherhood.

In one of Bara's stories, Serigne Touba and several other marabouts were betrayed to the French. When the colonial governor ordered them to renounce their faith or be shot, the others complied, but
Amadou Bamba, prompted by his constant companion, the angel Gabriel, refused to abjure his faith. As a result, the French ordered him into exile. The Serigne's first miracle occurred when his jailers served him a dish of roast dog. As soon as they set it in front of him, the meat started barking angrily. On another occasion, they took him to Dakar and put him in a cage with an enormous lion. Similar to the Biblical account of Daniel in the lion's den, Bamba led the lion out of the cage like a gentle lamb, when the authorities returned the next day. After this incident, the toubabs (white men) dug a pit, placed needles and sharp objects in the bottom of it, camouflaged it with a rug, and invited the marabout to sit down. To their surprise, when Serigne Bamba fell into the hole, the angel Gabriel had already put a soft bed from heaven inside the pit. On another occasion, Cheikh Amadou Bamba demonstrated an ability to walk on water while saying his prayers. When a captain who was anxious to rid the French of the venerated marabout tried to prevent him from praying on the ship, Amadou Bamba threw his lambskin on the waves, stood upon it, and prayed. The entire crew was amazed at the sight. In still another incident, the marabout and the man who betrayed him are both left on an island where a ferocious monster devours people. But when the creature threatens Bamba, Gabriel appears with an army of angels, saves the marabout, and puts the terrible monster to death in the twinkling of an eye. This army was the same one that had once helped the Prophet Mohamed fight against the forces of hell. After this miracle, Bamba and the other prisoner were reportedly transported through the air from the island to the port of Dakar. Because the
man who had betrayed him did not obey the marabout's command to keep
his eyes shut during their flight through space, he became blind, a
symbolic retribution for his earlier betrayal of the holy man.

The authorities in Dakar then arrested the extraordinary marabout
who supposedly arrived in Dakar two months before the boat reached
port there. Happy in the conviction that he had rid the French of
an African trouble-maker, the captain commits suicide when he learns
that the marabout had already returned to Dakar long ago. At this
point, the French banished Serigne Touba to the Gabon, but seven years
later he was granted permission to regain his homeland.

While Bara Niang is telling the story of Bamba, the people are
shouting, clapping their hands, and of course throwing money on the
rug in front of him. Cheikh Amadou Bamba is a symbol of national
pride in that he resisted the colonizer in his own way, not by natural
force but by supernatural means. The people believe these stories
and receive inspiration from them. Bamba's influence is even greater
after his death. Serigne Touba, to quote Mame Seck Mbacké, "vit dans
les coeurs de ses disciples." Instead of thanking Allah and His
Prophet, which is what most Muslims do, the Mouride thanks God and
Cheikh Amadou Bamba. Novelists who depict Mouridism provide consider-
able documentation for this practice.

In Matraqué par le destin, for example, when Uncle Tolé is asked
about his health he thanks God, Serigne Touba, and his personal mara-
bout. In Un Trou dans le miroir, Mamour Diop thanks God and Cheikh
Amadou Bamba that his business is doing well. The person who asked
him, Adja Déguène Fall, claims that Serigne Bamba, who has no equal,
is also her marabout, although she is merely using Mouridism as a pretext to approach him as a possible future husband for her niece. Mamour believes that Cheikh Amadou Bamba is in perfect harmony with God, a claim that he feels should be reserved for saints.  

Mamour's son Doudou regards Cheikh Amadou Bamba in a somewhat different light for he credits him with having provided the previous generation with a Black leader who helped them retain what remained of their dignity during the disorganization caused by the white colonial presence:

Je ne sais comment dire tout ce que nous devons au Cheikh Amadou Bamba, surtout nous, les "jeunes d'aujourd'hui," dit-il gravement, en s'asseyant devant Serigne Ablaye. Mon père et sa génération avaient immédiatement devant eux une image à laquelle ils pouvaient se confondre pour être sauvés de la désorganisation causée par l'envahisseur blanc. Ils ont trouvé une figure noire leur permettant de ramasser ensemble ce qui leur restait de dignité. 

But Doudou also recognizes that those who want to continue Bamba's work face a difficult task. First of all, they are not saints; they are ordinary humans. Next, they live in a world full of pitfalls that are more plentiful and more complex than those that Bamba had to avoid. Lastly, marabouts are confronted with young people who are far more distressed than their grandfathers were. What the author seems to be suggesting here is that maraboutism is outmoded. Serigne Touba was a powerful leader and a good man, but contemporary marabouts lack his spiritual commitment, and they live in a different social context. Bamba faced the colonizer, another human being. The contemporary marabout has to confront a society in the process of a
modernization that challenges traditional values and places young people at the center of a moral and psychological dilemma.

If Cheikh Amadou Bamba is never criticized in the Senegalese novel, the same is not the case for all his teachings or for the basic concepts of Mouridism. This contrast between the treatment of Bamba and the treatment of his principles suggests that writers, who are part of the Senegalese intellectual elite, admire Bamba primarily for his role as an indigenous leader who sparked hope and pride in the hearts of the people during French occupation.

**Mouridism in the Novels**

In Karim Ousmane Socé suggests that Mouridism converts illiterate and naive but strong, muscular men into submissive peanut workers. On a visit to Diourbel the hero meets a young man who fits the above description:

> "Médoune takes Karim on a tour of the sites of Mouridism. He also tries to persuade Karim of Amadou Bamba's sainthood by retelling some of the popular beliefs surrounding the day of Serigne Touba's death. Afterwards Karim, contrasting life in the cities with life as he perceives it in Diourbel, communicates what is essentially Socé's definition of Mouridism. According to him, Mouridism is an existence"
similar to that of a vegetable: work, self-preservation, and a salvation from hell that is achieved by giving all of one's excess wealth to the chief of one's religion. From this perspective, Mouridism has two main elements: work and submission to the marabout. There is little necessity for any independent thinking. Whatever impression was made upon him, Karim gives no indication that he is personally interested in Mouridism as a way of life, and quickly returns to the city. Socé's hero would obviously prefer the excitement of urban life to the vegetable-type existence and exploitation which he sees in Mouridism.

In Un Trou dans le miroir, Ibrahima Sèye carefully outlines various aspects of Mouridism. Like Socé, his observations emphasize the notions of domination and exploitation. Even though Mamour has been in the city since adolescence, he had scrupulously followed the ndiguel, the charge or order of his marabout, who had told him to "go, work, pray, and read the Koran." Attempting to instill the principles of Mouridism into his son, he regrets having allowed the boy to attend school, and tells Doudou that, if he could turn back the hands of time, he would have a peanut field in the country and Doudou would have a field of millet. According to this wish-dream, Doudou would have worked the peanut field in the morning and in the afternoon he would have cultivated his own millet. In Mamour's division of labor, Doudou would not only do his work, he would also do the marabout's work. The implication is that Mamour would do nothing. Uneducated and unskilled, Doudou would have no choice but to do as told.
Sève then gives his readers the definition of Mouridism that is most frequently used by the Mourides. According to this definition, the true disciple must work for his master until the master tells him, "Go! I'm pleased with you; I bless you." It is only then that the disciple can enjoy the fruit of his labor in solitude. Whoever has not received the blessing of his marabout will never succeed in life: "Celui qui n'as pas réçu cette bénéédiction de son marabout ne pourra jamais rien construire dans la vie. Tous ses essais pour devenir quelqu'un échoueront." In essence what the novelist does in this passage is to reconstruct the teachings of Cheikh Amadou Bamba, who stressed the importance of the marabout as a key factor in the salvation of the soul. According to Cheikh Bamba truth lies in one's love for his cheikh. The talibé should obey his master's orders always and everywhere; he should never put up any resistance not even in his inner feelings. One has to renounce his own free will because the cheikh's thoughts and actions are beyond question.

Mouridism in this sense is based on the theory of the talibé's total submission to his serigne. According to Amadou Bamba, "celui qui n'a pas de cheikh pour guide aura Satan pour cheikh, n'importe où qu'il aille." In pure Mouridism then, one's individual freedom is surrendered to the marabout, who thinks for his followers. The individual should not even attempt to think on his own, because Satan inspires the thoughts of isolated individuals. Novelists like Sève document the reality of Mouridism and the conflicts that this philosophy creates for protagonists who live in a modern world where the individual is encouraged to work first of all to realize his
personal desires and to exercise his Sartrien pour soi. In the Mouride marabout-talibé relationship, the master receives all the terrestrial benefits, while all the talibé can do is hope for celestial rewards. These notions of work and submission to one's marabout are still preached by those who preside over the brotherhood at the present time.

Mouridism in the Macrocosm: The Grand Cheikh

In Matraqué par le destin, Amar Samb provides a description of the Grand Cheikh of the Mourides. This example of the Mouride Cheikh is probably the most detailed portrayal of a Head Caliph in any of the novels. Most importantly, it is the depiction of an actual marabout, Cheikh Amadou Bamba's successor, Cheikh Mbacké, whose enormous wealth derives from contributions given by people who are very poor. During the Magal, these contributions swell the marabout's bankroll to the point where he can easily be considered a multimillionaire. Pilgrims desire to profit from his baraka since he is believed to have inherited his father's baraka. However, this marabout's baraka is not free. People wait in long lines to kiss his hand and to leave as much money as possible for the privilege of having done so.

Next, according to Samb's depiction, the grand Cheikh is also politically powerful. He heads the second largest brotherhood in Senegal. All the dignitaries in Senegal, including the governor, make their appearances at the Magal. Past and present government authorities recognize the political and economic power of the Mouride's chief marabout who has the power to mobilize votes and the wealth to buy
whatever he desires. In this sense Cheikh Mbacké is a political leader as well as a religious one.

When the Cheikh of the Mourides makes his appearance in Samb's novel, a great ovation breaks out. His attire, although very elegant, does not differ essentially from that of other marabouts. He is wearing a white boubou, babouches (slippers), a new white prayer cap, and a scarf. His beard is white, and his hair is gray. His very presence inspires dignity and worship. Charismatic, this marabout's appearance provokes hysteria. In a phenomenon that is more frequent among the Mourides than among other Muslim sects, the people break out in a spiritual frenzy that closely resembles "shouting" or "holy dancing" in the churches of black Americans. Some Mouride fanatics faint; others enter into states of ecstasy or trances; still others fall into the sand, shaking and screaming when they see the Grand Cheikh. As yet the marabout has not uttered a single word. The sight of him was sufficient to provoke this enthusiastic response from his followers. It is quite likely that these believers would, at that moment, execute any order that the marabout might give them. In theory, the Mourides are not allowed to express their own thoughts, and it has been suggested that the emotionalism of this hysteria enables them to obtain some release from the tension created by the necessity to repress what they feel under other circumstances.

In the portrait painted by Samb, Cheikh Mbacké is somewhat unorthodox in his approach to Islam. After he greets the dignitaries and the faithful, he begins his speech. First, he absolves the talibés of the need to go to Mecca. According to the marabout, the
pilgrimage to Touba replaces the hajj. In this way, he confirms the beliefs of fanatics who assert that Touba is more important than Mecca or Medina, because the Prophet is now in Touba. In this description, Samb confirms that the Mourides are the authors of unorthodox teachings that clearly distinguish them from other Muslims. The pilgrimage to Mecca is one of the five pillars of the Islamic faith, and no one has the authority to absolve a Muslim of this responsibility. When the Pontife of the Mourides attempts to do so, he is directly contravening the word of the Koran.

After this non-Koranic statement the Cheikh of the Mourides continues by reemphasizing the principles of Mouridism. He urges them to work, because work is the only source of salvation; he exhorts them to practice their religion, because religion is the key to heaven; and he commands them to listen to their superiors and obey them without question. The highlights of Cheikh Mbacké's message are not centered around the pillars of Islam; no instruction is given as to how to live and no references to the Koran are made. Before dismissing the throng, he ends by hoping that God will grant their desires and that he will see them again the following year. As seen in Samb's fictional portrayal, the Magal represents a special time for Mouride believers, but even here emphasis is placed on accumulation of money and the unanswered question about what the Mouride brotherhood actually does in return for the substantial contributions of its followers.
Mouride Marabouts: Ablaye and Gora

In Un Trou dans le miroir there are two other Mouride marabouts, Serigne Ablaye and Serigne Gora. Like Cheikh Mbacké, neither is a mystic; the precepts of Islam do not appear to be their primary concern, and they both support the basic principles of Mouridism: work and submission to the marabout. However, they are strikingly different. Ablaye is an opportunist who had the good fortune of being born the son of a well-known marabout. He is a selfish man whose main interest is to work his way up to the rank of grand marabout for his own gain. Gora, on the other hand, is a fetish priest who uses Mouridism and his wits to obtain workers for his fields.

A young marabout (he is not quite thirty-five years old), Serigne Ablaye has the background of a typical Mouride master. He owns peanut fields, he is polygamous, and he has several talibés whom he inherited at his father's death three years previously. Described as noble in rank and majestic in his gestures, he does not drive a luxurious car, but rather a Peugeot 403 that is outdated but still in good condition. The author insists upon the superficial aspects of the marabout's makeup, his material prosperity, and the proud way he carries himself. Already Ablaye is using his position to further his own ends and to upgrade his life style. There is no mention of his spiritual practices. In fact, Sèye's portrayal of Ablaye allows us to classify the author among those writers who view the marabout with disdain. Serigne Ablaye lacks humility; he is inconsiderate of others, un forgiving, selfish, and carnal. Once again, readers can easily perceive
the conflict between the behavior of a corrupt marabout and the more idealistic virtues of authentic Islamic belief.

To confirm his plans to take young Ngoné as his fourth wife, Serigne Ablaye visits Mamour, who is one of the talibés he inherited from his father. Accompanied by an entourage which includes three persons in addition to his chauffeur, who doubles as his spokesman, he sits on Mamour's bed and spreads out his boubou, while everyone else must sit on the floor. During the entire time he is present in Mamour's house, he tells his prayer beads and murmurs. He begins by clearly pronouncing the most important words, but he invariably drowns the end of his statements in a mixture of murmurs, throat clearings, and sniffles. It is usually his chauffeur who completes his statements or speaks for him. Similar to Serigne Mor in "Le Madihou de Pikine," Ablaye feigns spiritual superiority and attempts to veil himself with an aura of mysticism while assigning to his spokesman the responsibility for confirming the legitimacy of his actions.

Like all good Mouride talibés, those in Serigne Ablaye's entourage agree with everything he says. It is as if Ablaye needs his entourage to assure himself of his own position at all times. Indeed, he seems to always be preoccupied with making gestures that distinguish him from the rest of the people in the room. His lack of humility is evidenced when one of Mamour's daughters, Astou, enters the room to greet him. She has not removed her shoes, and her head is uncovered which is in defiance to tradition and shows disrespect to Serigne Ablaye, who hesitates before barely shaking her fingers.
Astou's unacceptable behavior is attributed to her education, and Mamour is reproached by the marabout's company for allowing his daughter to attend the white man's school. Mamour is domineering and tyrannical toward his wives and children, but in the marabout's presence he becomes meek, apologizing for the house, the food, his wives, his daughter, and everything else. Just as he emasculates his son in the name of Mouridism, the fanatical Mamour allows his marabout Serigne Ablaye to make him feel less than a man, even in his own home.

Serigne Ablaye is inconsiderate of Mamour insofar as his presence obliges Mamour to feed him and his entourage just two months before Tabaski, the feast of the lambs. At this time of year, the price of lamb is extremely high. Why couldn't the marabout have eaten tiebou dienn (the national dish of fish and rice) or some other dish which would have been less expensive to prepare? The only answer is that he is too important a guest. Serigne Ablaye himself, although he does not talk much, makes it clear that they should be given lamb to eat for lunch: "C'est bon, c'est bon, dit le marabout. Seulement pour le déjeuner... du mouton..." Important to note here is that Ablaye's demands are not unusual; they are quite in harmony with accounts made by other Senegalese writers, like Amar Samb, who have also depicted what takes place when a rural marabout comes to the home of an urban tablibé. As in real life, the visit from a marabout is inevitably artificial and weighted with costly protocol.

Until the protagonist Doudou enters the scene, the marabout does little talking. As he engages in dialogue with Doudou, who is unaware of the purpose behind the marabout's visit, Ablaye begins to expose
some of his views. The Serigne urges the young man, whom he addresses by his formal name Mohammed, to assume his responsibility as the oldest child and to remember that the only way to salvation is for young people to obey their parents. According to him, Doudou should avoid association with young people who have no respect for their elders and for the religion, because they are susceptible of being deceived by the deceptive and traitorous world. Doudou wanted to speak with the marabout further but once Wolimata, his father's third wife, entered the room perfumed and wearing an elegant grand boubou, Doudou looked into Ablaye's eyes and noticed that the woman had "lit the marabout's fire of desire." As a result the marabout was no longer interested in what Doudou had to say. Ironically, Doudou affirms the marabout's theory about the deceptiveness of the world as he muses, "le monde est bien traître, ou." Serigne Ablaye is not able to practice what he preaches, because he too is deceived by carnal desires. Up to this point, Doudou had believed in the so-called man of God, but in the future he becomes increasingly sceptical. He had seen through the marabout's mask.

The marriage banns are pronounced between Serigne Ablaye and young Ngoné. However, a disaster takes place on the wedding night. The griots sing and the women dance, because they are certain that Ngoné is a virgin. Unknown to everyone is the fact that Doudou has "spoiled" Ngoné so that the marabout refuses to marry her. According to Islamic practice, a man can repudiate his wife at will. When Serigne Ablaye determines that Ngoné is not a virgin, he leaves in the middle of the night; he doesn't eat his meal and he doesn't leave
any money. To emphasize the insult he believes he has received, he leaves a crust of bread with all the white removed:

Avant l'aube, elles s'étaient ruées toutes ensemble dans la chambre. Ngoné était couchée sur le ventre. La griote, la première, avait compris le message, l'insulte: Serigne Ablaye avait laissé le repas intact... La miche de pain qui l'accompagnait était posée sur le lit, près de l'oreiller, vidée de toute sa mie. À la vue de ce pain creux, la griote avait compris... Serigne Ablaye n'avait rien laissé, même pas un malheureux billet.

Ablaye's behavior is cruel and insensitive. Since he already had three wives and Mamour was his talibé, he could have forgiven the family and kept the affair quiet; he thinks only of himself. He totally ignores the expenses that the family has incurred and leaves no money at all for them. The fact that he is an important marabout entitles him to a fourth wife who has never been touched by another man, and that is the only thought on his mind. Sèye's novel is very hard in its portrayal of societal conflicts. Instead of being a part of the solution by providing hope and comfort, the marabout only compounds the problem by using religion to make demands from which he will be the primary beneficiary.

Serigne Gora stands in sharp contrast to Serigne Ablaye. Whereas Serigne Ablaye has "tout à fait l'allure d'un marabout," Gora more closely resembles a fetish priest. His daara is situated in the middle of his peanut fields, where Mamour Diop takes his son Doudou in the hope that this marabout can cure the young man of his mental instability. According to Mamour's friend, Gora is a gift of God, a man who has performed innumerable miracles, although he gives his clients neither gris-gris nor holy water. Nevertheless, this friend
claims that most of those who come to Gora in their sickness eventually become his talibés and they beg him to let them stay with him and work his fields once they are healed. Yet if Gora does not give gris-gris to his talibés he certainly believes in them and uses them, for he is a small man whose entire body is covered with gris-gris. The talisman on his chest contains strange inscriptions that are not from the Koran. He has leather, bronze, and iron bracelets on his wrists, bracelets on his ankles, copper and silver rings on his toes. Underneath the gris-gris he is wearing chaTa (wide-leg pants), a multicolored shirt, and a belt made from the skin of an animal with wild hairs. The hut is also filled with gris-gris, ranging from animal skulls to dried-out corncobs. In fact, the author describes him as if he, the marabout, was himself a gris-gris, and his overall appearance corresponds to what the Westerner imagines when he hears the words "witch doctor." His litany combines the name of God with the names of evil spirits. Observing Gora for the first time, Mamour is fascinated by the marabout's mysterious behavior and the animist rites that he stages for their benefit. Sarcastically the narrator states that Mamour "runs off at the mouth," thanking God after every statement. Even though he doesn't know Gora or anything about him, he is willing to place complete trust in the marabout. Mamour is gullible, a fanatic who failed in educating his son and now abdicates his parental responsibility in favor of a strange man on the assumption that he has spiritual power.

Doudou is subject to "fits" or periods when he loses touch with reality. Oddly, some of the revelations that Doudou receives during
these moments shed light upon some of the problems in Senegalese society and seem to reflect insights that Doudou did not have the strength to share openly. After Doudou enters into one of his states in front of Serigne Gora, the marabout gives the young man a fistful of cauri shells, which Doudou hands back to him. Gora casts and recasts the shells. But instead of a regular session of tanni during which he would predict the young man's future or reveal what spirit is plaguing Doudou, the reader is astonished that Serigne Gora chooses this moment to narrate a fable entitled "the doe and the horse." The author uses this fable to satirize the Mouride work ethic.

The fable begins when the doe meets the horse, which is wounded and dying in the middle of a field. The horse tells the doe that hard work and age have caused his wounds. The doe sympathizes with the horse but feels that he is responsible for his own misfortune since there is grass all around and he could have eaten it instead of working so hard. The horse replies that he is not like the doe:

- Je ne suis pas comme toi, biche, j'ai un maître auquel je suis tout soumis. Je mange ce qu'il me donne... Je ne peux pas faire n'importe quoi, je suis "sous les ordres." Je t'ai dit que j'ai un maître qui fut celui de mon grand-père et de mon père. Ils ont vécu longtemps tous les deux. Ma vie entière dépend de mon maître.

In rationalizing his situation, the horse explains that he only eats what his master gives him; in fact he admits that he is not free to do as he pleases, because he is "under orders" to a man who had been the master of his father and his grandfather before him. Because they had enjoyed long lives, he agrees to accept his own state of servitude in the expectation of doing the same thing. After failing to
convince the horse to come with him, the well-nourished and healthy
doe bids the horse adieu and reflects upon how sad it is to have a
master. The implication here is that outside observers view the sub-
missive life style that the Mouride brotherhood imposes upon its fol-
lowers as undesirable.

However, shortly afterwards the doe is wounded by a hunter.
Ironically, the horse, now the picture of health, comes by. According
to the horse, his master came, fed him, bathed him, and caressed him
while the others worked. Now that he is well, he works even harder,
and the master gives him extra rations. The doe asks the horse to
find him a master, but the horse is not certain that all creatures
can have a master. This reversal superficially suggests that the
Mouride work ethic has positive aspects. However, the reader
obviously notices the possible motive behind the master's sudden
interest in the horse which results in further exploitation. Also
the wounded doe is now willing to accept a master, but only out of
desperation.

The irony of this story becomes apparent within the context of
Doudou's experience under the tutelage of Serigne Gora, for his first
task is to help the small children organize the dead wood they had
gathered from the fields. In other words, this university-trained
young man is being ordered to repeat Koranic primary school. He is
being sent back to the daara, as if he were to blame for the education
that he had received--the education that had rendered him incapable
of discovering and maintaining the equilibrium necessary for day-to-
day existence. As a nonviolent, mentally ill person, Doudou is
being entrusted to a marabout who is actually a fetish priest. Gora does not pray with his guests nor does he share verses of the Koran with them. Instead he shares a story that reveals his expectations from his talibès: work and total obedience at all costs, a philosophy which paraphrases a previously cited quote from Cheikh Amadou Bamba.

This situation leads back to the story itself and the unanswered questions it raises. If the horse's master was so good and kind, why did he overwork the animal in the first place? Also the master has outlived two generations, and he may well outlive three. If having a master is essential in life, why is it that not all creatures can have masters? Perhaps the author is suggesting that not all creatures possess the type of mentality that allows them to submit themselves to others. Perhaps only those who lack self-reliance or mental resilience need constant and continuous guidance.

The Mouride marabouts portrayed in the Senegalese novel--Maître Tolé, the Grand Cheikh of the Mourides, Mamour Diop, Serigne Ablaye, and Serigne Gora--are all propagators of the Mouride work ethic; they all preach obedience to one's marabout; and they all defend the marabout's right to dominate and exploit his talibès. Despite the fact that the authors who created these characters may themselves be Mouride who respect Serigne Touba, they have not depicted their fictional marabout characters with affection. This lack of affection implies that educated writers disapprove of the way in which marabouts apply Mouride philosophy in order to exploit their followers for personal gain. Novelists also suggest that there is disequilibrium between the strong impact of Mouridism in contemporary Senegal and
its contribution to national progress and to the genuine spiritual development of its followers.

