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Birth of a Nation? The Origins of Senegalese Literature in French

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ABSTRACT

Although most critics chart Senegalese literary history from the 1930s and the rise of Negritude, there also exist a small number of texts from the 1850s-1020s that are usually classified as a sort of proto-Senegalese literature. This article focuses on Abbé David Boilat's *Esquisses sénégalaises* (1853) and Bakary Diallo's *Force-bonté* (1926), both of which occupy a deeply ambiguous position within the national literary canon because of their open support for French colonialism. The article contends that the status of these texts as key works in the Senegalese national canon rests on a specific vision of their Franco-African "hybridity." By questioning the value and the limitations of the notion of "hybridity" in relation to colonialism and nationalism in Senegal, the article aims to discover whether these texts by Boilat and Diallo might be deemed to signal the birth of a nation or the birth of a colony.

In the aftermath of independence, African nations inherited the Western notion of a "national literature," which posited a tight bond between language, literature, and national identity: a written literature was a sign of African modernity, and it was viewed as emerging from, but also effectively replacing, the premodern, oral tradition.[1] The process of establishing African national literatures was but one aspect of a wider, postcolonial nationalism that attempted to bind together the disparate elements of these newly independent nations. Despite the positive aims of the project of national canon formation in Africa, these emerging, national literatures were burdened with a freight of contradictory values and ideas that reflected the contradictions of modern African nations themselves. According to Nicholas Harrison, there has been a widespread critical perception of the postcolonial African author as "representative"—whether it be of the "nation" or of Africa, more generally—that is, the author is seen to be both a "representative" type and to "represent" his/her "people," acting as a kind of spokesperson (92–111).

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However, as Harrison rightly argues, the "representativity" of an author usually has far more to do with the context in which a literary text is received than with the nature of the text itself. African texts in French thus often find themselves caught in a complex web of representativity; they may satisfy the demands of those who require them to "represent" the life of the nation but their use of the "foreign" language of French can also see them cast as fundamentally "unrepresentative" of national identity. In light of such claims, can Senegalese literature in French be deemed a "national" literature at all when the majority of the population neither reads nor writes in this language?

Discussions of canon formation in Africa inevitably lead us back to the arguments of those such as the Kenyan author Ngugi wa Thiong'o who support the development of national literatures in "indigenous" African languages over "elitist" European-language literatures. However, the "indigenous" languages of Senegal did not have a standardized written form until recent decades and, even now, literacy rates in these languages are low. Although there are currently a number of publishers who produce texts in Wolof, Pulaar, and other Senegalese languages, they have not achieved a wide audience (Small 29–43). Equally, the presence of Islam in most regions of Senegal has created a religious literature in Arabic but these works are not widely known and they are not written primarily as "literary" texts but rather as devotional works. More fundamentally, Ngugi's conception of the link between language and consciousness is somewhat over-determined. As Derrida argues in *Monolingualism of the Other*, languages do not belong to any one people and nor can they be said to express an "essential" identity that is impossible to capture in another language. In the multilingual context of Senegal (and most other African nations), to speak of a single language capable of embodying national identity is at best tenuous. (Equally, in nineteenth-century Europe, including France, the promotion of a national literature often involved the marginalization of "regional" languages.) However, even if we accept the French-language literature of Senegal as a "national" literature, we are then faced with the problem of tracing a national literary history. The nation of Senegal did not come into existence until independence in 1960, as prior to that it was a French colonial possession. At what point, then, does "Senegalese literature" begin?

Although most critics choose to chart Senegalese literary history from the 1930s and the work of the Negritude school, there also exist a small number of texts from the 1850s to the 1920s that are usually classified as a sort of proto-Senegalese literature. These texts occupy a deeply ambiguous position within the national literary canon because of their open support for French colonialism. Those from the nineteenth century are written by representatives of Senegal's then dominant *métis* population—Léopold Panet's *Première exploration du Sahara occidental: Relation d'un voyage du Sénégal au Maroc* (1851); *Esquisses sénégalaises*, by Abbé David Boilat (1853); Frédéric Carrère and Paul Holle's *De la Sénégambie française* (1855)—while the early twentieth century saw the rise of an educated class of black Africans—*La bataille de Guilé*, by Amadou Duguay-Clédor (1913); *Les trois volontés de Malic*, by Ahmadou Mapaté Diagne (1920); and Bakary Diallo's *Force-bonté* (1926).[2] These are largely historical, political, travel, and ethnographic works, and thus constitute a sort of "paraliterature" (Diagne's is the sole work of "fiction"). This article focuses on two of these "Senegalese" texts, Boilat's *Esquisses sénégalaises* ("Sketches of Senegal") and Diallo's *Force-bonté* (literally, "Strength-Kindness," perhaps better

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rendered as "Strong Kindness" in order to capture Diallo's pidgin-French admiration for France), examining their representations of Senegal, as well as their status as "foundational texts" within a Senegalese national literature, as it has been constructed over close to five decades since independence. It is my contention that the status of these texts as key works in the Senegalese national canon rests on a specific vision of their Franco-African "hybridity," which has become, in some critical quarters, a sort of sine qua non of Senegalese national identity. In consequence, the problematization of national literature within this article is necessarily intertwined with the problematization of hybridity as a concept in current theories of colonial and postcolonial literatures. By questioning the value and the limitations of the notion of "hybridity" in relation to colonialism and nationalism in Senegal, I will essentially be seeking to discover whether these texts by Boilat and Diallo signal the birth of a nation or the birth of a colony.

In many respects, both Boilat and Diallo can be seen as archetypal "representatives" of French colonialism at different stages of the colonial process, as France's *métis* intermediaries of the mid-nineteenth century were forced to give way to black Africans at the beginning of the 20th century. Boilat was a *métis*, born of a French father and a *signare* mother, the *signares* being the *métis* women based in France's tiny coastal possessions, who constituted a ruling class that made its fortune from the transatlantic slave trade. He was sent to France to train as a Catholic priest, returning to Senegal as a missionary in the 1840s.[3] In *Esquisses sénégalaises*, a primarily ethnographic text, he calls for the full colonization of Senegal and he speaks of the need for a comprehensive missionary program to bring Christianity to the animist "heathens" and the "misguided" Muslims. Boilat's vision of French superiority is fueled by a Catholicism that would gradually cease to play a significant part in colonial ideology under the secular Third Republic, which saw no role for religion in its vision of colonial "progress."[4] For his part, Bakary Diallo seems an ideal product of the Third Republic's colonial mission. He was a black African, a Fulani from the Fouta Toro in northern Senegal, who joined the colonial army, and as a *tirailleur sénégalais* fought in a colonial war against Moroccan rebels, and later was severely injured serving France in the First World War. In his autobiographical work *Force-bonté*, Diallo displays nothing but respect, admiration and even affection for his patriarchal colonial masters.

