VISUALITY BEFORE AND BEYOND THE RENAISSANCE

Seeing as Others Saw

Edited by
ROBERT S. NELSON
University of Chicago

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CHAPTER NINE

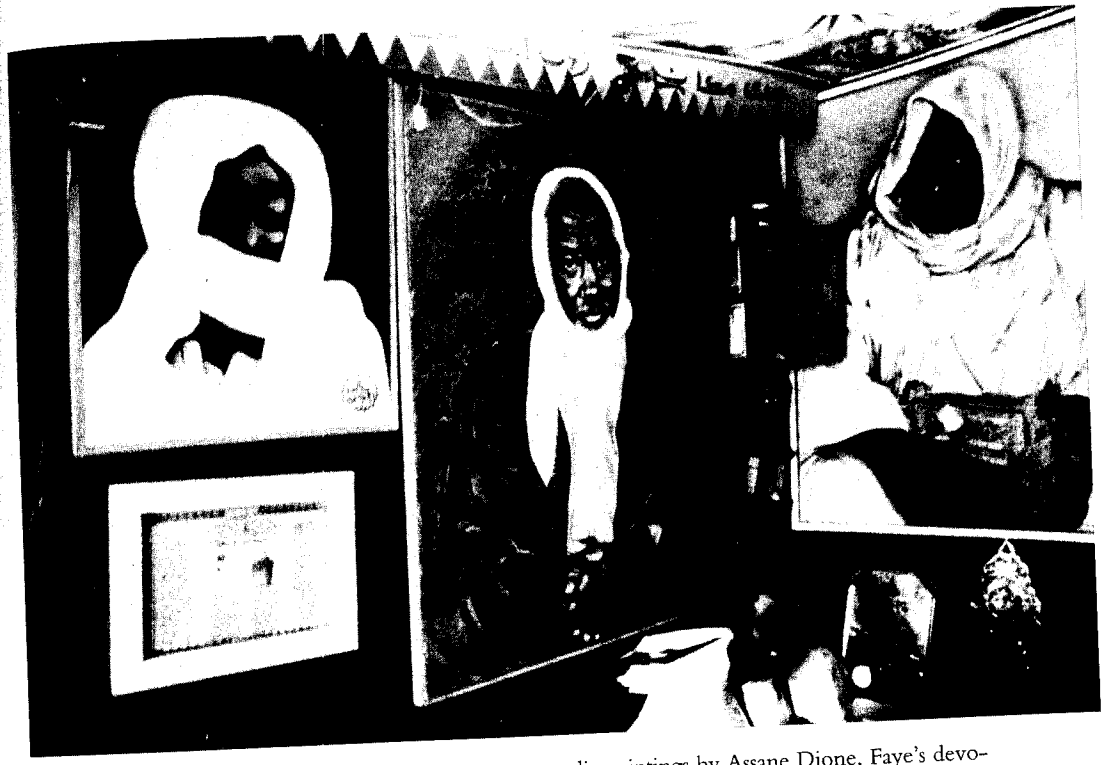
DISPLAYING SECRETS

Visual Piety in Senegal

ALLEN F. ROBERTS AND MARY NOOTER ROBERTS

Throughout the day, but especially during the afternoon, people come to see Serigne Faye.[1] His home, where he receives this steady stream, is located in one of the oldest working-class neighborhoods of Dakar, Senegal. The outer wall of his compound faces the street and is graced by a portrait of Sheikh Amadu Bamba, the saint central to the Mouride Tarixa – the locally constituted Sufi Path that Serigne Faye follows so fervently.[2] A great many residences, workshops, and businesses in urban Senegal possess similar imagery; what sets Serigne Faye's home apart from the many others we have visited in the course of our research is not so much the painting *outside* his household as it is the number and quality of depictions to be found *inside* his dwelling.[3] Acrylic paintings on canvas, paintings and drawings directly on the walls, framed calligraphic holy names and Qur'anic scripture, lithographs, banners, calendars, postcards, photocopies, stickers, and other visual arts literally *cover* the walls of Serigne Faye's bedroom and the adjacent room where he receives visitors (Fig. 44). Almost all portray Amadu Bamba, his sons who have or will serve as caliphs, and his first and most devout follower named Sheikh Ibra "Lampe" Fall. Swallows soar across the low ceiling of the sanctum in a trompe-l'oeil painting of a paradisical sky. So intense is the visual impact of this marvelous place that we shall refer to it as an "imagorium."[4]

Serigne Faye's imagorium is a place of and for "visual piety," to borrow the useful phrase of David Morgan.[5] Visual piety is "the set of practices, attitudes, and ideas invested in images that structure the experience of the sacred." Holy images of Amadu Bamba inform every moment and every act within the imagorium. It is in their gaze that Faye counsels and heals those who come to him during the morning. It is in their presence that *taalibe* followers of Faye assemble in the afternoon, to listen to his sermons. It is with their assistance that Faye's taalibes attain wisdom and achieve the ecstasy of approaching the saint by chanting and singing *dhikr* "songs of remembrance" and *khassaya* "odes" written by or about Amadu Bamba, "leaving the realm of reason and the language of linear logic behind."[6]



44. Serigne Faye's imagorium, Dakar, Senegal, 1997; acrylic paintings by Assane Dione, Faye's devotee. Serigne Faye sits in a tiny room filled with the active imagery of Sheikh Bamba and his sons. (Photograph: the authors)

The images of the saint and, secondarily, of his sons and his devotee Lampe Fall, participate in these processes in a directly active manner, for they are endowed with *baraka,* the divine "mystico-magical power," charisma, and blessing that is available through divine intermediaries such as Bamba.[7] Mouride visuality is above all a visuality of practice. Mourides touch their foreheads to images of the saint and his children, to gain baraka. Baraka transforms Serigne Faye's reception room into a sanctum: As they offer their baraka, the images give overt form to the collective memory elicited through chants and odes, while revelation of the deeply esoteric knowledge hidden in the images is presented in Serigne Faye's sermons.

The intensity of visual impact makes Serigne Faye's imagorium an especially apt place to consider the rich complexities of a very particular African visuality, and the visual piety derived from it.[8] Underlying Mouride visuality is an explicit dialectic between outward display and secret truths shared with Sufis throughout the Muslim world, which is also an independent and very common feature of non-Islamic African epistemologies.[9] Through examination of the overt/covert quality of Mouride visuality, a more general sense of African expression can be suggested. Before discussing the details of Serigne Faye's imagorium, let us consider details of Bamba's life that are pertinent to understanding the impact of these images, and to their dynamic role in activities taking place in the imagorium.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Amadu Bamba (ca. 1853–1927) was a Sufi mystic and saint (*wali Allah* – literally, "friend of God") whose sacred messages would prove especially apposite in the late-nineteenth-century transition from a political economy driven by domestic and trans-Atlantic slave trades, to one dominated by colonial capitalism (Fig. 45).[10] Sufism, with its stress upon strong bonds between marabout holy men (in Senegal, given the Wolof title Serigne) and their taalibe devotees through tarixa "paths," provided "an Islamic handbook to the production of charisma," ideology, and a structure of practice.[11] People began submitting to Amadu Bamba in great numbers through a principle called *njébbal*, popularly described as being as self-abnegating as "a corpse in the hands of a mortician."[12] Sheikh Ibra Fall (ca. 1858–1930), Bamba's first and most devoted taalibe, organized Bamba's following and created the Mouride Tarixa about the saint's person.[13]

Sheikh Bamba was a pacifist mystic who, as one admirer said, carried a pen, not a gun.[14] Yet although he derided those who would engage in holy war except as "spiritual combat" to find salvation within themselves, the French colonial administration found Bamba's charisma to be "surreptitiously revolutionary."[15] With prodding by colonially appointed chiefs, Bamba was sent into what would stretch to seven years of exile (1895–1902) in the French Equatorial African colony of Gabon, followed by four years in Mauritania, and then long house arrest in Senegal.[16] The administrators' intention was to diminish Bamba's prestige and bring an end to the intolerable "state within a state" created by his avid following.[17] Only later would they realize that for Senegalese Muslims, being sent into exile (especially for *seven* years – a mystically significant number) is an aspect of "the politics of the supernatural" and "the technology of charisma."[18] Indeed, exile echoes the Hegira (Hijra), the Prophet Mohammed's own flight from Mecca to Medina in 622 that marked the advent of Islam. Such "'suffering is He [Mohammed] Himself'" (Schimmel 1975: 136), and the Gabonese exile, in particular, helped confirm Bamba's status and stature as a saint.[19]