The Baye Fall

Another aspect of Mouridism that appears in a few novels is the sub-group of disciples who adhere to the philosophy of the grand marabout Cheikh Ibra Fall, Cheikh Amadou Bamba's most famous disciple and a man credited with establishing the Mouride peanut empire. Cheikh Ibra would not pray but he was willing to work. His disciples are called talibés Baye Fall (the talibés of Father or Daddy Fall). According to Amar Samb, they are the most fanatical group of the Mouride sect.

Baye Fall talibés go to extremes to earn money for their marabout. During the Magal described in Matraqué par le destin, some of these disciples "se mortifiaient en se donnant sur le dos et sur le crâne broussailleux et hirsute des coups de massue et de pilon." Other talibés Baye Fall dig a hole in the ground, pour in some gasoline, light a fire, and stick their sand-coated heads into it. After performing this feat, they walk among the fascinated onlookers to show that they had not been burned and to ask for large sums of money, which they received immediately. Often a talibé Baye Fall carrying a basin filled with water, a gigantic pile of dry wood, or an enormous pan, runs toward the house of a marabout, and if they knocked people down, they didn't even stop to apologize. According to their way of thinking, the person in their way is hindering them from reaching the marabout as quickly as possible and he is the one who is in the wrong.
These examples illustrate that the main goal of fanatical talibés Baye Fall is to please their master, even if it means offending others in order to do so. However, none of their activities regarding the marabout actually involve the principles of Islam.

Other novelists like Ibrahima Sèye describe the talibés Baye Fall who walk the streets of Dakar, while beating tambourines and drums to ask for alms. Because the Baye Fall play music and dress in traditional clothing, they usually draw a crowd. Sèye's fictional portrayal documents the real situation in Dakar and other locations where the Baye Fall frequently entertain to make a profit for their marabout. This phenomenon emphasizes further the extent of maraboutic exploitation; the marabout also reaps financial benefits from the masses who walk city streets.

**Tidjanism in the Novels**

In the Senegalese novel, Tidjanism receives a generally more favorable depiction than does Mouridism. However, references to El Hadj Malik Sy, the most honored saint of the Tidjaniyya brotherhood, are not as frequent or as detailed as those relating to Cheikh Amadou Bamba. This relative neglect is probably due to the fact that Tidjanism is a more orthodox, less controversial Islamic teaching than Mouridism. Furthermore, because El Hadj Malik collaborated with the French, he could not serve as a national hero of resistance to colonial intrusion. Still, he is never criticized by any of the writers, who show respect toward him, whenever his name is mentioned. In Karim, for example Ousmane Socé calls El Hadj Malik a venerated
religious leader and points out his talent as a Senegalese poet who wrote in Arabic. In this respect, Sy's disciples undoubtedly benefited more from his learning than Bamba's followers did from him. Unlike most of his family members, who are Mourides, Omar's Uncle Ali in Matraqué par le destin is a Tidjane, as is the only marabout whom Omar mentions with affection—Makhari Ndiaye. The narrator even attributes the marabout's dedication to Islamic virtues in part to the fact that he is a Tidjane and not a Mouride. Ties may be strong between the Tidjane marabout and his talibés, but this closeness does not result from a teaching that submission to the marabout is the only way to salvation. For this reason, educated Senegalese Muslims tend to identify more closely with the Tidjanes than they do with the Mourides. Most of the mosques in Dakar and in other large cities are operated by the Tidjanes. This does not mean that Mourides do not pray there. Muslims pray anywhere. Yet, because Tidjanism teaches salvation through individual spirituality, it is more easily assimilated to life styles.

In De Tilène au Plateau there is a brief section in which the author goes during her father's illness to see the Khalife of the Tidjanes (the head of the brotherhood) to obtain his blessing. Although her father is a Tidjane, it was not easy for her to obtain an audience with the head marabout, because he has so many followers, but when she does see him, she develops a deep respect for the man who received her with great simplicity in his personal quarters, speaking to her as if he were talking with his own daughter. He urged her to have faith and courage, to think about her responsibility to
her family and about her duty to accept God's will. He reminded Safi that her father is a true Muslim who will, he believes, certainly go to heaven. This marabout prays for the sick man and even visits him several times during his illness. After meeting the Khalife, Safi is comforted by the conviction that she has accomplished her final duty in regard to her father's illness, for in seeing him, she has committed the matter to God, and that is precisely what a Muslim is required to do with the difficulties of life. Serigne Sy does not make a long speech; he does not distribute gris-gris, and he makes no promises to heal Safi's father, but he is presented as a true man of the faith, a man who is compassionate, humane, and realistic in his approach to life. Even though his position places him upon a pedestal in the eyes of the people, he is still able to comfort those who are suffering. Diallo's portrait of Serigne Sy seems to reinforce the attitude of writers like Socé and Samb that Tidjanism emphasizes the importance of submission to God and the application of Islamic virtues to one's life.

If the Grand Cheikhs were evaluated solely on the basis of the limited portrayals of them in novels like Matraqué par le destin and De Tilène au Plateau, the Grand Cheikh of the Mourides would appear to be a person who mystifies the people for his own profit and the Khalife of the Tidjanes would seem to be one who inspires the people to attain depth in the principles of Islam. However, these novels do not give a complete picture of the real situation. In reality, Tidjane marabouts also exercise considerable political power, and they too are wealthy. Nevertheless, the historical figures Cheikh Amadou
Bamba and El Hadj Malik Sy did differ sharply in their views of domination and exploitation, and for that reason alone, there seems to be some validity in the contrast between Mouridism and Tidjanism as presented in these novels.

According to El Hadj Malik, the marabout is not an intercessor and should not be praised. He is a guide, a teacher who helps the faithful to earn their salvation. He himself frequently speaks out against marabouts who promise their followers that they will go to heaven. Sy's teachings are more scientific than mystical, and they accord less importance to the ideology of domination. Bamba's famous theory that "le travail fait partie de la religion" and the attitude of the Mouride toward work have of course led to certain forms of exploitation. In the case of the Mourides, talibés work for their marabouts in the country's most prosperous peanut fields; they themselves receive only the barest necessities while the marabout grows richer without having to work. In contrast, one of El Hadj Malik's main works, Kifaya, is a socio-religious criticism of marabouts who subjugate the faithful. According to him, the only money that a marabout should accept is the gift he receives for imparting religious instruction. However, after El Hadji Malik's death the Tidjanes were influenced by Mouridism and they too began to harvest peanut crops with free labor obtained from the daara. The descendants of the wali u yalla or saints are responsible for a distortion of their master's original teachings because the new leaders are less preoccupied with religious education than with the duties of administering
large, wealthy bureaucracies. However, novelists do point out that in theory, Tidjanism and Mouridism are significantly different.

Serigne Ndakarou

Most of the criticism of the marabout focuses on the transgressions of an individual character or the negative aspects of maraboutism in the society. Only one author—Ousmane Sembène—has dared to denounce Islam itself, and religion in general, as being hostile to progress. Sembène's work is unique in the sense that it goes beyond individual misdeeds to depict the Muslim religion itself as an obstacle to the growth and development of the individual and society in Senegal.

In *Les bouts-de-bois-de-Dieu* the management of the railway is quite aware of the power of the religious elite, represented in the novel by Serigne Ndakarou and El Hadji Mabigué, and it actively seeks their help in its efforts to crush the Dakar-Niger railroad workers' strike. There is no indication as to what brotherhood Serigne Ndakarou is affiliated with. "Ndakarou" is the city of Dakar in the Wolof language. It is probable that Serigne Ndakarou is the imam of the grand mosque of Dakar. Thus he speaks in the name of a large religious community. However, he does not hesitate to place all his authority in the service of a cause which is not his own and about which he understands nothing. The thought never once comes to his mind that the action of the strikers could be legitimate. In using his moral authority to support an unjust cause, however, he clearly
represents the type of marabout that colonial agents exploited in their attempts to subdue the people.

During the strike, the white establishment put a blockade around the city and deny the strikers and their families access to food and water, but the women prove to be a powerful force under these circumstances. When the heroine Ramatoulaye is arrested for killing and distributing the flesh of her brother's (El Hadji Mabigué's) ram after the animal had ransacked her concession, the women march to the police station, where they are forced into a violent clash and sprayed with water hoses. One of the women is killed. At this point, Serigne Ndakarou, called in by the authorities to calm the women, appears for the first time. Dressed in the traditional marabout turban and a large white boubou decorated with medals which probably represent "good and loyal services" to the colonizer, he is flanked by El Hadji Mabigué and two other faithful followers. The marabout's beautiful robe and his grandeur contrast sharply with the hungry and tattered crowd. He is prospering during their time of deprivation and he is flaunting it.

When he begins to speak, Serigne Ndakarou closes his eyes to the brutal use of force against the strikers and the blockade of the city. Instead, he reproaches the women and accuses the strikers of being responsible for the deprivation they are suffering, the fires and deaths they now mourn, and the intervention of the police. All those who revolt against the white man's rule he calls atheists, heretics, and communists. According to him, it is God's will that the white man controls the Africans' land. He contends that the people need
the white colonialists in order to survive, and for that reason they
should not revolt. Parts of his speech contain echoes of similar
exhortations delivered by El Hadj Malik Sy who urged the Tidjanes to
cooperate with the French:

Dieu nous fait coexister avec les toubabs français, et
ceux-ci nous apprennent à fabriquer ce dont nous avons
besoin, nous ne devons pas nous revolter contre cette
volonté de Dieu dont les connaissances sont un mystère pour
nous... rentrez chez vous. Je dirai au commissaire...
que vous ne recommencerez plus.

The similarity between this passage from Sembène's novel and El Hadj
Malik Sy's speech suggests that Sembène might have been using his
character to make a veiled accusation against this branch of the
Tidjanes for preaching resignation and for not being more forceful
with the oppressor.

In the police chief's office, Serigne Ndakarou shows how easily
he can wear different masks. In Wolof, he reproaches Ramatoulaye for
her seditious behavior. Then, addressing the police chief in French,
he urges him to look for the guilty whites, the communists, and to
leave the problem of the blacks to him. In essence, he wants to main-
tain control over the Senegalese, and he is willing to accept foreign
domination to do so. In an effort to demonstrate his control over
the people to the French police authorities, however, he reveals just
how out of touch he is with the day-to-day reality of the strikers
and their families. Since El Hadji Mabigué dropped the charges
against Ramatoulaye, she is free to leave, but although Serigne
Ndakarou wants her to ask her brother's forgiveness and to promise
not to revolt again, she refuses and the marabout finds himself
humiliated in front of the Whites. A new era has dawned. In this
scene, Sembène contrasts the collaborationist tendencies of the religious elite with the defiance of the women who support the workers' demands. Ramatoulaye's declaration actually marks the first face-to-face reaction against a marabout in the Senegalese novel, although later writers like Cheikh Alicu Ndéo and Mbaye Gana Kébé depict characters who physically assail the mystifying marabout. Ramatoulaye is motivated by a prise de conscience that allows her to clearly understand that standing up for what is right is more important than honoring the marabout. The good of the society is of utmost importance to Sembène, hindrances to progress should be denounced, and this is what he has done in allowing readers to grasp the moral superiority of the women over marabouts like Ndakarou.

All the religious leaders, the imams and the priests of the different sects in Les Bouts-de-bois-de-Dieu band together in a campaign to discourage the strikers and their wives. To call into question the authenticity of these men, Sembène ironically places quotation marks around the words "guides spirituels" when he refers to them in the text. Instead of preaching from the Koran, these feckless men praise the white man's greatness and argue that it is demonic to resist the colonial authority, because the white man has invented countless things, whereas the Senegalese are incapable of making anything useful. According to Sembène, such ideas are a logical outgrowth of the Islamic religious system as it is practiced in Senegal, and leaders who preach them offer nothing positive to the people. Subjugated to colonial domination, Islam became in his eyes a religion of fatalism, routine, and resignation—a religion that prevents an
oppressed people from liberating itself, robbing them of their dignity and their motivation. Amar Samb once declared, "à mon avis, on a trop décrié le colonialisme, sans savoir qu'îl n'existe de pire colonialiste qu'un marabout." His meaning is very similar to that of Sembène, for he is suggesting that the marabouts have prepared the people to accept enslavement.

During a meeting during which Ndakarou fawns over the white officials, Bakayoko, the leader of the strikers and Sembène's spokesman in the novel, asks him if he is aware that hungry and thirsty people are abandoning the road that leads to the mosques. The point is that the marabout's force and power derive from Africans, and when he allows the colonizer to use him as an instrument of their policy, he is renouncing his mission and betraying his people, for if Africans no longer needed him, he would be superfluous. In Les Bouts-de-bois-de-Dieu, brotherhoods and Muslim "spiritual guides" are portrayed in a totally negative light. They offer no solutions to the people's dilemmas, and they thwart the people's attempts to improve their quality of life. Sembène depicts them in this manner, because he wants to show how their spiritual message became distorted; instead of hope, Serigne Ndakarou preaches what amounts to a message of despair. He and the other religious leaders in the novel remain insensitive to the needs of the striking workers while selfishly pursuing their own individual interests. But as Sembène indicates, their betrayal of the people will eventually lead to the loss of their power, for the people upon whom their power depends will recognize the marabout's true face and renounce their faith in it.
Maraboutism and the Economy

In the religious system of the brotherhoods, disciples are expected to give gifts to their marabouts. Since the marabouts do not have to worry about their physical needs, they can presumably dedicate themselves to their spiritual mission. In return, the faithful benefit from the baraka of their masters. These gifts to marabouts are called addiya and are not the same as alms (sarax) given to the poor (miskin), although they have the same goal: salvation. Addiya are offered to a holy person in hopes of obtaining some of his baraka or getting him to intercede in prayer. The addiya is not found in the sacred texts, but in Senegal, it reflects an obligation that is greater than the alms recommended by the Koran. In principle it is not obligatory; in practice one cannot belong to a brotherhood and have recourse to marabouts without regularly offering them the addiya if one has the means to do so.27 Senegalese novelists frequently document this social reality and demonstrate how the addiya is essential to the marabout-talibé relationship.

For example, Serigne Birama Sidibé in La Grève des battu receives gifts from his talibé Mour Ndiaye at the end of every month, a time when most Senegalese receive their paychecks. Although addiya is usually a sum of money, in this case Mour Ndiaye gives his marabout natural products like rice, soap, milk, sugar, and tea. The addiya is also mentioned in Un Trou dans le miroir and in Njangaan, where Modou gives Serigne Moussa Drame a grand boubou, even after the marabout's decision has led to the death of his son. In such instances, it is clear that the marabout should be reproached, but in Senegalese
society people traditionally believe that marabouts are untouchable. Thus if a marabout has any credibility at all, he will always be able to meet his needs through the financial support of his followers. Everything the marabouts have (including their wives) comes to them by way of the addiya.

Even though the addiya is different from the asaka or zakkat which is supposed to be offered to the poor, some marabouts also profit from the asaka. The Mourides, for example, give their zakkat to their cheikh in the belief that he is in the best position to identify the most deserving poor. Regardless of one's economic status, one is expected to share one's possessions with the marabout. Peasants often take the addiya off of the top of their sale of peanuts. If there is a choice about whom to pay, the marabout generally has priority, and he often exploits this attitude in order to amass a large personal fortune.

Yet there are unselfish marabouts who are not interested in worldly goods. Some will not even accept compensation for doing the will of Allah. Maitre Thierno in L'Aventure ambiguë, for example, refuses to accept a thoroughbred Arabian horse that the Chief of the Diallobé offers him. According to him, the animal was too beautiful to be turned into a work horse, so when he is pressed to accept it, he simply gives it away. This lesson of voluntary poverty was learned quite early by Samba Diallo, probably the wealthiest of all Maitre Thierno's ndongs. His aunt, La Grande Royale, had purchased several expensive gifts especially for Samba; however, he presents these gifts to Maitre Thierno and asks him to give them to any of
the talibés who would like to have them. Like his master, Samba gives away the best of his material possessions, for his heart is only moved by spiritual things.

Similarly, the mystic Moussa Tine in _Au delà de la vertu_ has learned that one should not expect to be compensated by men for being good and kind, and for fulfilling the precepts of the Koran. One day after school Moussa accidently bumps into an unknown man and is knocked down. While helping Moussa to rise, the man puts a coin into the boy's hand. To the man's amazement, Moussa gives the man back his coin. He refuses to accept it, because he had done nothing to earn it and because he was the one who should beg the man's pardon. Moussa looks to Allah to reward him for doing what is right; he does not look to men. But Maître Thierno and Moussa Tine are rare in the Senegalese novel, for the acceptance of the _addiya_ is part of maraboutic protocol in the country.

Another way in which the brotherhoods and individual marabouts have prospered involves the organization of agricultural communities. After a marabout has chosen a location and his audience begins to grow, followers and would-be followers seek him out and come to live where he is. As the number of his talibés grows, he acquires more and more manpower to labor in his fields. Not only are his talibés taught to love work, but the marabout also authorizes the villagers to work his fields once a week. Such communities usually take on the name of the marabout who founded them; for example, Keur Brama in Wolof literally means "the house of Brama" or "Brama's territory." Marabouts like Tolé, Ablaye, and Gora who represent Mouridism draw
their incomes from the sweat and toil of workers who labor in the name of religion, and novelists like Socé, Samb, and Sèye portray this situation as economic exploitation.

The annual pilgrimages to the cities of Touba and Tivaouane also offer the Mouride and Tidjane brotherhoods opportunities to increase their wealth, for the faithful profit from these occasions to offer their addiya to the Grand Cheikh. According to Amar Samb in Matraqué par le destin, Touba was an out-of-the-way corner in the Baol region. Mouridism transformed Touba, which means "happiness," into an important city due to the followers who settled near Cheikh Amadou Bamba and his disciple Cheikh Ibra Fall. With the capital acquired during the pilgrimages, from the gifts, and with the labor of the faithful at the house of God, the marabout was able to build the most sumptuous mosque in Senegal and many luxurious villas as well. The Grand Cheikh even contributed to the improvement of the region's road system and to the construction of a railroad line from Saint-Louis to Touba. Tivaouane, the headquarters of the Tidjanes, has become prosperous in a similar fashion.

Many Senegalese are content to make local pilgrimages which help the national economy insofar as money which was going to Saudi Arabia stays in Senegal. With the pilgrimages to Touba, Tivaouane, and Thiarrène (the holy city of the Xaadira), the marabouts who govern these areas have become economic powers on the national level, and their influence continues long after their deaths. Samb and other novelists such as Sadji and Sembène have argued that in today's world the pilgrimage to Mecca is simply a matter of tourism, a profit-making
venture. So now that the grand marabouts declare that the pilgrimage to their tombs can free the Muslim from having to go to Mecca, the faithful periodically rush to these new "holy places." Samb deplored this mystification as a deformation of Islam, for according to him, the pilgrimage no longer serves the cause of God; it dishonors true believers, exploits the pilgrims, hurts the government, and only benefits the marabout.

Some followers exhaust their meager savings or go into debt to make the pilgrimage, but all people are not motivated by religious zeal. According to Samb, some pilgrims use the Magal as a pretext to spend time in Mbacké, Touba's twin city where debauchery, lust, licentiousness, and all forms of immorality are practiced. The country also loses one or two work days each year, because workers from all sectors abandon their normal occupations to participate in the pilgrimage. Automobiles, trains, and commercial planes are shifted from their regular schedules in order to transport the pilgrims. Traffic in the cities is paralyzed during this time, and accidents occur frequently.

The major complaint of Samb and other observers of this phenomenon is that all the profit goes to the marabouts. Some pilgrims give all their money to the marabout for his baraka and have absolutely nothing when they return home. During the Magal, not only is the Grand Cheikh's house full of money, but each mausoleum, each tomb, each public place, each rug spread out by a mystifier disguised as a beggar becomes a veritable treasure hoard where money accumulates. What happens to the vast sums that are collected during the
pilgrimages? The brotherhoods have no need to spend money, since the talibés do everything that needs to be done. According to Samb and other intellectuals, the brotherhoods fail to put the money back into the country. Furthermore, they contend that the brotherhoods do very little to help the Senegalese people. Considering the influence that these organizations exert on a national level, it is worthy of note that they have never created large-scale social welfare programs to assist in meeting the material needs of their followers, even though they certainly have the means to do so. Where then does the money go? Marabouts themselves spend it to assure themselves and their descendants of the material comfort they increasingly take for granted. They purchase palaces and villas, expensive automobiles, pilgrimages to Mecca, etc. Like many of the fictional marabouts, they serve the new gods of money and power more than they serve Allah. The critique of the marabout in the Senegalese novel is thus in actuality a critique of the marabout in Sengalese society--of the mentality he represents.

In most societies, financial power exerts political influence. Senegalese politicians cannot overlook wealthy marabouts who control hundreds of thousands of votes. Upon occasion, marabouts have been offered large sums of money or other favors to support a particular candidate.

Confronted by this situation, many early novelists like Samb, who discussed the problem in his 1973 novel, felt that the catalyst to the demystification of the maraboutic structure as it exists would be a fitting education for the public. However, twelve years later,
more Senegalese have been educated, but marabouts continue to exercise a strong hold over the population, as recent novelists like Sèye point out. Again the problem seems to go back to the basic structure of the Senegalese religious system that supports the idea that spiritual intermediaries are necessary. The maraboutic economic structure and the charlatanism that accompanies it are based on the premise that the people somehow feel that they need these mystifiers. Samb and others have suggested a free society will only emerge when people acquire a clearer perception of the forces that impinge upon them and manipulate them; in other words, they are advocating a type of consciousness raising.

In the Senegalese novel, brotherhoods tend to have a negative image, because their leaders are preoccupied with material and not with spiritual things. They are of the people but not for the people. Thus what exists in Senegal is a paradox that is reflected in the country's literature; intelligent individuals recognize the religious disorder that exists in the society and may even criticize it, but at the same time they are a part of the structure or see it as inextricably rooted in Senegalese religious traditions.
CONCLUSION

Throughout the present study, I have tried to demonstrate that fictional portrayals of the marabout in the Senegalese novel are not simply the expression of various novelists' isolated impressions of this character, but that these portrayals reflect the way in which the marabout actually functions in the society. In fact, the social realism employed by most Senegalese novelists in depicting the marabout explicitly posits a fiction-reality relationship that allows readers to perceive the fictional marabout's role in the novel as comparable to the one played by real marabouts in the daily lives of the Senegalese people. The accuracy of this social realism has been repeatedly corroborated by the observations of sociologists, essayists, journalists, and other researchers.

A historical overview of Islam in Senegal suggests several basic reasons for the marabout's importance there, and the novel seems to validate these notions. First, the Senegalese marabout is one of the principal representatives of a phenomenon that sociologists have labeled "Black Islam" or the syncretism of traditional African religious practices with elements of the Muslim religion. The "marabout-prêtre" who embodies this syncretism is not only the Muslim spiritual guide, he is at the same time the traditional religious leader, and as such he involves himself in fetishism, sorcery,
divination, and traditional medicine. People turn to him for supernatural interventions referred to as maraboutage. Also by way of an historical tradition strongly influenced by Sufism and the cult of the saints, the Senegalese came to rely on the baraka of marabouts, instead of their own personal efforts, in order to move toward spiritual perfection. Though the novelists do not describe the process by which people came to be spiritually dependent, they consistently point out the existence of a spiritual dependency complex whereby individual Muslim believers depend on marabouts, instead of Allah, for the answers to all of life's questions.