During the colonial era, both texts were heralded as proof of the benign influence of France's *mission civilisatrice* in Africa—as well as producing a "safe," exoticized Senegal for French consumption—while later generations in both Africa and the West were to criticize their role as works of colonial propaganda. (Michael Green traces a similar process in his recent article on Sol T. Plaatje's *Mhudi*.) In more recent times, however, critics have sought to challenge these colonial and anticolonial readings of *Esquisses sénégalaises* and *Force-bonté*, and the following pages will chart the critical strategies deployed in the "rescuing" of these texts. It is now widely agreed among critics that Boilat's text, written at the beginning of the French colonial conquest of Senegal, illustrates the ambiguities of the period prior to the establishment of colonial orthodoxies. In its turn, *Force-bonté* has increasingly been read as a tentative questioning of colonial authority and as a forerunner of later, more vigorous challenges to colonialism from the 1930s onwards. Perhaps, most important, both texts have been incorporated within the national literary tradition, in terms of style and content. Their hybrid nature as

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texts by Senegalese imbued with French culture has seen them cast as precursors of the hybrid Franco-African culture that was to become the norm in the upper echelons of Senegalese society, particularly in the period following the Second World War, reaching its zenith under the Francophile president, Léopold Sédar Senghor, who ruled Senegal from 1960 to 1980. Best known to anglophone scholars as chief theorist of "Negritude," the cultural expression of an essential black soul, Senghor also promoted the concept of "francité," a way of perceiving and expressing the world that he believed to be shared by all French-speakers. Unsurprisingly, Senghor views Boilat and Diallo as worthy founders of the Franco-Senegalese literary tradition. In his introduction to a 1977 anthology of Senegalese literature, he praises both writers and goes on to describe the national tradition in the following terms: "Senegalese literature is characterized by its expression of both 'Negritude' and 'francité': it is black-African in terms of the values it expresses but nonetheless it maintains a certain sense of balance, which reveals the French influence" (9). For Senghor, French colonialism has produced a hybrid Senegalese culture in which the Senegalese share "French" and "African" traits in equal measure, with African "passion" and "rhythm" balanced by French "logic" and "clarity." His views on the links between language, literature and identity are here clearly inspired by French conceptions of national literature, which had been prominent since the seventeenth century; for Senghor, only the French language could capture the hybrid consciousness introduced by colonialism.

As was mentioned above, the notion of hybridity, most closely associated with the work of postcolonial critic, Homi K. Bhabha, has been at the heart of much debate about the colonial and postcolonial world. For Bhabha, this hybridity is not simply the resolution of the tension between the cultures of the colonizer and the colonized; rather, hybridity reveals a crisis of authority for the colonizer. Attempting to codify colonial authority in a series of authoritative texts (political, historical, religious), the colonizer, in fact, reveal the limits of this authority. The books introduced by the colonizer launch a process of mimesis and transformation, which allows the colonized to reshape the original message of authority,[5] and this, for Bhabha, represents the fundamental ambivalence of colonial discourse: "the colonial presence is always ambivalent, split between its appearance as original and authoritative and its articulation as repetition and difference" (107).

Bhabha's well-known argument that colonialism produced colonial "mimic men" who effectively challenged the very notion of colonial authority through the articulation of a "native" version of this discourse seems highly applicable to the Senegalese situation: indeed, the troubled and troubling figure of the "assimilated" but questioning "native" has long been prominent in African literature.[6] It is a critical commonplace that French colonial policy was one of assimilation, a process that aimed to create "black Frenchmen," and the policy of assimilation did indeed have profound effects on Senegalese society. As France's oldest colony in Africa (the French "presence" dating back to the seventeenth century), Senegal produced an elite with a strong attachment to France, and it was rewarded with its own deputy to the French parliament in 1871, while those Africans born in the historic "four communes" that constituted the old colony were considered "citizens" rather than "subjects." However, a range of historians from G. Wesley Johnson to François Manchuelle (whose work will be discussed below) has challenged the historical vision of total assimilation, and charted the shift in French colonial ideology from

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assimilation to association in the early years of the twentieth century. In the period from the 1840s to the 1910s, there may have been an attempt at full assimilation, but this only ever concerned the tiny elite who were educated in French schools (and a male elite at that, as women were largely absent from French education in the colonies until after the Second World War). Even from the early stages of French education in West Africa, Africans who learnt in school about "our ancestors, the Gauls" also studied their own local history and culture. This process increased from the early years of the twentieth century when, increasingly, children were taught by African schoolteachers. For Georges Hardy, the architect of education policy in West Africa from 1912 to 1919, the idea of simply copying the French educational model in the colonies would be "a pedagogical disaster" (74).[7] According to Denise Bouche, French education in the colonies was never the process of total assimilation portrayed by colonial propaganda, but "was constantly adapting itself to the colonial situation on the ground" (895). The process of assimilating Africans would be a long and complex process and French education in the colonies would necessarily be tailored to the sociocultural "realities" of these "backward" societies, thus fostering an awareness of "difference" from France within the colonial education system itself. To return to Boilat and Diallo, it has been convincingly argued by critics that, while they are both imbued with French culture, they are emphatically not French: their texts display a profound "mimicry" of colonial discourse that both reflects and challenges key aspects of colonial ideology.

In the introduction to Karthala's 1984 edition of *Esquisses sénégalaises*, the Senegalese historian Abdoulaye-Bara Diop outlines the importance of Boilat's text and, in particular, its status as an historical, social and cultural record of various Senegalese kingdoms and ethnic groups in the mid-19th century (5–26). Boilat traveled widely in Senegal, recording details about all aspects of life, and for modern Senegalese readers, the book provides a wealth of detail on their country's past prior to colonization. (The twenty-four color illustrations by Boilat, originally published separately from the book itself, are extremely well known and they have come to be seen as the archetypal visual "representations" of pre-colonial Senegal.) The text itself is written in a highly fragmented form, combining reports from other missionaries, correspondence about education in the colonies, and Boilat's own ethnographic "findings": as such, it posits "Senegal" as a "French space" for which policies must be elaborated and developed. But how does one differentiate Boilat from the many French ethnographers and colonial administrators (often one and the same person) who sought to record aspects of Senegalese "traditional" life? General Faidherbe, the governor of Senegal from 1854 to 1861 who began the systematic conquest of the "nation," was also engaged in ethnographic research in the 1850s, writing his own studies and supporting the work of other ethnographers.[8] Intriguingly, Yvon Bouquillon and Robert Cornevin, in their biography of Boilat, cast the Senegalese priest as a figure whose role in the development of Senegal is equal to that of Faidherbe: in their view, both are seen unproblematically as "great" Senegalese figures of the past (103–05).