Ibra Fall sought and finally obtained Bamba's return from Gabon through a series of astute political and economic maneuvers.[20] When he was finally released, Bamba's followers are said to have cried "Our Allah returns!"[21] In all naïveté, the French created a sacred martyr. As Charles Stewart has written, "a combination of suspicion and antagonism towards Muslim leaders" like Bamba, "coupled with the secular influence of the colonial state, effectively transformed Islam into a grassroots ideology of opposition to colonialism."[22] Indeed, Léopold Senghor would laud Bamba as an apostle of "Négritude," and more recent political writers have considered him one of the greatest Senegalese *Résistants*, who "1400 years after Mohammed (may His name be praised) / Re-illuminates the saintly heavens!"[23]

The exile of Amadu Bamba was accompanied by miracles *(karamat)*, such as calming a hungry lion or praying on the waters. This latter is more commonly depicted in Mouride art than any other miracle, through richly detailed visual narratives (Fig. 46).[24] Paintings portray the saint being sent into exile aboard a French ship, in the company of a Catholic priest and European passengers. When the

45. The only known photograph of Amadu Bamba, taken in 1913 and published in 1917 (see note 53).

Christian captain refused his request to fulfill his devotions by praying on deck, the Angel Gabriel (Djibril) brought a message from God informing Bamba that he must "make do" (*se débrouiller,* in French). Gabriel helped the saint to halt and descend from the ship, spread his sheepskin on the waters, and pray as all Muslims should. Fish came to be blessed, and when he arose from praying, Bamba had sand on his forehead as though he had prayed on land.

Mourides recount this miracle endlessly, as proof that one can overcome *any* obstacle with God's help, even the most humiliating deprivations. For those who

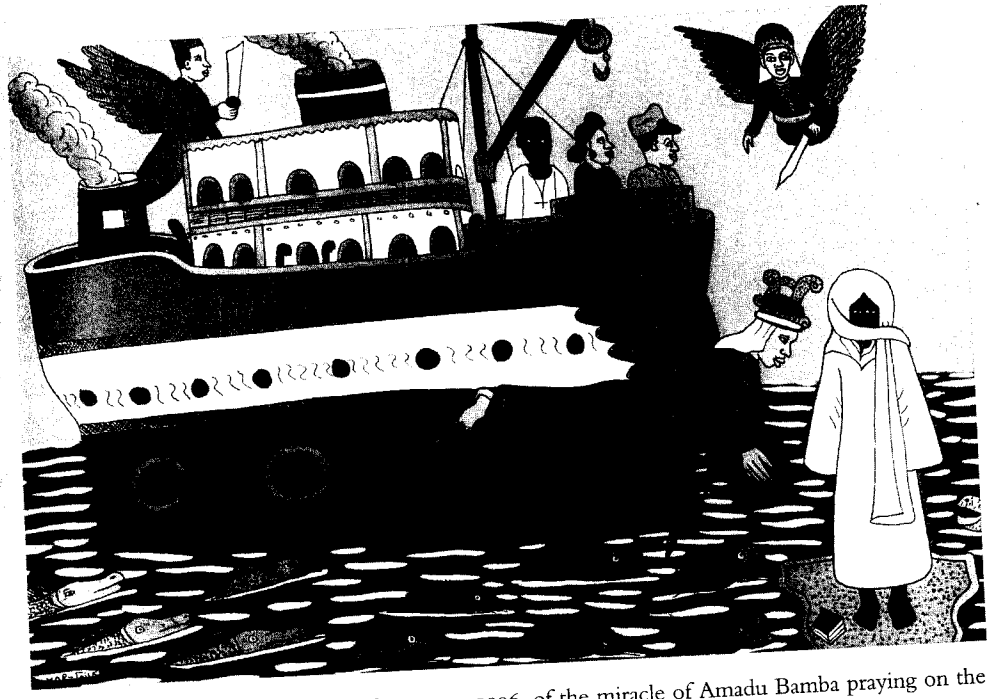
accept their reality, these incidents are proof of the saint's baraka, as Sheikh Bamba's own writing asserts.[17] Such wondrous acts may be the foundation of the sheikh's "sacred nationalism," but at a more popular level, they continue to inspire the anything-is-possible culture building of those engaged in recycling and other economic activities of the informal sector of urban Senegal.[18] As a popular artist nicknamed "Papisto Boy" explains, with reference to a towering portrayal of Bamba praying on the waters that he painted in 1993 on the side of a building at the threshold to a sprawling junkyard in the Colobane neighborhood of Dakar:

> One night I was sleeping and I dreamed of making a painting in that place [the junkyard] of the Great Sheikh, the Sainted Man, Sheikh Amadu Bamba. Yes, and I also saw that if one looks at this photograph, this wall painting *[fresque]*, it will give courage to those who are trying to make a living, you see, because these people [in the junkyard] work very hard, they work *very* hard, and yet they earn very little. But just the same, when they have the painting there before them, if they look at that painting there [at the threshold of the junkyard], they will have faith to, to, to keep living and keep working, to have courage and faith in their work.[19]

Papisto's reference to the painting of Bamba's miracle as a "photograph" may refer to the fact that all images of the saint are derived from a single photograph taken in 1913, as we shall discuss shortly; but more important than this, his choice of words reflects the dynamic, actual quality of the image as he understands it. Papisto knows that he painted the image, but he also knows that his artistic inspiration comes in dreams and visions through which he is visited by the saint. When he paints, Papisto says that "it is as if someone takes my hand and guides it." That "someone" is Amadu Bamba.

A thought-provoking cross-cultural comparison is possible. David Morgan notes that since 1940, many devout Americans – Protestants and Catholics alike – have considered Warner Sallman's popular painting *Head of Christ* to be "'an exact likeness'" of "the man they will behold in paradise," presenting Him "'in person.'" Some even hold that the image is "a 'photograph' of Jesus, an image so accurately capturing the Savior's features that it might be a mechanical reproduction."[20] Except for what is suggested by extremely rare (and controversial) artifacts like the Shroud of Turin, Christ's physiognomy is not and probably cannot be known; but people *yearn* to see His face, and so believe in the realism of a portrait like Sallman's, even though they are well aware of when, why, and by whom it was painted.

A great deal can be attributed to divine intervention. As much can be said for a "photograph" of the Prophet Mohammed as a winsome boy (in reality a snapshot of a drawing) that Serigne Faye possesses, or a reverse-glass narrative painting by Mor Gueye (ca. 1997) that depicts the Prophet accompanied by Amadu Bamba, Bamba's mother, the winged horse al-Buraq, Gabriel, and two other angels (Fig. 47). Gueye gives faces to his other subjects, but only shows an unarticulated, enrobed anthropomorph for the Prophet, floating on a cloud of baraka and receiving a separate stream of baraka from the heavens, which then halos his head. The



46. Reverse-glass painting by Mor Gueye, ca. 1996, of the miracle of Amadu Bamba praying on the waters as he is being sent into exile in Gabon in 1895. (Photograph: the authors)

47. Reverse-glass painting by Mor Gueye, 1997, depicting Amadu Bamba, Bamba's mother, and the Prophet, surrounded by Gabriel and other angels. (Photograph: the authors)

"will to image," as David Freedberg calls it, is so strong that some Muslims challenge even the most stringent aniconic principles of Islamic orthodoxy.[29] People want Jesus or Mohammed to be *present* in their lives, and to help them solve their all-too-tangible problems. "The image visually corroborates the already known," and they see as real what they have imagined, merging "form and physical existence, representation and object, in order to experience the presence of Jesus" or the Prophet.[30] The image, then, is also a promise.