During sixty-four years of novel writing in Senegal, the image of the marabout has remained essentially unchanged. The boroom daara was administering corporal punishment in 1920 when Diagne wrote his novel, and the marabout as a disciplinarian is still fresh in the thoughts of a young new novelist, Mamadou Dia Mbaye, who wrote Au delà de la vertu in 1982. In real life the marabout still walks around with his whip, even in the open air Koranic schools on the streets of Dakar. Bakary Diallo points out the marabout's role in gris-gris fabrication in Force Bonté (1926) and the young writer still portrays the marabout as a source of gris-gris in Un Trou dans le miroir (1983). Sadji characterized the marabout as a charlatan in Nini (1954) and villainous marabouts continue to be main protagonists in more recent works. Also, in the novel marabouts tend to dress alike (white boubou, turban, beard, prayer beads, etc.) and from the early novels to more recent works he still tends to be regarded with a sense of awe and esteem. The result has been a stereotyped image
of the marabout. What has changed is the novelists' attitude toward maraboutism. The importance of the theme of maraboutism in the novel and the degree of criticism has intensified with the increased significance of the marabout's role in contemporary Senegal. Before independence, the marabout was always a secondary character. But after Cheikh Hamidou Kane's treatment of Maitre Thierno in L'Aventure ambiguë (1961), novelists began to criticize openly the institution of maraboutism. Though maraboutism is depicted as having positive and negative aspects, the marabout's undesirable characteristics are dominant in most of the novels. They are frequently portrayed as corrupt, self-seeking, selfish, greedy, exploitative individuals who place secular concerns and their own personal desires before spiritual values and the Islamic virtues outlined in the Koran. Apart from the characters whom we label as model mystics and a few good marabouts, the marabout's image in the novel is overwhelmingly negative. Yet, had maraboutism not been perceived as a point of conflict, it would probably not have become an element of intrigue in the Senegalese novel.

On the personal plane, excluding the model mystics who struggle with their humanity to please Allah in every way, marabout characters in the novel show deviant behavior in the way they practice Islam. They are full of the same contradictions that plague other men. Some don't pray; others pray, but their prayers have little or no effect on their personal comportment. Some never fast and seem to be pre-occupied with satisfying the desires of the flesh. Marabouts also often aid believers in the distortion of the zakkat (alms) principle
by turning it into a profit-making venture. Still others make the hajj solely for its fringe social benefits and not for its original spiritual purpose. References to the jihad suggest that some Senegalese were originally Islamized by marabouts who forced them to convert. The religion itself never won their hearts and this fact explains why many Senegalese today continue to practice traditional religious customs. Maraboutism in the novel tends to be a family affair, and family members will band together to seek a maraboutage when necessary. In the personal sphere also, marabouts are themselves family men. Among the marabouts who are fathers, we find tyrants who crush the family members' efforts at individual self-realization, absentees who are uninvolved in family matters, and fortunately, fathers who are true examples of Islam at home and in society. Frequently polygamous, the marabout is often depicted as using Islam as a pretext to accumulate wives solely as a means of satisfying his sexual desires. On the basis of portrayals in the novels, it is certainly possible to conclude that, in private, marabouts are ordinary men, and not saints, as many believe them to be.

As an educator, the "marabout-maitre" has been criticized by most of the novelists, who describe the Koranic school or daara as a negative experience for most of their characters. The marabout-maitre himself is generally depicted as an incompetent teacher and a child abuser who exploits the talibés for his own personal benefit. Some novelists criticize the parental abdication which gives a Koranic schoolmaster total responsibility for a child's welfare. Others emphasize the ideological and pedagogical differences between the
Koranic school and the marabout, on the one hand, and the French school and its master, on the other. In the conflict that opposes the two systems of education, the marabout-maître appears to be losing the battle for the children's allegiance and attention. Already in 1920, this crisis was suggested in *Les Trois Volontés de Malic* and forty-one years later, it is staged in dramatic detail by Kane in his *L'Aventure ambiguë*. In the cities as well as in the villages, more and more Senegalese children are attending public school. While the traditional daara still exists, many marabouts now either hold Koranic school daily after regular school or on days when public school is not in session. Several of the novelists have even documented this change. The marabout's gradual loss of influence in this domain is due in part to modernization, for most novelists and other educated Senegalese view secular school as the key to progress and a major factor in social change.

In their role as priests and facilitators of maraboutage, some fictional marabouts are depicted as genuine seers (*seet-katt*) and healers (*facc-katt*). In the realm of traditional medicine, marabouts have an extensive knowledge of the African pharmacopeia and undoubtedly play a useful function in treating certain forms of injury and illness. Many of the techniques of the *facc-katt* predate the arrival of Islam, and recent scientific investigations have demonstrated the validity of their herbal cures. Maraboutages can also have value in curing mental disorders or disequilibrium. Because the *facc-katt* is himself African, his familiarity with the mentality of the people often enables him to treat mental and emotional problems more
effectively than Western psychiatrists can hope to do. In La Plaie, Malick Fall emphasizes the authenticity of the marabout-healer; in Matraqué par le destin, Samb is able to locate a genuine guérisseur (healer) among several charlatans; and in Au delà de la vertu, the author suggests by way of the marabout Serigne Brama that Africans should work to preserve what remains of their knowledge about nature's secrets that work for the good of the human mind and body. In contrast, when novelists portray the marabout in the roles of fetish priest or sorcerer, the results of his interventions appear to be less effective. However, in the eyes of the people, his strength lies precisely in this domain. Thus, even if gris-gris have no real power, they may well have some function in the psychological well-being of those who use them. Some novelists are quite aware of this possibility. For example, in La Plaie the protagonist was severely crippled in a car accident while depending on gris-gris to protect him and his car. However, later in the story he seeks another marabout for a gris-gris in hopes of curing his leg. The gris-gris, a tangible object, could offer the hero a sense of security that gives him peace of mind regardless of its effectiveness. As for the seet-katt and the marabout-sorcerer, novelists often use these marabouts as literary agents who foreshadow the subsequent course of the novel by predicting what will happen to a given protagonist by satirizing the hero's degradation while maintaining a high degree of suspense about the accuracy of the prophecy.

Some marabouts abuse their position in the society, and more than a few confidence men impersonate marabouts for their own material
gain. The result has been a rapid growth in charlatanism. Furthermore, the society suffers from a severe religious disorder, for although the syncretism of Islam and traditional religious practices appears to be harmonious, it actually camouflages a deep-lying conflict. The marabout is a problematic hero, in Lukacs' sense of the word, insofar as he is a degraded quester for authentic spiritual values in a corrupt society characterized by the loss of religious certainty. This religious disorder involves the previously mentioned spiritual dependency complex that novelists attribute to the religiosity of Senegalese who prefer intercessors to personal efforts for salvation. Educated and uneducated believers alike seek the marabout's intervention in all matters of life. However, many people are primarily interested in what is efficacious, in what powers the marabout can use to bring their personal desires to fruition. In fact, some writers see maraboutic charlatanism as having its roots in the cultural conflict that has placed characters in an ambiguous spiritual condition. Individualism and the search for the new gods of money and power have caused a distortion in the original purpose of religion in the society, and charlatan marabouts exploit this situation by making promises or issuing gris-gris solely to obtain money from gullible clients. Some writers even view the society and the gullible victims as accomplices to the crimes that the "marabout-vilain" commits against them.

In the public sphere, the brotherhoods, in particular the Mourides, are often portrayed as exploitative political and economic agents. After the deaths of the serin bu mag, or the founders of
these organizations, during the first half of the twentieth century, the nature and influence of maraboutism in the politico-economic sphere changed drastically. If the founders of the brotherhoods were uninterested in material gain, the same is not necessarily true for their successors. The Muslim brotherhoods and the grand marabouts of these religious sects gain their economic power through addiya (gifts to the marabout), agriculture (peanut empires), and pilgrimages to their holy sites. These marabouts are so wealthy and influential that they can influence voting and socio-political referendums. Politicians realize that they need the support of these men who are able to mobilize hundreds of thousands of votes. The serin bu mag (founders) are never attacked by the novelists, who nearly always praise and reverence them. Novelists seem to admire Cheikh Amadou Bamba in particular for the role he played during colonization. However, the basic principles of Mouridism as taught by Cheikh Amadou Bamba have been distorted so that a small group of leaders can subjugate and exploit their followers while limiting their freedom of consciousness. During colonization the brotherhoods helped the people to use Islam as a means to resist assimilation and acculturation. But in the present era, novelists suggest that the brotherhoods do little to truly help the people improve their quality of life, even though they have the means to develop social welfare and educational programs that would benefit their followers. Although some brotherhoods are portrayed more favorably than others, for example Tidjanism appears to be more acceptable than Mouridism, the general image of the brotherhoods in the novel is a negative one.
it is not the writer's role to solve society's problems. However, the African writer does have a socio-political role in that he can help raise the level of consciousness among his people. A writer who describes the day-to-day realities in Senegal cannot ignore the marabout and his influence on society. The Senegalese novelist can attack maraboutism and maraboutage in the hope that he may at least provoke his reading public into reflecting seriously upon them. Early writers inferred that the way to avoid the problems associated with maraboutism was to adopt the white man's values and to dispense with outmoded traditions altogether. Later, moderate novelists tended to define the problem, but they seldom attacked the marabout directly. For example, Sadji calls the false marabout a charlatan, but he was more disturbed by the role of the new African bourgeoisie than he was about the abuses of marabouts. More contemporary writers often suggest that the people are at fault for allowing themselves to be duped by charlatans and should accept the responsibility for their own gullibility. Samb and Diakhaté recommend education of the masses as a key to solving the problem of maraboutism, whereas Sembène proposes socialism as an appropriate response to the situation. Neither the marabout nor religion have a necessary role in the process of social change as he envisions it. Meanwhile maraboutism will no doubt remain strong in Senegal, and it will probably be a frequent theme in future novels as long as Islam and a belief in the supernatural continue to be essential features of Senegalese life. Because the marabout has been present in Senegal since the eleventh century, the phenomenon of maraboutism will probably never disappear totally. However, most
of the novelists imply that it is up to the people to rid their society of hindrances in order to achieve their common goal for progress and a higher quality of life: the Senegalese people must first of all perceive maraboutism to be a problem and then collectively they must define what the marabout's role in society will be in the future.
Chapter I

1 Animism is a word derived from the Latin "anima" which means breath, breath of life, and hence carries with it the idea of the soul or spirit. The term was invented by English anthropologist E. B. Tylor. According to Tylor, "primitive men" considered every object to have its own soul, thus giving rise to countless spirits in the universe. Since Tylor animism has come to be widely used in describing traditional religions of Africa and other parts of the world.

2 The Wolof are a tribe that comprises 36 percent of the total population of Senegal. It is the largest ethnic group in the country and the Wolof language functions as the main vehicular language of Senegal.

3 The Toucouleur represent 7 percent of the population of Senegal. This group was traditionally located in the Fouta, the Senegal River region in northern Senegal. It was the first ethnic group to be Islamized.

4 Saints of the Atlas is the title of a book by Ernest Gellner on the subject of the Berbers of Morocco.


7 Sufism comes from the word for wool; the early ascetics wore woolen garments.


11 Eickelman, p. 7.

12 Monteil, p. 128.


14 Ceddo were warriors who largely made up the entourages of the Burs (the highest political and religious personalities in traditional society) and other major chiefs. Chosen originally from the slave class and attached directly to the crown, they were called "slaves of the crown." In theory dependent on the Burs, they were in fact, independent, powerful, and sometimes unruly.

15 The Sine is a flat and marshy region of southeastern Senegal on the Saloum River. The region is called the Sine-Saloum.


17 Behrman, p. 15.

18 The Xadiriyya is the first major tariqa or brotherhood to establish its roots in West Africa. It is an Orthodox order little inclined to fanaticism. It was founded by Sharif Sidi Muhammad abd al-Djilani (1079-1166). Xadiriyya marabouts led the first wave of revolts in West Africa in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. These revolts were based on the rejection of states that did not enforce Muslim law and the forcible conversion of pagans. The Xadiriyya formed new states in the Fouta Djallon (1725) and the Fouta Toro (1776).


21 Dumont, p. 326.

22 Monteil, p. 123.


24 Behrman, pp. 10, 17.
Only about 5 percent of the Senegalese population is Christian, and more than 90 percent of these are Catholics. Nearly 90 percent of the people are Muslim and about 5 percent call themselves "animists" or practice a traditional Senegalese religion.

Chapter II

1 Faidherbe was the French general who was appointed governor of Senegal in 1854. Lat Dior Diop was the Damel or king of the region of Cayor, which was strategically located between the cities of Saint-Louis and Dakar. Lat Dior waged a determined campaign against the French and inflicted several severe defeats upon them. However, after a bitter battle in 1864, Faidherbe succeeded in driving Lat Dior from the Cayor and the region was annexed to Senegal.


3 The Peuhl (or Fulani) is a nomadic tribe that is found all over West Africa; they are herdsmen by tradition. There are approximately 600,000 Peuhl in Senegal, located primarily in the Ferlo and Senegal River regions.

4 Gris-gris are talismans that are believed to have supernatural power. The nature of gris-gris and their function will be discussed in Chapter V.


6 Acculturation is the intercultural borrowing between diverse peoples resulting in new and blended patterns. Assimilation is the process by which a cultural tradition is absorbed by and made similar to another totally different culture.


Personal interview with Amar Samb (IFAN, Dakar, Senegal) 10 January 1984.

Chapters IV, V, and VI are studies of le marabout-maître, le marabout-prêtre, and le marabout-vilain respectively.

Johnson Traoré was the director of the film which appeared in 1974.

A Mouride is a member of the Muslim brotherhood founded by Cheikh Amadou Bamba Mbacké.


Madubuike, p. 230.


Chapter III


Mbaye, p. 2.

Mbaye, p. 20.

Mbaye, pp. 18-19.

Mbaye, p. 132.

Mbaye, p. 21.

8 Kane, p. 17.
9 Kane, p. 39.
10 Kane, p. 40.
12 Sembène, Voltaïque, p. 139.
13 Sembène, Voltaïque, pp. 140-141.
16 Sembène, O pays mon beau peuple, p. 165.
17 Personal interview with Aminata Sow Fall (Dakar, Senegal) 28 July 1982.
19 Sow Fall, pp. 53-54.
21 Sow Fall, p. 88.
22 Sow Fall, p. 79.
23 Sow Fall, p. 80.
26 Birago Diop, Les nouveaux contes d'Amadou Koumba, p. 41.
27 Diop, p. 39.
28 Mbaye Cham, "Islam and the Creative Imagination in Senegal," p. 11.
Chapter IV

1 The Wolof seceded from the Mandingo Empire during the fourteenth century A.D. and they established sovereignty from the Senegal River to the River Gambia. In the sixteenth century there was a breakup of the Wolof Empire and Wolof kingdoms were established from the Senegal River to Cape Verde and south of Cape Verde to the River Gambia. These kingdoms practiced Islam and traditional African religion.


3 Abdoulaye Diop, p. 236.


5 Amar Samb, Matraqué par le destin ou la vie d'un talibé, pp. 43-44.

6 Abdoulaye Diop, p. 236.


9 Samb, Matraqué par le destin, p. 37.

10 Mamadou Dia Mbaye, Au delà de la vertu, p. 130.


12 C. Kane, L'Aventure ambiguë, p. 174.


15 Abdoulaye Diop, pp. 269-270.


18 Fall, *La Plaie*, p. 37.


21 Fall, *La Plaie*, p. 37.


23 C. Kane, *L'Aventure ambiguë*, p. 15.


29 Samb, *Matraqué par le destin*, pp. 41-42.


33 C. Kane, *L'Aventure ambiguë*, p. 22.

34 Personal interview with Cheikh Hamidou Kane (Dakar, Senegal), 10 August 1982.


36 C. Kane, *L'Aventure ambiguë*, p. 44.
Chapter V


2 Froelich, pp. 102-104.


6 Marty, Etudes sur l'Islam au Sénégal, I, 130.


9 B. Diallo, Force Bonté, p. 134.

10 Ousmane Socé, Karim, p. 62.

11 Socé, Karim, p. 61.

12 Socé, Karim, p. 61.

13 Socé, Karim, pp. 61-62.
14 Socé, Karim, p. 148.
15 Abdoulaye Sadjé, Maïmouna, pp. 114-115.
16 Personal interview with El Hadji Abdou Aziz Sy, Jr., Khalife General of the Brotherhood of the Tidjanes (Thies, Senegal), 24 February 1984.
18 Sembène, p. 112.
19 Sembène, p. 113.
20 Sembène, p. 114.
21 Sadjé, Maïmouna, p. 199.
23 Sadjé, Maïmouna, p. 27.
24 Sadjé, Maïmouna, p. 115.
25 Moussa Ben, p. 11.
26 Sadjé, Maïmouna, pp. 161-162.
27 Fall, La Plaie, p. 98.
29 N. Diallo, p. 32.
30 N. Diallo, p. 32. The kola nut is very important in Islam. The kola nut plays a capital role in the savannah for ritual offerings and is used for gifts before and since colonization. From cradle to tomb, the life of the Black African from the Senegalo-Nigerian western savannah is sprinkled with 1001 occasions, lucky or unlucky, to offer kola nuts. Islam sanctified the kola nut. Milk, flour, and the kola obtained with Islamized Blacks, a respect that recalls the relationship between the Christian and bread and wine.
31 N. Diallo, p. 32.
32 John S. Mbiti, African Religions and Philosophies, p. 58.
33 Moussa Ben, p. 11.

34 Ihecheckwu Madubuike, "Le roman sénégalais et le problème de l'assimilation," Diss. SUNY at Buffalo 1973, pp. 146-147.

35 Samb, Matraqué par le destin, p. 132.

36 Samb, Matraqué par le destin, p. 132.

37 Fall, La Plaie, p. 158.

38 Fall, La Plaie, p. 158.

Chapter VI


2 The marabout is in many ways similar to the black preacher in America who has been the cultural leader in the Black community.

3 Personal interview with El Hadj Abdou Aziz Sy, Jr. (Thies, Senegal), 23 February 1984.

4 M. Fall, La Plaie, p. 148.

5 Personal interview with Roger Dorsinville (Dakar, Senegal), 25 April 1984.

6 M. Kane, Roman africain et tradition, p. 433.

7 O. Socé, Karim, p. 133.

8 M. Kane, Roman africain et tradition, p. 450.

9 C. Ndao, Buur Tilleen, pp. 93-94.

10 M. Fall, La Plaie, p. 151.

11 A. Sadji, Nini, pp. 86-87.


13 A Sadji, Nini, p. 94.

15 A. Sadji, Maïmouna, p. 205.
16 O. Sembène, Xala, p. 109.
17 A. Samb, Matraqué par le destin, p. 8.
18 A. Sadji, Maïmouna, p. 162.
19 Moussa Ben, "Une situation florissante," p. 3.
20 A. Sadji, Maïmouna, p. 163.
21 A. Sadji, Nini, p. 87.
22 A. Sadji, Nini, p. 96.
23 A. Sadji, Nini, pp. 126-127.
24 A. Sadji, Nini, p. 127.
25 A. Sadji, Nini, p. 117.
26 A. Sadji, Nini, p. 118.
27 A. Sadji, Nini, pp. 138-139.
28 A. Sadji, Nini, p. 143.
29 A. Sadji, Nini, p. 144.
30 O. Sembène, Voltaïque, p. 127.
31 O. Sembène, Voltaïque, p. 131.
32 O. Sembène, Voltaïque, p. 131.
33 O. Sembène, Voltaïque, p. 138.
34 Samb, Matraqué par le destin, pp. 90-91.
35 Moussa Ben, "Pratique de médecine traditionnelle et 'science' des 'érudits,'" Takusaan le soir, 23-25 (December 1983), p. 11.
36 Mbaye Gana Kébé, Kaala-Sikkim, p. 10.
37 Kébé, Kaala-Sikkim, p. 10.
38 Kébé, Kaala-Sikkim, p. 13.
Cheikh Aliou Ndao, Le Marabout de la sécheresse (Dakar: Nouvelles Éditions Africaines, 1979), p. 49.
Ndao, Le Marabout de la sécheresse, p. 52.
A. Sadji, Maîmouna, p. 118.
Ndao, Buur Tilleen, p. 58.
M. Kane, Roman africain et tradition, p. 425.

Chapter VII

1 N. Diallo, De Tilène au Plateau, p. 124.
3 O. Socé, Karim, p. 64.
4 C. H. Kane, L'Aventure ambiguë, p. 106.
6 Ken Bugul, Le Baobab fou (Dakar: Nouvelles Éditions Africaines, 1982), pp. 80, 130, 143.
7 M. D. Mbaye, Au delà de la vertu, p. 33.
8 M. D. Mbaye, Au delà de la vertu, p. 35.
9 M. D. Mbaye, Au delà de la vertu, p. 128.
11 I. Sèye, Un Trou dans le miroir, p. 31.
12 O. Sembène, Xala, p. 20.
13 Le Coran, Sourate IV: 3.
Chapter VIII

1 A. Samb, Matraqué par le destin.

2 Personal interview with Mame Seck Mbacké (Dakar, Senegal), 15 July 1982.

3 A. Samb, Matraqué par le destin, p. 29.

4 I. Sèye, Un Trou dans le miroir, pp. 16, 103.

5 I. Sèye, Un Trou dans le miroir, p. 113.

6 O. Socé, Karim, p. 124.

7 O. Socé, Karim, p. 125.

8 I. Sèye, Un Trou dans le miroir, p. 31.

9 A. Diop, La Société Wolof, p. 276.

10 A. Diop, La Société Wolof, p. 276.

11 A. Samb, Matraqué par le destin, p. 151.

12 A. Samb, Matraqué par le destin, p. 151.


18 I. Sèye, *Un Trou dans le miroir*, p. 132.


20 I. Sèye, *Un Trou dans le miroir*, p. 137.


26 A. Samb, *Matraqué par le destin*, p. 93.


The Appendix contains excerpts from interviews with Senegalese writers and religious leaders. Some material has been deleted as being irrelevant to the thesis; however, a full manuscript of the complete interviews has been retained. This information has been included because it will be useful for future scholars to look at some of the primary materials that I was able to accumulate.

1. CHEIKH HAMIDOU KANE, author and statesman
2. EL HADJ MBACKE DIAKHATE, Mouride marabout
3. EL HADJ ABDOU AZIZ SY, JR., General Caliph of the Tidjanes
4. SERIGNE BASSIROU LAYE, Imam of the Layennes
5. MAME SECK MBACKE, author
6. AMINATA SOW FALL, author
7. ROGER DORSINVILLE, author and editor of Les Nouvelles

Editions Africaines
1. CHEIKH HAMIDOU KANE is the author of the classic novel L'Aventure ambiguë. Formerly the Minister for Industrial Development and Artisanry, he is currently the Minister of Planning and Cooperation under President Abdou Diouf. The following interviews were held at Mr. Kane's office at the Ministry in Dakar, Senegal on July 21, 1982 and August 10, 1982.

July 21, 1982

Boyd-Buggs: L'Aventure ambiguë, est-ce que c'est un roman autobiographique? Si oui, dans quelle manière?

Kane: Je crois que les premiers romans de tous les écrivains, en tout cas les premiers romans des écrivains africains de ma génération, ont toujours une grande composante autobiographique. De ce point de vue L'Aventure ambiguë n'échappe pas à cette règle. Il y a une bonne part autobiographique. Mais je dois dire que ce que je raconte, la vie de Samba Diallo, au moins jusqu'au jour de sa mort, c'est vrai en partie pour ma vie, mais c'est vrai en partie pour toutes les générations d'Africains qui appartiennent à un milieu traditionnel et qui sont allés à l'école occidentale. Tous les Africains, et maintenant ils sont des millions, de tous les pays d'Afrique noire, sont nés dans un milieu où il y a une éducation traditionnelle, un milieu où il n'y a pas d'écriture. Les seules écritures qui sont pratiquées sont des écritures étrangères; c'est l'écriture arabe, l'écriture anglaise ou l'écriture française. Donc tous les Africains noirs qui sont allés à l'école française, anglaise, espagnole, portugaise, pour parler des pays qui nous ont colonisés, sont des Samba Diallo. Ce sont les deux. D'une société traditionnelle ils sont allés à l'école; ils ont rencontré les mêmes problèmes que Samba Diallo. Dans ce sens je dis oui à votre question. C'est autobiographique. Mais ce n'est pas seulement pour Cheikh Hamidou Kane. C'est vrai pour tous les Africains qui ont été à l'école. Mais je dois préciser que ce n'est pas totalement autobiographique. Je veux dire qu'il y a une certaine fiction romanesque. Il y a des personnages qui n'existaient pas du tout parmi les personnages de L'Aventure ambiguë. Il y a des personnages qui ressemblent beaucoup à des personnes que j'ai connues mais ils se ressemblent simplement. Ce n'est pas tout à fait ces personnages que j'ai connus. C'est pour vous dire que même si il y a une grande partie, une grande composante inspirée par ma vie personnelle ou la vie des gens que j'ai connus autour de moi, il y a aussi une partie équivalente qui est de l'imagination qui est une stylisation, qui est une symbolisation.
Boyd-Buggs: Quelle est votre conceptions du rôle sociopolitique de l'Islam dans la société sénégalaise contemporaine et dans la société africaine en général?

