Senegalese Novel, African Voice: Examining the French Educational System through Aminata Sow Fall's *L'appel des arènes* and Cheikh Hamidou Kane's *L'aventure ambiguë*

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(Abstract)

This thesis examines representations of the French educational system in Senegal as presented in *L'aventure ambiguë* and *L'appel des arènes.* Each unfolding respectively within a colonial and postcolonial Senegalese context, the novels problematize the French school system by incorporating representations of its failures. As this thesis will argue, analyzing each author's educational discourse will unmask a Senegalese perspective on a French institution, showcase various ways that Senegalese students internalized their educational experience and provide representations of the ways in which French education could be, and was, utilized by its pupils.

Using two African novels in French to interpret historical experience will facilitate understanding of the French educational system from a Senegalese perspective. The first chapters create a foundation for analysis: Chapter two explains French goals and objectives when implementing a formal educational system in West Africa, while chapter three explores the form and function of the African novel in order to present it as a useful historical tool. Having defined the African novel in French as a viable means to interpret historical experience, chapter four focuses analysis on revealing how a system that was meant to procure French dominance, was ultimately transformed into a tool for Senegalese advantage.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

> "More than three-quarters of the people living in the world today have had their lives shaped by the experience of colonialism. It is easy to see how important this has been in the political and economic spheres, but its general influence on the perceptual frameworks of contemporary peoples is often less evident. Literature offers one of the most important ways in which these new perceptions are expressed and it is in their writing... that the day-to-day realities experienced by colonized peoples have been most powerfully encoded and so profoundly influential."[1]–*The Empire Writes Back*

When Aminata Sow Fall returned to her native Senegal in the 1960s, after a seven year sojourn in France, she found a country she barely recognized. The Senegal she remembered valued solidarity, humanity and honor; the Senegal she found in its place increasingly valued money and material goods. Feeling that important values were disappearing, Sow Fall began to write in order to record the changes she perceived.[2] Having never envisioned becoming a writer, the novels she produced reflected not a childhood dream of creative ambition, but an engaged response to everyday social issues.[3] Roughly a generation earlier, Senegal's Cheikh Hamidou Kane departed for France to finish his

[1] Bill Ashcroft et al, *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-colonial Literatures* (London: Routledge, 1989), 1.

[2] Médoune Guèye, "Ecriture, développement et féminisme: Entretien avec Aminata Sow Fall," *The Literary Griot* 12, 2 (Fall, 2000): 44-57.

[3] Guèye, 51

collegiate studies as a philosophy student. While abroad Kane began to write not with the intention of becoming a published writer, but in order to record his experiences as he passed from a "traditional society, belonging to an oral culture, to a modern society whose principle medium is writing."[4] What began as a personal journal documenting his journey for identity and self, eventually became *L'aventure ambiguë*, a novel reflective of a collective African struggle that contemporaneously bore "witness to . . . the existence of a black culture, a black civilization [and] a black sensibility."[5] For Kane, like Sow Fall, writing was not a professional career choice resulting from years of study, but the materialization of his own introspection that simultaneously expressed a collective African struggle for identity and legitimacy.

Both Kane and Sow Fall, despite their differences, share an important similarity: each has emerged from the French educational system to create engaged literature that directly responds to their lived experiences. Additionally, the novels under analysis here, Kane's *L'aventure ambiguë* and Sow Fall's *L'appel des arènes*, are both situated around an educational problematic that, through analysis, accomplish three goals. As this thesis will argue, both narratives reveal Senegalese perspectives on the French educational system. Second, the novels' educational discourse showcases the ways in which many Senegalese students internalized their educational experience. Lastly, both novels incorporate representations of how Senegalese pupils were able to use the French schools, not all of which were intended by French implementors.

Despite the wealth of literature that emerged from Senegal's colonial period, very few texts presented historical events from the perspectives of the men and woman who experienced the French-implemented changes. Instead, these texts where written by French historians, geographers, cartographers and other scholars who presumed to speak for and about the West African people who were "now submitted to [French] laws."[6]

[4] J.P Little, "Autofiction and Cheikh Hamdiou Kane's L'aventure ambiguë," *Research in African Literature* 31, 7 (2000): 71.

[5] Little, 73.

[6] Bruce Fetter, *Colonial Rule in Africa: Readings from Primary Sources* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1979), 85.

Through Francocentric interpretations constructed by colonial motivations and ideologies, the West African image and experience became molded according to French discourse. As a result, geographer Martin Lewis and historian Kären Wigen explain that, "in presuming to speak for and about foreign peoples, the western observer can cast them only into the role of an objectified, voiceless 'other.'"[7] Cloaked in a veil of silence, colonial Senegalese history, and the effects thereof, remained disciplines for western colonization.

With a continual emergence of historiography, and dare I say common sense, it becomes increasingly clear that the men and women of Senegal were anything but silent. While extensive primary documentation may be comparatively sparse, the emergence of other forms of written material, such as the novel, lend themselves to the exploration of historical experience from a multitude of perspectives.

An analysis of Kane's and Sow Fall's narratives will thus produce a Senegalese perspective on the French educational system, over that of a French. Juxtaposing the novel's text with actual historical context, will allow an easier extraction of an encoded African voice that presents colonial and post-colonial interpretations within an African constructed narrative. Borrowing from cultural theory, this study will confront the boundaries between what *is* history and what *is* literature. Just as cultural studies threaten to "muddy the clear divisions of choices,"[8] this study will continue to blur disciplinal boundaries by placing the novel within the discourse of history and justly, history within the discourse of literature. As a result, Kane's and Sow Fall's novels will emerge as a viable means to represent historical actualities.

To underline the historical legitimacy of literary analysis, it is helpful to turn to Samba Gadjigo, whose work emphasizes the scarcity of non-western colonial sources. What is lacking, he explains, is an authentic and direct experience which novels help to provide. The importance of the novel therefore, lies in not only its creative properties,

[7] Martin Lewis, *The myth of continents: a critique of metageography* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 114.

[8] Lawrence Grossberg, "The Sins of Cultural Studies," in *The Future of Cultural Studies*, ed. Jan Baetens and Jose Lambert (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2000), 26.

but in its ability to help fill the void of the African historical experience as told by Africans themselves.[9] Adding to his opinion, writer Sow Fall explains that when it comes to the development of Africa, "on a tendance à négliger la littérature en pensant que c'est simplement des loisirs, l'art de rêveurs qui sont là, qui écrivent des choses."[10] Expressed by African writers themselves, "les écrivains africains jouent un rôle engagé en cataloguant et en exposant les problèmes du jour."[11] As a result, their novels move beyond entertainment, to become active, engaged responses to historical actualities. Within this context, these fictionalized novels can serve as historical tools, providing insight on and perspective to Senegal's colonial and post-colonial past.

As an outside observer though, presenting an African perspective through the analysis of literature inherently risks interpretive misunderstandings based on frameworks of critical theory. In her book, *Decolonizing the Text*, Debra Anderson opens with a summary of Pierre Macherey's *A Theory of Literary Production*, which explains what happens when a text becomes the object of literary criticism.[12] In attempting to understand a text, to decode its message and structure, the critic risks placing the text into a preconceived theoretical context based on his/her "own set of underlying values." This form of criticism therefore, renders the text as "a product which is to be consumed, interpreted and described," based not on what is written, but on what the critic "desires the text to be."[13] This makes the analysis of a text, like Africa, an object to be colonized.

This is not to suggest, however, that as an outside observer one cannot and therefore should not attempt to extract alternate perspectives for fear of "colonizing a text." As Christopher Miller explains, readers must remain constantly aware of an African methodology; that as the subject of analysis, the the critic must seek to understand

[9] Samba Gadjigo, *Ecole Blanche, Afrique Noire* (Paris: Editions l'Harmattan, 1990), 81.

[10] Guèye,"Ecriture, développement et féminisme," 51. "There is a tendency to neglect literature because it is often thought of only as an activity of leisure, or the art of dreamers who write about things." Translation mine.

[11] Guèye, "Ecriture, développement et féminisme," 52. "African writers play an engaged role in cataloging and exposing everyday issues." Translation mine.

[12] Debra Anderson, *Decolonizing the Text: Glissantian Readings in Caribbean and African-American Literatures* (New York: Peter Lang, 1995), 1.

[13] Anderson, 2.

the "historical, political...[and] especailly anthropoogical context" in which the text is placed.[14] While some critics like Macherey or Edward Said may look harshly upon interpretation by outsiders,[15] attempting to uncover and understand the perspectives of the "other" is not only possible and desirable, but in an ever globalizing world, necessary.[16]

When Marshall McLuhan stated that we are living in a global village, he hit on an actuality that runs deeper than the forms of communication for which his reference was meant.[17] As cultures become ever more entangled and connected, everyone as members of a society has two choices. The first is to approach cultural exposure with an understanding of diversity that promotes empathy and growth. The second is to maintain an ignorance of "otherness" that condones and perpetuates ethnocentric judgments which, as history has shown, is often accompanied by misunderstanding, hypocrisy, violence and cruelty.[18] In an ever globalizing world, therefore, to "claim that only Europeans can understand Europe, Christians Christianity, Chinese China, and Muslims Islam, is effectively to surrender to an ethnocentric world."[19]

1.1 Novels within Historical Context

To better introduce Kane's and Sow Fall's novels, it is useful to provide a brief chronology of French involvement in Senegal in order to situate both novels within their proper historical context.[20] Despite French contact with West Africa beginning as early as the 1500s, active French efforts towards colonization did not begin until the second half of the nineteenth century. From the time the French introduced a formal educational

14 Christopher Miller, *Theories of Africans* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1990), 5.

15 See Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York : Pantheon Books, 1978).

16 In keeping with Miller's discourse, I am not arguing that critics can free themselves fully from ethnocentric and projective readings, see Miller "Theories of Africans: The Question of Literary Anthropology," *Critical Inquiry* 13, 1 (Autumn, 1986): 120-139. What I am arguing is that misguided and misinterpreted readings can be minimized, if critics are aware of cultural differences and a seek local context.

17 Marshall McLuhan and Bruce R. Powers, *The Global Village: transformations in world life and media in the 21st century* (New York : Oxford University Press, 1989).

18 For more on "otherness," see Edward Said *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978).

19 Lewis, 114.

20 For a more in depth historiography, see Appendix A.

system in the mid nineteenth century, until roughly 1903, education reached only a very small number of West Africans. Of these numbers, Senegal saw highest enrollment since it had the longest established relationship with France. Through the beginning of twentieth century only those children located within the four communes of Senegal (the four areas in Senegal that were definitively under French control [see figure 1]) and the sons of local chiefs received French education. The goal during this time period was not to educate the whole of Senegal equally, but to create a small, educated elite class that would one day be suitable for administration positions.

An increased emphasis on rural and mass education in Senegal and West Africa did not begin until the early 1930s. It is within this period of educational expansion that Kane's novel takes place. As a greater number of children came into contact with French ideologies and values, and even continued their education in France, the French school system increasingly produced within its students' consciousness a mental conflict based on contradicting ideologies between those taught by the schools, and those previously held by the pupils.

By post-independence years, which Senegal won in 1960, French education increasingly reached second generation children, whether they themselves had directly attended the schools. It is within this time period that the events of Sow Fall's novel unfold. As more Senegalese adopted French values and ideologies as a result of their education, an increasing number of parents and children drifted further from important traditional and cultural Senegalese values.

1.2 Introduction to Kane's and Sow Fall's Novels

Although Kane's novel *L'aventure ambiguë* was published in France in 1961, a year after Senegal obtained independence, it was both written and takes place during Senegal's colonial period. The activities that set in motion the events of this 'ambiguous adventure' unfold during the 1930s and 1940s, a time when the French more aggressively

perused their educational policy in West Africa.[21] Reflective of this context, the young protagonist Samba Diallo and his people, the Diallobé, find themselves at a crossroads as the pressure to send their children to the French schools increases. The novel opens in an educational setting, where Samba is studying religious verse, the focus of his traditional Islamic school. By order of La Grande Royale, the influential matriarch, and to regret of his Father (Le Chevalier) and teacher (Thierno), Samba is ripped from his traditional studies to attend a French school in Senegal. Exposed to French ideologies and values that often differed greatly from those to which he was accustomed, Samba begins to question the religion and traditions that once provided him a solid foundation and sense of self. Upon completion of his studies in Senegal, Samba leaves home to fulfill his higher education as a student of philosophy at a university in Paris. Surrounded by contradiction and confusion, Samba finds himself lost in a search for identity and self. Struggling to find his place between two worlds, Samba's adventure resonates with the reality experienced by both author Kane and so many of his countrymen. Unable to find an identity with which he can live, however, Samba's dies soon after returning to Senegal.

More than a form of entertainment, Kane's *L'aventure ambiguë* reacts directly to a colonialism during a time when an increased number of African children experienced the shift from traditional education to a French one. Through Samba's conflicted journey, with its tragic end, Kane presents and problematizes education both at a psychological and philosophical level. His novel at once provides a unique glimpse into the African consciousness and Senegal's past, while revealing an African reaction to and understanding of his own situation.

Similar to Kane's novel, Sow Fall's *L'appel des arènes* also opens in an educational setting where her young protagonist, Nalla, studies French grammar with teacher Monsieur Niang at one of Senegal's French schools. Distracted by the sounds of drums echoing from the distant wrestling arenas, Nalla is unable to concentrate on his studies and instead focuses his attention on his passion, wrestling. Although wrestling is the na-

[21] Gadjigo, 56-57.

tional sport of Senegal and plays a powerful role in Senegalese tradition, Nalla's French educated parents, Ndiogou and Diattou, are horrified with their son's priority of sport over education. Preferring a western life-style and determined to raise their only son in world of progress and technology, Nalla's parents do their best to instill in their son a good work habit that will secure a successful financial future. Nalla, unable to rely on his parents for support, turns increasingly toward two wrestlers he has befriended, André and Malaw. Through the intimate friendship he forms with both men, Nalla rediscovers his Senegalese roots and the values his grandmother, Mame Fari, had preached when he was younger. As Nalla's character increasingly is able to mix the world of his parents with that of his heroes, André and Malaw, the young boy gradually comes to exemplify how to combine the progress and technology of the present with the important values of the past.

Published in Dakar in 1982, Sow Fall's novel does not follow a young boy through educational changes at the onset of the newly implemented French school system, as did Kane's, but a boy who is the product of a family educated by the French system. Her character, Nalla, is therefore not reacting to the shift of education, as was Samba, but the evolving consequences of such a shift. Reacting directly to the problems of the post-colonial era, Sow Fall's novel provides a unique look into the evolving social issues first presented by Kane. As argued by Médoune Guèye, *L'appel des arènes* can thus be seen as representing "plusieurs formes d'aliénation de la société sénégalaise après l'indépendance."[22]

1.3 Chapter Breakdown

An analysis of each author's representations of education will heighten our understanding of how West Africans viewed the colonial and postcolonial school system: How

[22] Médoune Guèye, "La Question du féminisme chez Mariama Ba et Aminata Sow Fall," *The French Review* 72, 2 (December, 1998): 308-319. "The many ways in which the Senegalese society was alienated after independence." Translation mine.

were the French schools perceived? How were they internalized? How were they used? What are Kane and Sow Fall saying about French education? Responding to Bruce Fetter's only regret when presenting a text of primary sources that covered a period of more than one hundred years—that he was not "able to include more reactions to conquest from an African point of view"[23]— the following analysis will thus attempt to fill the void left by the absence of the African voice within colonial discourse. As Gadjigo states, 'a study of the colonial school from the bias of novels that deal with education, will force a more dynamic vision of the schools themselves from those who experienced them directly.'[24] From this, it will be possible to view French education in terms of what it was to the Senegalese student, rather than for what it was intended to be by and for the French implementer.[25]

To establish a larger frame of reference, a more detailed history of the French in Senegal has been provided in appendix A. For those unfamiliar with Senegal's colonial past, this section will establish a broader foundation for chapter analysis based on an overview of historical events that begin with onset of European presence and continue through the formal establishment of a French school system in West Africa.

Underlining the ever important nature of context, I should note that the opinions and interpretations represented by Kane's and Sow Fall's novels are not meant to speak for every African. To assume as much would only impose a new form of voicelessness. As a result, the choice to use only Senegalese novels for this analysis was not accidental. Despite the size of the African continent, and even the vast nature of French-claimed territories, cultural and historical diversity are often overlooked and Africa—and to a lesser extent the Francophone world—is mistakenly referred to and constructed as a monolithic and unified area. Yet each region and sub-region has its own unique culture and history, and knew varying degrees of European involvement. Because of Senegal's

[23] Bruce Fetter, *Colonial Rule in Africa: Readings from Primary Sources* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1979), 22.

[24] Gadjigo, 17. Sentences surrounded by (' ') means that I have already translated into English what the author stated in French.

[25] Gadjigo, 11.

positioning as the sight of first French contact and further West African expansion, Senegal has had a longer relationship with France that has resulted in unique regional characteristics relating to both colonialism and independence. As George Hardy, French governor to Senegal, explains, "Le Sénégal a longtemps occupé une situation privilgiée dans notre enseignement africain: c'est la plus vieille colonie du groupe de l'A.O.F., il possédait le plus grand nombre d'écoles, il bénéficiait de la présence d'un chef de service spécial."[26]

In order to respect specific regional histories, cultures and customs, as well as to account for the varying degrees of French involvement, a narrowed analysis is not only justified but necessary.

Chapter two deals with both primary and secondary sources in order to explain and define French objectives and goals when implementing their West African educational system. Within this chapter an educational system emerges that on one level preached equality, progress and African betterment as a result of schooling; yet on a more fundamental level often worked to reinforce the French position of dominance, rather than create West African equals. This discrepancy becomes important as it creates a foundation for the systems failures.

Chapter three is dedicated to defining the African novel in French as a valid historical tool. This section stresses the need to look at the novel as not just a story, but examine its form, substance, and function in order to establish a direct relationship with "accredited" histories. Emphasizing content over form, the differences separating literary narrative from historical narrative will gradually disappear, leaving both disciplines open to the benefits and criticism of the other. While the goal of this chapter is to present the African novel in French as a viable means to view history, I do not mean to suggest that these novels set out to rewrite history, but simply that they offer a re-interpretation of historical events. Extracting perceptions provided by direct experience and comparing

[26] George Hardy cited by Gadjigo, 18. "For a long time Senegal has occupied a privileged position in our understanding of Africa: it's the oldest of the A.O.F colonies, it possessed the largest number of schools, it has benefited from the presence of a special departmental head." Translation mine.

them to the dominant French interpretations that governed Senegal's history, is meant to provide perspective in hopes to promote a more well-rounded consideration of colonial history.

Within an overarching framework lending the novel to use as an historical tool, chapter four will employ Kane's and Sow Fall's works to interpret the French educational system from a Senegalese perspective. Drawing from postcolonial theory will facilitate analysis of each author's educational treatment, as their encoded voices both problematize the the school system, and offer solutions to education's overall failures.

I feel it necessary to point out, however, that the goal of this chapter is not to systematically refute French interpretation in order to suggest or allude to the "correctness" of Senegalese perspectives over the "incorrectness" of French discourse. My objective is not to imply that there existed, and exists, no positive results arising from French education, or even that there were no Africans in favor of its implementation and adherence. In fact, quoting one of Negritude's father's, Aimé Césaire:

> J'admets que mettre les civilisations différentes en contact les unes avec les autres est bien; que marier des mondes différents est excellent; qu'une civilisation, quel que soit son génie intime, à se replier sur elle-même, s'étiole; que l'échange est ici l'oxygène...[27]

The goal is simply to argue that stressing "diversity of experience and multiplicity of meaning is to hope to demolish monolithic ideological structures of the past."[28]

[27] Aimé Césaire, *Discours sur le colonialisme*, Fourth edition (Paris: Présence Africaine, 1955), 10. "I admit that placing civilizations in contact with one another is a good thing; that the marriage of different worlds is excellent; that one civilization, what ever its intimate genius, recoiled within itself will wilt; that exchange here is oxygen... Translation mine.

[28] Lewis, 114.

