TASAVVUF ARAŞTIRMALARI ENSTİTÜSÜ DERGİSİ TAED | JISS JOURNAL OF THE INSTITUTE FOR SUFI STUDIES

Wolof Sufi Oral Narratives' Structure and Function

Wolof Dilindeki Sözlü Tasavvuf Anlatılarının Yapısı ve İşlevi

Mamarame SECK*

Abstract

This study explores the unstudied rich Wolof Sufi oral cultural productions and their contribution to the knowledge about Islam in Senegal. It only focuses on oral production by Sufi leaders and their followers. This consists of an oral corpus of the life stories of past and current Sufi leaders, woven by multiple (re) tellers across generations, designed in such a way that they can give Sufi adepts examples to follow and, possibly, reproduce. The storytelling varies according to the speaker's skills and charisma, the audience's expectations and context of the performance. The combination of all these factors makes the structure of the stories unique, especially compared to those coming from western cultures.

Keywords: Narrative, Sufism in Senegal, Sufi oral Production, Islam in Senegal.

Öz

Bu çalışma, hakkında oldukça az çalışma bulunmakla birlikte son derece zengin bir içeriğe sahip olan Wolof dilindeki sözlü tasavvufî kültür üretimlerini ve bunların Senegal'deki İslâm hakkındaki bilgilere ne türden bir katkı sağladığını araştırmaktadır. Çalışma yalnızca tasavvuf büyükleri ile onların müntesipleri tarafından oluşturulan sözlü üretime odaklanmaktadır. Bahsedilen sözlü gelenek, tasavvuf büyüklerine izleyebilecekleri, hatta yeniden üretebilecekleri ve nesiller boyunca farklı anlatıcılar tarafından aktarılmış, geçmiş ve günümüz tasavvuf figürlerinin hayat hikâyelerinden oluşan sözlü bir külliyattan oluşmaktadır. Hikâye anlatımı, konuşmacının beceri ve karizması ile dinleyicilerin beklentileri ile icranın bağlamına göre çeşitlilik gösterir. Tüm bu etkenlerin birleşimi, özellikle Batı kültürlerinden gelen benzerleriyle karşılaştırıldığında, hikâye yapısını nevi şahsına münhasır kılmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Anlatı, Senegal'de tasavvuf, sözlü tasavvufî üretim, Senegal'de İslâm.

* Scholar, Fundamental Institute of Black Africa (IFAN), Department of African Languages and Civilizations. E-mail: mamarseck@gmail.com.

Cilt/Volume: 2 • Sayı/Number: 1 • Mayıs/May 2023
DOİ: 10.32739/ustad.2023.3.XX

Introduction

Senegal is a country that counts 94% Muslims, the majority of which are followers of Sufi Islam. This study explores the overlooked, yet rich oral cultural productions of the Senegalese Sufi orders and their contribution to the knowledge about practices of Islam in West Africa in general and Senegal in particular. The study only focuses on oral production by Sufi leaders and their followers. This tradition consists of an oral corpus of the life stories of past and current Sufi leaders, woven by multiple (re)tellers across generations, and designed in such a way that they reinforce the faith of Sufi adepts in their leaders. In addition, these stories set examples for Sufi adherents to follow and, possibly, reproduce.

Every Sufi congregation in Senegal is an opportunity to tell stories about past and current Sufi leaders. The ways in which the stories are selected and framed may vary according to the speaker's skills and personal charisma, the audience's expectations and the context of the performance. The combination of all these factors makes the structure of these stories unique, especially compared to ordinary stories and those coming from western cultures.

Why such a pervasiveness of oral stories in the practice of Sufi Islam in Senegal? What functions do the stories fulfill in Senegalese Islam in general and Sufi groups in particular? How do the stories manage to fulfill such functions?

Having observed my society for a very long time, participated in several Sufi gatherings in Senegal and abroad, in Europe and the United States, and collected data from various sources including video and audio-cassettes, television broadcasts, and others, I came to the following conclusion, which also serves as the main argument of this study. Sufi oral narratives in Wolof, which are centered on the shaykhs or Sufi masters, their exemplary characters, and the miraculous deeds they are said to have accomplished during their lifetime, are the medium through which Sufi orders carry their spiritual message and earn the loyalty of their adherents. In addition, the survival and continuity of these Sufi orders and the supremacy of their leaders largely depend on the spread of such narratives. By telling these stories, Sufi speakers aim to reinforce the disciples' faith in their respective Sufi movements and leaders. The social and religious contexts of the narrative performance and the speaker's goal together shape the structure of the texts, which fulfill cultural and religious functions.

Although Sufi orders in Senegal are known as important social, political and economic organization[1] in Senegalese society, the significant contribution of their oral cultural productions to the spread of Sufi Islam and the knowledge about Sufi practices in the region is not well known.

The study fills a gap by presenting a selection of Sufi oral stories, of which it explores the context of production as well as the characteristic discursive features. In addition, it shows how Wolof's discursive mechanisms and the context of production of the stories shape their structure and help them fulfill their cultural and religious functions.

Theoritical Frameworks

A corpus of texts

Oral discourse in West-African societies in many ways consists of a corpus of texts, interconnected

1 Christian Coulon, "Prophets of God or of History? Muslim Messianic Movements and Anti-Colonialism in Senegal", in *Theoretical Explorations in African Religion*, ed. W. van Binsbergen and M. Schoffeleers, London: Routledge&Kegan Paul, 1985, 346-66; Jean Copans, *Les marabouts de l'Arachide: La confrérie mouride et les paysans du Sénégal*, (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1988); Donald Cruise O'Brien, *Saints and Politicians: Essays in the Organization of a Senegalese Peasant Society*, (London: Cambridge University Press, 1975), "Introduction", in *Charisma and Brotherhood in African Islam*, ed. D. Cruise O'Brien&C. Coulon, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 1– 31; Philip D. Curtin, "Jihad in West Africa: Early Phases and Inter-relationship with Mauritania and Senegal," *Journal of African History* 12, 1 (1971): 11-24; Leonardo Villalón, *Islamic Society and State Power in Senegal: Disciples and Citizens in Fatick*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

and dialogic.[2] This conception of text, as developed in Barber's 2007 book, draws upon the Latin etymology of the word, "a tissue of words, from Latin *texere, meaning literally to weave, join together, plait or braid".*[3] Verbal texts, as Barber refers to the corpus of oral discourse, are "locally-produced texts, composed and transmitted according to people's own conventions, in their own language, encapsulating their own concerns", which "do seem to speak as if from 'within'".[4] In other words, texts, whether written or spoken, are rooted in their context of production and reception. From early on, in their edited volume, *Explorations in the Ethnography of Speaking,*[5] Bauman & Sherzer looked at the same issue and used the term "speech community", which they define in terms of "the shared or mutually complementary knowledge and ability (competence) of its member for the production and interpretation of socially appropriate speech". Along the same lines, these two authors speak of "the set of community norms, operating principles, strategies, and values, which guide the production and interpretation of speech, the community ground rules of speaking".[6]

Wolof Sufi oral narratives can be considered both globally and locally framed. Indeed, the norms of speaking in Sufi Islamic communities draw upon a long tradition, departing from the *hadiths o*r teachings of the Prophet Muhammad or *Muxamet* in Wolof. The latter is considered a model for all Muslims -titled given to him by his Lord in the Qur'an-; and his life and teachings, are recounted at religious gatherings in Muslim societies to inspire other Muslims.