Kane: Le rôle sociopolitique de l'Islam vient en deuxième lieu après le rôle religieux simplement de l'Islam. Je dois dire que les Africains musulmans sont plus nombreux que les Africains chrétiens. Les Africains musulmans se sentent d'abord comme musulmans et c'est une foi religieuse. Et ça, ce n'est pas un phénomène politique. C'est d'abord un phénomène de foi religieuse, un phénomène spirituel. Mais il faut dire que, étant donné le nombre des Africains musulmans, l'Islam est devenu effectivement un phénomène social dans la mesure où il y a un très grand nombre d'Africains noirs qui sont musulmans; dans la mesure où l'Islam n'est pas comme le Christianisme, une religion qui a été véhiculée ici par les colonisateurs, ça donne une coloration politique de l'Islam différente de la coloration politique du Christianisme. Le Christianisme a été introduit en Afrique par les missionnaires, les prêtres des pays qui nous ont colonisés: français, belges, allemands, portugais. Tandis que l'Islam a été introduit à l'origine par des Arabes, les Arabes qui n'étaient pas venus pour coloniser. Ils sont venus pour des raisons religieuses. Il y en a qui étaient venus pour les raisons de l'esclavage. Mais, par exemple dans ma région d'origine qui est le nord du Sénégal, l'Islam est venu depuis le onzième siècle et ce sont des Arabes qui sont venus s'installer et commencer à convertir les Noirs à l'Islam. Mais c'est seulement la première génération de musulmans noirs qui a été convertie par des Arabes. Après ce sont les Noirs eux-mêmes, devenus musulmans, qui sont allés transporter la religion du nord vers le sud. A part la dimension religieuse dont j'ai parlé, la dimension sociale qui est la conséquence du grand nombre de Noirs qui sont musulmans, il y a une dimension politique qui est la conséquence du fait que l'Islam a été introduit par les Arabes mais il a été diffusé par les Noirs eux-mêmes. C'est une religion qui continue de faire des adeptes. Il y a de plus en plus de Noirs qui se convertissent à l'Islam dans le temps. Il y a quelques années, c'était surtout les Noirs des régions sahariennes, au sud du Sahara. C'était la savane depuis le Sénégal jusqu'au Mali, en passant par la Haute Volta, du Niger aussi. Et dans les familles sénégalaises il y a des musulmans et des chrétiens qui sont des parents. Nous co-existons bien. Il n'y a pas de problème. Il n'y a pas un pouvoir religieux dans nos états africains, noirs en tout cas. Il n'y a pas le phénomène comme en Iran ou comme en Arabie Saoudite des ayatollah qui confondent le gouvernement, la politique et la religion. Ça n'existe pas chez nous.

Boyd-Buggs: Je sais que vous avez parfois donné votre définition de la négritude. Est-ce que vous croyez que la négritude reste toujours un outil philosophique et artistique dans la littérature noire contemporaine?
Kane: Dans ce qu'on appelle la négritude, moi je distingue deux composants. Il y a la négritude comme théorie, le point de départ de la génération Senghor, Césaire, Damas. C'est un concept qu'ils ont imaginé vers les années 30, un concept à la fois philosophique, esthétique, une théorie philosophique, esthétique, morale, qui permettait de donner un cadre conceptuel et intellectuel aux Noirs dans leurs relations avec les Blancs, pendant la période où nous étions colonisés par les Blancs. C'est le premier élément. Le deuxième élément c'est la manière d'être noir. La négritude pour moi c'est le fait que je suis noir et qu'en tant que noir, j'ai des réactions qui sont différentes de celles d'un Blanc. J'ai des réactions affectives; j'ai des relations sociales, familiales; j'ai des réactions esthétiques, différentes de celles des Blancs. Je dis que la négritude ce sont ces deux choses. D'une part une théorie, d'autre part une manière d'être noir par opposition à une manière d'être blanc. La négritude en tant que théorie peut-être n'a plus la même actualité aujourd'hui que vers les années 30. Pourquoi? Parce que maintenant nous sommes devenus indépendants politiquement; nous ne sommes plus des colonies, nous sommes maîtres chez nous, et nous n'avons plus besoin de nous affirmer comme les autres en avions besoin pendant les années 30. Par conséquent peut-être que les nouvelles générations de Noirs et d'Africains n'ont plus besoin de ce concept. Peut-être qu'ils peuvent recourir à d'autres concepts, celui de l'authenticité ou bien recourir à des concepts plus modernes, par exemple, ils peuvent devenir des socialistes; ils peuvent devenir des communistes, s'ils veulent. Ce sont des concepts. La négritude comme théorie est devenue moins actuelle et moins nécessaire. Mais la négritude comme manière d'être noir je crois que c'est une chose qui demeure et qui est plus présente. J'ai une partie de ma vie chaque jour qui est comme, qui ressemble à la vie que mènerait un Blanc de mon âge et de ma formation. Il reste que j'ai une autre partie de ma vie chaque jour, qui m'est propre, qui m'est personnelle, qui est différente de la manière comme le Blanc qui a le même âge et la même formation que moi vit chez lui. De ce point de vue la négritude comme manière d'être noir est une réalité qui survit beaucoup.

Boyd-Buggs: Parlons de la question de la confrontation entre la philosophie occidentale et les valeurs traditionnelles. Dans le roman vous avez indiqué ou suggéré qu'une synthèse est possible mais que quelque chose doit mourir avant ou pour avoir une renaissance. Mais "est-ce que la victoire des étrangers est totale ou sera totale?" Plus l'homme africain s'occidentalise plus il perdra quelque chose de ses valeurs traditionnelles. Que fera l'homme noir pour éviter de tomber dans le même piège que l'homme occidental? C'est-à-dire dans un système dualiste où l'homme est divisé. Que fera l'homme noir pour bien garder sa vision holistique du monde? Malheureusement dans notre monde, pratiquer une religion ne veut pas dire toujours y croire vraiment.
Kane: C'est la question la plus difficile. Cette question-là, on ne peut pas y répondre. C'est l'avenir qui va y répondre. Mais je crois que c'est aussi le peuple africain qui va y répondre. C'est une question que nous nous posons, nous, cadre intellectuel. Mais le peuple continue à vivre sa vie. Au niveau du peuple nous essayons de faire une synthèse. Par exemple ici à Dakar, les employés dans les usines ou dans les bureaux, en tant qu'employés du secteur moderne, ils essayent de trouver une manière d'être un bon employé, comme les Blancs, comme le veulent le monde moderne et l'économie moderne. Mais en même temps ils continuent de sauvegarder dans leur vie de tous les jours leurs traditions africaines, leurs valeurs de solidarité, leurs familles, larges grandes familles. Quand vous regardez ça, vous vous rendez compte que les ouvriers noirs d'une usine de Dakar ne vivent pas exactement comme des ouvriers blancs d'une usine similaire qui serait à Paris. L'ouvrier noir a, peut-être pour le moment, si on compare ces deux cas, l'ouvrier noir a moins de compétence technique, que le moyen d'un ouvrier Blanc qui est à Paris. Mais je dois dire que l'ouvrier noir sénégalais a fait beaucoup de progrès. Maintenant il est clair qu'il peut être aussi bon qu'un ouvrier blanc au plan technique. Mais en même temps, un ouvrier noir quand il a fini son travail, il rentre dans sa maison. Dans sa maison il a peut-être une, deux ou trois femmes. Et en tout cas il a ses frères, ses cousins qui sont dans la même maison que lui. Il partage ce qu'il gagne avec eux. Et ça diminue son revenu individuel parce qu'il le partage. Mais je crois qu'il préfère ça à la situation de l'ouvrier blanc de Paris qui lui, il vit avec sa femme et son fils et son enfant ou ses deux enfants et qui ne vit pas avec son père ou avec sa mère, ou avec ses cousins et ses cousines. Donc le peuple africain est en train de résoudre pratiquement ce problème théorique que vous posez. Je ne crois pas qu'il y ait une solution théorique. On ne peut pas prévoir comment passer, comment éviter de tomber dans une société dualiste, dans une civilisation dualiste. On ne peut pas y répondre théoriquement. On ne peut pas répondre théoriquement à la question de comment on peut avoir une société ou une civilisation holistique. Les artistes, les écrivains peuvent essayer d'imaginer, d'écrire des romans, de faire des tableaux qui suggèrent les solutions mais c'est une inspiration esthétique. On peut approcher la solution à ce problème d'une façon esthétique et d'une façon pratique au sein du peuple. Mais je ne crois pas qu'on puisse résoudre ce problème intellectuellement.

Boyd-Buggs: La crise de Samba a commencé en Afrique. Avant que Samba ait perdu la foi son père avait essayé de l'assurer en lui présentant des arguments assez convaincants. Mais apparemment ces arguments n'étaient pas suffisants. Quelles sont vos idées sur les relations entre l'intellect et les valeurs spirituelles?

Kane: Votre question affirme que Samba a perdu la foi. Je ne pense pas que Samba ait perdu la foi. C'est une question qui est très discutée. Beaucoup de lecteurs pensent que Samba Diallo a perdu la foi. Quelques autres lecteurs pensent qu'il n'a pas perdu la foi.
Moi en tant que lecteur je ne crois pas qu'il ait perdu la foi. Simplement quand il est sorti du milieu Diallobé, qu'il a été d'abord dans l'école, ensuite il est allé en Europe, il a eu d'autres façons de pratiquer la foi, de pratiquer sa religion. Et surtout il a pris conscience en Europe d'une valeur qui n'est pas connue chez lui dans le pays des Diallobé. Cette valeur, c'est la liberté de conscience. En pays Diallobé, une société totalitaire, dans tout, la religion et la vie sont mêlées et chacun a le droit de surveiller l'autre, d'éduquer l'autre, de veiller à ce qu'il soit musulman. Tout le monde est musulman. Il n'y a pas des musulmans et des chrétiens, des animistes ou des libre-penseurs. Dans le milieu traditionnel Diallobé, tout le monde est musulman. Alors Samba Diallo, quand il est allé en Europe, il est resté musulman. Il a gardé la foi mais il a pensé qu'il peut parfaitement être possible que dans le même milieu Diallobé qu'il y ait des gens qui ne sont pas musulmans. Il a pensé qu'il est possible que quelqu'un soit musulman sans que quelqu'un d'autre viole le surveiller et lui dire qu'il faut prier. C'est une différence entre l'Islam et les religions chrétiennes. C'est qu'en Islam il n'y a pas d'églises; il n'y a pas de clergé. Les marabouts sont seulement des gens qui vous aident mais qui n'ont pas un sacerdoce. Alors Samba Diallo n'a pas perdu la foi. En même temps qu'il est resté musulman pleinement, il a tout de même pensé qu'il faut que la société évolue et qu'elle soit une société tolérante ou personne n'oblige personne à avoir telle religion, telle autre. Mais le Fou n'a pas compris; le Fou, lui, est resté totalitaire. C'est le conservateur. Il considère que la société des Blancs, celle qu'il a vue, n'est pas bonne et qu'il faut la refuser. Ainsi quand il a dit à Samba Diallo de prier et Samba Diallo lui a dit non, il a peut-être pensé que Samba Diallo ait perdu la foi. Mais moi personnellement je ne crois pas que Samba Diallo ait perdu la foi. Ceci étant, vous me demandez comment concilier la foi religieuse et le raisonnement intellectuel. Enfin je ne sais pas là aussi si c'est une question qui peut recevoir une réponse. Il y a ceux qui croient puis il y a ceux qui ne croient pas. Mais je crois qu'on peut dire que l'intelligence et le raisonnement intellectuel ne pourront jamais rendre compte complètement de ce qui est spirituel. On sait que l'intelligence, la connaissance et la science feront des progrès tout le temps. Mais on sait aussi que malgré ces progrès, il restera toujours quelque chose qu'on n'expliquera pas. On sait que physiquement on ne peut pas connaître les limites de l'univers. L'homme qui vit sur la planète terre, ne pourra jamais aller jusqu'aux limites de l'univers. Il peut essayer d'imaginer, faire des calculs, mais jamais il ne connaîtra tout. Je crois que le savoir et la raison sont limités comme l'homme. Ce qui va au delà de cette limite, puisque la réalité va au-delà de cette limite, on devient obligé de croire puisque l'intelligence ne peut pas tout expliquer.

Boyd-Buggs: Est-ce que vous voyez des rapports entre des questions soulignées dans votre roman et certaines valeurs chrétiennes?
Kane: La foi musulmane et la foi chrétienne sont toutes les deux des fois, des croyances en Dieu. Selon nous musulmans, le christianisme est l'avant-dernière religion révélée par Dieu au monde et Mahomet est le dernier prophète de Dieu. Avant lui il y avait Jésus-Christ et l'affiliation remonte jusqu'à l'Ancien Testament, jusqu'à la religion juive abrahamique. Donc il y a des valeurs fondamentales communes pour nous musulmans entre judaïsme, christianisme et islam. Il est probable que certains des thèmes, certaines des valeurs de l'Islam noir tels qu'ils sont décrits dans L'Aventure ambiguë soient similaires ou ressemblent à des valeurs chrétiennes. En tout cas les musulmans et les chrétiens sont tous des hommes de foi par opposition aux matérialistes ou bien aux marxistes, matérialistes au plan de la philosophie ou au plan politique.

August 10, 1982

Boyd-Buggs: Après que la Grande Royale a pris la décision qu'il fallait envoyer Samba à l'école française, lorsque la crise de Samba a commencé, elle a disparu. Je me demande pourquoi elle ne réapparaît plus après.

Kane: Peut-être parce que quand Samba est revenu elle n'existait plus; peut-être elle était morte, je ne sais pas. En tout cas je n'ai pas eu de raison délibérée pour sa disparition. Elle a joué son rôle à un moment donné. Son rôle était de faire prendre une décision. Tous les autres hésitaient, faisaient le va et vient. Elle, c'est une personne qui est déterminée et qui a fait prendre une décision. Je crois que c'est le trait dominant du caractère de la Grande Royale. Et ce n'est pas un trait de caractère qui est exceptionnel en milieu africain chez les femmes. Presque tous les lecteurs africains de L'Aventure ambiguë me disent "Ce n'est pas normal. Ce n'est pas vrai chez nous, les femmes ne sont pas comme ça." Mais je pense que c'est parce que ce sont des gens qui sont un peu acculturés. Les Africains qui ne sont pas allés à l'école, eux, ils ne seraient pas étonnés par le personnage de la Grande Royale. Ce sont ceux qui sont allés à l'école et qui ont subi un lavage de cerveau de la part des Blancs, parce que les Blancs dans leur culture, la femme était un être inférieur. C'est la vérité dans la culture des Blancs. Il y a chez eux de la même manière qu'il y a des classes sociales qui se battent, de la même manière qu'il y a des querelles des générations, les adultes ne s'entendent pas avec les jeunes, les vieux sont une autre catégorie, dans la société des Blancs. De la même manière il apparaît chez eux aussi une espèce d'antagonisme et de lutte, comme une lutte des classes, entre les hommes et les femmes. C'est vrai chez les Blancs. Mais au milieu africain traditionnel ce n'est pas vrai. Dans la famille, les enfants, les adultes et les vieux sont dans la même famille, dans la même organisation, dans la même hiérarchie. Il n'y a pas d'opposition; il n'y a pas d'antagonisme. De la même manière, il n'y a pas, dans la société
africaine traditionnelle, il n'y a pas ces conflits, ces tensions entre les hommes et les femmes. Ce sont les Blancs qui ont leurs problèmes et qui projetent ces problèmes sur des sociétés africaines. Quand ils sont venus ici ce qu'ils ont vu c'est que l'Africain ne traite pas la femme comme le Blanc traite la femme. Ils ont vu qu'il y a une différence de traitement. A partir de cette différence de traitement ils ont dit qu'en Afrique la femme est un être inférieur. Ce n'est pas vrai. C'est eux qui ont vu ça. Moi en tout cas quand j'étais enfant, quand j'étais en milieu traditionnel africain, je n'ai jamais eu le sentiment que la femme est un être inférieur, bien au contraire. Elle a son rôle; elle a sa place, et des personnages comme celui de la Grande Royale ne sont pas des personnages exceptionnels.

Boyd-Buggs: Les Africains se sont islamisés ou se sont christianisés tout en gardant ou préservant certaines croyances traditionnelles et indigènes. Dans L'Aventure ambigué Samba cherche de la consolation auprès de la tombe de La Vieille Rella. Je me demande si cette partie de l'histoire appartient aux croyances traditionnelles. Par exemple le fait que les ancêtres reviennent pour donner des conseils ou qu'ils se sont réincarnés chez leurs descendants. Quel est le rôle de cette partie de l'histoire en ce qui concerne la Vieille Rella?

Kane: Je pense que vous avez raison de dire que chez les Africains musulmans comme chrétiens il y a une certaine coexistence entre la foi religieuse musulmane ou chrétienne et des formes de croyances traditionnelles; c'est vrai. Moins dans les parties de l'Afrique où les religions musulmanes ou chrétiennes sont installées depuis très longtemps. D'ailleurs pour ce qui concerne la religion musulmane, elle s'accommode de ça. C'est-à-dire qu'il y a seulement un certain nombre de dogmes que cette religion impose. Une fois qu'un musulman reconnait qu'il n'y a qu'un seul Dieu, que Mahomet est Son prophète, qu'il accepte d'aller à la Mecque, qu'il accepte de donner la dîme, il est en train d'observer les piliers de la religion. Une fois qu'il croit en ça et qu'il pratique, tout de sa culture traditionnelle qui n'est pas contre ces piliers, ces principes, l'Islam accepte. Et la tradition de vie musulmane, la sociologie de la société musulmane arabe est plus adaptée à la société africaine traditionnelle que disons la tradition sociologique occidentale. Donc l'Islam est plus proche de la culture traditionnelle africaine que le christianisme. Ce que vous dites est vrai. Il y a dans la société africaine traditionnelle quelques éléments de croyances traditionnelles qui coexistent avec la religion musulmane. Tous les éléments qui ne sont pas opposés aux principes de l'Islam, l'Islam les respecte. Maintenant je crois que Samba Diallo voit dans la tombe de la Vieille Rella un peu comme la manifestation du mystère de la mort. C'est cet aspect qui l'attire. Et c'est là, la première impression que cet enfant a de la mort. D'une part c'est ça qui l'attire. Et d'autre part on croit effectivement que les morts, comme disait Birago Diop: "les morts ne sont pas morts." Vous connaissez les vers de Birago Diop: "ils sont dans les vents, etc." On le croit
dans la société africaine traditionnelle. Mais il se trouve aussi que l'Islam, qui croit dans l'immortalité de l'âme, pense que les morts ont disparu physiquement mais leurs âmes continuent de vivre et d'autre part il y a la vie future. Il n'y a pas de contradiction entre la croyance traditionnelle et la croyance musulmane. Mais le rôle joué par la tombe de la Vieille Rella c'est celui justement de frotter l'imagination d'un enfant. C'est la première conception qu'il a de la mort. Il sait qu'il y a une personne qui y a été enterrée et il se demande: "qu'est-ce que ça veut dire la mort?" Est-ce que c'est seulement la disparition physique? Est-ce que c'est plus que la disparition physique? Est-ce que c'est la fin définitive, etc. C'est ça.

Boyd-Buggs: L'un des personnages principaux c'est le marabout, Maître Thierno. Dans certains romans sénégalais on présente des marabouts corrompus mais ici on trouve un homme saint et sincère. Je n'ai pas non plus l'impression que les gens dans le roman pratiquent le maraboutage. Quelles sont vos idées sur le rôle du marabout dans la société actuelle? Est-ce que même aujourd'hui il fait partie de la vie quotidienne des gens?

Kane: Il y a eu une évolution dans le rôle du marabout dans la société. Celui qu'on appelait marabout dans le passé c'est un homme comme le maître des Dialloché, comme Thierno, dont le rôle était d'enseigner la religion et le Coran aux enfants, et peut-être de diriger les prières à la mosquée. C'est le rôle original du marabout. Jusqu'à présent dans ma région, du fleuve du nord, il y a encore des marabouts comme çà qui ont des enfants depuis l'âge de 7 ans jusqu'à l'âge de 20 ans et qui leur enseignent la religion et le Coran. Mais à côté de ce genre de marabout, maintenant il y a une catégorie de marabouts qui sont des personnages qui sont souvent des fils ou des petits-fils d'un marabout de la première catégorie et qui, eux, n'enseignent plus. Ils n'enseignent plus ni le Coran ni la religion. La chose est devenue plus ou moins héréditaire. Quelquefois même ils ne savent même plus eux-mêmes le Coran. Ils sont devenus une espèce d'institution sociale nouvelle où les gens les suivent, sont leurs talibés, etc. Mais je crois que, par exemple, Serigne Bamba, qui était le fondateur de la Confrérie des Mourides, lui il enseignait le Coran aux gens; il était comme le Maître des Dialloché. Mais ses enfants quand il est mort, peut-être quelques-uns de ses enfants enseignent le Coran, mais d'autres, ceux qui sont les Khalife et le marabout, ils n'enseignent plus le Coran. C'est une situation nouvelle.

Boyd-Buggs: J'ai demandé à un marabout à Touba quelle est la différence principale entre les Mourides et ce qu'on appelle le mouridisme et les autres sectes islamiques. Et il m'a dit que les Mourides sont dédiés à leur marabout.

Kane: C'est vrai. Ils sont plus dévoués à leur marabout que les autres. Mais je vous dis que le phénomène maraboutique a
évolué un peu historiquement. Il y encore quelques marabouts, j'en connais qui sont amis à moi qui continuent à enseigner le Coran et la religion. Mais à côté d'eux il y en a d'autres qui sont marabouts et qui n'enseignent plus.

Boyd-Buggs: Dans quel sens est-ce que la mort de Samba aux mains du Fou prend un sens métaphysique? Est-ce que ça veut dire que les valeurs traditionnelles africaines existent à un tel point que si un individu cède à la tentation de les abandonner il va se détruire? Est-ce que c'est la mort qui est le vainqueur dans le roman?

Kane: Oui. Je peux répondre que oui. Si on ne fait pas attention, si on ne reconnaît pas les distances de certaines valeurs traditionnelles, on s'expose à des dangers. C'est que nous avons une culture traditionnelle africaine qui est une culture orale; il n'y a pas d'écriture. Aussi il y a des croyances religieuses traditionnelles. Ce n'est pas écrit dans les livres comme le Coran ou comme la Bible. L'essentiel des valeurs traditionnelles ce sont des valeurs d'oralité. Si devant ça, vous avez une religion, l'Islam, qui vient avec un livre écrit ou comme le christianisme qui vient avec un autre livre écrit, il y a un risque. C'est que quand l'Arabe musulman vient ou quand le prêtre catholique ou le pasteur protestant vient dans une société africaine pour la première fois ils peuvent dire qu'il n'y a pas de religion, qu'il n'y a pas de croyances traditionnelles. Parce qu'ils n'ont pas vu de livres, ils peuvent se dire qu'il n'y a pas de religion; ces gens-là n'ont pas de croyance. Alors ce qu'ils font à ce moment-là c'est de dire que c'est la table rase; nous pouvons imposer notre religion musulmane ou chrétienne. Mais il s'agit d'une société de tradition orale; il y a beaucoup de traits, de valeurs de cette société qui sont méconnus, qui sont ignorés. Si on ne fait pas attention on va écraser une réalité qui est là et qu'on ne voit pas. C'est ce que j'ai voulu souligner en faisant mourir Samba Diallo. J'ai voulu qu'on sache que la société africaine a sa culture; elle a sa civilisation et qu'à force de vouloir ignorer ça, on s'expose à la disparition de cette société. J'ai voulu des caricatures pour souligner ce fait. Le Fou, c'est le défenseur des valeurs traditionnelles africaines, même les valeurs les plus réactionnaires, les plus rétrogrades. Pour lui, non seulement il faut croire en Dieu, il faut être musulman, mais il faut que tout le monde veille à ce que le musulman fasse sa prière à l'heure exactement. Il n'a pas le droit de faire ça. Il n'a pas le droit d'exiger de Samba Diallo qu'il fasse sa prière. Samba Diallo lui, il est musulman. Mais il a été ailleurs; il a été à l'Océan. Il a vu qu'il faut constituer une société, une même patrie, une même nation entre des musulmans, des chrétiens, des animistes, des gens qui ne croient pas en Dieu, et que tout ce monde peut coexister dans la société et constituer un état. Donc lui, il est pour la liberté de conscience, pour la liberté de culte. Il continue à être musulman; il croit en Dieu, mais il ne croit pas qu'on doit imposer la même religion, la même croyance à tout le monde. Le Fou et la société africaine traditionnelle pensent que tout le monde doit avoir la même
foi et la même religion. Le Fou, il est traditionaliste; il est conservateur. Samba Diallo est musulman mais il est ouvert; il est moderne. Il va pratiquer sa religion. Probablement il va élever ses enfants dans l'Islam mais il n'accepte pas qu'on dise que toute personne des Diallo compte nécessairement être musulman et que celui qui n'est pas musulman doit être exclu des Diallo. C'est ça la signification de la mort de Samba Diallo: attention il y a des valeurs africaines; il ne faut pas qu'on considère que les Africains n'ont pas de valeurs. Mais parmi ces valeurs il y en a qui sont bonnes mais il y en a qui ne sont pas bonnes et qu'il faut écarter. Mais ignorer ces valeurs c'est s'exposer à des risques. En essayant de les assimiler on risque de les tuer.
2. EL HADJ MBACKE DIAKHATE is a marabout of the Mouride Brotherhood and professor of Arabic at the Grand Mosque in Touba, Senegal. The following interview was held in Touba at the marabout's residence on July 27, 1982. The interview was conducted in the Wolof language with the assistance of an interpreter, Mr. Babacar Loukoubar.