For most critics, the difference between Faidherbe and Boilat lies in Boilat's insistence on his own Senegalese identity. In the preface, he refers to himself as a "child of Senegal" (*Esquisses* v), and the entire book is informed by this perspective. To use Bhabha's terms, Boilat might be said to display the ambivalence of colonial authority, espousing French colonial doctrine, but, at the same time transforming

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it into something new. Consequently, many contemporary critics of Senegalese literature, such as Bernard Mouralis and János Riesz, have written intelligently and convincingly about the importance of *Esquisses sénégalaises* in developing a distinctive Franco-Senegalese consciousness. Although the book is addressed to a French audience, it is a book about Senegalese affairs written from a Senegalese point of view: Boilat argues that the Senegalese should learn from the French but he also charts an autonomous future for the "nation."

We see this colonial hybridity at work in particular in relation to language and religion. Although educated through French, Boilat also spoke two of the main Senegalese languages, Wolof and Sereer, and was steeped in local history and culture.[9] He believed that the Senegalese could be converted to Catholicism through preaching in indigenous languages and, in the conclusion to his book, he advocates the use of the Franciscan order as missionaries, as their dress and sense of self-abnegation mirrored that of the local *marabouts*, or "holy men"—who could be either Islamic or animist, and were often a mixture of both (*Esquisses* 479–90). For Boilat, it is an urgent priority that the Senegalese be assimilated into French Catholic culture, but he does not advocate a policy that denies all value to Senegalese cultures, choosing instead to promote a more hybrid, pragmatic vision of assimilation than is usually imagined in relation to French colonialism.

Although his French, Catholic education causes him to denounce certain aspects of local cultures, particularly animist and Islamic religious practices, Boilat's portrait of Senegal is, on the whole, very positive. In particular, he has a deep affection for the Wolof people, and he is deeply enamored of the artful nature of their conversation: "[T]he day is spent in gay and joyous conversation, which never grows tiresome" (326). Boilat is at pains to stress the significance and the beauty of this oral culture to his French audience:

> I have already stated that the Wolof are passionate conversationalists. One might suppose that they speak solely of absurd and trivial matters; on the contrary, we aim to prove that their discussions address practical issues; and they are able to learn from these discussions, just as we learn from reading a good book, engaging in a sort of dialogue with the author, and drawing out moral principles. We can get a better idea of the true value of this pastime if we compare their debates to literary meetings held in a room with a well-stocked library, with the president of the society reading from a moralist author, then inviting comment from the gathering. When one has mastered the language and can grasp its idiosyncrasies, one is surprised by the wealth of traditional wisdom possessed by the Wolof. (345)

This favorable comparison of Wolof oral culture with European literary culture is indicative of Boilat's approach throughout his book. If the Wolof are a cultured and sophisticated people without possessing a literature, he argues, then they will be capable of great progress once they have acquired literary skills and techniques. For Boilat, the future development of Senegal lies in the harnessing of local strengths to these European techniques. His "dual identity," steeped in both Senegalese and French culture, gives him an insight into two worlds, and he tries to combine them for the benefit of his homeland. He advocates increased schooling in French but he also believes in spreading literacy in African languages. He calls for France to develop an agricultural and economic policy in Senegal that

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will allow the colony to develop as an autonomous country. As János Riesz argues, France may be integral to Senegal's development but Boilat's vision of the future is resolutely Senegalese: "In the not too distant future, when [the Senegalese] have become doctors, judges and generals, it is they who will express the country's will and be the masters of its destiny" (*Les débuts* 48). According to Riesz, colonial discourse is gradually reshaped in Boilat's writing by his "nationalist" concerns. Equally, for Mouralis, *Esquisses sénégalaises* is the work of a protonationalist, whose idealistic vision of co-operation between France and Senegal, advocating assimilation without abandoning one's African identity, is a clear forerunner of the goals of Senghor's nationalism (once again, forging a clear connection between the perceived hybridity of the past and that of the present). Thus, for both Riesz and Mouralis, Boilat is, in many ways, a victim of French colonialism whose idealistic vision was condemned to failure by France's belief in its racial superiority, for, at its heart, colonialism was a project motivated by violence and domination, not the spirit of partnership envisaged by the *métis* priest.

Bakary Diallo's *Force-bonté* is also a text that views French colonialism as a partnership between France and Africa. However, Diallo is more open about the violence that accompanies colonialism: as a colonial soldier who took part in the suppression of Moroccan rebels, he could not fail to be aware of this violence. Writing at the high point of colonialism in the 1920s, Diallo seeks recognition for his devotion to France, defending its empire in Morocco and its national integrity in the First World War. He believes wholeheartedly in assimilation, in France's desire to make Frenchmen and women of its colonial subjects. Throughout his text, he is obsessed with learning French, the possession of which is the key marker of assimilation.[10] Indeed, his entry into the French colonial army marks the beginning of his fascination with the French language:

> There we were standing before a young white man with numerous golden stripes on his sleeve. He smiled and examined us with a curious look. His right hand was holding a quill, which he moved back and forth over the papers in front of him. The speed with which he wrote made me want to imitate him. I knew it wouldn't be possible straight away; but, deep within, I told myself "I'll learn one day." (28)

For Bakary Diallo, his book is concrete proof of the process of assimilation. Its naïve autobiographical account of his humble life is a sort of colonial Bildungsroman of the successful colonial subject, literally "inscribing" himself within the fabric of Republican France (although some critics have argued that he did not write the book himself, and that the text's naïve tone is the product of his literary "patron" Lucie Cousturier who "collaborated" on the text with him: see Midiohouan, "Le tirailleur sénégalais" 138–39; M. Kane 7–9; Michelman 10–12). To write a book in French, praising the wonders of French "civilization", is to be a valued member of "la plus grande France" ("Greater France"). Diallo's text can thus be read as a declaration of a distinctive Franco-Senegalese consciousness, displaying the rise of a simple Fulani shepherd to the status of "French" author. The book also represents the emergence of an educated black elite in Senegal. Although Diallo himself, as a humble *tirailleur*, stands at the lower end of the social scale, he is nonetheless representative of the establishment of black Africans as the privileged

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partners of the French colonial regime, an achievement that is best symbolized by the election in 1914 of Blaise Diagne as Senegal's first black *député* to the French National Assembly, ending over forty years of French and *métis* domination.[11] (Equally, the other Senegalese authors of this period are all black Africans: Amadou Duguay-Clédor and Ahmadaou Mapaté Diagne were both schoolteachers, and the latter was a close ally of Blaise Diagne. As shall be seen, their texts share Bakary Diallo's assimilationist, francophile vision while also maintaining a clear sense of an African/Senegalese identity.)

