

INFORMATION TO USERS

This material was produced from a microfilm copy of the original document. While the most advanced technological means to photograph and reproduce this document have been used, the quality is heavily dependent upon the quality of the original submitted.

The following explanation of techniques is provided to help you understand markings or patterns which may appear on this reproduction.

1. The sign or "target" for pages apparently lacking from the document photographed is "Missing Page(s)". If it was possible to obtain the missing page(s) or section, they are spliced into the film along with adjacent pages. This may have necessitated cutting thru an image and duplicating adjacent pages to insure you complete continuity.
2. When an image on the film is obliterated with a large round black mark, it is an indication that the photographer suspected that the copy may have moved during exposure and thus cause a blurred image. You will find a good image of the page in the adjacent frame.
3. When a map, drawing or chart, etc., was part of the material being photographed the photographer followed a definite method in "sectioning" the material. It is customary to begin photoing at the upper left hand corner of a large sheet and to continue photoing from left to right in equal sections with a small overlap. If necessary, sectioning is continued again — beginning below the first row and continuing on until complete.
4. The majority of users indicate that the textual content is of greatest value, however, a somewhat higher quality reproduction could be made from "photographs" if essential to the understanding of the dissertation. Silver prints of "photographs" may be ordered at additional charge by writing the Order Department, giving the catalog number, title, author and specific pages you wish reproduced.
5. PLEASE NOTE: Some pages may have indistinct print. Filmed as received.

University Microfilms International

300 North Zeeb Road

Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106 USA

St. John's Road, Tyler's Green

High Wycombe, Bucks, England HP10 8HR

77-32,058

SMYLEY, Karen Marie, 1943-
THE AFRICAN WOMAN: INTERPRETATIONS
OF SENEGALESE NOVELISTS ABOULAYE
SADJI AND OUSMANE SEMBENE.

City University of New York,
Ph.D., 1977
Literature, Romance

University Microfilms International, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106

© COPYRIGHT BY

KAREN MARIE SMYLEY

1977

THE AFRICAN WOMAN: INTERPRETATIONS OF SENEGALESE
NOVELISTS ABOULAYE SADJI AND OUSMANE SEMBENE

by

KAREN MARIE SMYLEY

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate
Faculty in French in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of
Philosophy, The City University of New York.

1977

This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in French in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Sept 6 | 1977
date

Alex Szogyi
Chairman of Examining Committee

Sept 6 - 1977
date

Henri Peyre
Executive Officer

for Prof. Cartey < at his request Henri Peyre
Professor Wilfred Cartey

Mary Ann Caws
Professor Mary Ann Caws

Henri Peyre
Professor Henri Peyre
Supervisory Committee

The City University of New York

.DEDICATION

In fond memory of a great lady whose
New Orleans "Créole" wisdom, wit and
beauty served as a constant inspiration
for this endeavor--my beloved Grand'mère
Belle Cayette Gabriel.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

An expression of sincere appreciation to
all whose efforts made this work possible.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION..... 1

PART ONE: THE TRADITIONAL AFRICAN
WOMAN IN THE NOVELS OF
ABOULAYE SADJI AND
OUSMANE SEMBENE

Chapter

I. THE AFRICAN MOTHER..... 19

II. THE AFRICAN WIFE..... 53

III. WOMAN OF MYSTICAL POWERS..... 92

PART TWO: IMPACT OF WESTERNIZATION UPON
THE AFRICAN WOMAN IN THE
NOVELS OF SADJI AND SEMBENE

IV. AFRICAN REFLECTION IN A WESTERN MIRROR..... 117

V. IN-DEPTH PORTRAIT OF THE WOMAN:
LOOSENING SOCIETAL TIES..... 153

VI. POLITICAL PORTRAIT OF THE AFRICAN FEMALE:
THE MOMENT OF NEGATION..... 190

CONCLUSION..... 230

Appendix

A. RESUME OF NOVELS..... 254

B. TABLE OF FEMALE CHARACTERS..... 260

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY..... 264

INTRODUCTION

Much of Africa's history and culture have been obscured by the ill-chosen epithet "dark continent." Behind these somber adjectives much of the truth of this vast continent remains undiscovered and its mysteries untapped. Daily, the media expose an Africa which is involved in internal and external struggles for development and self-definition. This exposure sheds some light upon the "darkened continent" and thus offers Africa's social, economic and political facets for the world's observation. While the media reveal the present, the historians, its past, and the economists its hope for future development, the scientists study its technology and the sociologists analyze its people. It is through the literature of Africa however that the past, present and future may be simultaneously observed. The intent of this study is to isolate a segment of Africa's literature--namely the novel--and to analyze the African female character as she is presented therein. This analysis will be undertaken solely in the works of Senegalese writers Ousmane Sembène and Aboulaye Sadjì.

Critical studies of African literature rarely stress the diversity and the impact of the female character. Often, she is overlooked as a minor role; one whose sole purpose is

to provide elements of the picturesque and the exotic for the rest of the literary piece. We intend to demonstrate that Sadjì and Sembène have indeed taken the African woman from behind such shadows and have elevated her as a character of singular importance in their respective novels. The dissertation seeks to demonstrate the wide variety of roles, the depth of characterization of each, and the overall magnitude of the woman's importance in Africa. This study is both timely and essential, for through their works, the authors shed new light upon the general subject of African literature and the particular subject of the theme of the female in the novel. Their work is significant in that it thrusts the characterization of the African female into a light of contemporaneity, where she may begin to share the spotlight with the female character of Western literature.

In order to comprehend more fully the subtleties of Sadjì's and of Sembène's work, it is essential to consider it within the total framework of African literature. The roots of this literature extend far into the greater body of material called the oral tradition; a tradition which for centuries has sought to preserve and to pass on African history, philosophy, folklore and culture. African literature, as we know it, only found its written beginnings in the early 1900's. Certainly the impact of colonization has had a significant effect upon the cultural expression of Africa. The very fact that French is the lingua franca of

much of West Africa can account for its infusion into the African literary framework. This literature may be said to span two worlds simultaneously, for indeed the French language has not served as a deterrent to the African, rather as a mode of expressing "another self." Its uniqueness may be seen in the fact that the Black African writer is able to express the essence of his "africanité" through the mode of a tongue to which he claims no birthright. Although certain qualities of French stylistics are preserved, the writer often restructures the language to accommodate the natural rhythm of his own thoughts. African literature of French expression is therefore a "mariage harmonieux" between the literary structures of Africa and of France.

One of the essential aims of this literature was to seek the expression of the African self; a self which had often remained obscure until the advent of the literary movement of the Black cultural world: *Négritude*. Although the concept of *Négritude* has been debated by European and African alike, it is unequivocal that without its impact, many African works may have merely reflected slight variations upon European themes, or may never have been voiced at all. Deriving much of its stimulus from the Harlem Renaissance of the 1920's, yet restructuring its outcry to suit Black-African and Caribbean intellectuals of French expression, *Négritude* saw its development in Paris in the 1940's. Paris was not only the intellectual forum for France

and all of Europe, but the meeting place for students of the colonial world as well. Among the many students were three who distinguished themselves as the initiators of the movement: Aimé Césaire, the Martiniquan poet who first declared the word "négritude"; Léopold Sédar Senghor, poet and current president of Senegal; Léon Damas, Guyanan poet, and lecturer in residence at Howard University, Washington, D.C. They were followed by a proliferation of aspiring Black writers whose works gradually drifted from French stylistics and French themes. The tendency was to recreate verbal paintings on paper of the natural surroundings of each "pays natal." Aimé Césaire's lengthy poem, "Retour au Pays Natal" was the first to utilize this reference. The cafe's of Paris abounded in Black-African and Caribbean students who sought to recreate the African sun in their cold Parisian flats. One was now able to depict scenes of the sounds, sights, and rhythms of Dakar, Port-au-Prince, Kouroussa, Pointe-à-Pitre, Abidjan, Ouagadougou. Novelist Camara Laye vividly recalls this experience.

I can still remember those evenings, long winter evenings mostly, . . .

But then seated at my little table lit by one miserable lamp . . . I would sit down to write and, in my thoughts, I was back again with my friends and family, beside our great river, the Niger. . . . And the light over my head, shining on my table and on to the sheets of paper I was covering with my hurried scrawl, was no longer a wretched little electric bulb but the sun in Guinea, that implacable African sun whose rays I could feel.¹

The value of Négritude to the Black intellectual has

been cause for much discussion since its inception. The impact of this literary movement was clearly threefold: linguistic, thematic, and psychological. The movement was initially conceived in a spontaneous student outburst preaching considerable anger, revendication, criticism of the European and revolt against the colonial system. In so doing, the spokesmen for Négritude did not seek to proclaim African superiority, rather to carve a passageway for the expression of African authenticity. So long under the yoke of assimilation, Africans had come to think of themselves as mere shadows of Europeans, and reflected as much in their work. The African first sought to destroy the image mirrored before him, before he could recreate one in his own likeness. In so doing, he was implementing a concept brought forth by Senghor: "le refus de l'autre, c'est l'affirmation de soi."²

This new approach to language and literature permitted the African to utilize both the linguistic and philosophical tools he had come to admire during his French training, but to restructure them to express his reality, his "africanité," his "l'être-dans-le-monde du noir."³ The linguistic impact of Négritude is undeniable, for the African writer now sought to alter and to redefine the syntax of the very French language he had so diligently tried to imitate. Léon Damas' memorable poem "Hoquet" sarcastically shows the profound desire of all French colonized peoples to speak the

French of the metropole.

.
 Ma mère voulant d'un fils mémorandum

 Cet enfant sera la honte de notre nom
 cet enfant sera notre nom de Dieu
 Taisez-vous
 Vous ai-je ou non dit qu'il vous fallait parler français
 le français de France
 le français du français
 le français français 4

The attempt was not to destroy, rather to redistribute sounds in a rhythmic, tonal and pictorial fashion, more closely attuned to the Black aesthetic. The alterations performed on the French language did not destroy its quality or appeal, yet permitted the African a broader range for his own verbal expression. Sartre refers to this newly created language as "un vêtement tout fait que les africains doivent retailer."⁵ Furthermore, Sartre perceives the French language as the beneficiary of this cultural admixture; calling it "un peu de sang frais qui circule en ce vieux corps."⁶ The situation is closely reminiscent of the interchange of roles between Caliban and Prospero, in Shakespeare's Tempest, in which the imposed language of the one becomes the tool of revolt for the other.

So he captures in his own and Prospero's language, a culture Prospero did not create and cannot control, which he, Caliban, has recognized as his own. But in the process, the language is transformed, acquiring different meanings which Prospero never expected. Caliban becomes bilingual. The language he shares with Prospero and the language he has minted from it are no longer identical. Caliban breaks out of the

prison of Prospero's language. This provides a new point of departure.⁷

Thematically, Négritude exposed the African writer to a scope of literature from which he used his life's experiences to generate his literary creations: the village, the tam-tam, the clan, his customs and traditions, his taboos, his religious beliefs, and most importantly, his perception of life which stressed his ontological organization of the world. His works also embodied a functional approach to the arts, one in which literature often served to enlighten the people. "Il suffirait seulement au romancier, selon son tempérament, de choisir dans la réalité ce qui le frappe plus particulièrement, ce qui le fait vibrer afin de le rendre à ses semblables pour leur joie, leur édification intellectuelle et morale, dans le mouvement et le pétilllement de la vie."⁸

Clearly the psychological benefits derived from the Negritude movement cannot be contested. Both the Black-African and the Caribbean intellectual were able to rid themselves of the self-deprecating and self-destructive patterns of thought which had long overshadowed their work and their lives. The movement was sufficiently vast so as to allow each writer to express personally his "négritude", while insuring that he would no longer deny his "africanité."

Many of the earlier artists of the Négritude movement chose poetry as the mode of expression for their "africanité."

Sartre even goes so far as to say that this new form of black poetry in the French language was "la seule grande poésie révolutionnaire"⁹ of the times. This study will focus primarily upon the novel of Black Africa, for, despite its various shortcomings, this genre offers both a particular form of "la vision du monde négro-africain," and a panoramic view of man. Although the authors often draw upon universal truths, much of the vitality of their work emanates from a vast pool of personal experiences. The element of fantasy or "l'iréel" is a significant theme in this literature, yet the African writer is principally concerned with the presentation of the realism of his world. ". . . le roman se propose plutôt d'inventorier, sous son aspect le plus correct--voire documentaire--la réalité de l'Afrique."¹⁰ In his essay, "Où va le roman?" Haitian author Jacques-Stephen Alexis speaks of the element of realism as the sole means of literary authenticity for the Black writer.

L'art permet de mettre en scène le réel avec toutes ses nuances, toutes ses contradictions, avec cette vibrance, ce tremblement inédit qui caractérise chaque âme humaine et que ne peut traduire aucun traité scientifique.
 Artistes nous sommes, et en artistes conscients de la difficulté et de la complexité de l'oeuvre d'art, nous devons travailler à dénoncer l'aliénation raciste, colonialiste, impérialiste. Pour ce faire, le réalisme est notre seule chance.¹¹

From the period of what is referred to as the first true black novel, Batouala, (1921), to the present, the

African novel has reflected both strengths and weaknesses as it struggled for self-definition as a genre. Although it is well past its fiftieth year, the novel still appears a relative newcomer on the African literary calendar, and has witnessed several significant transformations. These periods of development may be roughly divided into the following categories:

1921-1946	Colonization and the period of Union Française
1946-1960	Independence of African states
1960-present	Period of neo-colonialism

These historical categorizations are significant for each phase has generated a new mode of expression in the novel.

Africa was clearly marked by the colonial period, for much of its early literature shows traces of torment, bitterness and anger. The oppression was so significant as to cause the writer to seek, if not a refuge, at least a pause from its overwhelming impact. The earlier autobiographical novel, stressing the nostalgia of traditional Africa, offers an example of such times. The struggle for independence produced novels which expressed the theme of revolt, as well as that of the cultural ambivalence of the African who found himself divided between two distinct worlds. When independence for most of the African states had finally been achieved, and the spread of urbanization had become a reality, the novel began to focus upon the problematic character. His

search was one which stressed the agony of self-definition, or "le Moi," in the newly transformed Africa. Finally, many of the current African novels, including many of Sembène's works, have shifted from the theme of the inner self, to focus upon the concerns of "le peuple africain," and "la nation."

Thematically, the novel has revealed a wide variety of subjects to both an African and European public:

- the African at home, in a traditional setting (Batouala, Maran, L'Enfant Noir, Laye)
- the African who finds himself "dépaycé" in a foreign land (Un Nègre à Paris, Dadié)
- the African who has returned to his own land and is unable to readjust (O Pays, Mon Beau Peuple, Sembène)
- the African who seeks to take responsibility for his people (Bouts de Bois de Dieu, Sembène)

While this genre continues to search for new methods of presenting "le réel" to its people and to the world, it has attempted to preserve much of the artistic expression of traditional Africa. From its very inception, the task of the African novelist has been to seek inspiration from his immediate surroundings and to recreate, in written form, the popular oral art of his people.

A nous de créer des oeuvres artistiques qui prolongent le génie natif de nos peuples . . .
Elevons les formes artistiques qui vivent chez nous, étudions les formes discursives et le style narratif de nos conteurs populaires, assimilons-nous leurs organons formels, renouvelons-les pour recevoir le message de l'homme noir . . .¹²

Although many of the earlier writers tended to mirror their work on the French literary style they had come to admire, most sought to preserve those characteristics which best reflected the oral tradition of the masses: (a) frequent use of repetition, (b) restructuring of French language and syntax to accommodate African rhythmic patterns, (c) combinations of genres: insertion of poetry, music, "le chant" into the novel, (d) use of questions, riddles, proverbs to enhance story-telling qualities, (e) use of animal folklore for edification of people, and (f) reference to supranatural beings and deities. The selection of the novel has been made with considerable forethought. In many respects it is a genre which is still seeking growth and new orientations, yet it provides a panoramic background upon which the African female character may be studied in depth.

Our study will be limited to the West African country of Senegal, which boasts a rich history linking it early to France. Although French settlement in Senegal began as early as 1763, it was not until the 1850's that the French undertook a massive expansion of this region. After the 1815 "Traité des Esclaves" was enforced, the French established a series of communes and comprehensive governments responsible for the affairs of the Senegalese inhabitants. Although only two will be significant in this study, the four original communes are Dakar, Gorée, Rufisque, et

Saint Louis. While colonization may be said to have brought with it many physical features (schools, hospitals, small trade, roads), the overall effect of the policy of assimilation left an indelible mark upon the minds of many Senegalese. It is in Sadjí's works that this theme of cultural ambivalence will be most keenly observed. Within the borders of Senegal one is able to find several major cultural groups: the Senegambians, the Mandé, the Songhai, and the Fulani, languages: Wolof, Bambara, Malinké, Arabic and French, as well as an interesting admixture of religious beliefs: Islam, Christianity, and traditional African animism. It is the interrelationship of various cultural influences in Senegal which make this country a particularly apt region for study.

An additional factor in the selection of Senegal as the geographical location for the study of the African novel was the singular role it played as a literary meeting place for many of the contributors to the Négritude movement. It is also noted for having produced a significant number of Black Africa's distinguished writers; among these: Léopold Sédar Senghor; Ousmane Socé; Birago Diop; Cheik Anta Diop; Cheik Hamidou Kane; David Diop; Malik Fall; Ousmane Sembène; Aboulaye Sadjí.

Of these numerous African novelists, we will limit this study to the works of Senegalese authors Ousmane Sembène and Aboulaye Sadjí. This selection was based upon the

distinctive combination of similarities and dissimilarities between the two authors. Among the similarities one notes that both are indigenous to Senegal (Sadjì: 1910-1961, Rufisque) and (Sembène: 1923, Ziguinchor-Casamance); both reflect a Muslim training; both express a desire to use their novels as a channel for presenting the authenticity of traditional Africa. However, it is through the dissimilarities of each author that their particular talents for creating literary images of the African woman will be brought to light.

One notes a significant difference in the formal training of these novelists. Sadjì's educational background encouraged him toward the profession of teacher and eventually inspector of schools. Sembène, as a man of humble background and little formal education, worked his way from fisherman, mason, docker, to self-taught writer and most recently translated the art form of the novel into film. Although both novelists clearly depict the Senegal of old, emphasizing the significance of African traditional life, they tend to differ in their presentation of this theme. Since a major portion of Sadjì's work is directed toward the European, notably to the "colonizer," he tends to depict village traditional scenes in a highly moralistic and glorified fashion. Sembène directs his written message to the African per se, thereby preferring merely to recreate rather than to magnify the values of traditional Africa.

An additional element distinguishing the two writers involves their total approach to the political problems of Senegal and, indeed, of Africa in general. Due to the characterizations of such females as Nini, and Maimouna, Sadjì received the title of "excellent peintre de la femme sénégalaise."¹³ Although Sembène does not share in this title, per se, the very multiplicity of female characters in his work, and the significance he imparts to their roles, makes of him as important a portraitist of the female as his compatriot.

Sadjì and Sembène were selected as important literary figures for discussion, due to the significant span of historical and literary time separating their works. Their novels appeared concurrently during the latter phase of the Négritude movement and depict a development in theme, ranging from vehement criticism of "l'Autre" to the anguished criticism of "le Moi." This study intends to demonstrate that the treatment of the African female character in these novels is a cogent example of these changes in theme. It is through the portrayal of the African woman in literature that the dynamics of Africa's transformation from traditionality to modernization may be clearly examined.

Due to the literary contributions of both authors the role of the female character has been elevated to a position of merit in the African novel. In their respective works, yet often contrasting styles, Sadjì and Sembène delve past the superficial portraits of the woman in an attempt to

reveal her inner self. We intend to examine the works of these male novelists and their ability to penetrate "le monde psychique" of the female character. The literary creations of Sadjí and Sembène have carved a place of importance for the woman in African literature. Through their efforts, they have created certain key figures who are to be as classic to the literature of Africa as Flaubert's "Emma," Mauriac's "Thérèse," and Zola's "Nana" are to the literature of France. Many of the classic qualities in the nature of the African woman are revealed in excerpts of Léopold Senghor's poem, "Femme Noire":

Femme nue, femme noire
 Vêtue de ta couleur qui est vie, de ta forme qui est
 beauté!
 J'ai grandi à ton ombre; la douceur de tes mains
 bandait mes yeux.
 Et voilà qu'au coeur de l'Eté et de Midi, je te
 découvre,
 Terre promise, du haut d'un haut col calciné,
 Et ta beauté me foudroie en plein coeur, comme l'éclair
 d'un aigle.

Femme nue, femme obscure
 Fruit mur à la chair ferme, sombres extases du vin noir,
 bouche qui fais lyrique ma bouche
 Savane aux horizons purs, savane qui frémis aux
 caresses ferventes du Vent d'Est
 Tamtam sculpté, tamtam tendu qui gronde sous les
 doigts du vainqueur
 Ta voix grave de contralto est le chant spirituel
 de l'Aimée.

.....

Femme nue, femme noire
 Je chante ta beauté qui passe, forme que je fixe
 dans L'Eternel
 Avant que le Destin jaloux ne te réduise en cendres
 pour nourrir les racines de la vie.¹⁴

The enormous impact of colonization and the move from traditionality to westernization and urbanization produced a marked and lasting influence upon the lives of the African female. To make this eminently clear, this work will be discussed in two major sections of three chapters. We will focus upon the characters of both authors which fall in the category of (a) the traditional African woman, to be followed by (b) the impact of westernization. Each chapter will be followed by a brief summary, highlighting the central issues of that chapter.

¹G. D. Killam, ed., African Writers on African Writing (London: Heinemann, 1973), p. 157.

²L. S. Senghor, Rapport sur la doctrine et la Propagande du parti, Congrès constitutif du Parti du Rassemblement Africain, Fascicule ronéotypé (Dakar, 1959), p. 25.

³J. P. Sartre, Orphée Noir (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1948), p. xxix.

⁴L. G. Damas, Pigments (Paris: Présence Africaine, 1937), pp. 36-37.

⁵J. P. Sartre, "Présence Noire," Présence Africaine, 4 (1948), 58.

⁶Ibid., p. 59.

⁷J. Jahn, Neo-African Literature: A History of Black Writing (New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1968), p. 242.

⁸J. S. Aléxis, "Débat autour des conditions d'un roman national chez les peuples noirs: Où va le roman?" Présence Africaine, 13 (1957), 96.

⁹Sartre, Orphée Noir, p. xii.

¹⁰B. Mouralis, Les facteurs de la création romanesque en Afrique noire d'expression française (Paris: Centres d'études franco-phones, 1973), p. 26.

¹¹J. S. Aléxis, op. cit., p. 89.

¹²Ibid., p. 89.

¹³R. Pageard, Littérature négro-africaine (Paris: Le livre africain, 1966), p. 79.

¹⁴L. S. Senghor, Anthologie de la Nouvelle Poésie Nègre et Malgache de langue Française (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1969), p. 151.

PART ONE

THE TRADITIONAL AFRICAN WOMAN IN THE NOVELS OF
ABOULAYE SADJI AND OUSMANE SEMBENE

CHAPTER I

THE AFRICAN MOTHER

The African mother has been the focal point of numerous sociological studies, and literary works. Her closeness to the earth and her association with her child have been depicted in several novels, and poems, perhaps the most memorable of which is the introductory poem in Camara Laye's L'Enfant Noir, as he invokes a prayer of praise to his mother:

Femme noire, femme africaine, ô toi ma mère je
pense à toi . . .

O Dâman, ô ma mère, toi qui me portas sur le dos,
toi qui m'allaitas, toi qui gouvernas mes premiers
pas, toi qui la première m'ouvris les yeux aux
prodiges de la terre, je pense à toi . . .

Femme noire, femme africaine, ô toi, ma mère,
merci: merci pour tout ce que tu fis pour moi, ton
fils, si loin, si près de toi!¹

Among the novels selected in which the roles of the mother are of interest, are Maimouna, by Sadjì; Bouts de Bois, L'Harmattan and Xala by Sembène.

Although Aboulaye Sadjì's book, Maimouna mainly treats the plight of the traditional African girl who migrates from village to town, there is nevertheless an important role served by her mother, Yaye Daro. Yaye Daro is a middle-aged widow, left in poor financial straits due to her husband's

death. She is barely able to sustain herself, and the youngest of her two daughters, Maimouna, through her meager earnings as a market woman in the small village of Louga, Saint-Louis, Senegal. In his attempt to render Maimouna's physical and emotional transition from village to town more poignant, Sadji devotes considerable time to the description of her early years, growing up in peaceful Louga. The role of Yaye Daro is essential in this, as Sadji's moral portraits are based quite unmistakably upon the concept of the good of the village versus the evil of the cities.

Sadji offers no external portrait of this African mother, yet makes the reader aware of her fine maternal qualities in few words. Referred to as "une excellente femme,"² "une pieuse et fidèle épouse"³ he creates the moral atmosphere in which Maimouna is to grow. "Vit-on jamais femme plus honnête, plus courageuse, plus digne dans la pauvreté?"⁴ Devotion, an essential element in Yaye Daro's life, takes several forms. She is devoted to her deceased husband, to whom she remains faithful; devoted to the religious teachings of Islam, and a guiding example for her young daughter. "Cette femme, par habitude, se levait au petit jour, elle faisait sa prière au bon Dieu, puis nettoyait les abords de la case avec un balai en nervures de palmes."⁵ ". . . Maimouna et sa mère firent le salaam côte à côte, unies dans le même obscur idéal."⁶

Certainly, her devotion to Maimouna, and to the child's

upbringing are unrivaled, for Maimouna becomes the center of existence in the otherwise uneventful life of Yaye Daro. "Elle était son unique espoir, la seule perle qui fascinait encore ses yeux que plus rien d'autre n'émerveillait."⁷

In this area Yaye Daro is not unique nor even exceptional, for she demonstrates a significant aspect of the role of the traditional African woman: her very essence depends directly upon her offspring. No indulgence of Maimouna's whims is too great for Yaye Daro. Even in her meager state, she manages to provide for her daughter and to afford such luxuries as a visit to the famous coiffeur of Louga, Lala, "la magicienne de toilettes féminines."⁸ In her desire to make Maimouna happy, sacrifices are not uncommon to this devoted mother. "Sa mère pouvait tout puisqu'elle lui vouait un amour sans égal."⁹

Upon a first reading, Yaye Daro's indulgence of her young daughter appears to be overemphasized. One wonders if this is due to the quality of the mother's devotion, or perhaps to the fact that she no longer has a man to attend to and has chosen not to remarry. The author offers little information to enlighten us, as he tirelessly emphasizes the saintliness of this woman. He seems to want Yaye Daro to symbolize goodness, as he has totally isolated her from others. Without husband, and few women friends except the old Mame Raki, Sadjî thereby strengthens Yaye's image as the stable force in Maimouna's life. It is not difficult to

deduce that Yaye Daro symbolizes "the traditional African mother"; a significant force in the changing African society. "Le monde est si mauvais, les langues si méchantes, les pensées si cruelles et les Daro, si pauvres, si faibles, si seules. . . ."10

One would think at first, mistakenly, that Yaye Daro serves only as a plain background upon which Sadjí paints the portrait of Maimouna. Using few words to describe her, he almost totally extracts her from the center of the plot, not to reappear until the last few chapters of the book. The simplicity of the portraiture typifies that particular element of the novels, which, although they are written in French, are truly African.

We have witnessed Daro's devotion to her daughter, but what of the inner woman? Her "vision du monde?" Yaye Daro is a simple woman whose work ethic harmonizes with that of traditional Africa. Her work in the market, although demanding and tedious, and not nearly as profitable as she would like, strengthens her position as a practical woman. Her views on life, hard work, honesty, religious and familial devotion, have clearly not been touched by the trends of Westernization.

So unlike her daughter, who is fascinated by the lighter, romantic flurries of the imagination, and who longs for the thrill of Dakar, Yaye Daro remains staunch in her position as a non-romantic woman. She has great difficulty

yielding to the demands of Rihanna, her older, married daughter, who lives with her husband, Bounama, "un homme des cadres, . . . fonctionnaire de grade supérieur"¹¹ in Dakar. Rihanna greatly fears that her younger sister will not meet men of her standards in the unsophisticated village of Louga. "Elle craignait que la brousse n'en fit une petite sauvage, à peine présentable, ignorant tout des manières de la femme moderne, quand viendrait pour elle, l'âge de se marier dans les milieux selects où sa jeunesse, sa beauté et les relations mondaines de sa soeur lui donneraient forcément accès."¹² Yaye Daro is well aware of the life that Rihanna envisions for the young Maimouna. ". . . l'Ecole de Mme Maubert, où les filles sont si gentilles, où à la sortie des classes, elles forment de longues guirlandes chatoyantes. Ce n'est assurément pas dans cette brousse de Louga qu'elle trouverait le mari digne d'elle."¹³

Yaye Daro exemplifies an emotional conflict as she struggles with her own desires and what she suspects is a better way of life for her daughter. Maimouna, herself, expresses desires to leave the peaceful village for the lure of Dakar. "Et Daro essaya de faire diversion à l'idée tyrannique que Maimouna grandissait trop vite . . ."¹⁴

In her attempts to resist the callings of both daughters, Yaye strikes out first against Maimouna. "Aller à Dakar? . . . Je ne comprends pas. Toi aussi, tu veux me

quitter? Toi aussi, tu veux m'abandonner? Ne suis-je pas là pour m'occuper de toi, pour te distraire?"¹⁵ Then against Rihanna. "N'écoute pas Rihanna . . . /elle/ n'est plus ma fille, elle vit uniquement pour son mari. Si tu partais, je n'aurais plus qu'à cesser mon commerce et à me laisser mourir de chagrin. Non, ma petite Mai, . . . que cette mauvaise pensée quitte ton esprit."¹⁶

Since Sadjí is deeply entrenched in the principles of Islam, he offers this African mother little solace against the forces of the inevitable. "Destinée d'une mère, de toutes les mères vouées à l'abandon qui se tient pour élever des fillettes graciles, fruits de leur amour le plus ardent et le plus pur."¹⁷

In no way able to alter her own nor Maimouna's destiny, Yaye's Islamic faith has created in her a sense of resignation against which she fully acknowledges her helplessness. The Muslim philosophy is rarely practiced in its pure state in Black Africa, and most particularly not in Senegal, where the contradictory forces of "Islam noir" are apparent. Without entitling it as such, Sadjí shows the ramifications of this belief in Yaye Daro. He explains her nature as one given to superstition; thereby resembling most African women. "La mère Daro, interprétait favorablement ces cauchemars. Elle était superstitieuse comme toutes les mères noires. Pour elle, chaque rêve avait sa signification et recommandait soit une aumône, soit un

talisman."¹⁸

Her superstitions, reinforced by numerous visits to the marabout, or féticheur, are often accompanied by special offerings of a mystical nature. "Il fallait sacrifier un poulet blanc ou faire aumône d'un peu de lait caillé ou de noix de kolas. Parfois la vieille rapportait de ses visites des sachets de poudre et des boules de papier qu'elle fixait au corps de Maimouna."¹⁹

Superimposing one belief upon another is an essential factor in the practice of "Islam Noir." Daro explains to Maimouna, with ease, the nature of persons of supraterritorial powers, and begs her to heed the marabout's warning against Maimouna's friendship with a certain Karr Yalla--a young witch, capable of consuming the soul of a human.

Ecoute, ma fille, . . . Certaines personnes ont des dispositions surnaturelles cachées en elles et qui les distinguent de l'homme ordinaire. Leur oeil, démesurément long, voit à travers notre corps . . . elles voient tout, rien ne leur échappe. Ces personnes surnaturelles ne s'approchent de nous que lorsqu'elles nous jugent à point pour satisfaire leurs incroyables appétits . . . si un guérisseur réputé n'est pas dans la contrée, les "sorcières" triomphent et vont vous dévorer dans la tombe."²⁰

Maimouna shows concern about her little playmate Karr, but is hardly shocked about the explanation of such things. Her mild acceptance shows the preponderance of such beliefs in Senegal.

In devoting such time to the explanation of Yaye's religious beliefs, Sadji prepares the reader for the outcome

of Maimouna's adventure in Dakar. It is the marabout, Serigne Theirno, a deeply religious man of curative powers, who warns Daro against the oncoming doom in Maimouna's life. His premonition is not fully explained, yet one learns that jealousy, and cunning will play a decisive role in Maimouna's future in Dakar.

. . . je vois que ta fille sera bien reçue par sa soeur et ceux qui vivent avec sa soeur. Tout le monde voudra faire sa connaissance, mais elle devra se méfier. Je vois que cette ville est très grande et qu'on peut y amasser autant de biens que de maux. . . sa beauté est très précoce et déjà plusieurs langues nomment cette beauté. Par ailleurs, tous les yeux qui regardent ta fille ne répandent pas le même fluide.²¹

Close on the heels of Thierno's warning, Maimouna finds herself enraptured by the fascination of Dakar; surrounded by the flattering attention of her sister Rihanna and her husband Bounama, and sought after by numerous eligible admirers. The story eclipses as Yacine, the servant in Rihanna's home, wilfully encourages an illicit romance between Maimouna and Doudou; dashing young suitor of an unacceptable background. This love shatters Maimouna's illusions, crushes her high expectations and sends her humbly home to Louga pregnant. There, she must await her ultimate fate in shame. On one level, the evil in Maimouna's life is in the person of Yacine. Sadji seems also to be suggesting that she is the victim of the inherent evils of the fast growing cities, where traditions carry little

weight, values are distorted, and temptation is eminent.

Sadji, successfully using contrasts, reinforces the strength of the African mother, Yaye Daro, at the end of the novel, for it is through her that Maimouna is able to re-orient her shattered life. Loss of her innocence, her pride, and finally her physical beauty (due to smallpox) were traumatic events in the young girl's life. The non-romantic, practical Yaye, wearied by her daughter's flights of fancy, seems to show little compassion. Her sharp tongue, but sound advice offers the only escape for an otherwise devastated life:

Tout donné: ta jeunesse, ton honneur, notre honneur, ta santé; et il achève par ce coup-de-grâce . . . Tu a préféré t'aveugler sur l'amour et la fidélité d'un mécréant, d'un buveur d'acool. Je t'ai mise en garde et tu m'as, par ton attitude, persuadé mon erreur de vieille folle. Mais, d'ore et déjà, tu peux consacrer la vérité d'un proverbe oulof qui dit: 'La parole des vieux peut rester tard dans la forêt, mais elle n'y passe pas la nuit.'²²

In the person of Yaye Daro, Sadji has glorified the traditional African woman; emphasizing her strength, perserverance, and foresight. While her role offers little depth of characterization, it must be remembered that at the time Sadji wrote Maimouna (1958), the only weapon against the overwhelming affects of colonization was indeed glorification of the African past.

Looking deeper into Sadji's Muslim faith, we find that Yaye Daro represents the obedient Muslim woman; pious, and

resigned to her fate. Reflecting a functional approach to life, Yayo Daro's advice to her disillusioned daughter is sound.

Maintenant . . . sais-tu ce qu'il te reste à faire? Sécher tes larmes, achever ta guérison et me suivre au marché. Ah! mon marché si décrié . . . mon humble marché . . . Le marché des pauvres femmes obligées de se faire marchandes pour gagner leur vie! . . . Eh bien oui, il ne te reste plus que ça. . . . Tu seras marchande, comme moi.²³

In Les Bouts de Bois, (story of the 1947 Dakar-Niger strike) Sembène has ample opportunity to provide a wide cast of women characters. This novel reflects that very difficult period in Africa's history when French colonization was in effect; bringing with it both a new way of life and set of values. Black African independence seemed a desirable yet very distant goal. As the times were complex, so, too, were the characters painted in the novel.

As in the case of Sadjì, in Maimouna, Sembène has isolated traditional Africa and has placed it before the reader's eyes in the person of Niakoro, the very old mother of Bakayoko. While Sadjì devoted little time to physical portrayures of his characters, Sembène is careful to create the proper setting for the understanding of the story he unfolds.

Elle était très agée, Niakoro. De chaque côté de son petit nez à l'arête droite, les paupières tombantes recouvraient à moitié les yeux. Elle avait . . . les lèvres tatouées. Le contour de sa bouche se rétrécissait en un perpétuel mouvement de succion; au rythme de son souffle, ses

joues se gonflaient et se dégonflaient. On aurait dit qu'elle les avalait. Sa tête ne paraissait plus reliée au tronc que par des filets de peau; d'autres bandes molles pendaient sous le menton.²⁴

Sembène, in offering considerably less expansion on Niakoro's moral fiber than Sadjì, is brief. "Mais ce vieux visage avait gardé la sérénité de ceux qui arrivent au terme d'une vie de sagesse et de labeur."²⁵

As he begins to show contrasts, the author speaks praisingly of Niakoro's industriousness, as there was no place for idleness in traditional Africa. "Niakoro-la-vieille ne pouvait pas passer un après-midi inactive. Tantôt elle ravaudait, tantôt elle réparait ou ornait des calebasses. 'Je n'arriverai jamais à comprendre votre manque de gout,' disait-elle aux autres femmes."²⁶

The author wastes little time in acquainting us with the schism that is to develop between traditional and developing Africa, as he presents a panoramic view of the African woman in one chapter. He introduces us to Niakoro, her daughter-in-law Assitan, and to her granddaughter, Adjibidji; three generations of African women in one scene. We may best consider the role of Niakoro, as it is contrasted with her granddaughter, Adjibidji. As in the case of Yayo Daro, the old woman demonstrates little comprehension of the changing African ways. She sharply criticizes her daughter-in-law, Assitan, for allowing the little girl to spend so much time learning in the white (French) schools, when she should be learning a woman's responsibilities at

home. The strict differentiation of the world of men and women in Africa is made clear when Niakoro questions the usefulness of learning French for an African woman:

A quoi ça sert le toubabou pour une femme? Une bonne mère n'en a que faire. Dans ma lignée qui est aussi celle de ton père, personne ne parle le toubabou et personne n'en est mort! Depuis ma naissance--et Dieu sait qu'il y a longtemps--je n'ai jamais entendu dire qu'un toubabou ait appris le bambara ou une autre langue de ce pays. Mais vous autres, les déracinés, vous ne pensez qu'à ça. A croire que notre langue est tombée en décadence!²⁷

These things could not teach a girl to prepare couscous or how to ornament utensils. In her time, it was merely necessary to learn a few verses of the Koran, and nothing more. The female character as depicted in the novels of both Sadjì and Sembène, practices the Islamic faith with obedience, but certainly not with a clear understanding of the tenets of the Koran.

Adjibid'ji was particularly fond of reading and also enjoyed accompanying her step-father, Bakayoko, to political meetings. Niakoro was in no way able to comprehend the ways of this child of her own blood. "Qu'as-tu donc à être toujours fourrée avec les hommes? Ils préparent une grève. Ce n'est pas quelque chose pour toi."²⁸

More evident than her lack of comprehension of the new, a trait she shares with Yaye paro, is her reticence to accept innovation. This reticence, we are told, is partially due to fear of time passing;"Les usages d'autrefois

sont-ils donc abolis?"²⁹ partially due to Niakoro's personal need to be consulted. "De son temps, les jeunes n'entreprenaient rien sans le conseil des aînés. Et voilà qu'aujourd'hui, ils allaient, seuls, décider d'une grève."³⁰

Sembène seems to paint Niakoro in such a way as to emphasize her narrowmindedness; in contrast to her husband Fa Keita, who, although old, seems more readily able to adapt to some of the newer ways, namely the proposed strike. In scolding his wife, Fa Keita explains the position that traditional Africa should rightly maintain; not one of permanency, but of respect. "Niakoro, nous aussi les anciens nous devons apprendre et savoir que les connaissances actuelles ne sont pas innées en nous."³¹

Niakoro stands her ground, and merely replies with a "Bah" to her husband. She does not succumb, and yet we know that she must--leaving room for the Adjibidjis of the world.

To those Africans eager to exchange the old ways for the new, Sembène counsels them to hold the old Africa in a position of respect, and to build firmly upon its foundation. The author suggests that there is a Niakoro in the past of every African. "Mais que représentait Niakoro-la-vieille pour ces femmes occupées de la seule heure présente? A peine le souvenir d'un passé révolu qui s'effaçait lentement."³²

In order not to make too significant a contrast with

Niakoro--and Adjibidji, Sembène provides a third woman as a transitory force. Assitan, mother of Adjibidji, married Bakayoko in African custom, when her own husband died and Bakayoko was the next closest brother. According to religious and judicial decrees, she must move into the Bakayoko compound, along with her mother-in-law, and young daughter, in order to uphold her wifely duties. Assitan's position is made clear in Chapter II, Wives, where she symbolizes the traditional African wife. Her role as mother, however, should not be overlooked.

By all standards, Assitan is a good mother. Her care of and devotion to Adjibidji cannot be contested, although it is not openly manifested, as in the case of Yayo Daro and Maimouna. Yaye Daro shows less flexibility and more leaning toward Islamic fatalism. Assitan, on the other hand, does not approach innovation from a negative point of view. She has so internalized the complex system of African protocol and standards of behavior, that she would never permit herself the luxury of confrontation: certainly not with her husband; nor with her in-laws; rarely with friends; and only rarely with her own daughter. Assitan is unable to actively participate in the world of meetings, strikes, books, "the world of men," yet she recognizes this ability in her daughter. In fact, she is often dumbfounded by the precociousness of this child, who, despite her advanced learning, is considered obedient and trustworthy.

"Elle adorait Adjibid'ji, comme d'ailleurs le faisaient toutes ses voisines. Jamais elle n'avait à se plaindre d'elle . . ."33 Assitan's ability to comprehend the traditional roles of women and those of the future, make her a significant intermediary force between the Niakoros and the Adjibidjis of Africa.

September 21, 1958, marks an important date, politically, as well as literarily. Sembène used the issue of the 1958 Referendum proposed by French President DeGaulle, as the setting for the novel l'Harmattan. Although the novel does not reflect any particular country, it is a composite of many of the Francophone African states. Sembène explains:

. . . j'emprunte à chacun un fait, un événement de la vie de la cité. Mon intention est que chacun y décèle, y voie un peu de lui-même selon la vie qu'il mène.³⁴

His characters are nevertheless quite real in form, and in attitude, for despite his keen sense of imagination, Sembène borrows from the art of the African griot, in order not to distort the realities of Africa.