Boyd-Buggs: Au préalable je voudrais que vous vous présentiez. Ensuite pourriez-vous parler un peu du personnage de Serigne Touba qui fut le fondateur de la Confrérie Mouride et des autres points essentiels à savoir les rapports entre mourides, de la Mosquée de Touba, de comment vit la Confrérie Mouride, et de la place du mouridisme dans l'Islam.

DIAKHATE: Je m'appelle El Hadj Mbacke Diakhaté, fils de Serigne Amsatoum Diakhaté, compagne de Serigne Touba. J'enseigne l'arabe à l'école de la Grande Mosquée de Touba. Le mouridisme est la voie de tous ceux qui croient en Dieu et en Son Prophète. Il ne se singularise pas par rapport à l'Islam mais il permet de mieux le comprendre et de distinguer l'oeuvre de Prophète et celle de Cheikh Amadou Bamba ou Serigne Touba. Le mouridisme se définit par la croyance en Dieu, par l'amour du travail, par l'intégrité morale. Personne ne peut se dire mouride, quelle que soit sa place dans la confrérie s'il ne se conforme à ces critères. Touba, le nom de la ville où nous sommes, est le nom d'un arbre qui se trouve au paradis. Il n'existe aucune place ombragée par la branche de cet arbre du paradis. Le choix de ce nom tient à ce qu'il existe une porte céleste au-dessus de Touba qui sera ouverte éternellement pareille à la porte céleste de Médina prise par le Prophète pendant son ascension à l'appel de Dieu. Touba n'est pas une ville strictement pour les Mourides mais elle est pour tous ceux qui croient en Dieu. Le mouridisme ne se distingue pas des autres sectes. Par rapport à l'oeuvre du Prophète pendant un temps déterminé, c'est une revalorisation de l'Islam et c'est le but des autres sectes comme les Tidjanes ou les Xaadira. On peut dire que la contradiction n'existe pas.

Boyd-Buggs: Quel est l'élément le plus important de la vie de Serigne Touba et de son oeuvre au Sénégal?

DIAKHATE: Serigne Touba a consacré presque toute sa vie à la revalorisation de l'Islam, à la prière, à la lecture du Coran et à exalter l'oeuvre du Prophète. Il a franchement lutté contre les non-croyants qui ne voulaient pas de renouveau de l'Islam. Cela peut se traduire dans une perspective politique dans la mesure où les
colons ont fait entrer un jour l'alcool pour annihiler le courant islamique.

Boyd-Buggs: Comment est-ce que Serigne Touba a commencé à construire le mouridisme?

Diakhâtè: Serigne Touba a été intégré très jeune et il était un pratiquant assidu. Il prenait souvent le temps de prier et il pensait que la vie devait se limiter uniquement à la prière. Par sa pratique il s'est révélé très tôt être un saint.

Boyd-Buggs: Quel doit être le comportement du talibé mouride et discutez s'il vous plaît, le "wird" c'est-à-dire ce qu'on récite en égrenant le chapelet.

Diakhâtè: Serigne Touba a été sunnîte, ensuite tidjane, puis xaadîra. Mais les voies prêchées par ces sectes ne lui donnaient pas satisfaction entièrement. Enfin Dieu, pour le remercier de sa conduite rigoureuse envers Lui, lui a fait parvenir un "wird" par Son Prophète en demandant à Serigne Touba de convaincre tous ceux qui croyaient de choisir ce "wird." Auparavant Dieu lui demandait de dire à tous ceux qui croyaient en Lui de respecter les piliers de l'Islam. Le mouride, qui est avant tout pratiquant, doit être farouchement croyant.

Boyd-Buggs: Les talibés mourides, xaadîra, et tidjanes respectent tes piliers de l'Islam; mais qu'est-ce qui distingue particulièrement le talibé mouride?

Diakhâtè: La différence est que le talibé mouride doit travailler pour le marabout toute sa vie durant ou bien s'il a une autorité lucrative, il doit donner une dîme (en argent ou en nature) compensant exactement le travail qu'il devait faire pour le marabout. Cela pour le remercier de lui avoir montré la voie à suivre pour accéder à Dieu et pour lui montrer son attachement. Dans le cas contraire ce n'est pas un bon talibé mouride.

Boyd-Buggs: Comment est-ce qu'on devient marabout?

Diakhâtè: Tout homme qui peut prêcher correctement le Coran peut être considéré comme marabout ou serigne.

Boyd-Buggs: Il y a beaucoup de marabouts mais Serigne Touba s'est particulièrement distingué. À quoi cela est-il dû?

Diakhâtè: Malgré leur diversité, Serigne Touba s'est distingué, Dieu le faisant parmi eux Son plus proche.

Boyd-Buggs: Parmi les œuvres littéraires de Serigne Touba, quelles sont les plus célèbres?
Diakhaté: Les oeuvres littéraires de Serigne Touba ont été nombreuses; je ne peux pas citer les plus célèbres.

Boyd-Buggs: Est-ce que tous les talibés sont des garçons? Si oui, comment est-ce que les femmes apprennent la religion?

Diakhaté: Il y a des talibés hommes et femmes. Dans la religion Dieu ne distingue pas les hommes des femmes.

Boyd-Buggs: Est-ce que les femmes se distinguent dans la religion jusqu'à devenir marabout?

Diakhaté: Oui, il y en a beaucoup. Elles ont des femmes talibés qui leur donnent la dîme.

Boyd-Buggs: A l'heure actuelle qui est le grand marabout de Touba?

Diakhaté: C'est Serigne Abdoul Ahad Mbacké.

Boyd-Buggs: A la prière, est-ce que le marabout lit le Coran en wolof ou en arabe; est-ce que tous les talibés comprennent l'arabe?

Diakhaté: Ici à Touba, la plupart des gens comprennent l'arabe mais sur certaines questions ceux qui ne comprennent pas l'arabe demandent la traduction à leurs camarades talibés. En gros les versets dit par le Livre Saint sont traduits par le marabout.

Boyd-Buggs: Est-ce que la femme a un rôle à jouer dans la religion de la ville et de la mosquée?

Diakhaté: La femme a un rôle important dans la société mais l'islam prêche que la femme doit rester au foyer. Pour ce qui est de la mosquée, les bras ne manquent vraiment pas. Le travail est essentiellement fait par les hommes afin d'éviter toute souillure (règles menstruelles) des lieux par les femmes. Elles font principalement le repas pour les hommes mais elles peuvent donner la dîme en argent ou en nature.

Boyd-Buggs: Les Mourides chantent et dansent durant les cérémonies religieuses; est-ce une façon d'invoquer Dieu?

Diakhaté: La danse n'existe pas réellement chez les Mourides. Mais pour l'invocation de Dieu, les versets peuvent être chantés. Si l'on bouge en chantant, c'est une façon d'entrer en communion avec Dieu. Mais la danse sous sa forme folklorique est rejetée par le mouridisme.

Boyd-Buggs: Dans quelle manière est-ce que l'Islam et le mouridisme permettent la polygamie?
Diakhaté: Dieu nous permet la polygamie dans la mesure où les femmes peuvent entrer dans le travail. Dieu nous permet d'avoir plusieurs femmes dans la mesure où l'on a les moyens de les entretenir et cela en se conformant aux lois islamiques.

Boyd-Buggs: Est-ce que la Mosquée de Touba a la même architecture que celle de la Mecque?

Diakhaté: Pour ce qui est des mensurations, elle en a les mêmes que celles de la Mosquée de Médina à la Mecque, mais la conception est de Serigne Touba.

Boyd-Buggs: Que signifie le mot "cheikh"?

Diakhaté: Un cheikh est un homme qui connaît tous les préceptes de l'Islam. Par exemple à l'Université El Hazad du Caire, tous les licenciés portent un turban blanc. Quiconque portant un turban blanc peut répondre à toutes les questions théologiques. Ici à Touba personne ne peut prétendre au titre de "cheikh" s'il ne l'a pas hérité ou bien son travail envers la secte lui donne. Le titre de cheikh est la plus haute distinction dans le mouridisme.

Boyd-Buggs: Comment est-ce que les enfants apprennent le Coran?

Diakhaté: Les enfants vont à l'école pour y apprendre le Coran et la littérature arabe suivant les préceptes islamiques.

Boyd-Buggs: Existe-t-il des écoles coraniques en dehors de l'Ecole de la Mosquée de Touba?

Diakhaté: Chez chaque marabout, il y a une école coranique appelée "daara."

Boyd-Buggs: En dehors des écoles coraniques, existe-t-il des écoles qui enseignent la littérature arabe?

Diakhaté: Bien sûr. Il en existe plusieurs.
3. EL HADJ ABDOU AZIZ SY, JR. is the Grand Caliph of the Tidjane Brotherhood which is headquartered in Tivaouane, Senegal.

The following interview was held at El Hadj Sy's residence in Thies, Senegal on February 23, 1984. The interview was conducted in the Wolof language with the assistance of El Hadj Sy's spokesman, Serigne Lamine Sy.

Sy: Vous avez posé un problème pertinent. Le problème du marabout est un problème complexe au Sénégal parce que il y a marabout et marabout. Les vrais marabouts, les vrais mystiques et les faux marabouts. Il y a naturellement les véritables marabouts qui étaient mystiques et le faux marabout, n'est-ce pas, qui n'est pas mystique. Voilà une distinction. Et de les distinguer est un peu difficile ici au Sénégal. Ce n'est qu'au Sénégal qu'on voit quelqu'un qui ne sait rien et qui a la prétention de guider spirituellement les gens. Nous acceptons cet état de choses parce que nous sommes dans un pays démocratique, un état laïque où chacun exprime librement ses pensées. Quelle que soient vos pensées, vous êtes libre. C'est pourquoi le problème du marabout est d'abord un problème pour nous les marabouts. C'est un grand problème pour nous. Parce que ceux qui ont créé des différentes confréries n'avaient pas voulu ce qui se passe exactement. Les fondateurs des confréries étaient des savants, des hommes de culture qui avaient un idéal. Cet idéal consistait à conduire l'homme à la place idéale que de toute l'éternité lui réserve le créateur Dieu. Les fondateurs des confréries sont des sauveurs d'homme. L'être humain se compose de deux natures: la nature matérielle et la nature spirituelle. Comme le médecin dans le sens occidental est là pour guérir le corps, les chefs de confrérie, les fondateurs de confrérie, sont là pour guérir l'âme de ses défectuosités, de ses déficiences pour que cette âme atteigne à la pureté qui puisse lui permettre d'approcher le créateur Dieu. Leur méthode consistait d'abord à créer de grandes écoles où l'on enseignait au peuple, aux musulmans, la voie droite telle que la désignait et traçait Mohamed, le Prophète d'Islam. Parce que l'Islam se compose de trois dimensions: "imam"—la foi; "islam"—la soumission; et "irsan." Irsan c'est agir avec sincérité, avec pureté, c'est agir en conformité avec la loi de Dieu le plus purement que possible. "Irsan" c'est de faire tout ce que Dieu vous commande de faire et de s'abstraire de tout ce que Dieu vous a interdit de faire. Voilà le cadre d'"irsan." On a posé la question pour savoir qu'est-ce que c'est que "irsan!" Il a dit que c'est très simple. C'est agir comme si on voyait Dieu parce que si vous ne le voyez pas, Lui Il vous voit à chaque moment. Donc on a accès à cette dimension. C'est une dimension d'auto contrôle, de maîtrise de soi. On se
surveille parce qu'on se sait surveillé par Celui qui vous a créé. Et ça c'est la dimension supérieure, la dimension de la proximité. Et à ce moment-là, parvenu à cette troisième dimension, "irtsan" il devient l'ami de Dieu. Parce que Dieu l'a dit dans le Coran. Dieu a dit dans le Coran "ceux qui se sont abstrait de toutes mes interdictions, ceux qui pratiquent toutes mes recommandations, ceux-là, Je les aime." Les chefs de confrérie, leur propos était précisément de conduire les croyants à cette troisième dimension, "irtsan." Parce qu'eux, ils ont atteint cette dimension-là par leur travail et par leur pratique. Parvenu à cette dimension, ce n'est pas seulement de s'y maintenir seul mais d'y conduire les autres. C'est pour cela qu'ils ont créé des écoles mystiques. Et on les appelle, ces gens là, les marabouts ou sérgines. Quelque temps après, des étrangers, des gens qui n'avaient rien à voir avec les mystiques sont venus s'y intégrer. Ils ont créé des écoles parallèles. Et ils ne l'ont fait que pour la recherche de la popularité et pour exploiter les gens. C'était la fin d'une époque; ainsi on assistait au déclin de la tradition. Ces faux marabouts, c'est-à-dire ces faux mystiques, ont eu tout de suite comme premiers adeptes, comme premiers disciples, ceux-là qui gravitaient dans la cour de ces anciens rois. Ils font tous ces efforts à leur appel. Et puisque c'étaient des courtisans, ils ont tout de suite transformé l'esprit initial de ces écoles confréries. Et il y a eu les marabouts qui ont eu la naïveté de ne pas voir le danger que cela comportait; ils ont accepté. Mais il y avait des marabouts qui étaient assez lucides pour savoir le danger que comportait l'inclusion de ces courtisans dans leurs écoles, et ont beaucoup écrit justement pour protester contre l'invasion des courtisans des écoles confréries. Et c'est de là que provient cette confusion que nous voyons aujourd'hui entre les véritables mystiques et les faux mystiques. Ceux qui ont emprunté la voie des véritables mystiques se distinguent des autres parce qu'il y a des signes qui témoignent que telle personne est un homme de Dieu. Dans leur comportement, dans leur façon de parler, même dans leur façon de manger on voit qu'ils ont reçu une éducation mystique. Ils agissent conformément à la volonté divine. Or tout le monde accepte que parmi ces purs mystiques figurent ceux qui ont fondé et qui ont dirigé la secte tidjaniyya. Ce tidjanimisme, ce n'est pas d'origine sénégalais, c'est africain, c'est marocain, c'est algérien. Celui qui l'a créé, c'est un Algérien qui s'est installé au Maroc. Le fondateur de la secte tidjaniyya était mahgrébien, né en Algérie mais il a vécu longtemps au Maroc. C'est lui le fondateur de la secte tidjaniyya qui porte d'ailleurs son nom parce qu'ils s'appelle Cheikh Mohamed Tidjane. Il a eu des élèves; il a eu des disciples qui ont puisé à la source de son enseignement et qui ont diffusé cet enseignement en Afrique. Il y a parmi ses premiers adeptes un nommé Cheikh Amadou Ali. À la mort de Cheikh Mohamed Tidjane il a quitté le Maghreb et il est allé vivre à Médine, là-bas en Arabie Saoudite. Un Africain nommé Cheikh Omar Fouta est allé le rejoindre à pied à cette époque. Il a mis le temps qu'il faut mais il est allé à pied d'ici à Médine pour recevoir une initiation à l'éducation mystique de Cheikh Amadou Ali. Cheikh Omar était un Africain, un Sénégalais mais extraordinaire
à tout point de vue. (Un homme de culture.) Il était cultivé. Il a écrit plus de 27 livres. Il a dirigé 100 guerres, cent combats. Il a converti à l'Islam 70 rois. Il parlait 113 dialectes. Pendant 16 ans il a parcouru toute la région. Il était le premier Sénégalais à être converti à la secte tidjane.

Boyd-Buggs: C'est Cheikh Omar Tall?

Sy: Cheikh Omar Foutu Tall, oui. Et les Blancs ont beaucoup écrit sur lui. Mais ils ont mal écrit de lui. Ils ont médit de lui. Parce que c'était un ennemi de leurs projets parce que les Blancs à cette époque ne pouvaient pas comprendre un mystique qui était homme d'action et qui avait une si forte personnalité. Ils lui ont tendu beaucoup de pièges, mais jamais il n'est tombé dans leurs pièges. Et c'est en défendant ses principes, ses idées qu'il est mort. Les Blancs ont falsifié son histoire. Ils ont dit ce qu'ils ont voulu. Parce que dans leur conception occidentale le mystique devait être un homme léger qui vivait plus au moins d'aujourd'hui mais pas disposant d'une aussi forte personnalité. Après Cheikh Omar il y a eu El Hadj Malik Sy. Et El Hadj Malick Sy a appris l'enseignement de Cheikh Omar Tall. Et ils ne se sont jamais vus. Cheikh Omar, avant de mourir, il a reçu l'oncle maternel d'El Hadj Malick Sy qui était un disciple et un (moqaddem) dignitaire d'Omar Foutu. Et Cheikh Omar déjà lui avait prédit "naîtra de ta chambre, c'est-à-dire de ta maison, de ta propre famille, naîtra un grand mystique et il s'appellera Malik et c'est celui-là qui sera mon successeur; le travail qui me reste à paraître en occident, c'est lui qui le partera." À cette époque, El Hadj Omar a donné à l'oncle d'El Hadj Malik un papier. C'est-à-dire là où est conservé le secret de la secte de la confrérie tidjane. Il a transmis à son oncle, ce papier et lui a dit: "Garde-le. Quand il viendra, quand Malik viendra, tu lui remettras ce document. Malik est né à précher pour moi." On l'a appelé après le professeur de son père qui s'appelait Malik Sow. Et l'oncle maternel tout de suite quand il a eu des dispositions du jeune Malik s'est souvenu de ce que Cheikh Omar Tall lui avait déjà dit, et il lui a remis la boîte contenant le document secret. Il avait remis cette boîte à la maman de Malik en lui disant: "c'est son héritage spirituel; c'est à lui." El Hadj Malik était curieux d'esprit. Il a appris un peu partout. Il a appris le Coran et les différentes disciplines de l'Islam. Il a été au Fouta; il a été en Mauritanie, il a été au Kayor, un peu partout. Il a été un véritable intellectuel dans le sens d'un homme de culture parfait. Il a beaucoup écrit sur l'Islam. Il a formulé beaucoup de critiques sur nos attitudes à nous Sénégalais, nous Noirs, nos attitudes mystiques et religieuses. Il a fait beaucoup de choses. C'est Sérigne Malik qui est venu s'installer à Tivaouane et il s'est comporté en véritable mystique (un vrai mystique, un vrai professeur). Pendant toute sa vie il n'a cessé d'enseigner gratuitement. Et c'était un être désintéressé en toute chose. C'est lui qui a diffusé le tidjanimisme ici au Sénégal. Il a formé des hommes de culture à son école. Il a fait de véritables mystiques. Et il a affecté chacun dans une
région déterminée du Sénégal et ceux là avaient commission de sauver les gens qui se trouvaient dans ces endroits là. Il se rendait aussi à la Mecque comme Cheikh Omar avait fait à pied à l'âge de 30 ans. Il est resté longtemps en Arabie Saoudite, dans le monde arabe, en Egypte. Il a interrogé les hommes de culture, les grands mystiques de ce temps-là. Finalement il avait voulu rester et vivre définitivement à Médine, à côté du mausolé de Mohamed Rasoulah le prophète d'Allah parce que se disait-il: "mais enfin moi, je fais tout ce que je fais en son nom puisqu'il est là je veux rester à côté." Il est resté quelque temps là-bas. Il y avait un homme de culture, un vieil homme de culture qu'il avait connu à Médine. Après une période du matin dans la mosquée de Médine, il l'a invité à déjeuner chez lui et El Hadj Malik s'est rendu à cette invitation. Il lui a posé des questions. Et il lui a dit: "mais j'ai l'impression que vous ne voudriez plus retourner chez vous." Et Malik lui a répondu: "Oui, exactement. Parce que mon seul amour c'est le prophète de l'Islam et puisqu'il est là je peux habiter ici pour toujours. Et le pays d'où je viens est un pays où les hommes sont légers. C'est un travail difficile de vouloir les sauver par l'Islam. Moi je préfère rester ici jusqu'à ma mort. Le vieux mystique l'a conseillé. Il lui a dit: "restez aux environs du mausolé du prophète c'est une bonne chose mais retourner chez vous est meilleur et comporte beaucoup plus de mérite. Même si vous aviez converti trois personnes seulement cela vaut beaucoup plus de mérite. Donc je vous conseille de retourner dans votre pays et essayer de sauver votre pays. Votre culture, vos pratiques pure, votre intelligence vous assurent votre succès dans votre pays." Malik était habitué à tenir compte des conseils qu'on lui donnait et son registre intellectuel le poussait à reconnaître tout bon conseil et il est donc retourné ici au Sénégal. Il s'est installé dans un village après Tivaouane et c'est là-bas qu'il a fondé sa première école. Et c'est là où il a commencé à donner ses enseignements. C'était du temps de la colonisation. On est allé le calomnier auprès des colonialistes. On est allé méditer de lui auprès du gouverneur du Sénégal. Ils ont dit au gouverneur là-bas qu'il est en train d'éveiller les gens. Et il y a une pratique, la pratique spirituelle des Tidjanes qu'on appelle "vasïfa." C'est-à-dire le tidjane qui se met autour du tapis blanc, du drap blanc après la prière, qui s'agenouille devant Dieu, qui prie sur l'endroit et qui glorifie le saint nom de Dieu. Ils ont dit au gouverneur: "il est en train de réunir les gens autour de ce drap blanc là." Et ce n'était pas connu, même le Coran ne savait pas ce que c'est. Et le gouverneur l'a fait convoqué à Saint Louis. Ils ont essayé de l'intimider. Le gouverneur lui a dit: "Vous êtes en train d'éveiller ces gens et cela ne nous convient pas. Et puis vous avez innové quelques pratiques." Ils ont essayé véritablement de le fatiguer pendant quelque temps. Puis ils ont appelé des personnes, des personnalités qui ont fait un bon témoignage sur lui; ils se sont rendus compte qu'il n'était suspect de rien. Donc ils l'ont laissé partir. Il est parti. Un homme d'âge lui donna un conseil; un homme d'âge en même temps un homme de culture qui vivait à Saint-Louis. Il faisait partie de ceux qui l'aidaient dans son jeune âge quand il
était en train de chercher les éléments de sa culture. Il avait même épousé l'une de ses filles. C'était cet homme qui lui a dit:
"Ecoute. Il faudra que tu habites une grande ville et non plus un village isolé. Parce que dans une grande ville... tu auras moins de soucis." Et le travail de Malik consistait à diffuser cette voie spéciale de l'Islam qui est la Tidjaniyya. Diffuser donc la tidjaniyya ici au Sénégal, telle a été son oeuvre. Et c'est à partir de lui qu'il a été possible de créer toutes ces mosquées que vous voyez au Sénégal. Nous signalons qu'ils font plus de 30 milles. Son fils aîné lui a succédé qui s'appelait Babacar Sy. C'est un Saint-Louisien, sa mère est saint louisienne et il a été éduqué à Saint-Louis. Et donc il a hérité du khilafat et il est devenu le khaliife général des Tidjanes, c'est-à-dire le remplaçant de Cheikh Amad Tidjane ici au Sénégal de 1922 a 1957. C'est une véritable imam qui a tourné à la secte tidjaniyya sa grande diffusion au Sénégal.
C'était un homme d'action, un homme pur, quelqu'un très intelligent qui savait toujours exactement ce qu'il fallait faire. Il n'a jamais cessé d'être un phénomène pour les colonialistes. Parce qu'ils ont tout fait mais ils n'ont jamais pu avoir de prises sur lui. Et ils ont écrit ce témoignage: "Voilà. C'est une mâle qu'on n'a pas ouverte." Et c'était un homme extraordinaire de part son éducation, de part sa culture, de part sa méthode et de part sa pédagogie. On a même dit qu'il vivait à une époque qui n'était pas la sienne. Et les colonialistes ont toujours mentionné, le colon a toujours mentionné que c'était un homme sage. Ils ont préparé un éloge funèbre véritablement émouvant à sa mort, après avoir essayé de la malmener, après avoir essayé de l'intimider de toute façon. Ils lui ont tendu beaucoup de pièges. Cela est certain. Mais ils ont reconnu à sa mort qu'il était d'une dimension véritablement qui excédait la limite du Sénégal. Ils ont même fait ce témoignage, ce qu'ils voulaient véritablement dire de lui de ses qualités et de son envergure exceptionnelle peut-être ils ne pouvaient même pas le dire en français. Tel est le droit divin de la voie tidjiane. Il y a naturellement des gens comme des faux mystiques qui sont venus de l'extérieur et qui essayent de s'y intégrer. Ils ont fait ce qu'ils ont voulu. A quel point qu'un homme lucide véritablement hésite à reconnaître toutes ses qualités? Parce que les gens voient cette secte comme elle n'a jamais été. Le tidjanimisme n'est pas un club. Ce n'est pas non plus un passe-temps. Ce n'est pas un passe-temps où on vient par fanatisme et pour sortir quand on veut. C'est autre chose. Ce n'est pas non plus, le tidjanimisme, un moyen d'exploitation des masses. Ses fondateurs ont eu ce but: travailler l'être humain de telle sorte qu'il réponde à l'appel de Dieu son Créateur. C'est-à-dire qu'il soit de cette dignité que de toute éternité Dieu lui a reconnu, à peine que Dieu l'aime. C'est-à-dire rejoindre à partir de son humanité son Créateur Dieu. Voilà le but du tidjanimisme. C'est pourquoi depuis que la secte tidjane existe jamais elle n'a été dirigée que par des hommes de culture. Il faut être absolument un homme de culture pour être un guide des tidjanes. C'est une nécessité. Mais maintenant cette pureté initiale est perdue. Parce qu'elle s'est perdue un peu dans les foyers des marabouts. Dans
les anciennes écoles, dans les écoles de ces marabouts, vous trouverez encore des personnes vertueuses, sincères. Mais ces personnes sont le petit nombre maintenant, les purs. Et les marabouts ont la naïveté aussi d'accepter cette perversion de la ligne parce que maintenant au Sénégal il y a une rivalité entre les assemblées, une rivalité pour la procession de la plus grande assemblée. Et cette rivalité fait que la sincérité même n'existe plus. Le marabout dit spirituel n'ose plus dire la vérité de peur précisément de perdre ses adeptes. Beaucoup de marabouts vivent d'intrigue de réunir des gens qui parlent en leur nom, qui ont la prétention de réagir en leur nom, qui vivent d'intrigue politique et voilà en fin de compte maintenant à quoi on a ramené cette pureté initiale. Et naturellement il y a les hommes de pouvoir que cela arrange. Cette perversion de la religion, de la ligne pure, arrange les hommes de pouvoir. Parce que c'est ce qui leur permet de se distinguer et c'est ce qui met à leur disposition une clientèle bon marché. Maintenant au Sénégal il y a plus de cent mille marabouts. Ils ont prétention: "Je suis le champion, je suis le meilleur, je suis le seul." La ligne pure est devenue dégradée.