Although Sufi leaders may not consider themselves prophets, their followers may give them attributes of the Prophet Muhammad, or even of God sometimes. For instance, the Sufi group called Layene in Senegal considers the founder of its movement, Limamou Laye (1843-1909), a re-embodiment of the Prophet Muhammad. That is to say that West-African Sufi communities have adapted locally the tradition mentioned above; and they recount the lives and miraculous deeds or *muhjizat*, of their leaders at Sufi ceremonies. Local norms for public speaking are set by the *gëwël* in Wolof, or griot[7] to use a notion from the West. The latter's intervention, as verbal specialist in West-African societies, adds complexity to this oral tradition. Moreover, Sufi oral narratives that make up Sufi oral discourse are the major means of communication among followers of Sufi orders. The storytellers are actually re-tellers because their stories are generally well-spread out and known to almost all Sufi adherents. People re-tell these narratives to remind themselves of the good deeds of their leaders and to reinforce their faith in them. The episodic nature of such stories has given them a structure that differs from regular stories such as narratives of personal experience described by Labov & Waletzky.[8] In the West-African Sufi tradition, narratives are boundless because every speaker takes on an episode of a master text and links it to previous or incoming ones recounted by other speakers. In one of the narratives, the speaker ends his story by telling his audience that he just wanted to share this episode with them, which they can add to "what they already know":

2 M. M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, translated by M. Holquist & C. Emerson, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), 259-422; Karin Barber, *The Anthropology of Texts, Persons, and Publics: Oral and Written Culture in Africa and Beyond*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 1.

3 David C. Greetham, *Theories of the Text*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 26; Barber, ibid., 2.

4 Barber, ibid., 3.

5 Richard Bauman & Joel Sherzer, *Explorations in the Ethnography of Speaking*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 6.

6 Bauman & Sherzer, Exploration in the Ethnography of Speaking, 7.

7 George Olakunle, "The Oral History and Literature of the Wolof People of Waalo, Northern Senegal: The Master of the Word (Griot) in the Wolof Tradition", in *Research in African Literatures* 31, 1 (2000): 175.

8 William Labov and Joshua Waletzky, "Narrative Analysis: Oral versions of Personal Narratives", in the *Essays on the Verbal and Visual Arts: Proceedings of the 1966 Annual Spring Meeting of the American Ethnological Society,* ed. June Helm, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1967), 12-44.

1.	*Loolu dama leen koy seede*
2.	Ngeen dolli ko ca la ngéen xam
1.	*This, I am sharing it with you*
2.	*So that you can add it to what you already know*

Also, every speaker adds his personal skills to the storytelling, which make his account somehow different from other versions of the same story.

In addition, the context of the narrative performance has an impact on the framing of the story. Some parts of the story may be given preeminence over others while some others may be left out.

Context-based texts

The West-African Sufi context of the narratives, characterized by the dominant figure of the shaykh whose known actions and teachings are recalled by Sufi speakers, has certainly given shape to the five-step structure, instead of six as in the Labovian well-known model:[9] pre-story, abstract, orientation, complication and evaluation. The actions accomplished by the shaykh and the teachings that can be learned from these actions are the most important aspects of the storytelling. As a result, after highlighting these actions, the speaker wraps up his account with his personal assessment.

The majority of the Senegalese Sufi adepts do not read Arabic, which is the language of the Qur'an and other Islamic resources. They rely on oral translations and interpretations of the Qur'an by learned people; including the Sufi shaykhs themselves and the adepts they trained in the traditional Qur'anic schools or daara in Wolof. On Fridays, for example, local televisions and radios broadcast programs on Islam and Islamic teachings for those who have questions but cannot find the answers in the Qur'an. Question and answer series always follow the translation and interpretation of Qur'anic chapters and verses by so-called Arabisants or students of the Arabic language.

Many references in the stories told by Sufi speakers come from written sources, such as the Qur'an, hadiths or teachings about the Prophet Muhammad, or the writings of a Sufi scholar, which many people cannot have access to due to linguistic barriers. Some of the texts only exist in Arabic and in Ajami, wolofal in Wolof, meaning an Arabic-based script for Wolof for another African language. A few Senegalese can read Arabic, but most of them rely on storytelling to be educated about the history of their Sufi clerics. The storyteller selects the passage that best corresponds to the context of his performance and audience's needs, and weaves and presents that passage in his own words. The listeners, who are generally very excited and enthusiastic about the stories, will show respect and admiration to the storyteller by leaving their seats to join him and give him some monetary reward.

It is also important to note that oral tradition has been for a very long time the major means of knowledge transmission and circulation in West African societies. Djeli Mamadou Kouyaté, the griot who tells the epic story of Sundiata in an Epic of Old Mali,[10] said at the beginning of his account that the stroty came from his great-great grandfather, who told it to his grandfather, who passed it down to his father, who related it directly to him. This is how the memory of the ancestors is kept alive through generations. In these West African societies, the spoken word is as important as the written document, if not more important.

It is in this multifaceted context, that is, historic, socio-cultural and religious, that one must situate the diffusion of Sufi stories in Senegal. Sufi storytellers are among the minority who can read the Qur'an and writings of past and current Sufi masters, passages of which they relate to their audience. There is no Sufi gathering without stories about Senegalese Sufi Muslims. As a result, each Sufi order has its capital of stories. In addition, the name of a particular shaykh is associated with

9 Labov and Waletzky, "Narrative Analysis", 12.

10 Djibril Tamsir Niane, *Soundjata ou l'épopée mandingue, (Paris: Presence Africaine, 1960),* 1.

some miracle stories or important statements and predictions he made during his lifetime.

Wolof Sufi oral narratives are therefore context-based narratives. The context of the narrative performance dictates the structure, language, and functions of the narrative units. The word context here refers to a set of factors that determine the forms and functions of the stories. By context we refer here to what Gee called "the material setting, the people present (and what they know or believe), the language that comes before or after a given utterance, the social relationships of the people involved, and their ethnic, gendered, and sexual identities, as well as cultural, historical, and institutional factors".[11]

Following Gee's view of context, I stipulate that the people who compose the audience of Wolof Sufi oral narratives, their common background as well as the physical and cultural Sufi setting of the narrative performance together constitute the context that determines the structure, language and functions of the narratives. For instance, the way a story is told at a Sufi gathering that took place in Touba, the headquarters of the Muridiyya order,[12] is expected to be different from the way the same story will be told at another Sufi gathering taking place in Philadelphia, in the United Sates. Attendees of the Touba gathering will likely be mostly composed of Murids or followers of the Muridiyya, while those of the Philadelphia meeting will likely be mixed, that is, composed of followers and non-followers of the Muridiyya. The Senegalese community in the United States is composed of followers of different Sufi orders for whom every event is an opportunity to see other people and reconnect with the homeland culture and traditions. As a result, Sufi speakers tailor their speech based on the audience's background and needs at the time of the performance. The audience-designed nature of Sufi narratives leads to some variations in the accounts of the same story and the language speakers use.

Hybrid genre

Sufi oral discourse, especially Sufi oral narrative in Wolof, is a hybrid genre, both at the language and the text levels. As Hill stipulates about the language in use in the religious meetings held by the *Taalibe Baay* or disciples of Baay or father, the name given to shaykh Ibrahima Niass (1900-1975), son of Shaykh Abdoulaye Niass (around 1844-1922), founder of the Niass branch of the Tijaniyya order of Senegal:

> The oratorical genres employed in religious meetings are fundamentally heteroglossic, juxtaposing many speech registers and other genres: ancient classical Arabic prose, formalized Arabic poetry, Qur'ānic verses, "deep Wolof" narratives and translations, and conversational Wolof explanations incorporating many French loanwords.[13]

The hybrid language in Sufi oral narratives consists of the use of at least three languages in the speech: Wolof, French and Arabic. These three languages have different statuses and fulfill different functions in the communication between followers. Wolof is the vernacular spoken by the majority of Sufi followers. To reach out to a larger audience and make themselves understood by the majority of Senegalese Muslims, Sufi orators use Wolof. They use French, the official language and that of the former colonial power, for high-prestige and to show global connection. Arabic is the language of the Qur'an and the Prophet Muhammad. Therefore, Sufi orators use it to show their mastery of the Qur'an and other religious texts written in Arabic such as the hadiths of the Prophet Muhammad and the Sufi poetry by Senegalese Sufi clerics. They

11 James P. Gee, *An Introduction to Discourse Analysis: Theory and Method*, (London: Routledge, 2005), 57.

12 Cheikh Babou, "Contesting Space, Shaping Places: Making Room for the Muridiyya in Colonial Senegal, 1912–45", in *The Journal of African History* 46, 3 (2005): 405.

13 Joseph Hill, "Languages of Islam: Hybrid Genres of Taalibe Baay Oratory", in *Islamic Africa 2, 1 (2011): 70.*

may have to translate their Arabic message into Wolof afterwards.