In his portrayal of Bamba at the junkyard threshold, Papisto has created a painting of palpable realism, whose active presence transforms the alienation of the Colobane junkyard into a *place* of sense and devotion that is endowed with the humility and sacrifice of the saint.[31] No one chooses to toil in the junkyard, but many spend their lives there nonetheless; and overseeing their transformative labors are images of the saint, often placed just above and behind where men are working in their ateliers.

A VISUALITY THAT WORKS

Hard work has long been synonymous with the Mourides.[32] In the words of a junkyard denizen named Bubakar Fané, who makes trunks from recycled roofing or flattened oil barrels, "before a man can have dignity, he must work," following the saint's dictum: "Work as if you'll never die, pray as if you'll die tomorrow." As Fané further states, "We have found in the Qur'an that this [Bamba] was a man who worked hard and well, and who did things no one else had ever done: he walked on water. We love him, and we are all behind him because he did everything [for] and gave everything to us Muslims."[33] Nowadays, Bamba's "cult of work" is lauded in popular writing and contemporary fiction, and more locally in sacred songs and poems, all in reflection of the *lived* reality of Mourides.[34]

If, then, the sheikh's image adorns the walls of businesses and workshops throughout Dakar and outlying Senegalese towns, as it does the threshold of the Colobane junkyard and the outer wall and inner sanctum of Serigne Faye's home, it is because in the saintly deeds and words of Amadu Bamba, hardworking people find purpose in life, despite the obscene difficulties of want and strife all too common in contemporary Africa. True, the imagery assists in group identification, and promotes creation of networks of sales and service; true, the "reciprocal trust" that results leads to some "competitive advantage" in commerce; true, too, that Mourides may consider the portrait of the sheikh, "fearlessly superimposed wherever Allah, or the artist, chooses to put him," to be "a political metaphor, a stance to emulate in negotiating from a weak position" – or at least one that is "a clear alternative to [the] political power" of the state.[35] But despite how useful such functionalist views may be, they nonetheless obscure the importance of the saint to a dynamic phenomenology of work. If Amadu Bamba is "the Man of Refusal" he is becoming for young Mouride intellectuals, it is not simply because of his resistance to colonial oppression but, rather, because he helps hardworking people without formal employment refuse to give in and give

up.[36] Scratch and scrabble though they must, they *will* persist, they *will* feed their families, and they *will* make do *(se débrouiller)*, just as Allah told Bamba that he must in the face of his colonial adversaries.

The same functionalist views also obscure the active nature of the image of Amadu Bamba and Mouride visuality more broadly, for they reflect a reductive tendency to seek the origin of Islamic expressive culture in sociopolitical conditions, to the neglect of people's own ideas. As Seyyed Nasr asserts, following Islamic metaphysics and theology, "the origin of all forms [is] in God, for He is the Knower of all things, and therefore the essences or forms of all things have their reality in the Divine Intellect."[37] If we are to understand the visual piety of such Mourides as Serigne Faye, Papisto, and the men in the junkyard as they themselves do, we must beware of the distancing effects of Western humanities and social sciences.[38]

Here we shall consider characteristics peculiar to the image of Bamba, but as revealed through a way of knowing that Mouride visuality shares with the visualities of Sufis around the world.[39] In particular, we shall follow Nasr's suggestion that "it is . . . to the inner dimension of Islam, to the *batin* as contained in the Way and elucidated by the Truth, that one must turn for the origin of Islamic art."[40]

DISPLAYING SECRETS: THE MAGAL

For Mourides, as for other Sufis, the visible, manifest nature of people, places, things, and phenomena, known in Arabic as *zahir*, exists in a dialectic with *batin* – that which is hidden, secret, and profound. As elucidated by the thirteenth-century Persian poet Jalal al-Din Rumi, a distinction exists between outward form *(surat)* and essential meaning *(ma'na)*, which in turn describe exterior (zahir) and interior (batin) truths. "No reality is exhausted by its appearance," for zahir is a manifested symbol or sign *(aya)* of ma'na and batin, rather than an end unto itself. Nothing can be fully understood unless one "penetrates into the ma'na of things . . . to unveil the transcendent unity" and partake of their "inebriating interiority."[41] In effect, as Shaker Laibi suggests, "the great paradox of Islamic art" is its quest to "represent a reality that cannot be seen."[42] Or, as the Mouride devotional artist Assane Dione would have it, one must "pierce and penetrate" the image in order to define the meaning of the image itself, and to increase one's understanding of the image's "hidden side" or batin.[43]

As much as Mourides value "inebriating interiority," and despite the degree to which they share a Sufi sense that all that is obvious can also serve as an esoteric sign from God, they are by no means immune to the pleasures of display. Indeed, they excel at it.

Nowhere is such a dialectic of display and essence more evident than at the Magal, the annual pilgrimage to Bamba's tomb within the Great Mosque of Touba, celebrating the saint's exile to Gabon in 1895. The Magal is "the great mise-en-scène of Mouride identity," and for many Mourides, active participation in the Magal replaces the Hajj or pilgrimage to Mecca.[44] The etymology of the name

Touba is debated and is probably multireferential. Eric Ross asserts that it refers to Tûbâ, "the Tree of Paradise" – "one of the manifestations of the Cosmic Tree" growing "in the seventh uppermost heaven, marking the threshold between the inscrutable realm of the Creator and the realm accessible to His creatures," as discussed in the Holy Qur'an. "This tree is the closest one can possible approach God," as is Touba for Mourides.[45] Indeed, many say that the Prophet has come to Touba, and that the Kaaba has been transported there from Mecca (Fig. 48). Touba is considered the *qutb al-'âlam* or "pole of the world" around which the Mouride world turns, as marked by the Great Mosque's soaring central minaret named for "Lampe" Fall. And Touba is expected to become "as great as Mecca" through such current construction projects as a university and an international airport – assertions frequently stated much more bluntly than one might expect in conversation and local writing. In reaction, a more orthodox critic may scornfully contend that Mouridism is not really Islam at all.[46]

The Magal brings huge numbers of Mourides to Touba (the current popular estimate is "two million"). For Mourides, Touba is the primal *lieu de mémoire,* and they come to pray at Bamba's tomb and hope for a glimpse of the caliph, one of Bamba's two surviving children, or important religious figures. Family and friends gather to pray, exchange news and gossip, and partake in astoundingly sumptuous feasts. All are welcome, for at the Magal, hospitality is a "sacrament" of "vitally divine importance."[47] Dhikr-singing lasts all night, as blaringly broadcast by loudspeakers. The city becomes unimaginably swollen by the influx of the joyous, with buses, trucks, and trains perilously loaded. People dress in their finest, children are dolled up to their cutest, and the ambience is somehow both pious and carnivalesque.[48]

Visual display is at its most riotous near the Great Mosque.[49] The periphery of the mosque becomes a vortex of color, as brilliantly dressed throngs moil about. All of Touba, but especially the area around the Great Mosque, becomes a vast marketplace, serving the immediate needs of the hundreds of thousands of Mourides jamming its narrow streets at any given moment, but more long-term needs as well. In other words, shopping is one of the happy activities undertaken during the Magal. Prayer beads, photographs of the saint and scores of his descendants, incense, and other devotional items are spread near the walls about the Great Mosque. Across the street, goods are arrayed to catch and hold the eye, from vertiginous piles of shiny tinware to shoes of all hues, stacks of yellow foam-rubber mattresses, and luridly lavendar plastic plates. Farther from the mosque, alluring walls of fabric bolts vie with the earthy tones and tactile textures of herbal and animal medicines. Mounds of volcanically red-orange chili peppers contrast with neat piles of soothingly deep-green vegetable leaves.