Chapter 2

Goals, Motivations and Unforseen Results of French Education: Understanding the French Educational System in Senegal

"To think in French is to be French."[29]–*Jerry B. Bolibaugh*

France's colonization of West Africa, more than any other country's, insisted on a conquest that moved beyond the physical acquisition of territory, to encompass a psychological and moral conquest of the West African people. Exemplified by Napoleon III's failure to maintain an overseas Empire, French experience indicated that military power alone was not enough to dominate a people against their will.[30] As such, this "nouvelle conquête," as described by George Hardy, was "less rapid and brilliant than the first, but just as praiseworthy,"[31] and indeed, considered just as necessary. The French, motivated by both ethnocentric ideologies and a desire to procure a long-term position of

[29] Jerry Bolibaugh, *French Educational Strategies for Sub-Saharan Africa: their intent, derivation and development* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1964)

[30] Samba Gadijgo, *Ecole Blanche, Afrique Noire* (Paris: Editions l'Harmattan, 1990), 54.

[31] George Hardy, *Une Conquête Morale: l'Enseignement en A.O.F* (Paris: Librairie Armand Colin, 1917), 3.

dominance, thus expanded their colonial goals of material exploitation to include cultural conquest. Resulting from such a shift, the colonial weapons of subjugation evolved from guns and cannons to education and schools. As Kane's *L'aventure ambiguë* underscores:

> On commença, dans le continent noir, à comprendre que leur puissance véritable résidait, non point dans les canons du premier matin, mais dans ce qui suivait ces canons. L'école . . . mieux que le canon . . . pérennise la conquête. Le canon contraint les corps, l'école fascine les âmes.[32]

The French thus defined the school as a means to "transformer les peuples primitives . . . pour les rendre le plus possible dévoués à notre cause (la cause française) et utiles à nos entreprises," in order that they "subisse[nt] nos habitudes intellectuelles et morales pendant plusieurs années de suite; en un mot, de [leur] ouvrir des écoles où [leur] esprit se forme à nos intentions."[33] Through education then, the French hoped to secure their dominance by molding a West African identity that would not only indisputably accept French presence, but propagate the French-perceived benefits the metropolis had to offer her colonies.

As evident by works such as Kane's, however, the French not only failed to create a passive Senegalese populace, but, through education, introduced ideological contradictions that often undermined their colonial goals and even produced within the Senegalese consciousness reactions opposite from that which they had hoped to create. As such, Senegalese interpretation of the French educational system, their internalization of educational experience and their utilization of the school did not always conform with, or even reflect, the French educational objectives projected through French educational discourse. In order to analyze the French educational system from a Senegalese per-

[32] Cheikh Hamidou Kane, *L'aventure Ambiguë* (Paris: Julliard, 1961), 60. "On the Black continent it began to be understood that their (white colonialists) real power resided, not in the canons from the first morning, but in what followed those canons. Schools, better than canons, perpetuate conquest. While the canon compels the body, it is the school that bewitches the soul." Translation by Katherine Woods.

[33] Hardy, *Une Conquête Morale*, viii. "To transform the primitive people [of West Africa]. . . in order to render them devoted to our cause (the French cause) and to our mission, in order that they, over a period of years, succumb to our intellectual and moral ways; in a word, the school will form his sprit and mind in accordance to our intention." Translation mine.

spective, this chapter will first examine the French educational system in West Africa in order to foster a more complete, in depth comprehension of its operation, organization and character. Through careful analysis considering French colonial discourse, this delineation will define French educational objectives, and the ideologies on which they were formed, in order to reveal colonial goals that facilely preached equality and progress, yet fundamentally sought to reinforce the French position of dominance.

2.1 Foundation of French Thought

The French intention when establishing an educational system, and the goals they hoped to reach, can only be understood within the context of the general French cultural ideologies of the time. When French Governor General Louis-Gabriel Angoulvant wrote in a 1908 letter of instruction to his civilian administrators in West Africa that, "it is our mission . . . to bring civilization, moral and social progress, [and] economic prosperity [to the West African peoples],"[34] he was not only referencing a transition from a conquest of land to a conquest of people, but also articulating an ethnocentric tendency for which the French, as a collective whole, are now famous.[35] The importance of General Angoulvant's comment lies both in its open proclamation of French goals, as well as in its more subtle confirmation of the French cultural ethnocentricities on which these goals were based. In order to understand the context that legitimized such a statement, one must consider the cultural parameter of the metropolis herself.

French colonization in West African began at a time when France was at once searching for a way to assert and maintain world power, as well as coming into a new intellectual era that advocated the advanced and superior nature of French thought,

[34] Louis-Gabriel Angoulvant, "*France and West Africa*," ed. John Hargreaves in Bruce Fetter, *Colonial Rule in Africa: Readings from Primary Sources* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1979), 84.

[35] The following discussion of French culture is not meant to suggest that all Frenchmen believed in the superiority of the French language, culture, or country. As Jerry Bolibaugh explains, however, based on French policy, one can infer that a good number of those in administrative positions adhered to, or believed somewhat in, varying degrees of French superiority.

culture and civilization. In what Jerry Bolibaugh describes as the development of a "national myth,"[36] France saw herself "not as a race or nation, but as a mature world of being and a sophisticated way of thought and action."[37] Such beliefs "established France as the standard-bearer of western civilization, a role inherited from Greece and Rome."[38] French culture was thus deemed "the exemplar of western achievement . . . " and as such, possessed "universal qualities that [rendered] it applicable anywhere."[39] Within this cultural framework, many French felt that as the bearers of civilization, it was their mission to convert into Frenchmen those they deemed barbarians.[40] Constructing the perception that the native peoples of West Africa were less advanced with no culture of their own, the French came to internalize and advocate their "civilizing mission" based on an altruistic platform that would better the lives of those they reached.

The French language also played a role in the formation of French cultural ideologies, which rendered a close, almost indistinguishable relationship between language and culture. Claiming that "French had replaced Latin as the international language [and that] French culture set the standards for European aristocrats, French was gaining international recognition as the highest expression of Western civilization."[41] In what can be seen as a manifestation of such beliefs, Hardy asks the question, "n'est il pas universellement admis que la langue française possède des vertus exceptionnelles, qu'elle est merveilleusement propre à l'expression des idées claires et des sentiments nobles et qu'elle est la langue même de la civilisation?"[42] When faced with those outside the realm of French civility then, language became the "key to [the] cultural assimilation of less civilized peoples."[43] Just as French military weapons worked to transform West African

[36] Jerry Bolibaugh, 71.
[37] Bolibaugh, 71.
[38] Bolibaugh, 71.
[39] Bolibaugh, 71.
[40] Michael Crowder, *A Study of French Assimilation Policy* (London: Methuen and Co., 1967), 2.
[41] Bolibaugh, 59.
[42] Hardy, 186. "is it not universally accepted that the French language possess exceptional virtues, that it is uniquely conducive to expressing lucid thoughts and noble feelings, and that it is the language of civilization itself? Translation mine.
[43] Bolibaugh, 59.

land into French territory, the French school would therefore disband the French language in order to transform what was considered inherently West African and uncivilized with the inherently French and civilized. According to the French, schools would be the main instrument through which French culture would be spread[44] because "there were no racial or cultural differences that education could not eliminate."[45] By the 1900s, after conquest turned to colonial development, education became the medium through which assimilationist goals were achieved.

2.2 Establishing French Education as a Tool for Assimilation

According to Blair, "a part from superficial commodities of western living, the most important changes effected during the period of colonization were due to the introduction of the French educational system."[46] Despite its importance, however, French education had modest beginnings and was slow to expand. The first steps were taken by European missionaries who, as a byproduct of the missionary resolve to spread Christianity, also introduced West Africans to French culture and beliefs. In an attempt to rid West Africa of what was viewed as barbaric practices such as sacrifice, polytheism, and cannibalism, missionaries preached values and practices according to Christian doctrine.[47] Coinciding with their lectures, missionaries also taught West Africans to read and write in European languages to enable them to read the teachings of the Bible. Because of the close missionary-tribal contact, West Africans were also introduced to other aspects of European life, such as "carpentry, masonry and printing."[48] As a result, early western education and progress became synonymous with Christianity, as missionary teachings

[44] Francis McNamara, *France in Black Africa* (Washington D.C: National Defense University, 1989), 128.
[45] Crowder, *A Study of French Assimilation Policy*, 2.
[46] Dorothy Blair, *African Literature in French* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 8.
[47] Crowder, *Colonial West Africa: Collected Essays* (London: Frank Cass, 1978), 10.
[48] Crowder, *Colonial West Africa: Collected Essays*, 10.

worked to "[destroy] much of the inherited traditional cultural values and institutions."[49] In a quote spoken more than a century later, Bishop Desmond Tutu looks back and reflects: "When [colonists] arrived, we had the land and they had the Bible. They taught us to close our eyes to pray, and when we opened them again, we had the Bible and they had the land."[50]

Missionaries may have laid the foundation for education as a means to assimilate the native culture, but Faidherbe solidified its development.[51] With his emphasis on creating French schools,[52] traditional West African education was increasingly replaced by formal French instruction.

2.3 Changing the Face of Education in Senegal

With the arrival of the new schools came a separation of school and life, taking children out of the community and placing them in schoolhouses. French schools, seen as the "the surest means of action by which a civilizing nation could transmit its ideas to people who were still primitive, and by which it could raise them gradually to the French standards,"[53] thus changed the face of education both in setting and context. In terms of setting, pre-colonial Senegalese education saw the "school and life [as] one."[54] Children learned in their everyday environment from both their parents and the community, who taught responsibilities according the age, sex and social standing of the child. Within the schoolhouse, however, all boundaries that once dictated educational responsibilities became blurred as children of all ages, social standings, and even sex learned the same

[49] Blair, 8.

[50] Alan Little, "A Frontier Between Civilizations," *BBC News* (March 13, 2005), UK Edition.

[51] See Appendix A for more on Faidherbe.

[52] Such as *Ecole mutuelle* de St. Louis in 1817, *Ecole des Otages* in 1847, Schools in Podor, Sedhiou, Dagana, Bakel, Dakar, Louga, Rufisque and Matam between 1857 and 1895, *Ecole Faidherbe* in 1903 and Pinet-Laprade vocational school in Dakar in 1903This list taken from Abdou Moumouni, *Education in Africa*, tr. Phyllis Nauts Ott (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1968), 34.

[53] Cited by Villard in Michael Crowder, *A Study of French Assimilation Policy*, 35).

[54] Abdou Moumouni, *Education in Africa*, tr. Phyllis Nauts Ott (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1968), 18.

lessons.

Contextually, pre-colonial, traditional education also differed greatly from the French-imposed style. Traditional education, which once responded to the social, political and economic conditions in pre-colonial West Africa, was transformed to respond to the conditions in France.[55] Educational responsibilities that were once allocated to both the parents and the community, with boys learning from the male members of society, while the female members educated the girls, were now placed solely on a formal educator. Further inverting the child/parent relationship, Hardy explains that the French hoped all West African children would assume the household role of instructor, educating their parents in line with French teachings.[56] In place of the context-based education that once taught boys to hunt and fish, and girls to cook and raise children, new educators provided teachings far removed from students' life experience. Many of these teachings even demanded Senegalese children to write essays on winter and learn to grow cherries,[57] while reciting history lessons about the noble French who ended slavery and who treat the West African as a brother.[58] Additionally, new lessons often replaced the emphasis of a strong tie to both the spiritual and natural world with lessons on French reason and philosophy. Unlike the new French schools that placed utmost stress on formal classroom instruction, traditional education greatly emphasized physical development as well as intellectual. To achieve this, children participated in physically active games to enhance the body's agility, endurance, physical resistance and ability to [be] used . . . in different circumstances and for different purposes."[59]

Along with the changing setting and context of French schools, children were also exposed to an education that succeeded in altering traditions. Rooted in an oral society, children who attended the French schools learned to function and rely on the written word to transmit information, rather than the spoken word. Additionally, children were no

[55] Moumouni, 15.
[56] Hardy, *Une Conquête Morale*, 49.
[57] This Information is taken from a lecture by Professor Lamine Kane, which I attended while in Senegal.
[58] Moumouni, 45.
[59] Moumouni, 21.

longer taught in their maternal tongue as French became their language of expression. Lastly, France's history replaced Senegal's, as Senegalese children recited adventures about their ancestors, the Gauls.[60]

2.4 Enrollment

Although French education plays an important role in Senegal's history, it did affect all Senegalese equally, or even simultaneously. Colonial education developed in four stages, each putting the Senegalese population in further contact with French thought and culture. The earliest stage spanned from Faidherbe's conquest until 1903. France, still more dedicated to procuring territory, focused less on mass education, as French instruction was allocated mostly to those Senegalese living within the four communes of Senegal (see figure one) and to the sons of local chiefs. As a result, only a small percent of children received French education. According to Abdou Moumouni, about seventy schools existed in the area, but with only about 2,500 students enrolled.[61] The goal then was not to provide equal education, but to create a small, educated elite that would one day be suitable for administrative roles.

Beginning around 1903 France had more time to devote to the implementation of their educational policy. Over the next few decades, education was defined more by an attempt to organize a definitive plan, rather than by a large increase in the number of students educated. While numbers of enrollees did climb, the overall percentage remained low. According to Gadjigo, in 1911 an estimated 20,000 out of a possible 11,000,000 eligible West Africans were enrolled.[62] During this phase, education focused mostly on preparing students for teaching positions in order to facilitate future expansion.

The period between World War I and World War II saw a greater change. During

[60] Blair, 8.
[61] Moumouni, 35.
[62] Gadjigo, 60.

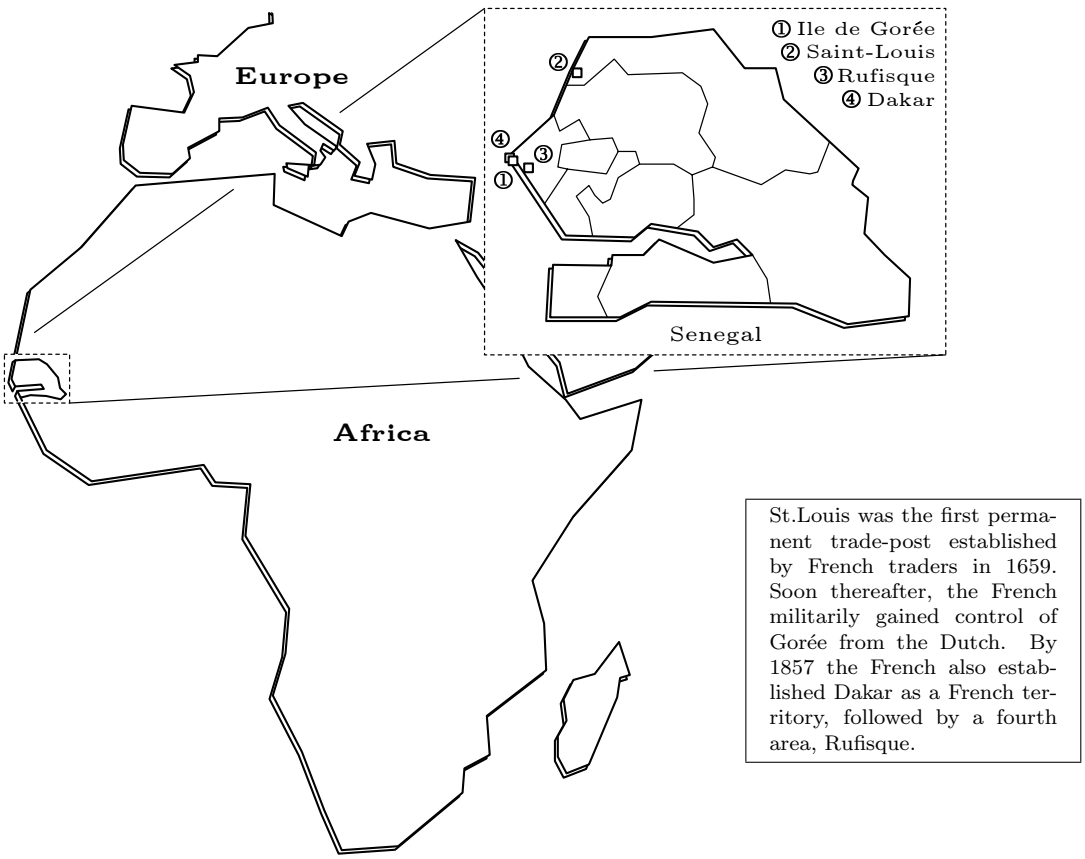

Figure 2.1: The Four Communes of Senegal.

this period, often defined by its trend toward mass rural education,[63] education moved further beyond the four communes, and their directly surrounding areas, to reach small villages and other isolated areas within Senegal's interior. According to government documents, Kelly reports that by 1937 enrollment rose to just over 57,000 students.[64]

By the time of Senegal's independence in 1960, enrollment had reached 28.8 percent of the school-aged population, and new schools continued to develop.[65] Besides an

[63] Peggy Sabatier, "Elite Education in French West Africa: The Era of Limits, 1903-1945," *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 11, 2 (1978): 247-266, 250.

[64] Gail Kelly, "Colonialism, Indigenous Society, and School Practices: French West Africa and Indochina, 1918-1939," in *Education and the Colonial Experience*, ed. Philip G. Altbach and Gail P. Kelly (New Brunswick: Transaction Books, 1984), 9.

[65] Helen Kitchen, ed, *The Educated African* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1962).

ever-increasing rate of enrollment, French education after independence took on another characteristic. A larger number of children, both rural and urban, who had previously grown up in the French system, were now having children of their own. Because of this, French education was able to reach those who had yet to even attend the schools.

2.5 Determining French Educational Goals

Although previous discussion recounts the changes resulting from France's implementation of a colonial school system, it barely accounts for the reasons motivating these changes, or why they were deemed imperative to the success of French colonial mission.

When determining French educational goals in West Africa, it is not sufficient to consider only those promoted by metropolis officials and law makers, who emphasized the French "civilizing mission" and the establishment of equality. For a variety of reasons, from inefficient organization to disagreement between colonial implementers and metropolis administrators, actual educational policy and curricula within the French colonies either did not reflect metropolis-stated objectives, or the stated objectives did not reflect the actual educational policy and curricula.[66] As a result, French educational goals and policy developed a fractured identity that on one level advocated the elevation of the West African *colonisé* to the ranks of French civility and equality, while on another level sought to secure French dominance through the subtle suppression and manipulation of West African pupils.[67]

[66] Bolibaugh, 88.

[67] I want to make clear that it is difficult to define *actual* French intentions and goals, for many Frenchmen honestly felt that French education would better the lives of those it touched. Despite this, there were other Frenchmen who opposed educating West Africans because creating an "African equal" would threaten their own positions of dominance. Based on studies of curricula, however, it appears that although there were those who truly believed in the integrity of education as part of a "mission civilatrice," the steps taken to achieve goals often pointed towards less philanthropic motivations.

2.5.1 Overt Goals

When Hardy claimed, "Nous avons agrandi leur verre, mais ils boivent dans leur verre,"[68] he essentially captured the outwardly projected sentiment surrounding French education in West Africa; namely, that although French education would altruistically provide pupils with a means for personal and social betterment, it would be the pupil who would benefit. His comment no doubly resulted from a French perspective that defined West Africans as inherently 'lazy in the body, lazy in sprit, and . . . conservative par excellence,' which, according to the French, helped explain their primitiveness and inability for unaided betterment.[69] Furthermore, the French saw West African reliance on religion and superstition over science and reason as rendering them morally inept and intellectually hindered. According to the French, West Africans were seen as living a withdrawn existence, detached from the outside world.[70] Since the French viewed social and geographical detachment as signs of savagery, the only possible route to civility was through the French themselves. As a result, many French honestly felt that West Africans needed French help because it was only through education that such their "faults" be corrected.

2.5.2 Covert Goals

Underneath proclamations that sought to establish an image of selfless, didactical objectives in West Africa, lay policies and strategies that reveal a metropolis conception of education as the ultimate tool to ensure *French* presence, as well as French economic and authoritarian goals.[71] Although Hardy reveals eight principles on which colonial education should be built—all of which promote health and economical benefits for the *indigène*—a closer look at educational strategies, organization and course curriculum

[68] Hardy, *Une Conquête Morale*, 272. "We have made larger their glass, but it is they who drink from within their glass." Translation mine.

[69] George Hardy, *L'enseignement au Sénégal de 1817 à 1854* (Paris: Emile Larose, 1920), 138. Note: sentences enclosed by (' ') means that I have directly translated what the author wrote from French.

[70] Hardy, *Une Conquête Morale*, 246.