Boyd-Buggs: En ce qui concerne la religion, les croyances traditionnelles, est-ce que l'Islam pratiqué par les Tidjanes incorpore ces éléments traditionnels?


Boyd-Buggs: Alioune Diop?

Sy: Oui et des abbés blancs et noirs. Ils étaient réunis donc se demandant comment ceux, les tenants des religions traditionnelles, les tenants de l'Islam, du christianisme et des libre penseurs, comment pouvaient-ils s'entendre pour oeuvrer ensemble. Alioune Diop a développé de grandes idées ce jour-là sur les religions traditionnelles. Je lui ai posé une question. Je lui ai demandé: "Qu'est-ce que vous entendez par religion traditionnelle? Est-ce que ce n'est pas cet ensemble que nous ont laissé nos ancêtres? C'est-à-dire, les danses de procession, des pratiques fétichistes, rendre des cultes à des objets, n'est-ce pas cela que
vous entendez par religion traditionnelle?" Alioune Diop m'a répondu: "Oui, effectivement. L'ensemble de ces pratiques, de ces choses-là et ces traditions, l'ensemble de ces pratiques traditionnelles. C'est cela que nous appelons les religions traditionnelles." Mais je lui ai dit que l'Islam est venu pour anéantir ces pratiques. L'Islam qui initialement est venu pour chasser ces pratiques ne peut pas œuvrer pour ce qui puisse faire marcher en arrière, pour s'accommoder encore de ces pratiques-là. Il y avait un scandale. Je lui ai dit que ce n'est pas possible.

Boyd-Buggs: Quand des marabouts font des gris-gris et quand on veut un travail quelque part et on va voir son marabout pour lui demander ce qu'il faut faire, toutes ces pratiques-là, ce n'est pas de vrai Islam, alors.

Sy: Si, en partie. Parce que ce qui compte en Islam c'est la prière adressée à Dieu. Dans toutes les religions on voit ces éléments. Parce qu'il est de la nature de l'être humain que chaque fois qu'il est inquiet de se tourner vers son Créateur. Pour l'Islam ce n'est pas momentané, ce n'est pas circonstantiel. C'est tout le temps et de son être que l'être doit tourner vers son Créateur. Le fait de mettre des amulettes et autres pratiques ne font pas partie de l'Islam pur. C'est hérité précisément des religions traditionnelles. Et Ei Hadj Malik Sy a écrit beaucoup sur ces pratiques, tels que les amulettes. Il n'était pas d'accord. Il les a interdites. Mais c'est une tradition enracinée profondément dans le peuple sénégalais et les gens y croient profondément. Et celui qui leur interdit cela devient leur ennemi. Quelqu'un qui leur interdise cela cesse d'être crédible. Mais ce n'est pas de l'Islam pur. Le prophète de l'Islam ne l'a pas fait et c'est lui que nous imitons. Et ceux qui ont imité le prophète Mohamed de son enseignement pur, rejettent ces pratiques. Ce que nous connaissons, ce que l'Islam nous enseigne que ce qui compte c'est la prière adressée à Dieu.

Boyd-Buggs: J'ai posé la question parce que dans le roman sénégalais c'est surtout ce marabout traditionnel qui est présent. Dans un sens il semble que c'est le côté traditionnel de la religion qui domine. C'est ça.

Sy: Au Sénégal on se sert des gris-gris parce que le peuple y croit. Le peuple croit profondément et ce n'est pas de l'Islam pur, les traditions qu'on a interdites à l'Islam.

Boyd-Buggs: Quelle est la différence entre la philosophie tidjane, le tidjânisme et une confrérie comme les Mourides, le mouridisme?

Sy: On n'a pas besoin d'aller loin pour voir la différence. Celui qui a créé le mouridisme comme celui qui a créé le tidjânisme n'avait qu'un seul but, conduire les gens à Dieu. Ce sont les méthodes qui diffèrent, dans les prières et dans les
pratiques culturelles. C'est la même culture et tous imitent le prophète. Mais ce sont leurs héritiers, ce sont les héritiers de ces fondateurs qui ont amené des changements. Ils ont perverti, ils ont ajouté à ces lignes purs des choses contraires. Et ce sont ces héritiers qui ont amené des rivalités qui distancent les deux confréries. Parce que la rivalité est une tradition fortement ancrée dans le peuple sénégalais. Et le fanatisme aussi est ancré dans le peuple sénégalais parce que cela était l'influence des anciens rois. Et donc quand ils sont venus dans les religions, dans les différentes sectes, ils ont transporté cet héritage-là. El Hadj Malik Sy et Serigne Touba étaient des parents et des amis. Et ils se rencontraient souvent même pour discuter la religion. Et même ils discutaient de leurs deux méthodologies en matière d'enseignement religieux. Ils ont discuté l'un avec l'autre. Et ils ont décidé qu'en fait, ils partageaient les mêmes idées. Mais les héritiers et les adeptes ont amené cette rivalité qui, au départ n'y figurait pas, ne faisait pas partie. Chaque fois qu'on lui amène un enseignement il a tendance à pervertir cet enseignement au fil des années. Fondamentalement il n'y a pas de différence. C'est conduire simplement le fidèle vers Dieu. C'est que maintenant il y a un problème. Il y a des marabouts qui sont des hommes de culture et des marabouts qui ne savent rien qui sont des ignares qui se méfient de ceux qui savent. Dieu les prend pour des ennemis, c'est normal. Parce qu'ils ne voulaient pas les rencontrer. Ils ne voulaient pas les approcher parce que ce serait faire montre de leur ignorance de leur culture. Ce qui les arrange c'est de se tenir à distance, de créer l'animosité pour pouvoir faire ce qu'ils veulent faire. C'est tout.
4. SERIGNE BASSIROU LAYE is the Imam at the Mosque of the Layenne Brotherhood in Yoff, Senegal. The interview was held at Serigne Laye's residence in Yoff on April 24, 1984.

Boyd-Buggs: Bonjour Monsieur Serigne Bassirou Laye. Merci d'avoir eu la gentillesse de me parler. D'abord je voudrais vous demander si vous pourriez m'expliquer un peu l'histoire de la confrérie des Layennes au Sénégal.

Laye: En effet je peux en résumer, grapher l'histoire de la confrérie des Layennes. Comme vous le savez c'est une histoire qui date de très longtemps. Parce que c'est une histoire qui date du mahdisme. Le mahdisme a été connu depuis le temps du Prophète Mohamed. C'est lui-même qui a parlé de la venue du mahdi vers la fin du temps. Et évidemment il avait donné des signes annonciateurs qui précéderaient l'arrivée du mahdi. Bref en 1843 vers 44 naquit à Yoff, un village, un nommé Limamu Laye. En 1883 ce Limamu Laye proclama être le Mahdi. Evidemment ceci ne fut pas sans difficulté. D'abord parce qu'en Afrique on pense souvent que les Prophètes sont blancs. C'est la raison pour laquelle ils ont au début contesté la prophétie de Limamu Laye. Parce qu'il a dit "je suis le prophète d'Allah, je suis le Mahdi attendu par le monde musulman." Et ses concitoyens sont allés, non seulement ils ont réfuté ses paroles, ils ont rié, mais ils sont allés trouver des autorités coloniales pour leur dire qu'il y a une nouvelle apparition à Yoff, un individu qui se dit prophète. Mais au fond ce que nous avons vu nous pensons qu'il veut organiser un soulèvement contre l'occupation coloniale. Et ceci évidemment ne peut pas laisser le colonialiste indifférent. C'est à partir de ce moment que les autorités coloniales françaises ont commencé à mener des problèmes à Limamu Laye. Ils ont menacé à mort les fidèles, les premiers fidèles. Il y en a eu qui ont résisté comme il y en a eu qui ont préféré ne pas subir les châtiments et qui laissèrent la nouvelle confrérie, qui démissionnèrent. Limamu Laye continua ainsi à prêcher disant aux fidèles que "je ne cesserai jamais d'appeler les gens de leur dire que je suis le prophète d'Allah, que je suis le Mahdi car ceci est la réalité. En ce qui concerne la force coloniale je ne veux pas combattre contre elle. Je ne veux pas la combattre d'une manière visible. Je combattrai le colonialiste par la force divine car, comme vous le savez, Dieu accorde à chacun ce qu'il mérite. Le colonialiste, il a la force terrestre. Ici-bas le colonialiste a une force tellement dissuasive qu'il n'est pas possible de le combattre. Je sais que vous êtes prêts à mourir, vous mes fidèles. Mais laissez-moi faire avec le colonialiste. Si vous vous soulevez contre lui, il vous anéantiira car Dieu leur a accordé cette force. Continuez à être musulman; continuez à vénérer Dieu Tout-Puissant; continuez à prier, à vous acquitter de vos devoirs islamiques et laissez-moi faire." De là le colonialiste était obligé
de reculer car il n'a pas vu de combattants contre qui il doit se heurter. C'est à partir de ce moment que les colons se décidèrent d'exiler Limamu Laye. Limamu Laye leur dit: "Ecoutez, vous mes fidèles, si jamais vous voyez que le colonialiste a réussi à m'exiler alors là vous avez droit à regagner vos maisons et à savoir que je ne suis pas le mahdi." Le colonialiste français devait le déporter au Gabon mais par la force divine, il n'a pas pu, seulement il a réussi à amener Limamu à Gorée. Ceci aussi Limamu expliquait. Il a dit que: "J'aurais pu ne pas quitter Yoff mais Gorée fait partie des îles, des îles qui doivent m'encadrer. Il y a quatre îles qui encadrent le lieu où je dois apparaître. Il y a l'île de Ngor, l'île de Gorée, l'île de Yoff et l'île de Madeleine soit Dakar. Ces sont ces quatre îles qui constituent les points de repère du lieu où je dois apparaître. En réalité il y en a deux de ces quatre îles qui sont beaucoup plus renommées. J'ai été à l'une avant mon apparition; j'étais une lumière. J'étais à Ngor et l'autre je dois y aller après mon apparition. C'est pourquoi je me suis laissé amener à Gorée." Et là aussi les Français ont tout essayé pour faire continuer au bateau le chemin du Gabon mais le bateau par la grace divine n'a pas pu dépasser Gorée. Ils ont pensé à une panne technique. Ils ont vérifié les machines, elles étaient normales mais en tout cas le bateau ne pouvait pas dépasser Gorée. C'est la raison pour laquelle ils ont descendu Limamu Laye à Gorée et à son retour de Gorée il a expliqué le pourquoi. Même à Gorée ils l'ont enfermé au début et il y a eu beaucoup de tonnerre. Le climat a changé de couleur, etc. Et les colonialistes, pris de frayeur se sont précipités à sortir Limamu de sa prison et ils l'ont laissé libre à Gorée. Ils lui ont même demandé de quitter les lieux et de regagner Yoff. Il a refusé et il a dit: "Je dois rester ici trois mois à Gorée." Ceci est, constitue les rapports qu'il y a eu entre Limamu et les autorités coloniales et de là il a continué à prêcher et il a dit au monde: "Je sais que je mourrai mais si je meurs mon fils est là qui s'appelle Issa." En ce moment-là il avait dix ans, même pas dix ans. "Si je meurs mon fils Issa continuera ma mission." C'est là qu'il a fait allusion à Issa. Et la tradition islamique a parlé de Issa. Les traditions qui ont parlé du mahdi ont parlé aussi de Issa, de Jésus. Le prophète disait que Jésus descendra sur terre. Ceci était une thèse qui a été accepté par la communauté chrétienne parce que la communauté chrétienne aussi attend ou attendait la résurrection du Christ. Les musulmans sont d'accord sur cela. Le Prophète l'a dit: "Le mahdi descendra sur terre comme Jésus descendra sur terre." Et les exégètes du Coran, tous ceux qui ont été de la tradition du prophète, ont affirmé que Jésus viendra sur terre avec le mahdi. Ils ont la même mission. Ou bien le Christ aidera le mahdi dans sa mission. A partir de ce moment donc je disais que Limamu Laye a fait allusion à son fils qui s'appelait Issa. Il a continué sa mission jusqu'en 1909. C'est la date de sa mort et son fils dont il parlait lui a succédé dans la communauté layenne. Il resta au trône de 1909 à 1949. Ça fait 40 ans de pouvoir. Après son décès venait à la succession le deuxième Khalife du mahdi qui régna à la tête des Layennes de 1949 à 1971. Et en 1971 il décéda et celui qui l'a
remplacé est le khalife actuel qui s'appelle, lui aussi, Issa. On lui a donné le nom d'Issa, fils de Limamu Laye. Il est le troisième khalife de Limamu Laye, le mahdi. Il est le khalife actuel. Il est là depuis 1971. Il doit faire actuellement, si nous faisons le compte, presque 13 ans de Khalifat.

Boyd-Buggs: Au sujet de Limamu Laye. Est-ce qu'il était savant ou est-ce qu'il suivait la tradition soufi?

Laye: Là il disait que "je n'ai pas à suivre un imam ou à suivre une tendance ou rite." Il disait que "je suis l'incarnation du prophète Mohamed." C'est un point très important, on sait qu'après le prophète Mohamed il n'y a pas d'autres prophètes. Il n'y a pas d'autres prophètes qui amèneront sur terre d'autres religions. Il disait que, ce que beaucoup de musulmans ignorent, le mahdi est le prophète lui-même qui ressuscite comme Jésus le fera à la fin du temps. C'est le prophète Mohamed lui-même qui ressuscitera à la fin du temps, prendra le nom du Mahdi et deviendra l'imam de Jésus Christ et de tous les musulmans. Mais il ne suivait pas les rites malékites ou quelque chose comme cela, de soufisme. Il disait qu'il était le Prophète Mohamed lui-même ressuscité. C'était l'incarnation du prophète Mohamed. C'est la raison pour laquelle il n'avait pas de modèles. Evidemment sa religion avait l'authenticité même. C'est-à-dire que sa secte avait été fondée sur les principes de bases, les principes fondamentaux de l'Islam. Par exemple, on veillait scrupuleusement aux cinq prières, au jeûne de Ramadan, à la zakat surtout et à la fraternité et à l'émancipation de la femme et des jeunes. C'est surtout ce qu'on pouvait noter comme quelque chose de nouveau. Parce que comme vous le savez la femme était un peu en arrière et elle conservait dans l'Islam une place en tout cas qui n'était pas à la hauteur de celles des hommes. Par exemple on interdisait aux femmes de fréquenter les mosquées. On leur interdisait de chanter les louanges d'Allah à haute voix. Mais lui il a accepté que les femmes fréquentent les mosquées; il a accepté que les femmes s'émancipent sur le plan de la religion, sur le plan strictement religieux.

Boyd-Buggs: Pour donner des louanges à haute voix!

Laye: A haute voix. C'est cela. Il a permis aux jeunes gens aussi de fréquenter les mosquées et de chanter des louanges d'Allah à haute voix. C'est la raison pour laquelle il a commencé à circoncire les enfants dès leur première année. Si vous voulez même dès le premier mois, le bébé est circoncis juste après sa naissance.

Boyd-Buggs: Comme dans la tradition judaïque, chez les Juifs.

Laye: Si vous voulez, c'est ça. Parce qu'il disait que le prépuce n'est pas quelque chose de sain. Il faut permettre à l'enfant de fréquenter la mosquée sans problème, sans risque de souillure.
Il faut enlever cela et comme ça l'enfant d'abord sur le dos de sa mère allait dans les lieux saints et une fois devenu un peu grand, il peut aller de lui-même fréquenter les mosquées. Une fois devenu adulte, voilà c'est quelque chose qu'il a déjà connu depuis très longtemps, quelque chose qui est ancré en lui. Voilà il n'aura pas de problème de s'acquitter de son devoir religieux. Et ce fut évidemment quelque chose de nouveau, surtout ici.

Boyd-Buggs: Y a-t-il d'autres marabouts avec des taalibes parmi le peuple et est-ce que vous avez des écoles maraboutiques où l'on enseigne la religion et les principes de la confrérie aux enfants? Qu'est-ce que vous faites au niveau de l'enseignement de la communauté layenne?

Laye: Au niveau de l'enseignement de la communauté layenne ceci a été organisé d'abord dans les familles. Dans chaque famille c'est le père de famille, le chef ou la matrone de la famille qui enseigne les enfants dès leur jeune âge. Donc les principes de la secte sont enseignés à partir du foyer, à partir de la maison. Ensuite il y a les écoles qui se trouvent dans les quartiers layennes où les pratiques, les rites et les principes des Layennes sont enseignés. Ensuite il y a des tournées qui se font presque chaque semaine. Il y a le déplacement d'une formation de daara. Des daara si vous voulez, ce sont des associations, de petites associations qui se font au niveau des villages et au niveau des quartiers. Ces daara ont une fédération. C'est cette fédération qui se déplace de village en village, de région en région chaque semaine sauf il y a une période transitoire qu'on appelle des vacances. Mais à part ces vacances, chaque semaine cette fédération et qui est regroupée au sein du groupement central des Layennes, cette fédération se déplace encadrée par certains membres du groupement central et certains membres dirigeants de cette fédération qui va donc comme j'ai dit dans un village, dans un quartier dans toutes les régions du pays. Qui organise une grande veillée religieuse. Durant cette veillée on fait des chants religieux et il y a quelqu'un qui enseigne les préceptes et les principes fondamentaux de la confrérie layenne. C'est en somme comme ça que se constitue l'enseignement religieux des Layennes. Il faut d'abord que ça se fasse au niveau des familles parce que l'enfant peut habiter à un lieu où il n'a pas l'occasion de voir la démonstration de la fédération. Donc il doit apprendre à connaître cette religion par son père ou son grand frère ou sa mère ou sa grande soeur, etc. Et le reste, c'est normal. Il faut qu'il y ait des écoles. Il faut qu'il y ait des démonstrations publiques.

Boyd-Buggs: Au niveau des marabouts j'ai remarqué à travers les romans et à travers les journaux et certaines autres publications que les gens fréquentent le marabout pour d'autres raisons que des raisons spirituelles. Je sais que ça se fait beaucoup chez les Mourides et les Tidjanes mais en ce qui concerne les Layennes je n'ai pas autant d'information. Est-ce que les marabouts layennes, est-ce que eux...
aussi, ils représentent cette même image pour les fidèles, les taalibés?