. . . jadis dans cette Afrique qui passe pour classique, le griot était, non seulement l'élément dynamique de sa tribu, clan, village, mais aussi le témoin patent de chaque événement. C'est lui qui enregistrerait, déposait devant tous, sous l'arbre du palabre, les faits et gestes de chacun. La conception de mon travail découle de cet enseignement: rester au plus près du réel et du peuple.³⁵

In preserving the true African character, the authors weaves his story of the struggle for African independence

around the lives of many; Joseph Koéboghi, his wife Ouighoué, their daughter Tioumbé; doctor Tangara, his family, camarades, faithful helper Mahn Kombéti and the white woman Charlotte. The plots intertwine around the central theme of independence, and how it affects each segment of the African populace: aristocrat, farmer, student revolutionary, Muslims, Catholics, pure blooded African, mulatto, men and women. The multiplicity of plots and characters make up the painting which Sembene uses in the novel itself. He refers to this painting as "l'Harmattan," and to the myriads of portraits in it as:

un théâtre sans costume . . . unique au monde
 . . . On y joue le drame de la vie . . . la vie,
 la leur de vie . . . une vie de colonisé . . .
 Un peuple entier voué au génocide.³⁶

L'Harmattan is therefore a wind which blows through all segments of Africa, stirring them to free themselves from colonization.

Dans l'ensemble, le tableau dit: toute l'Afrique est une tombe pour les Africains . . . C'est l'Harmattan. Ce n'est pas seulement un vent sec et chaud! C'est un sanglot. Un sanglot de quatre siècles, soufflé par des millions et des millions de voix ensevelies. Un cri intarissable à nos oreilles, venu des nuits anciennes, pour des jours radieux.³⁷

Two of the "millions et millions de voix ensevelis," are those of Ouighoué and her daughter Tioumbé. In order to observe their relationship, however, we must also consider Joseph Koéboghi, for it is around him that the entire mother-daughter relationship is based. Joseph, a Muslim who has

recently converted to the Catholic church, maintains a religious position that is outwardly "plus royaliste que le roi," but, in reality hypocritical. He still keeps his Muslim wives. Koéboghi's views on religion are often self-administered and sculpted to fit his personal needs. He shows a total lack of understanding of his daughter Tioumbé, a young school teacher and political activist, who chooses not to follow in the footsteps of her father. She prefers to disregard the religious tenets that are constantly separating Africans from their traditions, and opts to declare "No" to the referendum in the hopes of establishing a base for African nationalism. Although confronted with the idea that "le péché est une invention de la religion,"³⁸ and that preoccupation with this phenomenon is "la plus odieuse des machinations de l'obscurantisme,"³⁹ Joseph Koéboghi continues in his fight against sin in his household. Tioumbé, he feels, is the prime perpetrator of the abomination of rejecting the church and supporting nationalism. Little does he understand that the battle for independence is far more important than religious differences. Lèye, a comrade of Tioumbé, also launched on the campaign of "la dignité nationale," observes: "Il n'y a aucune différence entre mon père musulman, ou le père de Tioumbé, catéchument. Tous deux sont des jouets dans les mains des colonisateurs."⁴⁰ It is from this point that the role of Ouighoué, wife to the zealous Koéboghi, and mother to Tioumbé, develops.

The author's description of Ouighoué is by no means lengthy, yet Sembène reveals the character to us in a series of fast paced dialogues. The physical aspect of the woman is not apparent, for in reality, her exterior is of little significance. Sembène chooses to stress her subjugated Muslim nature. She appears as fearful, obedient, scurrying about between the father and the daughter in the hopes of quieting the rage of one and of softening the stubbornness of the other. The author describes her as "muette et peinée;"⁴¹ "pleine de crainte;"⁴² "épouvantée;"⁴³ and "pleurnichant."⁴⁴ As with her three predecessors, Yaye Daro, Niakoro, and Assitan, the force of Islam is that denominator common to them all. Ouighoué stands out, however, in that the author has chosen to accentuate her powerlessness over her present life, her fate, and that of her daughter. What is depicted here is more than a passive Muslim attitude toward the world; one that relegates all responsibilities to Allah. Ouighoué is instead, the frightened Muslim woman, the obvious victim of certain hadiths of the Koran. Ruled by her husband, whom she refers to as "fire," she is unable to fulfill natural maternal tendencies of protection and counselling. The limitations on her life have been ones that she has understood or perhaps, merely accepted, since birth.

Ton père est comme du feu. Tu lui dois
obéissance. Je ne suis qu'une simple femme.
. . . Elle pensait à la vie de ses parents,

de son père, de ses grands-parents, de ses arrière-grands-parents. Tous n'avaient vécu qu'au rythme implacable des saisons: à naissance, la mort d'un autre, un Autre qui est foudroyé par le tonnerre, de mauvais labours, un exode, la rigueur ou la clémence d'une année, l'épidémie qui emporte des villageois, ou des bovins. Dans ce cadre, tout était marqué, séparé, limité par un calendrier tout à fait différent de ceux dont on usait ailleurs. C'est de cette manière qu'existait sa famille, et celle des autres.⁴⁵

The Muslim order of things is realtered, however, as the determination of young Tioumbé to oppose her father, cause Ouighoué to have to take a stand--a painful step for many traditional women--an almost impossible one for a Muslim mother.

Ouighoué attempts, at first, to appeal to the better sense of both members of her family; she begs the father not to vent his anger upon his daughter by beating her. "Pardonne-lui! Tu es son père . . . Tu n'as pas de coeur! Tu es un homme, et tu te conduis bestialement avec elle. Es-tu vraiment un lâche pour te conduire comme ca?"⁴⁶ She begs Tioumbé to disavow her affiliation with the group of activists with whom she works. "Pas vrai, Tioumbé que tu ne recommenceras plus, que tu reconnais Dieu? Tu ne diras plus aux autres que le "non" est meilleur que le "oui"?"⁴⁷ Neither solution is acceptable. Joseph Koéboghi has his daughter bound and beats her unmercifully, in hopes of forcing her to abandon her position, or at least to show repentance for her political affiliations. Tioumbé remains

firm and silent, although writhing in pain; thus aggravating her father beyond all reason. Joseph suffers a blow to his pride, while Tioumbé only suffers physically. It is Ouighoué who experiences true inner pain; first, due to the scene she has just witnessed; second, due to her inability to help: "Ouighoué, écrase par la soumission, se révoltait intérieurement."⁴⁸ "La vie présente la débordait de tous les côtés selon sa propre expression. Elle se voyait noyée."⁴⁹ Her fears have even prevented her from untying her bruised daughter, despite Tioumbe's frequent requests.

Mère, détache-moi . . . Les gestes restèrent peïnés. Ils restèrent suspendus au-dessus des coudes. Elle était aussi torturée par l'indécision que par l'angoisse du châtiement prochain. . . . Je veux bien! . . . Mais il me tuerait. Je suis vieille, Tioumbé. Je n'ai plus la force de recevoir des coups.⁵⁰

Remorseful at having deceived her daughter, Ouighoué makes a feeble attempt at standing up to her husband; an act for which she must pay subsequently.

Elle était mue par une force nouvelle . . . Les co-épouses, terrifiées, reculaient. . . . Tu as toujours été ainsi. Frapper, c'est tout ce que tu sais faire. Tu tuerais la terre entière pour obtenir l'aumône des Blancs. C'est toi qui es esclave . . . Je maudis ton nouveau Dieu. Je suis contente qu'elle n'ait pas crié. Elle te privé d'une satisfaction.⁵¹

This outward demonstration of faith in Tioumbé was short-lived, however, as the worlds between mother and daughter widen considerably. This was not due to a lack of love for one another, but, it is suggested, to the schism

that must inevitably separate the old from the new, as they collide in Africa. The Muslim world of Ouïghoué was too deeply entrenched in her to cause her to question life, much less stand up for herself. "Avant je savais ce que c'était la vie, la famille. Maintenant, je ne sais plus."⁵² It was toward a newer Africa that Tioumbé was headed, at a speed and with convictions far beyond the realm of comprehension of Ouïghoué. In reply to her mother's questions regarding Tioumbé's political commitments, her answer was unequivocal.

Je milite pour l'indépendance. Voter, cette fois-ci, est important pour moi, pour nous. Ce n'est pas une question de nommer quelqu'un. C'est une question de vie, d'eau, d'aliments, de rires. . . . Ce n'est pas une question de mère ou de fille. C'est une question de tout le pays . . .⁵³

It is with particular tenderness that Sembène offers the reader a scene depicting mother and daughter, in the interest of changing Africa--each affixed to her beliefs, while internally, to each other.

Elles étaient vis-à-vis. Les larmes débordèrent des paupières de la mère. Le monde d'à présent l'aplatissait. Elle voulait parler, dire quelque chose, n'importe quoi. Elle fixait le visage de Tioumbé. Elle ne reconnaissait plus sa fille. Le silence frémissait dans ses oreilles. Les mâchoires de Tioumbé se comprimèrent durement; elle aussi entendait vibrer la corde filiale. Elle prit la main de sa mère, la serra douloureusement, avec tendresse. Cette figure déjà ridée, ses tresses courtes, recourbées à chaque tempe, lui étaient proches et lointaines. Montaient en elle des sanglots qu'elle ne pouvait contrôler intérieurement. Avec froideur, elle les étouffa.⁵⁴

Not one to end a relationship on a passive note, Sembène, in remaining loyal to his purpose to paint the "réel" of Africa, widens the split between the two women, to the point of rupture. Ouighoué, in her desire to see her daughter once more, follows her to the outskirts of the city, and finds her living with her lover and camarade, /Sori/. Shocked, she strikes out at this last affront of Tioumbé's, and retreats to her Muslim concepts, as before: "C'est comme ça que tu veux vivre? C'est ce que tu appelles être libre? . . . Tu n'es qu'une fille perdue. Tu finiras par habiter derrière le pont."⁵⁵ Walking away, we understand that the break deeply hurt both mother and daughter, yet is a necessity of the times.

La mère et la fille n'appartenaient pas au même monde, ne partageaient plus le même monde. La mère ne pouvait comprendre que l'uniformité, la règle du temps--son temps--ce temps qui passait. Tioumbé ne pouvait plus accepter l'uniformité et cette règle du temps écoulé. Elle rejetait, pour enfanter un autre monde, un temps nouveau.⁵⁶

Sadji's heroine, Maimouna, suffered personal misery, but returned to the safety of her mother. Sembène's heroine, whose suffering was more intense and less frivolous, had to endure separation from her mother. Although a separation is inevitable between the two women, they are not failures in their respective roles. Ouighoué is limited by society, religion, tradition, and the too rapidly changing times. She nevertheless contributes to the newer Africa by inspiring Tioumbé not to emulate her world, rather to forge

a newer one. She, too, is a part of the Harmattan; not to be destroyed, simply reborn. "L'Harmattan est le coeur de l'âme. Il gît en nous, comme le foetus dans la mère. Et nous, nous ne nous sevrans jamais d'elle."⁵⁷

In developing the pattern of behavior, function and significance of the traditional African mother, we come to the most recently and explosive of Sembène's novels, Xala. Here we have characters who represent present day Senegal; whose personalities are as different and as complex as are the influx of ideas flowing into modern Africa. Such a case is that of Adja Awa Astou, first of the three wives of the African entrepreneur El Hadji Abdou Kader Bèye. Awa reflects in time only, (1973), a modernized African woman. Her modern villa in a chic sector of Dakar; her daughter Rama's, Fiat; the high standing of life afforded by her husband, El Hadji, all attest to her modernization. It is in the realm of her beliefs and actions however, that she may be classified and studied in a traditional framework.

Sembène's novel revolves around the fall and decline of El Hadji. His life among the affluent African class, his conspicuous consumption, his political affiliations, are all aimed at pointing out the growth of a new impending evil in developing Africa, that of neo-colonialism. Its effects penetrate deeper, as the wounds to the African masses often come from their own. Sembène highlights El Hadji's Muslim life, in which he is permitted to maintain

up to four marital relationships--each contributing to his social prestige. The story reveals El Hadji's intention to take a third wife, N'Goné, to add to his existing two, Awa and Oumi. The emotional and political impact of the novel is revealed when El Hadji, develops "the xala" (impotency), and is unable to consummate his third union. A series of successive treatments with traditional Feticheurs and marabouts are of no avail, as his business and economic holdings fail due to neglect. Sembène's political thrust is aimed at the "impotency" of the neo-colonialist Africans, in their abuse of their fellow Africans. In so doing, he reveals the emotional and psychological ramifications of this impotence on several types of women.

Awa, El Hadji's first wife, stands in the forefront, as the truly Muslim wife. Her adherence to the tenets of Islam are not to be confused with those of Ouighoué in Harmattan. Awa, formerly a Catholic, converts to Islam, and thus is fully aware of the mysteries of the faith. Hers is not a passive participation, in which issues are imposed upon her, but rather, an active one, in which she chooses the role of Islam and is fully cognizant of its tenets. Here, the author describes the life of the woman of Islamic faith in a slightly more favorable light than in any of his previous novels. Awa's faith is strong and unbending, greatly exceeding that of her husband--although

he is the bearer of the respectful title El Hadji--who is Muslim in name only. When asked to wear the traditional caftan, and babouches, in preparation for his young bride, El Hadji's answer is decisive. ". . . toi aussi, tu crois à ces choses! J'ai deux épouses et jamais je ne me suis ridiculisé avec ces trucs. Et ce n'est pas aujourd'hui que je vais commencer."⁵⁸ Although the lack of regard for Ouighoué and Awa, by their respective husbands, appears similar, the results are nevertheless distinctive. Ouighoué saw no other role for a woman, and appeared thoroughly convinced of the inferior status of women. Awa, despite her seeming passivity, reveals herself as a stronger individual who understands the faults of her newly adopted faith, but remains loyal nevertheless. She is not unaware of other modes of life.

Awa operates within a complex, yet interesting framework. Having selected the way of life offered to her by El Hadji--a life in which she is to be only one of his three marital concerns--she accepts complete obedience to her husband. Her decisiveness, however, makes of her a modernized individual--one who acts through choice. This western aspect of her personality is kept under halter, for the confines of Islam force her to behave in a traditional mode.

The author has again opted to place a mother of traditional Islamic beliefs with a young, politically oriented

daughter, who openly disavows polygamy. The parallel between Ouighoué and Tioumbé of Harmattan and Awa and her eldest daughter Rama, of Xala, ends there, however, as the latter are not in opposition to one another. The fifteen years of political, economic and social change that have taken place in Africa, and particularly in Senegal, are evident in the mother-daughter relationships portrayed. Rama is clearly in a different world than that of her mother, yet she is not faced with the choice of remaining at home to stay with familial ties or forging her own political future. In order to pave the way for nationalism, Tioumbé had to turn her back on Islamic values; i.e., on her mother. Awa has selected her religious path, thereby enabling her to comprehend her daughter's involvement in the struggle toward African nationalism; freedom from neo-colonialism; survival of indigenous languages. Their relationship is clearly open and frank, even when there is a difference of opinion. El Hadji's pending marriage to a third woman, offered just such a difference.

Mère, tu ne vas pas nous dire, ici, à Mactar
 et moi, que tu es d'accord que ce troisième
 mariage de père a lieu avec ton consentement
 . . . Jamais je ne partagerai mon mari avec
 une autre femme. Plutôt divorcer . . .
 Je suis contre ce mariage.⁵⁹

Tioumbé also objected to her mother's acceptance of the abuse perpetrated by Joseph Koéboghi. Ouighoué's Islamic beliefs blocked any action on her part, causing her to

reinforce her humble position. Tioumbé could only pity her mother and hope to offer her refuge from the irate father.

Rama, angered by El Hadji's marriage suggests divorce to her mother. Awa, not nearly as self-effacing and frightened as Ouighoué; considers only the practical aspect of divorce.

Tu me conseilles de divorcer? Où irais-je à mon âge? Où trouverais-je un mari. Un homme de mon âge encore célibataire? Si je quittais votre père, avec de la chance, et avec la volonté de Yalla, si je trouvais un mari, je serais troisième femme ou quatrième. Et vous, qu'est-ce que vous deviendriez?⁶⁰

Rama fully understands her mother's dilemma and is drawn closer to her as a result. "Rama saisissait les moindres peines de sa mère."⁶¹ Their relationship is such that Awa finds it necessary to seek her daughter's advice concerning the "xala" of El Hadji; she is distressed and embarrassed by the stigma that his impotency has brought upon the Bèye family. The magnitude of this event draws the mother and daughter even closer.

Adja Awa Astou, très pudique, ne parlait du xala de son mari à personne. Elle se rapprochait de sa fille. Ainsi, depuis quelques jours elle avait remarqué la présence de Rama à ses côtés. Rama rentrait tôt le soir pour lui tenir compagnie. Elle se sentait moins seule.⁶²

Try as she might, Awa could not hide her shame from the perceptive Rama. "Aussi bonne épouse qu'elle pouvait être, docile, excellente mère de famille, elle ne pouvait cacher sa peine."⁶³ Hardpressed to offer counsel to her mother,

Rama reveals her opinions on polygamy in African marriages.

La supplication de la mère était sincère. Rama gardait son mutisme. Un sentiment d'ambiguïté l'habitait. Elle était foncièrement contre la polygamie. Elle savait les raisons qui maintenaient cette femme dans cet état: c'était pour eux, les enfants. Elle pardonnait cette faiblesse, mais ne pouvait l'admettre.⁶⁴

Sembène alternates the mother-daughter scenes with equal doses of realism and tenderness, and finally strengthens the bonds between the two women at the final grotesque moment in the novel. El Hadji, in order to be cured of the "xala," has submitted to be spit upon by a band of beggars, brigands, lepers (representative of the suppressed African populace). The scene is horrifying and can be compared to the dwarfs of Buñuel. Rama and Awa, contrary to Ouighoué and Tioumbé, who are compelled to part, are united, as they witness the humiliation of El Hadji.

Although the bonds of Awa's Islamic faith compel her to behave in a traditional pattern, the realistic and forthright relationship she enjoys with her daughter is unique to all of the mothers studied thus far. Awa stands alone.

Above all other female characters, the traditional African mother has been the most prevalent, and has had the most profound effect upon Franco-phone literature. Whether the protagonist agrees or disagrees, leaves home indefinitely or returns to her roots, the mother figure remains constant. Sembène offers praise in her behalf.

Soyez louées, femmes, sources intarissables, vous qui êtes plus fortes que la mort. Gloire à vous, coolies de Chine, tagalacoyes du plateau du Niger; gloire à vous femme de marin, dans l'éternel deuil. Gloire à toi, petite, petite enfant, jouant déjà à la mère. L'immensité des mers n'est rien à côté de celle de la tendresse d'une mère . . . 65

Summary

The African mother occupies a significant role in the female portraits in the African novel. In the works of both authors her position is hardly one of mere sentimental exoticism. The relationship each older woman shares with her daughter serves as a contrasting background for the emerging younger women. Sadjì's Yaye Daro, and Sembène's Ouighoué, Assitan and Awa, are each deeply imbued with a sense of African traditionality. This traditionality is handled by each author with considerable respect, although the differences in approach by each is evident. Sadjì has created Yaye Daro such that she reflects the moral attitude of an African before colonization. She is the manifestation of the symbol of "goodness." As such, she serves as the focal point in the life of her daughter Maimouna, who suffers the torments and temptations of the seductive city life of Dakar. Having imbued his character with piety, devotion, and mysticism, Sadjì leaves the reader with a portrait of Yaye Daro as the "glorification of traditional Africa."

Although Sembène depicts the mother figure as

representative of a time in African history that was less complex, and more comprehensible than the ambivalent periods their respective daughters must endure, there is no evidence of a glorification of this past. Sembène's presentation of this past is done with unquestionable reverence. One readily senses the tenderness and devotion of Ouighoué, Assitan and Awa vis-à-vis their children. However, Sembène has extended the role of the mother far beyond the realm of moral guardian of youth, for each is revealed as a woman in her own right. The traditionality presented is not one of a static nature, for even these African mothers are not afforded the privilege of remaining in a world of fixed values. They, too, are thrust upon a path of changing modes of life, new external forces, socio-political, and more importantly, psychological upheaval.

The mothers in Sembène's works are faced with choices and thereby conflicts as often as are their daughters. The mother-daughter relationships, although often in conflict, appear more developed and of a stronger nature than those in Sadjí's works. The daughters are stronger women in their own right. Contrary to Maimouna and her sister Rihanna, Rama, Tioumbé and Adjibid'ji are not committed to personal gain and acquisition, rather to the development of a newer Africa. The schism between mother-daughter in Sembène's novels, cannot be simplified to the level of good against evil; for there is more at stake. Neither Ouighoué,

Assitan, nor Awa is able to break with the ties of her traditional background. Although their respective daughters have chosen other paths for themselves, they are able to understand this fact. Sadjì uses Yaye Daro as a source of strength and refuge for the emotionally shattered Maimouna. Sembène puts the responsibility of comforting wounded souls upon the shoulders of the daughters. Although there is occasionally a severing of familial ties (Ouighoué/Tioubé), one senses the firm bonds of these mother-daughter relationships.

Sadjì chose to reveal the goodness of African motherhood and her complete devotion to her child, from the position of the writer. Sembène does not expose this to us from the author's point of view, rather, it is through the very eyes of the daughters that one discovers the treasured position of the African mother.

¹C. Laye, L'Enfant Noir (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1953), p. 7.

²A. Sadjı, Maimouna (Paris: Présence Africaine, 1958), p. 13.

³Sadjı, p. 15.

⁴Ibid., p. 13.

⁵Ibid., p. 10.

⁶Ibid., p. 17.

⁷Ibid., p. 13.

⁸Ibid., p. 29.

⁹Ibid., p. 26.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 29.

¹¹Ibid., p. 39.

¹²Ibid., pp. 38-39.

¹³Ibid., p. 39.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 38.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 49.

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 66.

¹⁸Sadjı, p. 21.

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰Ibid., p. 23.

²¹Ibid., p. 61.

²²Ibid., pp. 249-250.

²³Ibid., p. 250.

²⁴O. Sembène, Les Bouts de Bois de Dieu (Paris: Presses Pocket, 1960), p. 14.

- 25 Ibid., p. 14.
26 Ibid., p. 17.
27 Ibid., p. 18.
28 Ibid.
29 Ibid., p. 14.
30 Ibid.
31 Ibid., p. 29.
32 Ibid., p. 16.
33 Ibid., p. 21.
34 O. Sembène, L'Harmattan (Paris: Présence Africaine, 1964), p. 10.
35 Ibid., p. 10.
36 Ibid., p. 203.
37 Ibid.
38 Ibid., p. 155.
39 Ibid.
40 Ibid., p. 234.
41 Ibid., p. 229.
42 Ibid., p. 230.
43 Ibid.
44 Ibid., p. 232.
45 Ibid., p. 276.
46 Ibid., p. 239.
47 Ibid., p. 230.
48 Ibid., p. 231.
49 Ibid., p. 238.

- 50 Ibid., p. 241.
- 51 Ibid., p. 239.
- 52 Ibid., p. 240.
- 53 Ibid., p. 273.
- 54 Ibid., p. 243.
- 55 Ibid., p. 296.
- 56 Ibid., pp. 243-244.
- 57 Ibid., pp. 203-204.
- 58 O. Sembène, Xala (Paris: Présence Africaine, 1973),
p. 34.
- 59 Ibid., p. 27.
- 60 Ibid., p. 26.
- 61 Ibid., p. 41.
- 62 Ibid., pp. 70-71.
- 63 Ibid., p. 71.
- 64 Ibid., pp. 71-72.
- 65 O. Sembène, "La Mère," Présence Africaine, 16
(December 1957), 111.

CHAPTER II

THE AFRICAN WIFE

A. Young Woman Preparing Marriage

The process of socialization in traditional Africa, in contrast to that of the Western world, is one based on precision in each step of an individual's growth. The expression of one's individuality is de-emphasized in favor of the higher process of initiation into adulthood. This process demands that one be fully mature, married, and have produced offspring, before due respect is offered to the individual. The social restrictions placed on the African woman in each phase of her development, can be said to be more complex than those of the man, since her roles are often simultaneously overlapping; i.e., mother, young girl, wife, daughter. In the case of married women with children, we have witnessed some measure of authority on their part; the degree of autonomy being directly proportional to the attitude of the husband and to the outside religious influences (i.e., Islam, Christianity). The period between childhood and motherhood carries with it certain restraints that must be endured by the young girl. With whatever whims and fancies she may have been permitted as a child, during adolescence, the "I" of her personality

is put aside; not to reappear again well into married life. During this period of her life she must demonstrate her readiness for real womanhood; operating according to the desires of her mother, older sister, paternal aunt. The societal laws of behavior are certainly not written, and most often not verbalized. Tradition, however, has been preparing the young African girl to meet and to adjust to her womanly tasks: physical development, sexuality, marriage, motherhood. In effect, she faces three dimensions in her role as a woman which provide relatively little time for the expression of self. ". . . la fille, la femme, la mère africaine en est restée à la condition humaine la plus dure. On dit que la femme n'a que trois dimensions: les parents; le mari; la tombe."¹

Since the African novel of French expression offers several examples of the young woman enroute to marriage, we have selected a cast of several African wives from the works of Sadjí and Sembène. In order to envision the totality of the African wife, we have also included the category of the young woman not yet, or recently betrothed. These will be discussed in the persons of Maimouna, (Maimouna) by Sadjí, and N'Goné, (Xala) by Sembène. Although the novels were written in 1958 and 1973 respectively, the traditional method in which each young girl is prepared as a young bride is strikingly similar.

Sadjí, clearly a moralist, divides the story of the

adventures of Maimouna into three parts: Louga, where she is shown growing peacefully under the tutelage of her mother Yaye Daro; Dakar, where the temptations of the city and ambitious plans of her sister Rihanna lead her astray; and Louga, once again, where she repents for her misdeeds and endeavors to begin life anew. Brench, in his work The Novelist's Inheritance in French-Africa, has referred to Sadji's characters as two dimensional, puppet-like, persons whose "passions, motives and emotions are superficial."² This cannot be contested, for indeed, Sadji's characters lack the depth of those of Sembène and other contemporary African writers. Much must be said in regard to the time setting of the novel, since each author must be judged in relation to the time frame of his work. Sadji's literary importance comes during the period of colonization in Senegal. It was at this time that African men of letters, recently launched in the young generation of the novel, attempted to create literary pictures with a message in mind. Césaire, the poet, explains this goal: "Notre devoir d'homme de culture, notre double devoir est là: il est de hâter la décolonisation, et il est au sein même du présent, de préparer la bonne décolonisation, une décolonisation sans séquelles."³ From a literary point of view, Mohamadou Kane reinforces Césaire's thoughts.

Le but poursuivi était d'insuffler à l'Africain la conscience de l'authenticité de sa personnalité et de l'armer pour la reconquête de sa dignité. Les

circonstances décidèrent ainsi de la nature, des moyens et des objectifs de ce combat. L'écrivain africain sans moyen véritable de communication avec son peuple dont il est resté coupé pendant quelques décades, dut faire porter l'essentiel de son action vers l'Occident qu'il s'agissait de convaincre de conformer enfin sa conduite en Afrique à ses idéaux démocratiques. . . . L'oeuvre du romancier se veut alors simple miroir dans lequel l'Européen peut prendre conscience du problème qu'on l'invite à méditer.

It is therefore in this light that Sadjı paints what Brench calls "superficial" beings. However, these characters are essential to illustrate the author's concepts about colonization.

Having already described Yaye Daro as a near saintly individual, Sadjı unquestionably stresses the wholesomeness of life in Louga. Blatant eroticism is not a welcomed theme in African literature of French expression. However, the reader cannot mistake for superficiality Sadjı's description of the naturalness of young girls in the discovery of their bodies ". . . Sa poitrine s'arrondissait de petits seins durs, dont le bouton se détachait à peine. La première poussée avait été brusque et incalculable. . . . Et Maimouna se baigna plus fréquemment. Plaisir de se voir nue et de caresser sa poitrine, ses bras, ses jambes à loisir."⁵ More so than in Western cultures, it is here that African youth are encouraged to taste the first bite of the fruit of adulthood and sensuality. It is permitted, yet performed with dignity. Sadjı reveals his

talent for the description of sensuality in African culture by evoking rhythm and music in several passages.

Et l'appel du sabar retentissait loin dans le bourg. Il faisait courir dans le dos des filles de grands frissons qui glaçaient leur nuque et leur donnaient le vertige. Il mettait au coeur des jeunes gens une faim de tendresse et emplissait leurs yeux de multiples visions charmantes . . . Maintenant, elles allaient danser pour de bon la vraie danse des grandes . . . Une fillette bondit, courageuse, et se donne en spectacle. Le griot l'accoste, avec empressement. Elle lève une jambe, puis l'autre, déplie son bras en avant, marche par lentes foulées. Ses épaules roulent, son corps fléchit par saccades, et le petit derrière en mouvement s'arrondit, s'affaisse, marque des envies de se détacher pour courir, tantôt à droite, tantôt à gauche.⁶

Left to the goodness of the village life, perhaps Maimouna would have remained "une simple fille de l'intérieur."⁷ Instead, constant encouragement from her older sister Rihanna, and the phenomenon that Sadjı refers to as the inner revolt of youth, amplifies her desire to foresake Louga for the excitement of Dakar. "L'existence dans la brousse n'était qu'un perpétuel et pénible recommencement . . . pour une âme si jeune qui allait s'ouvrir aux beautés du monde. Ce train prosaïque des choses était un perpétuel motif de révoltes intérieures."⁸ Kenneth Little, in his study, African Women in Towns, explains the desire for the urban continuum from a less philosophical point of view ". . . it is in the rural village itself that numbers of prospective female migrants are initially stimulated to move. They gain there, like the men, an interest in the material

and non-material elements of culture, behavioral patterns and ideas that originate in or are distinctive of the city."⁹

The author spends considerable time in predictions and forewarnings, for the element of fatalism plays a significant role here. "The moral attitude in this novel is based, also, on a fatalism which seems to be inspired by Islam. The characters are, therefore, incapable of influencing or escaping from their destiny."¹⁰ Warning after warning prepares the reader for the inevitable-- Maimouna's inability to escape what lies in her destiny. "Maimouna étant fille des hommes portait en puissance une énorme hérédité faite de tristesse sans cause et de faiblesses sans raison."¹¹ Considering Maimouna not as a young girl, but as the personification of Africa during colonization, Sadji's references to "le Hasard" are explicit, ". . . le Hasard qui imprime son sceau sur toute chose; des destinées s'accomplissent, des projets avortent, d'autres réussissent. Fatalistes ou résignés, les Noirs boivent la coupe amère de la vie."¹²

Despite the predictions of doom, Maimouna is nevertheless led into the city of fascination--Dakar--where Sadji confronts the reader with abrupt changes from the tranquility of Louga. It is presented as a city of noise and movement "des fiacres et des cochers anonymes";¹³ one in which the sun is rarely seen behind the buildings; in other words, a

city "sans âme parce que sans passé."¹⁴ The advantages far outweigh the inconveniences to the impressionable young girl --thoroughly seduced by "La capitale des tropiques."¹⁵

La vie lui apparaissait toute rose. Rien ne pourrait plus l'empêcher d'être heureuse. Elle n'avait qu'à se laisser vivre et durer, à côté de sa soeur Rihanna et de son beau-frère Bounama. Le monde entier s'arrêtait là.¹⁶

It is in this world "à l'eau de rose" that Maimouna is to be transformed into a "petite Dakaroise"--before eventually becoming the "Etoile de Dakar."¹⁷ Had she remained in Louga, marriage preparations would have been handled by her mother; in this case, it is to the song of Rihanna that Maimouna must dance. Rihanna, herself had certainly been fortunate--"elle avait échappé au sort de ces femmes de la brousse, couvertes de la poussière des chemins et des loggans, qui trimaient à la place de leurs maris, n'ayant qu'un seul droit; faire une progéniture nombreuse et épuisante."¹⁸ It was now her responsibility to guide her younger sister in a similar direction; one in which she may choose a mate "qui convenait à la délicatesse de ses instincts."¹⁹ Rihanna's shallow and presumptuous nature are another indication of the negative side of Western influences upon the African personality. Sadjî has made of her a selfish and vain individual, whose origin--one finds difficult to believe--was of the same womb as Maimouna. She seems to be obsessed with social standing and material goods, much of which emanates from the evil in the city.

Even her visions of marriage for her sister are self oriented. "Elle se représentait ce mariage avec tout le faste imaginable . . . Dakar connaîtrait une agitation fiévreuse . . . Et elle, Rihanna, trônerait en maîtresse."²⁰ One has little difficulty understanding her violence, and sharp tongue, upon learning that Maimouna has been secretly seeing Doudou and that she is pregnant. "Rihanna éclata d'un rire hystérique et fit claquer ses mains . . . ah tu as un amant! Chiennne!"²¹

Brench feels that Sadjî's portrayal of the characters in his novel are one dimensional, and that they lack emotional depth and psychological development. "In most cases . . . the novelist is secondary to the moralist and fatalist."²² It must be noted, however, that the author possesses a keen ability to paint a true picture of African society; particularly of Senegalese--Muslim--traditions. This is evident as he weaves the social realism around the incident of Maimouna's first disastrous encounter with love.

Although the lifestyle of Rihanna and Bounama is maintained at great personal expense, it nevertheless offers him the ability to become "un aristocrate du milieu indigène."²³ As a member of this class, the code of behavior is explicit. One of the measurements of wealth in Senegalese society is the number of wives and of social parasites who are allowed to frequent one's home.

La maison était encore le rendez-vous de tout ce que le pays comptait de plus secret et qui déferlait sur Dakar à intervalles réguliers: princes de l'islamisme sénégalais accompagnés de leurs "talibés"; politiciens sans portefeuilles qui se promenaient perpétuellement avec une serviette vide et une longue canne d'ébène; chefs de canton bourrés de gris-gris et d'illusions.²⁴

Long afternoons of chatting with friends over tea, shopping, going to the cinema, leave considerable time for Maimouna to permit her emotions to ripen; for, as yet, her heart "ne vibrait pourtant encore pour personne."²⁵ For the sake of contrast, Sadjì has Maimouna struck by admiration for a young man of mediocre means who has completely assimilated into western society:

. . . il était beau garçon, ce Doudou Diouf. Il était de race sérère . . . corps très bien taillé . . . svelte, souple. Les complets des Blancs lui allaient à merveille, et il avait beaucoup de délicatesse et d'ardeur dans les gestes. Garçon moralement très naïf, il venait de sortir de l'école, sans diplôme. Ses parents ne surent où le placer. Mais comme Doudou était bien fait de sa personne, il réussit facilement à plaire et finalement à gagner sa vie . . .²⁶

Morally, he represents a type with little regard for African tradition, and as predicted it is this very type who abandons Maimouna in her pregnancy. The author reveals the shallow character of this "dandy Dakarois"²⁷ that attracts Maimouna. He deplores his lifestyle and lack of African dignity.

Telle était leur existence: Aller au travail pendant la journée, courir chez les femmes après le repas du soir, puis rentrer et dormir, ainsi de suite. Que fallait-il attendre de gens si peu exigeants? Leurs "idées," leurs bavardages

n'excédaient jamais les limites d'un cercle
 éternel, jalonné par trois domaines: la femme,
 la politique et la religion . . .²⁸

Maimouna's attraction is firm, however, and encouraged by the evil force in her life, Yacine, Rihanna's servant, she secretly meets the young man. Yaye Daro had first warned the reader of a malevolent force to be avoided in Dakar---a mysterious woman of evil, who lived near Maimouna.

Yacine's motive for encouraging this relationship is certainly jealousy--for the author implies that Western ways have introduced a social hierarchy dividing African from African.

. . . Yacine souffrait de sentir qu'elle
 n'était qu'une bonne, une simple mbinédane.
 Pour quoi s'intéresser au sort d'une autre, quand son
 propre avenir était compromis et quand personne ne
 lui attirait des prétendants illustres?²⁹

Yacine's impoverished state contrasts sharply with the splendor bestowed upon Maimouna by her suitors. The custom in Senegalese-Muslim society, calls for one's suitors to lavish gifts and favors upon the intended until such time as a choice is made by the parents and by the girl. The society plays an important role in "l'amour courtois sénégalais."

Le mariage en milieu traditionnel est présenté
 comme une institution dont le but est de maintenir
 l'équilibre du groupe en permettant des unions
 entre les différentes familles.³⁰

Mouralis, in his study of L'Individu dans le roman négro-africain, refers to this as the fusion of the individuals into the collective.

Unaware that Maimouna's heart is already taken, Rihanna and Bounama arrange a marriage for the girl with a very eligible bachelor--a religious man of good family, and good fortune. Maimouna, reluctant to show any emotion towards a future husband not of her choice, and obliged by society to accept the decision of her elders, must submit to the very stringent codes of courtship in Senegal.

Il existe au Sénégal tout un ensemble de règles qui n'est pas sans évoquer nos traditions d'amour courtois. Le soupirant en effet ne doit pas être seulement pourvu de qualités esthétiques qui éveillent le sentiment amoureux, il doit surtout être un véritable "samba linguère," c'est-à-dire un homme noble ou du moins se comporter comme s'il l'était. . . . cela signifie mener sa cour suivant les règles et surtout se montrer généreux non seulement envers ses propres griots, mais encore envers la jeune fille, sa famille et les griots, de celle-ci. Si quelques branches manquent à l'arbre généalogique de l'amoureux, de habiles griots sauront corriger ses défaillances et montrer que si la richesse, hélas, ne s'acquiert plus à la pointe de l'épée, elle ne saurait être portant qu'entre les mains d'un homme bien né. Il s'agit moins d'ailleurs d'être riche que de le paraître.³¹

The author creates picturesque examples of this system of courtship of Senegal. This passage reveals the intricate system of "ars amoris" as practiced in some African cultures.

Et chaque soir, Galaye, comme de droit, venait passer deux ou trois heures auprès de sa fiancée. Au début Rihanna leur tenait compagnie, par la suite on les laissa seuls: Galaye étendu sur le lit, de tout son long. Maimouna assise à ses pieds, les deux "Dialis" par terre pinçant les cordes de leurs guitares mélancoliques. L'encens brûlait et ses volutes se mêlaient aux effluves des riches parfums qui saturaient la pièce. Les "Dialis" soupiraient, murmuraient de brèves évocations, invoquant des époques que la légende peuplait de héros et de sanglantes batailles.³²

Unfortunately, Maimouna only participates half heartedly in these evenings.

Sadji has been criticized for a naive handling of Maimouna's love affair with Doudou and her consequent pregnancy. Much time is spent encouraging the physical naturalness of the African woman, yet no mention is made of intimacy between the two young people. We are told merely that they hold each other tenderly as they depart at the station. Even Maimouna's extreme naivete in regard to her pregnancy, is astonishing. ". . . je ne savais pas . . . Je ne savais pas que . . . qu'il y avait quelque chose de mal à connaître les jeunes hommes."³³ Fouet suggests that the delicacy with which erotic and sensual scenes are handled by African authors is due to a sense of discretion that is reinforced in their culture. One must not forget, however, that Sadji prefers to idealize the virtues of traditional Africa before it is contaminated by urbanization. The lesson he attempts to reinforce is unmistakable. "Le train siffla longuement. Adieu Dakar, ville dangeureuse, ville de perdition."³⁴

Sadji's criticism is aimed at the force of colonization and not at Maimouna's weakness as an individual, as was suggested by Brench. "She [Maimouna] is condemned to disgrace and disfigurement. Yet her sister escapes. The difference between them is that Rihanna accepts the conventions of society in Dakar while Maimouna does not. She is

unsure and weakened; therefore presumably, the fates destroy her."³⁵

Maimouna's pregnancy; her romantic deception by Doudou; her miscarriage; her eventual struggle for life against smallpox; and her loss of physical beauty, are not personal punishments. She is not chastized for having succumbed to temptation, for she is the victim of an African society in the midst of transformation.

It is morally too late to save the Rihannas, Bounamas, and Doudous of Senegal. By offering Maimouna a chance along side her mother in the market, Sadjì makes a final attempt at preserving the authenticity of traditional Africa.

Ousmane Sembène, in his most recent novel Xala, has offered us still another young woman preparing herself for marriage. Chronologically, N'Goné, the soon to be third wife of El Hadji, does not resemble Maimouna. However, in temperament, attitude, and the way in which she is manipulated, she is noticeably traditional.

In the person of N'Goné, the author has made no attempt at developing a full dimensional character for the reader. Sembène, aware of the changing Africa, offers us, not "La jeune femme Africaine," idealized, and purified; (as did Sadjì) rather "Une jeune femme Africaine," whose qualities and/or faults might be found in any segment of African society. N'Goné's beauty, although worthy of note, deserves

none of the superlative adjectives accorded to that of Maimouna. The author has no need to represent her as "L'Etoile de Dakar." Here, we have a more sober approach to her beauty.

N'Goné, il faut bien le dire, avait la saveur d'un fruit, que ses femmes avaient perdue depuis longtemps. La chair ferme, lisse, l'haleine fraîche . . .³⁶

As a point of commonality, however, both Maimouna and N'Goné are of poor families--a state which necessitates the search for a husband, preferably one of means. Despite the many Muslim overtones, one soon discovers that the world of tradition and religious adherence to fatalism are merely a façade, in Xala. The author makes no mystery of this, as he often accentuates the Promethean work code. Leaving little to Allah, we find N'Goné's family prepared to work towards this marriage: "Si la jeune fille n'a pas de travail, disait la mère--il faut la marier . . . lui trouver un mari."³⁷ "Il faut labourer son champ."³⁸ With the marriage goals set, N'Goné, as Maimouna, is turned over to the guidance of her aunt--Yay Binéta--whose role surpasses mere familial boundaries.