Beside the hybrid language found in Wolof Sufi oral narratives, there is also a hybrid text nature featured by presence of different genres or text types such as monologues, dialogues, praises and genealogies. Because these texts are centered around the shaykh and his miraculous deeds or philosophical stance, narrators use monologues, dialogues, praises and genealogies for various purposes, among which that consisting of highlighting the sanctity of that shaykh and legitimating his or her status. In this society, it is believed that *Baraka is transmitted from grandparents to parents and then to grandchildren. Moreover, the oldest son of a deceased shaykh often becomes his successor.* A Pulaar saying stipulates: *Debbo pijoo wo jibintaa waliyu* (A woman that commits adultery does not give birth to a saint.) Many people do not know who the father of these saints are, but their mothers are well-known and given as examples to other women.

Methodology of the Study

To analyze my narratives, I use two interrelated approaches. The first approach is a form-function analys**is,**[14] that is, a study of the correlations between form (structure) and function (contextual meaning). This approach is used to analyze the structure of Sufi oral narratives and its function in the context of production. Such an approach led to interpreting the pre-story stage, first stage of the Wolof Sufi oral narrative structure, as a necessary stage, in this oral cultural context, to suit the audience's needs for a thematic context in order to process and understand the message of the upcoming story.

The second approach is language-context analysis,[15] meaning a study of the interaction between language and context. The interaction between the two is often considered reflexive by some scholars, meaning, "an utterance influences what we take the context to be and context influences what we take the utterance to mean".[16] The application of this approach to my data led me to look at the relationships between the wording and structuring of Wolof Sufi oral narratives and their context of production, that is, the Wolof Sufi Islamic context. For instance, the widespread use of Arabic formulas in Sufi narratives shows the place of that language in Islamic practices in Senegal. Arabic is used to lend authority to a narrative, given that it is the language of the Qur'an and, therefore, it is highly valued to be able to speak it.

However, given the complexity of Wolof Sufi oral narratives and the interaction between their contexts of production, language, structure, and function, it becomes necessary to combine both form-function and language-context analyses to best analyze these narratives. In other words, my analysis consists of showing how the structure of Wolof Sufi oral narratives, the functions of the narratives, and the language in use, reflect the context of the narrative performance and together tell us about practices of Islam in Senegal. Particular attention will be paid to the complication stage of the narratives and how its structure interacts with the context. The complication is the stage where various linguistic devices such as dialogues, monlogues, praises and genealogies, are used to highlight the figure of the shaykh, which is the goal of the storyteller and the reason why the audience has come to attend his talk.

Context of Sufi Oral Discourse

A West African Sufi Culture

Students of Islam in Africa commonly mention the eleventh century as the beginning of the presence of Islam in West Africa. In Senegal, the gateway was the State of Tekruur in the Senegal River Valley, which subsequently became involved with the Almoravid reform movement that extended

14 Gee, *An Introduction to Discourse Analysis*, 54.

15 Ibid., 4.

16 Ibid., 57.

northward into Morocco and Spain.[17] According to Babou, Waar Jaabi, the first ruler of Tekruur, became Muslim in that period and supported the Almoravid movement.[18] The latter was a movement of Islamic conversion that spread throughout the Western Sahara, led by the nomadic Berbers or Almoravids early in the eleventh century. However, the real spread of Islam in Senegal and the surrounding region only happened in the nineteenth century with the advent of the Sufi orders. There are four of them: the Qadiriyya –the oldest order– originated in Baghdad in Iraq in the 11th century, and is named after its founder, Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani. The Tijaniyya –the largest order in present-day Senegal– was not founded until the 18th century. It originated in Algeria and is named after its founder, Ahmad al-Tijani, an 18th century mystic. The Muridiyya and the Layenes both originated in Senegal. The founders of the last two orders are respectively Amadu Bamba Mbacké (1853-1927) and Limamou Laye (1843-1909). al-Hàjj Malick Sy (1855-1922), al-Hàjj Umar Tal (1797-1864), al-Hàjj Abdoulaye Niass (around 1844-1922) and his son Ibrahima Niass (1900-1975) are often cited among the most popular propagators of the Tijaniyya in Senegal and the surrounding region.

Sufi orders appropriated Islam and adapted it to the local values and beliefs, leading some scholars, especially from the European perspective, to use the term *Islam noir or Black Islam. Robinson rejects this term, which he believes is pejorative, but rather speaks of the Africanization of Islam, meaning, the way "African groups have created Muslimspace or made Islam their own*".[19] In Senegal it is through the Sufi brotherhoods and supreme direction of Muslim leaders called shaykhs, or *marabouts* in local parlance, that many Senegalese practice Islam.

Sufism is seen by some scholars as a search for wisdom, piety, and closeness to God through rituals and litanies.[20] Brenner sees it as a "spiritual discipline intended to liberate the human spirit from its corporeal shell and enable it to move closer to God."[21] In general Sufism is considered as the annihilation of the individual's ego, will, and self-centeredness by God, and the subsequent spiritual revival with the Light of His Essence. However, the main aspect of Sufism is a belief in mystical forms of knowledge that can only be obtained through studying with a master or guide. Salafists do not concur with this view and rather promote strict observance of the *shari'a*, or Islamic law, the Qur'an and the *Sunnah*, or traditions of the Prophet Muhammad. Such critic does not necessary mean that Sufi Muslims, at least in Senegal, do not follow Sunni Islam. In fact, what makes Islam in Senegal an original case study for scholars of Islam in Africa is that there is no ambivalence between Sufis and Sunnis. Sufis have been Sunnis from early on.

The core Sufi relationship is the individual bond between a student and a shaykh, who expects complete submission to his or her guidance. There has been presence of female shaykhs, also called *shaykha*, in Senegal. This tradition goes back to the time of the Prophet onward beginning with the youngest wife of the Prophet Muhammad, Aicha, who was knowledgeable of the Qur'an and the *hadiths*, or sayings of the Prophet, to the extent that she is often cited by hagiographers of the Prophet Muhammad. Senegal has seen female shaykhs such as Soxna Maimouna Mbacké, who had several disciples during her lifetime. The tomb of Mame Diarra Bousso, mother of Amadu Bamba, is visited by thousands of people every year, coming to celebrate her sanctity. To find a female shaykh is less common

17 Philip D. Curtin, "Jihad in West Africa: early phases and Inter-relationship with Mauritania and Senegal", 12; Cheikh Babou, *Fighting the Greater Jihad: Amadu Bamba and the Founding of the Muridiyya of Senegal, 1853-1913*, (Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2007), 21.

18 Babou, ibid., 21.

19 David Robinson, *Muslim Societies in African History*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 42-59.

20 Ibid., 19.

21 See Louis Brenner, "Sufism in Africa", in *African Spirituality: Forms, Meanings, And Expressions*, ed. Jacob K. Olupona, (New York: Herder and Herder, Crossroad Publishing Company, 2000).

today than it was before but there are still a few female Sufi leaders such as Sokhna Aida Diallo, wife of late Cheikh Bethio Thioune. Her leadership is though challenged, if not simply rejected by members of the Murid Sufi brotherhood. Before her, late Sokhna Mariama Niass, from the Niass branch of the Tijaniyya used to teach the Qur'an and held a large community of disciples.

The shaykh reveals efficacious litanies to his or her students in the process of study, and enthusiastic disciples seek to acquire religious secrets as well as the shaykh's permission to transmit them to others. There is also a widespread belief in the power of particular shaykhs, leading to the practice of making pilgrimages to the tombs of shaykhs where pilgrims asked the dead to intercede for them before God. Disciples of Sufi orders often work for the shaykh, expecting *Baraka* or blessings in return.