For the Senegalese critic Mohamadou Kane, *Force-bonté* occupies a pivotal position within Senegalese literature, marking the end of a long series of texts in praise of colonialism and launching the tradition of African autobiography. Diallo's story brings him from a small village to the Senegalese cities of Saint-Louis and Dakar and finally to France, a movement that would be repeated in countless subsequent African texts, such as Camara Laye's *The African Child* and Cheikh Hamidou Kane's *Ambiguous Adventure*. However, despite his acknowledgment of the importance of *Force-bonté* as a landmark text, Kane is clearly disturbed by the text's idealistic belief in the positive value of the French colonial project. He believes that its primary interest for a modern audience lies in its status as "témoignage," bearing witness, giving an insight into the mindset of an African for whom "all blacks with a bit of sense cannot help but believe in colonial ideology" (*Force-bonté* xv).

János Riesz has questioned this assessment of *Force-bonté*, presenting Diallo's narrative as a challenge to stereotypes of the *tirailleur sénégalais* as a "grand enfant," a simple, trusting child who has absolute faith in the patriarchal figure of France (The 'tirailleur sénégalais'").[13] Indeed, far from being a typical *tirailleur*, Bakary Diallo is a dreamer and an outsider. Riesz persuasively argues that Diallo's musings on the reasons behind the Moroccan rebellion against French rule, as well as his persistent ruminations on a series of philosophical topics, effectively undermine colonial stereotyping. However, Riesz acknowledges that Bakary Diallo remains a colonial subject to his French masters; in many ways, like Boilat, he is a victim of the system he serves. After the war, he is forced to wander from one poorly paid job to another, remaining in France in the forlorn hope that he will be awarded citizenship for his services to the French nation,[14] but his quest for true assimilation is doomed to failure.

These new approaches to the "colonial" texts of David Boilat and Bakary Diallo, proposed by Kane, Mouralis, and Riesz, are deeply rewarding and provide a rich and complex understanding of their position within the Senegalese national literary canon. In so doing, these critics underline the hybridity of Senegalese culture in the colonial period, arguing convincingly that these two works represent an emerging Senegalese national consciousness. Although they are not directly inspired by the theoretical writings of Homi Bhabha, their essays can be seen as part of a much wider, recent critical reassessment of the ambiguity and ambivalence of colonial discourse. (Although they have developed largely in parallel—and, at times, in opposition—to one another, francophone studies and anglophone postcolonial studies have evolved broadly comparable critical approaches.) As shown in the preceding pages, Bhabha's exploration of the mimetic nature of the discourse produced by colonial subjects, which transforms the ambivalent discourse of colonial authority, can readily be applied to Boilat and

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Diallo. Between the "absolute" authority of colonial conquest and the challenges produced in the era of decolonization lies a deeply ambivalent grey area in which reductive oppositional models of the colonial encounter are interrogated. Even an ardent opponent of this form of colonial discourse analysis, such as Benita Parry, concedes that its "signal achievement" has been to move "the discussion away from the colonial text as an authentic portrayal of reality, to the system of ideological representation which such writing produced" (17). It is not a simplistic account of the politics of a text that matters but rather an analysis of its place within a complex discursive system.

Having outlined the conceptual framework within which much analysis of colonial textual hybridity is conducted, I would now like to develop a more critical assessment of this process. Despite my broad agreement with the more complex reading of colonial texts in general, as proposed by Bhabha, or the particular reading of early Senegalese texts presented by Riesz and Mouralis, I would argue that these approaches suffer to a certain extent from what Nicholas Harrison has termed an "ethnocentricity of time" (137); in their desire to provide a complex reevaluation of colonial-era texts from a critical position outside the rigid binaries of the colonizer-colonized divide, they end up neglecting the necessary work of historicization, and project certain contemporary values and norms on to the past. Moreover, as Benita Parry argues, this form of critical practice "is predominantly concerned with the text of colonial authority" and fails "to address itself to colonialism's culture" (17):

> Bhabha's interrogation of received historical authority takes place on the territory of colonial discourse itself and since colonial power is theorized here as a textual function, it follows that the proper form of combat for a politically engaged critical practice is to disclose the construction of the signifying system and thereby deprive it of its mandate to rule. (Parry 26)

Bhabha writes of the power of colonial "hybridity/mimicry" to "terrorize" colonial authority (115), but his textual focus makes such claims seem inflated and partial. Where does the violence of colonial domination figure in these readings? How is this violence explained or justified? In what ways does it inform the narratives of both texts? Claiming to remove these colonial-era texts from the "politics" of colonizer-colonized binary oppositions, such readings often end up simply ignoring, or severely downplaying, the politics of colonialism altogether. For Parry, Bhabha focuses on the "epistemic violence" of colonial discourse but has little if anything to say about the "material aggression" of colonialism. Perhaps most important, the specific hybridity of a colonized elite to be found in such texts becomes generalized as the condition of the colonized as a whole: the lives of those outside the elite are in effect marginalized.

Returning to the work of Boilat and Diallo, what then are the assumptions made by critics regarding the "representativity" of their "hybridity"? It was argued above that both Riesz and Mouralis view *Esquisses sénégalaises* as the work of a protonationalist who is attempting to chart the future development of Senegal through an appropriation of French skills and techniques. For Mouralis, Boilat's book lays out a program for the development of a modern, independent nation, a process that, if followed through, could have prevented the colonization of the

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country. Meanwhile, Riesz speaks of a change from the "language of violence to the power of language" stresssing Boilat's commitment to education as the key to Senegalese development (*Les débuts* 44). Riesz is right to underline the importance of education to the development of a nationalist culture capable of wresting power from the French. However, these benign interpretations of Boilat's ideas are somewhat misleading not least because, in 1853 when the book was published, the colony of Senegal was largely a fiction; the colonization of the country now known as Senegal had not yet taken place. In the early 1850s, the French "presence" in Senegal was confined to the coast: Gorée, Saint-Louis, Dakar, and a number of forts in between these towns. Even the map of "Senegal" produced by Boilat to accompany his text includes vast areas of land that do not belong to the current Senegalese state (mainly the Gambia and parts of Mauritania and Mali). When Riesz and Mouralis refer to Boilat's attempt to make colonialism beneficial to the colonized Senegalese, they speak about the colonial process as though it has already been accomplished when, in fact, it has only just begun: it is under the French governor General Faidherbe in the mid-1850s that France finally gains a genuine Senegalese colony on the African mainland. (It is no coincidence that the first regiments of *tirailleurs sénégalais,* African defenders of imperial authority, were formed in the 1850s.) Viewing French colonialism as inevitable, these critics forget the simple fact that *Esquisses sénégalaises* actively calls for the colonization of Senegal, which will necessarily entail war and destruction on a massive scale.[15]