La Badiène--soeur du père, tante de la mariée . . . maîtresse de la cérémonie. Selon la loi traditionnelle, la fille du frère est aussi fille de la soeur du père (en français: la fille de la tante).³⁹

It is she who directs the entire marriage; from the entrapping of El Hadji to the actual ceremony. In her managerial abilities, la Badiène closely resembles Rihanna

(Maimouna). Unlike Rihanna, through her cunning and careful planning she is able to realize success in her maneuvers. One senses that Rihanna's desires to find a suitable husband for Maimouna, rest considerably upon her own vanity. La Badiène is less interested in her personal motives, and more concerned with trying her hand at "le conditionnement de l'homme."⁴⁰ N'Goné will eventually reap the benefits; "C'est un beau parti . . . c'est son avenir et celui de ses futurs enfants assurés."⁴¹ Her adroitness in this area is compared to that of the female spider about to seize her prey. "Telle une araignée, laborieusement, la Badiène tissait la toile. El Hadji était mur. La Badiène allait le cueillir."⁴² La Badiène belongs to a particular group of women in African society whose association with the occult provide them with a dual personality. They are often the bearers of an evil intention and might be anyone in the village. "(They) seem like ordinary people with whom one carries on day to day affairs, but who participates in an invisible conspiracy against their friends and neighbors."⁴³

N'Goné's role is one of self-effacement during this period. She is totally manipulated, puppet-fashion, as La Badiène arranges for the young girl to entice and taunt the sixty year old, well-to-do businessman. Aware of his frailties, and vanity, she waves the beauty of N'Goné before him, so as to stimulate desire in El Hadji's mind. When

realizing all exits closed to him, Sembène describes the aging Muslim, as "harponné."⁴⁴ "El Hadji céda par faiblesse."⁴⁵

Here, the author evokes a notable contrast. N'Goné's faded and superficial character is made even more apparent by her aunt's keen sense of perception and ability to outwit others. Sembène offers not an idealized, but a realistic appraisal of African women; regardless of the traditional framework from within which they operate.

La Badiène's determination to assure her niece's future is only interfered with from the exterior: El Hadji's "xala" (impotency) is a cause for alarm.

La femme était dans ses états de femelle déçue.
Ce xala, si l'homme le subissait physiquement,
elle en était, elle la victime morale et son
rêve était éventré.⁴⁶

The author has constructed, in N'Goné, a mere framework. One must look into the thoughts of La Badiène and El Hadji, in order to see some emotional depth in this young woman. Her attempts at acting independently of these two stronger characters are limited, and poorly executed. Intimacy, between herself and El Hadji, offers just such a case. N'Goné is cautioned by her aunt as to the correct behavior on her wedding night. "Ne crains rien! Tu auras un peu mal, mais sois docile dans les bras de ton mari. Obéis."⁴⁷ Her submission however, is to no avail, as El Hadji is unable to perform his function. It is interesting to note that Sadjì makes of Maimouna a wholly naive creature--

one whose love affair has an air of mystery or surprise about it. The reader has no indication of the scenes that may have gone on between the two lovers "en cachette." Sadji's handling of the matter is delicate and most timid. Sembène however, by nature of the topic he has chosen, takes his readers boldly into the private chambers of his characters. Without the explicitness of erotic passages in Western literature, he, at least, shows the young girl's docility towards her new husband.

N'Goné en chemise de nuit vaporeuse, allongée, offerte . . . La veilleuse était sur ce corps frêle, aux formes bien sculptées, son éclat incertain.⁴⁸

Maimouna's understanding of sensuality and of sexuality are greatly hampered by her extreme naivete. It is in this area that N'Goné demonstrates, although feebly, at least some indication of her instruction in the "Ars-Amoris" of the Senegalese culture. However gauche the act, N'Goné, through her sexual initiative, appears less traditional than her counterpart, Maimouna.

Elle se collait à lui, prenait des initiatives, maladroitement, telle une leçon mal assimilée. Elle haletait, le renversa sur le lit, s'allongea sur lui . . .⁴⁹

N'Goné's lack of adroitness and El Hadji's negative reactions to her, prepare us for the eventual marital failure. We are made aware of the shallow grounds upon which their relationship is based, through El Hadji's thoughts. ". . . Cette banale causerie, qui n'avait rien

d'élevé ni de subtil, révéla à El Hadji qu'avec N'Goné il n'avait construit que sur du sable.⁵⁰

Maimouna's relationship with Doudou Diouf is also built on sand. Sadjí, the moralist, chooses to reveal this to Maimouna through a lesson in misfortune. Sembène does not undertake to teach the character, nor the reader. Instead, he focuses a mirror clearly in front of African society, in order to expose the type of personality that N'Goné represents. Her superficiality is closely associated with the more negative aspects of independent Africa: neo-colonialism. It is merely through the thinnest threads of cultural patterns that N'Goné, as the young African woman, is still linked to traditional society. The author's portrayal of the breakdown in traditionality among African women, makes of her a particularly representative character.

B. Responsibilities During Marriage

Sadjí's Maimouna and Sembène's N'Goné offer examples of young African women, not yet come into their own. Although physically developed and more or less prepared to embark upon marriage, they are nevertheless considerably restricted by societal and cultural traditions. Much of their personalities are revealed through other characters, causing them to appear to be puppets on a literary stage. The African woman who has completed the initial stage of betrothal, and who is well into the performance of her daily role as wife, has a greater sense of self. She has

acquired through marriage and childbirth, a modicum of independence and respect in the community. Her independence is not total, however, for her actions are still controlled by husband, elders, relatives, traditions, and taboos. In many cases, she is totally limited and confined, while living in a perpetual state of submission.

The Koran is explicit in regard to the status of the female in Islamic society.

Men have authority over women because Allah has made one superior to the other, and because they spend their wealth to maintain them. Good women are obedient. They guard their unseen parts because Allah has guarded them. As for those from whom you fear disobedience, admonish them and send them to beds apart and beat them. Then if they obey you, Take no further action against them. Allah is high, supreme.⁵¹

As Sadji devotes little of his efforts to the African wife, the women characters we have selected for study are from the novels of Sembène: Noumbé (Voltaïque); Ouighoue (Harmattan); Awa (Xala); and Assitan (Bouts de Bois de Dieu). The confines within which they must all act are Senegal; traditionality, polygamy; Islam. How the female character adapts to these conditions in her life is fascinating to observe.

In Sembène's collection of stories, entitled Voltaïque, he presents us with an intriguing character, Noumbé, main protagonist in the story "Ses Trois Jours." Noumbé is only one of the many women on Sembène's list of female characters whom he uses to illustrate his feelings about

polygamy. Through this short story, the reader enters the polygamous marriage and is able to participate fully in Noubé's experience as one of the three wives to Moustaphe.

The process Sembène uses is first to construct a picture of polygamy from the exterior. Noubé's physical preparations for the coming of her husband, might, upon first glance, be compared to those of most women eager to please their mates. She busies herself with the cleaning of the home (in this instance, a single hut in a compound); makes sure the children are well-behaved, and takes pains to prepare a culinary specialty. It is upon closer notice, however, that we come to realize the importance of these chores to this particular woman. According to Islamic law, a husband must spend three full days with each of his wives; (referred to as the Moomé). Emotionally, he may have chosen a favorite among his wives. Legally, however, he must favor each with his presence; equal funds for the maintenance of the home and the raising of the children. It is through Noubé's thoughts that we come to understand how much it means to her to hold her husband's affections for the coming seventy-two hours.

Noubé pensait à 'ses trois jours.' Trois jours à elle seule, où son mari Moustaphe serait à elle . . . Il y avait longtemps qu'elle n'avait eu semblable trouble . . . Avoir Moustaphe! Cela la reconfortait.⁵²

Although prematurely aged by five successive pregnancies,

Noumbé takes painstaking care to prepare herself. "Elle s'était refait les tresses, avait passé du henné à ses mains et à ses pieds."⁵³ Sembène is not timid here, as he reveals Noumbé's excitement in regard to the coming sexual activities of Moustaphe.

Je suis en forme, opina Noumbé, avec une nuance de fierté dans le ton. Elle saisit la main de la femme et la promena sur ses reins . . .⁵⁴

The loneliness and need of this woman to spend time with her husband becomes apparent.

Se sont mes trois jours. Je veux ressusciter les fastes d'antan; faire que son gosier garde la saveur du plat, des lunes et des lunes, et oublie la cuisine de ses autres épouses.⁵⁵

Making sure that we understand the moral fiber of Noumbé, he shows her as one who is not intent upon using cunning to undo her husband. She represents the very lonely and isolated African woman, bound in an Islamic, polygamous marriage. How many faceless and nameless others, must, upon similar occasions, ask themselves: "Pourquoi n'en serait-il pas ainsi toujours pour toutes les femmes . . . Avoir un mari à soi? Elle se la demandait."⁵⁶

Little by little the author draws us closer into the field of vision of the character, until we are at one with her. Putting aside the pedestal upon which so many of Africa's women are asked to stand--as the eternal mother--Sembène focuses upon Noumbé's emotional needs as a woman.

Elle ne voulait pas que son mari la considère moins que les autres co-épouses, la trouve plus

radine. Elle ne négligeait pas son devoir de mère, mais celui d'épouse passait avant . . . en certains moments.⁵⁷

From this vantage point, the reader is able to penetrate the deception, embarrassment, and frustration of Noubé, as all of her preparations are in vain. Moustaphe doesn't arrive! The vicissitudes of emotions during her three day wait range from jealousy, to self-pity, to suspicion of the other wives. It is as if Sembène is commenting upon the enormous waste of time required by polygamous protocol. A life, pitifully suspended amidst jealousy, rivalry and humiliation cannot contribute to the needs of Africa. Finally, anger, an emotional release, leads Noubé to make a stand: ". . . l'envie de sortir du cercle de la polygamie achemina sa pensée . . . Pourquoi acceptons-nous d'être le jouet des hommes?"⁵⁸

Within these few pages, Sembène is able to build Noubé into a strong woman; firm in her convictions. When Moustaphe finally arrives, on the third day, she is able to meet his reproaches with cool sarcasm. Her resentment builds however, until she is no longer able to contain her anger.

Exprès Noubé renversa la premier plat:
Oh! oncle . . . pardonne-moi . . .
Elle cassa les deux autres plats.
Son oeil devint rouge.⁵⁹

Defying the man of the house; shaming him in front of other male guests; is a supreme affront in the Muslim tradition. This insult to Moustaphe leaves one unsure as to Noubé's

future. Sembène is clever in showing to what extent the injustice of polygamy goes unnoticed, and is ingrained in the minds of many men.

Regardez ce qu'elle a fait cette folle. Un jour sa jalousie l'étranglera. Je ne suis pas venu la voir . . . deux jours seulement, et elle crie comme un veau . . . Depuis qu'elles ont des associations, ces bourgresses, elles croient qu'elles vont diriger le pays . . .⁶⁰

As to the future of the African woman in the polygamous marriage, Sembène offers no solutions. He does, however, raise questions, shatter illusions, and break patterns of conformity within the confines of this totally encompassing religious system. Translated from the Arabic, Islam means "submission to God."⁶¹ Noubé makes an attempt to free herself from these restrictions.

In Ouighoué, of Harmattan, we see still another African wife who must adapt to the confines of the polygamous union. Ouighoué, first wife to Joseph-Koéboghi, has already appeared in her role as mother to the politically active Tioumbé. Upon a closer observation, we recall that much of her personality is revealed through the attitudes of her daughter and husband--since, in this instance--Sembène has chosen not to have us penetrate the private thoughts of this woman. We understand clearly that Ouighoué's world revolves around obedience to Joseph-Koéboghi. The years of internalizing the condition of women has her refer to herself as "une simple femme."⁶² Both her existence and her person are reflections of negativism; crying, bowing, scurrying,

whimpering, stammering.

However great the pity we feel for Ouighoué, Sembène has the reader show equal disrespect and ridicule of Joseph-Koéboghi. As with Moustaphe, the author has painted the male character in such a light as to accentuate his obtuseness. One might easily feel a deliberate attempt, on the author's part, to paint such an extreme contrast in characters, were it not for what we know to be Sembène's literary goal: to capture on paper a reflection of all segments of his people. The Joseph-Koéboghi's, Moustaphe's, and nameless others, represent an unfortunate segment of African male personality. They all seem to stand firm behind one thought: "Ici, c'est chez moi. On m'obéit. Une maison ne peut avoir deux maitres."⁶³ It is understandable that the relationship between Joseph-Koéboghi and his daughter Tioumbé is poor, if one is to use his disrespect of women in general, as an example.

La mère? Comme toutes les femmes, elle a l'esprit étroit . . . la mère de Tioumbé n'est bonne à rien. Dieu sait que je veux divorcer d'avec sa mère, et ne garder que mes deux autres épouses.⁶⁴

Each of these roles is reinforced in turn, as the other wives of Joseph-Koéboghi all shudder when Ouighoué is being scolded and writhes in pain as she is flogged. Each woman knowingly suffers the pain and humiliation of her co-wife, in silence. No doubt, when Ouighoué finally musters enough strength to stand up to Joseph-Koéboghi, she is joined emotionally by

the other women of the compound. "Elle était mue par une force nouvelle. Une révolte, longtemps étouffée, éclatait enfin. Les co-épouses, terrifiées, reculaient."⁶⁵ The courage is short-lived, however, for its foundation is unstable. Ouighoué finds herself lost in a whirlwind of change in African values. A world of conformity, no matter how unpleasant, was something she had been able to comprehend. A woman who stands up to her husband, in outright disobedience, is more than she could grasp.

Et quand je me retrouve seule, seule avec moi, comme une charge pesante, tout s'obscurcit. Je revois les enfants que nous étions alors, les enfants d'aujourd'hui, les grandes personnes, nos maisons, les soldats, les Blancs et leur quartier, je me perds en moi-même. La vie présente la débordait de tous les côtés. . . . elle se voyait noyée.⁶⁶

This feeling of lack of control in the "tourbillion" of Africa ultimately divides Ouighoué from her daughter Tioumbé. In the realm of wife, Ouighoué had made no advances and one could not help but regret her situation as the submissive wife to the domineering husband. The maze of traditions within which she operates is far too intricate to offer a door for escape.

In the observations that we have made thus far, in regard to Noubé (of Voltaïque) and Ouighoué (of Harmattan), Sembène's negative feelings toward polygamy in Africa clearly begin to surface. His commentary is limited, yet as a novelist-cinematographer, the impressions he creates are lasting. We have been able to study the near-total state

of submission of a Ouighoué--engulfed simultaneously in the worlds of Islam and polygamy. Women such as Noubé, (although similar in condition and few in number) at least make an attempt at freedom. A profound impression left with the reader is one of the burdens of subjugation.

In the case of Awa, first wife to El Hadji (in Xala), Sembène uncovers still another version of the African wife in the performance of her responsibilities. In Awa, we have a woman of contemporary time, who has opted to behave in the traditional mode. Originally of the Christian faith, Awa (Renée Jean), willfully chooses to convert to Islamic practices, in the hopes of pleasing her husband, and of placing their marriage on firm religious territory.

"Elle s'était apostasiée par amour pour mieux partager les félicités d'une vie conjugale."⁶⁷ It is on this issue that Awa is able to differentiate herself from Ouighoué and Noubé, for her choice of this religion has brought with it a sincerity of commitment, not witnessed in the other characters. Sembène comments:

. . . c'était l'année où elle fit le pèlerinage à La Meque. Elle ne se vêtit qu'en blanc, depuis son retour du Lieu Saint, de la Kaaba. Néophite, elle était très pénétrée des dogmes de sa nouvelle religion. Devenue Adja, elle se dissuadait de garder en son coeur--qu'elle voulait pur, immaculé--toute haine, toute vilénie envers autrui. A force de volonté, elle fit taire velléité de haine à l'encontre de la seconde épouse. Elle voulait être une épouse selon les canons de l'Islam.

Awa's good faith thus established, one notices a change in

her person during the twenty years of marriage to El Hadji. As his intentions and affections towards her decline, the influence of Islam in Awa's life increases dramatically. The self-effacement of this character is unmistakable, as her religion takes on the function of a panacea to the coldness of a very shallow husband. Having returned from the third wedding of her husband, Awa is evidently pained by the experience and seeks refuge.

La porte qui se refermait l'isola encore,
comme d'autres s'isolent dans la droque.
Adja Awa Astou trouvait dans la religion sa
suffisante dose journalière.⁶⁹

Awa's self-isolation is treated as a gradual experience--seemingly a protective mechanism against rejection from others. She is first disavowed by her father, Papa Jean, ". . . un chrétien intransigeant, issu de la troisième génération du catholicisme africain"⁷⁰ who cannot accept his daughter's conversion to Islam, for a man he considers unworthy.

Papa Jean savait beaucoup sur ce musulman, sur ses activités syndicales. On lui avait rapporté ses discours dans les meetings politiques sur la présence française, ses alliés, les assimilés. Il ne le voyait pas comme gendre et d'avance souffrait de le voir associé éventuellement à sa famille.⁷¹

Although, at one time, the relationship between Awa and El Hadji must have been favorable, the addition of second and third wives, and countless business and political commitments left little more than politeness within their

union. Awa could always be depended upon to offer solace to a harried husband, if nothing more. One notes that the marriage has evolved into a platonic relationship, through El Hadji's private thoughts.

Il y avait longtemps qu'ils n'avaient pas eu de rapports. Cette femme était si taciturne, si indifférent aux choses de la vie qu'il serait possible de l'enterrer vivante sans entendre un germinement.⁷²

With few friends, and little contact with the other co-wives (called "weje"), Awa's only link with the world of everyday concerns, becomes the welfare of her children Rama and Moctar. Religion and her children's welfare become her reason for living. One might refer to her religious retreat into self complete, were it not for the emergence of two powerful human emotions--jealousy and shame.

Awa, certain that she had anesthetized herself well enough against terrestrial matters, is surprised to find herself emotionally affected during the weddings of her husband. She had begun to disguise her hurt when El Hadji took his second wife, Oumi.

La jalousie, avait-elle pensé, était bannie de son coeur . . . son mari prit une seconde épouse, elle dissimula son affliction.⁷³

The ordeal of still a third marriage reawakens some of these old sufferings. Sembène shows the silent, yet unmistakable pain felt by each co-wife, as she witnesses the appearance of a third bride. Their pain, in effect, draws them together into a silent sisterhood of compassion.

Les deux co-épouses gagnèrent le perron. De cette hauteur, elles suivaient les phases de l'intronisation. De leur temps et à l'aurore de la vie conjugale, elles avaient vécu cet instant, le coeur comblé de promesses et de bonheur. Témoins, en ce jour, du bonheur d'une autre, d'une rivale, l'évocation de leur lune de miel donnait à toute chose un goût de fiel. Elles ressentaient de cruelles morsures d'amertume. Drapées dans leur commun abandon, esseulées, elles ne se disaient rien.⁷⁴

The author makes no secret as to the sense of shame Awa feels as she discovers the affliction of her husband--his xala. In the African traditional value system emotions felt by the individual are often reflected upon his family, friends, and community. Here, Awa demonstrates the marks of traditional upbringing, as she shares fully in the embarrassment of her husband. "Simplement, je suis sa femme. La "awa."⁷⁵

Adja Awa Astou makes no stand--either for or against her husband, although she does seem to share in some of Rama's strength. El Hadji is painfully shamed for his unscrupulous activities against his own people, and thus, must receive his punishment from the very ones he has abused: the populace of Senegal. In the final scene, we see Awa and Rama, faced with the abhorrent treatment of El Hadji, by the dwarfs and other disfigured characters. Unable to contain her shame and embarrassment, Awa sheds the tears of a disillusioned woman. She is caught in a regrettable marriage; one in which she is being held accomplice. Awa's sincerity and devotion seem lost amidst the hypocrisy and

graft prevalent in the world of El Hadji. Sembène shows us a woman who has chosen to bury herself behind the safety of religion, and who, despite her attempts at self-purification, must nevertheless suffer the consequences of neo-colonialism in Africa. Once again, the wife appears as the unfortunate victim of circumstances.

In examining the African wife, Sembène has presented three distinct personalities, each operating differently within the traditional setting. The behavior of each character varies either according to the changing period in African history, i.e. period of the referendum (Harmattan); neo-colonialism (Xala); or according to a sense of personal commitment to change, i.e. Noumbé (Voltaïque). In one of Sembène's earlier novels (Bouts de Bois de Dieu), he presents an equally turbulent period; the Dakar Niger railroad strike of the 1940's. Of the many women who stand out in this novel, we have already met Assitan as the mother of Adjibidji. In her role as wife to Bakayoko, Sembène creates a portrait characterizing her as representative of the traditional African wife.

Assitan était une épouse parfaite selon les anciennes traditions africaines: docile, soumise, travailleuse, elle ne disait jamais un mot plus haut que l'autre. Elle ignorait tout des activités de son mari ou du moins faisait semblant de les oublier. Neuf ans auparavant, on l'avait mariée à l'aîné des Bakayoko. Sans même le consulter, ses parents s'étaient occupés de tout. Un soir, son père lui apprit que son mari se nommait Sadibou Bakayoko et deux mois après on la livrait à

un homme qu'elle n'avait jamais vu. Le mariage eut lieu avec toute la pompe nécessaire dans une famille d'ancienne lignée, mais Assitan ne vécut que onze mois avec son mari, celui-ci fut tué lors de la première grève de Thiès. Trois semaines plus tard, elle accouchait d'une fillette. De nouveau, l'antique coutume disposa de sa vie; on la maria au cadet des Bakayoko: Ibrahima. Celui-ci adopta le bébé et lui donna ce nom étrange: Ad'jibid'ji. Assitan continua d'obéir. Avec la fillette et la grand-mère Niakoro, elle quitta Thiès pour suivre son mari à Bamako. Elle fut aussi soumise à Ibrahima qu'elle l'avait été à son frère. Il partait pour des jours, il restait absent des mois, il bravait des dangers, c'était son lot d'homme, de matre. Son lot à elle, son lot de femme était d'accepter et de se taire, ainsi qu'on lui avait enseigné.⁷⁶

In order to understand the temperament of such a woman, it is necessary to recall the criteria of Africa's traditional culture that make of her what she is. The author describes these traits in a positive light, by no means reducing her to the exploited female figure. Assitan undertakes each of her responsibilities, and even more so during the strike, with the full knowledge of the necessity of mutual cooperation of man and woman, in order to attain harmonious goals. The author does not make of her a rebel; for she neither questions nor objects to the distribution of work during the period of turmoil. Bakayoko and the strength he represents, are her very foundation. "Elevée selon les anciennes coutumes, Assitan était toute réserve et vivait en marge de la vie de son mari, une vie de labeur, de silence et de résignation."⁷⁷

What is most evident in distinguishing the wives thus far presented, is the essential role played by their husbands. The confines of Islam and polygamy, in no uncertain terms, are sharply criticized by the author, in Voltaïque, Harmattan, and Xala. One must also consider the negative roles the author has attributed to the husbands of these women: Moustaphe, Joseph-Koéboghi, Hadji. Through their lack of vision, vanity, and shallowness, each has helped to further submerge his wife into a world of total submission. Interestingly enough, Sembène has reserved a more reasonable role for Bakayoko. Although totally involved in his commitment to African nationalism, he does not mistreat Assitan. He does, however, keep his infidelities to himself.

Nul n'aurait pu le savoir tant étaient secrètes les pensées de cet homme. Peut-être le spectacle de la détresse morale autant que matérielle qu'il avait eu sous les yeux au cours de ses tournées pendant toute la durée de la grève l'avait-il mûri?⁷⁸

In presenting Assitan, Sembène has focused our attention on the stable force present during the turbulent movement of African history from colonization to independence. As a character, she symbolizes the authenticity of African traditional womanhood--essential to the growth of the continent. While she appears chronologically before all of the others, it is fitting to reserve Assitan as the last woman character to be analyzed, for she stands alone in Sembène's works as the symbol of the traditional African wife.

Summary

In their respective portraits of the female characters, Sadjì and Sembène have painted the African woman both before she has taken her marriage vows and after. Sadjì stresses the former, while Sembène stresses the latter. It is interesting to note the literary paths that each author has forged for the protagonists to follow. Sadjì's Maimouna is developed along the lines of a triangle; as the author leads her from the village of Louga, to the city of Dakar and once again to the village. In Louga, Maimouna undergoes a socialization process necessary for her development into womanhood, and reflects the author's efforts to paint traditional Africa in positive tones. This process is interrupted, however, as the purity of the village must give way to the evil of the city of Dakar. Although his heroine is hopelessly entrapped in the web of evil, it is clear that Sadjì's wrath against the deterioration of the Dakarois society is the key question here. The only means of salvation for Maimouna is to return to the village--for purification.

Sembène's young woman character, N'Goné, is charted upon a circular path. This character, contrary to Maimouna, is already influenced by the ill effects of a deteriorating society. The superficiality of her life appears to have existed before El Hadji's proposal of marriage, during her

relationship with him, and the reader is led to believe that the girl will continue on just such a valueless route. Here, the salvation of the character is not the primary goal of the author, for there is no breaking the circular path unless the society itself undergoes change. Both authors have portrayed their characters as beings who are unable to act for themselves and must rely upon the outside influences of others: Yacine and Doudou Diouf, for Maimouna; la Badiène and El Hadji for N'Goné.

The life of the young African girl is primarily one of imitation and initiation, with little emphasis upon personal expression. It is essentially through marriage that the traditional African woman is emancipated. Sembène's portrait of four wives, brings this issue of emancipation into question. Our attention is focused upon Noumbé, Awa and Ouighoué. Each is caught under the yoke of both Islam and polygamy. In the eyes of their respective husbands, and the society, these women must adhere to the specific tenets of the Koran. To the extent that the characters do not adhere to these principals, they enter into a world of conflict; both externally and inwardly. Noumbé dares to talk back to her husband in remonstrance for his conjugal neglect. Ouighoué attempts, although feebly, to stand by her daughter. Awa, overcome with inner torment, seeks refuge deep within herself and her religion.

The characters demonstrate the author's view of the

detrimental effects of the stringent policy of polygamy upon the female. The development of their personalities reaches amplification only as they emerge from the submissive mold that was cast for them since childhood, to embark upon a path of "engagement." Sembène further offers a classic portrait of Assitan--the symbol of the traditional African wife. This character lacks the spark and energy of the other women whose inner emotional conflicts are made evident. Nevertheless, she is painted in a light of almost deliberate calm and repose. Although she is not the answer to the questions that the author poses regarding Islam, polygamy, and the status of the woman, she does symbolize the value of the traditional African wife--essential to the growth of the continent.

¹V. Monteil, L'Islam Noir (Paris: Editions du Seul, 1971), p. 195.

²A. C. Brench, The Novelist's Inheritance in French-Africa: Writers From Senegal to Cameroon (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 23.

³A. Césaire, "L'homme de culture et ses responsabilités," Présence Africaine, 24 (1959), p. 116.

⁴M. Kane, "L'écrivain africain et son public," Présence Africaine, 58 (1966), p. 14.

⁵A. Sadjí, Maimouna (Paris: Présence Africaine, 1958), p. 41.

⁶Ibid., p. 36.

⁷Ibid., p. 71.

⁸Ibid., p. 73.

⁹K. Little, African Women in Towns (London: Cambridge University Press, 1973), p. 15.

¹⁰Brench, op. cit., pp. 26-27.

¹¹Sadjí, op. cit., p. 44.

¹²Ibid., p. 155.

¹³Ibid., p. 138.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 88.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 97.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 121.

¹⁸Ibid., pp. 146-147.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 147.

²⁰Ibid., p. 177.

²¹Ibid., p. 188.

²²Brench, op. cit., p. 31.

- 23Sadj1, op. cit., p. 90.
- 24Ibid., p. 95.
- 25Ibid., p. 97.
- 26Ibid., p. 125.
- 27Ibid., p. 133.
- 28Ibid., pp. 101-102.
- 29Ibid., p. 132.
- 30Mouralis, Individu et Collectivité dans le roman négro-africain d'expression française (Abidjan: Université d'Abidjan, 1969), p. 23.
- 31Ibid., p. 142.
- 32Sadj1, op. cit., pp. 143-144.
- 33Ibid., p. 188.
- 34Ibid., p. 190.
- 35Brench, op. cit., p. 27.
- 36O. Sembène, Xala (Paris: Présence Africaine, 1973), p. 18.
- 37Ibid., p. 14.
- 38Ibid., p. 15.
- 39Ibid., p. 16.
- 40Ibid., p. 19.
- 41Ibid., p. 21.
- 42Ibid., p. 19.
- 43R. Simmons, Eyes of the Night: Witchcraft Among a Senegalese People (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1971), p. 157.
- 44Sembène, op. cit., p. 20.
- 45Ibid., p. 20.
- 46Ibid., p. 54.

- 47Ibid., p. 43.
- 48Ibid., p. 65.
- 49Ibid., p. 101.
- 50Ibid., p. 98.
- 51The Koran, IV, 34 as translated with notes by N.J. Dawood (England: Penguin Books, 1974).
- 52O. Sembène, Voltaire (Paris: Présence Africaine, 1962), p. 43.
- 53Ibid., p. 44.
- 54Ibid., pp. 45-46.
- 55Ibid., p. 45.
- 56Ibid., p. 48.
- 57Ibid., p. 47.
- 58Ibid., p. 61.
- 59Ibid., p. 71.
- 60Ibid.
- 61C. Farah, Islam: Beliefs and Observances (New York: Baron's Educational Series, 1968), p. 2.
- 62O. Sembène, L'Harmattan (Paris: Présence Africaine, 1964), p. 227.
- 63Ibid., p. 231.
- 64Ibid., pp. 147-148.
- 65Ibid., p. 239.
- 66Ibid., p. 238.
- 67Sembène, Xala, p. 24.
- 68Ibid., pp. 38-39.
- 69Ibid., p. 41.
- 70Ibid., p. 39.

71Ibid., p. 40.

72Ibid., p. 127.

73Ibid., p. 38.

74Ibid., p. 37.

75Ibid., p. 80.

76O. Sembène, Les Bouts de Bois de Dieu (Paris: Présence Africaine, 1960), p. 170.

77Ibid., p. 365.

78Ibid.

CHAPTER III

WOMAN OF MYSTICAL POWERS

In addition to her role as mother and wife, the traditional African woman is often deeply enmeshed in an intricate system of supranatural events, in which she takes an active part. Mbiti, in African Religions and Philosophies, tells us that "to an outsider, they sound more like fiction than reality."¹ Such events, however, offer no such shock to Africans who "know that the universe has a power, force or whatever else one may call it . . . It is difficult to know exactly what it is or how it functions. Even where allowance is made for conjuring tricks, obvious cheating, superstition, manipulation of hidden means of communication and other skilled use of laws of nature, one is left and confronted with phenomena which as yet cannot be scientifically explained away."² It is the belief in such supranatural forces that both strengthens and leads the way to the belief in magic in the African community. Claude Lévi-Strauss notes:

. . . the efficacy of magic implies a belief in magic. The latter has three complementary aspects; first, the sorcerer's belief in the effectiveness of his techniques; second, the patient's or victim's belief in the sorcerer's power; and finally, the faith and expectations of the group, which constantly act as a sort of gravitational

field within which the relationship between sorcerer and bewitched is located and defined.³

Sadji and Sembène, in an effort to present African authenticity, have provided examples of women characters, intricately connected with the realm of the supranatural. Sadji describes Mame Raki and Yacine, in his novel Maimouna; Khady, in Nini, and Goudi and Mame N'Dack, in Tounka. Sembène offers Mahn Kombéti of Harmattan and La Badiène of Xala, for our observation. The powers of the occult are not unfamiliar to the African community, for these beliefs are a part of a total mode of existence which combines the spiritual universe with the physical. In Bantu terminology, this totality of the African mind, body and spirit is called NTU. "It is not simply a coherence of fact and faith, nor of reason and traditional beliefs, nor of reason and contingent facts, but a coherence of compatibility among all the disciplines . . . Philosophy, theology, politics, social theory, land law, medicine, psychology, birth and burial, all find themselves logically concatenated in a system so tight that to subtract one item from the whole is to paralyse the structure of the whole."⁴

A particularly strong bond between man and God in the ontological world, has evolved from this cosmic totality. The phenomenon of a spirit, or animus, in man, animals and objects is referred to as animism. Senghor comments upon this significant feature of traditional African culture.

Le monde n'est pas, dans sa réalité, une somme de couleurs, de formes, d'odeurs; une somme de qualités sensibles. Il n'est même pas, comme l'enseigne la Physique aujourd'hui, une somme de particules perpétuellement en mouvement. Pour le Nègre, sous l'aspect matériel et sensible, il y a un monde d'âmes. Qu'est-ce que l'âme? . . . On peut dire que c'est une force spirituelle, un principe de vie intellectuelle et morale, qui anime chaque être, chaque plante, chaque chose pourvue d'un caractère propre: montagne, caverne, rocher, lac.⁵

This belief in animism emits a power strong enough to encompass other beliefs of the supranatural world: magic, divination, witchcraft. These elements are an integral part of the African traditional belief, and, as such, can neither be disengaged from the people nor from their literature. It is the female in Africa who is most closely associated with these powers, whether for the good or the evil of the community. "Le rayonnement qu'émet la femme est ambivalent. Il est bénéfique en ce sens qu'il est source de cette fécondité à laquelle la société tient tant. Mais parce qu'il est d'origine et de nature numineuses, il peut aussi devenir maléfique pour qui approche inconsidérément."⁶

As the moralist, Sadjì presents a picture of traditional and urbanized Africa, each with its women of mystical powers. In the village of Louga, Mame Raki represents the characterization of good, while in Dakar, Yacine symbolizes evil. The symmetry of the story is thereby kept intact.

Mame Raki, the neighbor and close friend to Yaye Daro

uses her knowledge of the occult for the good of others; twice in the treatment of Maimouna; once in the cure of Yaye Daro. According to Mbiti, her powers fall therefore under the realm of good magic. "The use of good magic is accepted and esteemed by society."⁷ Intent upon a faithful representation of traditional African village life, Sadjì offers colorful scenes in which one is able to witness the ease with which magic is intermingled into daily life--making it part of the "psychic atmosphere of African village life."⁸

When summoned by Yaye Daro to observe Maimouna's feverish state, Mame Raki diagnoses the child's case of yellow fever and proceeds to administer the necessary elixers.

D'un repli de son pagne la vieille Raki tira une poudre jaune, y posa le bout de sa langue et conseilla. Mets cette poudre dans un peu d'eau. Quand Maimouna l'aura bue les vomissements la quitteront et demain matin elle pourra aller et venir. Puis elle marmonna une prière, souffla et cracha sur la tête de la petite malade et disparut sans dire adieu.⁹

Certainly the "science and sagesse" of the old woman could not have been nearly as effective, were it not for the strength behind the pronouncement of the cure. "There is mystical power in words, especially those of a senior person to a junior one, in terms of age, social status or official position. . . . The words of the medicine-man work through the medicine he gives, and it is this, perhaps more than the actual herb, which is thought to cause the cure or

prevent misfortunes."¹⁰

Often the curative knowledge of such persons is in direct conflict with proven medical data. When, at the end of the story, Yaye Daro is struck by smallpox, Mame Raki does her best to hide the symptoms from the Service Hygiène (whose function was to place all such patients under quarantine). She attempts to put all of her knowledge of herbs and medicine into the cure of her friend.

Dans la petite galerie, à ciel ouvert, Mame Raki entassait ses produits 'pharmaceutiques' entièrement tirés des recettes empiriques locales. C'étaient des feuilles tordues et sèches, recroquevillées et crissantes qui, au moindre contact, se réduisaient en poussière; c'étaient de longues racines de 'nguiguiguis' des écorces de caillédrat, des poudres végétales, des boules de tamarin. Elle se livrait, toujours précise et sûre, à des massages, posait des cataplasmes, administrait des breuvages.¹¹

Failing, the officials had to intercede and bring Yaye Daro back to health "scientifically."

Although the sincerity of Mame Raki cannot be contested, one senses Sadjî's reticence in allowing the cure of Maimouna's case of smallpox. It is as if no amount of magic can undo the evil of the city; that evil which befell Maimouna through her association in the alluring but false Dakar. Narrowly escaping death, she is nevertheless robbed of her much cherished physical beauty.

Maimouna avait une figure boursouflée, rose comme une pastèque ouverte. Des ses yeux--deux entailles enflées de part et d'autre--coulait un liquid blanchâtre et putride.¹²

Harsh with his punishments, Sadji allows Mame Raki to stand by and to observe the pitiful condition of her friend's daughter--helplessly. Her magic is to no avail, as Maimouna has been contaminated by ills that far surpass the knowledge of the peaceful African village.

Interestingly, the author refers to Yacine, the faithful servant in the Bounama Diaw household, as "la Responsable."¹³ Clearly identifying each character with the symbol he personifies, we see Yacine as responsible for the implementation of much of the evil during Maimouna's stay in Dakar. Certainly she cannot be held accountable for the city; for she serves only as the vehicle through which much temptation was filtered through to the naive Maimouna.

Yacine, although not embodied with mystical powers of her own, nevertheless represents the evil magic, or sorcery familiar to traditional Africa. Sadji has placed her in the center of Dakar, and its urban setting; thereby reflecting the overlapping of customs in traditional and westernized Africa. Hers is a kind of sorcery built upon the foundations of urban evil, capable of destroying traditional African roots. The author offers no explanation for her unreasonable jealousy and willful need to harm Maimouna. He suggests the social injustices that necessarily arose during colonization. These were the results of the flow of Africans from the villages to the towns; unequal work

distribution, implantation of the seed of the western life-style. This young woman had been faithfully in the service of Bounama and Rihanna for three years--partially as a refuge from the unfortunate results of a well-known story.

Venue à Dakar, il y avait quatre ans, attirée par la vogue de la ville impériale, Yacine y avait rencontré un garçon de son pays nommé Iba. Beau garçon, belle voix. Ils chanterent ensemble un an durant les mélopées nostalgiques du Oualo, puis, ma foi, comme ils s'aimaient, ils firent un enfant. Dieu fit que l'enfant ne vécut pas et Dieu fit bien. Car Iba abandonna sa maîtresse et l'enfant pour s'engager dans la Marine. Cette épreuve suffit à la femme pour comprendre sommairement les dangers de l'existence. Elle s'était aussitôt repliée sur elle-même en jurant qu'on ne l'y prendrait plus.¹⁴

One feels that the presence of Maimouna (of equally humble background, and with no more preparation than Yacine) triggers the painful memories of her own shame. She determines to insure Maimouna's downfall, if no more than to equal her own. Sadji infers that much of the rivalry and jealousy between Africans is due to the institution of social hierarchies.

. . . Yacine croyait fermement que si Maimouna était plus jeune qu'elle, sa beauté n'était pas extraordinaire et ne surpassait pas tellement la sienne. Qu'au temps 'où le monde était encore le monde' il n'aurait pas été dit que Yacine Sarr put devenir jamais la 'mbinedane' de Maimouna Tall. Mais le monde n'était plus le monde, il avait changé de principes; les 'badolos' d'hier commandaient maintenant à leurs anciens maîtres. Elle, Yacine, jeune et d'excellente famille, aurait pu réussir dans la vie comme n'importe quelle autre femme.¹⁵

The sorcerer therefore is Dakar! The mutual attraction between Maimouna and Doudou gives Yacine a prime occasion for the implementation of her wizardry.

In preparing the lure to ensnare Maimouna, she uses the most powerful magic known to Africans--the force of Nommo. Nommo is defined as the life force which produces all life, and which influences things in the shape of the word. "It is a unity of spiritual-physical fluidity, giving life to everything, penetrating everything, causing everything."¹⁶ Since it is man (or in this case, woman) who has power over the word, it is he who is able to direct this life force in whatever direction he sees fit. ". . . the African has more faith in the power of the word than in the power of the substance."¹⁷ By continuously making reference to the attractive Doudou, and commiserating with Maimouna over her planned marriage to Galaye, Yacine employs the force of Nommo through the power of suggestion.

Quand à ce jeune Doudou, presque un enfant, il m'intéresse particulièrement. Ah! si j'avais ta beauté et ton nom, sur, Maimouna que je tourmenterais son coeur, ne serait-ce que pour mon contentement. . . . Je connais l'homme à qui on veut te donner en mariage; assurément, c'est un gentleman, riche et sérieux. On dit aussiqu'il est de bonne famille. Mais . . . il est trop vieux pour toi, ma chère Maimouna. Que peut-il te donner que tu n'as pas ici? tu es jeune, ta beauté a fait le tour du monde et tu n'as que l'embarras du choix entre mille partis. Pourquoi se presser de te marier à un homme que tu n'aimes pas?¹⁸

Yacine's magic is carried to fruition, for through her

suggestions and assistance, Maimouna is able to meet Doudou secretly and consequently suffers the same fate as Yacine herself--seduction and abandonment.

Sadji does not reserve the subject of the occult exclusively for the characters in Maimouna. In Nini, a novel directly concerned with the effects of westernization upon the African woman, he has inserted passages pertaining to magic. The contrast is made even more apparent as he weaves elements of Senegalese traditionality amidst modernized life in urban Saint-Louis. Although the pattern has already been established in Maimouna, the contrast is sharper here, as Nini (young, fair-skinned mulâtresse, intent upon the "chasse au mari blanc") rejects all ties with her indigenous African heritage. Existing only in the present, and deriving all of her essence from her skin-tone, Nini seems a misplaced French girl, in an African body. Her disdain of all things African has deep psychological implications. Living with her aunt Hortense and grandmother Héléne--who share in her protected image of self--she abhors all but the most subservient contact with darker-skinned Africans.

Ah, ces nègres! Ils sont indescriptibles. De vrais gamins. Ils envahissent déjà les rues. Les avez-vous vus courir à droite et à gauche, parler haut et lever les bras au ciel? Quelle guigne! Cela témoigne chez eux d'un manque absolu d'éducation et de bon goût. Tout est favorable au déchaînement de leurs instincts de jouissance, tout répond à leur sensualité bestiale.¹⁹

Nini, intent upon strengthening her amicable relationship with the French bachelor, Martineau, is encouraged by the two elderly ladies of the de Maerl family. The grandmother, whose African heritage is unmistakable and of less shame to her than to her granddaughter, decides to enlist aide in bringing about this marriage. It is through her that Sadjì is able to show the depth of African traditional beliefs, for the christianization she has undergone cannot alter her faith in the powers possessed by feticheurs and marabouts.

En vérité ils sont ridicules et osés, ceux qui prétendent que rien n'existe hormis ce que l'oeil peut voir et la main toucher. Il y a certainement des existences qui nous entourent, nous coudoient, nous guettent où nous épient.²⁰

Grandmother Hélène, although not anxious to publicize her affiliations with the African world, nevertheless cannot hide her respect for these mysterious arts.

La vieille Hélène qui a absolument confiance dans cet intermédiaire entre Dieu et les hommes . . . /elle/ admirait l'intelligence et la admirait l'intelligence et la sagesse de ce marabout.²¹

Sadjì provides a link with the traditional African past in the form of Khady, an old Senegalese woman, who leads Grandmother Hélène to the home of the marabout. His home is humble, but his capacity extensive.