[71] Bolibaugh, 74.

reveals the extent to which "the French [had] consciously employed their education system and language as an instrument of foreign and colonial policy . . . [and how] [t]hey . . . waged a persistent campaign to capture men's minds as the most enduring and complete means of ensuring the French presence, regardless of economic, political, and military events."[72]

In "'Elite' Education in French West Africa," Peggy Sabatier concludes that despite the colonial system's claims of equality and fraternity, the French "never intended to create indigenous elites who might effectively compete with them. . . "[73] Through limiting enrollment, constructing the West African curriculum, and channeling career opportunities,[74] the French were able to carry out an assimilatory policy that superficially preached equality and progress, but whose foundations were built upon promoting and perpetuating French objectives, ideologies and superiority. These aforementioned restrictions that characterized the inter-war period between World War I and World War II, provoked Sabatier to name this time the Era of Deliberate Limitations.[75] A further exploration of these limitations will thus work to provide evidence indicating France's goals when establishing its educational policy in West Africa.

Limiting enrollment

The French school system, although born from ethnocentric ideologies that projected an image of a benevolent "mission civilisatrice," was often shaped by a metropolis fear that education, if unregulated, would undermine French dominance by producing a self-deterministic West African mass. In order "to prevent education from becoming an instrument of social upheaval,"[76] the French sought to create a system that would indoctrinate a small percentage of West African students with French ideologies, while simultaneously attempting to mitigate the possibility for self-determinism, feelings of up-

[72] Bolibaugh, 73.
[73] Sabatier, 248.
[74] Sabatier, 254.
[75] Sabatier, 254.
[76] Jean Suret-Canale in Robert Johnson, "Education Change in Francophone Africa," *The Journal of Negro Education* 6, 3 (Summer, 1987): 256-281, 267.

rootedness, rejection of French education, or revolt. By targeting only a segment of the population, the French could more effectively focus their attempt to mold a Senegalese identify that did not simply "imitate French culture," but adopted it as their own.[77] As Frenchmen, educated West Africans could act in place of French administrators, while still directly implementing French wishes based on French social, political and economical ideologies. In essence, this form of assimilation allowed the French, who are often associated with a direct rule over colonies, to develop a system of *indirect-direct* rule; although the child turned administrator was born of Senegal, education would program him to think and rule Senegal as a Frenchman.

Constructing the West African Curriculum

Depending on perspective and historiographical evolution, France's colonial curriculum has been described in dramatically different ways. Some claim the curriculum adapted education to meet the needs of the students, while others feel it was manipulated to meet the needs of those behind its creation. A third point of view argues that it reproduced verbatim the curricula available in France. New studies suggest, however, that colonial education was born of all three. Designed to prime, mold and cultivate the desired effects, the French incorporated within the curriculum certain West African traditions, such as folklore, while manipulating subject matter to fit French needs. Based on an analysis of colonial texts, Gail Kelly concludes that although French schools taught local children about their own societies through a curriculum tailored to their context, what was included and excluded within these colonial texts was carefully chosen propaganda.[78]

Unlike French educational policy in either Indochina or their "New World" colonies, West African students were taught solely in French with little regard to native languages. As Kelly explains, students spent their first years mastering their new language, intensely

[77] Sabatier, 260.

[78] Gail P. Kelly, "The Presentation of Indigenous Society in the Schools of French West African and Indochina," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 26, 3 (July, 1984): 523-542.

focused on oral communication.[79] Pre-dating linguistic theorists Edward Sapir's and Benjamin Whorf's hypothesis that questions linguistic relativity, this curriculum no doubt reflected the French colonial notion that culture could be transmitted through language and language pre-determined thought.[80] In order to more fully realize assimilationist goals, it thus became necessary for the French to promote, and even enforce, their language over those native to West Africa.

In order to avoid verbalism and reduce the likelihood of the aforementioned dangers of education, language lessons remained progressive. In the earliest stages French was to remain as "simple autant qu'il est possible, et limité à l'expression d'idées courantes, à la désignation d'objets usuels, sans raffinement de syntaxe et sans prétentions à l'élégance."[81] Only those students deemed capable of fully adopting French ideologies would be allowed lessons facilitating mastery of the French language.

History, more than a technique to recount the past, became a tool to reprogram the West African pupil's understanding of the past. Educational policy thus advocated that history lessons stress that when French ships arrived on the shores of Senegal, the white man entered into a 'poor country, ravaged by tyrants, and robbed by slave traders.' Upon her arrival, however, 'France imposed a peace that reached far and wide by halting raids and the slave-trade, while also extending culture and building hospitals.'[82] According to the 1914 official plan of education, history was broken down into three parts. The first section would focus solely on French power by teaching students the phases of

[79] Kelly, *The Presentation of Indigenous Society*, 529. This concentration was to prepare students for jobs as translators for French administrators.

[80] The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis states that language is the means of expression and that "no two languages are ever sufficiently similar to be considered as representing the same social reality. The worlds in which different societies live are distinct world, not merely the same world with different labels attached. . . we see and hear and otherwise experience very largely as we do because the language habits of our community predispose certain choices of interpretation." To learn more about the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis see Benjamin Whorf, *Language, Thought and Reality* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1956).

[81] Hardy, *Une Conquête Morale*, 53. ". . . as simple as possible, and limited to the expression of everyday ideas and to the designation only of everyday objects. No emphasis would be placed on the refinement of syntax or elegant presentation." Translation mine.

[82] Hardy, *Une Conquête Morale*, 240. Note: sentences enclosed by (' ') means that I have directly translated what the author wrote from French.

French development and her place in the world. The second phase, although focusing on pre-colonial West African history, would center lessons on the instability of the black monarchs and the invasion by Arabs, who cruelly raided West African tribes in search of slaves. The cruelty of the Arab invaders would then be directly juxtaposed with the peace of the French colonist, who advocated progress and harmony among tribes. In the final section, West African students would learn the history of civilization as a whole, showing the progression of alimentation, habitation, clothing, modern tools, the struggles against maladies and finally moral, intellectual and social progress.[83] In the words of Hardy himself, the historical curriculum would serve to:

> . . . [rejoindre] les traditions locales, il rectifie les légendes que des personnages intéressés ont mises en circulation, il se tient à l'abri des mots creux et met en présence des résultats tangibles ; et il aboutit ainsi, non seulement à intéresser l'enfant, mais à lui faire aimer notre œuvre et à lui communiquer le sens et le goût du progrès.[84]

Geography was another discipline within the colonial curriculum that sought to raise West African children in the French image. While children were taught general geography of both West Africa and France, their lessons centered less on depicting topography, focusing instead on subliminal visual cues that favored the geography of France over that of West Africa. As Hardy explains, descriptions of France's fertile, open fields, bustling, progressive towns, and the overall contented nature of her people were privileged over depictions of stagnant, primitive and limiting images that the French presented through West African space.[85] As a result, geography lessons incorporated metonymical speech that employed aesthetic images of France to symbolically promote French ideologies.

Geography, just as history and language, thus subtly worked to undo any negative images of the colonizer that could be seen as hypocritical or contradictive. In their place,

[83] The official Plan for education, May 1, 11914, cited in Hardy, *Une Conquête Morale*, 242.

[84] Hardy, *Une Conquête Morale*, 243. "... reach local traditions, rectify legends that concerned people put into circulation, replace empty words with tangible results, and thus succeed not only to keep the interest of the child, but to make him/her favorable to our work. Additionally, it will serve to both communicate to him/her the meaning of progress while providing a taste for progress." Translation mine.

[85] Hardy, *Une Conquête Morale*, 249.

French education presented carefully constructed representation designed to foster an amicable rapport between the colonizer and the colonized. These images, it was hoped, would eradicate the possibility of education becoming a danger, while still promoting France's colonial goals.

Although children learned only in French and often focused on Francocentric history and geography lessons, students also received education related to indigenous culture.[86] As Kelly points out, however, that education emphasized *Africaness* or identity based on *blackness* rather than on the distinct peoples of West Africa.[87] The new French schools thus presented to its pupils a West African identity that was not diverse and independent, but characterized as an "amorphous black mass."[88] According to historians like Kelly, manipulating identity in this fashion left French presence less vulnerable to West African resistance. Once West African pupils accepted an identity based on French ideologies, they would not only cease to reject French presence, but advocate it as well.

Part of the French educational policy and colonial curriculum appeared to adapt lessons to a West African context, while surreptitiously depicting West African society in a manner consistent with the French beliefs. As such, texts may have been describing the norms of West African society, but that description depicted West African society as overall "lacking in history, identity and coherence."[89] In addition, texts used to describe and teach West African culture and custom proved anthropological in nature, written by the French for the French. On one level, educational texts remained either neutral or positive when describing West African children or culture and avoided "labeling them as backward."[90] Although the texts would reference troubles in West Africa's past, including slavery, the French were careful to transfer blame away from themselves and onto the

[86] Kelly, "The Presentation of Indigenous Society," 530.

[87] Senegal is a country teaming with diversity with many distinct ethnic groups that speak over 36 languages. Today, the Wolof of Senegal make up the majority at over 40 percent of the population, the Pular make up more than 20 twenty percent of the population, while the Serer comprise just under 15 percent. *CIA World Fact book*, 2005.

[88] Kelly, "The Presentation of Indigenous Society," 530.

[89] Kelly, "The Presentation of Indigenous Society," 535.

[90] Kelly, "The Presentation of Indigenous Society," 533.

long-established Arab culture.[91] In addition, texts avoided mention of West African institutions, such as government, while idealizing the West African educated elite. On another level, these same texts aimed to justify French involvement in West Africa by showing that hegemony, especially French hegemony, was natural and desirable. As such, texts hoped to avert West African objection to French rule.

In reference to contextual adaptation, the French often employed traditional West African means of communication, such as folklore, in creating their colonial texts. By encapsulating the ideals of French imperialism within a recognizable West African form, the French were able to use West African tradition to their advantage. Folklore, therefore, was used to more easily promote French ideologies because it was a genre more palatable for West African pupils.

Despite the appearance of tailoring education to fit the needs of its pupils, lessons continually depicted "blacks, not nations or societies. It denied the existence of indigenous political and social institutions; instead, the schools presented the individual black existing within a French-created geographical entity – *cercle*, *colonie*, or *region* – while neglecting the peoples of Africa."[92] Administrators recognized that such measures were necessary in order to operate under the pretense of *right* and not simply circumstance. The French therefore, did what they could to avoid the ingredients that would make a united political culture because "a shared political culture might possibly be generated by, or form in reaction to ... the schools. The schools thus avoided making too many distinctions between Africans and French, between France and Africa, between Africa of the past and Africa under the French, or between primitive and modern."[93]

[91] With the spread of Islam into West Africa came the establishment of Quranic schools. Although the French deemed the Quaranic schools to be formal educational institutions, they never made reference to them in the class texts.

[92] Kelly, "The Presentation of Indigenous Society," 540.

[93] Kelly, "The Presentation of Indigenous Society," 542.

Channeling Career Opportunities

In addition to controlling education through the control over curriculum and limited student enrollment, the French also channeled career opportunities. Job possibilities remained limited as training followed a determined path. Education would equip pupils with the knowledge necessary only for particular occupations, such as local teachers and translators.[94] By channeling careers, the French would be able to control who was able to fill what position. As a result, they hoped to prevent the possibility of West Africans gaining too much authority.

Despite the facade, the motivation for bringing French education to Senegal was not as altruistic as some may have believed, or had wanted to believe. Although many French sincerely felt that they were in fact bestowing upon the West Africans a gift of culture, the ways in which administrators worked to create and control education in West Africa serves as evidence of France's contradicting desires. The French, desiring a rise of empire, aspiring to foster market security and extend French culture, saw education as a vehicle through which their goals could be met.

Although the French preached equality and vowed to avoid the racism that plagued their "New World" colonies, their educational limitations proved that they never intended to create competitive West African equals. Education was thus a tool to advance French colonial aims, not a means for West African advantage. By slowly introducing students to French language and philosophies, policy makers hoped to create a West African solidarity that was interested in the French national action rather than one opposed to it.[95] Additionally, the adapted French curriculum was not meant to benefit West African pupils by teaching them that which was applicable to their context, but reversely attempted to manipulate the African context in order to more easily manufacture a predetermined outcome. In Hardy's own words, the colonial schools were designed to help: "les enfants à comprendre la nécessité du progrès et les détacher des routines

[94] Blair, 8.
[95] Bolibaugh, 66.

dangereuses . . . d'améliorer la vie indigène, surtout dans ses conditions matérielles . . . [et puis] que l'école . . . soit un instrument de moralisation et de loyalisme."[96] In other words, education was meant to promote the overtly established goals of the French "civilizing mission," while simultaneously beginning to mold the West African identity according to French intentions.

Despite the rupture from tradition, the French educational system enjoyed preliminary success in that it produced a limited number of "educated" Africans who conformed to French ideological changes. In addition French administrators, both in Senegal and the metropolis, saw a West African population seemingly accepting of their French-educated elites and the general status quo of colonial life.[97] But the inter-war period of the twentieth-century saw French schools expand to the rural areas, directly exposing a greater number of Senegalese to French education. Slowly more outstanding, young intellectuals left their homes in Senegal to complete their education in metropolitan France. This move opened the door to the very thing the French had feared most and had worked to prevent, namely, West African self-determinism.

Whether the fault of arrogance, ignorance or earnest belief, the paradoxical characteristics of assimilation through education taught equality and freedom to a people that the French fundamentally defined by their position as inferior and colonized. As products of French education, many West African pupils were left feeling uprooted and displaced; they were not French as their preliminary studies had taught them, but they were not solely West African in the same way as were their ancestors before the coming of the French. They were both. They were "east" and "west," hybrids caught between two worlds. The irony of the situation in which French-educated Africans were left came

[96] Hardy, *Une Conquête Morale*, 53-54. "the children to understand the necessity of progress while detaching them from dangerous habits . . . to better everyday life, specifically with material conditions . . . that the . . . school is an instrument of moralization and fosters loyalty." Translation mine.

[97] Sabatier credits the success of French educational policy to three factors: First, throughout their active attempts at colonization France maintained strict control both within and outside the original four communes. Second, the instruction itself acted as convincing propaganda, praising the "glories of French history" and civilization. Lastly, pupils were rewarded for their efforts with higher paying jobs and social prestige. Sabatier, 265.

to a head in the cafés of the metropolis herself, as "radical" and "active" African thought and literature gave birth to negritude.[98]

2.6 La Négritude

What began in 1920's Paris as an intellectual movement among displaced Africans reached revolutionary proportions by the 1960s. The negritude movement, known as *la négritude*, proclaimed that Africans, regardless of their place of residence, shared a common struggle resulting from a similar history. Their blackness was not a mark of inferiority, but a symbol of a culture and history of which they should be proud. Embracing it as such would create and re-create a black identity free of French imposed definitions and influence. The credited fathers, Senegal's Léopold Sédar Senghor, Martinique's Aimé Césaire and French Guyana's Leo-Gontran Damas, thus provided an outlet through which French-educated blacks could articulate and react to their experiences, while redefining and reclaiming an evolving identity. The proponents of *la négritude* expressed themselves through the written word, most often in the form of poetry. Concerning education, Guy Tirolien wrote in a 1943 poem titled "Prayer of a Little Negro Child":

Seigneur je suis très fatigué
Je suis né fatigué.
Et j'ai beaucoup marché depuis le chant du coq
Et le morne est bien haut qui mène à leur école.
Seigneur, je ne veux plus aller à leur école,
Faites, je vous en prie, que je n'y aille plus.
Je veux suivre mon père dans les ravines fraches
Quand la nuit flotte encore dans le mystère des bois
Où glissent les esprits que l'aube vient chasser.
Je veux aller pieds nus par les rouges sentiers
Que cuisent les flammes de midi,
Je veux dormir ma sieste au pied des lourds manguiers,
Je veux me réveiller
Lorsque là-bas mugit la sirène des blancs
Et que l'Usine
Sur l'océan des cannes
Comme un bateau ancré
Vomit dans la campagne son équipage nègre...
Seigneur, je ne veux plus aller à leur école,

[98] As pointed out by Miller in *Nationalists and Nomads* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998) 2, 9-55, the Negritude movement should not be seen as the beginning of an African intellectual response, but rather the culmination of thought. There were other important contributors, such as Tovalou Houénou and Lamine Senghor, who preceded the well known fathers of the defined movement.

Faites, je vous en prie, que je n'y aille plus.
Ils racontent qu'il faut qu'un petit nègre y aille
Pour qu'il devienne pareil
Aux messieurs de la ville
Aux messieurs comme il faut.
Mais moi je ne veux pas
Devenir, comme ils disent,
Un monsieur de la ville,
Un monsieur comme il faut.
Je préfère flâner le long des sucreries
Où sont les sacs repus
Que gonfle un sucre brun autant que ma peau brune.
Je préfère vers l'heure ou la lune amoureuse
Parle bas à l'oreille des cocotiers penchés
Ecouter ce que dit dans la nuit
La voix cassée d'un vieux qui raconte en fumant
Les histoires de Zamba et de compère Lapin
Et bien d'autres choses encore
Qui ne sont pas dans les livres.
Les nègres, vous le savez, n'ont que trop travaillé.
Pourquoi faut-il de plus apprendre dans des livres
Qui nous parlent de choses qui ne sont point d'ici ?
Et puis elle est vraiment trop triste leur école,
Triste comme
Ces messieurs de la ville,
Ces messieurs comme il faut
Qui ne savent plus danser le soir au clair de lune
Qui ne savent plus marcher sur la chair de leurs pieds
Qui ne savent plus conter les contes aux veillées.
Seigneur, je ne veux plus aller à leur école.[99]

In his exemplary poem, Tirolien emotionally expresses a first-person account of an African child who does not want to attend the French schools. The schools, he writes, teach things that are not from his home. The schools are depicted as a sad place, as are the men who attend them. These men have forgotten how to dance and how to walk with their skin touching the earth. The young boy would prefer to follow his father, to enjoy afternoon breaks and to walk barefoot once again.

As epitomized above, the poetry that spawned from *la négritude* differed from earlier works as Mapaté Diagne's *Les trios volontés de Malic*.[100] Rather than cautiously

[99] Guy Tirolien, "*Prière d'un petit enfant nègre*," in A*nthologie de la nouvelle poésie nègre et malgache de langue française* (Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1972), 86.

[100] Early Senegalese writers in French published books that conformed to and praised French ideologies and involvement in West Africa. An early example is Ahmadou Mapat Diagne's *Les trois volontés de Malic* (Malic's three wishes), the first Senegalese novel written in French. Convinced of the superiority and merits of the French educational system, Diagne's book follows a young Senegalese boy who wishes to attend a French school. He convinces his reluctant mother that times are changing and he can only benefit from the education offered at the new schools. Within the pages of his book, Diagne also praises the exploits of General Faidherbe and describes the colonizers as possessing nothing but good intentions. The development of West African works that moved from colonial limits will be discussed further in chapter two

staying within colonial limits, negritude poetry not only questioned the French and colonization, but openly resisted and condemned both. In addition, these works allowed for an African perspective among a sea of French colonial discourse. With the inspired beginnings of *la négritude*, which worked to destroy the myth of white superiority, generations of francophone African writers told their stories from their perspectives, revealing varying African thoughts and opinions on the white visitors who attempted to make Senegal, and the world, their own.

From poetry additional genres emerged equally marked by the influences of the negritude movement. Among other forms, the novel crossed from France to West Africa, lending itself to West African expression. Through the African novel in French, Francophone African writers spoke to the world in what has been described as the empire writing back.[101] These novels not only presented and problematized the West African struggle of hybridity, but rejected Eurocentric interpretations of history.

The French took great precautions to avoid creating an uprooted, displaced people that would question its presence and lessons of inferiority. Despite this, their goals to use education as a tool for assimilation were subverted as education became a tool for West African independence. Now, armed with the same intellectual means as their colonizers, West Africans were able to express themselves in the very way the French had hoped to suppress. With the effects of the negritude movement permeating beyond poetry into every facet of cultural and political life, all written expressions developed into a platform for substantive mimicry.[102] For the West African writer, the novel thus became allegorical in both form and function expressing an evocation of their story.

[101] Bill Ashcroft et al, *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-colonial Literature* (London: Routledge, 1989).

[102] L.H.M Ling, "Cultural Chauvinism and the Liberal International Order: 'West versus Rest' in Asias Financial Crisis." In G. Chowdhry and S. Nair (eds), *Power, Postcolonialism, and International Relations: Reading Race, Gender, Class* (London: Routledge, 2000): 115-141. The author defines substantive mimicry as, "a cumulative strategy of integrated, more coherent problemsolving, producing a hybrid sense of Self *and* Other. Arising from the interstices of contending worldviews, substantive mimicry fosters learning that draws on the cultural richness of mélange multiplicity without miring the problemsolver in its divisive differences," 117.