In Senegal, Sufism is practiced individually, through formulaic prayer rituals known as wird and dhikr, in which one recollects and meditates upon the names of God.[22] It is also practiced collectively, through the chanting of Sufi poems at gatherings and celebrations known as *jàng in Wolof.*

The two most popular Sufi events are the *Gàmmu* or Mawlid al-Nabi in Arabic, meaning celebration of the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad,[23] which is the major event of the Tijaniyya order, and the Great *Màggal* of Touba, or remembrance of the day of departure of Amadu Bamba into exile, which is the major event of the Muridiyya order. Senegalese Sufi leaders are known for their love of the Prophet Mouhammad in honor of whom they composed a vast body of poetry. When comes the birthday day of the Prophet, they gather at their respective headquarters to celebrate. Part of the celebration consists of a remembrance of the time of Prophet, his life and challenges he faced during the early days of Islam when trying to establish the new religion. As for the *Màggal*, it celebrates Amadu Bamba's forced exile for seven years out of Senegal because of the fear that he would take up weapons against the French colonial regime, in addition to their hope of putting his movement to an end. For the Murids, this was a test for their Shaykh which he had passed and for which he was rewarded with a large community of followers and a magnificent mosque in the holy of Touba. There are other events such as ziara, or visits to the living marabouts, in the holy cities of Touba, the headquarters of the Muridiyya, Tivaouane, the headquarters of the Sy branch of the Tijaniyya, Medina Baye and Leona in Kaolack, the headquarters of the Niasse branch of the Tijaniyya, Njaasaan, the headquarters of the Qadiriyya, and Yoff, the headquarters of the Layenes. Other places where companions of the founding fathers of the Sufi orders were buried are also visited. The purpose of the visits is to seek Baraka or spiritual blessings from the shaykhs, dead or alive, and from the holy places.24 In addition, the daayiras or local Sufi associations hold local events to practice and worship in communion.

Sufi discourse is characterized by the pervasiveness of stories about the Sufi leaders' miracles and life itineraries (jaar-jaari sëriñ bi in Wolof, meaning the spiritual itinerary of the shaykh). The stories are organized around various themes and contents. The most common themes are prediction making and relationship between shaykh and disciple while the content ranges from biographies of the shaykh to anecdotes. A designated speaker is hired to talk and tell these stories, and recite other testimonies about the shaykhs, punctuated by the chanting of moralizing poems written by these shaykhs in honor of the Prophet Muhammad. The Sufi songs constitute an important dimension of the meetings because they entertain the audience spiritually. Some attendees may stand up and dance as the chanters perform.

22 John Glover, *Sufism and Jihad in Modern Senegal: The Murid Order*, (New York: University of Rochester Press, 2007), 47.

23 Marion Holmes Katz, *The Birth of the Prophet Muhammad: Devotional Piety in Sunni Islam*, (New York: Routledge, 2007), 11; Annemarie Schimmel, *And Muhammad is His Messenger: The Veneration of the Prophet in Islamic Piety*, (Chapel Hill: UNC Press Books, 2014), 125-145.

24 Glover, *Sufism and Jihad in Modern Senegal*, 47.

Sometimes, they walk to the group of chanters and the speaker and offer them money to show their satisfaction. The speaker may or may not be from a griot or géwël lineage, although géwël speakers are especially good at recalling past events, which they combine with praises and genealogies. Indeed, in West-African societies, the figure of the griot or master of speech,25 or the géwël in Wolof, is fundamental in the weaving and spreading of texts. In this respect, the géwël is the one who sets the fundamentals of public speaking as he or she is known for his or her verbal skills, inherited from his or her ancestors. While not all public speakers are géwël, the fact a speaker is from that lineage makes the difference between his speech and the others. In this Sufi context, singers are mostly griots.

Functions of Sufi Oral Narratives

The cultural functions of Sufi oral narratives consist of extolling the great actions of past and current Sufi dignitaries. This practice is rooted in Senegalese culture, in which whoever has accomplished great deeds is sung and praised for these deeds. Moreover, there is a popular Wolof saying that says**:** Ku def lu réy, dégg lu réy "whoever did something big, will hear something big." Famous Senegalese griot, el-Hajj Mansur Mbay, often retraces sequences of the lives of the past political notabilities such as former President Leopold Sedar Senghor, first president of Senegal, Lamine Gueye, and Blaise Diagne, respectively, the first black lawyer and the first black African elected to the French National Assembly in French West Africa (Afrique Occidentale Française in French). Mbay's shows on local televisions and radios are very popular and many Senegalese enjoy watching and listening to them. The chanting and praising of Sufi shaykhs draw upon that long lasting tradition and aim at presenting them as examplums.

The religious function of Sufi oral narratives consists of highlighting the mystical dimension of the shaykh's personality and the miraculous deeds he would have accomplished during his lifetime. Sufi followers expect their master to be able to accomplish miracles or make noteworthy statements or predictions for the future. The philosophical teachings of a shaykh as well as his predictions are as important as his miraculous actions. Each section of the story either prepares or evaluates the actions or statements of a particular Sufi shaykh. The goal of the speaker is to present the shaykh as someone with a mystical power or baatin in Wolof Sufi language, which differentiates him from "ordinary" people.

These cultural and religious functions of Wolof Sufi oral narrative have made their structure unique, different from other Wolof ordinary narratives. The latter can be accounted for using Labov and Waletzky 1967's six-stage narrative framework, that is, they are composed of an abstract, orientation, complication, evaluation, resolution and coda. By contrast, Wolof Sufi oral stories, because of their context of production and the cultural and religious functions assigned to them, are composed of five stages: a pre-story (absent in Labov's model), an abstract, an orientation, a complication and a final evaluation. They lack a resolution and coda and the story ends with an evaluation and has a particularly rich and complex complication. The pre-story and the rich complication are the particularity of Wolof Sufi oral narratives. This shift in narrative structure can be seen as the evidence that narrative is culturally and contextually defined. The pre-story, abstract, orientation and evaluation sections do not advance the story. Rather, they provide the audience with useful information about the theme, point, setting and characters of the story as well as the narrator's assessment of that story. By contrast, the complication advances the story.

Beside the general functions of Sufi oral narratives, each these sections fulfills a specific communicative function.

The pre-story is the first stage before the actual storytelling. This is the step where Sufi narrators announce the theme or subject matter of the story

25 Judith Temkin Irvine, "Caste and Communication in a Wolof Village", (Ph.D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1973), 146-147.

being told. It brings in a context that legitimates the telling of such a story. In this oral culture, nothing is taken for granted; the more you say, the better you make yourself understood. Everything is verbalized for pedagogical purposes. The audience needs to be prepared for the reception of the message.

The abstract has the function of stating the point of the story. It briefly introduces the point of the narrative and answers the question: Why tell such a story in this particular setting? The abstract gives the audience a reason for listening to the story being told. Generally, it is not longer than a single statement.

The orientation has the function of setting the historical background: the site of the story, and the characters that are involved. Locations and time expressions are among the linguistic expressions that make up the orientation in order to help the listeners situate the event both territorially and temporally.

The complication is the most important section of the story, the one that features the shaykh, his actions and philosophical teachings. It is the stage everybody looks forward to hearing, and it also is the reason they come to listen, because it highlights and magnifies the shaykh. The fact that the shaykh is the focus of Sufi stories also explains the preeminence given to the complication stage. This is the stage where speakers emphasize the actions and teachings of a given shaykh. The stages preceding and following that complication respectively prepare for or wrap it up. Various linguistic tools are used for highlighting the shaykh's actions and teachings within that complication, which include embedded dialogues, monologues, praises, and genealogies.

The final evaluation serves as moralistic conclusion provided by the speaker. This is not only an assessment of the actions of the story being told, but also an opportunity for the speaker to draw a conclusion from the whole story and transmit a didactic message to his audience. This final evaluation is different from the embedded evaluations within the complication. It indicates the end of the story being told. It is tied to the abstract, giving the whole story the shape of an orthorhombic crystal sheltered by the pre-story stage as in the figure below.

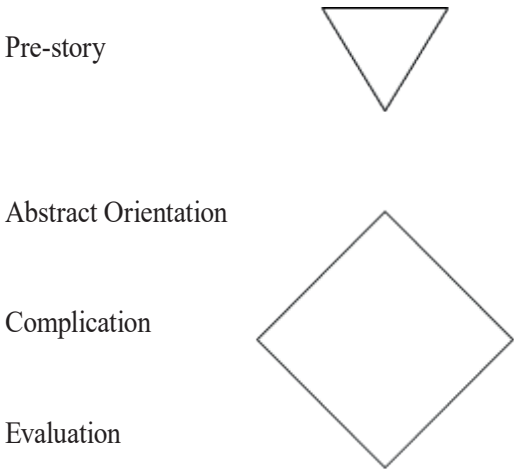

Figure: Wolof Sufi Oral Narrative Structure

Discourse Analysis of Sufi Oral Narratives

The following section of this paper consists of analyzing Sufi oral narratives. In this regard, I show how the macro and micro-structure of the narratives interact with their context of production. A special emphasis will be placed on the complication or peak of the narratives, due to the complexity of that stage and the specific preeminence given to it by storytellers as it is the stage of the actions accomplished by the shaykh. The pre-story, abstract, orientation and evaluation support the actions, which compose the complication.