Elegant women robed in the brightest imaginable oranges, greens, and blues wend through sinuous passages, many bearing bundles and babies and none ever dropping a thing or missing a step.[50] Older men wear flowing robes of more subdued blues, greens, whites, and yellows; cocky young men sport T-shirts and ball caps with logos from everywhere on earth; and taalibes of Sheikh Ibra Fall rush

48. Unsigned ink drawing (partially destroyed) on recycled cardboard ordinarily used to line shoes, mounted on the shutter of a cobbler's shop in Dakar, Senegal, 1994. The artist portrays the elision of Amadu Bamba flanked by the minarets of the Great Mosque of Touba, Senegal, where Bamba is buried, with the Kaaba of Mecca, the holiest place and "pole" of all Islam. (Photograph: the authors)

about in their patchwork belted tunics, carrying staggeringly heavy fagots upon their heads, to feed the cooking fires of their marabouts. Not a policeman is ever seen. A few cars thread these same paths, honking and fuming the while, and an occasional ambulance tries to get through; but more common are donkey and horse

carts trotting ever more souls in toward the Great Mosque from outlying neighborhoods. Such exuberant visual stimulation joins an onslaught of taste, touch, sound, and smell to swell to a cacophonous crescendo that falls utterly silent when the caliph comes to bless or passes through the crowd, lending deep sense to the hurly-burly.

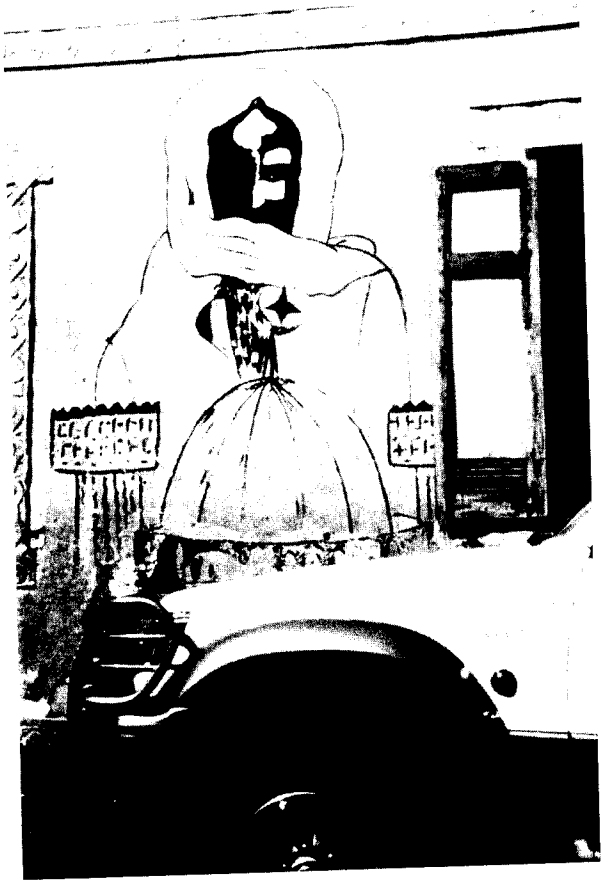
DISPLAYING SECRETS: DAKAR

Urban Senegalese women – with Mourides heavily represented in their ranks – are justly famous for their sense of fashion and physical beauty. Because so many are so tall, slim, and stately, in strolling the streets of downtown Dakar, one has the impression of being in the company of fashion models, and indeed, some have found places in that trade. Urban Senegalese women's lustrous, deeply dark skin is set off by elegant gowns in the most vivid colors, elaborate coiffures, and jewelry in gold or silver filigree, raised above the rush by six-inch platform pumps. Significantly though, physical beauty, no matter how ravishing, is associated with personal dignity, and *rafet,* the Wolof term for physical beauty, can also refer to the "moral beauty of an act. That is, for Wolof-speakers, the emotion provoked by either is the same," and exteriority finds its meaning within.[51]

Residential neighborhoods of Dakar have their own displays of color and image. Muted red, yellow, blue, and green walls are punctuated by shops bearing advertisements for toothpaste, soft drinks, rice, and tires. Ephemera abound, as graffiti, political slogans (often as palimpsests of rival messages), and entertainment posters. One also finds a growing abundance of wall paintings: Resistance figures from Senegalese history appear next to Mickey Mouse next to polemical pan-Africanisms next to didactic images decrying public urination next to the Statue of Liberty next to romantic wildlife scenes next to pleas for safe sex next to the sign of Batman next to portraits of Bamba and other saints of Senegalese Islam. Of this rich imageric stew, religious, moral, and historical themes accounted for about thirty percent of the paintings in the late 1980s according to one estimate, and it is our sense that this percentage has increased radically since then.[52]

Among religious paintings, portraits of Amadu Bamba are by far the most common (Fig. 49). They are also the most easily recognized, for all are based upon a single photograph of the sheikh taken in 1913 or thereabouts.[53] This "ubiquity and sameness, this pervasive familiarity" is in itself significant, for it is "deeply reassuring for the image's adherants. Believers return to the same imagery over and over precisely because it reaffirms what they want to take for granted about the world."[54] As Assane Dione has told us, he feels "secure" and "content" whenever and wherever he sees Bamba's image, because "for me, He is there. I don't see the image, I see the sainted man." As a wrestler on the Senegalese national team, Dione had once spent a month in Bulgaria, in relative isolation from anything familiar; when he chanced to visit the home of a Senegalese university student and find a portrait of Bamba there, he was filled with a renewed sense of well-being. World music star

Youssou N'Dour captures this emotion in his lyrics: "In this crazy world / Now I can go, anywhere / Because I know, you'll be there."[55] Both the ubiquity and the portability of the image make it above all a *popular* art form, and a fairly recent one at that.[56]



49. Unsigned portrait of Amadu Bamba on a wall in downtown Dakar. (Photograph: the authors)

Stuart Hall suggested more than thirty years ago that "'popular art is essentially a conventional art which restates in an intense form, values and attitudes already known; which reassures and reaffirms, but brings to this something of the surprise of art as well as the shock of recognition.'"[57] In the case of Bamba's portrait, the "values and attitudes" are "already known" and realized through the structure of local Sufism, while the "intensity, surprise, and shock" of the image are due to an ability that marabouts such as Serigne Faye convey to their more gifted followers to "pierce and penetrate" the image and traverse its obvious appearance to gain access to its "inebriating interiority." Indeed, Assane Dione says he has "a habit of concentrating on the image, for there is always something else, something more to find." He further insists that the portraits he paints of the saint are not portraits so much as they are revelations of numerical devices and sacred texts hidden in the saint's countenance, brought to his attention by Serigne Faye. The nature of the image in particular, and of Sufi practice more generally, permit such deconstruction.

IN PRAISE OF SHADOWS

In her seminal essay "On Photography," Susan Sontag suggests that photographs (or, we would say, aspects of them) are like "found objects – unpremeditated slices of the world" and "inexhaustible invitations to deduction, speculation, and fantasy."[58] In other words, what need not and would not have been noticed, can and will be – especially if one is a Mouride given to discovering hidden signs of

God in overt display. The technical, "coincidental," and therefore objectively irrelevant details of a photograph of Amadu Bamba taken on a muggy afternoon in 1913 are just such "unpremeditated slices of the world." Circumstantial details are concretized, rendered "eternal," and thrust before us as objects of ongoing interpretation. Distinctions between perception and representation are blurred, sign and signified conflated, and the photograph's imagery becomes "wholly ballasted by . . . contingency."[59]

Bamba's photographer stood him on a sandy stretch in front of a slatted wooden mosque in the walled compound of Djourbel where the saint was kept under house arrest after his exiles from Senegal (see Fig. 45).[60] Bamba looks straight at the camera, puckering his brow in the bright sunshine. He is wrapped in a voluminous white robe with long sleeves completely hiding his hands. His head is swathed in a loose white wrap, one end of which conceals the lower portion of his face, to hang over his left shoulder. Because his shoulders are slightly turned, the robe loosely continues the uninterrupted lines of the turban, presenting a nearly formless body in silhouette. A passive disattachment results, and the portrait is a "'stilled life' . . . immobilized in time."[61] Reflecting this sense, when Bamba appears in dreams and visions, people say they see him as in the 1913 photograph, moving-without-moving, gliding across the waters on his prayer skin (as though on a ski board) or on the ground "as though on a long carpet unrolling toward me."