Laye: Je crois que là où vous êtes vous pouvez déjà imaginer la réponse que je vais vous donner parce que s'il y avait ce trait-là il y aurait inévitablement une accumulation de biens ou d'argent. Parce que ceci, comme on le sait, se fait et se paie. Ça ne peut pas se payer évidemment, on n'a pas le prix. Mais il y a à chaque fois, échange. Comme vous pouvez le constater, ici c'est très modeste, là où vous êtes. Il n'y a pas d'endroit riche apparemment vous ne voyez pas. Le marabout layenne, lui, sollicitait pour recueillir de l'information sur le plan spirituel. Evidemment les fidèles ne peuvent pas vivre sans problème. Le monde est ainsi fait. En ce moment-là ils peuvent venir voir leur marabout, solliciter une bénéédiction divine pour remédier à certains problèmes. Ceci est normal. Chez nous il n'y a pas quelque chose qu'on peut appeler échange. On vient demander quelque chose comme une intervention, intervention au niveau de l'État ou au niveau spirituel pour avoir de l'argent ou pour gagner un marché, quelque chose comme cela et en échange on donne au marabout un pourboire ou quelque chose comme cela, de l'argent. Ceci ne se pratique pas comme cela. Mais moi personnellement j'ai vu que des malades ont été guéris devant moi par le marabout. Par exemple mon père guérisait des malades. Le Khalife qui est là il guérit jusqu'à présent des malades. Ce sont des interventions divines évidemment qui ne peuvent que renforcer la croyance des fidèles. Moi personnellement je suis encore très jeune mais il m'est arrivé de guérir certains malades. Et je sais que ce n'est que de la grâce divine. Je le sais. Evidemment je dois préciser. En Afrique il y a des réalités. Avant l'Islam il y a eu des guérisseurs africains. Je ne sais pas comment mais si on peut employer le mot marabout. Mais même avant l'Islam il y a eu des hommes, des savants qui étaient vénérés par la communauté où ils vivaient. C'étaient des savants. Avant l'Islam il y a eu des savants africains qui ont un savoir en tout cas spirituel. Le savoir spirituel peut ne pas être divin parce que si nous prenons le mot étymologiquement, les djinns, ce sont des esprits comme il y a d'autres qui sont des esprits. Ces savants pouvaient intervenir dans la vie de l'individu de plusieurs manières. Ce savant-là, je ne veux pas employer le mot marabout puisque quand on emploie le mot marabout il y a un mélange. On mélange le savant africain, qui est typiquement africain, qui n'a même pas de connaissance religieuse du Coran, mais néanmoins il est savant. Ceci est une réalité africaine. Ces savants continuent à exister jusqu'à nos jours. Ils sont souvent confondus avec les savants religieux que je donne le nom de marabout. Pour nous entendre ils ont à peu près le même accoutrement que les marabouts; ils ont à peu près le même agissement et le même comportement que les marabouts. Sauf que ceux-ci, qui sont typiquement africains, peuvent être athées comme ils peuvent être animistes. Et parmi ceux-ci on trouve des truands; on trouve des charlatans; on trouve de n'importe quoi. On trouve aussi de vrais savants. De vrais savants qui ont leur savoir comme le médecin occidental qui te guérit et que tu paies.
Ceci est un aspect parmi tant d'autres. Je ne peux pas être d'accord avec certains écrivains africains qui ne peuvent pas discerner entre ces catégories. Après la venue de l'Islam certains africains sont devenus savants du Coran et nous pouvons croire que c'est Dieu qui gratifie la personne de son pouvoir, de sa grâce. L'africain peut connaître des secrets du Coran que l'arabe ne connaît pas. Et moi j'en sais quelque chose. Je sais que cela existe en Afrique. Il y a des savants religieux, spirituellement, divinement religieux, qui ont un savoir du Coran parce que tout, il n'est pas dit que le Coran n'est que superficiel. Il y a quelque chose de divin. Il y a quelque chose de caché, ce qu'on appelle le (badim). Et ceci, je vous assure, il y a des africains, des religieux, des savants qui ont découvert, qui ont dégagé cette science. Ceux-là, en général, ne demandent pas de rançon si vous voulez. Ceux-là n'exigent pas les gens à leur donner de gros bien. Ceux-là n'exploitent pas. En un mot ils n'exploitent personne. Ils aident les fidèles à surmonter leurs difficultés. Ils aident les fidèles à se ressaisir moralement. Ils aident les fidèles à traverser certaines difficultés. Et ma foi ces savants, ces marabouts, vous pouvez encore les trouver au Sénégal. Ce que les intellectuels africains doivent faire c'est essayer de discerner ces catégories au lieu d'écrire et de montrer au Sénégal, à l'opinion mondiale, que le visage inappréciable de l'Afrique. Ils doivent discerner ces genres, ces catégories de savants africains comme je viens de faire. Je crois que c'est leur rôle. Ils doivent montrer le visage, le vrai visage des Africains. Aucun peuple n'est sans défauts, aucun peuple. Mais aucun peuple aussi ne peut pas être tout à fait arrière sur tous les plans. Vous voyez en Afrique on peut trouver beaucoup de choses qui peuvent aider l'humanité comme on peut trouver de bonnes choses, de bonnes qualités ailleurs.

Boyd-Buggs: Je crois que l'écrivain essaie d'améliorer le niveau de conscience des gens pour qu'ils ne soient pas pris par ces gens.

Laye: Effectivement pour les dévoiler, pour dévoiler les hypocrites. Ici il y en a beaucoup. Ils sont même je crois en Europe, en Amérique, en venant d'Afrique de tous les coins d'Afrique pour aller dans d'autres pays. Evidemment certains naïfs arrivent à être trompés. Mais à la longue je crois que l'opinion démystifiera ce genre de pratique qui n'est ni apprécié par l'Islam, ni apprécié par l'humanité, l'humanisme.

Boyd-Buggs: Je suis que le Coran donne le droit à un homme d'avoir quatre femmes. Est-ce que les Layennes pratiquent la polygamie?

Laye: Oui ils sont polygames. D'ailleurs la polygamie reste sans limites. Il n'y a pas de limites. Parce que vous venez de dire que le Coran dit que l'homme, le musulman, peut avoir jusqu'à quatre femmes. Ceci est une de plusieurs interprétations. Parce que d'ailleurs je crois que les exégètes du Coran sont d'accord sur le fait que le Coran n'a pas précisé cette limite de quatre. Parce que le verset qui a parlé de ça a parlé d'une manière qui peut susciter
plusieurs interprétations. Chez des Layennes il y a la polygamie je disais mais ceci reste avec des conditions. Limamu Laye nous dit que celui qui a la possibilité d'avoir deux, trois, ça dépend de ses possibilités physiques, morales et financières, il peut les avoir. Celui qui a ces possibilités peut être polygame. Mais à condition, je me répète, qu'il en soit capable physiquement, moralement et financièrement.
5. MAME SECK MBACKE is a poet and novelist, author of Le Froid et le piment (1982). She is also a member, by marriage, of the Mbacké family, the descendants of Cheikh Amadou Bamba Mbacké, the founder of the Mouride Brotherhood. The following interviews took place in Dakar, Senegal on July 15, 1982 at the Association of Senegalese Writers, and on April 25, 1984 at Abdoulaye Seck Clinic.

July 15, 1982

Boyd-Buggs: Je voudrais que vous parliez du rôle de l'Islam et du mouridisme dans la littérature sénégalaise, ce qui est le sujet de mes recherches.

Mbacké: Votre sujet, le rôle de l'Islam dans la littérature sénégalaise, est original dans le sens que notre littérature traditionnelle, la littérature wolof, surtout s'exprime oralement mais elle s'exprime aussi par l'écrit. C'est dans le mouridisme que cette littérature est assez vivace. C'est une littérature qui vit. C'est une véritable culture qui rayonne et c'est là qu'on sent la personnalité profonde de l'Africain, du Sénégalais. Dans le mouridisme, ce mouvement qui a été fondé par Cheikh Amadou Bamba Mbacké, on sent un certain attachement au terroir. Cette littérature puise ses racines profondes du terroir sénégalais. En même temps Cheikh Amadou Bamba utilisait cette littérature pour mettre l'Islam à la portée de ses contemporains. Dans le mouridisme on respecte les cinq prières, le pèlerinage à la Mecque, l'aumône. Mais surtout c'est la science et le travail que Cheikh Amadou Bamba a voulu mettre en avant-garde. Il a fixé les principes fondamentaux du mouridisme qui sont le travail, la discipline et la prière. C'est par le travail que l'homme s'applique, qu'il a transcendance vers Dieu. Ce n'est que par le travail que l'homme s'affranchit de tout pour pouvoir être libre et aller vers Dieu. Pour la discipline il faut un maître. Il faut toujours que l'individu soit guidé. Celui qui n'a pas de cheikh, de guide spirituel, aura Satan comme cheikh. Quand il dit cheikh il parle d'un homme assez éclairé sur le plan mystique, aussi bien que sur le plan scientifique. C'est dans ce sens qu'il a demandé à ses fidèles d'observer une certaine discipline. C'est pourquoi dans le mouridisme, la force du mouride c'est sa discipline, cet effort soutenu tenace. Quand le marabout parle c'est déjà acquis. Les gens sont là; ils exécutent. Ils croient fermement en ce qu'on leur dit parce que le marabout pour eux c'est un modèle; c'est un guide. Qui a un guide ne s'égaré pas. Pour la prière, il faut prier Dieu; il faut prier le Prophète; il faut prier tous les saints. Cheikh Amadou Bamba a demandé surtout de prier tous les saints du monde parce que
tout ce qui est saint se rapproche de Dieu. Ce n'est que par ce 
cheminement que l'être humain va arriver vers Dieu. Avec la naissance 
du mouvement mouride s'est développée toute une culture, une culture 
forte au terroir sénégalais, assez nuancée mais très distinguée. 
Cette culture est un mélange des rudiments arabes empruntés. Cheikh 
Amadou Bamba a emprunté la langue arabe pour mettre à la portée de 
des adeptes une certaine littérature. Les poèmes mystiques de Cheikh 
Amadou Bamba constituent quelque chose comme 750 manuscrits. Il a 
écrit de sa main 750 manuscrits. Jusqu'à présent on est en train de 
déchiffrer ces manuscrits pour les transcrire, pour les mettre à la 
portée de ses disciples. Le mouvement mouride est assez 
extraordinaire dans sa manière de s'élargir. Il a dépassé les 
frontières du Sénégal depuis longtemps. Il y a des Mourides au Gabon, 
à Paris, aux États-Unis et même à Médine. Cheikh Amadou Bamba a pu 
arriver à concilier la religion à la restauraion de la dignité de 
l'homme noir. Il a pu arriver à dissocier arabiété et islam. Si le 
Prophète a pu émerger chez des Arabes c'est parce qu'en ce moment, la 
société arabe était détruite, dépravée. C'est à cause de cette 
dépravation des moeurs qu'un Prophète a été envoyé là-bas afin 
d'éclairer ce monde qui a toujours vécu dans les ténèbres de la 
perversion. Et c'est pour cette raison que la mission du Prophète 
Mohamed était de ramener ce peuple sur la voie droite par Islam. 
C'était une société où les gens avaient honte d'avoir des filles. 
Chaque fille qui naissait était en danger de mort. Pour l'Arabe, en 
ce moment, avoir une fille franchement était la plus grande des 
hontes. Il voulait des enfants mâles. Il y avait une limite sur le 
nombre de filles qu'on épargnait. C'est dans ce contexte que l'Islam 
est apparu, que l'Islam a rayonné sur le monde, que Dieu a envoyé Son 
mesagger, le seigneur et prophète Mohamed. Pour nous qui sommes dans 
l'Islam c'est le meilleur des prophètes et c'est le dernier des 
prophètes. C'est lui qui porte le sceau de la prophétie et qui est 
la source de la révélation. Le Prophète Mohamed est l'homme de 
l'universel. Il a eu une formation arabe, est né dans une famille 
arabe, mais c'est l'homme de l'univers. Et je suis allée à la Mecque 
pour voir cette communion d'individus venus de tous les coins du 
monde pour sentir que vraiment l'Islam n'a pas de frontières. C'est 
pourquoi Cheikh Amadou Bamba a pu inculquer à ses adeptes que cet 
Islam-là n'était pas l'Islam de l'Arabe. C'était l'Islam du monde 
entier. C'était la pratique pour arriver à Dieu. Il faut une 
certaine discipline; il faut une certaine pratique; il faut croire, 
et il y a un certain cheminement mystique. Dans ses œuvres Cheikh 
Amadou Bamba a tellement chanté le Prophète qu'il a été consacré 
serveur du Prophète Mohamed au mausolé de Jérusalem. Vous allez 
me dire qu'il y a plus de dix siècles entre la période quand le 
Prophète a eu sa révélation et la période où Cheikh Amadou Bamba a 
eexisté. Bien sûr. Mais il se réclame le serviteur du Prophète 
Mohamed. C'est pourquoi Cheikh Amadou Bamba ici a le titre "Khadim-
er-Rasool". "Khadim" veut dire en arabe serviteur, "er-Rasool" veut 
dire de l'Envoyé. C'est pourquoi la plupart des gens, quand ils 
parlent de Cheikh Amadou Bamba, ils disent "Khadim-er-Rasool." C'est 
à dire celui qui est le serviteur du Prophète Mohamed. Cheikh Amadou
Bamba a eu de l'humilité et pour lui c'est une gloire que d'avoir consacré toute sa vie à l'Islam, d'avoir prié toute sa vie, d'avoir consacré tout ce qu'il avait à l'Islam et au Prophète Mohamed. Il serait difficile de donner la date de la naissance exacte du mouridisme. Disons que Cheikh Amadou Bamba est né vers les années 1850 à Mbacké et il est mort en 1927. Il faisait partie d'une famille maraboutique toucouleur. Son père était cadis dans la cour du roi Lat Dior. Cheikh Amadou Bamba a marqué son époque de son empreinte dans la mesure où il faisait des miracles. Ce n'est pas facile de séparer ce qui est légendaire de ce qui est vrai. Mais Cheikh Amadou Bamba était un homme extraordinaire qui pouvait faire beaucoup de choses. Je vais vous citer un partage de l'enfance de Cheikh Amadou Bamba. Il semblait que vers le crépuscule on le faisait entrer dans une chambre où il n'y avait pas de lumière. On n'allumait pas de lampe dans cette chambre mais dès que le crépuscule arrivait la chambre était inondée de lumière et les gens le voyaient plus jusqu'au réveil du jour. Il y a aussi une philosophie wolof qui dit que pour qu'un enfant soit vraiment consacré il faut que la mère travaille dans son ménage. Il faut que la mère de l'enfant soit une épouse digne, fidèle et dévouée à son mari pour donner naissance à un saint. La mère de Cheikh Amadou Bamba était une femme spéciale; on ne pouvait même pas la qualifier, tellement elle était douce avec son mari, digne dans son ménage; elle a apporté une certaine foi dans ce qu'elle faisait pour son époux. Comme elle n'était pas la seule épouse il fallait une nuit avec le père de Cheikh Amadou Bamba avant sa naissance bien sûr. Le père de Cheikh Amadou Bamba a frappé à la porte de sa mère. Ce n'était pas sa nuit chez la mère de Cheikh Amadou Bamba mais pourtant il a appelé et lui a dit: "Écoute, il y a du vent et la pluie va venir. Peux-tu me tenir cette palissade?" La mère lui a répondu: "Mais bien sûr mon époux." Et elle lui a tenu la palissade. Le père de Cheikh Amadou Bamba est parti; il a oublié. Il a dormi chez une autre femme. Entre temps la pluie est tombée toute la nuit et la femme était là tenant la palissade. Elle ne voulait pas que la palissade cède. Elle a lutté toute la nuit contre cette force pour maintenir cette palissade. Il a plu; le vent a poussé sur elle jusqu'au petit matin. C'est au petit matin que les gens l'ont découverte. Elle n'a pas bougé tant que son mari n'est pas venu lui-même pour lui donner l'ordre de laisser de tenir la palissade. C'est dans ce contexte que l'enfant prodigue est né. Il faut franchement suivre la voie mouride pour découvrir les secrets de la secte et pour constater que c'est un homme extraordinaire qui se réclame le serviteur du Prophète. De ses poèmes, des penseurs, des critiques, des observateurs, et des connaisseurs du monde musulman pensent que cette inspiration qui était en Cheikh Amadou Bamba n'était pas seulement l'inspiration de lui seul mais c'était l'inspiration du Prophète, Rasûl, le Prophète de lumière qui avait pénétré Cheikh Amadou Bamba et qui le faisait chanter de la sorte. De prendre dans sa main une plume et d'écrire 750 manuscrits c'est quelque chose d'inimaginable. Il y a même des manuscrits qui sont jalousement gardés par la famille et qui n'ont pas été mis à la portée des gens parce qu'il a dit des choses extraordinaires. Il est né à Mbacké et quand les gens ont vu qu'il
faisaient des miracles, ils ont couru vers lui. Les colonisateurs qui étaient là en ce moment, le gouvernement a pensé que cela pourrait gêner l'équilibre politique de la France et qu'il fallait s'en débarrasser. Pour eux cet homme qui avait toute cette foule derrière lui, à la longue qu'il allait prendre les armes contre la France. Ce qu'ils ignoraient c'était que cet homme investit une mission avec autre chose à faire que de s'occuper des armes. Ils ont tout fait pour le décourager; ils ont organisé des complot; ils ont envoyé des émissaires. On l'a accusé de toutes espèces de choses. Finalement on est venu chez lui. On a fouillé la maison et on a vu qu'il n'y avait que des cuillères et du sucre. Mais quand même devant sa forte influence on le craignait. Les conseils privés pensaient qu'il était dangereux. On a décidé de le déporter, de l'envoyer au Gabon et c'est ainsi qu'un jour, le 21 septembre 1895, dans la nuit il est parti sur un bateau. Il y a eu tellement de miracles extraordinaires faits sur ce bateau que jusqu'à présent on y croit. Ce qui est frappant c'est que les gens qui ont vécu à l'ère de Cheikh Amadou Bamba l'ont aimé jusqu'à la mort. Ceux qui ne l'ont jamais vu de leurs yeux l'ont vu avec leurs coeurs. Et il est resté vivant dans les coeurs. Je vous dis que si jamais vous avez la chance d'aller à Touba, d'assister à un Magal, vous saurez ce que c'est le mouridisme, la force du mouridisme. Parce que le talibé mouride n'aspire qu'à cette communion avec son cheikh. Cheikh Amadou Bamba est décédé depuis 1927 et il y a plein d'adeptes qui sont nés après sa mort. Pourtant tous ces adeptes nés après sa mort réagissent comme s'ils avaient été à ses côtés. C'est cette conviction profonde qui étonne et qui va continuer à étonner. On a fait des thèses multiples sur Cheikh Amadou Bamba; on a fait des études sur lui. On a fait un film d'après sa vie. Ce film, d'une valeur de trois milliards, a été financé par les Américains. On se demande comment un homme peut arriver à s'implanter d'une telle manière dans le pays et de mystiquement commencer à faire des miracles. Un talibé qui croit fermement en Cheikh Amadou Bamba vous dira qu'une demande faite au Cheikh se réalisera. Moi j'ai vu une femme, adepte de Cheikh Amadou Bamba, qui faisait des miracles en son nom. J'ai une amie qui avait quatre enfants, toutes des filles. Elle est allée voir la femme. La femme lui dit: "Tu veux un cinquième enfant garçon? Tu auras un garçon par la grâce de Cheikh Amadou Bamba." Et elle a eu un garçon. Le garçon est né. La femme a fait ça trois fois de suite avec trois femmes qui n'avaient jamais eu de garçon et elles ont toutes les trois un garçon. C'est pour montrer la foi immense que les disciples de Cheikh Amadou Bamba portent en lui. Selon les croyances populaires Cheikh Amadou Bamba était sur le bateau qui l'amenait en exil. Il voulait prier mais le capitaine lui a dit: "Mais Cheikh Amadou Bamba si tu pries tu nous gènera; ça ne nous plaît pas. Nous ne sommes pas musulmans; si tu pries sur le bateau tu vas nous gêner." Et tu dis que tu ne veux jamais offenser ton prochain. Alors à chaque fois qu'il faisait ses ablutions il y avait une femme qui venait le toucher, l'obligeant de refaire ses ablutions. Tout d'un coup les gens l'ont vu sur la mer, la natte de prière sur les flots et lui en train de prier. Et le bateau partait et la peau partait en même temps que le bateau. Et
il a prié. Quand on l'a vu prier on s'est jeté dans sa chambre; on est allé l'oublier. Quand il a fini sa prière il était déjà dans sa chambre. Arrivé au Gabon il a fait plein de miracles. Ils l'ont gardé en exil au Gabon pendant 7 ans, 7 mois, 7 jours et au bout de sa mission il est rentré. Les Français voulaient l'éloigner du Sénégal pour essayer de le tuer. On l'a mis dans une cage avec un lion affamé. Toujours selon les croyances populaires. Ils ont affamé le lion pendant une semaine et après ils l'ont jeté dans la cage. Ils ont attendu deux jours. Quand ils ont ouvert ils ont vu le lion comme un gros chat assis accroupi aux pieds de Cheikh Amadou Bamba, adouci comme un châton. Il y a eu aussi la fameuse affaire de son retour à Dakar. On l'a fait passer par Gorée. Quand ils l'ont fait passer par Gorée il voulait faire ses ablutions et comme il était sur le rivage il n'y avait pas de ruisseau. Il a prié et une source a jailli et cette source continue de souffler jusqu'à présent. On l'appelle "le puits aux oiseaux." Donc il a fait ses ablutions. Si vous allez à Gorée vous avez les vagues qui viennent immenses sur les rochers et à un mètre à peine vous avez la source pure. Cette eau n'a aucun goût de salé; c'est de l'eau pure et le niveau ne change pas. Tout ça participe à certains phénomènes qu'on ne peut pas expliquer parce que les voies de la mystique sont impénétrables. La force du mouridisme c'est sa force mystique. Un mouride peut vous dire quelque chose; s'il le dit avec conviction, cette chose va se réaliser. Cheikh Amadou Bamba a travaillé pour son peuple. Il a restauré la dignité de l'homme noir. Il a su dire non au colon. Et il a dit non à sa façon. Et jusqu'à présent c'est ce non qui continue. Il est revenu à son peuple; il a été encore envoyé en Mauritanie après 7 ans et quelques au Gabon parce que les Français pensaient qu'après 7 ans on allait l'oublier. Mais ils ont vu que les masses s'appuyaient encore plus sur lui et ils ne pouvaient pas comprendre ce phénomène. Le Prophète Mohamed a été envoyé comme prophète parce qu'il fallait remettre un peuple sur la voie. Il fallait sortir une religion qui soit à la portée de tous. C'est dans ce contexte que le Prophète a fait son apparition en Arabie Saoudite. Mais il ne l'a pas fait en tant qu'Arabe. C'est l'homme de tous les temps. L'Islam est une religion ouverte. Allez en Chine vous allez trouver des adeptes; vous trouverez des adeptes partout. Il y a beaucoup plus de musulmans que d'Arabes musulmans. Mais les gens avaient l'habitude de confondre l'arabité et l'Islam. L'Islam a vu le jour chez les Arabes mais l'Islam n'a rien à voir avec les pratiques arabes. Au contraire l'Islam est venu ordonner les pratiques arabes. C'est indiscutable que l'Arabe c'est l'arbre qui a aidé le pénétration de l'Islam chez nous. Mais dès que cet Islam est venu et constitue une religion universelle nous avons assez de Coran et assez de rationalité pour dire ce qui est purement musulman et ce qui est arabisé.

Boyd-Buggs: C'est pourquoi on parle de l'Islam noir.

Mbacké: Oui on parle de l'Islam noir. Si vous vous rappelez c'était Vincent Monteil qui a écrit sur l'Islam noir. Je me suis
insurgée contre cette appellation parce que l'Islam n'a jamais été ni noir ni blanc. C'est universel. En disant l'Islam noir Vincent Monteil voudrait confondre islam et arabité alors que ça n'a rien à voir. À Paris Monteil a fait une émission avec Martine Rouguinson concernant l'extension de l'Islam. Je suis intervenue dans cette émission et je lui ai fait comprendre qu'il n'y avait pas d'Islam noir, qu'il n'y a qu'un seul Islam. C'est une religion qui a remodelée la société arabe, qui a redéfini certains principes, qui a essayé de canaliser vers la voie droite cette hiérarchie plus au moins déchéante. Je ne suis pas raciste mais il faut replacer les faits dans leur contexte véritable. C'est pourquoi il n'y a pas d'Islam noir; il y a l'Islam pur. Si aujourd'hui vous parlez de l'Islam noir est-ce que demain vous allez parler de l'Islam jaune en Asie? L'Islam n'a pas de couleur; l'Islam n'a pas de frontière. Le mérite de Cheikh Amadou Bamba c'est d'être arrivé à faire entrer cette notion dans l'esprit de ses disciples. Il a étonné les Arabes parce que les poèmes qu'il a écrits sont dans le pur style littéraire arabe. Les Arabes ne comprenaient pas comment cet homme qui n'a jamais bougé du Sénégal, à part qu'il a été exilé, qui n'est jamais sorti pour aller dans une école arabe, comment il a pu maîtriser cette langue, utiliser cette langue jusqu'à sortir des poèmes extraordinaires. Après le Gabon Cheikh Amadou Bamba a été déporté en Mauritanie auprès de Cheikh Sidia. Son immense culture, son erudition, sa sagesse, et certains phénomènes mystiques ont fait que les Mauritaniens qui étaient censés savoir certains prataques coraniques étaient dépoussés par lui, ce qui fait que ces Mauritaniens se sont demandés s'ils n'avaient pas finalement cet homme était vraiment noir. On lui disait: "Ce n'est pas vrai, mais vous n'êtes pas noir. Vous avez le teint noir mais vous n'êtes pas un Noir." Il leur répondait: "Je suis un Noir qui cherche la science, qui cherche à s'élever, qui cherche Dieu." Lui, il avait assez de modestie, assez de sagesse pour ne pas se vanter de ses expériences. C'était un tel phénomène que les Maures sont venus se prosterner devant lui et Cheikh Sidia a voulu lui donner sa fille en mariage. Cheikh Amadou Bamba Mbacké a préféré prendre deux esclaves noires dont il a payé l'affranchissement et qu'il a épousées. La mère de l'un de ses fils est originaire de la Mauritanie. C'est pour vous dire cette ascendance extraordinaire qu'il avait sur les foules. Jusqu'à présent il a des disciples en Mauritanie. Au bout de 4 ans il a regagné le Sénégal. Comme les Blancs ont constaté qu'il avait toujours cette ascendance sur les foules, on l'a gardé en résidence surveillée à Diourbel. Pourtant avant son départ pour l'exil il a eu comme une inspiration mystique la lumière de Touba. Il a suivi cette lumière jusqu'à Touba. Et c'est cette place où il a marqué la terre; c'est sur cette place là où est construite l'actuelle mosquée. Aussi c'est sur cette place où il s'est finalement reposé quand il est décédé. Il voulait repartir à Touba après son retour de l'exil mais les Blancs ont refusé. Il est décédé à Diourbel et ses fils ont demandé la permission de l'enterrer à Touba. Ce n'est qu'après son décès que son coffre a été enfermé à la place qu'il avait marquée. C'est à cette même place qu'existe maintenant cette mosquée extraordinaire, la plus grande de l'Afrique.
A Touba aussi il y a un institut musulman et une bibliothèque. Chaque année les foules vont au mausolé du Saint de Touba. Il y à un pèlerinage qu'on appelle le Magal qui chaque année réunit des millions de pèlerins qui se retrouvent à Touba. Autant les gens vont à la Mecque et gravitent aux saintes pierres de la Kabah, autant les gens viennent ici en masse visiter le sanctuaire du Saint de Touba. Cheikh Amadou Bamba a offert à son peuple un modèle qui, s'il est suivi, nous mènera assez loin tant sur le plan mystique que sur le plan du développement. Cet exemple est suivi dans la mesure où les gens qui n'ont jamais vu le Sénégal, qui n'ont jamais été musulman, se convertissent à l'Islam et deviennent mouride. Le mouridisme est pour l'ouverture de l'Islam. Les Blancs ont essayé de malmener Cheikh Amadou Bamba mais il y a eu des Blancs qui sont devenus ses adeptes. Il y en avait un qui n'a jamais voulu quitter le Sénégal et qui est devenu son meilleur adepte. Jusqu'à sa mort il était adepte de Cheikh Amadou Bamba. Il y en avait d'autres Blancs encore et il y en a toujours. A Touba vous trouverez des Blancs en train de lire le Coran ou les poèmes de Cheikh Amadou Bamba. En France vous trouverez une colonie de Blancs qui le suivent. Cheikh Amadou Bamba a vu le jour au Sénégal mais c'est l'homme de tous les temps. C'est le serviteur du Prophète. Ses poèmes sont écrites en arabe mais c'est du wolof transcrit en arabe. Il a utilisé des caractères arabes pour développer ses poèmes et pour les mettre à la portée de tout le monde. Pour ceux qui n'avaient pas la chance de faire des études coraniques poussées il a pu arriver à leur présenter ça dans une forme beaucoup plus compréhensible. Il est pour l'homme d'action; il est pour l'homme de science. Il dit que la science et l'action devraient être conciliées. En gros c'est ce que je peux vous dire. Je vous ai parlé du rôle de l'Islam dans la littérature sénégalaise, pas d'expression française, mais d'expression arabe.