Pre-story

The pre-story is normally the first stage of the narrative although it is sometimes skipped by the speaker. In the context of an interview or lecture in which the speaker really wants to make sure his story will be understood, he generally starts with a pre-story. This provides the listener with the topic of the story in the form of a statement or, if it is a story about a particular shaykh, with praise of that shaykh. In

the pre-story below, from the narrative "Warning about Arrogance", recounted by Abdoul Aziz Sy Dabakh (1904-1997), son of al-Hàjj Malick Sy, the speaker announces the topic of his story, which is Xeebaate or "arrogance", by warning his audience about the potential consequences of such an attitude. He asks God to preserve him and his audience from arrogance. The use of the inclusive object pronoun 'us' is common in this context where the speaker does not want to exclude himself from his preaching. He usually includes himself among the addressees of his speech, so that his audience feels comfortable accepting his message. This speaker was also known for this practice: Xeebaate Yal nanu ci Yàlla musal!

"May God preserve us from being arrogant!"

The next pre-story from "An Example of Faithfulness" told by Kuridiyu Touré, a disciple of Ababacar Sy, is a long one in which the speaker introduces his topic, the faithfulness and discretion of his shaykh, Ababacar Sy (1885-1957), the oldest son and first khalifa of al-Hàjj Malick Sy (1855-1922). The speaker denied his shaykh any unfaithfulness and indiscretion, which explains the use of negative statements throughout the whole passage (e.g., ku dul soppeeku ba abada "someone who never changes"). The pre-story also contains praises of the shaykh and his attachment to Islamic law, to sharia and tariqa, turiq in Arabic, meaning "path" (e.g., Nit ku fonk sariyaa ngoogu ak tariiqa "someone who respected the Islamic law, and Sufi orders"). This pre-story is a prelude to a series of anecdotes, in which Sëriñ Baabakar was warned by his father and aunt against being unfaithful:

1. ku dul soppeeku ba abada
2. Ku dul soppeeku ba abada mooy Sëriñ Baabakar Si
3. Nit ku maanuwoon la
4. Li mu rawe ñépp, doomi soxna yi, mooy maanu
5. Maa la wax loolu man
6. Mboleem doomi soxna yi ci àddina,
7. li léen Sëriñ Baabakar Si rawe mooy maanu
8. Li léen Xalifa rawe mooy maanu
9. Xam nga maanu?
10. Lool la rawe doomi soxna yi
11. Du Allaaxu Akbar, Asalaamu Aleykum
12. Nit ku goree ngoogu
13. Nit ku am xam-xama ngoogu
14. Nit ku bëgg diinee ngoogu
15. Nit ku fonk sariyaa ngoogu ak tariiqa

Translation

1. *Someone that never changes his personalality*
2. *Someone that never changes his personality was Sëriñ Baabakar Si.*
3. *He was very discreet.*
4. *What he had more than anybody, any children of saint women, was his discretion.*
5. *I am who told you that.*
6. *Of all children of saint females in the world,*
7. *discretion was what Sëriñ Baabakar Si had over them*
8. *What khalifa had over them was discretion*
9. *Do you know what discretion means?*
10. *That's what he had over any children of saint females*
11. *Not "God is great", "peace be with you" (meaning initiating and closing a prayer.)*
12. *Here was an honest person*
13. *Here was a knowledgeable person*
14. *Someone who loved religion (Islam)*
15. *Someone who respected the Islamic law, and Sufism*

In the next pre-story taken from "The Lion Chasing the Warthog", the speaker, Sëriñ Moustapha Mbacke Ibn Abdoul Khadre Mbacke, grandson of Amadu Bamba (1853-1927), claims that his grandfather, who founded the city of Touba, wanted it to be a city of pity and compassion (yërmànde in Wolof). The pre-story is an introduction to a story about a lion chasing a warthog. The event would have happened in Touba, before it became the modern city we know today. The presence of a lion in that place is sufficient to show that it was a bush, inhabited by

wild animals. Amadu Bamba and his descendents then built the place and modernized it. The function Amadu Bamba has given to the city also appears in the pre-story, fàkkub yërmände "place of compassion", which means that Touba is a city of peace where the Murids can live safe, just like the warthog was safe when it found refuge in Amadu Bamba:

1. Fii jumaa ji ne, gayndee ngi fi woon
2. Waaye mel na ni nak bam ko fàkkee
3. Fàkkub yërmände la ko def

Translation

1. Here where the mosque is, there was a lion
2. But it seems like when he (Amadu Bamba) cleared up the place
3. he did so for compassion

In the pre-story below, taken from the narrative "Throwing Dates", the speaker, Sëriñ Abdul Aziz Sy Junior, grandson of al-Hàjj Malick Sy, launches his narrative about miracles by arguing in favor of an esoteric or mystical knowledge as opposed to exoteric or rational knowledge. He states that mystical knowledge is beyond rationalism, that is, beyond lu ni fàng "something that is overt." This statement prepares his audience for the series of miracles they will be hearing, which are not rational, but rather mystical. This pre-story is characterized presence of non-narrative clauses, verbal inflection (danu clause 1) and object focus auxiliaries (lañu clauses 3 and 5). The rational knowledge characteristic of western cultures is object-focused by lañu both in clauses 3 and 5. This helps set a barrier between Sufi believers and non-Sufi believers. The story the speaker will be telling is for Sufi believers, those who believe in mystical knowledge and not non-Sufi believers or rationalists:

1. Danu nekk ci jamono boo xam ne xel dafa ubbiku lool
2. Te tubaab yi bokkul ci séen xam-xam baatin
3. Ñoom lu ni fàng nit man caa teg loxo lañu xam
4. moo tax ñi ñu jàngal ñépp
5. lool lañu xam
6. su ma waxee mbiru baatin sax daf leen di jaaxal
7. te baatin pourtant am na
8. am na am nan ci prëw
9. gis nañ ñu ko jëffe
10. gis nañ ñu ko wone

Translation

1. We are in a time when people's minds are very open
2. and the white people do not believe in mystical knowledge
3. they, all they know is something one can touch with his hand,
4. which is why the people they trained
5. that's what they know
6. Even when I talk about mysticism, they get surprised
7. but, mysticism does exist
8. it exists; we have proof of its existence
9. we have seen people who practiced it
10. we have seen people who showed it

Sometimes, the pre-story is skipped as in the narrative "The Mean King and the Clumsy Waiter", which started directly with the abstract. The story was told by al-Hàjj Ibou Sakho, a Tijan disciple, affiliated to the Sy branch of the Tijaniyya order in Senegal. It does not contain a Sufi element although it was narrated in a Sufi setting. Maybe that is the reason why it does not contain a pre- story. The story was rather meant to entertain the audience. It begins directly with the statement of its point as follows: Caay-caay ga rëy na waaye lay wi dafa rafet, "The action was bad but the justification was beautiful."

We draw from these examples that pre-stories are meant to prepare the audience for the upcoming story.