The intense heat and sun are palpable, for the very dark skin of Bamba's face absorbs and reflects light in patches. An image of high contrast results that is more a collection of black-and-white shapes than a finely articulated, "realistic" portrait. The bright sunlight produces another noteworthy result. As Bamba's thin left ankle and foot emerge from the stark white of his robe, the shadow extending from his left sandle is so deep that his right foot is obscured in a black form projected onto featureless white sand. One can guess that the photographer may have mistakenly focused his camera slightly beyond, rather than upon, Bamba. This and the bright light also explain why the sheikh's white robe is without detail, lending it an altogether ethereal quality.

We in the West, who by now are so familiar with photography as to take its oddities of perspective for granted, may easily explain the contrasty nature and slight misfocus of Bamba's portrait. We can read through and recognize Bamba's face, ignoring the seemingly random play of abstract black-and-white forms. So can and do some Senegalese with whom we have spoken about Bamba's portrait. They explain in the most matter-of-fact manner why the shadow thrown by the sheikh is so dark that his right foot is hidden; and even though it is altogether invisible in the 1913 photograph, some artists paint a dim right foot in the shadow, or eliminate the shadow and paint two feet to improve upon the photograph's visual truth.[62] Yet the "fact" of Bamba only having one foot is located in the image as a "found object" for interpretation by those who are able and choose to recognize something beyond the obvious.

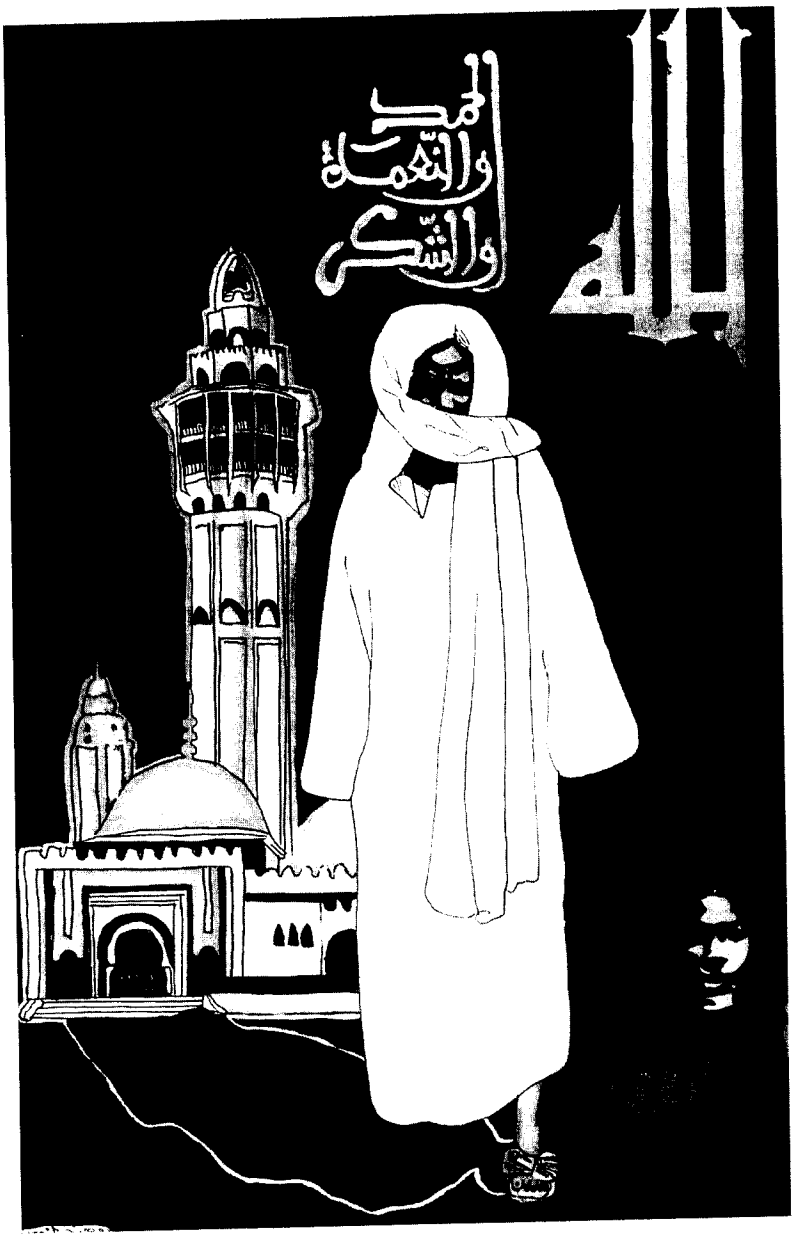
Because the shadow of Bamba's left foot obscures his right, the saint seems to be

stepping forth from the plane of the image, to traverse the veil between divine and human worlds. As such, the photograph provides proof of an assertion made by Serigne Faye that Bamba led a double life, the first in the shadowy obscurities and mystical truths of batin, the other a public life evident to all – despicable French colonizers included. Faye continued that God wrote in the Holy Qur'an that only He would know true batin, but in his own divinely inspired writings, Bamba told of how God had given him sacred water to drink, allowing him to penetrate more batin than any other person had or would, and to predict the future. For example, the saint wrote that Touba would be inhabited by all races at a time when the place consisted of only three tiny houses, and look at it now! It is the second largest city of Senegal, to which pilgrims from around the world travel for the Magal.

The saint's shadow can lead elsewhere. Recent reverse-glass paintings by Cherif Diop depict Bamba's shadow as a path to the entrance of the Great Mosque of Touba (Fig. 50). The sheikh is buried there, and Mourides all try to visit the Great Mosque as frequently as possible – not just for the Magal but also throughout the course of the year. Elderly Mourides hope to retire to homes in Touba, die there, and be buried in the city's large cemeteries. Like the tombs of Sufi saints the world over, the Great Mosque is a place of intense baraka. People praying at or circumambulating Bamba's tomb gain his baraka, as do women who touch the hems of their robes to pillars within the mosque, gaining the saint's baraka as increased by the fervor of those praying in the mosque. As a very special blessing, the caliph may offer sand from the tomb, that is, put in holy water for ablutions in time of need or consternation.[63] Although Bamba himself has been lost to the world since 1927, his baraka makes him present in the lives of those following his tarixa – his path, that is, according to the literal translation of the word.[64]

Cherif Diop's reverse-glass paintings present the visual pun of the saint's shadow as a tarixa "path" joining the man with his tomb, the mosque, and all they represent. The Mouride Tarixa is a way of life, and a path to glory. Bamba shows his followers "the path of truth" *(chemin de la vérité)*, and he himself is praised as *being* this path. But why should it be a *shadow* that articulates such an essential and vital relationship? Shadows have an explicit sense in the Islamic visuality shared by Mourides. Serigne Faye told us that no one should ever make a three-dimensional sculpture of the saint (or anyone else), for it would cast a shadow and therefore possess a soul of its own, in contravention of Qur'anic prohibitions. Only God should create a living being or anything approximating one.[65] We have yet to see a fully three-dimensional sculpture, although freestanding plaster figures made by I. Doumbus that were for sale in 1998, in which Bamba appears in a slightly rounded but still nominally flat form as derived from the 1913 photograph, challenge the prohibition. So do bas-reliefs modeled in the cement of a wall, carved into the trunk of a tree, or cast as plaster-of-paris plaques, which further dramatize the saint's passage between worlds.