April 25, 1984

Boyd-Buggs: Quand tu médites sur la condition humaine, est-ce à ce moment là que ta spiritualité entre? J'ai remarqué que tu te sers du thème de l'Islam, de la croyance en Dieu.

Mbacké: Oui. Pour ce qui atrait à la spiritualité je n'ai pas besoin d'attendre un moment donné pour en parler ou bien pour que cela rejaillisse sur mes écrits. Ce qui est certain c'est que je crois et ça va de soi. Dès l'instant que je crois en quelque chose, cette chose là est censé faire partie intégrante de moi-même et puis régir ma vie quotidienne, mes attitudes de tous les jours. Quand je pense, je pense en musulmane parce que je suis une musulmane. Quand je vis quand j'agis aussi, j'agis en musulmane. Alors je n'ai pas besoin d'attendre, d'être devant la feuille pour me transformer en musulmane. Je vis cela dans ma vie de tous les jours. Je crois en Dieu, je crois en un autre monde après la mort. Je crois aux bonnes actions sur la terre. Je crois en l'amour pour son prochain et pour mon prochain. Je crois aux potentialités intarissables dont l'homme
peut faire preuve s'il veut, que l'homme peut l'exploiter, que l'homme a en lui et qu'il peut pousser à loisir. Je crois à tout cela. Je me dis que le monde pourrait aller mieux si chacun essayait de se rendre service et essayait de s'accepter quelle que soit la terre, quelle que soit la couleur, quel que soit le ciel, quelle que soit la langue, quelle que soit la confession, quelle que soit la philosophie, quel que soit le sexe, quel que soit l'âge. L'homme est né pour communiquer avec son prochain.

Boyd-Buggs: Comme je t'avais dit, c'est l'Islam parmi les romanciers et les autres écrivains qui m'intéresse. Je sais que les écrivains ont beaucoup d'influence au niveau du peuple et surtout au niveau des gens qui lisent et c'est important pour moi.

Mbacké: On nous dit, que nous écrivains, nous sommes la conscience du peuple et je suis d'accord. Nous sommes censés être la conscience du peuple. Mais il y a une autre conscience qui nous interpelle, qui dort en nous. Et quand cette conscience-là commence à bouger nous devons nous ouvrir pour lire dans cette conscience parce que ce n'est qu'à partir de cela qu'on peut se découvrir. Quelle que soit la forme d'écrit c'est la façon d'appréhender la vie qui transparaît, quelle que soit la volonté d'un individu. Ce n'est qu'à travers ses croyances qu'il arrive à juger s'il reflète sa société ou à proposer un modèle. Ce modèle ne peut être que l'émanation de lui-même. Ce qui est certain c'est qu'en se penchant sur ce modèle on pourrait essayer d'établir des parallèles et de retrouver à travers ce modèle d'autres modèles qui ont cours dans la société dans laquelle il vit ou bien dans une autre société. Nous sommes ici en Afrique dans un pays musulman en majorité; l'Islam régit la vie de tous les jours. Donc il est normal que dans la plupart des romans que l'Islam transparaîsse.
6. AMINATA SOW FALL is a novelist and the author of three works: Le Revenant (1976), La Grève des bâton (1979), and L'Appel des arènes (1982). The following interviews took place in Mrs. Sow Fall's office in Dakar, Senegal on July 28, 1982 and on February 25, 1984.

July 28, 1982

Boyd-Buggs: Je m'intéresse au thème de l'Islam dans le roman sénégalais. Est-ce que votre croyance musulmane a influencé votre œuvre littéraire et dans quelle manière?

Sow Fall: Certainement. Parce que je crois que la croyance fait partie de l'individu. Une fois qu'on croit et qu'on a la foi je pense que toutes nos actions sont plus ou moins guidées. En tout cas, il y a une bonne partie de cette foi en ce que nous faisons. Par exemple, je pense que nous ne pouvons pas défendre un point de vue et écrire des choses qui sont à l'encontre de notre foi. Même si la foi, la religion, n'est pas en avant dans une œuvre romanesque, qui ne se donne pas à priori comme but de parler de la religion, je crois qu'il y a des incidences. Je peux vous donner un exemple concret. Dans La Grève des bâton où il est question de charité, il est évident que là il y a une forte influence de la foi dans ce que j'ai écrit. Parce que le point de vue que je répandais, si on peut le résumer en une seule phrase, c'est qu'il faut donner la charité telle qu'elle est prescrite dans l'Islam. C'est-à-dire d'une manière désintéressée. Et il faut venir en aide aux pauvres d'une manière désintéressée.

February 25, 1984

Boyd-Buggs: Ma thèse portera sur le thème de l'Islam dans le roman sénégalais et principalement sur le personnage du marabout. Est-ce que vous croyez que la révolution en Iran et la crise de la présence de l'Islam dans certaines sociétés ont eu un effet sur les écrivains? Par exemple j'ai lu quelque part que les Mourides ont un comité pour censurer certaines matières écrites. Je me demande si maintenant des écrivains hésitent de parler de certaines choses dans leurs romans.

Sow Fall: Tout ce que je peux vous donner serait un sentiment personnel. Je pense qu'un être humain doit écrire ce qu'il pense et ce qu'il sent comme il le pense et comme il le sent. Et dès le moment où il essaie d'autocensurer, de se dire "je vais écrire ceci ou je vais écrire cela" où il s'interdit certains chemins, dès ce moment-là il hypothèque sa propre sincérité. Parce qu'un écrivain doit sur
tous les thèmes dire les choses telles qu'il les voit. Maintenant sur le problème de l'Islam. Effectivement depuis Khomeini il y a un regain de l'intérêt du monde entier sur le problème de l'Islam et surtout ce qui est vraiment nouveau c'est le regard occidental sur l'Islam de Khomeini et peut-être une certaine crainte d'être envahi par le fanatisme musulman. Il y a ce phénomène objectif. Quant à moi je crois, je suis une croyante fervente, pratiquante. Je pense que si l'Islam m'inspirait quelques thèmes, si j'avais une inspiration religieuse, j'écrirais les choses en conformité avec mes sentiments, en conformité avec ma pensée et aussi ma manière de concevoir cet Islam. Mais il faut faire la distinction entre deux choses. Parce que si les marabouts abusent de leur pouvoir religieux, critiquer ces marabouts-là ne signifie pas critiquer l'Islam. L'aspect des marabouts, ce sont des personnes humaines qui sont là, qui doivent être, mais qui ne sont pas les intermédiaires entre les individus et Dieu parce que selon l'Islam chacun mérite d'après ses propres actions. Le marabout ne peut en aucun cas être intermédiaire. Il peut être guide, celui qui enseigne la religion. Maintenant si certains individus pensent que ces marabouts divergent de leur fonction et de leur rôle, les critiquer ne signifie pas critiquer l'Islam.
7. ROGER DORسينVILLE, Haitian author and editor at the publishing house Nouvelles Editions Africaines, has lived in Senegal for many years. The following interview was conducted in Mr. Dorsinville's office at Nouvelles Editions Africaines in Dakar, Senegal on April 25, 1984.

Dorsinville: Donc traitant l'Islam comme projet romanesque au centre même de cette création nous avons quelques titres seulement. Nous avons le livre d'Amar Samb, Matraqué par le destin. Nous avons ensuite un livre qui n'est pas précisément un roman mais qui est un scenario pour un film, c'est Njangaan qui a été écrit par Chérif Adramé Seck. Naturellement vous ne pouvez pas prendre comme point de départ L'Aventure ambiguë de Cheikh Hamidou Kane. L'Aventure ambiguë c'est le problème du questionnement de soi par un homme qui est à la charnière de deux cultures et non seulement par un homme mais par sa famille et cela est symbolique de toute la société islamisée qui est offerte une autre culture et qui s'interroge. La conclusion est posée par la Grande Royale; c'est qu'il faut aller acquérir les armes de l'autre puisque finalement l'autre est un conquérant. L'autre a prouvé sa force et nous a prouvé notre affaiblissement. Donc il faut aller prendre ses armes pour pouvoir appliquer ses armes, ses armes intellectuelles, etc. Mais l'auteur, et c'est ici que le livre justifie son titre, L'Aventure ambiguë, l'auteur qui a fait un choix pour lui-même puisqu'il est devenu un homme moderne tout en étant musulman, un homme de science puisqu'il a étudié la science économique, nous laisse dans une certaine ambiguïté puisque Samba Diallo va être assassiné. Il est assassiné au nom de la culture ancienne par quelqu'un que nous appelons un Fou mais en qui nous ne pouvons pas ne pas voir un symbole de la culture ancienne. Donc la conclusion n'est pas nette, elle n'est pas tirée, l'ambiguïté n'a pas été levée. En dehors de ces romans, en tant que romans, vous trouverez naturellement des portraits, mais pas de discussions culturelles précisément de l'Islam. Mais vous trouverez certains portraits de famille islamisée, de famille à la jonction de deux cultures. Le projet du livre n'est pas de dépeindre l'Islam mais de dépeindre certaines conséquences sociales. Dans ce sens vous avez les deux livres de Marima Bâ, Une si longue lettre et puis Un Chant écarlate. Dans les deux il s'agit de gens qui sont musulmans qui entrent dans la société moderne. Il y a des fonctionnaires, des gens bien, des gens à l'aise, des gens qui roulent en voiture, qui vivent dans la société moderne et qui ont retenu de l'Islam finalement ce qui leur plaisait. Non pas la sainteté de l'Islam mais la permissivité de l'Islam. C'est à dire l'Islam leur permet d'avoir plusieurs femmes donc ils y vont. Ce n'est pas la sainteté de l'Islam; ce n'est pas le soufisme appliqué à leurs vies. Ce sont
plutôt les tolérances par lesquelles l'Islam ne diffère pas pratiquement de n'importe quelle religion en pays noir. Dans Un Chant écarlate elle discute l'homme qui semble avoir opté pour une autre culture, qui va si loin dans cette culture qu'il devient docteur de l'université et qu'il épouse une Européenne aristocratique. Mais quand sa modernité a été mise à l'épreuve, on trouve qu'il retourne en arrière, à ce qui était, à l'appel de son enfance. Ce n'est pas précisément l'Islam qui est mis en cause ici. Il est mis en cause par certaines pratiques, les chants religieux, etc. Mais c'est l'Islam noir, les coutumes qui ont été transférées de l'animisme vers l'Islam, vers la modernité. Ce sont ces coutumes qui ont repris l'autorité sur l'homme parce que quand il consulte en marabout, on lui dit de tuer un mouton, de donner des kolas, etc. Ce n'est pas vraiment l'Islam, du soufisme non plus. C'est l'Islam mêlé, c'est le syncrétisme de l'Islam et le paganisme. C'est ça qui l'a ramené en arrière. L'Islam n'est pas au centre. C'est la conséquence sociale d'une culture adoptée pendant l'enfance qui tend à ramener l'homme en arrière et ne lui permet pas d'adopter entièrement une autre culture que nous pourrions appeler la culture des livres, la culture moderne, la culture civilisée, etc. Vous avez une discussion de ce problème également dans le livre d'Aminata Sow Fall, La Grève des battû. Parce que l'Islam est saisi dans une de ses conséquences rattachées à la foi, qui est l'aumône. Mais il y a une déviation de ce principe. C'est-à-dire qu'à partir du moment où on reconnaît qu'il faut faire l'aumône, l'aumône ne devient pas seulement une obligation, l'aumône devient pour certaines personnes une voie de rédemption. La personne ne cherche plus la sainteté de la vie; il fait ce qu'il veut dès lors qu'il peut donner l'aumône. Alors il y a toute une structure sociale qui se bâtit alentours qui est la structure sociale des marabouts qui utilisent cette voie de sainteté mais qui l'utilisent d'une manière qui n'est pas du tout sainte. Ils peuvent vous dire de tuer un mouton, donner de la viande ici, donner de l'argent là et puis tous les problèmes se règleront, etc., ce qui est un détournement de l'individu vers la voie interne de la sainteté pour une voie externe qui compense pour les fautes que la personne commet. C'est aussi assez net dans Mariama Ba. Maintenant qu'est-ce que nous avons encore comme roman qui intègre l'Islam en tout ou en partie?

Boyd-Buggs: Il y a des œuvres de Sembène. Par exemple dans Xala il y a des marabouts.

Dorsinville: Dans Xala le problème du marabout est un peu caché sous d'autres aspects mais il est discuté. Dans certaines nouvelles, par exemple le Kaala-Sikkim de Gana Kébé. "Kaala-sikkim" ça signifie la barbe du turban. C'est une satire des marabouts. Là il y a une mise en question très nette du maraboutisme tel qu'il est pratiqué. Vous trouverez la discussion du marabout, pas aussi critique dans Le Marabout de la secheresse par Cheik Aliou Ndao. Dans Mal d'Abdou Anta Kâ vous avez également une opposition entre les voies modernes et les voies anciennes. C'est un livre qu'il faut lire pour votre documentation sur le sujet. C'est une collection de nouvelles mais
il n'a pas toutes ses nouvelles là-dedans. Il y a l'une d'entre elles qui met en cause un homme qui vient voir son frère à la ville qui découvre que son frère a épousé une Toubab, une Blanche et que sa maison est fermée; il ne reçoit pas. Dans l'Anthologie de la Nouvelle Sénégalaise vous trouverez certaines de ces nouvelles. Je ne les ai pas précisément en tête. Puis il y a le dernier livre que nous avons publié ici qui s'appelle Un Trou dans le miroir par Ibrahima Sèye. Lui, il discute profondément le problème de la famille islamique. Le père qui est profondément musulman, profondément religieux, exerce sur la famille une autorité patriarcale qu'il veut indiscutable. Cette autorité est discutée par le fils mais le père finit par l'écraser. C'est un vrai travail d'émasculation auquel cet homme s'est livré sur son fils. C'est un livre très dur, très critique, qui finit mal, dans la mesure où un jeune homme, qui a fait l'université, va reprendre le chemin du daara, le chemin de l'école coranique comme s'il était un coupable. Alors que finalement c'est l'éducation qu'il a reçue qui devait être culpabilisée. Parce que comme il n'arrive pas à s'adapter, un homme moderne, un homme des livres n'arrive pas à s'adapter à la vie ancienne dans un milieu où le père domine avec autorité au nom d'Allah et au nom d'Islam, lui il devient déséquilibré. Il tombe dans l'alcool; il tombe dans la drogue; il tombe dans toutes les œuvres du sexe, etc. Comme il n'y a plus de chemin devant lui le père l'attrape et l'amène, après l'université, reprendre la vie du daara. C'est un livre très dur. Ça a été publié par nous également, Nouvelles Editions Africaines. Ce qui pouvait être fait c'est d'étudier le marabout comparativement avec la vision du marabout maintenant 20 ans après. Dans les premiers romans vous pouvez remonter jusqu'à Karim. Evidemment le problème n'est pas discuté dans le principe, il est discuté dans ses effets. Dans ce sens Karim peut être étudié côte à côte avec Le Revenant parce qu'ils sont à peu près la même chose avec cette différence: c'est Karim qui est son propre mobilisateur tandis que dans Le Revenant c'est la soeur du Malik qui vraiment exerce l'autorité et qui finit par condamner ce jeune homme à devenir ce qu'il est devenu, un rouleur. Ça sera peut-être intéressant aussi de voir la progression dans la société du rôle de la femme, c'est très important, la position de la femme, la grande soeur ou bien la tante. Dans Le Revenant et dans les deux romans de Mariama Bâ vous trouverez ces femmes là conspirant véritablement des choses rétrogrades. Il y a un autre livre qu'il faut voir. C'est l'autobiographie de Nafissatou Diallo, De Tilène au Plateau. Il y a la grand-mère, mais il y a le père. La grand-mère surprennament est très flexible. Elle comprend. Dans un certain sens c'est une grand-mère idéale. Ce n'est pas seulement qu'elle aime l'enfant comme l'enfant est, c'était comme si elle aimait déjà l'enfant pour ce que l'enfant allait devenir. Et ça c'est très important dans le livre de Nafissatou Diallo. Ici et là paraissent des scènes, des casques de circoncision. Par exemple dans Sourd-muet je demande la parole c'est épisodique. Également dans Pas si fou il y a la danse de casaque par des jeunes garçons après la circoncision. Mais ça n'occupe pas une place centrale. Mais ça peut être intéressant à voir et à faire figurer en un paragraphe dans votre
étude pour montrer que c'est inséparable de la vie sénégalaise. 
Puisque quand le jeune garçon arrive à certain âge inévitablement il 
est circoncis et cela donne lieu à une série d'instructions et tout 
cela. A la base ce sont des principes religieux. Même si aujourd'hui 
dans les familles bourgeoises c'est une intervention qui se pratique 
à l'hôpital. Mais la base est la même chose. Il y a un mélange aussi 
entre l'Islam et les coutumes traditionnelles dans la littérature 
malian avec Seydou Badia et Marcel Diabaté. Ce sont des cultures 
voisines; elles ne sont pas identiques. Mais tout cela peut être 
extrêmement intéressant à consulter. Donc il y a Buur Tilleen de 
Cheik Aliou Ndao et puis en partie dans son dernier livre, Excellence 
vos épouses. On peut puiser quelque chose; ce n'est pas central. 
Cet homme adopte de l'Islam les côtés permissifs pour avoir plusieurs 
épouses. Mais il n'adopte pas vraiment de l'Islam les principes qui 
auraient gouverné sa vie. Je ne parle même pas de la sainteté mais 
d'une certaine maîtrise de soi. Cet homme s'écroulait parce qu'il 
a perdu sa place de ministre. Il erre de lui-même comme il erre dans 
là vie. Il faudrait peut-être dégager l'impuissance que montre 
l'Islam comme les autres religions d'ailleurs à vraiment former 
un individu solide dans le système social actuel qu'agresse la 
modernité. C'est comme si pour être solide et pour vivre sa foi il 
fallait comme dans le christianisme se retrancher du monde et définir 
des lors l'humanité entre les deux secteurs: le monde et puis les 
autres qui sont les saints prenant en Islam les mêmes guides que par 
exemple dans le christianisme tel que formulé par Jésus qu'il y a 
beaucoup d'appelés mais peu d'élus. Je pense que si vous allez en 
profondeur pour voir les différentes possibilités en ce qui concerne 
l'Islam c'est-à-dire la foi islamique telle qu'elle est vécue dans 
ses indications, doctrines et dans ses corruptions et que vous 
elargissez de sa corruption, superstition d'une part et que plus tard 
vous élargissez au champ social pour voir la famille, bon en ce qui 
concerne notre zone je crois c'est à peu près tout. Il y a un livre 
vient de paraître à Présence Africaine qui est écrit par un 
Sénégalais, La Poubelle, regardez, vous voyez là un livre qui 
s'appelle La Poubelle. Bon, c'est un livre mal écrit mais il y a 
là-dedans justement, ça vient de paraître, je ne sais même pas si 
c'est en librairie déjà ici. Il y a un ou deux chapitres là-dedans 
sur l'Islam marabout. Ça pourrait vous intéresser également de voir 
un petit peu le point de vue de l'homme mais enfin c'est un point de 
vue très moyen. Ce n'est pas une discussion par exemple au niveau 
de L'Aventure ambiguë. L'influence de l'Islam dans la famille, 
l'Islam en tant que l'Islam, la pureté de l'Islam tel que définissent 
ses superstitions auxquelles tout cela a abouti parce que c'est la 
fragilité de l'homme et ensuite vous le transcrit au champ social 
et que commençant par le champ social, vous voyez par exemple 
l'ambiguïté de la position dans L'Aventure ambiguë et que vous voyez 
des autres livres qui ont suivi L'Aventure ambiguë, c'est à dire les 
25 ans qui ont suivi L'Aventure ambiguë pour voir comment sur le 
terrain l'Islam s'est appliqué. Alors vous avez les différents 
embranchements, les différents romans et les différents personnages, 
le personnage du père, le personnage de la femme, et qu'il réagit,
le personnage du jeune, comme ils réagissent. Vous avez là un champ assez large pour développer votre parallèle entre le prêtre et le marabout. Il y a un Sénégalais qui est chef du bureau dans un des ministères ici qui a écrit un livre, un roman sur l'Islam. C'est-à-dire, c'est un père qui élève son fils et qui veut que le fils devienne vraiment un homme de foi et un homme de prière. Et à cette occasion le père parle beaucoup de l'Islam et le livre montre l'éducation que reçoit le fils, l'éducation exemplaire. Voilà le livre qui vraiment a au centre l'Islam. Je l'ai lu, c'est un qui a été publié par l'auteur. Je l'ai lu. Le livre m'a frappé comme un livre intéressant. Pas un chef-d'oeuvre mais c'est un bon livre. Et c'est un seul livre qui nous manque pour l'éducation des enfants justement qui aurait été très bon. alors dans ce sens-là. Pour ce que vous avez en tête comme centre d'intérêt parce que c'est avec le livre d'Amar Samb et le Njangaan de Chérif Adramé Seck, c'est le seul livre à ma connaissance qui prenne au centre le problème de l'Islam. Les autres sont traités parallèlement à d'autres. L'Aventure ambiguë évidemment. Les autres traitent le problème ... C'est le seul qui traite de l'Islam comme sujet au centre. C'est Au-delà de la vertu par Mamadou Dia Mbaye. En passant, il faut aussi prendre même pour une indication, un portrait de marabout, de l'homme saint, de l'homme pur dans le livre de Ken Bugul, son père. Le père de Ken Bugul, ce personnage distant de la famille qui prie tout le temps et qui sourit seulement quelques fois, on devine qu'il est bon parce que c'est un homme de prière mais qui n'intervient pas dans la famille et qui est vraiment absent du quotidien de la famille parce qu'il s'est vraiment refugié en Dieu. Il y a ce personnage dans le livre de Ken Bugul, Le Baobab fou.
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