Abstract

While the pre-story prepares the listeners for the understanding of the forthcoming story, the abstract clearly states the point of that story, that is, the reason the story is worth telling and listening to. The most common abstract in Sufi stories is the one centered on the shaykh. As mentioned earlier, the shaykh is the most important figure in this Sufi culture, and almost all stories are somehow related to him. In the example below from the narrative "The Prediction", Ahmet Iyane Thiam, the representative of the Tall family, from al-Hàjj Umar Tall (1797-1864), justifies his presence at the Great Màggal of Touba, the major event of the Muridiyya, telling people about his shaykh, Seexu Umar (al-Hàjj Umar Tall), his visit to Mbacke, the area where the city of Touba is located today, and, especially, the prediction Seexu Umar had made about the coming of Amadu Bamba. The reference to his prediction will make the audience, essentially composed of adepts of the Muridiyya, aware of the relationship between the Mbacke and the Tall families. The point of telling this story is to make people acknowledge the truth of the prediction, because Amadu Bamba came and founded one of the biggest Sufi orders in Senegal:

1. Ndax Seexu Umar bés ba muy annoncer ñówu Seex Amadu Bamba
2. boobu dara xewagul

Translation

1. *Because Seexu Umar the day he announced the coming of Seex Amadu Bamba*
2. *At that time nothing had happened yet*

In the abstract below, the speaker announces that the point of his story is Sëñ Tuubaa (Amadu Bamba) himself (ci boppam in Wolof) and not anybody else: Sëñ Tuubaa ci boppam, ma musal léen ci benn xisa, "Sëriñ Tuubaa, let me tell you a story about him."

In the next example, the abstract is in the form of a rhetorical question: lan moo ma yóbbu ci Sëriñ Baabakar? or "what took me to Sëriñ Baabakar?" The point of labeling the abstract that way is to answer that question by telling the whole story of the relationship between the speaker, Abdou Karim, and his marabout, Ababacar Sy, referred to in the text as Sëriñ Baabakar 'marabout Baabakar':

1. Lan moo ma yóbbu ci Sëriñ Baabakar ?
2. Du benn nit du benn Sëriñ du doomam

Translation

1. *What took me to Sëriñ Baabakar?*
2. *It is nobody, it is not a marabout, it is not his child*

As one can see, from the examples above, abstracts in Sufi narratives, are generally shaykh centered because Sufi narratives are meant to magnify a shaykh and his extraordinary actions. The abstract provides the listener with the purpose of the story, which is followed by the orientation.

Orientation

The orientation is the stage where the narrator gives information about time, place, and the people involved in the story. If it is a Sufi story, a shaykh is always involved with other characters. The orientation is important for the audience to know where and when the event happened, and who were involved. Sometimes the speaker cites his sources in the orientation to show some credibility. In the example below, from the story "When the Shadows Will Be the Same", recounted by Moustapha Mbacke Ibn Abdoul Khadre Mbacke, Amadu Bamba, referred to here as sëriñ bi, 'the marabout', is involved with his disciple called Tafsiir Muse Paate Daraame, from Saalum (Saloum in French spelling), a region located in the central Senegal, north of the Gambia.

1. Ku ñuy wax Tafsiir Muse Paate Daraame ab seexub
2. seex bu dëkk Saalum la bu bokk ci taalibey sëriñ bi
3. daa xorumuwoon lool man a waxak sëriñ bi nak…

Translation

1. *Someone called Tafsir Muse Paate Daraame,*
2. *a shaykh from Saalum, who was among his students.*
3. *He was a very funny person, but good at speaking with the marabout*

One can also find an orientation within the complication, as in the next example, from the story "In the Governor's Office," by Mouhamadou Thioune, a griot murid follower, living in New York City, who wants to inform his audience that Amadu Bamba's brother, Maam Seex Anta, owned a house in Dakar, when the former came there to meet with the colonial governor: Maam Seex Anta jëndoon na fa kër,"Maam Seex Anta bought a house there."

As stated earlier in this study, sometimes, the story does not have a Sufi element; it is just made up by the storyteller or derived from sources other than the Sufi repertoire. The setting in the "The Mean King and the Clumsy Waiter" story as will be recalled, features a king and one of his subjects, who, accidently, poured some sauce over the king's coat. The latter, upset, commanded his guards to kill the waiter. Knowing that he would die anyway, the waiter poured the rest of the sauce over the king's coat. When the king asked him why HE did such an action, he responded wisely saying it is because he did not want the king to kill for minor action, but a major one.

The final evaluation of the story preceding "The Clumsy Waiter and the Mean King" served as abstract to the following one. Indeed, the story preceding. The Mean King and the Clumsy Waiter concerns a woman who attempted to poison the Prophet Muhammad but was denounced by the poisoned food. She was excused by the Prophet thanks to her wise argument that she wanted to challenge the Prophet and see if he was a real one. After telling this religious story, the speaker wanted to entertain his audience with another, non-religious story, but on the same topic. Hence, he used the final evaluation of the story as the point (abstract) of the following one. The audience's reaction to second story is telling of its function. They laughed heartily to death after hearing the "The Mean King and the Clumsy Waiter". The fact that this story and the previous are on the same theme may also explain why "The Mean King and the Clumsy Waiter" does not include a pre-story, to announce the topic. Below is the abstract of "The Mean King and the Clumsy Waiter:" Caay-caay ga rëy na waaye lay wi dafa rafet (evaluation from previous story), "The action was bad but the justification was beautiful."

Evaluation

There are two types of evaluations in Sufi narratives, an embedded climactic evaluation, within the climax or complication, and a final or post-climactic evaluation, after the complication. The division is based on the function of the evaluation.

1. Climactic evaluation

Climactic evaluations usually consist of praises and genealogies found within the complication and are meant to highlight and magnify specific actions accomplished by a shaykh. The function of praises and genealogies is twofold: first they are used to extol a Shaykh's great actions; second, they justify the performed actions by the shaykh's family lineage.

For instance, in the example below, from "The Prediction", the storyteller praised his shaykh, Seexu Umar Tall to legitimate his capacity of making true predictions. In referring to Seexu Umar as Amiirul Moominun or 'commander of the faithful' in Arabic, a title given to some highly ranked Sufi leaders, the speaker intends to justify his capacity to perform miraculous actions. In the same praise passage the speaker refers to his shaykh as 'kodd Aadama Aycha' 'youngest son of Aadama Aycha'. In fact, it is common in this West-African matrilineal culture to praise someone via his or her mother.

It is also a common belief in that society that the success of a child relies on the quality and personality of his or her mother. While in western societies the logic seems to be 'like father like son', in this matrilineal society it is 'like mother like child.' The speaker, a multilingual communicator, uses Arabic and Pulaar when praising his shaykh who is a Pulaar speaker. Pulaar is the speaker's native tongue. The rest of the story is in Wolof. The use of Arabic, the language of the Qur'an, shows the speaker's knowledge of that language. It also gives authority and sacredness to the message since Arabic is the language of the Qur'an and the hadiths or sayings of the Prophet Muhammad:

1. kodd Aadama Aycha (Pulaar expression)
2. Amiirul Moominun (Arabic, "Commander of the faithful")
3. Nga xam ni moo daan wax:
4. yaqoolul Fuutiyu wazaakal afharu al qadariiyu ibn Seyiidu Umaru

Translation

1. *The youngest son of Aadama Aysa*
2. *Commander of the faithful*
3. *You know that he used to say:*
4. *"I am from the region of Fuuta, the poor servant of his lord, the son of Seyiidu Umaru"*

The speaker in the next example is the same speaker as in the previous one. In the passage below he praises his host at the Great Màggal of Touba, Sëriñ Saaliwu Mbakke, as someone whose testimonial cannot be wrong because of his holiness. The praises followed the recounting the prediction of al-Hàjj Umar Tall. According to the speaker, Sëriñ Saaliwu Mbakke, a son of Amadu Bamba, at that time supreme leader of the Muridiyya, gave his testimony to the prediction, the first time the speaker told it in his presence, and the marabout's testimony was sufficient to grant the narrator's story truth and reliability. In the praise the speaker also says that Sëriñ Saaliwu Mbakke does not speak for his own pleasure, but only under God's control. Such a statement corresponds to what is expected from a Sufi in this culture, that is, to not do anything for one's pleasure, but only for God's pleasure.