Ils peuvent ainsi fouiller à loisir, dans le passé, le présent ou l'avenir, la clef d'une vie humaine et détourner le cours d'une existence.²²

Khady, who reveals her parentage with Grandmother Hélène,

facilitates the meeting of the two worlds.

Elle est soeur en Eve de la vieille H el ene et elle l'affirme solennellement pour que le Manding n'en puisse douter.--Je vous am ene ma soeur, dit-elle. Malgr e qu'elle soit plus claire que moi nous sommes de la m eme famille et avons les m eme grand-parents du c ot e noir. Elle c'est moi et moi c'est elle.²³

The author provides the same colorful portrait of the marabout and his prescriptions, as he did in Maimouna.

Enfin . . . l'essentiel est obtenu: les coeurs de Nini et du Blanc seront 'fondu' comme l'air et la lumi ere. Seule la mort qui met fin   tout pourra les d esunir. La petite devra se baigner une seule fois avec l'eau contenue dans le premier flacon . . . Chaque matin, avant de voir un rayon de soleil, elle devra prendre dans le creux de sa main un peu de l'eau du second flacon pour humecter son visage. Enfin l'eau du troisi eme flacon sera vers ee dans un aliment qu'on fera c o te que c o te manger au Blanc.²⁴

Despite Nini's negative reactions to such prescriptions, she follows the advice of the marabout, faithfully yet to no avail. Martineau cannot be hers and must return to France. Sadj i suggests that the European's magic is more powerful than that of Africans, since they were able to overpower the Africans and inhabit their lands.

Car les Blancs r esistent fort bien   l'action des forces occultes, des G enies tut elaires de l'Afrique Noire . . . les Blancs arrivent quand m eme   occuper le pays et   y faire leur loi.--Quelle  motion intense avait fait na tre la premi ere apparition des 'Oreille Rouges' sur les terres de la 'Science Noire' o  vivaient des hommes grands et forts, plus savants que les baobabs (arbres-f etiches, puisqu'ils pouvaient les an eantir d'un petit mouvement sec des doigts! . . . si le Blanc est refractaire aux effets de sorcellerie de toutes sortes c'est que lui-m eme est un sorcier. Sa peau claire le rapproche de l'ange, son intelligence

qui invente des merveilles que contempnent nos yeux incrédules tend à l'identifier aux génies les plus puissants, visibles ou invisibles.²⁵

Unfortunate circumstances take the life of Grandmother Hélène. With her death, Nini's resentment of the African blood in her veins increases, as the need to cut all contact with the African world becomes her prime consideration.

. . . la mort de la vieille Hélène vient grossir l'immense rancune de Nini contre cette humanité nègre si prolifique et si hilare. Il lui semble que si grand-mère Hélène avait vécu ailleurs qu'au Sénégal, par exemple, en Europe, la mort l'aurait épargnée. Aussi bien chaque voix de femme noire qui troue la rumeur du salon et monte jusqu'à Nini lui paraît faite d'ironie, de cynisme, et traduire une intention malicieuse. Elle se trouve coupée de son passé, Lachée par l'amour, abandonnée par sa fierté et ses hautes visées, épiée par ses camarades et trahie par le Manding, elle ne sent plus sous ses pieds un sol assez solide pour bondir à nouveau.²⁶

Tounka, Sadji's short story based upon Senegalese legend, offers several examples of the supernatural powers of the female character. This ancient legend speaks of the fusion of the worlds of the sea and land in the form of a marriage between a sea princess and a fisherman of the Lebou people. The story reveals the lack of understanding between the peoples of these two worlds and results in considerable rivalry and jealousy. "Goudi," the sea princess, means "night," and is perceived by the small fishing community as a sorceress.

La beauté extraordinaire, l'allure mystérieuse, l'humeur traciturne de la mère, les prodiges qu'accomplissait le fils à cet âge eurent vite fait de les désigner à la méfiance du peuple tout

entier. On prétendait que la mère possédait deux yeux supplémentaires placés par derrière à la base du crâne et dissimulés par sa lourde toison; des yeux qui, la nuit, remplaçaient ses yeux naturels et lui permettaient de faire la chasse à l'homme. On lui attribuait le pouvoir de dérober les âmes et de provoquer la mort sous des apparences naturelles.²⁷

Much of Goudi's powers are put into use at night and exemplify the use of the expression "eyes of the night." It is at night that certain individuals in the community may be totally overtaken by malevolent spirits and forced to engage in the practice of witchcraft. "Le système repose ensuite sur une conception particulière de la personne; la totalité de l'individu est composée de son corps, de son âme et de son double. L'existence du double permet d'expliquer tous les phénomènes qui relèvent du monde de la nuit."²⁸ Sadjî gives a striking account of the duality in this mysterious woman.

Un soir N'Galka rentra plus tard que l'habitude et fut surpris de trouver sa femme chantant des mélodies inconnues, la bouche tordue et écumante, les yeux exorbités. . . .

Dès que N'Galka pénétra dans la case, la femme confuse changea d'expression et sourit aimablement en disant:

--Tu es rentré cette nuit plus tard que les autres fois. Il faut craindre les mystères de la nuit, ils sont dangereux pour les fils de l'homme.²⁹

In Tounka, Sadjî uses several group scenes which clearly demonstrate female participation in the world of the occult.

On consulta les fétiches, on fit des offrandes au "bourou-guedje" et les femmes habillées de sacs

et d'oripeaux grotesques exécutèrent sur le rivage, face à la tempête, la danse diabolique et provocatrice qui apaisait le courroux des dieux et faisait tomber la pluie.³⁰

The author vividly describes the dance of possession which is carried out by the women in the small community as they rhythmically and invitingly dance to the sounds of the central drum, the Gorong.

Le Maître-Féticheur Tyôvâne et Mame-N'Dack, la "Voyante" firent résonner le grand tambour des "ndeups" ornés de queues de djinnés et que l'on ne battait qu'avec des tibias de djinne. Les sons s'en allèrent détachés, alourdis, profonds.

.

Les femmes se renvoyaient l'hymne scandé par les éruclatations des tams-tams, la voix éclatante, incisive du "gorong" et par leurs battements de mains sonores.

Ce n'était plus qu'un balancement de corps rythmique provoqué du geste et de la voix par la grande Féticheuse surexitée et fascinée, cadencé par un orchestre obsédant; un délire collectif causé par on ne savait quel pouvoir démoniaque.³¹

Among the many female characters in Tounka, Sadjî selects a particular woman and gives a striking portrait of her total involvement in the world of the supernatural.

Aucun de ces secrets n'échappait à Mame N'Dack, la "voyante." Septuagénaire née dans le foyer des djinnés et des fétiches les plus antiques, elle était leur intermédiaire auprès des hommes. Elle faisait connaître leur volonté, intercédait quand ils étaient en colère. C'est elle qui arrangeait l'habitat de tous les génies dans la demeure de ceux qu'ils protégeaient. C'est elle qui conseillait, préparait et dirigeait les "ndeups" d'un bout à l'autre du littoral.³²

Although the major thrust of Sembène's work concerns African nationalism, he does provide, however, several passages dealing with the powers of the occult. Mahn Kombéti, of Harmattan, is an elderly woman who is reputed to have garnered special abilities in the use of certain herbs. Her knowledge provides more of an example of herbology than of sorcery.

. . . l'utilisation des herbes médicamenteuses est transmise de père en fils, de mère en fille. Les secrets des plantes, légués et conservés par quelques-uns, doivent demeurer le bien de tous . . . Ses connaissances des plantes, sa longue pratique; sont d'un grand secours dans ce pays, où on ne trouve pas un simple dispensaire à moins de cent cinquante kilomètres.³³

Revealing the source of much of her knowledge, she tells us, "Si tu connaissais ma grand-mère, elle savait mille fois plus de choses des plantes que le plus grand des doctors."³⁴

The author gives some indication that European medicine has often been used in a political vein.

Jamais, chez nous, on n'a été chez les prêtres. Tu sais avant, c'étaient les prêtres des Blancs qui soignaient . . . si tu vas voir ces hommes aux robes longues, ils soignent ton corps et gardent ton esprit.³⁵

Nevertheless, he suggests a coalescence of both the scientific and traditional curative measures, for the eventual benefit of all.

En l'arrachant à l'empirisme grossier d'autrefois, qu'il ne faut pas confondre avec l'invocation à la divinité, ou la mystification des féticheurs, et en lui apprenant l'anatomie, le praticien africain puise à la vraie source scientifique. Pour l'avenir de l'Afrique, pendant un temps

transitoire, il est à souhaiter que les médecins africains collaborent avec les botanistes africains . . .³⁶

In addition to her powers as herbologist, Mahn Kombéti's wisdom is also highlighted. In her friendship with Ouighoué, she seems to have a better understanding of the transition period in African history, than does her less enlightened friend. "Nos enfants ne sont plus nos enfants, en esprit. Ils parlent du temps à venir. Nous, nous ne parlions que du temps présent, sans comprendre, et nous ne vivions que du temps passé."³⁷

Sembène does not accentuate the wisdom of la Badiène (Xala), rather, he speaks only of the negative aspects of this woman. He reveals her ability to manipulate and to control her niece N'Goné and particularly El Hadji, while alluding to her possible association with the "eyes of the night."

Yay Binéta était poursuivie par la guigne, ay gaaf. Elle avait à son actif deux veuvages: deux maris enterrés! Et selon la rumeur publique des traditionalistes, elle se devait de faire son plein de morts: une troisième victime. Aucun homme ne se présenta de crainte d'être la prochaine proie. Or, dans ce milieu, ce cap ne se franchit pour une femme que très rarement. Dévoreuse d'hommes, incarnation d'une mort anticipée, les hommes la fuyaient et les femmes mariées de son âge préféraient divorcer plutôt que d'être veuves à ses côtés, à cause de son ay gaaf.³⁸

Armed with a sharp tongue, keen sense of perception and her reputation as a "dévoreuse d'ames," la Badiène sets out to lure and finally to snare her prey. The author

describes her cunning and timely maneuvers. "La Badiène narguait, défilait l'homme . . . Le glissement de l'homme se faisait doucement . . . (elle) dirigeait la manoeuvre."³⁹ Drawing from the rich folkloric heritage of Africa, Sembène uses the symbol of the spider to reveal the ways of this calculating woman--leaving a lasting impression on the reader. "Rien n'avait été négligé pour le conditionnement de l'homme. Telle une araignée, laborieusement, la Badiène tissait la toile."⁴⁰

Although in Xala, Sembène invests most of the powers of sorcery and divination in his male figures (marabouts and feticheurs), El Hadji's "xala" (impotency) has a direct bearing upon the attitudes and reactions of his wives Awa, Oumi and N'Goné, his daughter Rama, and la Badiène. Sembène's story of modern Senegal (1973) is particularly significant for it reveals a major and permanent feature of Black African culture; syncretism. Despite the impact of the islamizing mission of the Arabs into Black Africa, in the seventh century A.D., there remains a dominant strain of traditional belief in the forces of animism. This religious admixture is referred to as "L'Islam Noir." "Le noir ne se soucie pas de concilier le dogme et les prescriptions coraniques avec les habitudes au fond de la race. Il plaque foi et morale nouvelles sur l'héritage ancestral."⁴¹ "Il est facile de constater que la pratique quotidienne de l'Islam, à Dakar, comme ailleurs, repose sur

un arrière-plan de croyances anté-islamiques, d'origine animiste."⁴²

El Hadji, a successful Senegalese businessman, has come to cherish many material accoutrements of the Western world: foreign cars, villas, imported cuisine, mannerisms, cultural events. When struck by fear of impotency, (a devastating thought in African culture which reinforces the extended family), El Hadji turns from his Western beliefs and rediscovers his faith in traditional animistic practices. The Western treasures he has accumulated become mere borrowed idols without meaning. His search for a cure to the "xala" is carried out in the world of magic, through the use of powders, potions, and amulets.

El Hadji Abdou Kader Bèye avait consulté un tas de facckatt. Chacun avait prescrit son ordonnance. On le oignit de safara, on lui en fit boire; on lui donna des xatim qu'il devait porter autour des reins comme fétiches; on le lava avec des onguents; on exigerait de lui qu'il égorgeât un coq tout rouge. Il faisait n'importe quoi dans l'espoir de son rétablissement. A la vue de sa Mercedes, stationnant devant les pailloles ou les baraques branlantes et de sa tenue européenne, chaque facc-katt comprenait que son patient possédait un standing élevé. On lui demandait des payait comptant.⁴³

It is because El Hadji's faith eventually falters and he disregards his African heritage that these occult powers, having initially provided a cure for the "xala," are utilized to insure his shameful downfall. The author suggests that the force of magic, whether intended for good or for evil, is present in both traditional and modern

Africa. It is perhaps one of the few remnants of "Africanité" that has yet not been altered by Westernization, and affects the entire community. "Whatever reality there is concerning witchcraft in the broad and popular sense of the term, the belief in it is there in every African village, and that belief affects everyone, for better or for worse. It is part of the religious corpus of beliefs."⁴⁴

Summary

Maimouna and Nini, by Sadjì, and L'Harmattan and Xala by Sembène, are as different in scope as are the thoughts and styles of their respective authors. A notable similarity that does exist, however, lies in the area of the occult; a theme which both authors have intricately interwoven into their works. The parallel is further extended as both writers have included the realms of (a) magic, (b) sorcery and (c) divination. The female characters they have chosen for this purpose are involved in the world of the supernatural.

Sadjì paints the forces of "good magic" through the person of Mame Raki. Her skill and knowledge in the area of herbal medicine is readily accepted by the entire village. There are limitations to her power, however, as the author seems to suggest that it is unlikely, if not impossible, to be cured from the destructive forces prevalent in the cities of corruption. Such is the case with Maimouna, who must forever bear the mark of smallpox, and the emotional

scars of shame. Evil magic, or "sorcery," is spread by Yacine, the servant. The reader was foretold of Yacine's coming at the early stages of the book. Upon meeting her, Sadjí makes it apparent that this young woman's intent to do harm to Maimouna is deliberate. He contrasts the cunning and insincerity of the one, with the innocence and naiveté of the other. Whether for purposes of good or evil, Sadjí uses these women characters to illustrate the co-existence of the religion of Islam and the traditional African animistic beliefs.

In Nini, there is less emphasis upon magic and sorcery and more upon the element of divination. Although the actual work is performed by a male figure, the marabout, its effects are felt by the other women in the novel. Belief in the various powers of the marabout are more pronounced in Tante Hortense and Grand'mère Héléne than in Nini. Trusting the forces of the occult are a significant link between the mulâtresse and her African past. Allowing herself to partake in a spell devised to ensnare the Frenchman, Martineau, is not antithetical to the girl's nature. Only when success is not forthcoming does she sever her ties from the mystical world of her African ancestors.

Sadjí's short story, Tounka, is rich in African legends and folklore. The author uses this colorful background to illustrate the supranatural powers of several

key female characters (Goudi and Mame N'Dack), as well as the total involvement of the village women (in the dance of the ndeup). Both from the individual character and the group scenes, Sadjì highlights a malevolent nature in these characters, which is used to bring ultimate harm to their community.

In Sembène's work, we find similar uses of the world of the occult. In L'Harmattan, Mahn Kombéti demonstrates her skill in the area of herbal medicine. Her powers are curative, therefore she is a representative of "good magic." In la Badiène, one has a counterpart to Sadjì's Yacine. She, too, utilizes her cunning in "spider" fashion, in order to manipulate the life of her niece N'Goné, and to entice El Hadj into a lucrative plan for marriage. A major theme of Sembène's latest work, Xala deals specifically with the art of divination and the effect this has upon the individual and the total community. Here, too, this power is entrusted to a male figure, the marabout. However, the eventual mark of shame, (El Hadj's "xala") must be borne by the women characters as well.

This chapter illustrates a cosmic totality within the African philosophy, which unifies the living being and all aspects of the life around him. ". . . to subtract one item from the whole is to paralyse the structure of the whole."⁴⁵ Belief in the power of the supranatural, is clearly one of these elements. Both Sadjì and Sembène have

interwoven the arts of magic, witchcraft, sorcery, and divination into the pages of their novels. It is interesting to note that both have portrayed the African woman as a vehicle of much of this power.

- ¹J. Mbiti, African Religions and Philosophy (New York: Doubleday & Co., 1970), p. 257.
- ²Ibid.
- ³C. Lévi-Strauss, Structural Anthropology (New York: Basic Books Inc., 1963), p. 24.
- ⁴J. Jahn, Muntu: An Outline of the New African Culture (New York: Grove Press Inc., 1961), pp. 96-97.
- ⁵L. S. Senghor, Liberté I: Négritude et Humanisme (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1964), p. 71.
- ⁶P. Erny, Les Premiers Pas dans la vie de l'enfant d'Afrique Noire (Paris: L'Ecole, 1972), p. 100.
- ⁷Mbiti, op. cit., p. 257.
- ⁸Ibid., p. 257.
- ⁹A. Sadjí, Maimouna (Paris: Présence Africaine, 1958), p. 57.
- ¹⁰Mbiti, op. cit., pp. 257-258.
- ¹¹Sadjí, op. cit., p. 233.
- ¹²Ibid., p. 236-237.
- ¹³Ibid., p. 128.
- ¹⁴Ibid., p. 129.
- ¹⁵Ibid., pp. 131-132.
- ¹⁶Jahn, op. cit., p. 124.
- ¹⁷Ibid., p. 130.
- ¹⁸Sadjí, op. cit., p. 150.
- ¹⁹A. Sadjí, Nini: Mulâtresse de Sénégal (Paris: Présence Africaine, 1947), p. 358.
- ²⁰Ibid., p. 349.
- ²¹Ibid., p. 352.
- ²²Ibid., p. 344.

- 23Ibid., p. 347.
- 24Ibid., p. 351.
- 25Ibid., p. 365.
- 26Ibid., p. 389.
- 27A. Sadjı, Tounka (Paris: Présence Africaine, 1946), p. 50.
- 28R. Bureau, "Sorcellerie et prophétisme en Afrique Noire," Etudes, 6 (1967), p. 473.
- 29Sadjı, op. cit., p. 56.
- 30Ibid., p. 46.
- 31Ibid., pp. 85-86.
- 32Ibid., p. 88.
- 33O. Sembène, L'Harmattan (Paris: Présence Africaine, 1964), p. 36.
- 34Ibid., p. 37.
- 35Ibid.
- 36Ibid., p. 36.
- 37Ibid., p. 163.
- 38O. Sembène, Xala (Paris: Présence Africaine, 1973), p. 54.
- 39Ibid., p. 19.
- 40Ibid.
- 41A. N'Goma, "L'Islam Noir," Présence Africaine, 8 (1959), p. 333.
- 42T. Fougeyrollas, Dakar en Devenir (Paris: Présence Africaine, 1968), p. 203.
- 43Sembène, Xala, p. 66.
- 44Mbiti, African Religions, p. 264.
- 45Jahn, op. cit., pp. 96-97.

PART TWO

IMPACT OF WESTERNIZATION UPON THE AFRICAN
WOMAN IN THE NOVELS OF
SADJI AND SEMBENE

CHAPTER IV

AFRICAN REFLECTION IN A WESTERN

MIRROR

In Part One of this study, particular attention was given to the study of the group and its interworkings. Although certain characters were highlighted, the African woman was observed through her comprehensive role as "mother," "young girl," "wife," and "woman of mystical powers." This network of collectivity was emphasized to demonstrate one of the striking features of African literature: the incorporation of the individual into the body of the group. "Dans le roman ou la poésie négro-africaine, l'individu s'intègre au peuple et à la société dont il émane. Même quand il dit "Je," il entend "Nous," il représente son peuple."¹ African literature of French expression rarely lends itself to the contemplation of the human condition, or to reflections upon man or nature. L. Kesteloot comments: "On est frappé du peu de place qu'occupent les thèmes individuels de l'amour, de la mort, de la nature, de Dieu . . . nous n'avons, par exemple, jamais rencontré le classique roman d'amour--à deux ou à trois personnages--qui a eu tant de faveur en France depuis Madame de Lafayette. . . . Peu de méditation sur la mort ou la

nature!"²

There is by no means absence of "le Moi" in African literature of French expression. The concept of individuality, as introduced to the African continent through Westernization, has been grafted onto the African personality. Much like the heart transplant, this new philosophy has not been totally rejected, yet often finds difficulty adjusting itself to the traditional African communal scheme of things. It has brought about the development of a character in literature, referred to by S. Anonzié as "le personnage problématique." The goals of this character are precise: ". . . redéfinir la place de l'individu africain dans une société changeante, et qui se modernise."³

One must consider the rapid speed with which the transformation of Africa was and is taking place. This metamorphosis from the simple to the complex is reflected in the literature, as the authors paint their characters in a world of conflict. The character struggles with social, political, literary, philosophical or sentimental problems. M. Battestini, in her work, L'Angoisse Chez les romanciers africains, equates this world of conflict to a climate of "angoisse," "sociale ou individuelle selon la tonalité affective des auteurs."⁴ She states:

Dans cet univers en pleine mutation, a grandi une inquiétude: celle de n'être plus soi. L'Occident avait bousculé la vieille Afrique, et

l'Africain avait cherché dans la Négritude un refuge, puis un triomphe, enfin un regain d'anxiété. Ce déracinement, dû aux intrusions des valeurs étrangères, tous les écrivains l'ont ressenti. D'où la naissance de cette génération nouvelle des "Etres doubles" . . .⁵

The characters may resolve their "situation d'angoisse" through any of several alternatives: renunciation, alienation, escape, or possibly death. The most striking feature of this "angoisse" in the African novel is the fear of self-obliteration. In the words of Battestini:

". . . la peur de son "auto-destruction" par l'un des éléments de sa dualité."⁶

In the works of Sadji, (Nini), and Sembène (Bouts, Xala, Voltaïque) we observe African women who clearly reflect the concepts of "des êtres doubles," "angoissées." Each resolves the situation of her possible "auto-destruction" in a different manner. Although each of the female characters to be studied projects a different reflection of herself in the Western mirror, they are nevertheless linked by a common point: the distortion of their essential "Africanité."

Although Nini, N'Dèye Touti, and Diouana were created during the period of colonialism in Senegal, and Oumi, during independence, each one is a product of the colonial situation, and reflects the various psychological ramifications of the system. This system of economic, political, and cultural control of one country by another, thrives

upon stagnation. This single feature is of primary importance to the maintenance of the status quo, for there can be no growth where the oppression of one people is required for the profit of the other. Frantz Fanon, in his work, Towards the African Revolution, describes what takes place during this cultural breakdown: "This culture, once living and open to the future, becomes closed, fixed in the colonial status, caught in the yoke of oppression. Both present and mummified, it testifies against its members. The cultural mummification leads to a mummification of individual thinking. The apathy so universally noted among colonial peoples is but the logical consequence of this operation."⁷

Although Albert Memmi's work The Colonizer and the Colonized, speaks specifically of the situation in Algeria, and Tunisia, one may draw certain parallels with the rest of the African continent. He states that "the engine of colonialism turns in a circle."⁸ The very existence of the system is dependent upon the proper functioning of each member in a specified and unquestionable way in order to insure the desired results. For the colonizer, it is a world of "profit, privilege, and usurpation,"⁹ while for the colonized, it is one of "misery, chronic hunger, ignorance, or in general, subhumanity."¹⁰ Memmi points out the irony of the colonial situation. First, the colonizer seeks to punish the colonized for being what he has created

him to be. In the interest of self-preservation, he must seek, at any cost, to differentiate himself from the colonized, whom he sees as lazy, weak, dependent, inherently wicked, backward, evil, thievish, and unreliable. Secondly, the colonized gradually comes to see himself in the same negative light. He has assumed the view of "the Other," in the Sartrean sense. Those colonized individuals of Africa, as reflected in the literature, are faced with several alternatives: (1) to reject the values of the oppressor and to remain true to traditional Africa at all costs; (2) to succumb to the value judgment of the colonialists, thus remaining the "inferior" individual he is taught to be; (3) to envision no escape save that of assimilation into the world of the colonizer, thereby obliterating all traces of the African self. It is this last alternative that has rendered Sadji's Nini, Mulâtresse de Sénégal, a seminal work. Fanon explains this choice: "Having judged, condemned, abandoned his cultural forms, his language, his food habits, his sexual behavior, his way of sitting down, or resting, of laughing, of enjoying himself, the oppressed flings himself upon the oppressed culture with the desperation of a drowning man."¹¹ The irony of the situation is a bitter one, for "as soon as the colonized adopts those values, he similarly adopts his own condemnation."¹²

Of the women characters to be studied in this chapter,

all are from Dakar, Senegal, except Nini, who is native to the small island in Senegal, Saint Louis. More than a mere geographical location for the setting of Sadjî's story, there is a particular history of the island that is essential in the development of the character of the young "mulâtresse."

French contact in Senegal came in the early part of the seventeenth century, "when French commercial companies started trading at the mouth of the river Senegal, first entered by Europeans in 1445."¹³ In 1663, Richelieu founded the first charter company in Senegal--"La compagnie du cap vert." In 1659, Louis Caullier, having built a fort at that site, renamed the area in honor of Louis XIV; thus making Saint Louis the first French establishment on the African coast. With the additional trading companies being established, and the arrival of more and more Europeans to the area, Saint Louis grew and prospered considerably in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, until it became "the centre of French commercial activity on the West coast of Africa."¹⁴ By 1879, Saint Louis had a population of 16,000, as compared to the numbers of inhabitants of the other French-African territories. In addition to her size, the success of Saint Louis was also due to the location of French banking and commercial establishments, as well as government administrative buildings. This thriving city, that Robert July refers to as the success of

the Third Republic, was "self-confident and ebullient in her new growth, yet graceful and self-contained through her long years of maturity."¹⁵ This, however, is hardly the picture painted by novelist Pierre Loti, in Roman d'un Spahi. He offers a poetic description of a desolate and uninviting African island:

Et puis enfin apparaît au - dessus des sables une vieille cité blanche, plantée de rares palmiers jaunes; c'est Saint-Louis du Sénégal, la capitale de la Sénégambie.

Une église, une mosquée, une tour, des maisons à la mauresque. Tout cela semble dormir sous l'ardent soleil, comme ces villes portugaises qui fleurissaient jadis sur la côte du Congo, Saint-Paul et Saint-Philippe de Benguéla.

On s'approche, et on s'étonne de voir que cette ville n'est pas bâtie sur la plage, qu'elle n'a même pas de port, pas de communication avec l'extérieur; la côte, basse et toujours droite, est inhospitalière comme celle du Sahara, et une éternelle ligne de brisants en défend l'abord aux navires.

On l'aperçoit aussi ce que l'on n'avait pas vu de large; d'immenses fourmilières humaines sur le rivage, des milliers et des milliers de cases de chaume, des huttes lilliputiennes aux toits pointus, où grouille une bizarre population nègre.

Cet isolement de la mer est pour ce pays une grande cause de stagnation et de tristesse: Saint-Louis ne peut servir de point de relâche aux paquebots ni aux navires marchands qui descendent dans l'hémisphère. On y vient quand on est forcé d'y venir; mais jamais personne n'y passe, et il semble qu'on s'y sente prisonnier, et absolument séparé du reste du monde.¹⁶

It was precisely this "isolement" that led to Saint Louis' importance as a model of French assimilative policies in microcosm.

The close contact between European and Africans in commerce was inevitable in the early days of settlement in the city. As there were few, if any, French women among the first arrivals, it is also understandable that black-white relationships should flourish. Rita O'Brien, in her work, White Society in Black Africa, goes so far as to say, "in order to combat desertion from outposts, French companies recommended marriage with local women."¹⁷ The African woman was referred to as the "signare,"¹⁸ an adaptation from the Portuguese, *sinhora*. These marriages, although sanctioned by the government, were not legally binding. The early French settlers, however, did respect the social mores of the times and often gave their names to the offspring of such unions; in addition to some property, and education in France, if possible. It is from these unions that a considerable number of mulatto offspring grew to be the first class of Africans eager for assimilation to the mother country, France. This group of assimiles, or *evoules* were provided with benefits and privileges unknown to their darker brothers. The other Africans, called "habitants" or "captifs," were often treated with paternalism rather than equality.

The "métis," as they were often called, so readily adapted to the language, culture, and civilization of their fathers that they managed to rise in power in Saint Louis, and other areas of Senegal. Some were to become managers,

owners of trading firms, high functionaries, and even secured political footage. Quite naturally, the emergence of this "color" separation led to economic separation and resulted in the development of a bourgeois class. Although the creole power class lost much of its impact during the "loi cadre," its members often sought refuge behind the ivory tower of their "almost whiteness."

Sadji's Nini, Mulâtresse de Sénégal is a product of this society. The author gives the reader a clear explanation of what he intends to do in the novel:

Nini est l'éternel portrait moral de la Mulâtresse, qu'elle soit du Sénégal, des Antilles ou des deux Amériques. C'est le portrait de l'être physiquement et moralement hybride qui, dans l'inconscience de ses réactions les plus spontanées, cherche toujours à s'élever au-dessus de la condition qui lui est faite, c'est-à-dire au-dessus d'une humanité qu'il considère comme inférieure mais à laquelle un destin le lie inexorablement.

On peut plaindre cette catégorie d'êtres ou la blâmer. Je crois qu'il est plus charitable de ne la plaindre ni la blâmer, mais de lui offrir, comme dans un miroir, la réalité de ce qu'elle est.¹⁹

The author emphasizes the moral fiber of his character who is trapped in an endless search for self. Although Sadji has stated that he cared neither to pity nor to blame the young woman, one senses a condemnation, nevertheless. Armed with a strong sense of religion and righteousness, Sadji often exposes Nini's weaknesses with surgical precision. He succeeds in creating what M. Battestini refers

to as "un monstre psychologique" who apparently is condemned to this precarious psychological condition. She is a character whose individuality is couched in a larger pattern of human behavior, appearing only as a "type." In effect, she is the central character of a story that could have been written about "les Ninis, les Riris, les Loulous, les Nanas et les Nénettes . . ." ²⁰ common to the colonized world.

In order to analyze the behavior of Mlle Virginie de Maerle, Sadjì, who is fond of detailed descriptions, offers the reader a lengthy external portrait. We find Nini, twenty-two, unmarried, living with her two older relatives, Tante Hortense, and her Grand'mère Hélène. Their home is one reminiscent of the southern French style of architecture, common to Saint-Louis. Its dilapidated exterior and faded, cluttered interior are the only souvenirs of the de Maerle family, and of a glory that was decidedly past. Tante Hortense and Grand'mère Hélène, "signaras" in their time, lived in a faded world of memories that had no doubt helped in the formation of Nini's vision of superiority. Having failed at the illusory "chasse à l'homme blanc," they had resolved themselves to the comforting world of religion. Simone de Beauvoir finds the consequence a natural one: "Love has been assigned to woman as her supreme vocation, and when she directs it toward a man, she is seeking God in him: but if human love

is denied her by circumstances, if she is disappointed or overparticular, she may choose to adore divinity in the person "of God Himself."²¹ The last attempt by the de Maerle women to achieve "salvation" in the eyes of their stratified Creole community, rests in the hands of Nini.

Employed as a secretary "classe B," at the Department of Rivers, Nini has an opportunity to dissolve her "almost whiteness" into the other Europeans. The portrait Sadjì offers is one of controlled artificiality. It is as if Nini had studied a manual on whiteness and was spending her time in the application of the rules. The selection of adjectives suggests a mechanical attitude. Nini is presented as extremely "matinale," and prides herself on her sense of European timing. She is "ponctuelle," has a "démarche vite," accomplishes her work with "adresse," yet with "frénésie," speaks and moves quickly, plays a game of "tennis classique" is concerned with "questions de principe," and revels in the fact that her home life is "surveillée." These robot-like gestures do little to camouflage traces of her African past. "Rien ne permet de déceler en elle une mulâtresse si ce n'est l'excès de poudre de riz qui couvre sa figure ou ses lèvres un peu fortes et sensuelles. Sa démarche ne trahit pas cette mollesse des gestes et des mouvements qui se remarque chez toutes les négresses les moins noires."²²

In addition to movement and gestures, Sadjì devotes

particular attention to the use of language and to Nini's concern for perfection. Fanon, in Black Skins, White Masks, explains the effect of language on the colonized individual.

To speak a language is to take on a world, a culture. . . . Every colonized people, in other words, every people in whose soul an inferiority complex has been created by the death and burial of its local cultural originality--finds itself face to face with the language of the civilizing nation; that is, with the culture of the mother country. The colonized is elevated above his jungle status in proportion to his adoption of the mother country's cultural standards. He becomes whiter as he renounces his blackness, his jungle.²³

In her effort to distinguish herself from the other "habitants" who happen into the office, Nini creates a linguistic gap between herself and "les Noirs." She pretends not to be able to speak or to understand but the slightest words in the local language, Wolof.

Ecoute Mamadou, s'emporte Nini, parle-moi français, s'il te plaît, je ne cause pas ta langue.²⁴

The phenomenon is further explained by the author, who often interjects his comments throughout the novel.

Surtout n'allez pas leur demander si elles parlent ouolof (la langue de leurs aïeux nègres). Elles ne comprennent que le français--et peut être l'anglais--Elles parlent d'ailleurs le français avec une vivacité et une couleur que leur envieraient les Parisiennes les plus intoxiquées, Elles sont à l'afflût des tournures de langues frais émoulues de Paris.²⁵

In her attempts to widen the gap between herself and "les Nègres," Nini uses language effectively. Her comments in the presence of Martineau and other French associates is

always preceded by "nous." She refers to all Africans as "eux, ils," as if there were no racial ties. Often she forgets that she, too, belongs to the group "l'autre."

Ils sont insolents ces indigènes . . .²⁶

Qu'elles sont bêtes; aucune éducation.²⁷

. . . nous avons toujours nos esclaves de case qui s'estiment heureux d'être sous notre protection. Pourquoi voulez-vous absolument mettre par terre un système vieux comme le monde? Pensez-vous arriver à faire de ces gens-là des gens comme nous, capables de s'élever à notre niveau de civilisation . . .?²⁸

By Nini's constant use of the word "Nous," one comes to understand the irony of the colonial system as it has been played. In the eyes of Martineau and his compagnon Perrin, Nini is merely a version of the African, only in shades of "café au lait" dans lequel le café a été nettement absorbé."²⁹ Martineau makes no mistake about his feelings for the mulâtresse:

Hé! tu n'as pas à te plaindre mon vieux,
tu as l'avantage de tomber sur une fille presque
blanche.

Heu! Blanche . . . la blancheur importe peu
en l'occurrence; une négresse c'est une négresse,
on n'en saurait faire une blanche . . .³⁰

Sadji refers to his heroine as "victime, sans le savoir"³¹ humiliated by the very Europeans she imitates. Lost between the races, all of the Ninis are reduced to "créatures amusantes, fort divertissantes et n'appartenant en propre à aucun milieu . . ."³² Lost in a world of affectations and theatrics, Nini is unable to see to what extent she

appears ridiculous to those she is trying to impress. In reply to Perrin's sarcastic question concerning Nini's reading matter, she proudly displays her poor familiarity with French literature: ". . . j 'aime aussi les romantiques, j'en raffole. . . . Montesquieu m'a fait pleurer plus d'une fois. Quel lyrisme. Il me plaît surtout parce qu'il est le poète de l'amour."³³

Sadji stresses the element of contrast throughout the novel. We recall his positioning of Good and Evil in Maimouna. He has again recreated situations in which the goodness of the traditional African life is in opposition to the evils of colonization. Nini's shallowness of character seems to be in proportion to the generosity of the "Noirs" by whom she is surrounded. The house servants, the marabout who offers her help in the pursuit of her French prey, and even the distant admirer, N'Diaye, demonstrate a sense of generosity that is overwhelming, while Nini's concerns are petty. Making further use of the art of contrasts, Sadji stresses the precision of Nini's personality and the aura of illusion that permeates the entire story. Sadji frequently refers to the world of "les rêves," whether in the past of the old women, or in the future of the young ones. The author paints a dreamlike atmosphere through such terms as "ombre," "bulle de savon," "vertigineuse ascension," "fantôme." In addition to the juxtaposition of the colors white and black, the illusion of doubt is

also created through muted colors: ". . . les tons gris de toutes ces maisons de Saint-Louis qui s'effritent."³⁴ In effect, the distorted self image of Nini can be visualized in the author's description of the des Maerle home: "Les lumières, camouflées par un système de stores en nattes du pays, n'ont même pas la force de filtrer à travers les persiennes constamment fermées."³⁵ Nini's use of certain verbal constructions indicates her inability to deal with the Africaness within her. Much of the world and its events appear to her in the conditional tense of the verb devoir, showing her need to state what (should be) as opposed to what (exists).

Unable to see herself, Nini continues to bask in her whiteness and its privileges, as she carefully plots the seduction and capture of the Frenchman, Martineau. If she is successful, Martineau's love will assure her entry into a world of white acceptance; a refuge from blackness.

Fanon comments:

Something remarkable must have happened on the day when the white man declared his love to the mulatto. There was recognition, incorporation into a group that had seemed hermetic. The psychological minus-value, this feeling of insignificance and its corollary, the impossibility of reaching the light, totally vanished. From one day to the next, the mulatto went from the class of slaves to that of masters.

She had been recognized through her over-compensating behavior. She was no longer the woman who wanted to be white; she was white. She was joining the white world³⁶

Yet, despite the mechanical gestures, the practical language,

and face powdered in "poudre de riz," Nini is unable to escape her African heritage. As a member of the Muslim faith, Sadjì's own belief in fatalism offers Nini no control over those elements of her life that are inherently African: ". . . trois choses la rattachent malgré elle à ce sol d'Afrique qu'elle renie de toutes ses forces; d'abord son petit nez écrasé aux narines largement ouvertes; ensuite ses lèvres fortes et gourmandes; enfin cette démarche féline qu'elle tache de corriger dans un perpétuel raidissement."³⁷ Nini's sense of self control can do little to hide her depth of passions. The lack of "pudeur de jeune fille," an extensive list of previous lovers, her need to revive erotic memories are but some of the examples. Sadjì portrays the pitiful condition of the African woman left abandoned by the European lover. There is no outlet left for her frustrations or desperation, as she is condemned to a life of immobility within a stagnated society. Nini differs little from her older relatives in that each professes ". . . un immense besoin d'aimer et d'être aimées."³⁸

Nini's belief in the forces of magic serve as an indication of the strength of traditional Africa. Although she outwardly rebukes the use of fetishes and "gris-gris," one senses her hope that the marabout whom her grandmother has consulted might have some positive effect in her entrapment of Martineau. "Malgré elle, elle songe au

pouvoir, à la force coercitive des deux eaux bénites offertes par le Manding . . ."39 Despite the disdain with which she treats all Africans who come into contact with her, she obediently takes the "eau-bénite" as prescribed by the marabout. It is only when the effects are negative that she once again declares the backwardness of traditional animistic beliefs.

Elle s'en va donc pensive, sous l'ardent soleil de midi, obsédée par cet événement malécontreux que le Manding, grand héritier des pouvoirs occultes, n'a pas découvert dans le compte rendu des 'Ravanes'.

Nini tient maintenant le secret d'une revanche certaine contre sa grand-mère et sa tante qui croient encore à la légende des marabouts noirs. Elle n'a jamais voulu croire à ces superstitions . . .⁴⁰

Nini appears undaunted by embarrassment or ridicule from Europeans. She continues in her pursuit of happiness, even at the cost of self-esteem. She indeed cast all of her lots for what Fanon calls "whiteness at any price."⁴¹ As her only salvation is through association, it is she who proposes to Martineau. Sadji highlights the girl's sense of desperation:

C'est sûr, mon chéri que tu m'épouseras devant tout Saint-Louis? J'ai beaucoup de rivales, tu sais, et si tu partais m'abandonnant, après nos longues relations que tout le monde sait, je serais condamnée à mourir de chagrin ou à quitter ce pays.⁴²

We are reminded of a similar instance in a novel by Mayotte Capécia, Je Suis Martiniquaise. Mayotte, a mulâtresse, who shares with Nini her desire to meld into the white world,

describes a supreme moment of happiness with her French officer: "Alors commença pour moi une vie merveilleuse. Je vivais avec un blanc, un officier, qui me traitait comme sa femme . . . J'aurais voulu vivre toujours ainsi."⁴³

A. C. Brench, in The Novelist's Inheritance in French Africa, refers to Nini as a mere puppet of a character, one who is void of any real personality. By accentuating several of the character's weaknesses, it is evident that Sadji condemns the woman he is describing. However, we feel that he lays even greater blame upon the colonial system for having created these souls "à hérédité double."⁴⁴ Confronted with Martineau's departure to France, Nini contemplates her essence for the first time in the novel. She is in search of an answer:

Pourquoi faut-il qu'elle soit éternellement celle qui convoite, qu'elle demande, supplie? Est-elle donc une mendiante d'amour?⁴⁵

Sadji introduces clarity into Nini's otherwise vague existence.

Le mensonge de son existence et de celle de toutes les mulâtresses, ses consœurs, lui apparaît clairement grossi par la déception que vient de lui infliger le départ brusque de l'amant. Mais il est trop tard pour refaire sa vie; impossible de devenir autre. Le destin les a toutes condamnées à cette vie sentimentale de bohème qui tantôt s'illumine d'une certitude ou d'un espoir tantôt se trouve empoisonné par leur condition d'hybrides n'appartenant à aucune société normale.⁴⁶

Nini is forced to succumb to her destiny or to act against it, in the words of Achiriga (La révolte des

romanciers noirs) "tant bien que mal."⁴⁷ He supports the fact that she was in effect not wholly a person of weak character. "La misère morale d'une telle vie s'explique plus par la contrainte sociale que par un manque de caractère."⁴⁸ The reader is not shocked by Nini's depression as she discovers Martineau's coming marriage to an authentic white woman, rather that she has mustered her strength and planned to leave Saint Louis. Nini's behavior suggests the possible future seduction of other "hommes blancs." Her lack of sensitivity is evident, yet Sadjì has offered no alternatives. As Nini boards the plane for Paris, only the optimist harbors a vague hope that one day she may return with a better grasp on her values. The realist knows that Nini's search for whiteness will be without end.

Sembène has also painted several women characters whose reflection in the mirror of Westernization is as distorted as that of Nini. None share with her the double heredity of French and African parentage. The sense of "angoisse" that is created is not based upon skin differentiations, but upon a mental and emotional assimilation into European society. One of the earlier and most classic examples of this phenomenon is found in Les Bouts de Bois de Dieu, in the person of N'Dèye Touti.