Herein lies the ambiguity of many—but by no means all—African nations: they were born through the violence of colonialism. Although Boilat argues the case in *Esquisses sénégalaises* for the development of the Senegalese nation he believes that this can only take place *after* French colonization. However, despite his prescience and understanding on so many other issues, Boilat remains silent on the means by which colonization can be achieved. In fact, his view of relations between the Senegalese peoples and the French is extremely idealistic, and gives no indication that war will be necessary to achieve his aims:

> [T]he peoples of Senegal all love the French, and they take great pleasure in visiting Saint-Louis or Gorée to observe daily life and to admire the skill and intelligence of the Europeans through the gifts they have brought from France and the way in which they have deployed them in the colony. Few nations are more gentle and welcoming than the peoples of Senegal but who has attempted or undertaken to civilize them? (467)

Certainly, some Senegalese "nations" had made certain material gains from the French presence on the coast but it is simply not true that the rulers of kingdoms such as Walo, Kajoor, Fouta Toro, and Sine were in favor of greater French influence on their internal affairs. As Senegalese historians such as Mamadou Diouf have shown, these were separate kingdoms and republics that lived within their own autonomous political, social and cultural systems, and they resisted all French attempts to extend their influence to the interior of Africa (see *Le Kajoor*).[16]

Accordingly, I would argue that it is impossible to view Boilat in an unproblematic fashion as a "representative" spokesman for a putative Senegalese nation, seeking to make the best of the colonial process. It is not a question of putting Boilat "on trial" for his "collaboration" with the French, rather, I believe it is

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necessary to examine the reasons why Boilat supports French colonialism. He may be reticent about the full implications of colonialism but it is clear from his writing that the "Senegalese nation" can only come into being through a more active French "presence," which will necessarily mean the decline in power of the indigenous kingdoms, constantly described by Boilat as a brake on progress. Boilat may genuinely have believed that the "Senegalese" were ripe for conversion but he recognizes that the Franciscan missionaries he would charge with this task must be placed "under the protection of the French government" (483). He goes on to urge the French to resume the process of agricultural colonization that had been attempted in the Walo region a generation earlier but that had failed because of the hostility of the local monarch (485). In each of these cases, Boilat presents ideas for the development of the "nation" but he downplays any sense of resistance to such moves, resistance that was chiefly organized around existing political structures: effectively, Boilat simply wishes the Senegalese kingdoms out of existence.

However, Boilat's *métis* contemporaries, Léopold Panet and Paul Holle, are far more open about the realities of French colonization. Panet's travel narrative is essentially an account of a secret, "spying" trip from Saint-Louis du Sénégal to northwestern Morocco, providing information on the peoples and kingdoms (for whom he shows little more than contempt) lying between French Algeria to the north and France's tiny, isolated West African colony. Paul Holle was even closer then Panet to the heart of the French colonial establishment. He served as an officer in the colonial army, and played a key role in the defense of the French fort at Medine on the Senegal river against the troops of El-Hadj Omar in 1857. Writing with the French judge Frédéric Carrère two years prior to the events at Medine—in a statement curiously overlooked by Manchuelle who refers to Holle's "African patriotism" (341)—Holle is in no doubt that force is necessary to achieve the colonization of Senegal:

> People should not come to Senegal speaking of tolerance and freedom of religion; these principles might have some value in countries where human reason, having reached a certain stage of development [. . .] has earned the right [. . .] to invoke the idea of liberty of conscience; but, let us not forget that we are living amongst races governed by base instincts that are fed by a religion that deadens the mind. Besides, when one considers that all primitive societies have been governed by force, one will allow that it is legitimate for us to make a moderate and intelligent use of force. (360)

Essentially, Panet, Holle, and Boilat speak for the hybrid, Franco-Senegalese *métis* population on the coast who were France's allies, and not for the entire Senegalese "nation." As mentioned above, the *métis* had made their fortune as slave-owners. However, in the wake of the abolition of slavery in 1848, the old economy had been ruined and the *métis* needed to develop new forms of trade, and I would argue that Boilat's vision of Senegal is seen almost entirely from a *métis* perspective. Effectively, his text constructs a nation that is to be governed by his class.[17]

This issue brings us to a central problem with certain "revisionist" analyses of Senegalese colonial texts/history that seek to promote a Senegalese "cultural" nationalism. For instance, François Manchuelle makes great play of the distinction between cultural and political assimilation, arguing that, "culturally," figures such as Holle and Boilat (and later Blaise Diagne) who actively worked in the name of

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the French colonial project, were resolutely "Senegalese" despite their "political" allegiance to France, which he deems to be "merely" an act of political necessity (333–36). However, colonization was not an established fact in "Senegal" in the period of *métis* domination. The *métis* "collaborated" with the French in order to preserve their status as privileged intermediaries. Then, in the early twentieth century, when conquest had been achieved and colonization had become the status quo, the *métis* declined as a social and political force and a new political elite emerged from the majority black population. (This shift in power from the *métis* to black Africans is encapsulated in Abdoulaye Sadji's 1954 novel, *Nini, mulâtresse du Sénégal*, in which the main protagonist is presented as a deluded and racist relic of an unpleasant, colonial past.) Manchuelle rightly asserts that such "collaboration" was seen as a political necessity for the emerging black bourgeoisie. However, it was also the result of a concrete choice by a social and political class to embrace French language and culture as a means of furthering their cause, thus driving a wedge between themselves and "uneducated" Africans, a divide that is still clearly visible in Senegalese society today. As Parry argues, actual power relations between social groups are dissipated in such analyses by the desire to focus on a more elusive (and allusive) notion of cultural and political hybridity.

At the heart of these criticisms lies the notion of representativity: the evolving Franco-Senegalese consciousness of a *métis*, followed by a black, elite did not reflect the experiences of the vast majority of the population, which continued to express its identity through "local" languages and cultures. In fact, far from turning the local population into "African Frenchmen and women," the period from the 1850s to the 1890s, during which Senegal was systematically and violently colonized by the French, was the period during which Islam became the dominant religion of the "nation," and a central component of "national" self-identity. Islam had been present in various parts of Senegal from the eleventh century but it had remained, by and large, the religion of the local monarchies. However, as traditional political and social bonds were destroyed, firstly by slavery, and subsequently by colonization, Islam filled the growing void and became a focus of resistance to the French. For instance, Senegal's "national" hero, Lat Dior, the *damel* (or king) of the realm of Kajoor in northwestern Senegal, converted to Islam in order to rally the growing number of believers to his cause (Diouf *Le Kajoor* 260–61). Once the Senegalese kingdoms had been defeated militarily, Islamic leaders were willing to co-operate with the French authorities ("dangerous" holy men such as Cheikh Amadou Bamba were dealt with harshly by the colonial regime), while all the time strengthening the position of Islam within Senegalese society as a whole.[18] For Boilat, Islam had to be defeated in order for a modern Senegalese nation to flourish but Islam has instead become a central pillar of Senegalese national identity.[19] I am not seeking here to posit a "legitimate," "authentic" Islamic national identity in Senegal that one can contrast with an "inauthentic" French tradition. However, it is vital to remember that the hybridity of African nations cannot be confined to the extent to which Africans adopt and transform European models. As Aijaz Ahmad has warned, it is deeply misleading to read the history of formerly colonized "nations" purely through the prism of the colonial encounter, and in terms of European influences.[20] In this context, the brilliant work of Jocelyne Dakhlia on the precolonial Maghreb is highly instructive. Far from being homogeneous and culturally introverted, North African culture prior to European conquest was