Shadow is not given a negative sense by Mourides, as a deficiency or lack of light. This is not the deception of Plato's "Cave," nor does shadow have any of the



50. Reverse-glass painting by Cherif Diop, 1998, showing Amadu Bamba's shadow leading to the entrance of the Great Mosque of Touba, where Bamba is buried. (Photograph: the authors)

connotations that it did for eighteenth-century Europeans, as "uncanny" or an "unreal appearance," a "diminished trace," a "pretext," a "destructive presence," or a "threat." Nor is it considered to possess (or be) "grotesquely imitative mobility . . . like some parasitical animal."[66] Instead, the Mouride sense of shadow is more

like the Zen-influenced views of Jun'ichiro Tanizaki, who praised the secrets, mystery, and depth of shadows that leave open all potential.[67] For Mourides, shadow is equally vital. Indeed, Papisto Boy and several Mourides have told us that Amadu Bamba is "the Shadow of the Prophet Mohammed."

Papisto explained that at the end of his mortal life, when Mohammed lay dying and an angel came to take his soul, God promised to come to earth Himself, to replace the Prophet. But how could He do this? He decided to divide Mohammed in two, and Himself as well, and then join one half of each to the other to make a new human being: Amadu Bamba.[68]

Others have asserted that the Prophet was nothing but divine light (see Fig. 47), and as such, could throw no shadow. As Mark Taylor asks, how is the presence of nonpresence to be understood, when "the absence of shadow is the shadow of spirit"?[69] Bamba fulfilled the saintly task of providing the Prophet's shadow, just as for Mourides, it was Bamba who achieved (or completed) the overall message and purpose of the Prophet. In his odes, Bamba wrote of God permitting him to approach Him, even to the extent of seeing His face hidden to all others, mortal and immortal alike. Bamba's own shadow, as seen in the 1913 photograph, "participates in God," Papisto said. Such observations are consistent with Serigne Faye's assertion that "Allah gave Mohammed to the North and Bamba to the South" – that is, Mohammed is to the Arabs what Bamba is to sub-Saharan Africans. Furthermore, "Mohammed is the day, he is clear [*limpide,* in French] and can recognize everything; while Bamba is night, mystery, and the hidden side of things. No one can understand Bamba directly, because he is night."

Multiple references to light and dark are at play here, including an allusion to skin color, race, and a long history of abrasive interethnic relations between "white" Arabs, such as those of neighboring Mauritania, and "black" Africans of Senegal. More essential, though, is the sense that while revelation from divine light in the person of the Prophet is an essential element of Islamic devotion, there is nothing obvious or "clear" about Bamba or his teachings, only the richly obscure but profound truth of the night, which comes directly from the "half" of Bamba that is God Himself.[70]

The 1913 photograph portraying the obscurity of Bamba's face both produces and reinforces such deductions. Papisto noted that if one blocks a portion of Bamba's face with one's hand, one can see the face of the Prophet in the 1913 photograph. Others understand Bamba's face as a text, recognizing the black shapes as arabesque. Sufis have long made poetic reference to the "calligraphy" of the face of the Prophet as "a marvelously written manuscript of the Koran." The nose is an *alif,* the sweeping stroke with which one begins the holy word Allah; the eyebrows are the *basmala* formula "In the name of Allah"; and the eyes and mouth may represent different letters, according to their shapes.[71] Pursuing such revelation, the black forms of Bamba's face as seen in the 1913 photograph are God's own writing, and if one pursues this thought, his face becomes a calligram, composed of the holy names Allah and Mohammed – the saint's "two halves" (Fig. 51).

51. Reverse-glass painting from Mor Gueye's studio, 1998, of Amadu Bamba as a calligram reading "Allah" and "Mohammed," inspired by a photocopy of an unsigned ink drawing. (Photograph: the authors)

A final aspect of Bamba's face emerged when we asked about its contrastive black-and-white shapes. We were told that because he is a saint, no one ever saw Bamba's "real" face, and no one knows what he "really" looked like. Even the French might recognize the man before them as Amadu Bamba, but no one could fully fathom the saint's "inebriating interiority." The mystery of Bamba's face is increased by assertions that the 1913 photograph of Bamba is not of Bamba at all, for one simply cannot photograph a saint. Some say that when the French authorities ordered Bamba to pose, another man donned his clothes to take Bamba's place. The upshot is that the countless portraits of Bamba may not be of Bamba at all. Or, rather, they are and are not Bamba at the same time, for according to Mouride visuality, "all" we see is a mortal face, yet his batin is there to be discerned by those sufficiently devoted to the task. Paradoxically, then, the saint's unrecognizability is what one can recognize in his face.

WRITING WITH LIGHT

The dialectic of display and secrecy essential to Mouride visuality is what makes Serigne Faye's imagorium have such tangible impact. The sanctum jammed with huge paintings and smaller images works at both levels of vision, exterior and interior (see Fig. 44). The imagorium seems at once gigantic and miniature, releasing attention outward and at the same time focusing it inward.[72] Scale is defied, and as our almost-three-year-old son exclaimed, it feels as though one can "jump into" the larger-than-life portraits. Assane Dione's trompe-l'oeil ceiling for the imagorium, with its blue sky, clouds, and birds, is an uplifting device that plays further with boundaries of place and time, directing one along the path to paradise in defiance of the constraints of this world.[73]

Faye himself has artistic interests, but it is his encouragement and guidance of Assane Dione that has led to the creation of the imagorium. Dione was trained in formal and industrial arts, and had a budding career as a contemporary painter, at one time sharing a studio with Fodé Camara, an artist with an established international reputation.[74] But Dione left those pursuits to follow the spiritual path of Mouridism. Now most of what Dione paints is for Serigne Faye, although he occasionally accepts commissions to paint billboards or other works to support himself.

At first glance, Dione's style seems to be photo-realism. His large portraits of Bamba, the saint's sons, and Lampe Fall are based on well-known photographs, and what differentiates his renditions from those of the hundreds of Mourides producing images of these same persons is Dione's strikingly precise rendition of their every detail. He is also an accomplished draftsman and calligrapher, and his designs for calligraphic banners, some incorporating images of the saint or the Kaaba, recall the drama of certain contemporary North African artists.[75] Yet as visually arresting as Dione's paintings and banners are, their realism or attractive design is only an exterior beauty. To reiterate Seyyed Nasr's paraphrase of Rumi, "no reality is exhausted by its appearance," and as he paints, Dione seeks to "pierce and penetrate" the images upon which he concentrates and that he seeks to produce, in order to grasp their batin or "hidden side" (côté cachée). Indeed, he *produces* rather than *reproduces* images, for although Dione's paintings of Bamba may seem to be the same, he considers each to be unique in the numerical formulas and sacred texts he discerns in it, as guided by Serigne Faye. Instead of "photo-realism," then, it may be more appropriate to understand Dione's work through the original Greek roots of the word "photography": "writing with light." But we would add that he "writes" with darkness, as well.[76]

As he completes a painting of the saint, Dione is eager to begin another, to learn something new in the process. A project that he has been planning for some time is to create twenty-eight large portraits of Bamba. He would like to display these at Touba during the Magal, and he has chosen their number because it is mystically associated with the sacred city. Although such a bank of images might stimulate "the vertiginous emergence of semblances," something like certain projects of Andy Warhol, the differences among Dione's twenty-eight paintings would be far more significant.[77]

Dione's paintings actively contribute to contemplation and the achievement of ecstasy. They provide a sense of well-being and are sources of baraka. It is difficult to imagine so much imagery in such a small place as the imagorium, and in a most direct manner, Serigne Faye's taalibes are assisted in realizing the Sufi dictum that "when one recites the *dhikr,* one should visualize his sheikh and seek the aid of his sanctity."[78] Interaction with the paintings is increased by the stifling heat of the tiny room, as the joyful taalibes crowd into their marabout's presence. That the taalibes sing "songs of remembrance" in the imagorium leads one to reconsider what "memory" can be, for in the enactment of dhikr before the images, Amadu Bamba is *there,* among his disciples.[79]

During Islamic and personal holidays, as well as the Magal, Assane Dione's paintings are removed from Serigne Faye's imagorium. For the naming rituals of his children or the Prophet's birthday, the street in front of Faye's home is completely blocked by a tent with sides open for coolness, within which the paintings are hung, facing inward. Around the outer perimeter of the tent, Dione's calligraphic banners are suspended, while the entries to the tent are flanked by plywood trompe-l'oeil cutouts of the "Lampe Fall" minaret of the Great Mosque at Touba. Inside, guest vocalists sing dhikrs and kassayas, using powerful public address systems. Serigne Faye's taalibes dance to this sacred music in slow, sweeping movements, holding their arms aloft so that their great sleeves give the impression of wings. The audience is transported.[80]

The street before Serigne Faye's home, ordinarily a most profane passageway, is transformed into a sacred place invested with the images and collective memories of the saint and those closest to him. An enclosure of the same sort is erected at Touba during the Magal, and although other marabouts may possess and display calligraphic banners and the occasional painting of the saint, none has the number of images that Serigne Faye deploys, nor paintings of the same size or quality as Assane Dione's. Even when it travels, the imagorium is a place of dense and deep experience.