In the N'Diayène compound the women are united in their attempts to procure food for their families and striking husbands. N'Dèye lives among them, but not of them, for

she has created a schism (through her imagination) that protects her from what she views as a lower life. In the thoughts of Memmi, all colonized people are faced with two choices; petrification or assimilation. Both Sadji and Sembène introduce their women characters after these choices have already been made. Neither Nini nor N'Dèye are confronted during their decision making period.

The sense of duality that troubles N'Deye, is treated differently by Sembène. As a strikingly beautiful black woman, her goal is not to "whiten" herself or the race, but to "whiten" her standard of living. The torment she feels, however, is as profound as that of her "consoeur" Nini. The first step in the process of assimilation is to feel shame for one's own heritage. Nini had successfully removed herself from any close contact with her African roots, whereas N'Dèye is decidedly aware of her African heritage. Her sense of ambivalence and disgust is even more pronounced:

Machinalement, ses pas la portèrent vers le quartier incendié. Elle marchait dans une poussière noire encombrée de débris informes, d'objets calcinés. N'Dèye Touti avait grandi ici-même, elle avait joué dans ces cavernes sombres, dans ces ruelles étranglées, ces courettes empestées. Ces souvenirs étaient vifs comme une blessure. Elle en était presque à bénir l'incendie qui venaient de détruire ces témoins de son enfance et de sa honte.⁴⁹

Fanon, in Les damnés de la terre, has made an interesting portrait of the living quarters of colonial peoples in general, clearly showing the division of the two.

Le monde colonisé est un monde coupé en deux.
 . . . La ville du colonisé . . . est un lieu malfamé,
 peuplé d'hommes malfamés. On y naît n'importe où,
 n'importe comment. On y meurt n'importe où, de
 n'importe quoi. C'est un monde sans intervalles,
 les hommes y sont les uns sur les autres, les cases
 les unes sur les autres. La ville du colonisé est
 une ville affamé, affamée de pain, de viande,
 de chaussures, de charbon, de lumière. La ville
 du colonisé est une ville accroupie, une ville à
 genoux, une ville vautrée. C'est une ville de
 nègres . . .⁵⁰

Sembène has created a setting for his character that is
 strikingly similar.

Et voici que ce qu'elle voyait autour d'elle
 était tout autre. Au milieu des décombres des
 femmes et des hommes s'affairaient. De-ci de-là
 des piquets se dressaient, des caisses, des
 bidons vides s'entassaient; au milieu de nuages
 de poussière noire, ces hommes et ces femmes
 balayaient, creusaient, dégageait une marmite,
 ou la carcasse d'un lit, tandis qu'autour d'eux
 couraient des enfants nus dont la peau avait
 la couleur de la cendre.⁵¹

Other than performing mechanical duties around the
 compound, she is unconcerned about the strike and its
 issues. When asked her views on the matter, a lack of
 concern is evident. She is more impressed with those
 aspects of the romantic side of life, that she has learned
 in school.

. . . Tu dois avoir une idée sur la grève, toi
 qui vas à l'école?
 . . . Tu sais bien que non, tante, c'est trop
 dur pour moi.
 . . . Qu'est-ce qu'on vous apprend à l'école,
 alors?
 . . . Tout, tout de la vie . . .
 . . . Eh bien, la grève, ça ne fait pas partie
 de la vie?⁵²

Certainly those around her have scoffed at N'Dèye's attempts

toward Europeanization. The making and wearing of a brassiere offer a prime example of such ridicule.

. . . Hé, venez voir! Il y a une vache pleine qui se promène tout habillée dans la maison sur deux pattes!⁵³

The girl's life is lived as if she were "enfermée dans un enclos,"⁵⁴ disgusted by her own, yet not permitted entry into a world she longs to possess. Permitting the reader entry into the private thoughts of N'Dèye, Sembène shows the marked effects of assimilation. N'Dèye's world is based upon "chalets faits de neige,"⁵⁵ "plages où se bronzait des gens célèbres,"⁵⁶ "des villes aux nuits éclaboussées de néon,"⁵⁷ "maisons peintes de couleurs claires,"⁵⁸ "jardins pleins de fleurs,"⁵⁹ and "enfants vêtus à l'européenne jouant dans des cours propres."⁶⁰

N'Dèye therefore envisions a life for herself in which she can find escape from what she refers to as "ce cimetière vivant."⁶¹ Sembène has not created an insensitive character so much as he has produced a woman who longs desperately for acceptance in another culture. Fanon explains this longing:

La ville du colon est une ville en dur, toute de pierre et de fer. C'est une ville illuminée, asphaltée, où les poubelles regorgent toujours de restes inconnus, jamais vus . . . les rues de leur ville sont nettes, lisses, sans trous, sans cailloux. La ville du colon est une ville repue, paresseuse, son ventre est plein de bonnes choses à l'état permanent. La ville du colon est une ville de Blancs . . .⁶²

The fact that N'Dèye wishes to avoid the issues of the strike

and seek refuge in "le quartier européen, là où il y a des villas entourées de jardins et non des cahutes de bois et de zinc enfermées dans leurs palissades ou leurs haies de bambous,"⁶³ does not make of her a shallow individual. According to Fanon, she is paying one of the prices of assimilation. "Le regard que le colonisé jette sur la ville du colon est un regard de luxure, un regard d'envie. Rêves de possession. Tous les modes de possession: s'asseoir à la table du colon, coucher dans le lit du colon, avec sa femme si possible. Le colonisé est un envieux."⁶⁴

Nini and N'Dèye share other points in common in their search towards assimilation. Both ignore the opinions of the European in this regard. Both must be shocked into the reality of their inescapable plights. Nini, accepting all forms of ridicule on the part of "les hommes blancs," has adapted the facility to soon forget the hurt and to proceed to newer prey. N'Dèye, created by Sembène expressly to reveal to Africans portraits of themselves, suffers more humiliation than Nini. Having long felt close to the European through association, she is devastated upon overhearing two gendarmes discuss her crudely.

---Ce sont des sauvages, dit le capitaine . . .
 ---Vous avez vu ces yeux? demanda le commissaire.
 Et cette poitrine? Une vraie petite vache normande,
 juste comme je les aime!
 ---Bah! faites-la repérer par un de vos gardes et
 envoyez-lui deux kilos de riz. En ce moment, elles
 couchent pour moins que ça!⁶⁵

The incident is one that is pivotal in causing N'Dèye to begin to realize who she is. In so doing, Sembène prepares her for the path of self-realization she will undertake. She will begin to seek nourishment from the very roots she has denied.

In many respects, Oumi N'Doye, the second wife of El Hadji, in Xala, has achieved the material success so longed for by N'Dèye. She benefits from her husband's high standing in the community, as the wife of a very prominent business man. She and her family are able to live in a quartier that is similar to the European one of the colonized days. She, as well as the first wife, Awa, has her own "villa"; her children are sent to private school in a chauffeured car; and there is even talk of buying a new Fiat for her daughter, Mariem. Unlike N'Dèye, however, Oumi's world leaves no room for the European ideas which so fascinated the former. Oumi's is a world of acquisition and of prestige.

Through her portrait, the author reveals the transition of Senegal from the days of colonialism to those of independence. As the story is set in the 1970's, one is able to see the long range effects of the process of Westernization. Oumi speaks casually of such things as her "perruque noire," "Evian" water for her husband, and "Afro-American soul music." She prides herself on her knowledge of the latest European styles. N'Dèye had been

relatively familiar with many French authors, while Oumi's intellectual pursuits are vastly limited. "Sa lecture quotidienne était les romans-photos. Elle les dévorait, y croyait et rêvait de ces amours palpitantes qu'elle aurait souhaité vivre."⁶⁶ Her life has become so Westernized that to distinguish it from that of the European is difficult. In his effort to demonstrate the loss of African pride that is easily eroding the neo-colonialist society, Sembène has Oumi conduct most of her conversations in French, even in intimacy with her husband. Memmi speaks of the colonized individual as being able to participate in two worlds through the use of the two languages he possesses: the colonized tongue is functional, while the native one is emotional. In the case of the Oumi's of the new Senegal, French had taken on a connotation of prestige. The references to this linguistic preference are interwoven throughout the story. She only listened to "la chaîne internationale dont les émissions sont exclusivement en langue française";⁶⁷ she refers to her husband in the third person as "Monsieur"; her culinary art is not of African origin but "glané dans un journal de mode français."⁶⁸

Without sacrificing anything of Oumi's individuality in the novel, one may also look upon her as a portrait of the African elite of the Independent era. Many of their dealings are among themselves, yet decidedly reflect

European ideas. Standards of living have been drafted along the lines of imitation rather than innovation. Oumi focuses upon these standards, as she makes her entrance into the theatre with her husband.

Oumi N'Doye, en grande tenue, était prête pour le cinéma. Elle était joyeuse, amusante, les propos légers. Ils se rendirent dans une salle d'exclusivités dont la clientèle se composait d'une majorité d'Européens. Reconnaisait-elle des gens--des Africains--que Oumi N'Doye conversait avec aux.

Après le cinéma, Oumi N'Doye voulut danser. Il y avait longtemps qu'ils n'avaient. Ils allèrent dans leur "boite," du . . . El Hadji y avait "sa bouteille" de whisky . . . les couples semblaient des ombres mouvantes, s'agitant au rythme "soul" afro-américain.⁶⁹

Oumi cannot be considered a tortured soul in a state of anguish, for she is unaware of the influences that have been impressed upon her. She does not choose the path of new adventure, as did Nini, nor that of personal growth, as in the case of N'Dèye Touti. Oumi, in effect, is a shallow individual whose entire life has been devised around superficial artifices. It is not surprising that when the "xala" [Wolof, for impotency] befalls El Hadji, she too is caught in its path. In many respects, Oumi and El Hadji are a significant part of the "impotency" of the newly independent Africa.

Sembène's story of "La Noire de" in Voltaïque, characterizes the most unique of African reflections in a Western mirror. Rather than become absorbed into European culture, Diouanna wishes merely to taste of its novelties

and to return to Africa. She is employed as blanchisseuse for a French family in one of the finer sections of Dakar. As her duties are shared with three other domestics, the working conditions are favorable. The lady of the house, Madame, has little difficulty in developing Diouana's interest in France. This is seasoned with occasional leftovers from the family table and some used clothing. Diounna could think of the French family in no other terms save that of ". . . des Grands Blancs." The author explains that Diouanna is a part of a plan to defray the expense of hiring a French maid, upon the family's return to Antibes.

Pendant les trois ans que Diouana travailla chez elle, Madame lui fit miroiter la promesse de la France. . . . Pour 300 francs CFA par mois, n'importe quelle jeune Africaine la suivrait au bout de la terre.⁷⁰

Success is assured, for Diouanna could dream of no other world but that of the metropole.

Diouanna voulait voir la France et revenir de ce pays dont tout le monde chante la beauté, la richesse, la douceur de vivre. On y faisait fortune. Déjà, sans avoir quitté la terre d'Afrique, elle se voyait sur le quai, à son retour de France, riche à millions, avec des vêtements pour tout le monde. Elle rêvait à la liberté d'aller où elle le désirait, sans avoir à travailler comme une bête de somme.⁷¹

Her excitement can readily be compared to that of Nini and N'Dèye. There is less tendency toward reverie, however, than toward pure anticipation. Contrary to the former, Diouanna's "angoisse" is not caused by the longing

for a romantic world, but by the very weight of reality awaiting her in Europe. Once the ocean is crossed, and the initial excitement subsides, Diouana's view of France slowly begins to change.

Elle se demandait où était la France? Les belles villes qu'elle avait vues sur les écrans dans les salles de cinéma de Dakar; les denrées rares, les foules compactes? Le peuple de France se réduisait à ces marmots malveillants, à Monsieur, Madame et Mademoiselle qui lui étaient devenus étrangers. La territoire du pays se limitait à la surface de la villa.⁷²

Emanating from a culture of communal living, Diouanna finds it difficult to adjust to a world of isolation. Sembene dramatically depicts the change in the personality of the girl by revealing the thrusts of racism she must endure. There is persecution from the children who refer to her as "la sauvage,"⁷³ "la Nègres-se."⁷⁴ She is taken from place to place as if on exhibit. Her household duties increase until she becomes "bonne à tout faire." As N'Dèye had overheard opinions of the white officers in her regard, Diouana is prey to the constant observation of her "French family."

C'était la centième fois qu'on la trimbalait de villa en villa. Une fois chez les uns, une fois chez les autres . . . Il y avait à dîner, des gens extravagants qui la talonnaient, la poursuivaient pendant qu'elle cuisinait. Leur présence était une ombre obsédante attachée à ses moindres mouvements.⁷⁵

Soon this "ombre obsédante" takes a nearly human form. The process of depersonalization reaches its apex as Diouanna withdraws slowly into herself. Her color becomes

something exterior to herself, and she regards it with the same objective aversion as the white family.

Lentement, elle se noyait. Les larges horizons de naguère se limitaient à la couleur de sa peau qui soudain lui inspirait une terreur invincible. Sa peau. Sa noirceur. Craintivement, elle fuyait en elle-même.⁷⁶

Césaire, in Discourse on Colonialisme, refers to colonization as a process of "thingification."⁷⁷ As Diouanna realizes that she is merely an "objet utilitaire . . . que l'on l'exhibait comme un trophée,"⁷⁸ her sense of isolation is heightened. She is no longer referred to by her rightful name, (always mispronounced), but as ". . . la Noire de . . ."⁷⁹ She is no longer black for herself.

In painting Diouanna's portrait, Sembène has attempted to show the "fossé infranchissable"⁸⁰ separating the girl from her employers; the black from the white. Toward the end of the story, there is little, if any, conversation among employer and employee, showing the impenetrability of each world. In light of this, there can be neither growth nor escape from the situation in which Diouanna finds herself. Her alternative is simple! Sembène is a writer whose portraits rely little upon mere words. As an artful creator of films, the ending of the story can be visualized as a final scene: a bitter one. When questioned by the inspector, Madame states:

J'ignore pourquoi elle s'est suicidée. Elle était bien traitée, ici, mangeait la même nourriture, partageait la chambre de mes enfants.⁸¹

Few may ignore the impact of colonization upon the African continent. Among the many that have been intricately trapped in the web of this massive system, we find the African woman. Finding herself in the path of cultural change, she is called upon to gaze at her reflection in the mirror of Westernization. Each of the women characters presented was confronted by a moment of realization, in which her true identity was in question. The alternatives for solution were several: Nini--escape in the "Other"; N'Dèye--personal growth; Oumi--shattering of an already shallow individual; Diouanna--death by her own hand. Although each author has approached the creation of the female characters with his particular mark of individuality, both Sadjì and Sembène have revealed a regrettable diminution of respect for traditional Africa, and the appearance of a sense of duality in the African personality. The image of the African woman in the Western looking glass truly reflects distortion.

Summary

The external factors of Westernization, colonization, religious syncretism, and political upheaval, have contributed to the appearance of a new theme in the novel of Africa. Due to the shifts which have taken place in the very heart of African society, one finds that the hero or heroine is constantly seeking to readjust to these new

innovations and to redefine his "être-dans - le-monde."
Both Sadjì and Sembène focus attention upon this new literary search and its effects upon the female character.

The sense of ambivalence is clearly present in Sadjì's Nini, who typifies the mulatresse in search of self. Her very essence depends entirely upon the white French blood which flows through her veins. It is obvious that she must therefore reject all ties which link her to an African past. The inner torment of this character is much like that of her literary "kinsman," Sembène's N'Dèye Touti. Both women are situated at a fork in the road of their respective lives; a fork which demands that each make a choice as to the direction she will take. Sembène's character is neither propelled nor fascinated by the aura of "whiteness," as is Nini. Instead, her rejection of her African heritage is in favor of European values. Nini encounters no external factors which might cause her to return to her origins, so she opts for escape into a world of fantasy. The roots of the African soil appear more established, however, in Sembène's character, N'Dèye, for she does not stray too far or for too long a time. The introduction of the militant Bakayoko into her life, and the penetrating reality of the railroad strike, whose effects weaken and devastate her people, shock the girl back onto a path of self-actualization.

Oumi, of Xala, is one of the few characters who is not

called upon to act or to make a decision. Her situation is neither one of "angoisse" nor torment. Although the character does not reflect the fuller sense of development of the other women in the literary world of Sembène, she is important in the creation of an atmosphere of waste and deterioration that has infected some segments of the African society. Oumi appears as an African body and soul which lacks the "nommo" or life force necessary for its function.

But for the last pages of Sembène's story La Noire de . . ., Diouanna appears to be a passive character who is acted upon. She seems to absorb the humiliation of her situation as an exploited servant, far from home and her people. Her inner torment is precisely due to her initial desire to participate and to penetrate the idealized France of her imagination. The isolation and alienation of this character are perhaps the most poignant of all the female characters discussed in this chapter. Her decision is clearly the most dramatic of all three: death by suicide.

As the emphasis has shifted from the group to the individual, one is better able to see the effects of these changes as they are reflected in the woman. The general tone is one of sobriety and sadness. Throughout the distorted view of the characters, both Sadjì and Sembène nevertheless, have made a significant contribution to the overall development of the female character in African literature.

¹L. Kesteloot, Les écrivains noirs de langue française: naissance d'une littérature (Bruxelles: Université Libre de Bruxelles, 1965), p. 307.

²Ibid., p. 307.

³S. Anonzié, Sociologie du Roman Africain: Réalisme, Structure et Détermination dans le roman moderne ouest-africain (Paris: Tiers-Monde et Développement, 1970), p. 27.

⁴M. Battestini, L'Angoisse chez les Romanciers Africains (Dakar: Actes du Colloque, 1963), p. 162.

⁵Ibid., p. 161.

⁶Ibid.

⁷F. Fanon, Towards the African Revolution (New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1964), p. 34.

⁸A. Memmi, The Colonizer and the Colonized (Boston: Beacon Press, 1965), p. xxvii.

⁹Ibid., p. 9.

¹⁰Ibid., p. xxv.

¹¹F. Fanon, op. cit., p. 39.

¹²Memmi, op. cit., p. 121.

¹³M. Crowder, Senegal: A Study in French Assimilative Policy (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), p. 7.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 7.

¹⁵R. July, The Origins of Modern African Thought (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1967), p. 235.

¹⁶p. Loti, Pages Choiesies (Paris: Calmann-Lévy Editeurs, n.d.), p. 138.

¹⁷R. O'Brien, White Society in Black Africa: The French of Senegal (Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1972), p. 31.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 33.

¹⁹A. Sadjí, Nini (Paris: Présence Africaine, 1947), p. 1.

- ²⁰Ibid., p. 315.
- ²¹S. de Beauvoir, The Second Sex (New York: Bantam Books, 1952), p. 630.
- ²²Sadjı, op. cit., p. 293.
- ²³F. Fanon, Black Skins, White Masks (New York: Grove Press, 1967), p. 38.
- ²⁴Sadjı, op. cit., p. 295.
- ²⁵Ibid., p. 310.
- ²⁶Ibid., p. 295.
- ²⁷Ibid., p. 296.
- ²⁸Ibid., pp. 359-360.
- ²⁹Ibid., p. 308.
- ³⁰Ibid., p. 303.
- ³¹Ibid., p. 310.
- ³²Ibid.
- ³³Ibid., pp. 305-306.
- ³⁴Ibid., p. 300.
- ³⁵Ibid.
- ³⁶Fanon, Black Skins, p. 58.
- ³⁷Sadjı, op. cit., p. 308.
- ³⁸Ibid., p. 292.
- ³⁹Ibid., p. 354.
- ⁴⁰Ibid., p. 371.
- ⁴¹Fanon, Black Skins, p. 49.
- ⁴²Sadjı, op. cit., p. 367.
- ⁴³M. Capécia, Je Suis Martiniquaise (Paris: Editions Correâ, 1948), p. 144.

- ⁴⁴Sadji, op. cit., p. 243.
- ⁴⁵Ibid., p. 377.
- ⁴⁶Ibid.
- ⁴⁷J. Achiriga, La Révolte des Romanciers Noirs de Langue Française (Ottawa: Editions Naaman, 1973), p. 29.
- ⁴⁸Ibid., p. 30.
- ⁴⁹O. Sembène, Les Bouts de Bois de Dieu (Paris: Presses Pocket, 1960), p. 184.
- ⁵⁰F. Fanon, Les Damnés de la Terre (Paris: Maspéro, 1968), p. 8.
- ⁵¹Sembène, op. cit., p. 184.
- ⁵²Ibid., p. 87.
- ⁵³Ibid., pp. 100-101.
- ⁵⁴Ibid., p. 102.
- ⁵⁵Ibid., p. 100.
- ⁵⁶Ibid.
- ⁵⁷Ibid.
- ⁵⁸Ibid., p. 184.
- ⁵⁹Ibid.
- ⁶⁰Ibid.
- ⁶¹Ibid.
- ⁶²Fanon, Les Damnés, p. 8.
- ⁶³Sembène, op. cit., p. 185.
- ⁶⁴Fanon, Les Damnés, p. 8.
- ⁶⁵Sembène, op. cit., pp. 186-187.
- ⁶⁶O. Sembène, Xala (Paris: Présence Africaine, 1973), p. 58.
- ⁶⁷Ibid., p. 61.

⁶⁸Ibid., p. 86.

⁶⁹Ibid., p. 102.

⁷⁰O. Sembène, Voltaïque (Paris: Présence Africaine, 1962), p. 166.

⁷¹Ibid., p. 165.

⁷²Ibid., p. 177.

⁷³Ibid., p. 176.

⁷⁴Ibid.

⁷⁵Ibid., p. 178.

⁷⁶Ibid., p. 180.

⁷⁷A. Césaire, Discourse on Colonialism (London: Monthly Review Press, 1972), p. 21.

⁷⁸Sembène, op. cit., p. 180.

⁷⁹Ibid., p. 180.

⁸⁰Ibid., p. 167.

⁸¹Ibid., p. 161.

CHAPTER V

IN-DEPTH PORTRAIT OF THE WOMAN: LOOSENING SOCIETAL TIES

The introduction of Westernization into African society has caused the African woman to have to redefine her position within herself and within the society. Although Westernization has exposed the woman to newer dimensions, it has also introduced conflicts. We have observed in Chapter IV that much conflict revolved around the distorted self-image seen in the mirror. The conflict has now evolved to the level of the woman and her immediate society. She must resolve the differences between her newly-formed self and the traditional society within which she lives.

The African woman, as portrayed in the novels of Sadjì and Sembène, offers examples of a vital conflict with traditionality. Both of the authors have shown the strain of Westernization as it comes into contact with the traditional mores of Africa. Both have illustrated the anxiety created as the women characters struggled with sexual freedom, romantic conceptions of love, views on marriage, and in some cases, the severing of family ties. We have selected Nini (Nini), Penda and N'Dèye Touti (Bouts),

Tioubé (Harmattan), and Rama (Xala), to illustrate these phenomena. The changes that occur not only affect the women characters concerned, but are reflected upon their families, as well. They too, must adjust or adapt to the new demands of their more independent sisters, daughters, wives, loved ones. Although the sociological dynamics of this traditional/westernized transition are of importance, we are primarily concerned with the literary aspects of the problem. We intend to observe the effects of Westernization upon the sexual customs, conceptions of love, marriage, and family interrelationships within a literary framework.

African literature of French expression is primarily a literature of commitment that flourished best after the Second World War. As such, few works have centered around the individual themes of love, eroticism, marriage, family. Sadjí is an exception to this; in both Nini and Maimouna he devotes a major portion of the novel to the drama of each young woman in her search for love. Francis Fouet, in his article "Le thème de l'amour chez les romanciers négro-africains," states that this theme is presented in the novel in three common forms: ". . . sexualité, sentiment, passion."¹ In Sadjí's literary creation of "la mulâtresse," he has presented Nini in each of these aspects of love.

In both of his novels portraying women, Sadjí has

favored an open and natural approach to sexuality. In this way he emphasizes the qualities of traditional Africa, in which sex is important only in its ontological relationship with other aspects of human life. "La sexualité apparaît aux yeux de l'homme d'Afrique comme chose éminemment saine, naturelle et bonne. Son évocation est lourdement chargée de connotations cosmiques et religieuses, elle s'inscrit elle-même dans un contexte de sacralité et son image est porteuse des plus hautes valeurs."² In this sense the sexual act is mechanical, the couple are merely the vehicles, procreation is the ultimate goal. These traditional values are only disturbed when the individual comes into contact with the temptations of urbanization. In reconsidering these two major works, one must visualize Maimouna as having firmer roots in the African soil. Her interlude in Westernized Dakar is brief, albeit damaging. Nini is positioned at the farthest end of the spectrum for she is, in effect, a product of urban life; one whose personality has therefore been distorted.

Although Sadjî developed Maimouna's sexual initiation in greater detail, he was fairly discreet in offering the reader scenes of eroticism during Maimouna's brief love affair with DouDou Diouf. On the other hand, one learns little of Nini's developing womanhood. The author has chosen to stress the scenes of eroticism that occur only in her adult life. Through his selection of adjectives, the

author describes the moral discretion that surrounds scenes of nudity in the pure African community. In a brief introductory scene, Sadjì poses Nini at the balcony of her home, overlooking several African girls performing their morning "toilette." The frank simplicity of the scene is tempered with suggestions of "vague contemplation,"³ "demi-obscurité,"⁴ "dernières lueurs de l'aube"⁵ and "pudeur."⁶ Sadjì has introduced the reader subtly to the division in Nini's perception of life; "sur toutes ces scènes flotte comme une vague atmosphère à la fois obscène et sacrée."⁷ It is she who casts a shadow upon traditional African purity.

The character is portrayed in a mechanical fashion. She relies upon imitation to survive in a world foreign to her own. Sadjì, nevertheless, has reserved the world of eroticism as a significant link between the mulatresse and her African roots. At this juncture, one is reminded of Sartre's L'Orphée Noir, in which he refers to the symbolization of earth, sexuality and the Black man. "L'homme noir est paysan, non-technicien--son contact avec l'Afrique mère est par moyen d'un panthéisme sexuel."⁸ Sadjì stresses Nini's connection with eroticism and creates scenes of "volupté" in which she is without artifice. We recall a scene in which Nini, inspired by romantic French literature, a glass of port wine, the nostalgic surroundings of her salon, and her own faded souvenirs, basks in a world of

erotic fantasies. Sadji has been generous with detail, as he describes the development of the sentiment in the young girl. Through his selection of the verbs "ouvrir," "monter," "lever," "étendre," in the following paragraph, one is able to sense a motion that rises and envelopes Nini's being, as in a sexual climax.

Nini ouvre "La Muse Gauloise" et se met à lire. Peu à peu la volupté monte en elle comme un fleuve d'oubli. Ses yeux dilatent et brillent; ses paupières battent frénétiquement. Un moment d'euphorie la traverse. Elle se lève, étend les bras et bâille longuement, très longuement. Puis elle regagne sa petite chambre aménagée en boudoir où des coussins moelleux jonchent le parquet. . . . Une tendresse infini baigne alors tout son être. Elle devient amoureuse et lascive. Hélas! elle n'a aucun partenaire pour répondre à ses élans généreux.⁹

The author continues to paint Nini in subdued tones that accentuate her romantic tendencies.

Autour d'elle tout est poésie et mouvement; la chambre, le divan, les tableaux tournent comme en rêve. Doucement elle s'étend sur le divan, ferme les yeux, lâche le livre et appelle à elle, en imagination, des scènes d'amour passées où elle avait joué au maximum.¹⁰

In trying to preserve some of the authenticity of Nini's personality, the author reveals her affinity for rhythm and dance. "Seules sur la piste elles dansent une biquine ou une rumba en réalisant des tours de hanches d'une perfection un tantinet impudique."¹¹ Many of Nini's actions are based upon her romantic illusions, while others reflect a lack of sensitivity. Fluctuating between true sentiment and calculated emotion, Nini reflects a calculating

conception of love.

The concept of romantic love, as perceived in the Western world, was uncommon to traditional Africa, until the period of colonization. Love, as a prerequisite for marriage, had been considered unnecessary, as most stress was upon the functionality of the union. As the sense of the individual developed in importance, relationships between individuals took precedence over the group. The quest for love is rarely treated in Franco-African literature, as it is not considered a part of those essentials necessary to revitalize Africa and Africans. Sadjı, however, is profoundly impressed with the nineteenth century realistic writers and has devoted much of the drama of Nini's life to her endless quest for love. "Et pour Nini, la vie, en éternel voyage, semble une bête énorme chevauchée par le hasard, qui disperse au gré des vents de l'oubli les êtres et les choses."¹²

Despite the flights of fancy that frequently occupy Nini's imagination, Sadjı has created a character of a pragmatic nature whose many actions are precisely timed and patterned. A. C. Brench, in Novelist's Inheritance, has formed an analogy between Sadjı's works and those of the nineteenth century realistic French author. It is due to her very calculated maneuvers and determined goals that we may draw a parallel between Nini and Julien Sorel, of Le Rouge et le Noir. Both characters are condemned to a

subordinate existence, by the roles which society has cast upon them. In order to succeed (as in Julien's case) and to escape (as for Nini) both characters have relied upon the manipulation of those persons who occupy the coveted position; Mme de Renal, and Martineau. Rather than formulate a parallel between Nini and the feminine characters in Stendhal's story, we find that she is more easily akin to Julien. Sadji has created a feminine character who often embarks upon masculine roles. Nini is not passive and does not wait for men to approach her. She is energetic and aggressive. Both authors have emphasized the importance of the "devoir" as perceived by their respective characters, as well as the sense of inferiority of the main protagonists. We recall Julien's precise calculation of the capturing of Mme. de Renal's hand, while seated on the veranda amidst guests. There is a similarity of determination on Nini's behalf, as she uses her seductive dress, toilette, and atmosphere to help ensnare her prey, Martineau. Both Sadji and Stendhal have isolated a moment of anticipation before the arrival of the "other." It is interesting to note each author's use of time to create excitement.

Le soleil en baissant, et rapprochant le moment décisif, fit battre le coeur de Julien d'une façon singulière. La nuit vint. Il observa, avec une joie qui lui ôta un poids immense de dessus la poitrine, qu'elle serait fort obscure. Le ciel, chargé de gros nuages, proménés, par un vent très chaud, semblait annoncer une tempête.¹³

Par les deux portes donnant sur le balcon, du

côté du fleuve, arrivent, intermittentes, des vagues de rumeurs que le vent de la mer cueille sur les places bruyantes de Guet-ndar et qu'il apporte à la cite presque silencieuse. De multiples petits bruits montent d'en bas, violant la loi du silence, qui s'établit avec beaucoup de gravité dès que tombe la nuit.¹⁴

Both Julien and Nini, respectively, are prey to the whims of time

Après un dernier moment d'attente et d'anxiété, pendant lequel l'excès de l'émotion mâtait Julien comme hors de lui, dix heures sonnèrent à l'horloge. . . . Chaque coup de cette cloche fatale retentissait dans sa poitrine, et y causait comme un mouvement physique.¹⁵

La minute fiévreuse approche, la minute où les deux Blancs vont arriver, couverts de leur prestige et de leur immunité. Rien ne doit laisser à désirer.¹⁶

Since certain aspects of Nini's personality appear one-dimensional and shallow, one wonders whether she truly feels love for Martineau. Is she capable of love? Nini's ability to love is based upon her sense of inferiority and her desire to escape the boundaries of her world. Love of a white man has so conditioned her thinking that she convinces herself that there is sincerity in her feelings. Fouet explains Nini's ability to love as a contradictory process which makes her a victim "d'une sorte d'auto-suggestion. L'amour chez elle est un complexe de sensualité perversie et de l'obsession de blanchir sa race, une tentative de s'intégrer dans le monde des Blancs. . . . Sadjì a su faire de Nini un être compliqué et contradictoire. Tant que dure sa liason avec Martineau,

Nini aime ou croit aimer."¹⁷

In addition to love, Sadjì has Nini experience the two strong emotions of jealousy and rivalry. Having formed a well balanced triangle, (Martineau-Nini-N'Diaye) one sees the whiteness which predicates Nini's love in contrast to the blackness which defines her hatred. For Nini, even a series of meaningless affairs with passing white visitors to Saint-Louis are preferable to the avowal of love from an African. Having received a declaration of love, by letter, from N'Diaye, Nini is outraged at the mere suggestion of a union of the two, and makes her sentiments known to Martineau and his friend Perrin: "Je trouve que cette lettre est une insulte, un outrage fait à mon honneur de "fille blanche." Ce nègre est un imbécile, un malappris qui a besoin d'une laçon. Et je la lui donnerai cette leçon; je lui apprendrai à être plus décent et moins hardi; je lui ferai comprendre que les "peaux blanches" ne sont pas pour "bougnoles."¹⁸ In Nini's eyes her purity is compromised by this offer. "One must apologize for daring to offer black love to a white soul."¹⁹

Nini's situation is of such a precarious nature that she is prey to pangs of jealousy. Having prepared an intimate dinner for four, she is unnerved by the attentions that Martineau and Perrin bestow upon the servant, Fatou, a beautiful Senegalese girl. The men refer to the "djiguène" as "rudement belle" and "follement séduisante." Nini attempts

to thwart their interest by implying Fatou's inferiority. "C'est une enfant de la maison, répond Nini qui est secrètement vexée par la plaisanterie des Blancs qu'elle trouve déplacée."²⁰ The author has balanced most of the contrasts in the novel. Nini has been portrayed as jealous, during most of her life, of "La femme blanche," "une vraie Blanche," "une Blanche authentique." He offers her the occasion to vent her anger towards one white woman. Nini utilizes this opportunity to construct a case of rivalry between the two, that is, in effect, imaginary.

Les grandes dames, pense Nini, sont plus réservées, plus discrètes dans leur tendresse pour leur mari. Celle-ci doit être une crue, une fille ramassée sur les Grands Boulevards. C'est ainsi que Nini se venge de la femme de son patron.²¹

Certainly, it is the indifference shown to Nini's person, that causes such venom to rise.

Si sans même le saluer elle avait laissé échapper un geste, un mouvement prouvant qu'elle était jalouse de cette présence dans le bureau de son mari, la mulâtresse en aurait été secrètement flatée. Mais rien que de l'indifférence, une sécurité hautaine, un amour robuste et sans ombrage.²²

Nini's jealousy can be said to supersede the particular, and encompass the general. As she is searching for "L'homme blanc," she is frightfully insecure in the presence of "La femme blanche."

African literature of French expression is not considered a literature of "gaieté" in which the quest for

happiness is resolved by the main character. S. Anonzié, in Sociologie du Roman, refers to the problematic hero or heroine as one engaged "dans une sorte de quête longue et labyrinthique."²³ Nini's quest for happiness can be equated to the stendhalien concept of "la chasse au bonheur." In effect, she is actively engaged in this quest due to the desperation of her racial situation. "It is because the Negress feels inferior that she aspires to win admittance into the white world."²⁴ Nini breaks the code of propriety and proposes marriage to Martineau. Her manner is forthright and undoubtedly compromises the young Frenchman who has felt merely pleasant diversion with the mulâtress. Although the reader suspects that the promise Martineau renders is false, if not halfhearted one, Sadjî ironically isolates a moment of sincerity for Nini. It is one of the rare moments in which her character appears to be less artificial.

La pauvre Nini est devenue une chose souple et docile. Elle ne songe plus à son prestige de "fille blanche," elle ne songe plus à son prestige aux douceurs du beau pays de France, patrie perdue et non encore retrouvée. Pour la première fois elle devient une créature humaine débarrassée de tout artifice, humble et consentante. Elle perd les ressorts montés en elle par son milieu et sa situation équivoque entre deux races qui l'ont engendrée et qui paraissent toutes deux la renier.²⁵

The author brings Nini so close to her desired goal only to disappoint her once more. It is only due to Martineau's extracted promise of marriage that she is able to bear his

departure to France with a modicum of dignity.

During Nini's adventures, her grandmother and old aunt have been gradually affiliating themselves with the African members of the family. Although Nini continues to exist in her world of illusion, it is as if the old women come closer to their roots as they approach old age. The author severs Nini's ties to her African past when her grandmother dies. The hope of a white future is equally shattered as she reads the announcement of Martineau's marriage to a French woman. Despite the great love that Nini had professed for Martineau, one is surprised to find that her period of desolation is acute, but brief. Martineau's name can now be entered on the long list of previous lovers who have shared in the affections of the mulatresse. Sadjì comments upon Nini's extensive repertoire of lovers: "Depuis l'âge de quinze ans elle n'a fait en effet que collectionner des amants comme on collectionne des timbres-poste."²⁶ "Là, finit cette longue succession d'amants, vrais adorateurs d'un seul jour, d'une seule nuit, ou tout au plus, de quelques semaines d'ennui tropical."²⁷

Nini has mistakenly been accused of shallowness. Alienated from both the black and white segments of her life, her world is reduced to the stagnation of the colonial system. Nini serves as a classic example of the individual in African literature, for she is condemned to an

existence of solitude. "La nature intériorisée de cette quête laisse apercevoir une deuxième caractéristique de cet individu: la solitude."²⁸ Sadjí has relieved her of the burden of a past and propelled her into an unknown future. Although he has made it clear throughout the novel that the Ninis of the world are controlled by the forces of chance, they are rarely offered an opportunity for self-redemption. The unexpected trip to France is but an initial departure. In effect, Nini is condemned to live a life "en éternel voyage." There will be no end to her "chasse au bonheur."

"The novels by Senegalese writers show the impact of urbanization upon the pattern and ways of life, also the interrelationship between personal dramas and the transformation of the system of values."²⁹ In Les Bouts de Bois, Sembène paints N'Dèye as a victim of colonization, yet offers no apology for her behavior. The author does not penetrate the story itself, as had Sadjí in Nini. He can be said to be a more objective observer of the African woman than Sadjí. Sembène is not without compassion, however, for he portrays N'Dèye with sympathy and understanding. She cannot be considered a unique character, for the N'Dèye Toutis are common to Westernized Africa. N'Dèye's longing for a life "à l'européenne" is most authentically portrayed. The author does not offer an explanation of the development of the phenomenon, but introduces the character in the midst

of her inner struggle for self-definition.

Although historic and literary conditions vary greatly, N'Dèye Touti may be said to resemble Emma Bovary in her tendencies toward romantic reverie. Both Emma's education at the French convent and N'Dèye's, at the Ecole Normale Supérieure, in Dakar, set them apart from the surroundings in which they were living. Both women enjoyed the isolation of the schools and the sense of superiority it bestowed upon them. Most importantly, Sembène and Flaubert have offered a similar pattern of escape to their heroines; the romantic flight of fancy based upon literature. We recall Emma's fascination with the images in her books: "Et Emma cherchait à savoir ce que l'on entendait au juste dans la vie par les mots de félicité, de passion et d'ivresse, qui lui avaient paru si beaux dans les livres."³⁰ When confronted with the monotony or platitudes of Charles, she had only to enter into the world of dreams appropriately decorated with "le parfum des citronniers,"³¹ "des pays à noms sonores,"³² "des stores de soie bleue,"³³ "des routes escarpées,"³⁴ "la chanson du postillon."³⁵ N'Dèye's visions are none too different, for she imagines "chalets faits de neige,"³⁶ "des plages,"³⁷ "des gens célèbres,"³⁸ "des nuits éclaboussées de néon."³⁹

Both Emma Bovary and N'Dèye Touti have fashioned a vision of the man of their dreams. In their imagination, their own worth would benefit from association with men of

such high caliber. For Emma:

Il lui semblait que certains lieux sur la terre devaient produire du bonheur, comme une plante particulière au sol et qui pousse mal tout autre part. Que ne pouvait-elle s'accouder sur le balcon, des chalets suisses ou enfermer sa tristesse dans un cottage écossais, avec un mari vêtu d'un habit de velours noir à longues basques, et qui porte des bottes molles, un chapeau pointu et des manchettes!⁴⁰

For N'Dèye Touti:

Dans les livres qu'elle avait lus, l'amour s'accompagnait de fêtes, de bals, de weeks-ends, de promenades en voiture, de somptueux cadeaux d'anniversaire, de vacances sur des yachts, de présentations de couturiers: là était la vraie vie et non dans ce quartier pouilleux, où à chaque pas on rencontrait un lépreux, un éclope, un avorton.⁴¹

Des titres des livres, des noms défilèrent. Un instant, elle s'arrêta à celui de Bakayoko. Cet homme dur qui parfois semblait vivre dans un autre monde, l'attirait, mais, qui était-il? Un ouvrier. La femme d'un ouvrier, d'un ouvrier qui n'était plus jeune? A quoi bon être une élève de l'école normale? Un avocat, un docteur peut-être et un amour, un amour qui l'entraînerait loin de ce cimetière vivant . . .⁴²

Although Emma's love interest in Charles Bovary clearly subsided, N'Dèye found herself more and more attracted to the political activist Bakayoko. N'Dèye's personality and near-Europeanization would seemingly lead her to a man such as Beaugosse, (a handsome young man whose thoughts and manners reflected much of the French influence). Since his true commitment is not to the cause of the strike, his participation is more passive than active. Instead, N'Dèye prefers the somewhat hardened, middle aged, Bakayoko, who

is already married to Assitan.

Sembène does not offer as great a number of contrasts as Sadjì, nor is he as interested in directing the course of N'Dèye's fate. The author neatly constructs the triangle of affections between N'Dèye, Bakayoko and Beaugosse. N'Dèye's decision is not handled by the exterior force of change, as in the case of Nini. As Sembène's purpose is to shape a sense of responsibility for the Africans in his novels, it is N'Dèye who must choose between the two suitors; each reflecting a different aspect of Africa. Her choice is made somewhat easier, however, as it is she who pursues the illusive Bakayoko. For one of such refined and delicate training, N'Dèye resembles Nini in her approach to the man of her choice. Intimacy between her and Bakayoko has only been intimated in the story, for Sembène has not offered any scenes of eroticism. Although the more contemporary of the two authors, Sembène reflects a sense of traditional Africa in his hesitancy to describe scenes of love and intimacy. "Les gestes de l'amour sont décrits par les Africains avec une extrême discrétion. Contrairement à tant de romans modernes, nous ne trouvons pas de ces scènes érotiques complaisamment détaillées. Ni les préliminaires de l'acte sexuel, à plus forte raison l'acte lui-même, ne sont représentés."⁴³

It is N'Deye who offers herself in marriage to Bakayoko. It is clear, however, that there has been some

tenderness between them. The romantic young girl still has no real conception of the kinds of things that Bakayoko or those involved in the strike represent. Even while offering a proposal of marriage, her references are to images she has formed during her literary education. Bakayoko is actively engaged in a struggle for the social rights of the Africans, while N'Dèye thinks of him in terms of a romantic union. Prepared to undertake the second position in a polygamous marriage, N'Dèye even offers a parallel to reinforce her argument: ". . . je veux être ta seconde épouse. Je connais une "évolué" qui l'a fait, Pourquoi pas moi?" Et je ne serai pas jalouse d'Assitan."⁴⁴ N'Dèye's jealousy does become aroused, however, not by Assitan, the docile, traditional wife of Bakayoko, but by Penda, the prostitute turned activist. N'Dèye clearly suspects that the friendship between Bakayoko and Penda is more intimate than she would like. Her jealousy was a consuming one, and is only allayed by Penda's death during the march of the women to Dakar.