1. Ku mel ni Sëriñ Saaliwu Mbakke
2. Dóotul waxe bakkanam
3. Lu mu wax rekk Yàllaa moo ko deside ca Hazal
4. Yal na ko fi Yàlla yàggal

Translation

1. *Someone like Sëriñ Saaliwu Mbakke*
2. *Does not speak anymore for his own pleasure*
3. *Whatever he says, God has decided it in Azal (This is an Arabic word which refers to the place where God is said to have made all the decisions about our lives)*
4. *May God leave him here (in this life)*

Finally, in the example below, from "In the Governor's Office", the griot speaker who was telling a story about a meeting between Amadu Bamba and the colonial governor in Dakar, mentions that another griot, Góor gi Mapaate Mbaay, a witness of that meeting, praised Amadu Bamba. It seems as if the narrator appropriated the praises to magnify Amadu Bamba. It would be interesting to see whether the praises are the narrator's praises or the eyewitnesses' ones since this way of praising Amadu Bamba has become very common. Góor gi Mapaate Mbaay found Amadu Bamba very audacious when he performed, unexpectedly, two long ràkkas in the governor's office. So, he praised him. The narrator reports the praise in the form of an embedded evaluation.

Complication

1. Góor gi Mapaate Mbaay daadi koy daadi koy woy foofa, tagg ko, ne ko

Embedded praise

2. Balla Aysa Buri Sëñ Mbakke Maaram fii nga taxaw fàttaliku sa boroom, ku fi mësa taxaw fàtte nga sa boroom ndax sa moroom, yow rekk yaa fi njëkk a taxaw fàttaliku sa boroom‖

Translation

Complication

1. the man Mapaate Mbaay then sung him, sung him there, praised him, told him

Embedded praise

2. Balla Aysa Buri Sëñ Mbakke Maaram, here you step and recall your Master, whoever stepped here before, forgot about his creator/owner because of someone, you are the first one to step here and recall your creator/owner.

2. Final evaluation

The final evaluation serves as a closing statement for Wolof oral Sufi stories. It consists of the speaker's personal remarks and conclusion about the story. In effect, since Sufi stories give preeminence to the complication which contains the actions and the teachings of Sufi leaders, speakers evaluate those actions and teachings and provide their audience with a take home message. One of the forms this evaluation can take is a simple statement, which rephrases the abstract of the story as in the following, from the narrative "In the Governor's Office".

1. kon nag képp kuy wax Asxadu Anlaa Ilaaxa Illalaa
2. ci njabootu Sëñ Tuubaa nga bokk

Translation

1. Therefore whoever says: "I bear witness that there is no god but God,
2. You belong to Sëñ Tuubaa's family

Note the resemblance between the evaluation above and the abstract below which it rephrases. The expression "whoever says: "Assadu Anlaa Ilaaxa Illalaa" in the passage above refers to all Muslims as mentioned in the one below. This is the evidence of the close relationship between the abstract and final evaluation in Sufi narratives. The abstract, to which this evaluation is tied, is in the passage below:

1. Sëñ Tuubaa ñówu fi ngir Murid yi rekk
2. Sëñ Tuubaa daf fi ñów ngir jullit yépp

Translation

1. Sëñ Tuubaa did not come here just for the Murids

2. Sëñ Tuubaa came here for all Muslims

The final evaluation can also be composed of praises in honor of the shaykh as in the next example, from "Staying with the Shaykh", in which, the speaker, Abdou Karim, after he finished talking about his companionship with Sëriñ Baabakar Si, his shaykh, who trained and educated him, praises that shaykh for his personal success:

1. Waaye fii ma toog ba Màkka
2. Benn fóore yabuma
3. Loolu dama léen koy seede
4. Ngéen dolli ko ca la ngéen xam

Translation

1. From here to Mecca
2. No savant undermines me
3. This, I am sharing it with you
4. So that you can add it to what you already know"

*Comp*lication

This is the stage that everybody looks forward to hearing. It is a complex section which includes embedded text types such as dialogue, monologue, praise, and genealogy. The function of the complication is to highlight the actions a shaykh is said to have performed in a particular context, and also his teachings and ways of thinking, through dialogues and monologues. These actions and philosophical thoughts are constantly assessed by the speaker in the form of embedded praise evaluations.

Embedded Text Types

Monologue

A monologue consists of an uninterrupted speech

in which a speaker communicates his thoughts to himself or an audience. The purpose of attributing a monologue to a shaykh in Wolof Sufi narratives is to justify upcoming actions and also to highlight that shaykh's philosophical teachings. The justification of actions is a way for the speaker to tell the audience that all a shaykh has done, was done for a reason, which always has to do with his relationship with God. A shaykh does not act for his own sake, but for the sake of serving God and other believers. The example below, in which Amadu Bamba justifies his decision to go to the water, is telling. This monologue is from the narrative "Praying on the Water" by Abdou Samade Mbacke, grandson of Amadu Bamba. All the actions of the story are suspended during this monologue. Below is an excerpt from this monologue:

1. mu wax nag ne bëgg sa bakkan warta tax
2. ma faat waxtu Yàlla wii
3. ndox mi jaamu Yàlla ni man la
4. suuf si mu lalu nga xam ne moo ko lal
5. jaamu Yàlla la ne man
6. defuma ko ngir ndam
7. defuma ko ngir xarbaax
8. dama koy def ngir bañ a faat waxtu Yàlla wi
9. leegi dinaa sanni der bi
10. mu dem ci ndox mi
11. lu yàgg yàgg dina dem ca ci suuf sa
12. ma man ca taxaw julli
13. wala ndox mi taxaw ngir ndigalu Yàlla
14. ndax ab jaam la
15. ma man a taxaw ci ndox mi julli
16. wala sama baat bi, sama bakkan bi ma ñàkk ko ci ndigalu Yàlla
17. waaye lépp a ma gënal bëgg sama bakkan
18. tax ma bañ a julli waxtu wi

Translation

1. *Then he said: the fact I want to survive (literally I like my nose)*
2. *should not allow me to skip this prayer of God.*
3. *The water is a slave of God just like me.*
4. *The sand that lays on it, that you know, covers it*
5. *Is a slave of God just like me.*
6. *I am not doing it for pride,*
7. *I am not doing it for the sake of performing miracle,*
8. *I am doing it to avoid skipping God's prayer (time).*
9. *Now I am going to throw down the prayer skin,*
10. *it will go in the water.*
11. *It will surely reach the shore*
12. *So that I can stand up and pray.*
13. *Or the water will stop at God's will*
14. *because it is a slave,*
15. *So that I can step on the water and pray.*
16. *Or my (neck meaning) my life, I will lose it in following God's recommendation.*
17. *But, all this will be better for me than hanging on to my life*
18. *resulting in not praying on time.*

There is another monologue in "Throwing Dates", when Aliw Tamaasiina entered the date palm field, found a bunch of dates, and wanted it for his shaykh, Seex Axmet Tijaan. Before grabbing the bunch of dates, he expressed his intention to send it to his shaykh in a short monologue. The narrator justifies the success of Aliw Tamaasiina's action by his faith in Seex Axmet Tijaan and the blessing he received from God: mu ni kii daal sama seriñ bi rekk laa ko yéene, "he said, this, I want it for my shaykh only."

Beside the monologues, in which the shaykh communicates his thoughts to himself, there are also dialogues involving the shaykh and the other protagonists. Dialogues are a tool used by Sufi narrators to magnify some of the attitudes, sayings, and teachings of the shaykh during his life, and through his exchanges with others. By talking to the other protagonists, the shaykh appears to reveal himself, not only to his interlocutors, but, indirectly, to anyone who listens to the story. Some of the sayings attributed to a shaykh were passed down through oral tradition and are still current.

Dialogue

It is very common to have dialogues in Sufi narratives, in which a shaykh speaks directly to other protagonists, instead of having his speech indirectly reported by the narrator. Dialogues convey Sufi morals as is the case for monologues. Both dialogues and monologues interrupt the storytelling and, therefore, the sequence of actions.

In the example below, from "The Prediction", the dialogue between Seexu Umar and the people seated on the bench in Mbakke is meant to let the audience listen to Seexu Umar's prediction of the advent of Amadu Bamba as if they were present when the event happened. Recalling the prediction also gives a credit to its author and pride to his adepts, those who believe in his holiness.