CONCLUSION: MOURIDE VISUALITY AS AN AFRICAN VISUALITY

Mouride visuality is based upon a dialectic of exterior and interior vision. Light and perception are both matched and completed by darkness and depth. The visual piety of Mourides begins with the image of Sheikh Amadu Bamba. As Papisto said, Mourides never stop looking at the image, "for it makes something enter into you." When they open their eyes in the morning, they want it to be the first thing they see, for it gives them courage to begin the day's hard work; and when they sleep in its presence, they sleep in *Bamba's* presence, and he offers them counsel in their dreams. The image counterbalances human weakness, and one never finds people being lazy in the presence of the portrait, nor will they permit themselves base acts. Instead, in sight of the image, people are humble, generous, and strong.

The image is seen, but through its baraka, it also sees those looking at it reverentially. Bamba projects sacred light, for, as Papisto stated and others agreed, the saint is "half" of the Prophet, source of all enlightenment. But one's eyes penetrate the image as well, for if this were not the case, we were told, one would not feel the effects of the saint's God-given baraka. For Mourides, then, vision seems to work both ways, not unlike the attraction of two magnets, following one man's analogy. Others assert that a human has two sets of eyes, one to perceive the externalities of this world, the other in the heart, looking to deep truths.[81] A blind man may lack the first ability but preserve the second, whereas an apostate or atheist is without inner vision and is far blinder than blind.

Mouride visuality is greatly influenced by Sufism, as it was introduced and has been constantly reinforced by trade among people living in what are now the republics of Senegal and Morocco. Yet judging from the impact of the unseen in

other African societies, it is our hypothesis that contemporary Mouride visuality is based upon pre-Islamic and coexisting extra-Islamic traditions as well.[82] Such cultural hybridity is found elsewhere in west Africa as an "artful blending of one secret with another," and the sublime results are nicely illustrated by a Diomande mask from Côte d'Ivoire, made for the Poro men's initiation society.[83] The exterior of the mask depicts a spirit-being possessing both a human nose and a ground hornbill's features. The inside of the mask is covered with Qur'anic scripture – "secrets shaped in silence" through which "the visible is converted to the legible."[84] The tension between the mask's exterior and interior visions constitutes the efficacy of the object itself, and of its performance.

Elsewhere in Africa, one finds similar play of the seen and unseen. Careful manipulation of the visible is always a powerful political tool. For Mende people of Sierra Leone, for instance, "the aesthetic of looking is not to look too closely."[85] There may be danger in scrutiny, for that or those not meant to be seen can imperil people who look nonetheless, either purposefully or by accident. But "when secrets are simultaneously hidden and displayed, the attraction to what is concealed is tantalizingly enhanced."[86] In contrast, there are sources of knowledge so deep that ordinary vision cannot reach them. In such cases, *not* seeing is believing.[87] For example, in earlier times, when Zaose people of Burkina Faso actively worshiped at the cave of an earth spirit, only a blind man could disappear into the depths to communicate with divinity. The cave itself was called "the eye of the earth" (with the other "eye" the sun), and the hallowed place must have lent the man the transcendent vision necessary for his shamanistic travel.[88]

In most African communities, some individuals can see into and perhaps visit the world of spirits, either through trance and dream or a ken extended by magic. Being able to visualize the other world affords those suffering misfortune an opportunity to gain guidance and succor from the beloved deceased. Among Luba people of Congo/Kinshasa, spirit mediums rub chalk around their eyes as "surrogate moonlight" associated with the lunar culture hero. Chalk brings Luba mediums the enlightened perspicacity necessary to see through the obscurity of illness and the confusion of deceit.[89] Neighboring Tabwa share these ideas and practices, and say that at death, the wise words of an elderly person become light in the east that permits perception for the loved ones surviving.[90] While ethnographic details such as these are derived from visualities different from that of Mourides, there is nonetheless a shared sense of the vital dialectic of light and shadow, surface and depth, the revealed and the concealed, that for Mourides is personified by the saint, Sheikh Amadu Bamba.

NOTES

1 Since 1994, one or both of the authors have made a dozen visits to Dakar, thanks to generous funding from (in chronological order) the Museum for International Folk Art of Santa Fe, New Mexico; a Project for Advanced Study of Art and Life in Africa, the Office of the Vice President for Research, and the African Studies Program of the Uni-

versity of Iowa; the Midwestern Universities Consortium for International Affairs; the J. Paul Getty Trust; the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research; Dak'Art, the Biennale of Contemporary African Art (Dakar, Senegal); and the James Coleman African Studies Center of UCLA. Three visits to Senegal in 1994 were possible through Allen Roberts's leave of absence as Faculty Scholar at the University of Iowa. Our research program has received the benediction *(n'diguel)* of Caliph Saliou Mbacké, one of two surviving sons of Sheikh Amadu Bamba; and the project will lead to a book and major exhibition to open at the Fowler Museum of Cultural History of the University of California at Los Angeles in spring, 2002. We are grateful to Ousmane Gueye, Serou "Djiko" Diop, and Mapathé Kane for research assistance, and to our other Senegalese friends for their warm and enduring support. Thanks for help with this particular paper are extended to Serigne Faye and his taalibes, Assane Dione and his family, and "Papisto Boy"; and to Professors Louis Brenner, Jean Copans, Christian Coulon, Richard De Puma, Mamadou Diouf, David Morgan, David Robinson, Gregory Starrett, and Glenn Storey for their intellectual guidance. For Sid, Seth, and Avery.

2 The Arabic word "mouride" *(murid)*, meaning "follower, disciple, acolyte," can be applied to any Sufi, but in Senegal it has become the name of a particular *tarixa (tarîqa)* or "path." We preserve the common French spelling of "Mouride," and otherwise follow the standardized Wolof orthography of Arame Fal et al., *Dictionnaire wolof-français suivi d'un index français-wolof* (Paris: Éds. Khartala, 1990).

3 Issues of Mouride imagery are broached in Allen Roberts and Mary Nooter Roberts, "L'Aura d'Amadou Bamba: Photographie et fabulation dans le Sénégal urbain," *Anthropologie et Sociétés* 22, no. 1 (1998): 15–40; and in "'Paintings like Prayers': The Hidden Side of Senegalese Reverse-Glass: Image/Texts," *Research in African Literatures,* forthcoming 2000. The question of whether or not Muslims are strictly aniconic is subject to interpretation. Conventional wisdom that images should not be produced is based upon the Hadith, or secondary texts, and not the Qu'ran itself. David Freedberg (*The Power of Images: Studies in the History and Theory of Response* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989], 54–81) provides a useful discussion of and bibliography about the "myth of aniconism" in Islam.

4 We believe the word "imagorium" is our neologism. The term might be applied to other examples of African expression, with the most obvious being the ancient Christian churches of Ethiopia; see Stanislaw Chojnacki, "Ethiopian Paintings," in *Religious Art of Ethiopia,* ed. W. Raunig (Stuttgart: Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen, 1973), 34–65.

5 David Morgan (*Visual Piety: A History and Theory of Popular Religious Images* [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998], 2–3) writes of popular Christian art in the United States.

6 Rose Lake, "The Making of a Mouride Mahdi: Serigne Abdoulaye Yakhine Diop of Thies," in *African Islam and Islam in Africa: Encounters Between Sufis and Islamists,* ed. D. Westerlund and E. Rosander (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1997), 216–53, esp. 217.