Sembène does not fail to expose certain artificial qualities in N'Dèye's personality. She seems compelled to seek a final moment with Bakayoko, in order to dissuade him from leaving. Calculating her stance, choosing the correct candle lighting for atmosphere; positioning herself in the muted rays, N'Dèye seems to employ some of the same mechanical techniques as Nini. "On dirait le masque bronze

d'une déesse iféenne," pensa Bakayoko, et il lui sembla que N'Dèye Touti avait étudié sa pose. Les paupières de la jeune fille battirent, sa lèvre inférieure tremblait. Enfin une larme perla au coin d'un de ses yeux, s'arrêta un instant au bord du menton et vint s'écraser sur la poitrine."⁴⁵ Bakayoko's indifference to her beauty and to the setting are devastating. N'Dèye Touti's romantic visions have been severely crushed. Sembène has not taken the position as a moralist in the life of this young African girl. He has illustrated, however, that the theme of love is truly secondary to that of the quest for communal strength.

Characters of a nature such as Nini and N'Dèye are representative of the victims of colonization in Africa. Sadjì focuses primarily upon this aspect of Westernization. Sembène's female characters are not merely victims of this system, for several of them represent considerable strength. As Sembène's initial goal is to present Africa to Africans, he does not dwell upon the ramifications of Europeanization, rather the steps one might take towards the development of Africa by its own people. In creating Penda, of Les Bouts de Bois de Dieu, he has shown a significant impact of Westernization upon the African woman: the role of the single woman, the prostitute.

Nini was portrayed by Sadjì as one who merely offered herself freely to various men in her life. Her sexual

freedom was part of a daily search for happiness that encompassed the major part of her life. With each sexual escapade, Nini convinced herself that love was present and thereby condoned the act. Her problem is particular to urban centers. C. McHardy, in his article "Love in Africa," affirms that "romantic love is a luxury most African women in towns cannot afford."⁴⁶ He further explains that sex often provides a convenient arrangement between individuals. Although numbers of men were a part of Nini's repertoire, she was never referred to in the text as a prostitute. Sadjì constantly reinforced the innocence of the girl.

Sembène neither praises nor apologizes for the behavior of the single woman he has created. Through his descriptions, however, we see that her inner goodness is definite not implied. Penda is unique in that she is the only creation of this sort in all of Sembène's works, although he allows sexual freedom to many women characters. She is referred to as prostitute by several of the women on the march and cynically by N'Dèye Touti, whose jealousy of the Penda-Bakayoko relationship is apparent. The term, itself, is one that varies in significance throughout Africa. Its scope extends from the woman living alone to she whose livelihood is based upon the purchase of sexual favors. Penda is one who fits this category, for she is presented as socially isolated from the communal extended

family that is prevalent in traditional Africa. We find her living in a "case," by herself, without husband, children, and immediate family ties. Such a case is already a motive for social isolation in Africa. Her functioning as a "femme libre," encircles her in an even greater form of alienation from the other women. Although her role has bestowed some amount of disfavor upon her character, nevertheless Penda demonstrates certain qualities of an independent woman. The mere realm of choice of sexual partners affords her a privilege that Balandier compares to the level of seventeenth century courtisane; an era in which women were able to select among the elite officials, at will. Sembène, who positions himself against the subordination inherent to the polygamous marriage in Africa, offers this character an exit from exploitation by males. ". . . elle choisit alors qu'elle était choisie, elle cherche à obtenir le plus d'avantages possibles alors qu'elle était source de profit et richesse capitalisée, affirmant ainsi un véritable renversement des rôles."⁴⁷

Armed with this sense of independence and a somewhat hardened exterior, Sembène develops the character of Penda into that of a crucial role in the novel. Through few words or descriptive passages, he succeeds in inventing a sensitive human being who represents a glimpse of the African woman of the future; whose sense of commitment and purpose form the basis of her character.

The high sense of responsibility that is prevalent in the novel, particularly in the women and notably in Penda, may be compared to certain elements in Malraux's La Condition Humaine. The work is used in Bouts de Bois, as a literature of reference for the strikers, although the leader, Bakayoko, is not sure who will be able to understand Malraux's message of the struggle for humanity. H. Peyre, in The Contemporary French Novel, speaks of Malraux's increased level of consciousness, which sets his characters outside and above ordinary humanity. "They seek neither money nor property nor do they, like Stendhal's, set out every morning hunting for happiness. Their quest is metaphysical and moral. At the very moment when they raise their arm to kill with a dagger, or are blown up by a bomb, they seize in a flash the essential meaning of life."⁴⁸ Sembène's characters cannot be compared fully to those of Malraux, for there is less introspection on the part of the Africans. The characters do not dwell upon the questions of man's fate or the possible absence of God, but are immediately thrust into the act of solidarity. As such, Penda does not question her role as woman, nor her significance. The juxtaposition of her roles as prostitute and eventual soldier of the women present no problems to the novel. Sembène frees the character from the usual shackles of subordination so that she may be able to develop the strength required of her to demonstrate

leadership and to gain respect from the others.

The author does not fail to portray the inner emotions of Penda, for there is a hierarchy of sentiments that set her apart from the other women characters. She reflects true friendship for a woman friend, Maimouna; tacit, yet sincere love for a man, Bakayoko; and the highest form of love for her fellow beings, which results in her death.

It is curious to note that the author has introduced the theme of love between Bakayoko and Penda, has elevated it to a high form of mutual work for the ultimate good, while offering no intimate scene between the two lovers. N'Dèye's jealousy had alluded to a possible relationship between Penda and Bakayoko. Despite her blindness, Maimouna has been the only one to guess Penda's feeling for Bakayoko. Due to her perceptivity, she is able to warn the younger woman of the high goals of men such as Bakayoko.

Penda, peut-être n'y avait-il qu'une place dans ton coeur et celui qui l'a prise, n'est-ce pas Bakayoko? . . . Celui-là traverse ton coeur en n'y laissant qu'une amertume. Il détruira tout. Vois-tu, nous autres femmes, nous aimons un homme quand nous ignorons tout de lui, nous voulons son secret. Et celui que nous avons ainsi choisi, même s'il nous traite durement, même s'il est sans pitié, nous lui courons après. . . . Mais ceux qui sont comme Bakayoko, ceux-là sont notre poison. Ils font de nous ce qu'ils veulent.⁴⁹

The relationship which Penda and Bakayoko enjoy is one that may be compared to that of Kyo and May, in La

Condition Humaine. Their love is neither as highly developed, nor does it occupy such an important place as the love of the latter. The similarities are limited to a structural nature, in which both of the couples share a sense of commitment that encompasses their love. This sense of commitment is self-generating and mutually energetic. It differs considerably from the emotion that Bakayoko has for his devoted traditional wife, Assitan, and the physical union he experiences with N'Dèye. Through her participation in the forces of the women marchers to Dakar, Penda loses her life. Bakayoko declines N'Dèye's offer for marriage, and chooses to continue his struggle for the benefits of the strikers. One senses a unity, however, between Bakayoko and Penda that recalls May's experience at the death of Kyo. "The fraternity of death lays them bare to the purpose for which they were living. The highest form of love is, to Kyo and May in La Condition Humaine, to lure the loved one into death."⁵⁰ Malraux reveals Kyo's misgivings about not taking May with him on an ill-fated mission.

De quel droit exerçait-il sa pitoyable protection sur la femme qui avait accepté même qu'il partit? Au nom de quoi la quittait-il? Était-il sur qu'il n'ay out pas là de vengeance? Sans doute May était-elle encore assise sur le lit, écrasée par une peine qui se passait de psychologie . . .

Avant d'ouvrir il s'arrêta, écrasé par la fraternité de la mort, découvrant combien, devant cette communion, la chair restait

dérisoire malgré son emportement. Il comprenait maintenant qu'accepter d'entraîner l'être qu'on aime dans la mort est peut-être la forme totale de l'amour, celle qui ne peut pas être dépassée.⁵¹

Sembène reveals Bakayoko's elevated sense of love for Penda. Although he never declares his love specifically, the hero does admit that his sentiments for Penda emanate from the better parts of himself.

Although N'Dèye has made an attack on Penda's lack of virtue, Bakayoko quickly recovers with: "Tu n'arrives pas à la cheville de Penda. Je sais ce qu'elle valait. C'était une vraie amie et elle a donné sa vie."⁵² When alone with his thoughts, Sembène uncovers Bakayoko's true sentiments for Penda:

L'image de Penda lui apparut. Il aurait pu prendre Penda comme deuxième épouse. Il se demandait quelle était exactement la nature des liens qui l'avaient uni à cette femme. Peut-être avait-elle été, comme lui, une voyageuse qui allait de gare en gare? Une chose était sûre, ce qu'il lui avait donné venait du meilleur de lui-même.⁵³

The solitude of the hero or heroine who undertakes the struggle for humanity is important in Sembène's work, although his characters rarely contemplate the mysteries of life on a metaphysical plane. They are involved in an active phase of life, and may be described as "engagés." Set in a traditional framework, Sembène has nevertheless demonstrated his praise of traditional womanhood, while carving a place for the African woman of the future. Penda represents Sembène's literary offering to the development of

an independent and self-assertive woman.

Of the characters presented, thus far, Nini, N'Dèye and Penda have reflected the problems of Westernization superimposed upon African traditionalism. Each has had a different vision of reality and has come to reconcile those conflicts through escape, political activism, or death. Although the styles of Sadjì and Sembène vary greatly, the above-mentioned characters share a sense of social alienation with Tioumbé (Harmattan) and Rama (Xala). Having distinguished himself as a writer of revolt, Sembène shows less hesitancy than Sadjì in severing the family ties of his female characters. "La révolte contre les habitudes traditionnelles atteint son paroxysme chez les personnages de Sembène Ousmane. A la différence de ce qui se passe dans la plupart des autres romans, les individus qu'il met en scène envisagent beaucoup plus facilement de rompre avec leur milieu s'ils estiment nécessaire."⁵⁴ Although all of the women are alienated from their traditional surroundings, it is Tioumbé and Rama who appear to struggle more with the conflict presented by this phenomenon.

Both of the young women are of Islamic origin and have firmly declared themselves against the stifling practice of polygamy. Rama, in fact, refers to herself as "une musulmane moderne."⁵⁵ Both have benefited from an education that leads them farther and farther away from a system of subordination of women and total dependence upon males.

This is clearly in keeping with the themes particular to Sembène, in both his novels and films. "Fidèle à lui-même, Sembène Ousmane se maintient dans la ligne de pensée révolutionnaire, ne manque pas une occasion de dénoncer l'injustice qu'elle soit africaine ou européenne, défend la cause des femmes, et en particulier montre les méfaits de la polygamie dont souffre les femmes dans les pays islamisés."⁵⁶

Although Harmattan was written in 1964 and Xala in 1973, Tioumbé and Rama share many points in common. Each is particularly sensitive to the concerns of her mother. The reader senses more than simple concern in this regard, for the daughters appear stronger than their mothers and think of themselves as protective agents. As the rapport between husband and wife is extremely poor, Tioumbé and Rama form the nucleus of love for their otherwise unfulfilled mothers. While remaining essentially obedient, in the traditional fashion, the daughters seem to have surpassed the role of mere offspring and exercise some authority over their mothers. Their mothers are not unaware of the strength of their daughters and their dependence upon them for support and compassion. Awa, first wife of El Hadji and mother to Rama, finds security in her daughter's presence, "Elle se rapprochait de sa fille. . . . Elle se sentait moins seule."⁵⁷ Ouhigoué, mother to Tioumbé, depends upon her daughter's devotion. "Depuis sa naissance, Tioumbé ne

l'avait pas quittée. Elle se sentait le devoir de la protéger envers et contre tout. A ses yeux, elle n'était qu'une enfant."⁵⁸

Both of the young women experienced a reversal of traditional roles, not merely with their mothers but with their fathers, as well. Sembène has not been flattering in the presentation of the paternal roles in both novels. Both of the daughters display little respect for their fathers, who have a lack of respect for their wives, as well. More importantly, the father-daughter conflicts seem to revolve particularly around political issues. Moustaphe, a converted Catholic, opposes Tioumbé's fight against the Referendum of 1958. Rama takes offense at her father's hypocritical dealings in the independent African government. In the presentation of both women characters, Sembène has shown the importance of the constant strength of the woman. It is apparent that she has been strong before the independence of Africa, when the enemy was clearly European. She still is required to display strength against the unscrupulous affairs of other independent Africans. In this, Sembène demonstrates a characteristic trait of his approach to literature. He has been unyielding in his destruction of ". . . le mythe de l'innocence nègre."⁵⁹ Both of the fathers are accomplices in the underdevelopment of Africa. Both of the daughters are sincerely committed to African nationalism. Sembène uses dialogue to evoke an atmosphere

of tension and bitterness between the parents and their children. Rama shows disobedience by raising an objection to her father's proposed marriage to N'Goné. "Je suis contre de mariage. Un polygame n'est jamais un homme franc."⁶⁰ Such blatant disrespect for traditional customs flusters El Hadji. He is able to safeguard his dignity in only one way; a slap across his daughter's face. "Ta révolution, tu la feras à l'université ou dans la rue, mais jamais chez moi. ---Tu n'as rien, ici, répliqua Rama; un filet de sang coulait du coin de sa bouche."⁶¹

Moustaphe, Tioumbé's father, attempts everything to force his daughter to cease her political activities against the reigning government. He destroys her voting card, has the girl bound, humiliated and beaten. Yet Tioumbé remains firm in her convictions. Sembène describes the loss of paternal control that Moustaphe feels, with considerable drama:

En dépit de son acharnement maladif à vouloir faire taire sa fille, il se voyait bafoué. Non seulement le pouvoir responsable, mais l'exécutif et le législatif qui lui étaient échus, parce qu'il était le père, lui échappaient. Sans se confier à personne, il éprouvait les rudes coups de boutoir du temps présent du temps à venir, sur la vieille forteresse familiale.⁶²

The strength of Tioumbé and Rama, as noted in their political convictions, and their paternal conflicts, can also be seen in their love relationships. Both women are young, educated, and familiar enough with Western ways to envision the element of romance in their lives. Sembène has

illustrated quite the contrary. The author emphasizes the commitment of each woman as the guiding force in her life. Rama and Pathé speak of marriage, but it is evident that theirs will be a marriage of partnerships. He, as doctor, she, as educator, intend to combine their love for one another with their desire to rid Africa of its neo-colonialist tendencies. The author has shown tenderness between the two young people, but certainly does not devote any lengthy passages to the description of their love. As the theme of El Hadji's search centers around his impotency, no consideration has been given to scenes of eroticism between Rama and Pathé. A brief question (in El Hadji's mind) is the only apparent indication of sexuality. "Est-ce que Rama est encore vierge? se demandait-il? Vite, il repoussa la question."⁶³

Tioumbé's commitment is certainly as strong as Rama's. However, the former is aware that marriage is an issue that has no immediate place in the struggle for African liberty, despite her love for Sori. Tioumbé's convictions appear stronger than those of her lover, as she must often remind him of his responsibilities toward African independence. "Sori, tu ne comprends rien! Rien, . . . Crois-tu que ton départ me plaise? . . . Non . . . Mais je suis contente que tu retournes . . . C'est pour vivre que nous combattons . . . Non pour nous rejouir de notre victoire. Mais construire!"⁶⁴ The author has used formidable sensitivity

in creating the character of Tioumbé, who is not only "politiquement supérieure"⁶⁵ to her lover, but who has nevertheless maintained the very delicate balance between her concerns for Africa and her desires for womanhood. Tioumbé's monologue, in which she ponders the role of the new African woman, dramatically depicts her inner struggles.

Pourquoi, pourquoi avant était-ce moi qui posais des questions? Crois-tu que je sois aussi différente des autres femmes? Je suis comme toutes. Dans notre grand diversité apparente, nous accueillons, pareillement, l'amour. Mais, ce qui nous différencie c'est notre fenêtre sur l'avenir. Combien de fois, seule après les réunions où la classe, toute seule, me suis-je interrogée! Je suis femme, voudrais-je l'oublier, que je ne le puis."⁶⁶

It is evident that Tioumbé recaptures control of her deceptions, for she is reassured of Sori's love and has the strength to encourage him to go to Guinea to continue the struggle. "Ne me demande pas de renoncer à ce qui te fait partir. Je suis africaine. Les frontières actuelles sont l'oeuvre des colonialistes. Mets-toi bien cela dans la tête."⁶⁷ Tioumbé's decision reflects the position that Sembène has offered to the theme of love; a secondary one.

In the novels of Sadjí and Sembène, the women characters have been both negatively and positively affected by the impact of the Western world. Each has demonstrated a severing of the societal ties linking her to a traditional past. As Nini leaves home, rejects her family, and entertains fantasies of a romantic love, in a white world,

Sadji illustrates the negative aspects of Westernization. Through Rama and Tioumbé, Sembène has been able to speak against traditional African customs of polygamy and parental control. Although some may have been impressed with the illusions of Europe, his most memorable characters have demonstrated strength of character. The latter are engaged upon a path that leaves no room for the indecision witnessed in Nini and Maimouna.

Summary

Certain themes in the novels of Sadji and Sembène have not been treated individually, yet have played a significant part in the overall presentation of the works. It is no accident that these themes have had their most dramatic impact upon the lives of the female character. Some of the more important ones have been: sexuality, love and marriage, education, religious freedoms, political commitment, and fraternity of women.

In the novels of Sadji, most notably in Nini, we find a particular emphasis upon the themes of love and sensuality. The emphasis the author has placed upon the erotic nature of his heroine is unmistakable. In this, the author demonstrates a fundamental tie with the African past; a tie which Nini, herself, has difficulty masking. Although she harbors a somewhat romanticized version of love, Nini is not portrayed in an idyllic or delicate manner. We have noted an aggressive nature in Sadji's heroine that may be

compared to the same tendency in the Stendhalien hero, Julien Sorel. Both characters have embarked upon a well-planned strategy of human nature which was calculated to result in the physical and emotional possession of another. This active rather than passive nature of the female character may be seen in her other strong passions. Sadjì treats Nini's love of Martineau, her hatred of N'Diaye, and her jealousy of Fatou and of the white woman, with equal intensity. Much of this aggression is apparent when she decides to break all ties with family, friends, and most particularly with her heritage, in order to seek escape into the white world. She appears quite sure of her choice, and unaware of the fact that she will have constantly to seek refuge from a racial shadow that will never be too far behind her.

Sembène has portrayed four female characters who illustrate the author's emphasis upon the impact of Africa's changing system of values. The personal drama of each is portrayed, while the concerns of a growing sense of nationalism in Africa form a common denominator for all of the individuals concerned. N'Dèye Touti is similar to Nini only in that the emotion of love is an important element in her life. She, too, has an idealistic view of this emotion and feels the weight of its absence in her life. She is also ashamed of her past, although that shame is less of the color of her people than of their traditions. She would

prefer that they be as "culturally" acceptable to her as the images of the European that have been a part of her literary world. As she seeks refuge in the fascination of books, one finds certain traces of Flaubert's Emma Bovary. When N'Dèye is presented with a choice of lovers, it may only superficially be viewed as a choice between the culturally assimilated Beaugosse, and the more militant Bakayoko. In effect, Sembène is offering the girl a choice between two Africas, symbolized by each man. Her selection of Bakayoko is significant in terms of the growth of the African continent and of the development of the woman, as well.

Sembène has selected Penda to represent a balanced picture of the impact of the changes in the African system of values. There are both negative and positive aspects visible in her personality. Her role as prostitute is acknowledged, yet it is not blamed nor are apologies offered for it. Penda is more positively viewed as the symbol of the strong and independent woman figure who is capable of leadership in times of stress. If the female character is to take the responsibility of leadership, she must endure its hardships as well, with no allowances made for her sex. Penda is favored with glory as she leads the women marchers to victory, yet encounters death along the way.

Both Rama and Tioumbé reflect the changing Africa and

must each struggle with what is considered the traditional concept of womanhood and the newer ideals of education, monogamy, independence, sexual freedom. Although each has a more crystallized perception of self than the other woman characters, their inner conflicts are emotionally painful.

Whether her struggle has been in the area of love, sexuality, family relationships, religious dogma, or political commitment, the female characters in the works of both novelists have had to readjust to new, and often conflicting positions, vis-à-vis their traditional world. These adjustments were made with considerable deliberation and often resulted in permanent severing of societal ties. As Sadjì and Sembène unfold the personal dramas of each of these women, one notes that they have renounced the security of the strong family unit and traditional mores, for a more independent existence. Emerging from this transition the character reaches a newer dimension of "the individual," and experiences a sense of "angoisse" reminiscent of the character development in the European novel.

¹F. Fouet, "Le Thème de l'Amour chez les Romanciers Négro-Africains," (Dakar: Aches du Colloque, 1963), p. 159.

²P. Erny, Les Premiers Pas Dans La Vie De L'Enfant d'Afrique Noire (Paris: L'Ecole, 1972), p. 30.

³A. Sadjı, Nini (Paris: Présence Africaine, 1947), p. 291.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Ibid.

⁸J. P. Sarte, L'Orphée Noir (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1969), p. 29.

⁹Sadjı, op. cit., p. 304.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 305.

¹¹Ibid., p. 329.

¹²Ibid., pp. 334-335.

¹³Stendhal, Le Rouge et le Noir (New York: Dell Publishing Co., 1963), p. 79.

¹⁴Sadjı, op. cit., p. 357.

¹⁵Stendhal, op. cit., p. 80.

¹⁶Sadjı, op. cit., p. 357.

¹⁷Fouet, op. cit., p. 49.

¹⁸Sadjı, op. cit., p. 324.

¹⁹F. Fanon, Black Skins, White Masks (New York: Grove Press, 1967), p. 56.

²⁰Sadjı, op. cit., p. 360.

²¹Ibid., p. 400.

²²Ibid., p. 401.

²³S. Anonzié, Sociologie du Roman Africain: Réalisme, Structure et Détermination dans le Roman Moderne Ouest-Africain (Paris: Tiers-Monde et Développement, 1970), p. 42.

²⁴Fanon, op. cit., p. 60.

²⁵Sadji, op. cit., p. 367.

²⁶Ibid., p. 322.

²⁷Ibid., p. 334.

²⁸Anonzié, op. cit., p. 43.

²⁹H. Bobrowska, "Novels by Senegalese Writers Aboulaye Sadjí and Ousmane Sembène," Przeglad Socjol, 21 (1962), p. 367.

³⁰G. Flaubert, Madame Bovary (New York: Dell Publishing Co., 1964), p. 68.

³¹Ibid., p. 72.

³²Ibid.

³³Ibid.

³⁴Ibid.

³⁵Ibid.

³⁶O. Sembène, Les Bouts de Bois de Dieu (Paris: Presses Pocket, 1960), p. 100.

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸Ibid.

³⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰Flaubert, op. cit., p. 72.

⁴¹Sembène, op. cit., p. 100.

⁴²Ibid., p. 135.

⁴³Fouet, op. cit., p. 142.

⁴⁴Sembène, op. cit., p. 323.

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 345.

- 46C. McHardy, "Love in Africa," Présence Africaine, 68 (1968), p. 55.
- 47G. Balandier, Sociologie des Brazzavilles Noires (Paris: Colin, 1955), p. 148.
- 48H. Peyre, The Contemporary French Novel (New York: Oxford University Press, 1955), p. 189.
- 49Sembène, op. cit., p. 304.
- 50Peyre, op. cit., p. 189.
- 51A. Malraux, La Condition Humaine (Paris: Editions Gallimard, 1946), p. 81.
- 52Sembène, op. cit., p. 342.
- 53Ibid., p. 349.
- 54B. Mouralis, Individu et Collectivité dans Le Roman Nègro-Africain d'Expression Française (Abidjan: Université d'Abidjan, 1969), p. 76.
- 55O. Sembène, Xala (Paris: Présence Africaine, 1973), p. 123.
- 56L. Sainville, Anthologie de la Littérature Nègro-Africaine: Romanciers et Conteurs (Paris: Présence Africaine, 1963), p. 57.
- 57Sembène, op. cit., p. 70.
- 58O. Sembène, L'Harmattan (Paris: Présence Africaine, 1964), p. 272.
- 59Mouralis, op. cit., p. 141.
- 60Sembène, p. 27.
- 61Ibid., p. 27.
- 62Sembène, L'Harmattan, p. 237.
- 63Sembène, Xala, p. 127.
- 64Sembène, L'Harmattan, p. 295.
- 65Ibid., p. 291.
- 66Ibid., p. 298.
- 67Ibid., p. 295.

CHAPTER VI

POLITICAL PORTRAIT OF THE AFRICAN FEMALE: THE MOMENT OF NEGATION

We have attempted to analyze the impact of Westernization and its effect upon the character of the African woman in literature. The image presented was one that reflected African societal mores. In order to arrive at a comprehensive analysis of women in African literature, it is important to discuss the literary concept of *Négritude*.

The term "*Négritude*," which entered French vocabulary in 1935, is one which constantly evokes polemical discussions. Since its inception, the word has been continually defined and redefined. Finding themselves at an impasse in Paris, the Black students of the colonized world were intent upon redefining goals for themselves and shedding the yoke of dependence. Senghor describes the situation that nurtured the need for this word. "Nous étions alors plongés, avec quelques autres étudiants noirs, dans une sorte de désespoir paniqué. L'horizon était bouché. Nulle réforme en perspective, et les Colonisateurs légitimaient notre dépendance politique et économique par la théorie de la table rase. Nous n'avons,

estimaient-ils, rien inventé, rien crée, rien écrit, ni sculpté, ni peint, ni chanté. Des danseurs! et encore . . ."¹ Senghor explains that the formation of a revolutionary concept that merely stripped the Black man of his borrowed frocks of assimilation, was not sufficient. One had to look toward the past, with appreciation, and yet incorporate the values of the Black African culture into the reality of the twentieth century. Therefore, Senghor looks upon Négritude as a contributive force. "La négritude est le patrimoine culturel, les valeurs et surtout l'esprit de la civilisation négro-africaine."² Césaire was the first to use the term "Négritude" effectively in his poem Cahier d'un retour au pays natal. The word, (as commonly occurs with most words in African poetry), changes its meaning as the poet wills it. Kesteloot explains that Césaire has used Négritude to mean color, race, psychology, and "revendication." When called upon to offer one single definition, he replied: "consicence d'être noir, simple reconnaissance d'un fait, qui implique acceptation, prise en charge de son destin de noir, de son histoire et de sa culture."³ The lines of the poet have become classic:

ma négritude n'est pas une pierre, sa surdit e rue
 contre la clameur du jour
 ma négritude n'est pas une taie d'eau morte sur
 l'oeil mort de la terre
 ma négritude n'est ni une tour ni une cath edrale
 elle plonge dans la chair rouge du sol
 elle plonge dans la chair ardente du ciel
 elle troue l'accablement opaque de sa droite patience.⁴

In Orphée Noir, Sartre has offered a definition of Négritude which transcends racial connotations and enters into the philosophical arena. Although the work was written as a preface to Senghor's Anthologie de la Nouvelle Poésie Nègre, its significance cannot be limited to poetry, but rather to African literature in general. Sartre envisions Négritude as an attitude, specifically: "une attitude affective à l'égard du monde."⁵ In Heideggerian terms, Sartre relates the Black experience, or understanding of his universe, to the concept of "l'être-dans-le-monde-du noir."⁶ It is, essentially, a Black perspective of the universe. A significant part of Sartre's work discusses his vision of Négritude in terms of a dialectical progression.

The thesis: the supremacy of the white world

The antithesis: the moment of negation

The synthesis: projection towards a raceless society. There has been much criticism of Sartre's statement. Much of the negative aspect of the dialectical progression has been stressed, causing the "moment de la négativité" to be reduced to a racist anti-racist philosophy. Kesteloot has explained Sartre's position by insisting that the use of the term "négatif," in the Hegelian sense, is not pejorative. ". . . le mot de "négativité" ne pouvait qu'être mal compris! Pour un esprit non prévenu, l'erreur était inévitable d'assimiler ce

vocable à négatif, négateur, négation, etc. . . . c'est-à-dire à l'"action de nier" une affirmation positive."⁷ In opposition to the thesis of white supremacy, Sartre offers the antithesis of black consciousness, or rejection of the values imposed by the "Other." It is this phase which most closely typifies the general definition of Négritude. It is an active phase in which the Black man is meant to espouse revolution. Sartre sees this period as a transitory one that must be transgressed in order to reach the ideal goal of the synthesis. For African literature to be arrested in this phase would merely negate the effects of the dialectic. Sartre clearly states: "La Négritude est pour se détruire; elle est passage et non aboutissement: moyen et non fin dernière."⁸

In order to arrive at the synthesis which Sartre proposes, it is important to understand that the synthesis is to be a "moment supérieur" in the dialectic. This third moment proposes to preserve the qualities of the first two while erasing their imperfections. Its origin is the German verb "aufheben" which means surpass, obliterate, and conserve simultaneously. The thesis is therefore negated, while the synthesis contributes positive qualities to the whole. It is in this final phase that Sartre speaks of love of humanity. The result will be one of a black contribution toward a universal raceless society. "La synthèse aboutira à l'amour humain."⁹

Sadji has made slight reference to the term *Négritude*, while Sembène has declared himself a non-participant in this literary movement in Africa. In Killam's African Writers On African Writing, Sembène expresses his objections in a colloquim held in Dakar in 1965. He states that he can find no exact definition of *Négritude* since its usage has suffered from much distortion and misunderstanding. Considering the writers of the early 30's, Césaire, Senghor, Damas, Nègre, et al., their sense of *Négritude* was originally a banner of revolt under which most of the African writers grouped. For Sembène, in 1965, this militant sense of the term no longer existed:

So far as I am concerned, *négritude* reminds me of that 'folfol' worn by women expecting a baby which lets you see their whole body through their clothes. *Négritude* seems to me to have nothing solid about it. What it may become in future is another question. There was a time when *négritude* meant something positive. It was our breastplate against a culture that wanted at all costs to dominate us. But that is past history . . . I am against *négritude* because to me nowadays it no longer means that combination of revolutionary fervour that people like to pretend that it has.¹⁰

The characters in Sadji's and Sembène's works may be analyzed in terms of the dialectic proposed by Sartre. Sadji's characters exist only in the phase of the thesis, that is "the supremacy of whites." Both Maimouna and Nini reinforce these values of colonization. Although each must pay the consequences for her acts, the author never gives the women characters an opportunity to develop to the

third and final stage. In neither case is there revolt or concern for humanity. On the other hand, Sembène's characters generally reflect each phase of the dialectical progression. There are relatively few women who demonstrate the moment of the thesis. N'Dèye Touti immediately comes to mind, yet we recall that she progresses to a stage of the antithesis. Most of Sembène's characters originate in the phase of revolt from the colonial culture, and affirmation of self, Sartre's "moment de la négativité." Sembène has objected to the term of *négritude*, yet his most powerful characters are born in this stage, and reflect his militancy. When confronted with the issue, Sembène remarked: "Apparently, I have been going in for *négritude* without realizing it, which is quite a surprise."¹¹ The characters to be discussed in this chapter are those who represent the phase of pure anger and revolt. Some continue the struggle until the needs of Africa are sought, her heritage recalled, and her goals redefined. It is in the stage of the antithesis that Sembène paints his most powerful women characters. Some may even pass on from anger to love--of Africa, and perhaps, eventually, to offer Africa's contribution to the universe. Sartre ultimately envisions a synthesis of love in which there would emerge a raceless society. Sembène's synthesis leaves no place for a raceless society, however. Yet he stresses a synthesis which would affirm Black values while incorporating

them into the other cultures of the world. "I am not in favour of shutting ourselves up completely in a Black world, in *négritude*. If we want an open window on to all races and all languages, we must also borrow from others."¹²

The women characters to be discussed in this chapter are N'Dèye Touti, Penda and Adjibidji from Les Bouts de Bois de Dieu; Rama, from Xala; and Tioumbé from Harmattan. Although there are differences in age, educational background, and inner struggles, they are linked by a common pattern of growth. Each of the women characters develops into a full dimensional character as she enters the moment of negativity. The characters develop in proportion to the expression of their "*négritude*" in the political arena. Although Les Bouts de Bois de Dieu was written in 1960, Harmattan in 1964, and Xala in 1973, Sembène has never disassociated himself from the political scene, which he sees as an integral part of all literature. He explains: ". . . One speaker said that literature should keep clear of politics. I do not agree. . . . We are speaking French and the word 'politique' means the affairs of the city and, it is impossible to discuss the art and culture of living men in isolation from the men themselves. . . . Every form of culture, especially literature, has its own ideology, so the problem is a political one."¹³

Sembène paints the characters more vividly as they embark upon a personal struggle for Africa. The women characters

may be more clearly discussed from the standpoint of their commitment to the African struggle than in chronological order. Each will be analyzed in regard to her connection to the dialectical progression in Sartre's Orphée Noir.

In Les Bouts de Bois de Dieu, we have selected three characters who represent, to a greater or lesser degree, the three phases of Négritude:

- 1.--the thesis--white supremacy. . . . N'Dèye Touti
- 2.--the antithesis--moment of negation (Négritude)
 . . . Penda
- 3.--the synthesis--contribution to humanism . . .

Adjibid'ji

N'Dèye Touti represents the moment of the thesis in Sartre's dialectic. As she embraces European ideas and envelops herself in a world of literary fantasies, she clearly illustrates her belief in the supremacy of "the Other." Sembène spends considerable time in this phase of the girl's development. We recall the emphasis placed upon her shame in the local compound and her sense of distance from the other women. The secondary characters in Sembène's stories, Mame Sofi, Ramatoulaye, Maimouna (Bouts de Bois), Mahn Kombéti (Harmattan), La Badiène (Xala), are often representative of only one aspect of the African personality. They serve to characterize the strong woman, the humorous old woman, the wise woman, the woman of mystical powers. These characters are numerous and important to the novels,

yet rarely demonstrate growth. The major women characters, however, are dynamic beings who experience different levels of character development. Although Sembène has disavowed himself from Négritude, per se, his most powerful women characters are precisely those who pass from the level of the thesis, to the moment of negation and finally arrive at the synthesis of universal harmony.

The author has artfully positioned the two suitors in N'Dèye's life, and has endowed each with a specific ideology. Beaugosse, the attractive young Wolof man, sees no future for the railroad strikers to hold out against the French administration. His goals are of a more immediate and practical nature. "Cette grève, c'est de la foutaise! Voilà deux mois que ça dure et on en est toujours à zéro."¹⁴ When asked by N'Dèye if he intends to relinquish his stand, Beaugosse can see only the immediacy of the present situation before him. "Et puis, on crève de faim!"¹⁵ The contrast of immediacy and futurity is subtle yet evident in the choice of words of both men. As Beaugosse speaks of exact figures (deux mois), (à zéro); his conception of the strike is a failure in spatial time. Although only slightly altering the verbal construction to render a sense of futurity, Bakayoko sees the strike in a long range success. "Il dépend de vous, travailleurs de Dakar, que nos femmes et nos enfants connaissent des jours meilleurs. Nous avons un rocher qui se dresse sur notre route, tous ensemble nous

pouvons le déplacer. En tout cas, les cheminots ne reprendront le travail que lorsque satisfaction leur sera donnée!"¹⁶ The use of the future tense implies the continuation of the struggle.

As author, one finds Sadjì often interspersed throughout his novels, either as interlocutor, narrator, offering advice to Nini or to Maimouna, or explanations to the reader. Sembène does not enter the novel as himself, and offers little explanation to the reader. However, we have been able to discover certain similarities between the author and his major character Bakayoko, in both physical portraiture and in political convictions. Flaubert suggested, it is reported, that his literary creation, Emma Bovary, was himself. Sembène does not pretend to enter into the psyche of the women he describes although the psychological portraits are uniquely apt. If he may be said to enter the story at all, particularly in Les Bouts de Bois de Dieu, it is through the figure of Bakayoko. Bakayoko represents the African who is both firm in his stand on traditional Africa, yet intent upon forging newer paths into the modern world. Interestingly enough, the author has used this character as a spiritual force which passes through a number of the women characters. In this manner, he may be compared to the African force NTU, (in Bantu philosophy) which is the life force present in the African ontological view of the universe. It is a

motivating force which breathes life into both animate and inanimate beings. As such, the spirit of Bakayoko reaches far beyond his actual presence. In the manner of Greek tragedy, he is not introduced into the novel until long after his name is spoken. His presence is nevertheless essential to the continuation of the strike in all three cities. Although this novel is one that essentially praises womanhood in Africa, each of the significant female characters has been touched either superficially or more intensely by the male figure Bakayoko. A brief diagram might thus be constructed to illustrate the pattern of relationships.

brief romantic
encounter with
N'Deye Touti

political companion
to Penda

BAKAYOKO

wife to
Assitan

son of
Niakoro

step-father
to Adjibid'ji

It is through Beaugosse's comments that we understand the spirit of Bakayoko, this solitary character who unifies many parts of the novel. "Quel était donc ce Bakayoko, on aurait dit que son ombre était sur chaque chose, dans chaque maison; dans les phrases des autres, on retrouvait ses phrases, dans leurs idées, ses idées à lui, et son nom même se répétait partout comme un écho?"¹⁷

Through the unyielding views of Bakayoko, Sembène is

thus able to criticize N'Dèye Touti. Unlike Sadjì, he creates little sympathy for this girl who has somehow been swayed from her roots. She is not portrayed as a victim, as was Nini, for there is still time for salvation. Bakayoko chides her for her insufficient reading habits and even questions her choice of literature. In reply to Beaugosse, who finds N'Dèye's literary world too engrossing, she offers: "Tu dis que je lis trop de livres! Bakayoko, lui, dit que je n'en lis pas assez ou que je lis de mauvais livres!"¹⁸ N'Dèye is therefore offered a choice between two individuals who represent either the present or the future of Africa. It is through her choice of Bakayoko that she is able to pass to the moment of negation and to enter into a period of self-affirmation.

N'Dèye's period of négritude is one that appears quickly and abruptly. It is in reaction to her total disappointment, as Bakayoko refuses her proposal of marriage. Although her plans are thwarted, N'Dèye eventually experiences a moment of self-rediscovery. She has emerged from a world of literary fantasies to one in which communal strength is accentuated. Her abrupt passage into this period is shown through Sembène's choice of words connoting time: "le passage de Bakayoko";¹⁹ "sa vie";²⁰ "des conséquences";²¹ "au moment de";²² "cette dernière entrevue";²³ "fièvre qui dura plusieurs jours."²⁴ Sembène, using his dramatic talents as cinematographer, causes N'Dèye's

self-revelation to occur after a dramatic fever has totally overcome the grief-stricken girl. Upon awakening she is renewed: "L'orsque la fièvre fut passée et malgré sa faiblesse elle fut prise d'une sorte de maladie du travail. Rien ne la rebutait, elle lavait, soignait les enfants, faisait de longues courses à la recherche d'une poignée de riz. Parfois elle restait des heures entières penchée sur un livre de géographie. De carte en carte elle apprenait son pays mais souvent encore un visage d'homme apparaissait au milieu des taches multicolores."²⁵ N'Dèye's new attitude was met with admiration from the other women in the compound, who still called her "Mad'mizelle," but with respect and affection.

Sembène softens the effect of some of N'Dèye's artificiality by equating this romantic tendency with her youth. Although the author does not develop a period of synthesis in N'Dèye's life, it is expected that this might possibly occur. N'Dèye is but the formation in the link that binds Africa to Europe in a positive manner. "Un matin que l'on cherchait du papier pour allumer le feu, elle alla prendre ses cahiers, sauf un qu'elle enfermait soigneusement et sur lequel, la nuit tombée, seule sous la lueur d'une bougie, elle écrivait un poème qui était un peu comme le chant de mort de sa jeunesse."²⁶

Sembène refers to Bakayoko as "L'âme de la grève." As such, it is interesting to note the impact he has upon

Penda, as well as N'Dèye. Although he had been in physical union with N'Dèye, he is in a spiritual and ideological one with Penda. Penda is a complex character who is primarily introduced during the period of the antithesis. She demonstrates no evidence that declares the supremacy of whites. One finds that in her status as a woman of easy virtue, she neither condemns nor extols her African authenticity. Initially a passive character, Penda appears one dimensional until she is developed during the moment of negation. There, she dons the cartridge belt of the soldier and leads the marching women to Dakar. She expresses some doubt as to her involvement in the strike of the men workers, given her previous attitude toward men. Here, she is questioned by Maimouna, "Tu n'aimes pas beaucoup les hommes et pourtant tu te bagarres pour leur grève. . . . Avant de s'endormir, Penda se posait parfois la même question: "Pourquoi me suis-je jetée dans cette affaire. Je n'ai rien à en retirer . . ." Mais elle s'endormait avant d'avoir trouvé la réponse."²⁷ The doubts eventually are calmed, however, and Penda shows more and more competence in the area of leadership.

In the role of leader, both of women and of men, Penda is subtly dissociated from her role as the prostitute. Sembène offers no criticism of her moral values. Instead, he focuses the reader's attentions away from this aspect of the girl's personality to bring it upon her more

positive qualities. The author's strong Marxist leaning is evident here, as he creates this militant woman figure from the lower elements of the African society and instills in her a series of higher goals. It is interesting to note that many of Sembène's women characters develop in strength as they shatter the confines of traditional "feminine" roles. His character portrayal of the female is unique in African literature of French expression, and reflects much of the Marxist philosophy of the woman in society. "The emancipation of woman will only be possible when woman can take part in production on a large social scale, and domestic work no longer claims anything but an insignificant amount of her time."²⁸ They approach men, not so much in physical appearance or attitudes (for the author has tried to keep the womanliness intact), but in their struggles. This new position invites them to participate in the physical world of women, but in the mental and intellectual association of men. One may see evidences of this "de-feminization" in N'Deye, who discards her illusions to join in the search for water and food, despite the adverse conditions. Penda leaves her promiscuous wanderings and takes up the rifle and the clenched fist. Adjibid'ji participates in the union meetings where, previously, only men were allowed. Rama defies paternal obedience and makes her stand against polygamy clear. Tioumbé relinquishes her personal needs for marriage

and children to fight for the political independence of her country. The personal concerns of the woman are clearly secondary.