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deeply hybrid and, in fact, it was "linguistic colonialism [that] resulted in a binary opposition, opposing an Arabic-speaking Muslim population to an assimilating French-speaking group" (241). For Dakhlia, it is thus important to destabilize "the far-too-widely accepted understanding that real identitary complexity, with all it brings in the way of existential enrichment and suffering, began only with colonization" (241). Equally, to view Senegalese culture and history in terms of a struggle between (African) tradition and (European/Western) modernity, as certain critics have unquestioningly done, is to deny their true complexity in which Islam, race, ethnicity, class, gender, as well as the legacy of colonialism, all have a part to play.

The political and cultural ambiguities to be found in Boilat's text are also evident in the emergence of a black, Franco-Senegalese consciousness in *Force-bonté*. Although Manchuelle, Johnson, and others have convincingly argued that the black African leaders and writers of the period immediately after the First World War were forming a nascent black national identity within the structures of the empire, *Force-bonté*'s status as a "nationalist" text is, nevertheless, deeply problematic. While it is true that the text marks a tentative step towards the development of a distinctive, black Senegalese voice in French, its belief in the supposed assimilationist ideals of colonialism never wavers; Diallo ponders the meaning of historical events but French colonial authority is never in question.

Riesz refers to the author's touching sincerity and believes that the book has a "charm" that is evident to "today's readers" ("The 'tirailleur sénégalais'" 175). This appeal to the present seems indicative of recent moves within postcolonial criticism, which seek to reassess colonial-era texts in light of contemporary theoretical and political concerns. As John McLeod argues, deploying Edward Said's notion of "traveling theory," texts and ideas continually slip free from their original contexts to take on new meanings, and much postcolonial criticism strives to chart the ways in which texts such as those by Boilat and Diallo can "travel" and be remade in the present. (Robert Young's exemplary work on the evolution in understanding of the notion of "métissage" is perhaps the best example of this process.) I find McLeod's arguments compelling, and they are an important reminder of the capacity for future generations of readers to rework the meaning of a text. Nonetheless, in charting such textual "travels," the critic must remain aware of Nicholas Harrison's notion of an "ethnocentricity of time," which was evoked above. Riesz is surely correct in underlining the elements in Diallo's text that make it sympathetic to many contemporary readers; however, does this mean that the reader should simply ignore Diallo's blind faith in France that culminates in a ten-page eulogy at the end of the story, concluding with the cry of "Vive la force-bonté de la France" (171)? On the contrary, if we as critics are to attempt to gauge the full complexity of these texts we must acknowledge that these latter, imperialist ideas have also "traveled," but they have done so in the opposite direction to those concerning cultural hybridity, as most contemporary readers would find Diallo's defence of France's colonial policies—so positively greeted by many at the time of its publication—to be deeply unpalatable. (In this context, it is significant that the Senegalese critic Mohamadou Kane is far less at ease than Riesz about the implications of Diallo's politics for his position within a putative "national tradition.")

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The other key black African texts from this period, Duguay-Clédor's *Bataille de Guilé* and Mapaté Diagne's *Les trois volontés de Malic* could also be said to contribute to a Senegalese cultural nationalism but their fundamental political allegiance is to France. The "cultural nationalism" of such texts is tempered by a political "collaboration" that is simply concealed by the notion of a benign, Franco-Senegalese hybridity. For example, in *La bataille de Guilé*, Duguay-Clédor relates the epic tale of Albouri Ndiaye who defeated Damel Samba Laobé Fall of Kajoor in 1886. The text can be seen as a contribution to local history and hence an integral part of the cultural nationalism described by Manchuelle. In the introduction to his book, Duguay-Clédor appears to confirm such a reading by berating ignorant French governors for their inability to understand oral tales. However, in an introduction written for the 1930 edition of his book, Duguay-Clédor claims that the epic past of the "nation" is invoked in order to give the full history of a country "which has shed so much of its flesh and blood for the glory and prosperity of *la plus Grande France*" (28). As Benedict Anderson argues so convincingly in the second edition of *Imagined Communities*, Renan's dictum that each nation must go through a process of forgetting is rather misleading. In fact, Renan argues that the violent, "fratricidal" past of the nation is invoked as a series of regrettable incidents between "brothers," which serves to highlight the healing of such wounds within the unified, modern nation (199–201). Blaise Diagne, in his preface to *La bataille de Guilé*, makes this clear when he argues that the book will give Senegalese youth a version of history "that is far removed from the agitation and the passions aroused by those unrealistic demagogues who seek to sow discord in our native districts" (21). An earlier period is here invoked in order to remind the nation of its shared conflictual past, in the process highlighting the harmony of the modern nation, a harmony that is brought about and guaranteed by membership of "la plus grande France." Equally, in Mapaté Diagne's text, the Senegalese past is evoked as a time of conflict, strife and unjust indigenous (i.e., Wolof) rule, which was brought to an end by the "bon commandant Faidherbe" (3).

The texts by Diallo, Duguay-Clédor and Mapaté Diagne are in many ways representative of the evolving hybrid culture of their time, and the limited political choices open to them, but their approach to colonialism was by no means the sole option available. By 1926, the year of *Force-bonté*'s publication, anticolonial—or at least "reformist"—ideas were becoming increasingly common: René Maran's novel *Batouala*, winner of the prestigious Prix Goncourt, was published in 1921 and was hailed as an important anti-colonial statement (even, if as many critics now agree, its anti-colonialism was more in the eye of certain beholders than in the text itself); the Negritude writers were about to issue their challenge to the colonial order; and the communist movement was hardening its anti-imperialist stance. Within a year of the publication of Diallo's book, his compatriot, another former *tirailleur*, Lamine Senghor, had published a savage, communist-inspired attack on French colonialism in *La violation d'un pays*.[21] This evocation of alternative approaches to empire is not designed to condemn Bakary Diallo, but rather to situate his opinions within the full context of his time. Diallo supports assimilation, but that was not a universally accepted position even within Senegal itself. The vast majority of the Senegalese population continued to live within the parameters of their own indigenous cultures, and their acceptance of France's military and political

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superiority did not involve a concomitant belief in France's cultural superiority. Diallo's "cultural nationalism" is of a type originally confined to the African elite but which began to spread more widely after mass conscription in the First World War, as many more Africans were introduced to French culture. Even then, a complete espousal of the values of French "civilization" cannot be said to have become the default cultural stance of all Senegalese.