Chapter 3

Defining the Novel as a Means to Interpret History: Identifying the Function and Form of the African Novel in French

> "The herald of the black soul has passed through the white schools... It is from the shock of the white culture that his Negritude passed from immediate existence to the state of reflection."[103]
> —*Jean-Paul Sartre*

When the French governor to Senegal, Baron Jacques Roger, decided to publish a book of fables that he translated from Wolof to French,[104] he was met by an excited western audience thirsty for tales from the exotic. Yet when native Senegalese attempted to produce literature in French, their work was often met with skepticism of authenticity. Feeling they lacked the objective perspective a French author would possess, Debra Anderson posits that early African writings became another area of European colonization.[105] Like Diagne's *Les Trois volontés de Malic* (1920), for Senegalese writing to be positively recognized, it had to propagate the benefits of French colonialism. The

[103] Jean-Paul Sartre cited in Jack, *Negritude and Literary Criticism* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1996), 67
[104] The maternal language spoken by the majority of Senegalese.
[105] Debra Anderson, *Decolonizing the Text* (New York: Peter Lang, 1995), 2.

French, always fearful of an African self-determinism that would question the French "right" to rule, viewed "African writers whose works conformed to the definition of colonial literature . . . as proof of the success of France's civilizing process and the success of the assimilation process."[106]

With the spread of the negritude movement and the growing desire to reclaim a unique history and identity, however, West African writers moved beyond the imposed limits of French colonialism to use written texts to react to the French colonizers. Basing their stories in history and personal circumstance, characters and plots reached beyond entertainment to embody a didactic purpose or teaching. Through altered novelistic writings, West Africans began to voice their reactions to and interpretations of a history long told according to French construction.[107] As a result, the novel became "an offshoot of a weapon in the struggle against colonialism,"[108] providing an outlet for expression that French education never intended to create. Based mutually on its reactionary function and defining style characteristics, the African novel thus began to serve both as a metaphor for Negritude doctrine and a viable means to view history.

In order to more completely recognize the African novel in French as a viable means to interpret historical experience, a solid understanding of both its function and characteristics is necessary. As such, the following discussion has been divided into three sections, each designed to facilitate understanding of its use as an historical tool, while providing preliminary examples using Kane's *L'aventure ambiguë* and Sow Fall's *L'appel des arènes*. The first section will explore the evolutionary function of the African novel in French, from propagating French colonization to reacting against it, in order to emphasize its focus on the historical and its usefulness in providing historical perspective. The second section will analyze the shared objectives, themes and style characteristics typifying the African novel in French in order to reveal the ways in which form reinforced

106 Belinda E. Jack, *Negritude and Literary Criticism* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1996), 22.

107 In this sense, "altered" refers to those characteristics of novels by African writers that did not parallel those of their European counterparts.

108 A.C Brench, *Writing in French from Senegal to Cameroon* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), 2.

function to make the novel allegorical on both a figurative and formal level. The third section will directly juxtapose the novel with "accredited" histories in order to minimize the differences separating literary narratives and historical narratives, thus solidifying the novel as an equally valid and important historical tool.

3.1 Evolutionary Function of the African Novel

Mostly a society rooted in oral tradition, the novel was introduced to West Africans alongside the colonizer and his school system. The novel, as Europeans had come to define it, followed strict syntactical rules of complex plots and fictional prose, which varied from a traditional African oracular style of metaphoric allegories. Perhaps as a result of this difference, the novel did not take hold in West Africa as a means of expression until the 1950s.[109] As the negritude movement was inspired by and perpetuated the reclamation of traditional values, the novel increasingly functioned as another medium through which West Africans could react to their situation.[110] The evolution of the African novel in French has thus led academics like Ihechukwu Madubuike to define African novels as belonging to one of three separate phases: the first began in the early nineteen hundreds and lasted until roughly 1930, thus preceding the timeframe of the Negritude movement; the second phase, which temporally corresponds to the Negritude movement, began in the 1930s as more Africans left their homes to study in the universities of France, and it lasted until the 1960s.[111] The final period defined by Madubuike began with the emergence of novels less influenced by the ideals propagated by the Negritude movement, but that focused more "on the exploitation of the African masses."[112]

Belonging to Madubuike's first group, the earliest African novels to appear in French

[109] Dorthey Blair, *African Literature in French* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 182.

[110] While poetry was the main form of Negritude expression, the novel facilitated an African reaction that moved beyond just the cultural boundaries to which poetry often remained and included political and economic responses as well.

[111] Ihechukwu Madubuike, "The politics of assimilation, the novel in Senegal," *African Studies Review* 18, 2 (September, 1975): 89-99.

[112] Madubuike, 89.

often applauded the progressive accomplishments made by the French and French education, as exemplified by Diagne's *Les Trois volontés de Malic*. As a rule, these works were welcomed by the French colonizers who viewed the texts as written proof of their success in West Africa, and specifically in Senegal. Undesired by, if not unbeknownst to the French proponents of a French educational policy in Senegal, the literature that praised the French system in accordance to plan would soon evolve into a means to question, if not reject that same system. Through exploring, problemetizing and reclaiming black identity, the African novel in French began to function as a means to react to colonization and the colonial situation, and would eventually evolved into a style that "s'inscrit dans une vision idéaliste"[113] to expose "les problèmes du jour."[114]

The first category of novels to part from pro-colonial writings and challenge the French system appeared in the mid 1950s, several years before Senegalese independence. Home to Kane's *L'aventure ambiguë*, novels of this category were often directly influenced by the negritude movement and therefore sought to explore, problematize and reclaim black identity as preached by negritude doctrine. Under the backdrop of colonial rule these works frequently followed an African child's journey to adulthood in order to explore the clash of culture that resulted from the introduction of the French schools.[115] Consequentially, these novels provoked historical understanding of colonial history from a new angle by providing an anti-colonial West African perspective. In providing a medium through which colonized peoples could depart from colonial constructions and voice West African historical interpretations, colonial understandings, educational motivations and agency, colonial writings increasingly became a medium through which to view historical experience.

Another category of African novels in French came after independence, which Senegal won in 1960. While still addressing many of the same issues explored in colonial

[113] Aminata Sow Fall in Médoune Guèye, "Écriture développement et féminisme, " *The Literary Griot* 12, 2, (Fall 2000): 44-59, 51. "To inscribe in an idealist vision. . . " Translation mine.

[114] Guèye, "Écriture développement et féminisme," 52. "everyday problems." Translation mine.

[115] J.P Little, "Autofiction and Cheikh Hamidou Kane's *L'aventure ambiguë*," *Research in African Literatures* 31, 2, (Summer 2000): 71-82.

literature, these texts focused specifically on problems relevant to a country and a people dealing with the prolonged effects from decades of direct French rule. Exemplified by Sow Fall's *L'appel des arènes*, these post-independence novels continued to focus on a child's journey, but conflict is moved away from the colonial school directly, focusing instead around "the Western-educated second generation of Africans in their role as parents."[116] As such, post-independent novels moved beyond colonial works to answer questions concerning the nature of independence, both politically and culturally. As Sow Fall states, "c'est ce genre de questions qu'on doit se poser, mais malheureusement on ne les pose pas et pourtant ce sont des questions qui sont en filigrane dans toute la production littéraire africaine post-indépendance."[117]

As it evolved the African novel in French thus provided an insider's perspective on the issues relevant to a people who emerged from colonization to an independent nation marked by the effects of a colonial past. In reacting to the circumstances of each respective environment, both colonial and post-colonial novels in French functioned a means to react to colonialism and reclaim disappearing traditional values. In responding to the colonial and post-colonial situation, these novels thus provide a unique African perspective on a history overwhelmingly understood from western constructions.

3.2 Characterizing the African Novel in French: Objectives, Themes and Style Characteristics

Paralleling Sow Fall's statement describing the writer as "d'abord le reflet de ce qu'il est, le reflet de son milieu, [et] le reflet de son temps,"[118] the novel, like its writer, naturally evolved with the transformation from a colonized Senegal to one of independence. Despite

[116] Odile Cazenave, "Gender, Age and Reeducation," *Africa Today*, 3rd Quarter (1991): 54-62, 54.

[117] Aminata Sow Fall in Guèye, "Écriture développement et féminisme," 52. "It is these questions that need to be asked, but unfortunately are not being asked; and yet they are the questions implicit in post-independence African literature." Translation mine.

[118] Guèye, "Écriture développement et féminisme," 47. The writer is "first the reflection of what s/he is, the reflection of her/his environment, and the reflection of her/his time." Translation mine.

this evolution, however, novels from both the colonial and post colonial period continued to share many characteristics. In form African novels, like the language in which they were written, took something that was once a French means of marginalization and evolved it into a tool of West African advantage. Void of defining characteristics attributed to the French novel,[119] the African novel in French thus included shared objectives, themes, and style characteristics that, through form, reinforced its function as a tool in the struggle against colonialism and the continued effects first introduced by colonization.

3.2.1 Shared Objectives Among African Novels in French

A reoccurring objective classifying the African novel can be found in its engaged response to social situations. Differing most greatly from the style of its European counterparts, African novels reacted to colonialism by valorizing traditional African ethics and beliefs through the rejection of typical Western ideologies and assumptions.[120] In *L'aventure ambiguë* Kane describes a scene where a Senegalese character, known only as *le fou*, or 'the Fool,' leaves the only land he has ever known for France. After a description of his first moments inside a Parisian debarkation hall, the Fool expresses his thoughts as he leaves the confines of the building and sees the streets of Paris for the first time:

> L'asphalte... Mon regard parcourait toute l'étendue et ne vit pas de limite à la pierre. Là-bas, la glace du feldspath, ici, le gris clair de la pierre, ce noir mat de l'asphalte. Nulle part la tendre mollesse d'une terre nue. Sur l'asphalte dur, mon Oreille exacerbée, mes yeux avides guettèrent, vainement, le tendre surgissement d'un pied nu. Alentour, il n'y avait aucun pied. Sur la carapace dure, rien que le claquement d'un millier de coques dures.

[119] Blair, 182.
[120] Madubuike, 88-89.

L'homme n'avait-il plus de pieds de chair?[121]

In accordance with the novelistic objective to value traditional West African ethics and beliefs through the rejection of typical French ideologies and assumptions, the Fool's description of earth and feet can be seen as a metaphor for the difference between an industrial world that values the material and a spiritual world understood and valued based on its innate qualities. Unlike the traditional Senegalese culture, Paris' industrial culture exists separate from the natural and spiritual world. This separation is presented as both literal and symbolic as their feet, representative of the French being, are severed from the earth by shoes and man-made ground. Even with the connection he once knew, the Fool finds himself in disconnect both literally and psychologically in a land constituted by a life-style—and the implied values it embodies—that is so different from his own. Captured by the Fool's shock, the material partition between earth and man symbolizes a dehumanization that separates France and Senegal by more than physical space. By way of metaphor, the Fool thus illuminates differences between his two worlds. In emphasizing the unattractiveness of Paris, the Fool subtly devalues the French life-style and values. Because his reaction is based on a comparison to his own culture and country, he is able to indirectly preference Senegal's traditional values over those of the metropolis. Through his disbelief and use of dull, colorless adjectives to describe Paris, he is thus able discursively question the once emphasized superiority of French ideologies and values that were taught to Senegalese pupils.

Another example of how the African novel in French aimed to value the "traditional" over the "French imposed" emerges when comparing the following two descriptions of Paris, one written by Kane, the other in a Parisian guidebook.

[121] Cheikh Hamidou Kane, *L'aventure ambigu* (Julliard: Paris, 1961), 103. "The asphalt. . . my gaze traversed the entire extent of what lay before me, and I saw no limit to the stony surface: down there, the icy feldspar, here the light grey of the stone, the dull black of the asphalt; nowhere the tender softness of the bare earth. On the hard asphalt, my exacerbated ears and my eager eyes were vainly on the look-out for the soft upheaval of earth from a naked foot. There was no foot anywhere around me. On the hard carapace, there was only the clattering of thousands of hard shells. Had men no longer feet of flesh?" Translation by Katherine Woods, L'aventure ambiguë (Oxford: Heinemann Educational Publishers, 1963), 91.

> Western: Paris... the name is synonymous with high style. France's storied capital is one of the world's most captivating cities, brimming over with art, culture and history. Nestled serenely on the banks of the River Seine, Paris offers a compact network of quaint streets sprinkled with trendy cafés, bars and restaurants.[a]
>
> Kane : Paris "ces rues sont nues... non, elles ne sont pas vides. On y rencontre des objets de chairs, ainsi que des objets de fer. A part cela, elles sont vides. Ah ! on y rencontre aussi des événements. Leur consécution encombre le temps, comme les objets encombrent la rue."[b]

[a] Eurobound, Inc. *Paris Guide*, Los Angeles (2001-2003).

[b] Kane, 131. Paris "its streets are bare... no, they are not empty. One meets objects of flesh, as well as objects of metal. Apart from that, they are empty. Ah! One also encounters events. Their succession congests time, like the objects that congest the street." Translation by Katherine Woods, 128.

Characterizing the western description, the portrayal emphasizes Paris' culture and history, a topic of praise in French colonial propaganda. Interestingly, however, culture and history are not mentioned in the perspective offered by Kane's novel. Instead Paris' "quaint streets" are contrastingly described as naked of substance. Although there are objects of both flesh and metal within the space, they represent a dehumanization that leaves the streets metaphorically empty. Additionally, Kane's narrative refers to successional, perfunctory events inferentially described as being preformed in response to overly rational instincts that are void of human feeling or thought.[122] The miserableness projected through Kane's description offers a metaphor that further serves to emphasize a rejection of French ideologies in favor of the traditional. When Kane's novel presents empty images of a city that has previously been characterized by its physical charm, it further depicts a dehumanized world detached from harmony with nature.[123] Through his description of a "naked" Paris, Kane's narrative takes readers from a world inferred as alive (Senegal) to a world hollowed of such a description. Here, the harmony and spirituality incarnate to Senegal are replaced by materialism and rationalization as Paris, in all by the physical sense, is void of the necessary characteristics that make people human.

Like Kane, Sow Fall also advocates the traditional by valuing the 'Senegalese' over the 'French' in her novel. In a conversation between Nalla and his teacher, Monsieur

[122] John Erickson, "Cheikh Hamidou Kane's L'aventure ambiguë," *Yale French Studies* 53 (1976): 92-101.

[123] Brench, 103.

Niang, the teacher says:

> Tiens, petit! Tu vois cela! Le plus grand bouleversement jamais vu dans une ville surdéveloppée. Toute vie bloquée, devine pourquoi!... A cause d'une panne d'électricité... Au fond, il me semble qu'on est toujours esclave de quelque chose: eux de leur technologie, nous de notre pauvreté. Chez mon père, aucune ampoule ne brille la nuit, mais tu sais, on s'en moque là-bas, de l'électricité et même si on n'a pas tout le confort, on vit bien. Alors qui est plus heureux? ... Evidemment nous souffrons peut-être plus de nos pénuries qu'eux de leurs surplus... Mais dans l'ensemble qui est plus heureux? Chez nous, le fond de l'homme n'est pas encore mort... Qui est le plus heureux?[124]

In a fashion typical of post-independence writing, Sow Fall more boldly asks the questions that openly challenge French influence and the changes it initially brought through colonial contact. The teacher's reference to *une ville surdéveloppée* (overdeveloped city) embodies the comparable perspectives between French culture and that of traditional Senegal. His comment not only makes reference to a city that is forming according to French ideals, but to its citizens as well. While Monsieur Niang realizes that life is not perfect, no matter what the situation, he also understands that poverty is not in the lack of possessions, but in the lack of necessities—everything else is superfluous. Technology equals development only in superficial, impersonal terms and therefore superiority based on progress is unreliable and can cripple a nation as much as it can help. Reflected in Monsieur Niang's question then—"Mais dans l'ensemble qui est plus heureux?—is Sow Fall's answer: material belongings are not a prerequisite to happiness and materialism over contentedness is not development. Monsieur Niang's statement is thus not meant to comment on the inconveniences of a traffic jam, but to critique a Senegalese society that is increasingly coming to resemble a French society. By fully adopting

[124] Sow Fall, 110. "Look Nalla, you see that! The biggest disruption ever seen in an overdeveloped town. Life has stopped, and guess why? Because of an electricity outage. Basically, it seems to me that you're always a slave to something: them to their technology, us to our poverty. In my father's village nothing brightens the night sky, but you know, they make fun of it there, electricity. And even if they don't have all the comforts of the world, they live well. So tell me, who is happier? Perhaps we suffer more because of what we lack then they do with their surplus... but overall, who is happier? At least for us the foundation of man is not yet dead. I ask, who is more happy?" Translation Mine.

the values of French culture, Senegal is following a dangerous path toward destruction as the foundation of man continues to crack under the weight of French modernity.

3.2.2 Shared Themes Among African Novels in French

In addition to objectives, African novels in French share common thematic foundations that frequently question identity in a search for self. Validated by an "art imitating life" quality, novels exploring and reclaiming identity are often auto-biographical in nature. In *L'aventure ambiguë*, reflections of author Kane are seen in the book's protagonist Samba Diallo. Not only is Samba's name an alternative for Kane's,[125] but the character's education follows the same path as the author's. In addition, Samba's personal struggle for identity was lived by Kane.[126]Considering his work as directly influenced by the Negritude movement, Kane's personal struggle, presented and problematized through Samba's adventure, moves beyond one man's journey for self to reflect a widespread struggle known to a generation of French educated Senegalese.

Sow Fall's novel may also be considered autobiographical in the sense that she focuses on issues relevant to her life experience. Unhappy with the changing values and morals among the younger generations, Sow Fall's perspectives are represented by her her character Nalla's struggle to find his place between the westernized world of his parents—products of the French school system—and the traditional world of his heros—products of time-honored education. Unlike Kane's novel, Sow Fall considers herself and her post-colonial work as developing outside the negritude movement. As a result, Sow Fall's novel reacts less against direct colonization and more to the negative effects resulting from such a state. Hers then, is not the insertion of a personal dilemma reflective of a generation's,

[125] Vincent Monteil, preface to *L'aventure ambiguë*, 1961. Samba is the African equivalent of Cheikh Kane; a name given to the second son born to a family.

[126] Montiel, preface. Kane, a product of the French school system, began his education in a traditional Quranic school in Senegal. He was introduced to French culture and education when he was made to enroll in a French style school. With a new educational system came new teachings, most of which conflicted with and contradicted all that he had already been taught and believed. In continuing higher education in France, Kane realized that he was not alone in his feelings of confusion and questioning.

but the accentuation of what she perceives as a national trend towards favoring the contradictions of western life-style and values over those of traditional Senegal's.[127]

3.2.3 Shared Style Characteristics Among African Novels in French

Whether in response to Negritude's call to reclaim pride in African culture and history—which would include traditional methods of communication—or motivated by conscience or unconscious feelings of familiarity, novelistic discourse among African writers in French often followed a written pattern reflective of oral traditions.[128] According to Kane himself:

> Le métier d'écrivain n'existait pas dans nos cultures, et à plus forte raison, on n'a pas de poètes, [de] romanciers et [de] mémorialistes. Tout cela, ce sont des formes, des genres qui sont liés à la pratique de l'écriture. Chez moi, ce qui existe c'est la parole, c'est le conte, c'est la légende, c'est le proverbe, etc., c'est le dialogue.[129]

As such, African novels in French often employ conversation among characters over narrative description, emphasizing dialogue over adjectival prose. Whether purposely or inadvertently, African writers thus add a layer of allegory to the function of the novel by stylistically contextualizing its form towards reclaiming tradition.