As Sembène invites the woman to participate in the world of men and to assert her authority there, he sees no shame in men partaking in the traditional "world of women." In Les Bouts de Bois de Dieu, the strike is so well defined and requires such strength that total "engagement" is required. Bakayoko sharply reprimands Beaugosse for his lack of flexibility in regard to man-woman roles.

Je n'ai jamais été à Dakar à pied répondit Beaugosse, le visage fermé. De plus je trouve que ce n'est pas une histoire de femmes. Et puis il n'y a pas d'eau là-bas; quand je suis parti, Alioune et les autres camarades couraient la ville à la recherche d'une barricade où d'une bouteille d'eau, ce qui n'est pas un métier d'homme.

Bakayoko states: "Quant aux délégués de Dakar, qu'ils fassent la corvée d'eau, le temps n'est plus où nos pères pouvaient considérer cela comme une humiliation. Si tous les ouvriers avaient le même état d'esprit que toi, adieu la grève et les mois de sacrifices!"²⁹

Penda is firm in her position as leader of the women. It is here that she meets her death, however. As in the case of N'Dèye, Penda is not developed into the moment of the synthesis. We have already illustrated a parallel between Penda and Bakayoko and Kyo and May, in Malraux's La Condition Humaine. The parallel may be extended to include the sentiments of the male figures. Both Kyo and Bakayoko share the burden of freer sexual attitudes toward

their loved ones. May acknowledges her infidelity to Kyo, who, despite his beliefs, feels some disappointment. Bakayoko understands Penda's activities as prostitute, yet is not offended by them. Both men must face the decision to permit, or to invite, (as in the case of Kyo,) their women into the fraternity of death. Both are aware of the risks involved. Bakayoko feels that it is the responsibility of the men to help the women in their feats. Kyo expresses that this form of invitation into death is perhaps the most total expression of love possible. Despite their political commitment, both men have been able to enjoy a sense of freedom with their respective women. The complexities of both Kyo and Bakayoko are no enigma to May or to Penda. A sense of freedom permeates both relationships. Several lines of Malraux's work and of Sembene's novel reveal a similarity of expression:

Pour May seule, il n'était pas ce qu'il avait fait; pour lui seul, elle était tout autre chose que sa biographie . . . Depuis que sa mère était morte, May était le seul être pour qui il ne fut pas Kyo Gisors, mais la plus étroite complicité. 'Une complicité consentie, conquise, choisie' . . .³⁰

The lines in Sembène's novel are strikingly less poetic than those of Malraux. However, the reader does feel the strength of the bonds between Penda and Bakayoko. This link, which ultimately ends in the death of the young woman, emanates from what Bakayoko calls "le meilleur de lui-même."³¹ Theirs was not so much a struggle against the

solitude of man, as it was a struggle for Africa. Penda's development as a strong woman character takes full bloom in the phase of her negritude. Although it is there that she meets her end, the impression which the author leaves with the reader is one of permanence:

Penda, la fille facile, Penda, la meneuse
au pagne ceinturé.³²

Bakayoko has a marked effect upon the life of yet another woman, his step-daughter, Adjibid'ji. She cannot be considered a major character, as the author has devoted merely a few pages to her development in the novel. Adjibid'ji nevertheless offers an important message to the story. She represents the promise of the Africa to come, perhaps because she is young. She is presented at the beginning of the novel, and has a brief-lived role. Sembène presents her to the reader in the phase of the synthesis. Consequently, there is no need to develop her role any further. She represents a link between Europe and Africa which combines the qualities of each and neutralizes their respective faults. One senses a circular motion in this character, who represents the wisdom of her aged grandmother Niakoro, and the wit and intellect of her step-father Bakayoko, simultaneously. Sembène fuses the traditional spirit of the old woman into her granddaughter, as she passes from life. Adjibid'ji's respect for her elders and profound interest in them accentuates the positive qualities of traditional Africa, as projected by the author.

What distinguishes Adjibid'ji from the other women characters in the novel is this very ability to participate in the best of the two cultures, and with ease. Through Bakayoko's tutelage, Adjibid'ji has become familiar enough with French to use it fluently, although often scolded by Niakoro for not using Bambara exclusively. Furthermore, under the guidance of her stepfather, she has been made more acutely aware of the conditions of man, outside of Africa, yet not always fully understanding these issues. Her very precociousness and awareness thrust her into the world of the men. Sembène portrays the vivid scene of the young girl, eager to be among the men, as they rally around the cause of the railroad strike. This was a world in which she felt much comfort, and far more understanding than the ordinary young girl of her age. One easily understands why the men soon adopted her as the "sougoutou" of the union, (Wolof, for little daughter). Adjibid'ji has been encouraged by her father to read Malraux's La Condition Humaine, although her comprehension was necessarily poor. In this manner, Sembène invites the reader to construct certain additional similarities between it and Les Bouts de Bois de Dieu. Both are works whose authors were somewhat influenced by Marxist philosophies. Both are of political natures, although Sembène does not approach the aspect of the dilemma of the solitude of man. He does, in fact, emphasize the communal strength prevalent

in Africa; a strength which seems to grow in intensity as the theme of the railroad ventures from station to station. It is the very repetition of the movement of the train that forms a leitmotif in the story. Although the character of Adjibid'ji does not experience a profound development after her initial introduction, her role is nevertheless one of significance. The author utilizes her as an introduction to what will hopefully occur for African women; ". . . elle éprouvait qu'elle était libre, indépendante."³³ and for Africa; ". . . notre univers s'élargit."³⁴

Rama, the eldest daughter of El Hadji and his first wife, Awa, offers a significant contribution to the political commitment of the African women presented in Sembène's novels. Through a simplification of his style, Sembène has also simplified the characters in his novels. One is more visibly struck by the message they portray than by the descriptions within the works. Rama lacks the depth of the literary development of previous characters of note: N'Dèye Touti, Penda, Tioumbé, and Nafi. Since the author has directed most of the reader's attention toward the interrelationships of El Hadji and his three wives, Rama may only be considered as symbolic of the new energy of the African youth. She is presented on a superficial level, for there is little comprehension of the inner woman. Her emotional life is obscured somewhat while the author highlights her external self.

In Xala, the interrelationships of the characters are more difficult to define along the lines of Sartre's dialectical progression. We meet Rama as she is already in the phase of "négativité." The author offers no light whatever upon the search for self-awareness that may have preceded her introduction. The sense of Négritude that is projected is one of positive action as opposed to revolt. Set in a contemporary period in Senegal, Sembène causes the flow of militant energy to be directed in the direction of the inner African enemy and less toward Europe.

As a novelist, Sembène does not enter the story. His ideas, however, are apparent throughout. Rama has seemingly struggled with and overcome absolute paternal control. Locking horns with her dogmatic father on various political and familial issues, she shows that she is much less intimidated by his authority than the other women under his control (his wives, children). Similar to Penda and to Adjibid'ji, her stand and defiance of her father cause Rama to participate in the universe of men. Both parents are aware of this alteration of roles. Awa realizes that she has come to depend heavily upon her daughter. El Hadji regrets that Rama's spirit and forthrightness are wasted on her womanhood. He remarks: "Dommage qu'elle soit une fille! D'un garçon, il en aurait fait quelqu'un."³⁵ Not wishing to adhere to the wishes

of men, Rama is firm in her position against polygamy. Although her role is less fully developed than other women in the novel, there is a simplicity that is appealing and which serves to illustrate the irony of the more hypocritical El Hadji. Rama refers to herself as a "musulmane moderne";³⁶ while her father is considered a "musulman, non pratiquant."³⁷ Rama is pious in her Islamic faith yet intends to marry one man. El Hadji benefits from the Islamic law permitting multiple marriages, yet his beliefs are relegated to the level of the superficial. Sembène also uses the character of Rama to present a case for divorce in such an unhappy union. Rama attempts to convince her mother that life alone would be better than the half-existence she is enduring. This is to no avail.

Sembène doesn't concern himself with the chronology of the life of the character. We find Rama totally involved in the "moment de la négativité." Here, she serves as the mouthpiece for Sembène's political views. Her "engagement" causes her to reject the frequent usage of French, common among many Africans. Rama listens to the local radio station, and works actively to edit a newspaper "Kaddu," in the tongue of Wolof. In reply to her father's sarcastic scorn, she replies:

85% du peuple l'utilise. Il lui reste à savoir
l'écrire.
--Et le français?
--Un accident historique. Le wolof est notre
langue nationale.³⁸

Rama's reference to language is one that reflects Sembène's concepts. At numerous literary conferences, the author has stated that the African tongues must be incorporated into their educational system, or, ". . . our literature will still be subject to the control of other powers, or other people's intentions."³⁹ However, through the vehicles of Tioumbé, Adjibid'ji, Bakayoko, and Rama, he does not suggest linguistic isolation. Instead, he stresses mutual enrichment. Consequently, Rama does not rebuke the French language, rather considers it an accident of history, which must not obliterate African tongues.

Rama's is a role of positive action written in almost stark simplicity. There are few descriptive passages giving hints to her physical makeup. There is little denoting change in her emotional being, save the minor verb changes from the present, to the imperfect. The description of the area, countryside and interiors, so prevalent in other works, is also lacking here. Sembène has stripped the French he uses of its most impressive subtleties and turns of phrase. The level of simplicity he reaches reflects the simplicity of the African tongues of which he so often speaks.

It is interesting to note that in a character whose essence is "engagement," the climax of the story is one in which there is ultimate inactivity. The memorable scene in which the lepers and scoundrels of the streets of Dakar

surround the heretofore unrepentant El Hadji, demonstrates a complete cessation of movement. Rama's mother, Awa, is only able to function in silence; "elle . . . baissa les yeux. Elle pleurait."⁴⁰ Rama's ultimate gesture was one of determination, yet, ironically, of no real help to her father. Sembène describes it as the last positive movement: "Rama bouscula avec énergie la femme, qui alla s'écrouler près de l'homme tronc."⁴¹ The last verb used in the description is a descriptive one: "Adja Awa Astou et Rama avaient les larmes aux yeux."⁴² One senses Rama's helplessness in assisting her father and in comforting her mother. Despite her principles, her intentions, Rama seems trapped in the web of impotency which surrounds her father. Sembène suggests that even the innocent may be ensnared by the cancerous effect of the "xala." Impotency The grotesque ending of the story causes Rama to be unable to reach the synthesis of universal love, as suggested by Sartre.

The theme of political unity (as observed in the "moment de la négation") unites all of the female characters studied thus far. Of those, Tioumbé Harmattan is by far the most politically developed. Considering each from the point of view of awareness, it is Tioumbé who is most acutely conscious of the political needs of the African nation. Certainly the political setting changes within each novel, yet it is this woman alone whose

political commitment appears to be no accident of involvement. Although Sembène causes Penda to lose her life, N'Dèye to participate in the struggle for freedom, Rama to persist in the education of African traditions, and Adjibid'ji to serve as a bridge towards the future, we feel that it is Tioumbé who is the most "engagée" in the struggle for nationalism. Sembène has imbued this singular female character with much political awareness. Through the development of such characters as Tioumbé, the author seems to suggest that the success of Africa's independence is dependent upon considerable female participation. This concept reflects Lenin's thoughts on the role of women in society.

Up to the present, the position of women has been such that it is called a position of slavery. Women are crushed by their domestic drudgery, and only socialism can relieve them from this drudgery, when we shall pass on from small household economy to social economy and to social tilling of the soil.

Only then will women be fully free and emancipated . . .

It has been observed in the experience of all liberation movements that the success of a revolution depends on the extent to which women take part in it.⁴³

Penda, although a most courageous leader of the women, has already isolated herself from the traditional values of marriage and family. N'Dèye merely reacts to the unrequited love of Bakayoko. Adjibid'ji, although a promise of future harmony, does not actively participate in the struggle. Rama, although sincere, becomes ensnared in the web of

corruption of her father. Tioumbé appears to us to reflect the most profound of the women launched upon the political battlefield, since the reader is able to witness her struggle between her ideals and her traditions. The struggle enables one to penetrate the inner fiber of this woman and to expose her beliefs as well as her emotions.

More than any of the other female characters, Tioumbé represents a total political commitment to the struggle for African nationalism. Her personal achievements, as well as her attempts to politicize those around her, reflect clearly defined Marxist teachings. The active participation of female characters of the caliber of Penda, Rama and particularly Tioumbé, provide an intellectual and political buffer against those who are less politically aware (Oumi, N'Goné, Nafi, Ouighoué). Without this buffer, the ultimate success of African nationalism might be thwarted by those women who Stalin calls "slaves to ignorance."

The woman worker stands shoulder to shoulder with the man worker. She works with him in the common task of building our industry. She can help the common cause if she is politically conscious and politically educated. But she can ruin the common cause if she is downtrodden and backward, not, of course, as a result of her ill-will, but because of her backwardness.

.
 She can make an enormous contribution in this case if she frees herself of backwardness and ignorance. And the contrary is also the case: she could act as a brake on the whole cause if she remains a slave to ignorance in the future also.⁴⁴

Sembène presents Tioumbé in the midst of the moment of negation. The négritude, which the author has said he avoids, is nevertheless apparent. It takes many of the forms discussed previously; revolt; renunciation; affirmation; "la conscience noire." These often closely follow one another in a rapid progression of scenes. Sembène has interspersed Tioumbé's expressions of négritude throughout the novel, often causing her serious moments of inner torment. Sembène has arranged Harmattan in such a way that its panoramic scope, which encompasses the lives of many characters, on various sociological and economic levels, moves at a quick pace, yet does not detract from a full literary development of each role. He has been able to thread the vignettes along while not losing the central theme of African nationalism. The story of Tioumbé, her personal plight, her mother's, and father's lives, and the interrelationship of all three are written in such a manner that one is drawn into the network of lives, while not losing the essence of the other chapters. This style is reminiscent of the flow of chapters in Les Bouts de Bois de Dieu.

Tioumbé is decidedly firm in her political beliefs. There is no doubt as to her stand on the issues of politics, religion, and, interestingly enough, the independence of the woman. The author concentrates on dialogue or character description rather than the scenery he has portrayed in his

other novels. Contrary to N'Dèye, the refuge of the dream is absent here, for even Tioumbé's words are precise and rarely use the conditional tense. The path carved for her is as direct as that of Penda's, yet with considerably more emotional torment. Upon the rare occasion in which Tioumbé ventures into the realm of illusion, she does it merely to muster her resistance against the physical and mental floggings inflicted by her father. She visualizes her battle as not being with her father, but with the forces of imperialism.

Elle était convaincue qu'en broyant sa haine contre l'impérialisme, elle ammassait assez de force pour ne pas hurler. Elle se représentait un immense flot de sang, un océan de sang qui débordait la barre, escaladait les côtes, envahissait tout le continent. Au-dessus tanguait un navire négrier, la silhouette racée.⁴⁵

Tioumbé's négritude cannot be mistaken as she affirms her political position with precision. "Je milite pour l'indépendance."⁴⁶ ". . . C'est une question de vie, d'eau, d'aliments, de rires."⁴⁷ "C'est une question de tout le pays . . ."⁴⁸ Tioumbé is the only one of Sembène's women characters to declare her participation in the communist party, indicating the author's personal Marxist leanings.

Tu oublies que cette région n'est pas indépendante et que je suis membre du premier parti marxiste qui ait écrit le mot d'Indépendance, le premier à le prononcer dans cette partie de l'Afrique. En outre je suis responsable de cette région. Pour toi, pour moi, pour des milliers et des milliers de la Guinée, du Gabon, du Tchad, du Dahomey, du Soudan, toutes ces régions ne

font qu'une. Les impérialistes, en un sens, ne demanderaient pas mieux que nous leur laissions le terrain. Mais ça, non!⁴⁹

Much of Sembène's quarrel with religion in Africa has not been with the doctrines on the whole, but with those limiting aspects which they encourage. Harmattan is unique in that it delivers a battle against both Islam and Christianity, simultaneously. One also recognizes a third religious adversary of Sembène in the form of the zealot or the hypocrite, as with Moustaphe (Voltaire); Koéboeghi (Harmattan); El Hadji (Xala). The individual is stressed here more than the group as Tioumbé declares to her father: "Dieu est une affaire personnelle, Père, l'Afrique, une affaire à nous tout."⁵⁰ Finally, showing less tact and provoking the wrath of her father, she states: "Père, je ne crois pas au Christ."⁵¹

Sembène does not state his intention of portraying the independence of the African woman in the preface. Through his creation of Tioumbé, however, he has done just that. She is of a compassionate nature, yet is decidedly stronger than the men who surround her; her father, Sori, et al. Sembène's style is void of the nuances common to French literature, yet reflects a purity which is implicit in Tioumbé's character. She begins: ". . . je milite et c'est mon idéal."⁵² She continues: "Je suis ce que je suis."⁵³ She concludes: "J'ai besoin d'être libre."⁵⁴

The liberty she seeks is for Africa but must

necessarily reflect the liberty of the woman as well. The price she must pay is dear and not without anguish. It is difficult to break with her family. Tioumbé's conflict with her father is perhaps the easiest to comprehend. Koéboghi's final words, however, leave no room for reconciliation, and cause Tioumbé stress. "Je ne suis plus ton père. Je te renie."⁵⁵ Tioumbé resorts to physical violence. Certainly, an incident of such a nature as the fight between Tioumbé and her father is unique to African literature. The behavior of the young girl is such that she is shocked by her own act. Sembène explains: ". . . Son coeur battait."⁵⁶ The adjectives "épouvantée" and "condamnée" do well to describe Tioumbé's emotional state. Whereas Penda, N'Dèye, and even Sadji's Nini had chosen to isolate themselves from other members of their society, Tioumbé can be said to suffer more, as her anguish is formidable. She is torn by the belief in what she knows to be correct for the struggle for nationalism, and what she feels for her family. "Elle réprimait, dans sa poitrine haletante, un cri. Un cri de révolte contre elle-même, d'avoir violé l'ancienne structure familiale."⁵⁷ In order to portray the sensitivity of this young African girl, Sembène often depends upon his cinematographic talents to depict her emotions. He is able to create sadness, as Tioumbé's mother, devastated by her daughter's behavior, cries out: "Tu n'es qu'une fille perdue."⁵⁸

Much of the melodrama familiar to Sadji's descriptions are absent. There is even simplicity in the sadness. "Tioumbé, meurtrier, voyait sa mère partir. Elle resta plantée là. Ses larmes coulèrent."⁵⁹

Perhaps the most difficult of Tioumbé's tasks as an independent woman is her renunciation of her lover, Sori. Both of Sadji's women characters had been duly rejected in their pursuit of true love. Other women in Sembène's novels had either suffered rejection, (N'Dèye), abandonment (Maimouna, the blind woman), death (Penda), and eternal patience (Assitan). Tioumbé is the only one to have love at her fingertips and to renounce it for the common good of the continent. It is here that she appears her most powerful, for it is evident to the reader that her decision has been made with considerable difficulty.

--Yo! Sori, tu ne comprends rien! Rien
 . . . Crois-tu que ton départ me plaise? . . . Non
 . . . Mais je suis contente que tu retournes.
 J'ai souvent, très souvent souhaité que tu me
 dises: 'Tioumbé, je ne pars plus. Mais
 maintenant c'est bien que tu partes.⁶⁰

Deception in love had rendered N'Dèye a pouting, feverish, child who showed no interest in the striking men and women and hungry children surrounding her. In each of the vignettes that Sembène has woven together to form the entire story of Harmattan, the constant theme is that of "la liberté créatrice" in Africa. Tioumbé seems to garner some strength from this idea and uses it as nourishment to

replensih her weakened emotions. "D'un coup, Tioumbé semblait retrouver son aplomb. La déception sentimentale la rendait plus ferme."⁶¹ When questioned by Sori as to their life together, Tioumbé makes a rare reference to the future. Sembène deemphasizes the element of fate (prevalent in Sadjí's work) and chooses to stress the durability of their mutual affection. "Si on veut, et si c'est aussi fort que tu le dis, nous nous reverrons."⁶² As Tioumbé returns the conversation to what she refers to as "les choses sérieuses"⁶³ she clearly indicates that love must take a position of lesser importance, given the present political situation.

Often thwarted by external forces, few of the women in the novel have been able to reach the moment of the synthesis, as described in Sartre's Orphée Noir. As Tioumbé is fully engaged in her struggle for "négritude," or the unity of Africa, she cannot be said fully to reach the third phase of the dialectical progression. However, her concerns are not merely self oriented. Sembène suggests a communion with other women throughout the world. The element of universalism is clearly evident. The struggles of the African woman and the African people seem to merge with the mutual struggles of all oppressed peoples. "Tioumbé se demandait comment se seraient comportées dans la case les femmes qui militent de par le vaste monde."⁶⁴ The author utilizes a symbol of which he is fond, the

rhythmic motion of the silent caravan, (as in the locomotive of Les Bouts de Bois de Dieu) to portray the dignity of communal strength.

Depuis six heures, la caravane s'acheminait sur le sentier qui menait vers les pirogues. Une vingtaine d'hommes, un peu de tous les métiers, gagnaient la Guinée, devenue Terre Promise . . . Ils avançaient en silence, le coeur lourd, lourd d'espérance et de regret. La soif de liberté, cette liberté créatrice, allait pouvoir se changer en dignité. Le besoin insatiable de créer, de s'affirmer à leurs yeux, ce besoin qui, pendant des siècles, avait été étouffé, allait être investi pour leur cause.⁶⁵

As Sori and the other continue their march to Guinea, Tioumbé remains behind to work in her own territory. The scene is necessarily one of sadness. "Tioumbé se sentait fatiguée, le coeur endolori."⁶⁶ The reader is aware that Tioumbé has renounced father, mother, traditions, and lover for her work for Africa. As such, the fatigue she expresses is not of the type one feels at the end of a project, rather at its beginning. Much work remains to be done. Tioumbé's final remarks are: ". . . Va, Sori, la lutte continue . . ."⁶⁷ Although Sembène's literary creation appeared in 1964, one finds, in Harmattan, a comprehensive view of the African woman. The beginning pages invite the reader into the world of the traditional Mahn Kombéti and her herbal medicines. The final pages offer guidelines for the restructuring of a new Africa, with Tioumbé, the independent woman, as a key figure. The indication is subtle, yet unmistakable; "Elle marchait

entre Koffi et Digbé. Les autres venaient derrière . . ."68 The woman will become one of the significant leaders in the African struggle.

It is not surprising that Sembène has selected the political arena for his women characters, as they have been long involved in the political affairs of traditional Africa. Since colonization has particularly victimized the woman figure, it would seem important that she strive to combat some of the ill effects. While her struggle is one that is intended to rid Africa of the negative effects of colonialism and neo-colonialism, it attempts to liberate it from the overpowering restraints of traditional Africa, as well; paternal rule, polygamy, child-brides. Sembène has produced women characters who are aware of themselves as well as aware of the political situation surrounding them. They are able to accept responsibility and to generate a sense of leadership. The dynamic force which propells each woman into activity and which serves as a common link among them all is Négritude; "le moment de la négation."

Summary

In Sartre's Orphée Noir, he establishes dialectical progression which he uses as his basis for the analysis of Negro-African literature. This same progression serves as an interesting scale upon which one may study the political commitment of certain of the female characters in Sembène's

novels. The theme of political involvement is left untouched in Sadjì's works, both by the men and the women figures. It is therefore through Sembène's characters that this important element of African literature is revealed, for Sadjì's characters are limited to the first phase of *négritude* (the thesis), in which their existence depends solely upon a world created by European colonization.

Sembène's characters pass to the second phase of the dialectic (the moment of negation), wherein their roles are more fully developed. The female characters he has painted suffer less directly from European colonization, but are more immediately affected by the internal problems of Africa. Consequently, their growth is generated from within themselves. N'Dèye and Penda dramatically demonstrate this internal growth which takes place during the period of the antithesis. Sartre refers to this phase as the period of black consciousness. Due to N'Dèye's extreme sense of romanticism, she must be jostled ever so slightly, so as to remind her of the value of her own African heritage, she eventually arrives at this realization and takes an active role, along with the other women of the compound, in the spirit of the railroad strike.

Penda, as well as N'Dèye, is greatly influenced by the strong and politically astute Bakayoko. Here the author is able to enter the novel, through the role of

Bakayoko, and to illustrate those elements of the Marxist philosophy which he espouses. Classic examples of these are Penda and N'Dèye's participation with the masses, and an emphasis upon communal strength. The threads which intertwine the lives of these three characters are of both a political and emotional texture. Sembène does not restrict Penda at an emotional juncture in her life, rather he leads her on to develop a sense of leadership and a commitment to African nationalism. The humiliation of her role as prostitute is counterbalanced by her ultimate stand as a militant soldier of the people.

Rama and Tioumbé are characters who do not experience a moment of self-actualization during the course of the novel. One meets each of them at a stage most closely associated with the antithesis in the dialectical progression. They symbolize a sense of political awareness and commitment that the author has painted in favorable colors. Both women are sincere in their participation in the struggle for African nationalism. The aspect of négritude which they represent is less concerned with revolt from an external enemy, and more importantly with reconstruction from within the African society. In order to achieve this goal, they assume what has been traditionally known as the male role. They participate in the world of political ideas and ideals, advanced education, religious reform, fewer societal restrictions, implementation of regional

languages, membership in the communist party. These involvements are undertaken at a costly price to the emotional happiness of each character. Indeed, they are offered little security in their interrelationships with family, friends, lovers. The personal concerns of Rama and Tioumbe are secondary to the cause which unites them.

It is through his youngest character that Sembene's symbolization of the future of Africa and of the African woman may be seen. She embodies the elements of traditional and modern Africa, and simultaneously utilizes these to harmonize with certain values of the European culture. Consequently, Adjibid'ji represents the "moment of synthesis" in her novel. It is important that one view the female character in terms of a political hierarchy, for the author has used the dynamic forces of the women as a vehicle for sparking change and growth in Africa. The progression begins with N'Dèye, the most difficult of all to inspire along the path of black awareness, and ends with the key to an Africa which incorporates its own particularities with the elements of universality: Adjibid'ji.

¹L. Kesteloot, Les Ecrivains Noirs de Langue Française: Naissance d'une Littérature (Bruxelles: Université Libre de Bruxelles, 1965), p. 110.

²Ibid.

³Ibid., p. 113.

⁴A. Césaire, Cahier D'un Retour Au Pays Natal (Paris: Présence Africaine, 1968), p. 100.

⁵J. P. Sartre, Orphée Noir (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1948), p. xxix.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Kesteloot, op. cit., p. 121.

⁸Sartre, op. cit., p. xli.

⁹Ibid., p. xlii.

¹⁰G. Killam, African Writers on African Writing (London: Heinemann Books, 1973), p. 149.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Ibid., p. 150.

¹³Ibid., p. 149.

¹⁴O. Sembène, Les Bouts de Bois de Dieu (Paris: Presses Pocket, 1960), p. 105.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 338.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 110.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 107.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 346.

²⁰Ibid.

²¹Ibid.

²²Ibid.

²³Ibid.

- ²⁴Ibid.
- ²⁵Ibid.
- ²⁶Ibid., p. 347.
- ²⁷Ibid., p. 225.
- ²⁸The Woman Question: Selections From the Writings of Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, V.I. Lenin, Joseph Stalin (New York: International Publishers, 1975), p. 11.
- ²⁹Sembène, op. cit., p. 290.
- ³⁰A. Malraux, La Condition Humaine (Paris: Gallimard, 1946), pp. 46-47.
- ³¹Sembène, op. cit., p. 373.
- ³²Ibid.
- ³³Ibid., p. 20.
- ³⁴Ibid., p. 145.
- ³⁵O. Sembène, Xala (Paris: Présence Africaine, 1973), p. 127.
- ³⁶Ibid., p. 33.
- ³⁷Ibid.
- ³⁸Ibid., p. 142.
- ³⁹Killam, op. cit., p. 150.
- ⁴⁰Sembène, Xala, p. 170.
- ⁴¹Ibid.
- ⁴²Ibid.
- ⁴³The Woman Question, p. 43.
- ⁴⁴Ibid., pp. 64-65.
- ⁴⁵O. Sembène, L'Harmattan (Paris: Présence Africaine, 1964), p. 237.
- ⁴⁶Ibid., p. 73.

47Ibid., p. 273.

48Ibid.

49Ibid., p. 295.

50Ibid., p. 228.

51Ibid.

52Ibid.

53Ibid.

54Ibid., p. 243.

55Ibid., p. 275.

56Ibid.

57Ibid.

58Ibid., p. 296.

59Ibid., p. 297.

60Ibid., p. 295.

61Ibid., p. 297.

62Ibid.

63Ibid.

64Ibid., p. 291.

65Ibid., p. 297.

66Ibid., p. 299.

67Ibid.

68Ibid.

CONCLUSION

Senegal boasts numerous writers who have valiantly praised their African mothers, sisters, and wives. However, few have created as lasting and as finely chiseled portraits of the female character as Aboulaye Sadjì and Ousmane Sembène. The scope of these portraits ranges from mere superficial sketches to more profound psychological studies. The most significant feature of their work, and indeed, the very purpose of this study, has been to analyze the manner in which each author has revealed the inner world of African women, while highlighting her overall importance in African society. Although this dissertation was not intended to set the stage for a polemical discussion in which one of the authors will emerge the victor, much of our focus has been upon the contrasting views of the female character in the works of each. The essence of this study has been to show the multiplicity of roles that the African female has enjoyed in the novel. Although each novelist reflects a particular style, our aim has been to present two artists who have chosen to paint the same scene with different colors, and brushstrokes. The salient feature in these works has been their ability to penetrate the stereotype of the

exotic African female, in order to reveal a portion of the female soul. Both authors have created portraits of striking realism and sensitivity.

In order to review and analyze the treatment of the African female in Sadjì and Sembène's work, we have selected several categories which reflect the authors' view of traditional Africa: (a) the African mother, (b) the young woman, (c) the wife, and (d) women of mystic powers.

It is scarcely surprising that the female portraits presented in the works of the two Senegalese authors vary greatly, for, although each shared the urgency of the 1940's to declare his "négritude," the literary goals of both writers were clearly distinctive. It was the Martiniquan poet, Aimé Césaire, who stated that the foremost responsibility of Black men of culture was to hasten the process of decolonization of his people and of his land. As "hommes de culture," novelists Sadjì and Sembène share the burden of this significant responsibility. However, each author attempts to "decolonize" through different means, while addressing different audiences. While Sembène poses as the "Griot" of his people, and directs his works principally to the African, Sadjì writes to the European, so he may better see and understand the African plight. He states: "Le rôle particulier de la littérature dans la colonisation consiste donc à mieux faire connaître au

peuple colonisateur le peuple colonisé, sous l'angle de l'universelle humanité . . ."1

Both Sadji and Sembène stress the importance of strengthening ties with the beliefs and customs of traditional Africa. Sadji approaches the traditionality of Africa as a salve for the scarred emotions of those who have been injured by the evil of the urban areas. His painting of the Senegalese village life and the feelings of communal harmony that abound there are memorable. The detailed descriptions of the compound, the market life, food preparations, daily personal habits, communal festivities, joys, expectations and fears of the inhabitants offer the reader an accurate picture of the Senegal which Sadji knew well. In his portrayal of Yaye Daro, Mame Raki and N'Diaye, the African suitor in Nini, we have remarked a tendency to glorify and to thereby symbolize the goodness of the traditional African. The author has unequivocally condemned the evils of the city of Dakar, both for the innocent Maimouna and the less innocent Nini. Sadji's death in 1961 unfortunately curtailed the author's opportunity to extend his vision of the village/city opposition. His battle had been with the ill effects of colonization. Once the independence of Senegal was realized, further novels may have revealed a more harmonious view. In neither Maimouna nor Nini does the author offer evidence of an eventual co-existence of

traditional African ways and Westernization.

On the other hand, Sembène treats the world of traditional Africa with considerable respect, yet does not offer this as the only world in which the African, and indeed, the African woman, may exist. During his earlier novels, those which were written on the very brink of independence in Senegal, one notes the wisdom and pride in the female characters of a traditional mode. We recall Niakoro and Assitan. The author focuses the reader's attention upon this world, in order to reinstill pride in certain slowly eroding values. However one notes that even Niakoro and Assitan do not live isolated in the African past, for their peaceful existence is being disturbed by the advent of Westernization. They are called upon to recognize this fact, like it or not. Sembène differs fundamentally with Sadjì on this issue, for his presentation of traditional Africa and the Western world does not reject the possibility of an eventual harmonious existence between the two. Rama, Tioumbé and most importantly, Adjibid'ji are evidence of this.

In traditional Africa, the character who perhaps receives the most sympathetic treatment is the African mother. Sadjì tends to glorify this role, notably in Maimouna, where one finds Yaye Daro as the symbol of "good." Although she demonstrates the emotional concerns of a mother who truly loves her daughters (while neither Maimouna nor

Rihanna seem to return this love on the same level), there is relatively little penetration of the character beyond her role as "the mother." In this, she appears a merely functional character, in that she serves as reinforcement to the less emotionally secure Maimouna. Sembène's mother figures are equally endowed with a certain moral fiber (Assitan, Awa, Ouighoué), but demonstrate more inner emotional conflicts than Sadjì's Yaye Daro. In most cases, these conflicts were brought about by the ambiguous position of these women in the changing African society and by the desire of their daughters to forsake the village in order to venture into this newer society. Both Sadjì and Sembène portray the mothers as patient and loving, yet in several cases, it is Sembène who renders the older women dependent upon the strength of their young daughters. In the Awa-Rama, Assitan-Adjibidji and Ouighoué-Tioumbé combinations, one notes the harmony of the mother-daughter relationship, and the interplay of their strengths and weaknesses. In Sadjì's novels, it has been shown that the younger girls more readily display the frustrations of the changing society, while Sembène has reversed this pattern. It is the mothers in his novels who are often more dramatically tormented by these innovations. One senses an attempt on their part to try to cope with the changes, but in each case, their daughters (no matter how devoted they may be) have

chosen paths which the mothers are unable to comprehend. This is clearly a departure from the traditional African mode of kinship and development--where it is expected that a daughter mirror her mother and her's before her, without question.

Sadji has shown the traditional African mother to be a strong and steadfast individual. With his keen sense of contrast, he has portrayed the young woman in his novels as lacking in these qualities. Weakness was noted as a significant feature in the personalities of both Maimouna and Nini. The author makes it clear that he is, in no way, admonishing either girl. He depicts the youthful exuberance of the innocent Maimouna who finds herself overwhelmed by the excitement of her new urban life in Dakar. Nini is portrayed as less innocent, yet, nonetheless a victim of the forces of temptation which completely overpower her. It is not the young that Sadji seems to criticize, rather the menace of the cities and their powers of corruption. Both young women are lacking in sufficient strength to fend off this imminent evil. Maimouna is able to seek refuge in her traditional village society, comforted by her mother and companions, while for Nini, no refuge is provided.

Both authors have offered a character study of the female in an almost historical perspective. Their work reflects the periods of early colonization, independence and

finally neo-colonialism. The female characters they portray range from innocence (Maimouna), to victimization (Nini), to cultural ambivalence (N'Dèye Touti), to military strength (Penda), to national solidarity (Rama and Tioumbé). With the exception of N'Dèye, the young woman in Sembène's work is a relatively independent being. All of the young women are called upon to decide the course their lives should follow, despite an interesting series of influencing factors. It is interesting to note that the author has placed considerable power in the hands of the youth, and in particular, the woman. In this aspect, he differs with Sadjì who suggests that wisdom emanates only from the elders in the society: Yaye Daro, Mame Raki, Grand'mère Héléne, and Tante Hortense. Sembène allows a great deal of freedom for his young female characters. He has been innovative in this regard, for clearly the young woman in his novels enjoys a position of respect and independence that have been rare in Francophone literature.

As the young woman develops into the wife, Sadjì relies heavily upon the use of contrasts to complete his portraits. Within the traditional village life of Louga, one finds the devotion of the widow Yaye Daro; a devotion that extends not only to her daughters, but is a reflection of her marriage as well. In a culture in which marriage is a natural and functional occurrence, it is both surprising and significant that Yaye Daro has chosen

to remain a widow, devoting all of her time and energies to her market work and to the raising of her daughter. There is a subtle suggestion that one love has been sufficient for this woman. Her sincerity is sharply contrasted with that of her older daughter, Rihanna. Although Rihanna seems to care for her husband, she is quite impressed with the world of protocol and elitism in which they live. The reader wonders whether the hardened elder sister is not a future portrait of the younger one, if left amidst the evils of Dakar. The magnitude of this evil seems to have engrossed Rihanna completely, for very little of the naturalness of her traditional upbringing remains intact.

It is interesting to note the direct proportion between Sembène's portrayal of the young girl and the married woman. There is a sense of optimism present in the one, while there is a forboding feeling of desperation in the other. In lieu of having provided a center of refuge for many of the wives, Sembène shows that traditional African culture has often served to constrict and to suffocate them. The principals were essentially those of obedience and submissiveness which pervaded the worlds of Ouighoué, Assitan, Awa, and Noubé. It is from these very tendencies that their respective daughters chose to revolt. In essence, Sembène presents many of the married women in his novels as victims of a society which offers

them little space within which to breathe. Sadjí was merely able to describe the more superficial reactions of Yaye Daro and of Rihanna to Maimouna's pregnancy and to the ensuing events. The characters were too sketchy to do otherwise. On the other hand, Sembène allows the reader to view the inner emotional conflicts of the married women as they attempt, or at least struggle with the idea of changing their status in society. Ouïghoué and Awa offer excellent examples of these struggles.

An interesting note of similarity that is found in the work of both authors centers around the element of mysticism. Both of the novelists depict the significance of the supernatural in the corpus of the traditional community. It is considered a most natural way of life for such village women as Yaye Daro, Mame Raki in Maimouna, and Mahn Kombéti in Harmattan. Sadjí relies heavily upon Islamic philosophy in Maimouna and upon the Christian ethic in Nini; while in all of Sembène's works one notes the presence of the Islamic influence. Interestingly, the presence of these religious beliefs has not lessened the strength of the traditional African belief in animism in the works of either author. It is also significant to note that the advent of Westernization has only served to slightly attenuate these beliefs rather than to dispell them entirely, as may have been expected. This admixture of religions, called syncretism, is a vital part of the

African culture, and is reflected in the literary worlds of both Sadjì and Sembène. Nini, Maimouna, Harmattan, and Xala offer numerous examples of this phenomenon.

While Sadjì and Sembène embraced the values of traditional Africa, the introduction of Westernization into the African society is an essential theme in both of their works. Sadjì is unequivocal in his presentation of Westernization as having had a deleterious effect upon the African and particularly upon the woman figure. Urbanization has helped to uproot her and her family causing a departure from traditional societal mores. As an example, neither Maimouna nor Rihanna were able to uphold the stable values they had been taught by their mother in the village of Louga. Nini's sense of values bears no resemblance to those roots which were once hers and which linked her to the Maimounas and the Rihannas of Senegal. Sadjì presents the problem of Westernization, as illustrated by his tormented female characters, yet does not venture to offer solutions for its powerful sorcery. Instead, he merely offers refuge within the traditionally sound walls of the villages. He has created Yaye Daro, Mame Raki, and perhaps the repentant Grand'mère Hélène as the sole female characters representative of the stability of African values. The other female characters represent the emotional strain of the ambivalence of their two worlds. These characters are constructed of fragile

materials and give the impression of weakness, for although caused by external forces, their lack of strength of character depicts a deterioration of African pride.

Sembène has been equally emphatic in his presentation of the element of Westernization and its negative effects upon the life of the African woman. However, the two authors differ fundamentally in their overall message. Exposure to the western world and its ways has created the emergence of a new woman in Sembène's novels. Most of these are dynamic characters who simultaneously embody a respect for the traditional past while displaying courage enough to break ties with that very world, if necessary. This sense of movement and dynamism in these female figures may be said to symbolize the overall picture of change and growth which the author visualizes for the African nation itself. We recall Adjibid'ji, Penda, Rama, Tioumbé, as just such women in motion. Of the few static characters described in the novels, (that is, those whose entire worlds are focused upon the past), Sembène highlights their ultimate decline into that past (Niakoro, Ouighoué), or their self-destruction (Oumi, N'Goné, Diouanna). For the more active of Sembène's female characters, each is called upon to make a choice, or to declare her "engagement" in life. The author has attempted to penetrate the female mind in order to disclose the torment which often plagues his characters. Thus, Sembène highlights the problematic

character who relies heavily upon introspection in order to exist, while Sadjì's female characters were more superficial in structure.

In our analysis of the traditional aspects of the works of Sadjì and Sembène, we approached the study from the point of view of various categories of women figures (i.e., the mother, the young girl, the wife, the women of mystic powers). While these same characters exist in the Westernized societies of Africa, this conclusion will shift its attention to an analysis of certain themes which have been treated by both writers. These are (a) religious restrictions, (b) love and eroticism, (c) parental ties and (d) political commitment.

Religion is not used as a central theme in the works of either author, although its overall effect is essential to the dramatic portrayal of the female characters. The Islamic faith of both Sadjì and Sembène may be considered only as a common denominator between the two writers, for they differ fundamentally in their personal interpretation as well as in its treatment in their novels. Sadjì offers a positive view of Islam, which may be seen in the sincere and reverent *Yaye Daro*. In Maimouna and in Nini the characters rely heavily upon fatalism and a pre-ordained series of events during the course of their lives. By offering no criticism of the Islamic faith, Sadjì continues to reinforce his pattern of the total glorification of

traditional Africa.