My criticism of what I perceive as the limitations of some recent readings of the texts by Boilat and Diallo should not be taken as an absolute denial of the invaluable contribution of literary critics and historians who have sought to "revise" received ideas about a docile, thoroughly assimilated colonized elite in absolute thrall to its colonial masters; on the contrary, I fully acknowledge that the more complex vision of the colonial period that such criticism has produced has led to a breaking down of some of the more schematic divisions in our thinking about the shift from the colonial to the anti-colonial to the postcolonial. However, effectively, the critical approach to Senegalese literature that I have been examining, which places such a high value on the notion of cultural hybridity, appears constrained by a desire to shoehorn Senegalese writing in French into a seamless continuum that posits Negritude as a concept central to Senegalese literature. Over the past two decades, Philippe Dewitte and Martin Steins, in particular, have shown that Negritude, far from representing the sudden emergence of a radical, left-inspired racial consciousness among Africans, as many of its later supporters would have it, was actually part of a growing process of African self-awareness and self-confidence that had been gathering pace since the First World War.[22] Indeed, for Steins, Negritude represents, in many ways, a rather conservative shift away from certain radical black movements of the 1920s. Even the title of Senghor and Césaire's journal *L'Étudiant noir* indicates their rejection of the latent anticolonial violence in the title of their more radical predecessors's *Légitime défense*. Negritude was for a long time a "reformist" movement that sought a compromise with colonialism; Senghor and his acolytes did not envisage or even desire the possibility of independence until the 1950s. In Senegal, Negritude's cultural nationalism stressed the value of the indigenous cultures of the homeland, but Senghor and his supporters remained fundamentally committed to the French nation. After independence in 1960, Senghor modified his ideas in order to meet the challenges of nation-building through the creation of "official" narratives of the nation, which combined the "African" and "French" elements that he saw as central to the hybridity of Senegal. "Indigenous" figures such as Lat Dior became "national" heroes and, in the literary sphere, figures as disparate as Léopold Panet, David Boilat, and Bakary Diallo were cast as founders of the "national" tradition (Senghor, Preface, *Première exploration* 5–6). This Senghorian approach to Senegal's history, praising "indigenous" and "French" figures in equal measure, has been increasingly challenged over the past two decades. The Senegalese historian Mamadou Diouf argues that Negritude adopted a museum curator's approach to African cultural traditions, treating them as an object of historical curiosity rather than as a living and vibrant mode of being:

> Negritude's return to origins is in fact an intellectual exercise. For Senghor, this exercise has a concrete political goal, namely to legitimize Negritude. This is achieved by presenting the traditional oral tale and the words of the *griot* solely

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> as the expression of a set of values. [. . .] There are neither anecdotes nor "slices of life." All that remains is the exemplary value of the image. In this context, the historic role of the poet is self-evident. ("Repreésentations" 16)

Diouf effectively argues that Negritude, in its Senghorian form, serves purely to provide a reservoir of "traditional" images for the poet-president with which to cobble together a composite image of a set of African values. In the process, the very real "values" and "traditions" of specific ethnic groups and religions, which were still an integral part of the lived experience of the large majority of Senegalese, were neglected and marginalized. For Diouf, Senghor's Negritude was merely the literary side of a bourgeois nationalist political movement that sought to establish a narrative of the Senegalese nation stretching back into the mists of time while simultaneously refusing to acknowledge the worth of traditional African values in the modern political process. As we saw in the writing of Duguay-Clédor, the past is invoked as a symbol of shared history but it does not inform the future direction of the nation. Negritude is thus intimately bound up in processes of cultural and political struggles for legitimacy, struggles that, as Parry argues, are usually absent from work that chooses to focus on hybridity.

Unsurprisingly, the celebration of hybridity in certain strands of postcolonial criticism has come in for sustained critique, particularly from materialist critics, such as Parry with whose work I engaged above. Equally, Neil Lazarus and Timothy Brennan argue that the obsession with hybridity has emerged from a new postcolonial cosmopolitanism, which promotes the worldview of the migrant, postcolonial intellectual, while Ella Shohat has argued that "[a] celebration of syncretism and hybridity per se, if not articulated in conjunction with questions of hegemony and neo-colonial power relations, runs the risk of appearing to sanctify the *fait accompli* of colonial violence" (109). In perhaps the most telling critique, Peter Hallward comments ironically that "[w]hat is remarkable is that postcolonial theory should so often have argued that the colonial relationship is especially 'ambivalent and symbiotic' rather than minimally and trivially so" (xv). Cilas Kemedjio views this situation as "a veritable syndrome of moderation, one that dismisses all uncompromising contestation of the colonial system, relegating it to the category of enlightened extremism" (50). The work of these scholars reminds us that colonialism was a system based on economic and political exploitation and the postcolonial literary critic must take care not lose sight of this when examining texts from the colonial era.

Both *Esquisses sénégalaises* and *Force-bonté* are clearly an integral part of the national literature of Senegal but, as I have demonstrated, it is misguided to search for a somehow timeless and "representative" hybridity uniting all Senegalese texts in French. The creation of national literary canons in Africa in the 1960s was important in the process of nation-building, but postcolonial critics must retain a flexible notion of national literature rather than positing a seamless continuum of texts all geared towards the same goals. As Harrison argues:

> [I]f one takes a sceptical, historicizing view of any "national" body of literature, or a body of literature in a given language, the particular significance of "sharing" the language and even the *extent* to which "it" is shared, both across time [. . .] and across the globe, come to seem far from clear, a matter of diverse

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> overlapping histories rather than something that can be captured at the level of a general "identity." (109–10)

It is not that the use of the French language somehow makes these texts fundamentally compromised by their link to colonialism. As Benedict Anderson has argued, the European languages of the colonial powers have played a strong role in nationalisms throughout the former empires (133–35). Nations and national literatures are made up of competing discourses, and *Esquisses sénégalaises* and *Force-bonté* are narratives that view Senegal from within imperial ideology: they are the by-products of colonial violence and domination. They may represent a "nascent" cultural nationalism but they also belong to a tradition of political collaboration that has continued to mark Franco-Senegalese relations since independence.[23] Their espousal of a specific Franco-African form of cultural identity has become integral to many contemporary notions of Senegalese identity, a process that has seen the likes of Boilat and Diallo elevated to the status of "representative" authors. However, Senegalese national identity cannot be so neatly confined within the limits of the Senegalese encounter with France, and much Senegalese cultural production escapes such potentially reductive classifications.