Concerning orality, some historians and theorists argue that African culture, by nature, has pre-disposed the African to oral communication over written,[130] and written forms thereby render the act of writing as "disjunctive and alien."[131] While inferentially this conclusion suggests that the African novel's trend towards orality is an attempt to reverse feelings of alienation resulting from an imposed style of communication, it also

127 Guèye, "Écriture développement et féminisme," 44.
128 Eileen Julien, *African Novels and the Question of Orality* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992).
129 Little, 71. The profession of writer did not exist in our cultures, and even less so that of poet, novelist, memorialist. All those are forms associated with the practice of writing. Where I come from, there is the word: stories, legends, proverbs, dialogue. Translation by J.P Little.
130 Adrian Roscoe in Julien, 8.
131 Julien, 8.

implies an essential "assumption that there is something ontologically oral about African society."[132] But, as Julien explains, orality in Africa is a "matter of material conditions," and is therefore accidental. As such, orality juxtaposed with *la négritude* signals a way to recapture part of traditional Africa. As Mohamadou Kane suggests, "the originality of the African novel must [therefore] be found more specifically in its relationship to forms of oral literature... Greater attention to the relationship, to the links of continuity between oral and written literature, would allow one to better understand the problems of the African novel."[133]

Considering the relationship between orality and literature then, Kane and Sow Fall's use of intra and inter-character conversation over narrative descriptions adds a formal symbolism to the function of their novels. When, for example, highlighting Samba's early questioning of French ideologies, Kane's novel provides a conversation between a traditionally religious father and his once traditionally, now French educated son. While reading his school assigned French philosophy lesson, Samba states:

> Mon père ne vit pas, il prie...Tiens! Pourquoi ai-je pensé cela? Pourquoi ai-je pensé la prière et la vie en termes d'opposition? Il prie, il ne vit pas... A coup sûr, nul autre dans cette maison ne l'aurait pensé ainsi. Moi seul pouvait avoir cette idée bizarre d'une vie qui serait, de quelque façon, hors la présence de Dieu...Curieux...Où donc ai-je pu la prendre? Cette idée m'est étrangère. L'étonnement dans lequel elle me met en est la preuve. C'est en tout cas une idée évoluée, je veux dire qui marque un progrès de précision sur mon état d'esprit antérieur: elle distingue, elle spécifie. Il y a Dieu et il y a la vie, qui ne sont pas nécessairement confondus.[134]

[132] Julien, 8.

[133] Mohamadou Kane, *Sur les formes traditionnelles du roman africain*, in Julien, 5.

[134] Kane, 106-107. "My father does not live, he prays...But wait minute! Why did I think that? Why did I think of prayer and life in terms of opposition? He prays, he does not live...Certainly no one else in this house would have thought that way. I am the only one who could have this bizarre idea of life which could be lived, in some fashion, outside the presence of God...Curious...Then were could I have got it? This idea is foreign to me. The astonishment into which it plunges me is proof of that. I mean to say, an idea that marks a progress in precision over my previous state of mind: it distinguishes; it specifies. There is God and there is life, two things not necessarily intermingled." Translation by Katherine Woods, 94-95.

Rather than describing influential French philosophies, Samba's intrapersonal conversation soliloquizes the transformation of a young boy's once foundationally strong beliefs. Through conversation, Kane's novel retains an elemental form related to traditional oral communication that emphasizes the relationship between orality and literature. As a result, the retention of orality serves to indicate another manner in which the African novel in French is allegorical in form.

Using a similar syntactical approach, Sow Fall presents changing cultural practices through a conversation between Nalla and his friend Malaw. Nalla first describes the traditional "coming of age" ceremony where boys depart for an extended period of isolation with male members of society. During their time away from home, the young boys learn from elders in a celebration marked by dancing and, at the end, circumcision. Although the boys entered the ceremony as children, they return as men. When Malaw asks about Nalla's own experience, the boy embarrassingly replies:

> Pour moi, il n'y a pas eu de case de l'homme. Je voulais bien, mais cela ne s'est pas passé pour moi comme pour les autres garçons... Je me retrouvai le lendemain dans une salle d'hôpital, froide à vous donner la chair de poule. Un monsieur à blouse blanche me fit une piqûûre pour m'empêcher de ressentir la douleur...Je n'eus pas le boubou des circoncis mais une longue tunique grise.[135]

According to Nalla's mother, circumcision was no more than a medical act and therefore undeserving of ceremony and celebration. To this Malaw replies, "'Cosaan' se meurt..."[136]

In the aforementioned quote, Sow Fall's novel presents changing cultural values through a traditional medium of oral communication over a narrative description. In so doing, the novel's use of orality to express a departure from tradition can be seen as subtly emphasizing a desire to return to traditional roots in order to regain disappearing

[135] Sow Fall, 82-85. "For me, there was no coming of age ceremony. I wanted one, but it did not happen for me in the way it does for other boys... I found myself the next day in a hospital room, cold enough to give you goose bumps. A man in a white shirt gave me an injection to numb the pain...I did not wear the traditional coming of age wardrobe, but a long gray tunic." Translation Mine.

[136] Sow Fall, 85. "Tradition is dying." Translation Mine.

Senegalese values. As such, *L'appel des arènes*, like Kane's *L'aventure ambiguë*, is equally allegorical in form as it is in function.

Another stylistic trait characterizing the African novel in French involves the implementation of character typification. Distinctive of oral lessons used to instill values in young African children, individual characters within the novel become symbols for broader ideologies and perspectives. Concerning the decision to send the community's children to the French schools, Kane's influential matriarch La Grande Royal[137] speaks not solely for herself and her community within the novel, but seemingly represents all those in Francophone West Africa that feel their children can profit from the French school system. In addition to her collective voice that advocates the advantages of French education, her gender further personifies the extensive changes that will inevitably result from the decision to send children to the foreign schools, as can be seen in her speech to all residents of the Diallobé village:

> J'ai fait une chose qui ne nous plaît pas, et qui n'est pas dans nos coutumes. J'ai demandé aux femmes de venir aujourd'hui à cette rencontre. Nous autres Diallobé, nous détestons cela, et à juste titre, car nous pensons que la femme doit rester au foyer. Mais de plus en plus, nous aurons à faire des choses que nous détestons, et qui ne sont pas dans nos coutumes. C'est pour vous exhorter à faire une de ces choses que j'ai demandées de vous rencontrer aujourd'hui.[138]

As this speech exemplifies that La Grande Royale's gender, and the power she possesses, is not a fortuitous characteristic defining a fictional character, but the embodiment of coming change. She is not simply an isolated character representing a single voice, but rather a single character projecting a collective sentiment.

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137 The Most Royal Lady.

138 Kane, 56. "I have done something which is not pleasing to us and which is not in accordance with our customs. I have asked the women to come to this meeting today. We Diallobé hate that, and rightly, for we think that the women should remain at home. But more and more we shall have to do things which we hate doing, and which do not accord with our customs. It is to exhort you to do one of those things that I have asked you to come to this meeting today." Translation by Katherine Woods, 45.

Like Kane, Sow Fall uses her characters to represent ideologies and perspectives larger than the individual itself. When Sow Fall first describes her character André as living in a village far from land known to Nalla, and as possessing feet strikingly thick and large, she is describing not just the man standing before Nalla, but revealing the existence of a Senegal yet unknown to the young boy.[139] For Nalla, André symbolizes a rich Senegalese history, tradition and culture from which the young boy has been denied access, while at the same time, representing the benefits of returning to traditional Senegalese values.

Rooted in the use of shared themes, objectives and style characteristics, the African novel in French was transformed from a tool that propagated the benefits of French colonialism into a weapon against colonization and changing Senegalese values. Through the use of written discourse that resembled traditional oral communication, authors reinforced the novel's reactionary function by adding allegory to form. Departing from French-imposed ideologies, the African novel in French thus further lends itself useful for providing historical perspective.

3.3 Juxtaposing the Novel and Histories: Minimizing the Difference Between the Two

When Paul Veynes said "History is a true novel"[140] his comment not only worked to dilute history's claim of objective authenticity, but it directly inserted history into a novelistic context. While modern historians accept history's subjectivity with little contestation, consenting to a relationship where novels can serve as historical tools that promote historical interpretation and/or re-interpretation has sparked more of debate. As Anderson presents, writers like Maurice Blanchot posit an impossible relationship between history and literature, for "literature can never express or account for the past."[141]

[139] Sow Fall, 31.

[140] Paul Veynes, Comment on *Ecrit l'Histoire* (Paris: Seuil, 1971), 423-424; Found in Paschal B. Kyiiripuo Kyoore, *The African and Caribbean Historical Novel in French* (New York: Peter Lang, 1996), 2.

[141] Anderson, 11.

Blanchot goes further to suggest that identifying literature with history would reduce literature to an historical tool.[142] In this section, however, it will be argued that defining a relationship between the two disciplines is not reductional, but oppositely, will open the African novel in French so that it may additionally serve as an historical tool. In so doing, History will also benefit from the various perspective represented through novels, for they will facilitate a layering of historical understanding. Borrowing from cultural studies theory, the insertion of one discipline into the discourse of another not only works to break the boundaries that separate fields of study, but also "challenges how the disciplines work."[143] By mapping the connection between the two, this section will define the African novel in French as a valid means to view historical experience.

As lamented by scholars like Paschal Kyiiripuo Kyoore, the African novel in French has received comparatively little attention from historians and researchers.[144] Not fully convinced of the practical knowledge novels would contribute to historical understanding, some critics argue that the novel, defined as a work of fiction, remains a product of its author's imagination despite its historical context or direct influences. As a work of fiction, the novel allows its author too much liberty for subjective imagery, which thereby negates its use as a valuable text for historical insight. In response, proponents point to the fact that even accredited history remains subject to the perspectives and biases of those involved in its recording and endorsement as "truth." Contributing to the debate on whether historical fiction is a viable means for interpreting historical experience, Hayden White reminds us that "what distinguishes 'historical' from 'fictional' stories is first and foremost their content rather than their form."[145] Therefore, the African novel in French offers an increasingly "afro-centric" reading of history and thus provides an additional layer to the French discourse on colonial and post-colonial Senegal.[146]

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142 Anderson, 12.

143 Lawrence Grossberg, "The Sins of Cultural Studies," in *The Future of Cultural Studies*, ed. Jan Baetens and Jose Lambert (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2000.), 26.

144 Kyoore, 1.

145 Hayden White, *The Content of Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation*, in Kyoore, 3.

146 Kyoore, xi.

Historical and novelistic content, despite their differences in form, share between them common conceptional traits that help advocate the novel's legitimate use as an historical text.[147] Contemporary historians have also aruged that histories—or *his-stories*—like the novel, are subject to *selection*, *subjectivity*, and *personal motivation* that consequently render all historical accounts as subjective representation. To further minimize the differences separating literary narratives and historical narratives, the following section will directly compare the selection, subjectivity and personal motivation shared between histories and novels in order construct the African novel in French as an equally valid historical tool.

3.3.1 Selection in History and Novels

Although novels are more widely recognized for their subjective properties, early twentieth-century scholar Alfred Sheppard states that in writing the narratives of history, just as in novels, the author selects certain details over others in order to guide readers to a desired effect. Leaving out "details that would distract from the larger picture. . . [these] choices are necessary to avoid the indifferences that readers would feel if all facts were treated as equally valuable."[148] Historical narratives, however, often create dominant, "official" understandings while marginalizing alternative perspectives. History, therefore, takes on a double identity—that of the collective "official" record and that of each individual's experience—that introduces a layer of subjectivity to all "accredited" histories.

Individual experience thus becomes crucial in uncovering perspective "because it is what history must define itself against." In other words, individual experience "becomes the "the other" of [dominant, official] history."[149] As an offspring of experience, the African novel in French uses its own selection process not to recreate the past as truth,

[147] For a complete comparative study of Sheppard's, Veynes' and White's philosophies of history and the historical novel, refer to Kyoore, xi-31.

[148] Paul Veynes in Kyoore, 3.

[149] Dominick LaCapra, *History, Politics and the Novel* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987), 16.

but rather to re-present a perspective of the past. This allows the novel to be viewed as an additional "historical document" that can work in conjunction with history to reinforce or question historical truths. As a result, literary discourse becomes a critical analytical tool in uncovering previously silenced voices. Kane exemplifies this multitude of perspective in the following scene from *l'aventure ambiguë*:

> Etrange aube! Le matin de l'Occident en Afrique noire fut constellé de sourires, de coups de canon et de verroteries brillantes. Ceux qui n'avaient point d'histoire rencontraient ceux qui portaient le monde sur leurs épaules. Ce fut un matin de gésine. Le monde connu s'enrichissait d'une naissance qui se fit dans la boue et dans le sang. De saisissement, les uns ne combattirent pas. Ils étaient sans passé, donc sans souvenir. Ceux qui débarquaient étaient blancs et frénétiques. On n'avait rien connu de semblable. Le fait s'accomplit avant même qu'on prit conscience de ce qui arrivait. Certains comme le Diallobé, brandirent leurs boucliers, pointèrent leurs lances ou ajustèrent leurs fusils. On les laissa... d'autres voulurent palabrer. On leur proposa, au choix, l'amitié ou la guerre. Très sensément, ils choisirent l'amitié: ils n'avaient point d'expérience. Le résultat fut le même cependant, partout. Ceux qui avaient combattu et ceux qui s'étaient rendus, ceux qui avaient composé et ceux qui s'étaient obstinés se retrouvèrent le jour venu, recensés, répartis, classés, étiquetés, conscrits, administrés.[150]

Like the creators of dominant histories, Kane selects as his focus certain interpretations of an historical event in order to present an alternative understanding of what the coming of France meant to those who witnessed it from the shores of Africa. Through his

[150] Kane, 59-60. "Strange dawn! The morning of the Occident in black Africa was spangled over with smiles, with cannon shots, with shining glass beads. Those who had no history were encountering those who carried the world on their shoulders. It was a morning of accouchement: The known world was enriching itself by a birth that took place in mire and blood. From shock, the one side made no resistance. They were a people without a past, therefore without memory. The men who were landing on their shores were white, and mad. Nothing like them had ever been known. The deed was accomplished before the people were even conscious of what had happened. Some among the Africans, such as the Diallobé, brandished their shields, pointed their lances, and aimed their guns... others wanted to parley. They were given a choice: friendship or war. Very sensibly they chose friendship. They had no experience at all. The result was the same, nevertheless, everywhere. Those had shown fight and those who had surrendered, those who had come to terms and those who had been obstinate-they all found themselves, when the day came, checked by census, divided up, classified, labeled, conscripted, administrated." Translation by Katherine Woods, 48-49.

description, Kane emphasizes the negative aspects of early French presence in order to ultimately present and problematize the struggle of black identity. Rather than selecting information designed to guide understanding of a French civilizing mission that bestowed the gifts of French culture upon the souls of Africa, Kane's narrative offers a less selfless description. Here, Kane's representation reveals the false intentions of the white visitors who camouflaged their objectives with a veil of western formality combined with African ignorance. His description challenges French histories, such as those of General Faidherbe's, whose recorded escapades often failed to remember African resistance.[151] His words paint a picture of a people treated not as equals under the motto of *égalité* and *fraternité*, but as a mass, "classified, labeled, conscripted [and] administered"[152] as if animals. Additionally, when Kane writes that "those who had no history were encountering those who carried the world on their shoulders," and that "they were a people without a past, therefore without memory," he is not conforming to the French belief that Africans had no history, but contrarily, pointing out that Africans had no established history involving European contact and, therefore, had no memory or experience that would indicate the events to come.

Similarly, Sow Fall selects to represent perspectives that guide readers to the understanding that unlike the early colonizers' assumption that Africans possessed no history or culture, there is value in tradition. When Mapaté, the griot,[153] says to Nalla's mother (Diattou) in reference to a radio she keeps turning up in hopes to drown out Mapaté's voice, "votre machine-là n'est qu'une création de toubabs, alors que moi, je suis un homme,"[154] Sow Fall's representation is not dismissing the value of technology, but challenging the notion that technology always yields desired advancement. On the one hand, Nalla's family has surrounded themselves with technology representative of

151 Blair, 6.

152 Woods, 49

153 The role of the griot is an important part to traditional African societies. These men are members of a professional caste of praise singers, historians, musicians, and orators, and are often seen as the keepers of history and tradition.

154 Sow Fall, 114. "Your machine is nothing more than a white man's invention, but me, I am a man." Translation mine.

French progress. On the other hand Mapaté represents the value of human contact and personal relationships. Through his comment then, Mapaté is not referencing the literal choice between man and machine, but the symbolic choice of technology over man—-of the material over humanity. Alluding to the radio as *only* a machine and therefore not a necessity for life, Mapaté underlines the idea that actual advancement and progress should not sacrifice civility. Since Diattou's actions are uncivil and rude, Mapaté's comment challenges the notion that technological advancement leads to civility, as was often advocated by French discourse.

The novel, like the history in which it is embedded, is not free of subjective selection. The selection process of the novel, however, plays an important role in uncovering layers of history by selecting to include that which was previously excluded from dominant perspectives. As such, the African novel in French adds to historical experience by producing new representations not included by dominant French discourses.

3.3.2 Subjectivity in History and Novels

Whether shaping novels or histories the author's selection process does not operate alone when deciding which points to emphasize versus which to leave in the periphery, but in tandem with the creator's subjective perspective. Perspective, a product of personal experience, presents understanding as conceived by those with personal experience. As a result, historical narratives, as much as literary narrative, are shaped by its author's subjective vision.

While subjectivity in dominant, accredited histories concerning Senegal propagated the benefits of French culture and education, or favored the word of a Frenchmen over that of an African, subjectivity in the African novel in French oppositely propagates the validity and importance of African culture and favors the word of the African. By way of *L'aventure ambiguë* and *L'appel des arènes*, Kane and Sow Fall are thus able to relate perspectives as members of a society with a colonial history of being colonized, rather than a colonial history of colonizing. As a result, their perspective take a different

form, for their expression is based on different components and goals. The subjective vision that shaped their works was not meant to proclaim that nothing of use came from colonialism, or more appropriately the contact of cultures,[155] but that colonialism—and education specifically—did not result in the benefits that the French originally projected. As such, theirs is a perspective based on a cultural disconnectedness and an incongruity between what they were taught and felt, or believed and witnessed.

Within the novels, both French and Senegalese subjectivity appear within the text. In a conversation between a French school administer in Senegal (Monsieur Lacroix) and Samba's father (Le Chevalier), Kane's novel expresses the cultural perspectives of both men. Concerning religion and science, Le Chevalier speaks first:

> **Chevalier:** A mon tour de vous demander: vous ne croyez pas á la fin du monde?
> **M. Lacroix:** Non,évidemment. Le monde n'aura pas de fin. Du moins pas la fin qu'on attend ici. Qu'une catastrophe détruise notre planète, je ne dis pas...
> **Chevalier:** Notre paysan le plus fruste ne croit pas a cette fin-là, épisodique et accidentelle. Son univers n'admet pas l'accident. Il est plus rassurant que le votre, malgré les apparences.
> **M. Lacroix:** Peut-être bien. Malheureusement pour nous, c'est mon univers qui est vrai. La terre n'est pas plate. Elle n'a pas de versants qui donnent sur l'abîme. Le soleil n'est pas un lampadaire fixé sur un dais de porcelaine bleue. L'univers que la science a révélé à l'occident est moins immédiatement humain, mais avouez qu'il est plus solide...
> **Le Chevalier:** Votre science vous a révélé un monde rond et parfait, au mouvement infini. Elle l'a reconquis sur le chaos. Mais je crois que, ainsi elle vous a ouvert au désespoir.
> **M. Lacroix:** Non pas, Elle nous a libérés des craintes... puériles

[155] Aimé Césaire, *Discours sur le Colonialism* (Paris : Presence Africaine, 1955), 10.

et absurdes.[156]

Within this conversation, Kane references the French subjective vision that scientific reasoning is superior for it can free believers from superstition and the fear of the unknown. As represented by Le Chevalier, however, the Senegalese response depicts science as superficial and as leading to a world of despair. The Senegalese cultural perspective goes on to challenge that of the French by demonstrating that Senegal did not need a French "*mission civilatrice*" to know a supreme being, and in fact, the unequivocal faith of the Diallobé people is believed to be more preferable, if not superior, to the empty and disparaging feelings to which Le Chevalier believes scientific knowledge to lead.

Subjectivity, as represented in and personified by the African novel in French thus follows subjectivity in histories in the sense that it helps determine what the creator will select to include and emphasize versus what will be excluded or suppressed. In deconstructing novels, as in deconstructing histories, understanding an author's subjective vision aids in underlining or determining individual perspective. By emphasizing perspectives that dominant histories had long suppressed, the African novel in French further lends itself for historical understanding and analysis.