1. Mu ne léen: "ndaw see
2. Am na ku nekk ci moom
3. Su ñówee Baayam sax dina ko topp
4. Waxumalaak keneen"

Translation

1. He told them: "that woman
2. there is someone in her
3. when he comes, even his father will follow him
4. A fortiori someone else"

The next dialogue from the story "In the Governor's Office" features Amadu Bamba and the colonial governor. The rationale for having this dialogue was to give Amadu Bamba an opportunity to tell what this movement, the Muridiyya Sufi order, meant to him. Amadu Bamba's answer to the governor's question about the Muridiyya was also a pretext for the narrator to remind his audience of the key elements of that order. The narrator did not talk about the necessary allegiance to a shaykh in this definition. Maybe Amadu Bamba's response was contextual since he did not want to differentiate himself from the other Muslims, or, maybe, the speaker wanted his report of that conversation to accommodate the non-Murids present at his lecture:

Dialogue

1. Tubaab ne ko:
2. " li ma lay doye du lenn.
3. Li may doye du dara ludul rekk takkal la medaayu legion d"honneur"
4. Sëriñ Tuubaa ne ko yittewoowu ko.
5. Mu ne ko:
6. " agit di la laaj ñan ñooy say njaboot,
7. ñan ñoo di say njaboot, ba nu xàmmee leen ci nit ñi,
8. ba am nu nu jëflanteek ñoom ci xeetu teraangal
9. Sëñ Tuubaa ne ko:
10. " képp kuy wax Asxadu Anlaa Ilaaxa Illalaa, wa asxadu ana Muxamada Rassuulula, iqamu salaat, itaamu xakaat, sayru ramadaan, xajul bayti, ci sama njaboot nga bokk »

Translation

1. The Tubaab said to him:
2. "the reason I wanted you to come here is nothing but...
3. The reason I wanted you come here is nothing but to give you the legion d'honneur medal"
4. Sëriñ Tuubaa told him that he did not need it.
5. He [the Tubaab] said to him:
6. "and also to ask who your people are,
7. who your people are, so that we recognize them amongst others,
8. so that we treat them with lots of hospitality"
9. Sëñ Tuubaa said to him:
10. "whoever says: there is only one God and Mohamed is his prophet, prays, helps the poor, fasts during the month of Ramadan, accomplishes the pilgrimage to Mecca, belongs to my family"

The next dialogue, from "When the Shadows Will Be the Same" features Amadu Bamba and one of his disciples, Tafsiir Muse Paate Daraame, presented by the narrator as full of humor, (daa xorumuwoon lool 'he was a very funny person') who came to complain about the fact that people compare Amadu Bamba with the other shaykhs, as it usually happens between followers of different Sufi leaders.

Amadu Bamba's reaction was to give his disciple the assurance that all these people will ultimately join his movement. Below is the dialogue between Amadu Bamba and Tafsiir Muse Pate Daraame:

Complication
1. mu ñów nuyu sëriñ bi daad ni ko:
Dialogue
2. " mbakke. » Sëriñ bi nuyu ko
3. mu ne ko : " waaw tafsir lu réew mi wax nak ? »
4. mu ne ko : " ah réew mi ñungi wax rekk di sant rekk
5. waaye man de lenn rekk a ma metti
6. tudd giñ lay tudd di tudd kenn rekk moo ma metti"
7. sëriñ bi ne ko: "booba ker yi daa doonul genn rekk
8. bés bu ker yi doone genn wax ji doon jenn (laughs)"

Translation

Complication
1. He came, greeted the shaykh, and told him:
Dialogue
2. "Mbakke." The shaykh greeted him back,
3. told him: "Tafsir how are people in the country doing?"
4. He told him: "people talk and are thankful only.
5. But only one thing bothers me
6. the fact they talk about you alonside someone else at the same time, bothers me."
7. The marabout said to him: "it is because the shadows are not the same, yet.
8. The day the shadows will be the same, the talk will be the same, as well"

Conclusion

In the course of this study I have shown that the cultural context of the Wolof Sufi oral narratives has shaped their structure and determined their content. I defined context, as both a global and local concept.

Globally, the Sufi narratives are rooted in the long tradition of stories about the Prophet Muhammad and his hadiths or sayings within Islam, to which many Muslims are accustomed. These stories are told along with chanting during Mawlid celebrations across the Muslim Ummah, specially in countries where Sufism is practiced.

Locally, Sufi storytelling has developed within a West-African Sufi culture dominated by the figure of the shaykh, who is the center of the stories. The life itineraries of previous shaykhs are related to their adepts by other Sufi shaykhs or disciples during Sufi events.

The purpose of telling such stories is to enhance the disciples' faith in their shaykhs and their attachment to a particular Sufi order. The content and quality of the storytelling vary according to the setting and the speaker. The norms for telling stories in West-African culture were set by the griot, an important figure known for his speaking skills. However, Sufi stories are not told by griots only. Moreover, most of the speakers in the corpus of narratives collected for this study were told by non-griots, members of the two leading Sufi families in Senegal, namely the Mbacke and the Sy lineages.

Bibliography:

Babou, Cheikh. A. *Fighting the Greater Jihad: Amadu Bamba and the Founding of the Muridiyya of Senegal, 1853-1913*. Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2007.

Barber, Karin. *The Anthropology of Texts, Persons and Publics: Oral and Written Culture in Africa and Beyond*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

Bakhtin, M. M. *The Dialogic Imagination*. Translated by M. Holquist & C. Emerson. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981. 259-422.

Bauman, Richard & Sherzer, Joel (eds.) *Explorations in the Ethnography of Speaking*. Second Edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989.

Brenner, Louis. "Sufism in Africa". In *African Spirituality: Forms, Meanings, And Expressions. Edited by Jacob K. Olupona. New York: Herder and Herder, Crossroad Publishing Company,* 2000.

Copans, Jean. *Les marabouts de l'Arachide: La confrérie mouride et les paysans du Sénégal.* Paris: L'Harmattan, 1988.

Coulon, Christian. "Prophets of God or of History? Muslim Messianic Movements and Anti-Colonialism in Senegal." In *Theoretical Explorations in African Religion. Edited by* W. van Binsbergen and M. Schoffeleers, 346-66. London: Routledge&Kegan Paul, 1985.

Cruise O'Brien, Donald. *Saints and Politicians: Essays in the Organization of a Senegalese Peasant Society.* London: Cambridge University Press, 1975.

---, "Introduction." In *Charisma and Brotherhood in African Islam*. Edited by D. Cruise O'Brien and C. Coulon, 1– 31. New York: Oxford University Press, 1988.

Curtin, Philip D. "Jihad in West Africa: Early Phases and Inter-relationship with Mauritania and Senegal", *The Journal of African History* 12, 1 (1971): 11-24.

Glover, John. *Sufism and Jihad in Modern Senegal: The Murid Order.* New York: University of Rochester Press, 2007.

Greetham, David C. *Theories of the Text.* Edition, illustrated, reprint; Publisher, Oxford University Press, 1999

Hill, Joseph. "Languages of Islam: Hybrid Genres of Taalibe Baay Oratory". In *Islamic Africa 2, 1 (2011) : 67-103.*

Irvine, Judith Temkin. "Caste and Communication in a Wolof Village". Ph.D. Diss. University of Pennsylvania, 1973.

Gee, James P. *An Introduction to Discourse Analysis: Theory and Method.* New York: Routledge, 2005.

Katz, Marion Holmes. *The Birth of the Prophet Muhammad: Devotional Piety in Sunni Islam*. New York: Routledge, 2007.

Labov, William, and Joshua Waletzky. "Narrative Analysis: Oral Versions of Personal Narratives". *Essays on the Verbal and Visual Arts: Proceedings of the 1966 Annual Spring Meeting of the American Ethnological Society.* Edited by June Helm. 12-44. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1967.

Niane, Djibril T. *Soundjata ou l'épopée mandingue. Paris: Presence Africaine, 1960.*

Olakunle, George. 2000. "The Oral History and Literature of the Wolof People of Waalo, Northern Senegal: The Master of the Word (Griot) in the Wolof Tradition". *Research in African Literatures* 31, 1 (2000): 214-216.

Robinson, David. *Muslim Societies in African History.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

Schimmel, Annemarie. *And Muhammad is His Messenger: The Veneration of the Prophet in Islamic Piety.* Chapel Hill: UNC Press Books, 2014.

Villalón, Leonardo *Islamic Society and State Power in Senegal: Disciples and Citizens in Fatick*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.