The analysis of cultural hybridity and syncretism should not be divided from the politics and history that produced them. For, essentially, colonialism is a question of political and cultural domination. It produces forms of cultural hybridity but, to paraphrase one of the key questions from Césaire's *Discourse on Colonialism*: is colonialism really the best means of establishing a cultural dialogue? It is the violence of colonialism that must not be forgotten as we seek to develop a more complex understanding of the literature of the colonial period. In Senegal, the birth of the nation is also the birth of the colony, and this ambiguity is central to an understanding of much of its national literature in French.

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NOTES

1. One of the chief advocates of the study of "national literatures" in francophone Africa has been Adrien Huannou, while one of its chiefs critics has been Guy Ossito Midiohouan ("Le phénomène"). For an interesting summary of this debate, see Miller 144–51.

2. See also the historical "cahiers" of Yoro Dyâo, who was educated in Faidherbe's "école des otages" for sons of Wolof nobleman. These accounts of Wolof history were collected together and published by R. Rousseau (Dyâo and Rousseau, "Le Sénégal d'autrefois: Etude sur le Oualo"; "Le Sénégal d'autrefois: Etude sur le Cayor"). Dorothy

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Blair gives a brief summary of several of these works in her important introductory study (31–44). In her *Anthologie de la littérature sénégalaise d'expression française*, Gisela Bonn does not include any extracts from this early period, even though Léopold Sédar Senghor, in his preface to the collection, cites both David Boilat and Bakary Diallo as important examples of the hybrid, Franco-African nature of Senegalese literature (Senghor 8–9). In a special 1985 issue of the French-published journal, *Notre Librairie*, dedicated to Senegalese literature (referring exclusively to material in French), Mohamadou Kane provides a brief overview of the literature of the period from 1850–1930.

3. For an account of Boilat's life, see Bouquillon and Cornevin.

4. As Alice Conklin argues, there were distinctive but fundamentally complementary Catholic and secular visions of France's "civilizing mission" in Africa (1–10). Education in France's African colonies was dominated by religious orders until the separation of Church and State in the first decade of the twentieth century, when the Republic created its own network of secular schools. However, religious orders did not simply disappear: for instance, Léopold Senghor was educated at a mission school near Mbour, south of Dakar, from 1914 to 1923. As Owen White has shown, religious orders maintained an important presence in colonial education until independence, primarily because the colonial authorities did not have the finances to establish a comprehensive network of schools (41–51). The chief authority on education in the West African colonies is Denise Bouche. (I am grateful to Benedict Anderson for raising the issue of Republican and Catholic education during the conference at which this article was originally delivered as a paper.)

5. Benedict Anderson discusses the privileged role of the printed word in the development of "imagined communities" (22–36).

6. See, in particular, Cheikh Hamidou Kane, *Ambiguous Adventure*, and V. Y. Mudimbe, *L'écart*.

7. For examples of the flexibility of colonial education, see the numerous "African" elements included in the infamous "Mamadou et Bineta" books used in African schools (Davesne and Gouin 1939).

8. For a discussion of Faidherbe's role in the development of ethnography in Senegal, see Bathily. As many commentators have mentioned, Boilat pipped Faidherbe to the Institut de France's Prix Volney in 1856, when the latter's Wolof grammar book was rewarded ahead of the governor's study of Senegalese languages (Abdoulaye-Bara Diop 11); Bouquillon and Cornevin 103).

9. Equally, Léopold Panet's spying work on behalf of the French colonial regime was facilitated by his knowledge of Arabic, allowing him to travel from northern Senegal to Morocco as a "native." For a brief biography of Panet, see Robert Cornevin's introduction to the 1968 edition of Panet's text.

10. The obsession of the colonized with the language of the colonizer is a common feature of African literature in French. Perhaps the best known example is Cheikh Hamidou Kane's *Ambiguous Adventure* in which the main protagonist Samba Diallo declares: "I remained for a long time under the spell of those signs and those sounds which constitute the structure and the music of their language. When I learned to fit them together to form words, to fit the words together to give birth to speech, my happiness knew no further limit" (159).

11. Blaise Diagne has attracted both great praise and deep antipathy from historians. The US historian Wesley Johnson provides an extremely positive analysis of Diagne's role in Franco-African politics. However, the Senegalese historian and economist, Amady Aly Dieng, lambastes his countryman as a traitor who betrayed his people, and worked solely in the interests of the French.

12. Birago Diop's multivolume autobiography (1978–89) and Nafissatou Diallo's *De Tilène au Plateau* (1976) are two of the most famous Senegalese examples of this genre.

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13. For an assessment of the different critical perceptions of *Force-bonté*, see Midiohouan, *Tirailleurs sénégalais*, and Papa Samba Diop.

14. In this light, *Force-bonté* could be seen as a forerunner of post-independence Senegalese writing on the figure of the mad *tirailleur*, a figure broken by his experiences in the colonial army: "le fou" in *Ambiguous Adventure*, Tanor in Sembene's *White Genesis*, and the eponymous "Sarzan" in Birago Diop's story from *Tales of Amadou Koumba* are perhaps the best known examples. For an excellent overview of the representation of the *tirailleur* in African literature, see Riesz and Schultz. The most informative history of the *tirailleurs sénégalais* is to be found in Myron J. Echenberg's monumental study.

15. Oumar Bâ records the devastation of Faidherbe's 1855–56 campaign against El-Hadj Omar in northeastern Senegal, in which an estimated 20,000 people were killed, and entire villages were wiped from the map.

16. James F. Searing also brilliantly analyses the destabilizing effects of slavery on indigenous societies in Senegal.

17. For an analysis of the shift from slavery to colonialism in Senegal, see Klein.

18. For a fascinating discussion of the complex relationships between the French and the Islamic leaders in Senegal, see Robinson, *Paths of Accommodation*.

19. As Amar Samb has illustrated in a monumental 500-page study, there exists a large body of Senegalese religious, devotional texts written in Arabic that forms a hybrid, Afro-Islamic culture. In a fascinating article, "Un historien et anthropologue sénégalais: Sheikh Musa Kamara," David Robinson provides an overview of one of Senegal's most influential Islamic scholars and authors.

20. I have argued at length elsewhere against the essentialist ideas put forward by scholars such as Samb depicting Islam as an "essential," "indigenous" element of Senegalese identity (Murphy 16–18, 173–75).

21. Miller provides a very interesting reading of this little-known text (21–28). See also Midiohouan's excellent article on Senghor's book ("Lamine Senghor"), which he views in part as a riposte to Ahmadou Mapaté Diagne's extremely positive view of French colonialism in *Les trois volontés de Malic*.

22. Miller uses the ideas of these cultural historians throughout his reading of early twentieth-century francophone black African culture in *Nationalists and Nomads*.

23. See Sembene's vicious satire of the neocolonial politics of Senghor's regime in *The Last of the Empire*. For a discussion of this novel, see Murphy 186–204.

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