3.3.3 Motivation in History and Novels

A third conceptional trait, motivation, further combines with perspective and selection to create histories as subjective as novels. In adhering to the same approach as has been discussed thus far, authors of African novels in French were not motivated to rewrite

[156] Kane, 87-88. C: Let me ask you a question in my turn, you truly do not believe in the end of the world? L: No, obviously. The world will not come to an end—at least not the end that is expected here. That a catastrophe might destroy our planet—of that I do not speak. C: Our most simple-minded peasant does not believe in such an end as that, episodic and accidental. His universe does not admit of accident. In spite of appearances, his concept is more reassuring than yours. L: That may well be. Unfortunately for us, it is my universe which is true. The earth is not flat. It has no steep slopes which give upon the abyss. The sun is not a candelabrum set upon a blue porcelain dais. The universe which science has revealed to the West is less immediately human, but confess that it is more solid. C: Your science has revealed to you a round and perfect world, in infinite movement. It has re-conquered that world from chaos. But I believe that in so doing it has laid you open to despair. L: Not at all. It has liberated us from fears—childish and absurd fears. Translation by Katherine Woods, 75-76.

historical events as represented by the French, but simply to provide new points of view. By understanding the motivations of African novelists in French, it becomes increasingly apparent that novels were meant to reflect on and question past and present actualities. As a result, determining Kane's and Sow Fall's motivation to write will further help define the African novel in French as a valid means to view history.

As mentioned in the introduction, Kane's primary motivation to write resulted not from a desire to create fictional stories, but to express and explore his own experienced dissonance as he encountered French philosophies.[157] In an interview presented by Little, Kane openly states that the preliminary journal that would unknowingly become *L'aventure ambiguë* was neither intended as a work of fiction nor as a means to record his memories. Additionally, it was not a way to reflect on a "literary form practiced in Europe."[158] What it was, he states, was a way to, on some level, "bear witness to Westerners of the existence of a black culture, a black civilization, [and] a black sensibility, because Westerners could have access to that culture, to a knowledge of those values, and to that sensibility only through the medium of writing and books."[159] At the same time, he hoped to provide tools to the next generation of Africans, who as a result of western influence, were not as firmly rooted in African cultural traditions.

In a similar fashion, Sow Fall claims that the changes she witnessed in her country motivated her to begin writing. In an interview with Guèye, Sow Fall describes her decision to write as seemingly random since she grew up with the desire of becoming a doctor.[160] During her seven years spent in Paris, Sow Fall began to write poems and other short pieces out of nostalgia for her native country. Upon returning to Senegal, her seven year absence allowed her see certain changes within the country. She perceived a dehumanization as money and the material continued to take over traditional values. Fearing that she too would have failed to notice these changes had she not been absent,

157 Little, 72.
158 Little, 72, Interview 16 Dec. 1997.
159 Little, 72, Interview 16 Dec. 1997.
160 Guèye, "Écriture développement et féminisme," 56.

Sow Fall decided to write so that her novels could serve as a mirror of society. Designed to point out social, political and cultural issues, Sow Fall hoped to draw attention to the changes she was witnessing.

3.4 Conclusion

Through exploring author motivation, perspective and selection, it becomes evident that histories and novels share many similar characteristics despite their opposite definitions as "fact" versus "fiction." Echoing Sheppard, although form plays an important role in structuring both literary and historical narratives, it should not automatically negate the novel's use as an historical text. By basing their novels in history and actual circumstance, the African novel in French writes a different history of colonization, while advocating the importance of tradition. Additionally, these novels provide an African perspective and voice on a colonial history long told according to western construction and a post-colonial era marked by western influence. The African novel in French thus becomes allegorical in both form and function as it moves away from a tool to propagate French colonization to become a means of rejecting that same system. In addition to the novel's evolution as means for African expression and its use as an historical tool, the novel serves an additional purpose; it exemplifies the irony of French colonization. The French, who advocated assimilation and constructed an educational program to eliminate the possibility of producing a self-deterministic West African populace that could question French presence, inadvertently created a foundation on which to build the very thing they had hoped to suppress. The French, in other words, had lay the seeds to their own undoing. As a result, the African novel in French becomes a useful medium through which to analyze French education from a West African perspective.

Chapter 4

Examining *L'aventure amibuguë* and *L'appel des arènes*: Analyzing Representations of the French Educational System

> "The new school shares at the same time the characteristics of cannon and of magnet. From the cannon it draws its efficacy as an arm of combat... from the magnet, the school takes its radiating force."[161]–*L'aventure ambiguë*

Within the sphere of colonial and postcolonial discourse Homi Bhabha posits the existence of *third space*, or an area between self and other.[162] For him, the third space represents a locus of constant negotiation and renegotiation, wherein identity emerges in a hybrid form. Identity, or the internalization of a continually developing sense of self, is thus not seen as static and reductionist, but part of an evolving framework. At the heart of both their novels Kane and Sow Fall center their treatment of education around the ambiguity involved in the multiplicity of identity and culture. Similar to Franz Fanon whose *Black Skin, White Masks* explores the physiological journey of a man

[161] Cheikh Hamidou Kane, *L'aventure ambiguë*, tr. Katherine Woods (Oxford: Heinemann Educational Publishers, 1963), 49.

[162] Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994).

struggling to find identity in a world that has wrongly defined him and other blacks as "savages, brutes, [and] illiterates,"[163] both Kane and Sow Fall represent a journey for identity within a framework of colonial and postcolonial education. Their narratives problematize the French school system by incorporating representations of its failures; yet also suggest solutions to the inner-anguish experienced by pupils whose exposure to French education catalyzed an African cognitive awakening, or *prise de conscience*.[164] Analyzing the authors' representations of the French educational system will therefore unmask a Senegalese perspective on a French institution, showcase various ways Senegalese students internalized their educational experience and provide representations of the ways in which colonial education could be, and was, utilized by its pupils.

In parallel expositions Kane and Sow Fall employ similar narrative strategies to present the interwoven treatment of education, the driving force behind overarching themes of identity, cognitive dissonance, alienation and hybridity.[165] In *L'aventure ambiguë* the young protagonist, Samba Diallo, is introduced to readers while reciting the Word in his traditional Senegalese Quranic School. In *L'appel des arènes*, Nalla first appears while reciting a French grammar lesson in one of Senegal's French schools. Although each scene is centered on correctly executing the respective lesson, Kane introduces traditional education separate from the influences of the white schools, while Sow Fall directly situates Nalla within the main discipline of French cultural conquest.[166] The disparity between these two scenes is representative not only of their differing temporal context, but also indicative of the situational milieu in which both authors will place their educational problematic. Additionally, Kane's introduction, although based in tradition, surrounds Samba's lesson with an air of violence as the child is physically punished for

[163] Franz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, tr. Charles Lam Markmann (New York: Grove Press, 1967), 117.

[164] From this point forward, the inner-anguish to which I refer will be termed *cognitive dissonance*, or the "psychological conflict resulting from incongruous beliefs and attitudes held simultaneously." Merriam-Webster, 2005.

[165] The notions of culture, identity and hybridity are also discussed in Omar Sougou, "Resisting Hybridity," *African Cultures, Visual Arts, and the Museum*, ed. Tobias Doring (Amsterdam: Edictions Rodopi, 2002): 213-227, 213.

[166] For a discussion of cultural conquest see chapter 2.

a mistake in his recitation. Unlike Samba, whose punishment foreshadows the coming psychological anguish the boy will suffer resulting from a rupture in education, Nalla's French grammar lesson, where he describes an African context to demonstrate his mastery of the French langauge, is reinforced with positive feedback from his teacher.[167] The inconsistency between two otherwise similar scenes thus establishes through suggestion both the failure of and offered resolution to the educational problematic. Where Samba is seen as failing, Nalla is depicting as succeeding. Using the novels in tandem, one can therefore conclude that Samba's tragic fate could have been circumvented if he had been able to adopt Nalla's ability for successful negotiation and compromise.

It is important to note that although both authors problematize the French school system, neither is averse, at least in theory, to French education. Both Kane's and Sow Fall's novels include references to French education that at once acknowledge a Senegalese desire to learn from the foreign schools and suggest that neither author rejects the potential benefits from cultural contact. In *L'aventure ambiguë*, for example, we learn of the foreign school's attractiveness when one character explains that "the men of the Diallobé want to learn 'how better to join wood to wood.'"[168] This desire thus draws attention both to the early allure of the white schools, as well as recognizes the foundation on which many Senegalese based their decision to attend those schools. Similarly, an inclination towards benefits of education can be inferred in the following conversation in which Nalla asks André if there are (French) schools where he is from. To this André responds, "Oui, il y en a maintenant. Tous les parents veulent envoyer leurs enfants à l'école... *Le savoir est une bonne chose*. Ce savoir qui est à la mode, il est utile de l'étudier..."[169]

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[167] Sow Fall, 9. When Nalla's teacher asks him to give an example of a sentence that can be used to form a direct object pronoun, Nalla responds: "Le chasseur a abattu un lion." ("The hunter caught the lion.") Translation mine. It is worth noting too, that Nalla's statement seemingly reflects colonization as the hunter symbolically represents the west while the lion references Africa.

[168] Woods, 32

[169] Sow Fall, 36. "Yes, there are now. All the parents want to send their children to the school... *Knowledge is a good thing*. It is useful to study this knowledge which is so fashionable..." Translation and emphasis are mine.

Despite referencing the benefits of French education, the overall language, character depiction and problematization of the white schools reveal the general failure of the French educational system as a whole. By introducing an educational schema based on a fundamental dichotomy between *French* and *African*, the French essentialist approach to education allowed no room for the blending of authentic culture. As a result, French education predicated a dichotomy between assimilation and refutation. Awakening within the African consciousness, however, was a dialectical tension more complex than acceptance versus denunciation, as assimilation suggested the loss of self as a result of being uprooted, while rejection risked destruction as a result of isolation.[170] The necessity of a third choice, which Kane's novel introduces as based on compromise, "qui veut vivre, qui veut demeurer soi-même, doit se compromettre,"[171] follows Bhabha's theory of third space and hybridity.

In a similar fashion, *L'appel des arènes* posits compromise as the key to a successful negotiation between two otherwise unfavorable outcomes. In a scene reminiscent of Guy Tirolien's "Prière d'un petit enfant nègre,"[172] Nalla sits in a French-style schoolhouse feeling sad and isolated. When Monsieur Niang asks Nalla why he is unable to concentrate on his studies, Nalla explains that the traditional songs infiltrating the classroom from the wrestling arenas have captured his attention. To raise his pupil's spirits, Monsieur Niang relates wrestling stories from his childhood.[173] Fascinated and filled with life, Nalla desperately seeks more information from his teacher. Monsieur Niang tells Nalla that he would gladly share his stories, but that they would not be an excuse to abandon the boy's schoolwork. From now on, Monsieur Niang would recite (in French) a story three times for Nalla's pleasure. Upon its completion, Nalla would be expected to write the story in a journal so that he could point out and analyze the verbs. Nalla gladly accepts

170 Assimilation and denunciation will be discussed in detail in section two of this chapter.

171 Kane, 20. "He who wants to live, who wants to remain himself, must compromise." Translation mine.

172 See chapter 2, page 32.

173 For clarification, it should be noted that wrestling in Senegal is an important sport tied to tradition and culture.

his teacher's offer.[174]

Monsieur Niang's ability to combine school lessons with his pupil's interest in tradition demonstrates a negotiation that diverges from the French essentialist approach to education. By not labeling one side as more important than the other, Monsieur Niang successfully demonstrates what Césaire eluded to as mutual cultural benefits, where each side can be ameliorated by the strengths of the other.[175] Monsieur Niang's progressionist approach can therefore be understood as underlining the necessity of compromise. Additionally, his successful exicution can be seen as a metaphoric advocation for hybridity.

4.1 Senegalese Perspectives on French Education

Applying Samba Gadjigo's approach to literature, employing both colonial *L'aventure ambiguë* and post-colonial *L'appel des arènes* will allow for a double advantage when determining perspective. "D'une part," he explains in reference the novels used in his study, it "permet de saisir les changements de l'histoire scolaire selon la perspective du colonisé et d'autre part, [il] permet de montrer comment le romancier a perçu cette dynamique sociale... et la manière dont la problématique de l'école a été posée varie suivant les auteurs."[176] Considering both novels in tandem will thus permit an understanding of an evolving Senegalese perspective on French education, as the colonial school system in Kane's novel becomes a system inherited from colonialism in Sow Fall's novel.

In *L'aventure ambiguë*, education is often accompanied by descriptions of violence and psychological discord that essentially equate the French school system to a colonial instrument of war. As the narrator explains:

> On commença, dans le continent noir, à comprendre que leur puissance véritable résidait, non point dans les canons du premier

[174] Sow Fall, 90-91.

[175] See introduction page 10.

[176] Samba Gadjigo, *Ecole Blanche, Afrique Noire* (Paris : Editions l'Harmattan, 1990), 55. "A double advantage. On one hand, it allows us to see the changes in historical scholarship as seen by the colonized, and on the other hand, it allows us to see how the novelist perceived this dynamic... and the manner in which each author presents the problematic of the school." Translation mine.

> matin, mais dans ce qui suivait ces canons. Ainsi, derrière les canonnières, le clair regard de la Grand Royale des Diallobé avait vu l'école nouvelle.
>
> L'école nouvelle participait de la nature du canon et de l'aimant à la fois. Du canon, elle tient son efficacité d'arme combattante. Mieux que le canon, elle pérennise la conquête. Le canon contraint les corps, l'école fascine les âmes. Où le canon a fait un trou de cendre et de mort et, avant que moisissure tenace, l'homme parmi les ruines n'ait rejailli, l'école nouvelle installe sa paix.[177]

Education is presented here in the same manner as it was constructed through Hardy's discourse, as a tool of conquest, of war, a way to capture the African soul. Whether this a is teleological observation based on the outcome of Kane's known experience, or an accurate representation of early African perceptions is of little importance. What is important, however, is its affirmation of French intentions as perceived from a Senegalese point of view.[178] Education is seen (at first) in relation to French power as it perpetuates conquest with its cannon-like characteristics. What makes the school more effective than the canon, however, is its placement within the contradictions of French colonization. The school is seen both as a means of "destruction" and "construction,"[179] as conquest works towards subjugation and thus allows the school to establish *its* peace.

The use of the possessive adjective "sa paix," (its peace), instead of a definite article "la paix," (peace), further illustrates that this is a Senegalese perspective on a French institution. As Kane's novel further explains:

> De l'aimant, l'école tient son rayonnement. Elle est solidaire d'un ordre nouveau, comme un noyou magnétique est solidaire d'un champ. Le bouleversement de la vie des hommes à l'intérieur de

[177] Kane, 60. "On the black continent it began to be understood that their true power lay not in the cannons off the first morning, but rather in what followed the cannons. Thus, behind the gunboats, the clear gaze of the Most Royal Lady of the Diallobé had seen the new school. The new school shares at the same time the characteristics of cannon and magnet. From the cannon it draws its efficacy as an arm of combat. Better than the cannon, it makes conquest permanent. The cannon compels the body, the school bewitches the soul. Where the cannon has made a pit of ashes and of death, in the sticky mold of which men would not have rebounded from the ruins, the new schools establishes [its] peace." Translation by Katherine Woods, 49. Bracket mine.

[178] See Chapter 1.

[179] Woods, 49. "They destroyed and they constructed."

> cet ordre nouveau est semblable aux bouleversements de certaines lois physiques à l'intérrieur d'un champ magnétique. On voit les hommes se disposer, conquis, le long de lignes de forces invisible et impérieuses. Le désordre s'organise, la sédition s'apaise, les matins de ressentiment résonnent des chants d'une universelle action de grâce.[180]

By comparing the French school to a magnet Kane's novel underlines the irony of conquest. In order to provide peace, in order to effectively fulfil a "mission civilatrice," the school must first destroy the roots that would prohibit growth according to French vision. As a result of destruction, however, French education can establish the foundation for a new order. There within, the contradictions of French colonialism dissipate as "disorder is organized" and "rebelion is appeased."[181]

In addition to representations of education as a tool of war, both novels represent education in terms of contradictory values between those held the Senegalese and French. As discussed in part in chapter three of this study, Kane's *L'aventure ambiguë* indirectly eludes to cultural and ideological differences in a series of philosophical conversations between characters. Presenting both French and Senegalese ideologies and philosophies relating to the universe and nature, each culture is seen in opposition of the other. Where the French value science and reason, the Senegalese traditionally emphasize superstition and God. French culture is presented as conquering nature, where Senegalese culture attempts harmony with nature. Where one seeks materialism, the other seeks spiritualism. Because education, whether formal or informal, is the process through which values are often acquired, the French school was thus perceived as transmitting clashing ideologies.

Using a more direct approach that centers on life-style and cultural specificities,

[180] Kane, 60-61. Like "a magnet, the school takes its radiating force. it is bound up with a new order, as a magnetic stone is bound up with a field. The upheaval of the life of man within this new order is similar to the overturn of certain physical laws in a magnetic field. Men are seen to be composing themselves, conquered, along the lines of invisible and imperious forces. Disorder is organized, rebellion is appeased, the mornings of resentment resound with songs of a universal thanksgiving." Translation by Katherine Woods, 50. I will return to the analogy of the white schools as a tool of war in the section 2 of this chapter. Perceived as a tool of war, the novels present the school as means of extraction for African advantage.

[181] See the above translation.

Sow Fall establishes perceived contradictions resulting from French education. Juxtaposing the following excerpts, Sow Fall employs the use of character typification in order to present Nalla's mother (Diattou) as symbolically representative of learned French cultural teachings and André as symbolically representative of traditional cultural practices. In the first scene describing a lunch environment seemingly representative of Louis Pasteur's germ theory,[182] Diattou forces Nalla to eat according to the correctness of western standards:

> Avec la foi des nouveaux initiés, Diattou avait tenu à faire de son fils un modèle conforme à sa propre conception de l'âge moderne...–Nalla, la fourchette dans la main gauche ! Coupe la viande avec le couteau, pas avec tes dents...Oh là là, n'y mets pas les doigts, tu vas souiller la nourriture...–Souiller quoi? – Mais la nourriture! Tu vas l'infester de microbes qui provoqueront ensuite des maladies...Et d'autre fois...–Noue bien la serviette autour du cou...et ne mets plus les coudes sur la table. C'est incorrect. D'autre fois encore : – N'avale pas d'un trait! Par petites gorgées...[183]

Additionally, Nalla is not allowed to play with the neighborhood children. According to Diattou, "ils sont sales, sans éducation et débraillés."[184]

On its outermost level, the scene presents Diattou's education as producing cultural changes. What once would have been defined as proper manners within a West African context is now re-defined according to French ideologies. French education has instilled within Diattou a precise set of rules regulating everything concerning the correctness of the modern age, down to correct table etiquette. Indicative of Francocentric views, manners that deviate from French norms are considered barbarous and backward. In addition,

[182] French microbiologist, Louis Pasteur, spent his life searching for the cause of disease. His discovery that germs and microorganism cause many infectious diseases led to new forms of, and emphasis on, hygiene.

[183] Sow Fall, 65-66. "With the faith of a new initiative, Diattou wanted to raise her son according to her own conception of the modern age. –Nalla, put the fork in your left hand! Cut the meat with the knife, not your teeth...oh my goodness, do not put your fingers in the food, you'll ruin it. –Ruin what? –The food of course! You will infect it with microbes that will make you sick...Other times she would would say: –Tie the napkin around your neck...and don't put your elbows on the table. It's not correct. Still other times she would say: –Don't gulp! Take small sips..." Translation mine.

[184] Sow Fall, 66. "They are dirty, uneducated and ill-kempt." Translation mine.

Diattou's restrictions allowing Nalla to socialize with other children is also founded on French-influenced ideologies that define the children as uneducated, dirty and ill-kempt. Within this scene, Diattou's education is presented as altering her cultural sense, as that which she relates to traditions or separate from French education is redefined as dirty, unintelligent and dangerous.

Unlike at his mother's house described above, "[c]hez André, [Nalla] avait découvert les charmes d'une vie simple, sans artifice, sans contrainte, sans conventions serviles. . . "[185] Contrasting these two scenes, life according to Diattou's French adopted standards is presented as rule-laden and strict, while the traditional is understood to be relaxed and simplified. The French school system, which had altered Diattou's understanding of the world, but not influenced André's, is thus further presented as transmitting contradicting values capable of altering tradition and culture.