Although trained in the Muslim faith, Sembène hardly paints it in a positive light. He portrays the system as a binding one, both in traditional and modern Africa, which has led to the mental suffocation of numerous women. One vividly recalls the plight of Noumbé, Ouighoué, and Awa. Each was sincere in her faith, but ultimately weakened by it. A key element in the Islamic faith is that of the polygamous marriage. The author takes a strong position against polygamy as he evokes pity for those women who were destroyed by it, and empathy for those who attempted to rebel against it. Both Sadjì and Sembène incorporate the element of syncretism in their respective novels. Indeed, the coexistence of the traditional African animistic beliefs and the religions of the Western world are harmoniously portrayed. The writers are at ease as they create a literary admixture of priests, imams, feticheurs, and marabouts. While Sadjì and Sembène have often differed in their presentation of Senegal, it is significant to note that in this instance both tend to suggest that the power of belief in the world of animism is a permanent and genuine feature of the African corpus of beliefs.

The themes of love and eroticism are decidedly important elements in Sadjì's novels. In fact, much of the characterization of Maimouna and Nini, depend directly upon

their sensual and emotional involvements with various men. Sadjì offers the element of love to his characters, yet places it just beyond the reach of both of his female protagonists. Although viewed from different perspectives, there is much that unites Maimouna and Nini. Each young woman longs for sincere affection, each is attracted by a more or less forbidden fruit (Maimouna-DouDou Diouf; Nini-Martineau), and upon tasting it, each must undergo a type of moral castigation. Although Sadjì makes it clear that he does not blame the women for their distorted sense of values, their banishment from the flock of "good and authentic Africans" is nonetheless undeniable.

The theme of love is an important part of the lives of most of the women in Sembène's novels, as well. However, his female figures may be distinguished from Sadjì's in that they are not controlled by this emotion. There is both desire and need expressed by N'Dèye Touti, Nafi, Rama, Tioumbé, yet one does not sense the longing for affection of a Maimouna or a Nini. Romantic love between a particular man and woman is not of primary importance to Sembène's women. It is overshadowed by the more exigent concerns of love of family, of fellowman, and love of nation. One vividly recalls Penda, Tioumbé, and Rama, who were willing and prepared to renounce sentimental love for the tasks before them. We may conclude that the element of love in Sembène's novels makes rather than breaks

the spirit of the woman.

The strength of the family unit, and its importance in the establishment in the African sense of self, has been treated as a major theme in the writings of Franco-phone literature. Both Sadjì and Sembène incorporate this theme into their works. The concerns of the "family" (whether nuclear or extended) are subtly woven in and around the events in the lives of the characters. Sadjì threads this theme ever so loosely around the lives of Maimouna and Nini, for neither girl pauses to think of family before self. In fact, the family structure, if not renounced, was surely disregarded for personal gain. This was demonstrated by Maimouna, who sought adventure, her sister Rihanna, who sought money and position, and by Nini, who desperately pursued love.

Sembène has not presented the African family as an indestructible unit, although he clearly points out its significance. Several of the female characters are called upon to take a stand opposing their families, however, the family appears a more stable structure than in Sadjì's novels. Although the result of the destruction of the family may be similar, the causes differ considerably. In order to renounce the family, Sembène's female characters are plagued by much introspection and soul-searching. The causes for such a drastic step are not of a personal nature, rather, are representative of a political or

ideological difference. The break is more likely to occur only when traditional Africa is unable to adjust to the newer forces of modernization. Perhaps the most memorable of Sembene's characters to illustrate this point is Tioumbe. Indeed, it is difficult not to recall the emotional pain that was hers as she felt impelled to take a stand against her parents, and notably against her mother.

In the political arena, one notes that Sadji has not imbued his female characters with a sense of political commitment, although he stresses the good of the traditional African life before the implementation of colonization. This focus upon the transition of an "untouched" or "authentic" society into a "hybrid" one is accomplished by merely alternating scenes from village to city life, with little explanation as to the origin of these political changes. Indeed, it may be noted that no where throughout Sadji's novels does he malign the Frenchman, or the European in general. The only evidence he offers the reader as to the effects of the colonial system is through the change in character of the women who have strayed from the traditional roots and have assimilated colonial ways. It is important to note, that although Sadji had stated as one of the goals of African literature to "hâter la décolonisation,"² his female characters do not actively participate in its downfall. Through the negative tones with which the author paints his characters, one may

conclude that Sadjì visualizes the female as a victim of this system, powerless against its forces. While he offers no real solution for the problem, he focuses the attention of both African and European upon the psychological consequences of the colonial system on the female psyche.

Sembène has also portrayed the African woman as a victim of the colonial system. Her abrupt transition from the traditional to the modern world have frequently produced in her a distorted set of values (Oumi, N'Dèye Touti) or have sown the seeds of self alienation (Diouanna). Through such sharp portraitures, both authors have established a firm case against colonization in Africa.

The single feature which distinguishes the female characters in Sembène's work from those created by Sadjì, lies in the element of "engagement." Although Sadjì's creations are vivid and authentic, they lack the dynamism evident in Sembène's work. While Sadjì describes the situation, Sembène both describes and suggests change. This change, for the most part, is invested in the hands of the women themselves. It is the very concept of participation which most clearly differentiates Sadjì and Sembène's interpretation of the female character. Indeed, Sembène's female characters may be termed unique in that they are encharged with a sense of active involvement with Africa's political transitions. Much of this philosophy reflects

the author's espousment of the Marxist view of the female role in society. These new roles often lead to positions of leadership in the African society. It is in the vivid descriptions of Penda and Tioumbé that this is made most evident. Through such portraiture, Sembène creates a position of power for the female character. He invites her to take an active role in the political reconstruction of her continent. Thus he suggests that the condition of women may only see change if the condition of Africa is ameliorated. Sembène essentially paints his characters in optimistic tones and shows that the African woman is forging newer paths for herself in the future of Africa, both as an integral part of the family structure and as an individual. He charges the female characters with a sense of responsibility and offers them the promise of an even greater role in the construction of Africa's future. Indeed, Sembène's novels reflect a new breed of African womankind; prepared to face the demands of the times. The central theme of Les Bouts de Bois de Dieu reflects this new breed of woman:

Un matin, une femme se leva, elle serra
fortement son pagne, autour de sa taille et dit:
---Aujourd'hui, je vous apporterai à manger.
Et les hommes comprirent que ce temps,
s'il enfantait d'autres hommes, enfantait aussi
d'autres femmes.³

Our analysis of the presentation of the female character in the works of Sadjí and Sembène has enabled

us to approach this theme from the aspect of the particular. The authors have focused our attention upon those elements in the lives of their female characters which most clearly reflect the worlds from which they emanate: Senegal; the colonial era; the Islamic faith; a polygamous culture; an ambivalent society which simultaneously reflects African traditional mores and a psychological dependency upon French culture. Yet, the specificity of these elements in no way limits the broader scope of these female characters. The Senegal in the lives of Nini or Tioumbe is no more restricting than the Rouen of Emma Bovary; the Paris of Nana; or the Argelouse of Thérèse. These classic French characters have reached a level where they have achieved a status of the universal type, while little of their individuality is sacrificed. The African female characters of Sadjì and Sembène may be considered an essential part of these universal female types in literature. The universalism which they depict is an important element in the theories of both authors, and more importantly, essential to the very structure of all literature of Black Africa. For, in effect, literature and the novel, are at the service of all men. "Le roman n'est pas seulement . . . témoignage, description mais action, une action au service de l'homme, une contribution à la marche en avant de l'humanité."⁴ The value of these female characters far surpasses the mere boundaries of Senegal. Clearly, the

political and racial aspects of the lives of the women might otherwise reflect any country in Black Africa, the Caribbean or possibly the United States. However, it is upon the broader level of their womanhood that a link is formed between the African woman and other women of the world. The authors have succeeded in showing that there are few racial, geographical, or political limitations to the inner emotional world of the female character. One need not have suffered as Nini, Maimouna, Noumbé, or N'Dèye Touti in order to empathize with their emotional needs.

In presenting the very authenticity of their characters, Sadjì and Sembène have provided their portion of the African cultural contribution to universal literature. Cheik Hamidou Kane speaks of this contribution as the essential responsibility of the African writer. "It is the task of the writers to work for the creation of a literature which, backed by African cultural tradition, will appeal before all else to the intelligence and sensitivity of Africans: a literature whose value will only be recognized throughout the world if it is truly representative of the aspirations and aesthetic expression of the people."⁵

In its initial stages, African literature had certain specific goals. Many of the earlier works were created in the phase of the Sartrian dialectic of Négritude, which he refers to as the phase of "négativité."

There was considerable anger, condemnation of the "Other"; and especially declaration of "le Nègre." With the passing of the years, there has been a shift in the literary goals of the newer generation of writers. The African writer no longer needs to declare himself essential to the rest of the world. The task of the writer is now twofold: it encompasses a personal engagement on the part of the author to help in the reconstruction of his country, and a broadening of the African perspective. Sembène states: ". . . je pense que j'écris surtout pour les autres, pour mon pays d'abord, pour la société humaine ensuite . . . Je n'aime pas à être un témoin, je désire participer à la construction de mon pays et à l'édification de la société humaine."⁶ The African writer must therefore address himself to the particular, while keeping in mind the ultimate goal of reaching the universal. Senghor speaks of this phenomenon as a "co-naissance" of the Black African within the rest of the world. "Parce qu'il se sent, il sent l'Autre; et parce qu'il sent l'Autre, il va vers l'Autre, sur le rythme de l'Autre pour connaître à Lui et au monde. Ainsi, l'acte de con-naissance est "accord conciliant" avec le monde, conscience et création en même temps du monde dans son indivisible unité."⁷

It must be stated that although African literature and the literatures of the world co-exist in a harmonious setting, it is hardly the "indivisible unité" of which

Senghor speaks. Sartre also mentions a similar goal of the writer which would permit him to write freely in a society without cleavages; "une société sans classes."⁸ This represents an ideal situation; one which the conditions of the world and of human nature find difficult to realize, at this time. "Bien entendu, il s'agit d'une utopie: il est possible de concevoir cette société mais nous ne disposons d'aucun moyen pratique de la réaliser. Reste qu'elle nous a permis d'entrevoir à quelles conditions l'idée de littérature se manifestait dans sa plénitude et dans sa pureté."⁹ Sartre explains that these conditions do not exist at present, yet, that it is today that one must write. The ultimate goals of the writer and of his work have not yet been reached. Much remains to be done.

We may conclude that the novels of Sadjí and Sembène have served to provide a significant cultural contribution from Africa to the rest of the world. Their works reveal the inner world of the African woman, both to those within and to those outside of the boundaries of the African continent. The literary heroines they have created have become classic figures in the literature of Africa, and also embody universal female types. The contribution is indeed significant, yet the overall input of the African writer is far from terminated. Through his literary efforts, he must continue to scratch through the

hardened stereotypes and myths, to uncover both the positive and the negative truths he finds there, in order to reveal them to his own people as well as to the rest of the world. From its very inception, Black African Franco-phone literature, indeed Négritude, has been charted upon a path of reciprocity. The point of departure was the Black man seeking truth through self-revelation, yet the overall direction of his search was aimed beyond the African continent, the African people or the African self. We recall Sartre's prediction for Négritude.

. . . car la Négritude n'est pas un état, elle est pur dépassement d'elle-même, elle est amour . . . Il (l'homme de couleur) est celui qui marche sur une crête entre le particularisme passé qu'il vient de gravir et l'universalisme futur qui sera le crépuscule de sa négritude; celui qui vit jusqu'au bout le particularisme pour y trouver l'aurore de l'universel.¹⁰

Aime Césaire, the originator of the very word "Négritude," uses his classic poem Cahier D'un Retour Au Pays Natal to express the ultimate direction of the Black African cultural contribution.

.
 car il n'est point vrai que l'oeuvre de l'homme
 est finie
 que nous n'avons rien à faire au monde
 que nous parasitons le monde
 qu'il suffit que nous nous mettions au pas du monde
 mais l'oeuvre de l'homme vient seulement de
 commencer
 et il reste à l'homme à conquérir toute interdiction
 immobilisée aux coins de sa ferveur
 et aucune race ne possède le monopole de la beauté,
 de l'intelligence, de la force
 et il est place pour nous tous au rendez-vous de la
 conquête . . .¹¹

¹A. Sadjí, "Littérature et Colonisation," Présence Africaine, 6 (1948), 139.

²Ibid.

³O. Sembène, Les Bouts de Bois de Dieu (Paris: Presses Pocket, 1960), p. 65.

⁴J. S. Alexis, "Débat Autours des Conditions d'un Roman National Chez Les Peuples Noirs: Où va Le Roman?" Présence Africaine, 13 (1957), 96.

⁵G. D. Killam, African Writers On African Writing (London: Heinemann Books, 1973), p. 70.

⁶O. Sembène, "Le Roman Négro-Africain," Notes Africaines, no. 138 (1970), 49.

⁷L. S. Senghor, Liberté I: Négritude et Humanisme (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1964), p. 216.

⁸J. P. Sartre, Qu'est-ce que la littérature? (Paris: Gallimard, 1948), p. 195.

⁹Ibid., p. 196.

¹⁰J. P. Sartre, Orphée Noir (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1969), p. xlii.

¹¹A. Césaire, Cahier D'un Retour Au Pays Natal (Paris: Présence Africaine, 1968), p. 34.

APPENDIX A

RESUME OF NOVELS

SADJI, Aboulaye (1910-1961)

1. Nini 1947

Story of a young Senegalese mulâtresse, torn by self-hatred. Spends entire novel searching for reinforcement of white aspect of self. Only means of self-actualization is through marriage to "un français." Sadji shows strains of African past in girl's background (dance, rhythm, passions, etc.) masked under studied and plastic gestures of Western world. Her over zealousness in regards to the Frenchman, leads to demoralization. Dream not fulfilled--she nevertheless entertains visions of a life abroad.

2. Maimouna 1958

Young girl from small village in Saint Louis, Senegal. Lives with mother (Yaye Daro), a market woman. Married sister, Rihanna, who lives in Dakar, entices Maimouna to come for extended visit. (Part II) Life in Dakar, amidst evils and temptations of urban life. Maimouna succumbs to passions; has love affair with young

"Westernized" African. Leaves city in shame (due to pregnancy), to return to village to live alongside mother. She is stricken by smallpox; loses both the baby and her physical beauty. Finally resolves to live life of a market woman, accepting her fate.

3. Tounka 1946

Short story based upon legend of Casamance region of Senegal. Story traces mythical journey of land people known as "Lébou," who eventually become well-known fishermen. Central character, N'Galka, hero figure of his people, chooses a princess of the sea, Goudi, to be his wife. Their marriage produces a boy child, Tounka, who embodies strengths and weaknesses of the sea people and the land people. Jealousies and rivalries among the two peoples form the basis of the story. Sadjì uses the mode of the legend to depict the emotional struggles of man, while also highlighting the strength of the African belief in mystical powers.

SEMBENE, Ousmane (1923-)

1. Les Bouts de Bois de Dieu 1960

Considered a classic among author's works. Focuses upon political situation in Senegal. Story based upon a factual strike of railroad workers along Dakar-Niger line, 1947-48. Scenes, as chapters appear to be, move rapidly

between Bamako, Thiès, and Dakar. Interesting aspect of novel is that central roles are dedicated to women behind the men in this endeavor. Does not present men characters as weak, yet does emphasize role of women in achievement of African independence. Characters are too numerous to mention here, however, some that are stressed are:

N'Dèye Touti--assimilated into French society
 Ramatoulaye--strong-willed, traditional backbone
 Penda--prostitute, committed political activist
 Assistan--traditional "passive" wife
 Adjibid'ji--future of Africa, combines best of
 both worlds

2. Voltaire 1962

Among these short stories, we have selected those which best represent the emotional and psychological development of the women characters, both isolated and in society.

A. "Devant l'Histoire"

Story reflects break in values between traditional and Westernized African lifestyle. Position of woman (Sakinétou) vis-à-vis husband (Aboulaye) comes into question. Lack of precision in their lives is equated to same in Africa at that time.

B. "Ses Trois Jours"

Fairly lengthy (thirty-three pages). Reveals emotional conflict of an African woman of Muslim faith (Noumbe), bound by tradition to whims of husband (Moustaphe). Feels pangs of unjust world she must live in. Her suffering reaches a peak as she breaks (although only slightly) with religious concepts. She stands up to husband and confronts him with his blatant disrespect for her. Also a good example of the feeling of collectivity "entre femmes."

C. "Lettres de France"

Story of Nafi, young Senegalese girl, given in marriage to seventy year old man, Demba. Interesting point is that they live in Marseille, in grim surroundings, forcing her to relate her entire emotional experience by letter, to a friend at home. Story is vibrant, "mouvementé," yet clearly depicts a conflict in the emotional world of the woman trapped between traditionalism and Westernization.

D. "La Noire de . . ."

Classic--made into prize-winning film. Story of young Senegalese girl, (Diouana) who serves as "au pair" for French family in Dakar. Pleased with situation, she agrees to return with them to France, where she feels that she would enjoy working in a country that she has longed to

visit. Once on French territory, she is exploited fully, both by Monsieur et Madame and friends. Her misery is such that it may only be relieved through suicide. Story rich in imagery, psychological development. Evidence of colonization apparent.

3. Harmattan 1964

Complex story set amidst political upheaval in West Africa, during period 1958-60. Allusions made to Guinea (Referendum of 1958) although geographical location remains fictitious. Several sociological levels of Africans represented: bourgeoisie, peasantry, revolutionaries. It is interesting to note Sembène's emphasis upon the constraints of polygamous marriages and their effect upon women. Ouighoué, (principal example of subjugation); domineering husband (Moustaphe). Out of this union, however, emerges Tioumbé, young, politically aware African girl, willing to break traditions for the convictions of her beliefs. She leaves home, and disobeys father. Story shows need for continuation of African struggle and important role played by women in this endeavor.

4. Xala 1973

Latest of Sembène's novels; recently released in film version. Depicts Senegal in modern setting. Encompasses various sociological levels: government officials, businessmen, peasantry. Several influences in the novel are the

effects of neo-colonialism, Islam, traditional African beliefs (particularly in the area of fetichism and magic). Women selected for analysis are representative of all of these phenomena:

Awa--traditional wife; Islam; obedience

Oumi--Westernized African; bourgeois; shallow

Rama--young political activist; committed to
African nationalism

La Badiène--powers of supernatural

Novel offers emotional portraits of the women characters and reveals deep emotional conflicts.

APPENDIX B

TABLE OF FEMALE CHARACTERS DISCUSSED IN
WORKS OF SADJI AND SEMBENE

Character	Novel	Setting	Time
Adjibidji	<u>Bouts</u>	Bamako	1940's
Assitan	<u>Bouts</u>	Bamako	1940's
Awa	<u>Xala</u>	Dakar	1970's
Diouanna	<u>Voltaïque</u>	Antibes	1950's
Goudi	<u>Tounka</u>	Cayor	--
Grand'mère Hélène	<u>Nini</u>	St. Louis	1940's
La Badiène	<u>Xala</u>	Dakar	1970's
Mahn Kombéti	<u>Harmattan</u>	--	1950's
Maimouna	<u>Maimouna</u>	Dakar	1940's
Maimouna	<u>Bouts</u>	Dakar	1940's
Mame N'Dack	<u>Tounka</u>	Cayor	--
Mame Raki	<u>Maimouna</u>	Louga	1940's
Nafi	<u>Voltaïque</u>	Marseilles	1950's
N'Dèye	<u>Bouts</u>	Dakar	1940's
N'Goné	<u>Xala</u>	Dakar	1970's
Niakoro	<u>Bouts</u>	Bamako	1940's

APPENDIX B--Continued

Character	Novel	Setting	Time
Nini	<u>Nini</u>	St. Louis	1940's
Noumbé'	<u>Voltaire</u>	--	1950's
Ouighoué'	<u>Harmattan</u>	--	1950's
Penda	<u>Bouts</u>	Dakar	1940's
Rama	<u>Xala</u>	Dakar	1970's
Rihanna	<u>Maimouna</u>	Dakar	1940's
Tante Hortense	<u>Nini</u>	St. Louis	1940's
Tioumbé'	<u>Harmattan</u>	--	1950's
Yacine	<u>Maimouna</u>	Dakar	1940's
Yaye Daro	<u>Maimouna</u>	Louga	1940's

APPENDIX B--Continued

Character	Age	Mar. Stat.	Ethnic Grp.	Lang.	Rel.	Man
Adjibidji	8-11	S	Bambara	Fr/ Bam.	Is.	--
Assitan	25-30	M	Bambara	Bambara	Is.	Bakayoko
Awa	35-40	M	Wolof	Wolof	Is.	El Hadji
Diouanna	18-22	S	Wolof	Fr/Wol.	Is	--
Goudi	--	M	legend	Lébou	none	N'Galka
Grand'mère Héléne	55-60	W	Fr/Sen.	Fr/Wolof	Cath.	--
La Badiène	55-60	W	Wolof	Wolof	Is.	--
Mahn Kombéti	50-55	W	--	trad.	Is.	--
Maimouna	30-35	S	Wolof	Wolof	Is.	Dou-Dou
Maimouna	13-17	S	Wolof	Wolof	Is.	DouDou/ Galaye
Mame N'Dack	70-75	W	Lebou	Lébou	Is.	--
Mame Raki	55-60	W	Wolof	Wolof	Is.	--
Nafi	20-23	M	Wolof	Fr/Wol.	Is.	Demba/ Arona
N'Dèye	20-23	S	Wolof	Fr/Wol.	Is.	Bakayoko/ Beaugosse
N'Goné	20-25	M	Wolof	Wolof	Is.	El Hadji
Niakoro	65-70	M	Bambara	Bambara	Is.	Fa Keita
Nini	22-25	S	Fr/Sen.	French	Cath.	Martineau/ N'Diaye
Ouighoué'	45-50	M	--	trad.	Is.	J. Koéboghi
Penda	21-25	S	Wolof	Wolof	Is.	Bakayoko
Rama	19-23	S	Wolof	Fr/Wol.	Is.	Pathé

APPENDIX B--Continued

Character	Age	Mar. Stat.	Ethnic Grp.	Lang.	Rel.	Man
Rihanna	20-25	M	Wolof	Wolof	Is.	Bounama
Tante Hortense	50-55	S	Fr/Sen.	French	Cath.	--
Tioumbé	20-25	S	--	Fr/trad.	atheist	Sori
Yacine	25-30	S	Wolof	Wolof	Is.	--
Yaye Daro	50-55	W	Wolof	Wolof	Is.	--

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Achebe, Chinua. "The Novelist as a Teacher." New Statesman, 29 (1965), 161-62.
- Achiriga, Jingiri. La Révolte des Romanciers Noirs de Langue Française. Ottawa: Editions Naaman, 1973.
- Aléxis, Jacques-Stephen. "Débat Autour des Conditions d'un Roman National chez les Peuples Noirs - Où Va Le Roman?" Présence Africaine, 13 (1957), 81-101.
- Ames, David W. "The Economic Base of Woloff Polygyny." South Western Journal of Anthropology, 2 (1955), 21-27.
- Amob, Margaret. African Women Speak. Togo: Regional Seminar of World Union of Catholic Women's Organizations, 1958.
- Anciaux, Léon, et al. La Femme Noire Vue par Les Ecrivains Africanistes. Brussels: Académie Royale des Sciences d'Outre-Mer, 1967.
- Andreski, Iris. Old-Wive's Tales: Life Stories of African Women. New York: Schoken, 1971.
- Anonzié, Sunday O. Sociologie du Roman Africain: Réalisme, Structure et Détermination dans le Roman Moderne Ouest-Africain. Paris: Tiers Monde et Développement, 1970.
- Appia, Béatrice. "Superstitions Guinéennes et Sénégalaises." Bulletin de IFAN, 2 (1940), 358-395.
- Ariwoola, Olagoke. The African Wife. London: O. Ariwoola, 1965.
- Astier-Loufti, Martine. Littérature et Colonialisme: Expansion Coloniale Vue Dans La Littérature Romanesque Française, 1871-1914. Paris: Mouton, 1971.

- Atterbury, Anson P. Islam in Africa; its Effects - Religious, Ethical, and Social - Upon the People of the Country. New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969.
- Awoonor, Kofi. The Breast of the Earth: A Survey of the History, Culture and Literature of Africa South of the Sahara. New York: Doubleday (Anchor Books), 1975.
- Ba, Amadou H. Aspects de la Civilisation Africaine (Personne, Culture, Religion). Paris: Présence Africaine, 1972.
- Ba, Amadou H. "L'Islam et L'Afrique Noir." Présence Africaine, 18 (1961), 20-27.
- Balandier, Georges. "Femmes Possédées et Leurs Chants." Présence Africaine, 5 (1948), 749-54.
- Balandier, Georges. Sociologie des Brazzavilles Noires. Paris: Colin, 1955.
- Bara, Diop. A. "La Culture Wolof: Traditions et Changements." Notes Africaines, 121 (1969), 1-7.
- Battestini, Monique. L'Angorisse Chez Les Romanciers Africains. Dakar: Actes du Colloque, 1963.
- Beauvoir, Simone de. The Second Sex. New York: Bantam Books, 1952.
- Behrman, Lucy. Muslim Brotherhoods and Politics in Senegal. Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1970.
- Beier, Ulli. "Les Anciennes Religions Africaines et le Monde Moderne." Présence Africaine, 41 (1962), 127.
- Bhêly-Quénum, Olympe. "L'Ecrivain Africain Ne Dispose Pas d'Assez de Moyens de Diffusions." France Eurafrique, May 1972, pp. 24-28.
- Bishop, R. "On Identifying A Standard of African Literary Criticism: Characterization in the Novel." Journal of New African Literature and Arts, 11 (1971), 1-18.
- Bobrowska, Halina H. "Novels by Senegalese Writers - Aboulaye Sadjî and Ousmane Sembène." Przeglad Socjol, 21 (1962), 367-9.

- Bobrowska, Halina H. "Social Problems in the Works of Sembène Ousmane." Africana Bulletin, 14 (1971), 233-34.
- Bohannan, Paul, et al. Africa and Africans. New York: Natural History Press, 1971.
- Brémond, C. "Spécificité du Thème Africain de l'Impossible Restitution." Cahiers d'Etudes Africaines, 8 (1968), 201-205.
- Brench, Anthony C. The Novelist's Inheritance in French Africa: Writers from Senegal to Cameroon. London: Oxford University Press, 1967.
- Bureau, René. "Sorcellerie et Prophétisme en Afrique Noire." Etudes, April 1967, pp. 467-81.
- Burns, Emile. An Introduction to Marxism. New York: International Publishers, 1957.
- Camara, Camille. Saint-Louis du Sénégal: Evolution d'une Ville en Milieu Africain. Dakar: IFAN, 1968.
- Camara, Camille. "St. Louis, Sénégal: A European Town in An African Environment." Nigerian Geographical Journal, 12 (1969), 17-36.
- Capécia, Mayotte. Je Suis Martiniquaise. Paris: Editions Corréa, 1948.
- Cartey, Wilfred. Whispers From A Continent: The Literature of Contemporary Black Africa. New York: Random House (Vintage Books), 1969).
- Case, Frederick I. "La Bourgeoisie Africaine Dans la Littérature de l'Afrique Occidentale." Canadian Journal of African Studies, 6 (1973), 257-66.
- Centres d'Etudes Francophones. Négritude Africaine; Négritude Caraïbe: Les Littératures d'Expression Française. Paris: L'Université Paris Nord, 1973.
- Césaire, Aimé. Cahier d'un Retour au Pays Natal. Paris: Présence Africaine, 1968.
- Césaire, Aimé. Discourse on Colonialism. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1972.
- Césaire, Aimé. "L'Homme de Culture et ses Responsabilités." Présence Africaine, 24 (1959), 116-17.

- Chevrier, Jacques. Littérature Nègre: Afrique Antilles, Madagascar. Paris: Armand Colin, 1974.
- Clignet, Rémi. "Quelques Remarques sur le Rôle des Femmes Africaines en Milieu Africain: le cas du Cameroon." Canadian Journal of African Studies, 6 (1972), 303-316.
- Collomb, H., et al. "Aspects Socio-Thérapeutiques du N'Doep: Cérémonie d'initiation à la Société des Possédés chez les Lebous et Wolof du Sénégal." Revue de la Faculté d'Ethnologie, 12 (1967), 42-57.
- Colloque sur la Littérature Africaine d'Expression Française. Université de Dakar, no. 14, Dakar, 1963.
- Colloque sur la Négritude, tenu à Dakar. Présence Africaine, Paris, 1972.
- Colloque sur les Religions, tenu à Abidjan. Présence Africaine. Paris, 1962.
- Comhaire-Sylvain, Suzanne. Femmes de Kinshasa Hier et Aujourd'hui. The Hague: Mouton and Company, 1968.
- Crowder, Michael. Senegal: A Study in French Assimilation Policy. London: Oxford University Press, 1962.
- Damas, Léon G. Pigments et Névralgies. Paris: Présence Africaine, 1972.
- Daubert, Margarita. Contemporary African Woman. Connecticut: Negro Universities Press, 1969.
- Davidson, Basil. A History of West Africa. New York: Doubleday (Anchor Books), 1966.
- Diallo, Tnierno K. "L'Islam et la Femme." AWA: La Revue de la Femme Noire, 4 (1973), 22-25.
- Diop, Aboulaye B. "La Culture Wolof: Traditions et Changements." Notes Africaines, 121 (1969), 1-7.
- Diop, Cheikh Anta. Antériorité des Civilisations Nègres: Mythe ou Vérité Historique? Paris: Présence Africaine, 1967.
- Diop, Fifi. "Propos Sur la Polygamie." Afrique Nouvelle, 8 (1968), 10.

- Eliet, Edouard. Panorama de la Littérature Négro-Africaine: 1921-1962. Paris: Présence Africaine, 1965.
- Erny, Pierre. Les Premiers Pas dans la Vie de l'Enfant d'Afrique Noire: Naissance et Première Enfance; Eléments pour une Ethnologie de l'Education. Paris: L'Ecole, 1972.
- Evans-Pritchard, Edward. La Femme dans les Sociétés Primitives et Autres Essais d'Anthropologie Sociale. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1971.
- Fanon, Frantz. Black Skins, White Masks. New York: Grove Press, 1967.
- Fanon, Frantz. Les Damnés de la Terre. Paris: Librairie François Maspéro, 1968.
- Fanon, Frantz. Toward the African Revolution (Political Essays). New York; Grove Press, 1967.
- Farah, Caesar E. Islam: Beliefs and Observances. New York: Baron's Educational Series, Inc., 1968.
- Flaubert, Gustave. Madame Bovary. New York: Dell Publishing Company, 1964.
- Fontaine, C. "De la Femme objet à la Femme Sujet: De la Condition de la Femme en Afrique." Revue Psychologique des Peuples, 18 (1963), 273-82.
- Fouet, Francis. Le Thème de l'Amour chez les Romanciers Négro-Africains d'Expression Française. Dakar: Actes du Colloque, 1963.
- Fougeyrollas, Pierre, et al. Dakar en Devenir. Paris: Présence Africaine, 1968.
- Fougeyrollas, Pierre, et al. Human Behavior in Senegal. Paris: Editions Anthropos, 1970.
- Fougeyrollas, Pierre, et al. Modernisation des Hommes: l'Exemple du Sénégal. Paris: Flammarion, 1967.
- Gamble, David. The Wolof of Senegambia. London: Oxford University Press, 1957.
- Gérard, Albert. "Les Générations Dans le Roman Africain." Revue Générale Belge, May 1965, pp. 19-33.

- Gleason, J. "The African Novel in French." Art Forum, 1 (1962), 75-92.
- Glissant, Edouard. "Le Romancier Noir et son Peuple." Présence Africaine, 16 (1957), 26-31.
- Goldmann, Lucien. Pour une Sociologie du Roman. Paris: Gallimard, 1964.
- Guides Bleues Illustres. Dakar et le Sénégal. Paris: Librairie Hachette, 1972.
- Hargreaves, J. D. "Assimilation in Eighteenth Century Senegal." Journal of African History, 6 (1965), 177-184.
- Idowu, E. Bolaji. African Traditional Religion: A Definition. New York: Orbis Books, 1973.
- Idowu, H. O. "Assimilation in Nineteenth Century Senegal." Cahiers d'Etudes Africaines, 34 (1969), 194-218.
- Jahn, Janheinz. Manuel de Littérature Néo-Africaine du XVI siècle à Nos Jours, de l'Afrique à l'Amérique. Paris: Editions Resma, 1969.
- Jahn, Janheinz. Muntu. New York: Grove Press, 1961.
- Jahn, Janheinz. "The Scope of Modern African Literatures." Research in African Literatures, 1 (1969), 167-175.
- Jahn, Janheinz. Who's Who in African Literature: Biographies, Works, Commentaries. Federal Republic of Germany: Horst Erdmann Verlag, 1972.
- Jean-Bernard, Soeur. "La Femme dans la Société Africaine." Afrique Documents 1 (1967), 5-87.
- Jore, Leonce A. Les Etablissements français sur la Côte Occidentale de l'Afrique de 1758 à 1809. Paris: Maisonneuve et Larose, 1965.
- July, Robert W. A History of the African People. New York: Scribner, 1970.
- July, Robert W. The Origins of Modern African Thought. New York: Praeger Publishers, 1967.
- Kane, Elimane. "La Polygamie Musulmane au Sénégal." Revue Indigène, March 1960, p. 26.

- Kane, Mohamadou. "L'Ecrivain Africain et Son Public." Présence Africaine, 58 (1966), 8-31.
- Kane, Mohamadou. "Naissance du Roman Africain Francophone." Arts d'Afrique, 2 (1969), 54.
- Kane, Mohamadou. "The Status of Married Women Under Customary Law in Senegal." American Journal of Comparative Law, 20 (1972), 716-23.
- Kesteloot, Lilyan. Intellectual Origins of the African Revolution. Washington: Black Orpheus Press, 1972.
- Kesteloot, Lilyan. La Négritude et Son Expression Littéraire." Paris: Centres d'Etudes Francophones, 1973.
- Kesteloot, Lilyan. Les Ecrivains Noirs de Langue Française: Naissance d'une Littérature . Brussels: Université Libre de Bruxelles, 1965.
- Kesteloot, Lilyan. Négritude et Situation Coloniale. Yaoundé: Editions CLE, 1968.
- Killam, G.D. (Ed.). African Writers On African Writing. London: Heinemann, 1973.
- Klein, Martin A. Islam and Imperialism in Senegal; Siné-Saloum, 1847-1914. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1968.
- Koran. Translated by N. J. Dawood. England: Penguin Books, 1956.
- Laye, Camara. L'Enfant Noir. Paris: Librairie Plon, 1953.
- Lévi-Strauss, Claude. Structural Anthropology. New York: Basic Books Inc., 1963.
- Little, Kenneth L. African Women in Towns: An Aspect of Africa's Social Revolution. London: Cambridge University Press, 1973.
- Loti, Pierre. Pages Choiesies. Paris: Calmann-Lévy, n.d.
- Maistriau, Robert. La Femme et Le Destin de l'Afrique: Les Sources Psychologiques de la Mentalité dite "Primitive". Elisabethville: Editions CEPST, 1964.

- Makward, Edris. "Négritude and the New African Novel in French." Ibadan, 22 (1966), 37-45.
- Malraux, André. La Condition Humaine. Paris: Gallimard, 1946.
- Mannoni, O. Prospero and Caliban: The Psychology of Colonization. New York: Praeger Publishers, 1964.
- Maquet, Jacques. Les Civilisations Noires. Paris: Horizons de France, 1966.
- Marie André du Sacre-Coeur. La Femme Noire En Afrique Occidentale. Paris: Payot, 1939.
- Mbiti, John. African Religions and Philosophy. New York: Doubleday (Anchor Books), 1970.
- Memmi, Albert. The Colonizer and the Colonized. Boston: Beacon Press, 1965.
- Michelman, Fredric. "The Beginnings of French-African Fiction." Research in African Literature, 2 (1971), 5-17.
- Monteil, Vincent. L'Islam Noir. Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1971.
- Moore, Gerald. "Towards Realism in French African Writing." Journal of Modern African Studies, 1 (1963), 24-28.
- Mortimer, Edward. France and the Africans: A Political History. New York: Walker, 1969.
- Mutsiso, M. "Women in African Literature." East African Journal, 8 (1971), 5-13.
- Mouralis, Bernard. Individu et Collectivité dans le Roman Négro-Africain d'Expression Française. Abidjan: Université d'Abidjan, 1969.
- Mouralis, Bernard. Les Facteurs de la Création Romanesque en Afrique Noire d'Expression Française. Paris: Centres d'Etudes Francophones, 1973.
- McHardy, Cecil. "Love in Africa." Présence Africaine, 68 (1968), 55.
- Nantet, Jacques. Panorama de la Littérature Noire d'Expression Française. Paris: Librairie Arthème Fayard, 1972.

- Nassau, Robert. Fetichism in West Africa: Forty Years of Observance of Native Customs and Superstitions. New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969.
- N'Diaye, Jean-Pierre. Elites Africaines et Culture Occidentale, Assimilation ou Résistance? Paris: Présence Africaine, 1969.
- N'Goma, Albert. "L'Islam Noir." Présence Africaine, 8 (1959), 333.
- O'Brien, Rita Cruise. White Society in Black Africa: The French of Senegal. Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1972.
- Ortova, Jarmila. "Les Femmes dans l'Oeuvre Littéraire d'Ousmane Sembène." Présence Africaine, 71 (1969), 69-71.
- Pageard, Robert. Littérature Nègro-Africaine: Le Mouvement Littéraire Contemporain dans l'Afrique Noire d'Expression Française. Paris: Le Livre Africain, 1969.
- Paricsy, Pál. Studies On Modern Black African Literature. Budapest: Center for Afro-Asian Research of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, 1971.
- Paulme, Denise, (Ed.). Women of Tropical Africa. Translated by H. M. Wright. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971.
- Peyre, Henri. The Contemporary French Novel. New York: Oxford University Press, 1955.
- Pickthall, Mohammed M. The Meaning of the Glorious Koran. New American Library, n.d.
- Reed, John. "Between Two Worlds: Notes on Presentation by African Novelists of the Individual in Modern African Society." Makerere Journal, 7 (1963), 1-14.
- Rencontres Internationales de Bouake. Tradition et Modernisme en Afrique Noire. Paris: Editions du Sevil, 1965.
- Rouch, Jean. "Vers une Littérature Africaine." Présence Africaine, 6 (1948), 144.
- Sadji, Aboulaye. "Littérature et Colonisation." Présence Africaine, 6 (1948), 139.

- Sadji, Aboulaye. Maimouna. Paris: Présence Africaine, 1958.
- Sadji, Aboulaye. Nini: Mulâtresse de Sénégal. Paris: Présence Africaine, 1947.
- Sadji, Aboulaye. Tounka: nouvelle. Paris: Présence Africaine, 1946.
- Sainville, Leonard (Ed.). Anthologie de Littérature Négro-Africaine: Romanciers et Conteurs. Paris: Présence Africaine, 1963.
- Samb, Amar. "L'Education Islamique au Sénégal." Notres Africaines, 136 (1972), 97-102.
- Sartre, Jean-Paul. Colonialisme et Néo-Colonialisme. Paris: Editions Gallimard, 1964.
- Sartre, Jean-Paul. Orphée Noir. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1969.
- Sartre, Jean-Paul. "Présence Noire." Présence Africaine, 4 (1948), 58.
- Sartre, Jean-Paul. Qu'est-ce que la Littérature? Paris: Editions Gallimard, 1948.
- Sembène, Ousmane. "La Mère." Présence Africaine, December 1957, p. 111.
- Sembène, Ousmane. "Le Roman Négro-Africain." Notes Africaines, 138 (1970), 47-50.
- Sembène, Ousmane. Les Bouts de Bois de Dieu. Paris: Presses Pocket, 1960.
- Sembène, Ousmane. L'Harmattan. Paris: Présence Africaine, 1964.
- Sembène, Ousmane. Voltaïque. Paris: Présence Africaine, 1962.
- Sembène, Ousmane. Xala. Paris: Présence Africaine, 1973.
- Senghor, Léopold Sédar. Anthologie de la Nouvelle Poésie Nègre et Malgache de Langue Française. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1969.
- Senghor, Léopold Sédar. Liberté I: Négritude et Humanisme. Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1964.

- Senghor, Léopold Sédar. "Négritude et Civilisation de l'Universel." Présence Africaine, 46 (1963), 18.
- Senghor, Léopold Sédar. The Foundations of "Africanité" or "Négritude" and "Arabité." Translated by Mercer Cook. Paris: Présence Africaine, 1971.
- Simmons, William S. Eyes of the Night: Witchcraft Among A Senegalese People. Boston: Little, Brown & Company, 1971.
- Skinner, Elliot (Ed.). Peoples and Cultures of Africa: An Anthropological Reader. New York: Doubleday and Company, 1973.
- Socé, Ousmane. Karim: Roman Sénégalais. Paris: Nouvelles Editions Latines, 1948.
- Stendhal. Le Rouge et Le Noir. New York: Dell Publishing Company, 1963.
- The Woman Question. Selections from the Writings of Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, V. I. Lenin, Joseph Stalin. New York: International Publishers, 1951.
- Thiam, Bodié. "Quelques Superstitions Ouoloves." Notes Africaines, 41 (1949), 13.
- Thomas, Louis-Vincent. "Du Sacré au Profane: Religion et vie Sociale Africaines." Notes Africaines, April 1970, pp. 44-50.
- Thomas, Louis-Vincent. "Le Fetichisme; L'Animisme en Afrique Noire." Afrique Documents, 93 (1967), 43-44.
- Trimingham, J. S. A History of Islam in West Africa. London: Oxford University Press, 1970.
- Vierya, Paulin Soumanou. Sembène Ousmane Cinéaste. Paris: Présence Africaine, 1972.
- Vincent, Jeanne Françoise. Femmes Africaines en Milieu Urbain. Paris: Office de la Recherche Scientifique et Technique Outre-Mer, 1966.
- Von Grunebaum, Gustave E. French African Literature: Some Cultural Implications. The Hague: Mouton and Company, 1969.

- Wallerstein, Immanuel. Africa: The Politics of Independence. New York: Vintage Books, 1971.
- Wallerstein, Immanuel. Conflit Social en Afrique Noire Indépendente: Réexamen des Concepts de Race et de "Status group." Brussels: Centre d'Etude et de Documentation Africaines, 1971.
- Wästberg, Per. (Ed.). The Writer in Modern Africa. Stockholm: Scandanvian Institute of African Studies, 1968.
- Wauthier, Claude. L'Afrique des Africains: Inventaire de la Négritude. Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1964.
- Wipper, Audrey. "The Roles of African Women: Past, Present and Future." Canadian Journal of African Studies, 6 (1972), 143-46.