In a third perspective, neither novel presents French education as a vehicle through which the Senegalese could learn about civility, authentic culture and history, as French discourse projected. Instead, both novels provide representations of education where the school system allows its pupils to learn about the colonizers. Exemplified by la Grand Royale statement: "Notre grand-père, ainsi que son élite, ont été défaits. Pourquoi? Comment? Les nouveaux venus seuls le savent. Il faut le leur demander; il faut aller apprendre chez eux l'art de vaincre sans avoir raison,"[186] education is perceived as allowing a reversal of judgement. The more pupils are indoctrinated by ideologies and values transmitted by the French schools, the more knowledge teaches them to think for themselves and question French teachings and actions. Armed with the knowledge that French education provided, Senegalese pupils could thus become the subject of evaluation and question French colonizers based on *French* and Senegalese philosophies and ideologies. No longer the "other" of French construction, pupils could reclaim a once subjugated

[185] Sow Fall, 62. "At André's he discovered the charms of a simpler life, without artifice or constraints." Translation mine.

[186] Kane, 47. "Our grand-father, and the elite of the country with him, was defeated. Why? How? Only the newcomers know. We must ask them: we must go to learn from them the art of conquering without being right." Translation by Katherine Woods, 37.

voice that would reroute gaze back upon the French.[187]

Incarnating a reversal of judgment, Kane's character, *le Fou* (the Fool) enables an interpretation of French culture within a framework paralleling the unawareness with which colonists originally approached Senegalese culture. Just as France eurocentrically approached all West Africans as lacking in history and culture, the Fool's afrocentrism presents France as "parfaitement inhumaine," and "vide d'hommes," filled only with machines.[188] In a world defined by the values of the Diallobé, certain ideologies and actualities of French society appear foreign, backwards, and even crazy. It is thus through the Fool's state of mind that Kane critiques France. Just as the Fool was able to judge France and her inhabitants as a result of direct contact, French education provided a foundation for a more wide-spread Senegalese questioning of French culture as a whole. Using what they learned at school, pupils could apply their knowledge to query the contradictions and inconsistencies within French ideologies and philosophies.

L'appel des arènes also works to represent a reversal of judgement. Dressed in his blue jeans and neatly buttoned shirt, Nalla finds himself feeling shy and awkward when faced with another boy wearing only faded shorts.[189] Placed within a traditional milieu, the wrestler's home, Nalla's western clothes become a metaphor for subversion. French ideologies would have considering Nalla's clothes as a symbol of advancement and superiority. However, within a traditional Senegalese context he is depicted as out of place. Western perceptions of advancement and superiority are thus undermined and called into question as Nalla's clothes render him as "the other."

In addition to presenting education in terms of war, cultural contradictions and a fostering a reversal of judgement, both novels include representations of French education as connected to *l'oubli*, or forgetting. As Nalla's grandmother (Mame Fari) explains in *L'appel des arènes*, there is a positive type of forgetting and a negative type; one that

[187] To learn more about "othering" see Aschcroft et al. *The Empire Writes Back*, Edward Said, *Orientalism* and *Culture and Imperialism*.

[188] Kane, 103. "Completely dehumanized," and "empty of men." Translation mine.

[189] Sow Fall, 38-39.

helps a person to heal from painful experiences and one that causes pain. By presenting education in terms of causing negative *l'oubli*, both authors provide insight into the reasons why many Senegalese would have wanted to avoid the white schools, while also projecting a uniquely Senegalese trepidation related to *l'oubli* itself. As expressed by the chief of the Diallobé's in *L'aventure ambiguë* "en apprenant, ils oublieront aussi... peut-on apprendre ceci sans oublier cela."[190] Paralleling the chief's fear that by learning *this*, one might forget *that*, Sow Fall's André warns Nalla, "quand tu seras grand et que tu seras un monsieur important plein de diplômes, ne m'oublie pas. Tu ne m'oublieras pas?[191] Here, André's statement moves beyond the idea of simply forgetting a friend as a result of time, and instead more profoundly references André's fear that as a result of his French education, Nalla will forget his past, his roots and his country.

In a conversation between Nalla and Malaw, *L'appel des arènes* further touches on *l'oubli*. When Nalla asks why brush is burned, which leaves an ugly mark on the ground, rather than picked, Malaw responds that it nourishes the soil. Malaw follows with the comment that their grandparents knew that and they (the wrestlers) knew it too, but that maybe tomorrow Nalla and his peers would no longer know that.[192] While this scene explains a supplemental agricultural change resulting from French education and influence, it remains indicative of a more detrimental form of *l'oubli*: The loss of one's culture, of one's tradition and essentially, of one's life. As Monsieur Niang explains, a man without roots is like a tree with no roots; both will shrivel up and die.[193]

The French school system, as a result of putting Senegalese pupils into contact with ideologies and values that often opposed and contradicted those of traditional West Africa, was therefore perceived as an institution that could cause children to forget important aspects their culture and tradition.[194] The question thus became, how do you

[190] Kane, 44. "Can one learn this without forgetting that...?" Translation mine.
[191] Sow Fall, 36. "When you are a grown man with all your diplomas, don't forget me. You won't forget me will you?" Translation mine.
[192] Sow Fall, 52.
[193] Sow Fall, 72.
[194] This will be discussed further in section two of this chapter.

provide pupils with the tools for self-betterment without also passing on contradicting or negatively perceived cultural traits. As stated directly by the chief of the Diallobé, "comment donner aux Diallobé la connaissance des arts et l'usage des armes, la possession de la richesse et la santé du corps sans les alourdir en même temps?"[195] It is this question that takes center stage in both novels.

4.2 Internalization of Educational Experience

Within both novels, the Senegalese characters respond to colonialism in one of three ways: assimilation, denunciation or a third position that negotiates between the two. Kane's treatment of French education in colonial Senegal focuses mainly on the protagonist's psychological and philosophical journey between "French" and "Senegalese." As a result, the novel sacrifices its main character to facilitate an understanding of the African consciousness when negotiation fails. Sow Fall's novel, situated within a post-colonial context, allows a more encompassing view concerning the effects of three choices introduced in Kane's novel. Through a consideration of each aspect of this cognitive trichotomy,[196] it will be possible to further view ways in which Kane and Sow Fall problematize and suggest resolutions to educational failures. Additionally, their representations of the educational system will reveal a variety of ways in which Senegalese pupils internalized their educational experience.

4.2.1 Assimilation

In an analogous fashion, the two novels depict assimilation in terms of alienation, new forms of colonization and death. Samba Diallo, who became a student of French philosophy, finds himself at loggerheads between two value systems, two cultures, and

[195] Kane, 44-45. "How are the Diallobé to be given knowledge of the arts and use of arms, the possession of riches and health of the body, without at the same time weighing them down, dulling their minds." Translation by Katherine Woods, 35.

[196] Used here, cognitive trichotomy refers to the decision towards either assimilation, denunciation or negotiation.

essentially two worlds that are so seemingly contradictory. Samba's impasse motivates him to reflect:

> Je ne suis pas un pays des Diallobé distinct, face à un Occident distinct, et appréciant d'une tête froide ce que je puis lui prendre et ce qu'il faut que je lui laisse en contrepartie. Je suis devenu les deux. Il n'y a pas une tête lucide entre deux termes d'un choix. Il y a une nature étrange, en détresse de n'être pas deux.[197]

In a moment of lucidity Samba explains his psychological ambiguity; he is neither uniquely "Senegalese" as were his ancestors before the arrival of the French, nor is he uniquely "French" as his French education has indicated. Samba is unable to compromise between the two because he is trying to be both, a phenomenon that Sougou describes as "resist[ing] hybridity."[198] In an essentialist educational system that constructs culture and identity in monolithic terms, Samba feels pressure to choose between the two. Feeling alienated from each world by contradictions from the other, Samba loses himself. Uprooted and displaced, Samba becomes a man of fractured identity, trapped in a system that demands a choice of one over the other. Recalling Monsieur Niang's analogy that like a tree, a man without roots and therefore without an identity cannot live, Samba suffers a death.

At the height of impasse, one can argue that Samba's death symbolizes the failure of French education. Rather than provide a vehicle to social and self-betterment, as articulated by France's "mission civilatrice," the French school elicited a rupture as a result of identity being defined in a rigid, unilateral and monolithic nature. Implicit in Samba's failure then, is the novel's offered solution to its character's dilemma. Samba, rather than trying to choose one or the other, needs to negotiate between his two worlds.

Just as Samba felt alienated, lost and even suffered death in the face of assimilation, Diattou's character in *L'appel des arènes* represents the full effects of choosing to

[197] Kane, 164. "I am not a distinct country of the Diallobé facing a distinct Occident, and appreciating with a cool head what I must take from it and what I must leave with it by way of counterbalance. I have become the two. There is not a clear mind deciding between the two factors of a choice. There is a strange nature, in distress over not being two." Translation by Katherine Woods, 150-151.

[198] Sougou, 213.

assimilate to French culture. Her adherence to western values comes at the detriment of her African past, for she rejects all that she (and her French education) considers uncivilized and backward. Enticed by western ideologies such as individualism and progress, Diattou responds in the exact assimilationist manner that the French had hoped would happen as a result of the educational system:

> Diattou, attisée par les vents d'Ouest, est tombée de l'arbre, bénissant les cieux de lui avoir permis de monter dans la capitale pour y continuer ses études. Elle y rencontra Ndiogou Bari, l'étudiant distingué, qui l'épousa plus tard et l'amena en Occident. Le Paradis pour Diattou. La grande solution : l'individualisme...et la liberté. Oui, la liberté...Diattou mit le plus grand soin à se métamorphoser. Elle se soumit à la torture d'apprivoiser ses cordes vocales... elle apprit à régler sa démarche et ses gestes sur la vitesse de l'occident...[199]

Conforming to the French image, however, does not allow Diattou the liberty she had hoped to obtain. In place of autonomy assimilation leads instead to a new form of colonization and alienation. As Cazenave argues, Diattou has "given up African criteria of beauty and moral standards, turning to the European model. [She has thus] adopted another type of colonization, more subtle, but very much at the center of every one of [her] acts and gestures."[200] Education has made her a slave to someone else's standard of beauty and idea of liberty.

In what Edouard Glissant terms "pulsion mimetique,"[201] or mimetic drive, Diattou additionally suffers from a "particular kind of alienation," as she becomes obsessed with imitating the French "other." Evident by the extent to which she tries to transform her voice and gestures, the "French language [has] become an object of desire and identifi-

[199] Sow Fall, 95. "Diattou stirred up by the winds from the West fell from the tree, blessing the heavens that allowed her go to Dakar in order to finish her studies. While there she met Ndiogou Bari, a distinguished student, who married her and brought her to the West, Diattou's paradise. The West offered her individualism and liberty, yes liberty. Diattou thus took careful care in transforming herself. She submitted herself to torture in order to change her vocal cords... to regulate the way she walked and to adjust her gestures to reflect the fast-paced nature of the West." Translation mine.

[200] Odile Cazenave, "Gender, Age and Reeducation," *African Today*, 3rd Quarter (1991): 54-62, 59.

[201] Celia M. Britton, *Edouard Glissant and Postcolonial Theory* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1999), 83.

cation. . . [for it] is emblematic of [the] white French civilization," to which she is trying to conform. In an attempt to identify completely with the European other, Diattou thus loses "any autonomous perspective on reality." As a result of her 'obsession with imitation,' which Glissant describes as "impossible to live with, not only because imitation can never succeed but because the obsession itself is unbearable," Diattou loses her sanity and walks out on her family in the final scene of the novel.[202]

Exemplified by the above representations, to assimilate an exclusively French identity becomes problematic on both a psychological and physical level. The French educational system is thus presented as failing because if its West African pupils assimilate to French culture, alienation, insanity and even death ensue.

4.2.2 Rejection

In a parallel style both authors present rejection of the foreign schools in a fashion that serves to further problematize French colonial and postcolonial education. Voiced by a local school teacher in *L'aventure ambiguë*, "nous refusions l'école pour demeurer nous-mêmes,"[203] isolation from and refusal to attend the French school is offered in place of assimilation. The teacher's reference to self-preservation in the face of French education suggests that the school will rob its pupils of their pre-colonial Senegalese self. By rejecting the French schools in their entirety, the Diallobé can thus preserve their identity, culture and a lifestyle separate from French influence.

The paradox in rejection, however, parallels the conditions characteristic of France's first conquest. As stated in Kane's novel, the French conquered West African land not out of right elicited by superior civility, but by modernized warfare to which West Africa possessed no equivalent. France's West African conquest thus took place on an uneven playing ground.[204] However, once the weapons of warfare transformed from guns

[202] Britton, 83.

[203] We refuse the schools in order to remain ourselves," Translation mine.

[204] While Africans did possess guns as a result of established trade with Europeans, there remained a large disparity between quantity and technique.

to schools, West Africans saw a unique opportunity. Knowledge would foster a more level playing ground by providing West African children with the requisite education to articulate their own identity, history and culture. Complete rejection of the French schools, therefore, risked leaving West Africans open to the same vulnerably known during the first conquest. If they chose to reject the schools, then they risked being destroyed again by weapons to which they knew no equivalent.

The conclusion that rejecting French education would lead to isolation and eventually destruction appears in both novels. In *L'aventure ambiguë* the master of the Quranic school, Thierno, is depicted as clinging to his religion and tradition to the point that he is blinded of all other realities. "The country of the Diallobé," he feels, is "dying from the assault of strangers." Hope, he concludes, would be found not within the white schools, but through producing "such a man as the country's great past had produced."[205] The production of a strong religious leader would could carry on the Word of God and thus keep the Diallobé firmly founded in religion.

Yet with or without the new schools la Grande Royale feels that the Diallobé are dying. As she explains, "there are more deaths than births among the Diallobé."[206] Continued down the same path, Thierno understands that "their houses will fall to ruins, their children will die or be reduced to slavery. Extreme poverty will be entrenched among them, and their hearts will be filled with resentment."[207] As a result, if Thierno is granted his wish to prevent the children of the Diallobé from attending the foreign schools, isolation would only lead to further destruction.

Similar to Theirno, Sow Fall's André symbolizes a postcolonial result of isolation from the French schools. Although the character himself does not reject the foreign schools, as did Theirno, his isolated background and continued separation exemplifies both the advantages and dangers resulting from a detachment from the French schools. Through his adhesion to a time-honored upbringing, André, a character who in both

[205] Woods, 23.
[206] Woods, 35
[207] Woods, 35.

life and sport represents the traditional, pre-colonial values of Senegal, symbolizes a life that has remained mostly uninfluenced by the western school. Raised by his family and community, André still personifies the importance of honor, tradition, and a life requiring only the necessities for survival. Regrettably, however, André meets an untimely end when he is shot by drunken thieves. Although Sow Fall admits that André's death was designed to be climactic,[208] in viewing her novel in tandem with Kane's, André's death resonates with a distinct irony that acts to fulfill Kane's admonition that an inability to negotiate would lead to defeat. When André, a traditionalist who represents time-honored custom and traditional values, is murdered via a gun, his death serves to symbolically present both the benefits and dangers of his isolation from French culture and inability to negotiate.

4.2.3 Alienation

The dichotomy between assimilation and rejection that forces the choice between French and Senegalese, engenders two unfavorable outcomes that both lead to alienation. Through Sow Fall's character Monsieur Niang, the expansive and disfiguring effects of alienation resulting from education come to surface and thus underline the failure of the French school. "L'aliénation," he claims, "est assurément la plus grande mutilation que puisse subir un homme."[209] Within its framework:

> Chacun refuse d'être soi-même et se perd dans l'illusion qu'il peut se tailler un manteau selon sa propre fantaisie...Le mal est universel...Personne ne sait plus à quoi s'accrocher. L'idéal n'existe plus, mais la course vers les ténèbres. L'homme perd ses racines et l'homme sans racines est pareil à un arbre sans racines: il se dessèche et meurt. (Un homme qui a perdu son identité est un homme mort...)[210]

[208] Personal interview with Sow Fall, May, 2003.

[209] Sow Fall, 72. "Alienation is surely the greatest mutilation that can befall a man." Translation mine.

[210] Sow Fall, 72. "Everyone refuses to be themselves and becomes lost in the illusion that they cloak themselves according to their own fantasy...Evil is universal...Nobody knows what to cling to. The ideal no longer exists, only a road towards darkness. Man looses his roots and a man without roots is like a tree without roots: he shrivels up and dies. (A man who has lost his identity is a dead man...)" Translation mine, parenthesis appear as in original quote.

As a result of alienation, victims find themselves lost in a fantasy world that is never fully complete because assimilation and rejection are themselves incomplete—there are always reminders, always conflicts between fantasy and actuality. Within a world of contradiction, men are uprooted and their identity fractures without reparation. Man becomes lost and confused, at home nowhere.

Reiterating alienation, Malaw explains to Nalla that the men and women who left his village all became lost in the big city. There, they created the mirage of finding something better by dressing well and wearing their hair nicely, but in so doing, they forgot how to look at the sky and the earth. Within the westernized cities they could no longer dream, sing or feel.[211] Malaw's mission was thus to use wrestling, a sport with strong ties to tradition, to bring back the lost and reattach them to their roots. Filled with emotion and resolve, Malaw's father pleads: "Sauve-les mon fils... Ouvre des arènes et remue-les. Fais-y bouillonner le tam-tam comme une mer en furie... ils ne pourront pas résister à l'appel de la terre."[212]

As exemplified, French education could be internalized neither in terms of assimilation nor rejection. Instead, educational internalization must be constructed within the African consciousness in a different fashion than what was allocated by the school itself. Returning to the opening scene of *L'appel des arènes*, Nalla's grammar lesson, where he uses French to describe an West African context, suggests a solution based in negotiation and compromise. As we will see next, ideas of hybridity will further materialize, fostering a an alternative to the binary vision inherent to all forms of essentialism.

4.3 Senegalese Pupils' Use of French Education

Resulting from the representation of a Senegalese perspectives on and internalization of the French educational system, both novels are able to present various ways in

[211] Sow Fall, 135-138.

[212] Sow Fall, 139. "Save them my son... Open arenas and move them. Bang on the drums like with the fury of the sea... they will not be able to resist the call of the earth." Translation mine.

which Senegalese pupils were able to use their education, not all of which were anticipated by French educational implementers, administrators and policy makers.

First, because Kane includes representations of French education in terms of a war tool, his novel also suggests that education can be used by its pupils along a similar line. Unlike the first phase of colonization, where success resulted from guns and technology, knowledge was an attainable tool. Following the analogy of education as an instrument of war, the schoolhouse could be used as an arsenal providing West African pupils with the secrets of their enemies. Armed with the same weapons, French education becomes a means for survival as pupils would find themselves more prepared to fight the battle of the second conquest. "L'école étrangère," explains the La Grande Royale, "est la forme nouvelle de la guerre que nous font ceux qui sont venus."[213] Because of this perception, she goes on to state :

> Moi, Grande Royale, je n'aime pas l'école étrangère. Je la déteste. Mon avis est qu'il faut y envoyer nos enfants cependant...l'école où je pousse nos enfants tuera en eux ce qu'aujourd'hui nous aimons et concervons avec soin, à just titre. Peut-être notre souvenir lui-même mourra-t-il en eux. Quand ils nous reviendront de l'école, il en est qui ne nous reconnaîtront pas. Ce que je propose c'est que nous acceptions de mourir en nos enfants et que les étrangers qui nous ont défaits prennent en eux toute la place que nous aurons laissée libre.[214]

The hostility incorporated within the matriarch's speech serves to both suggest the foreign schools as means for survival, while reinforcing other metaphoric consequences of war.[215] While the foreign schools will destroy they will also construct. Destruction will leave the child in a foundational state. Like land cleared for renovation, the child

[213] Kane, 47. "The foreign school is the new form of the war which those who have come are waging, and we must send our elite." Translation by Katherine Woods, 37.

[214] Kane, 56-57. "I, the Most Royale Lady, do not like the foreign school. I detest it. My opinion, nevertheless, is that we should send our children there...the school in which I would place our children will kill in them what today we love and rightly converse with care. Perhaps the very memory of us will die in them. When they return from the school, there may be those who will not recognize us. What I am proposing is that we should agree to die in our children's hearts and that foreigners who have defeated us should fill the place, wholly, which we shall have left free." Translation by Katherine Woods, 45-46.

[215] Samba Gadjigo also discusses the violence surrounding education and education as a means of survival. See Gadjigo, 58.

is ready to rebuild on a more solid foundation. Construction, therefore, would produce a metaphorical structure that would ultimately prepare Senegalese pupils for a future that could no longer neatly separate the "east" and "west," "Senegalese" and "French." As le Chevalier points out, we may "have not had same past...but [we will have] strictly speaking, the same future. The era of separate destines has run its course."[216]

To further facilitate education as an institution that can be used for survival, la Grande Royale provides two metaphors indicative of hybridity:

> Souvenez-vous de nos champs quand approche la saison des pluies. Nous aimons bien nos champs, mais que faison-nous alors? Nous y mettons le fer et le feu, nous les tuons. De même, souvenez-vous: que faisons-nous de nos réserves de graines quand il a plus? Nous voudrions bien les manger, mais nous les enfouissons en terre.[217]

The metaphoric structure that French education would erect can be understood as needing to be filled not with assimilationist or denunciational ideologies, but with compromise and negotiation. Just as the Diallobé could not unchangeably preserve their fields and hope to grow crops the following season or hold on to their seed reserves and hope to survive the next year, they cannot isolate their children and hope to produce adults capable of survival. In order to procure a future, the children of the Diallobé, like the fields that provide food and the food that provides life, must take the essential, although not necessarily desirable, steps toward prosperity.

Education, as represented by la Grande Roayle, can be considered a tool of war to be used for survival. Survival, as earlier testified to by Diattou's mental instability and Samba's death, cannot be based on the the dichotomy of assimilation versus denunciation; a third option is imperative for success. The following section will thus further explore both novels' treatment of this negotiated space and how education is presented as fostering notions of *third space*.

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[216] Woods, 79.

[217] Kane, 57. "Remember our fields when the rainy season is approaching. We love our fields very much, but what do we do then? We plough them up and burn them: we kill them. In the same way, recall this: what do we do with our reserves of seed when the rain has fallen? We would like to eat them, but we bury them in the earth. Translation Katherine Woods, 47.

4.3.1 Hybridity

As a result of hybridity, or the successful negotiation between what was originally presented as polar opposites, education can be used to extract positive aspects of dissimilar cultures. The notion of compromise emerges within both authors' depictions of the French educational system. Where Kane emphasizes the resulting dangers of indecision through Samba's tragic adventure, Sow Fall elicits a more hopeful tone as Nalla succeeds where Samba had failed.

One must be cautious, however, not to confuse Samba's inability to situate himself within the third space as proof that Kane denounces hybridity. For instance Samba says:

> Il arrive que nous soyons capturés au bout de notre itinéraire, vaincus par notre aventure même. Il nous apparaît soudain que, tout au long de notre cheminement, nous n'avons pas cessé de nous métamorphoser, et que nous voilà devenus autres. Quelquefois, la métamorphose ne s'achève pas, elle nous installe dans l'hybride et nous y laisse. Alors, nous nous cachons, remplis de honte.[218]

Here Samba is expressing the notion of education, culture and identity within the framework originally constructed by colonial discourse–that is, in terms of rigidity. Within a monolithic construction, hybridity is perceived as shameful, as causing a fractured identity within a system that does not allow such an option. As a result, an incomplete metamorphosis is seen as failure. Samba's depiction as a man "resist[ing] hybridity"[219] thus becomes the incarnation of Kane's educational discourse surrounding notions of identity. Considering Samba's death, *L'aventure ambiguë* discursively underscores the idea that it is not the hybrid or the concept of hybridity that is at fault, but the system which defined both as being incomplete.

In Sow Fall's novel, wrestling symbolizes the means through which one can satisfy

[218] Kane, 124-125. "It may be that we shall be captures at the end of our itinerary, vanquished by our adventure itself. It suddenly occurs to us that, all along our road, we have not ceased to metamorphose ourselves, and we see ourselves as other than what we were. Sometimes the metamorphosis is not even finished. We have turned into hybrids, and there we are left. Then we hide ourselves, filled with shame." Translation by Katherine Woods, 112-113.

[219] Sougou, 213.

the practicality and importance of learning, while avoiding the fear that education will lead to alienation and destruction. If the French school system projected a lifestyle and a value system that resulted in a pupil's detachment from his culture, then wrestling, with its strong ties to traditional culture and values, could aid in reestablishing the roots of its detached children. As indicated earlier, when Malaw explains that he left his village, Diaminar, in order to bring people back, he references not only a specific geographical location that is progressively moving toward exile, but a disappearing spiritual and psychological milieu of values and honor. To counteract the disappearing values symbolized by Diaminer, Malaw's father states that his son should use wrestling to remind those who had left of what they were giving up. As he reiterates to his son, "they will not be able to resist the call of the Earth,"[220] or, as indicated by Sow Fall's title, "l'appel des arènes" (the call of the arenas).

As projected by Malaw's father, Nalla's bond with André and Malaw, as well as his relationship to wrestling, serves to reconnect him to his African roots. Through sport and friendship Nalla rediscovers the values of honor and tradition that his parents had lost in the schoolrooms of western progress.

In one of the final scenes set in a ring where Malaw is to fight with Nalla by his side, *L'appel des arènes* emphasizes the merging of cultures as men and women, Senegalese and French, doctor and farmer come together in celebration. Having followed his son, Ndiogou is surprised to see the diversity of a crowd instantly linked by a common "délire de joie si intense, si sincère, si spontané."[221] His feelings of trepidation and condescension quickly give way to excitement as he finds himself cheering with those around him. As the match concludes and father and son are reunited in more than the literal sense of physical proximity, Ndiogou, in a proposal indicative of hybridity, asks his son "Je t'accompagnerai dorénavant aux arènes, et tu feras tes devoirs avec moi. Veux-tu?"[222]

[220] Sow Fall, 139.

[221] Sow Fall, 153. "Joyful delirium that was so intense, so sincere and so spontaneous." Translation Mine.

[222] Sow Fall, 156. "From now on I will accompany you to the arenas and you will do your homework with me. Would you like that?" Translation mine.

Based on different internalizations, Nalla and Samba thus use education in a manner that cause their fates to diverge. Where Samba's follows a path towards darkness unable to negotiate an identity with which he could live, Nalla becomes the symbolic link of hybridity. Nalla neither rejects one culture in favor of another, nor finds within his consciousness a need to choose between the two. Raised by a family who attempts to mold him in the same fashion as French education hoped to mold its pupils, Nalla is able to continue a link with tradition through both his grandmother and the wrestlers. Just as Sow Fall hopes to present negatively precieved changes through literature emblematic of a societal miror,[223] André and Malaw re-present the positive values that would be lost if Nalla were to succumb wholly to his parents ideologies. As Ndiogou too accepts the validity of compromise initiated by Nalla's passion, 'the call of the arenas' brings home father and son.

[223] Guèye, "Ecriture, développement et féminisme," 48.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

Although education, whether formal or informal, is a catalyst conducive to the transmission of knowledge, cultural values and a personal sense of morality, it is not at the same time, a determinant forcing adoptability and subscription. When French colonists introduced an educational system based on a fundamental dichotomy between *French* and *African*, it resulted in the establishment within the West African consciousness a dialectical tension more complex than assimilation versus denunciation. Through the annexation of French disciplines, however, pupils found within the same institution a means to not only contextualize, internalize and problematize their situation, but a vehicle to transform a tool of colonization into an instrument for decolonization. Education thus became its own antithesis. As such, analysis of the colonial and postcolonial French educational system demands at its most fundamental level a consideration of perspective. With few African texts contributing to the colonial discourse that defined French education, however, French educational perspectives subsumed and co-opted the West African experience of France's "mission civilatrice" in favor of the former.

With the rise of West African literature that responded to direct cultural, social and political actualities, a unique insider look at various aspects of West African life, including colonial education, began to flourish. The African novel in French thus emerged as a genre ideal to represent an additional historical experience from a West African

perspective. In form, African novels in French employ discursive strategies reminiscent of traditional methods of communication, such as orality and character typification. This tactic, whether purposeful or coincidental, works to both legitimize African tradition while subtly incarnating a desire to return to important customs and the values they promote. In function, these novels give voice to an educational experience from an African perspective. As a result, the African novel in French moves beyond entertainment to additionally serve as an historical tool. In recognition of the novel's bi-functional purpose, Sow Fall further states that novelists have the power to "créer une littérature qui reflète simplement notre manière d'être, qui soit un miroir de notre âme et prise de notre culture."[224] Sharing the aesthetic characteristics of art and the documentary features of history, the African novel in French thus "autorise à la fois l'appreciation de la beauté et la prise de conscience."[225]

Within the framework of social response and additionally defined as an historical tool, Kane's and Sow Fall's novels are two works that provide a strong foundation from which to extract Senegalese representations on the French colonial and postcolonial school system. Through representations of the educational problematic, it is possible to decode various perspectives on a French institution, diverse ways in which pupils internalized their educational experience and unforseen ways that pupils used the French schools. In addition, both novels put into application theoretical notions of third space and thus present hybridity as a solution to the cognitive dissonance, or *crise de conscience*, which often resulted in feelings of alienation among African pupils.

Viewing education as treated by Kane and Sow Fall further provides an understanding of a Senegalese experience that was often absent in French colonial discourses. Considering representations of how many Senegalese interpreted and internalized the colonial system helps reveal the ways in which education was used by Africans, rather

[224] Médoune Guèye, "Ecriture, développement et féminisme: Entretien avec Aminata Sow Fall," *The Literary Griot* 12, 2 (Fall, 2000): 44-59, 47. "...to create literature reflective of our manner of being, that mirrors our soul and society." Translation mine.

[225] Guèye, 52. "allows at once for the appreciation of beauty and the awakening of consciousness." Translation mine.

than how it was meant to be used by colonial implementers. While French colonial policy worked to create a subjugated people whose French indoctrination would prevent self-determinism through assimilation, Kane's and Sow Fall's novels provide evidence to suggest that pupils' use of the French school did not always adhere to French intentions. Through negotiation, students allocated a third choice that fell between France's vision of assimilation and rejection. When successfully achieved, compromise allowed Senegalese pupils to extract useful educational teachings, exemplifying the positive aspects of cultural contact, while still maintaining a tie with their traditional roots. In the end, Kane's and Sow Fall's novels give testimony to the extent to which the Senegalese pupil transformed an institution that was once a French means of marginalization, into a tool for Senegalese advantage. The French school system, rather than successfully subjugating a people, provided a stage on which to act out a West African agency. By unintentionally planting the seeds of self-determinism, the French school system created what it had set out to avoid. As a result, it became a tool for Senegalese independence, rather than a vehicle to procure French colonialism.

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Appendix A

An Early History of The French in Senegal: From European Discovery to French Educational Implementation

Long before the French envisioned Africa as a land ripe for conquest and colonization, the steppingstones that would make such a venture possible were being placed. The following discussion, centered on French involvement in Senegal, will establish a foundation for French colonization as interest progressed from trade, to imperial conquest, to colonization.[226] Detailing the major occurrences, themes, and chronologies of early French involvement in West Africa this section will establish a long-term, foreign presence based on French territorial and trade rights.

[226] For use in this paper trade, imperial conquest, colonization and colonialism are defined as follows: Trade refers to the sequestering of French on off shore islands or coastal forts as a result of tropical disease and African resistance to their presence. From there, they could conduct trade through African agents. Imperial conquest refers to increased French exploration of African land followed by military acquisition of territory. Colonization falls within the realm of conquest as the French were to establish French-controlled governance. Colonialism refers to the state of being colonized and is therefore situated within the framework of established French power and dominance.

A.1 Early French Involvement in West Africa

For all practical *European* purposes, African history began in the fifteenth century, when Portuguese sailors and traders came into contact with the peoples along the West African coast. The importance of this contact proved twofold: first, the Portuguese lit the match that would ignite European interest in the "dark continent," while at the same time set the trade-standard for their European counterparts. As John Blake explains, the foreigners quickly established a profitable trade relationship that sought agricultural products and human labor in return for material European goods. The Portuguese, already envisioning Africa in terms of national profit, declared a monopoly over both African land and the surrounding ocean in hopes to thwart off other European competition.[227] Despite their efforts, word of Portugal's success in West Africa quickly spread across Europe, sparking the interest of competitors such as the French, Spanish, English and Dutch.[228] In part out of desire to know firsthand the trade benefits of maritime expeditions, and in part out fear that the Portuguese were growing too powerful as a result of naval strength, Portugal's European competitors set out to militarily challenge the self-proclaimed monopoly over Africa. Consequentially, the military vying for trade rights among the Portuguese, Dutch, French and English set in motion centuries of land disputes that would lay the foundation for future spheres of European influence and control.

Despite its naval exploits, however, Blake states that general European interest beyond simple trade remained minimal. Unlike West Indian territories that were overwhelmingly conceptualized in terms of colonization, Africa was originally contextualized only in terms of trade. Through a European lens, Africa was a place of port where Europeans could trade with Africans. While one was eager for gold, cheap agricultural

[227] John Blake. *West Africa: Quest for God and Gold* (London : Curzon Press, 1977), 106.

[228] Oscar Norwhich explains the extent to which Portugal attempted to guard against European competition by explaining that by order of the King the Portuguese were to guard all information they acquired about Africa, from land maps to sea routes. Leaked information was punishable by death. Oscar Norwich, *Maps of Africa* (Johannesburg: A.D Donker LTD, 1983).

products and labor to work their overseas plantations, the other became enamored with beads, cloth, and weapons brought by the white visitors. Beyond that trade, Africa was considered little more than a landmass prohibiting easy access to Asia.[229] As a result of early European trade interest in Africa, a desire that could be quenched without colonial exploit, the early European relationship with Africa was not characterized in nineteenth century rhetoric as "invader, ruler, or master," but as traders mutually dependent on coveted goods.[230]

The Early European/African relationship, while not indicative of Europe's future exploits, did result in the establishment of coastal forts that evolved with time into launching pads for territorial acquisition. With increasing trade competition, European traders, like the French, sought to establish permanent African posts to secure personal trade networks. As French trade expeditions increased, however, so too did African opposition to foreign presence on their soil. As a result of African resistance and tropical disease to which the French immune system knew no defense, French traders were forced to build posts along the West African shore, or off coastal islands. Bound to these territories, the French conducted inner-continental trade through African agents. In compensation for the goods with which they traded, Europeans increasingly received and demanded human labor, which turned the confines of their forts into holding cells to await ships that would carry acquired slaves to European colonies in the West Indies.[231]

By 1659 the French set up their first trading post in St. Louis (Senegal), and militarily gained control of the Dutch fort on Gorée Island, which both solidified a continuing Franco-West African contact and fostered a select African assimilation.[232] Since the forts were based in trade and not colonization, the white population remained rela-

[229] Blake, 106.

[230] Christopher Fyfe, "Reform in West Africa: the abolition of the slave trade," in *History of West Africa Vol.2*, edited by J.F Ajayi and Michael Crowder (New York: Columbia University,1972).

[231] Before the arrival of Europeans, slavery was an integral part of African life. Human life and labor was highly valued, and therefore viewed as a fair trade at the onset of European contact. European exploitation, however, changed the face of slavery resulting in the exportation of 12-30 million Africans, depending on the source referenced and the fashion used to calculate exportation.

[232] Michael Crowder, *A Study of French Assimilation Policy* (London: Methuen and Co., 1967), 10. Gorée is located just off the coast of modern-day Dakar.

tively low. Within the French settlements lived a white minority of sailors and soldiers, and a black majority of both free Africans and imprisoned slaves, the latter en route to overseas European colonies. Away from France and their families, many Frenchmen fathered children to slave women or to their African mistresses, creating a sizable mulatto population known as *métis*.[233] Within these settlements, the French considered the *métis* as assimilated to French culture for they adopted many French values, religion and language—which many spoke as eloquently as any Frenchmen.[234]

Although the French were physically bound to these areas and therefore had limited control over the surrounding territory, their judgment of the African people knew no such limit. Based on ethnocentric ideologies that would continue to shape the African image within the French conscience, the men and women who lived beyond the French boundaries were deemed uncivilized. Some Europeans believed the superstition that Africans' dark skin was a brand to mark their sins.[235] Despite French descriptions of the savage African, the former claimed to believe in a fundamental equality of man. Africans too could know the blessedness of civility and enlightenment if and when they adopted the French way of life. Until then, the French would continue to view their own culture as intellectually and morally superior and the Africans as an inferior people who lacked a comparable history and culture of their own.

The French remained interested in the West African interior partly out of fear of possible encroaching trade competition from other European powers, and in part out of an exploratory curiosity. By the mid seventeen hundreds, French explorers like Michel Adanson stepped further outside of the known African territory, recording their discoveries. To compensate for West African resistance to infringing French presence, "local French officials and merchants in Senegal," paved any expansion with continued exploratory and

[233] Crowder, *A Study of French Assimilation Policy*, 11.

[234] Adopting the French language becomes increasingly important as the French become more involved in Africa. Eventually, both African's and French alike saw French as a symbol of education and prestige.

[235] Adam Hochschild, *King Leopold's Ghost* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1999).

peace missions.[236] The maps that resulted from such adventures progressively showed an improved knowledge of West African land, which in turn helped foster French territorial expansion. As a result, France eventually increased its territorial hold by two towns, Dakar and Rufisque.

While the French in West Africa began to move further into Senegal's interior, France started to witness the disintegration of her West Indian colonies as racism, unfair trade and unequal political representation increasingly promoted revolts among slaves and colonists. With the loss of her most profitable colony, St. Domingue,[237] France's desire to secure a New World empire came to a momentary standstill. In order to revive her aspirations of an overseas empire, France sought to reconceptualize Africa as a land for establishing a second empire, rather than a land only seen in terms of trade.[238] According to the French, this would symbolically proclaim France's greatness as a nation and restore the metropolis' lost prestige and glory.

By the mid eighteen hundreds trade thus gave way to conquest as France began to actively pursue West African colonization. At this point, recourses for expansion transformed from trade to both the military and French culture itself. With this shift, imperial agents that once consisted of merchants and colonists became secondary "to soldiers, technicians and teachers."[239]

Unlike in their former New World colonies, France's inner-continental West African expansion took place in the wake of the French Revolution (1789). With their new found sense of enlightenment, the French were increasingly motivated to share their culture with Africans in what the French described as a civilizing mission.[240] As a result, revolutionary

[236] Olatunji Oloruntimehin, "The Western Sudan and the coming of the French, 1800-1893," in History of West Africa: Volume Two, ed. J.F Ade Ajayi and Michael Crowder, New York: Columbia University Press (1973): 344.

[237] St. Dominigue, now known as Haiti, was once the most profitable of all French colonies. The Haitian revolution of 1791 was a slave revolt that defeated French colonizers resulting in the first independent black nation.

[238] Anthony Pagden, *Lords of All the World: Ideologies of empire in Spain, Britain and France 1500-1800*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995).

[239] Henri Brunschwig, *French Colonialism 1871-1914: Myths and Realities* (New York: Praeger, 1964).

[240] Francis McNamara, *France in Black Africa*, (Washington D.C: National Defense University, 1989).

ideologies of equality and fraternity were soon applied to expansion in territories such as Senegal. Through culture, the French would bring freedom and civilization to the people of Senegal in order to "convert [African barbarians] into Frenchmen."[241] The French believed that this would create a colony based on equality and thus successfully avoid the racial inequalities that plagued France's West Indian settlements. The discursive shift resulted in the French, whether in Senegal or in France, to internalize their African conquest as "an establishment of 'la paix franaise' and their early administration as 'l'œuvre civilisatrice'."[242]

A.2 Assimilation and Colonial Expansion

Through promoting and establishing equality by way of assimilating the Senegalese to French political, social, cultural and economic systems, France hoped to create a colony free of the problems associated with her earlier attempts in the West Indies. Motivated by egalitarian ideologies, the French thus adopted an assimilationist system allocating equal rights to every citizen, including those residing in the French-claimed territory of Senegal. While in theory assimilation recognized that men can be equal, in practice, equality was dependent on being French, not African. The inherent contradiction in assimilation thus lay in its fundamental recognition of equality, but equality based on the assimilator's superiority.

With the rise of France's Second Empire in 1852, African colonies were subjected to the direct rule of the Emperor. Under direct rule, France appointed General Louis Faidherbe governor of Senegal in 1854. Through military campaigns and treaties with local leaders, Faidherbe successfully brought one-third of modern Senegal under direct French rule,[243] resulting in a French history that glorified his accomplishments.[244] It was

[241] Crowder, *A Study of French Assimilation Policy*, 2.
[242] Crowder, *A Study of French Assimilation Policy*, 2. "An establishment of French peace and her early administration as a civilizing mission." Translation mine.
[243] Michael Crowder, *Colonial West Africa: Collected Essays* (London: Frank Cass, 1978), 31.
[244] Blair, 6.

here, under imperial French direction, that the first great period of colonial expansion took place.[245]

[245] Crowder, *A Study of French Assimilation Policy*, 14-15.