7 Annemarie Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1975), 102; see also Donal Cruise O'Brien, "Charisma Comes to Town: Mouride Urbanization 1945–1986," and Christian Coulon, "Women, Islam and Baraka," both in *Charisma and Brotherhood in African Islam,* ed. D. Cruise O'Brien and C. Coulon (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 135–57 and 113–33, respectively.

8 If visuality is a "cultural system," and so a set of formative and productive interpretive

processes varying from people to people and time to time, as Robert Nelson suggests in the introduction to this volume, then one must agree that the astounding cultural diversity of Africa (over two thousand distinct languages are recognized) is matched by a multiplicity of distinct visualities, changing from ethnic group to ethnic group and perhaps even from faction to faction, and changing as well for the same group over time. African ways of seeing are endowed with an equally broad array of visualizations – that is, performative and plastic artistry that articulates visuality.

9 Shaker Laibi, *Soufisme et art visual: Iconographie du sacré* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1988); Seyyed Nasr, *Islamic Art and Spirituality* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1987); Mary Nooter, ed., *Secrecy: African Art That Conceals and Reveals* (Munich: Prestel for the Museum of African Art, New York, 1993). Islam was introduced to what is now Senegal in the eleventh century; see Mervyn Hiskett, *The Course of Islam in Africa,* Islamic Surveys 15 (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1994), 107. Although most Senegalese are now Muslim, Mouridism still bears the stamp of local religious practice, making it very much a "local Islam" rather than universalist Islam; on this distinction, see Robert Launay, *Beyond the Stream: Islam and Society in a West African Town* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 5–9.

10 Vincent Monteil, "Esquisses sénégalaises (Wâlo – Kayor – Dyolof – Mourides – Un Visionnaire)," *Initiations et Études Africaines* 21 (Dakar: Institut Fondamental d'Afrique Noire, 1966), 162; Jean Copans, *Les Marabouts de l'arachide* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1988), 226. The Mouride Tarixa is the subject of a substantial literature, with Donal Cruise O'Brien's *The Mourides of Senegal* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971) a useful, though dated, overview.

11 Cruise O'Brien, "Charisma Comes to Town," 4; see also David Robinson, "An Emerging Pattern of Cooperation Between Colonial Authorities and Muslim Societies in Senegal and Mauritania," and Charles Stewart, "Colonial Justice and the Spread of Islam in the Early Twentieth Century," both in *Le temps des marabouts: Itinéraires et stratégies islamiques en Afrique occidentale française v. 1880–1960,* ed. D. Robinson and J.-L. Triaud (Paris: Éds. Karthala, 1997), 155–80 and 53–66, respectively.

12 Leonardo Villalon, *Islamic Society and State Power in Senegal: Disciples and Citizens in Fatick* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 119–21; Moriba Magassouba, *L'Islam au Sénégal: Demain les mollahs?* (Paris: Éds. Karthala, 1985), 29.

13 Mourides consider Fall to be the avatar of diligence and self-sacrifice, personifying Bamba's philosophy of hard work. See Donal Cruise O'Brien, *Saints and Politicians: Essays in the Organization of a Senegalese Peasant Society* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 45–7; David Robinson, "Beyond Resistance and Collaboration: Amadu Bamba and the Murids of Senegal," *Journal of Religion in Africa* 21, no. 2 (1991): 149–71, esp. 158–9.

14 Cruise O'Brien, *Saints and Politicians,* 54 n. 18.

15 Fernand Dumont, *La pensée religieuse d'Amadou Bamba* (Dakar: Les Nouvelles Éditions Africaines, 1975), 34; Annemarie Schimmel, *Deciphering the Signs of God: A Phenomenological Approach to Islam* (Albany, N.Y.: SUNY Press, 1994), 178.

16 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 and Kegan Paul, 1985), 346–66; Robinson, "Beyond Resistance," 159; Cruise O'Brien, *Saints and Politicians,* 19; Tidiane Sy, *La confrérie sénégalaise des Mourides* (Paris: Présence africaine, 1969), 109–12; Monteil, "Esquisses sénégalaises," 164.

17 Dumont, *La pensée religieuse,* 78; Monteil, "Esquisses sénégalaises," 167.

18 Donal Cruise O'Brien, "Introduction," and Jean-Louis Triaud, "*Khalwa* and the Career of Sainthood: An Interpretive Essay," in Cruise O'Brien and Coulon, *Charisma and Brotherhood,* 1–31 and 53–66, respectively.

19 Coulon, "Prophets of God," 356; Monteil, "Esquisses sénégalaises," 163; Thomas Shaw, "Sacred and Profane Aspects of the Popular Image of Sheikh Amadou Bamba," in *Treasures of Popular Art: Paintings on Glass from Senegal,* ed. M.-T. Brincard and M. Dedieu (New York: African-American Institute, 1986), 1–2; cf. Schimmel, *Deciphering the Signs,* 65.

20 Cruise O'Brien, *Saints and Politicians,* 42–52.

21 See E. Marty, "Les Mourides d'Amadou Bamba," in *Revue du Monde musulmane* (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1913), 11, 44–5. Such an elision between Bamba and both God and the Prophet is discussed later in this chapter.

22 Stewart, "Colonial Justice," 57; cf. Christian Coulon, *Les musulmans et le pouvoir en Afrique noire* (Paris: Éds. Karthala, 1983), 30–4 and passim.

23 Madike Wade, *Destinée du Mouridisme* (Dakar: Côté West Informatique, 1991), 52; Monteil, "Esquisses sénégalaises," 178, 200–1; Magassouba, *L'Islam au Sénégal,* 25; Sy, *La confrérie,* passim.

24 Narrative paintings are found elsewhere in contemporary Africa, and are especially well documented in Zaire (Congo/Kinshasa); see Johannes Fabian, *Remembering the Present: Painting and Popular History in Zaire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), and Bogumil Jewsiewicki, "Collective Memory and Its Images: Popular Urban Painting in Zaire – A Source of 'Present Past,'" *History and Anthropology* 2 (1986): 365–72.

25 Amadu Bamba was a prodigious writer; the importance of such literature to the development of a sense of "being Muslim" in colonial Senegal is presented in Stewart, "Colonial Justice," 65–6.

26 Cruise O'Brien, "Introduction," 20. On Bamba's miracles, see Amar Samb, *Le Magal de Touba* (Dakar: Éds. Hilal, 1974), 13–15; and Roberts, "System D," 93; cf. Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions,* 206–12. Cruise O'Brien ("Charisma Comes," 137, 143–4) briefly mentions the saint's continuing miracles in the 1980s. "Culture-building" and the inspiration from Bamba's miracles felt by people toiling in the informal sector of Dakar are presented in Allen Roberts, "The Ironies of System D," in *Recycled, Re-Seen: Folk Art from the Global Scrap Heap* (New York: Harry Abrams for the Museum of International Folk Art, Santa Fe, 1996), 82–101.

27 "Papisto Boy" (aka. Pape Mamadou Samb) paints portraits, visual narratives, and slogans on the outer walls of factory compounds in Dakar. He is an exceptionally articulate, self-taught artist who has been exhibited in Germany; see Friedrich Axt and Moussa Sy, eds., *Anthology of Contemporary Fine Arts in Senegal* (Frankfurt am Main: Museum für Völkerkunde, 1989), and Hubert Fichte and Leonore Mau, *Die Wanderbilder des Papisto Boy* (Frankfurt: Qumram-Verlag, 1980). His paintings are not "frescos," strictly speaking, but are created from housepaint or any other pigments he can obtain. All quotations are from the author's research, and Papisto's French is translated by the authors.

28 Morgan, *Visual Piety,* 32, 34, 40.

29 Freedberg, *Power of Images,* 56.

30 Morgan, *Visual Piety,* 49, 26, 31.

31 The transformation of anonymous site to meaningful place is a topic of our greater research program on Mouride arts; comparative ethnography, theory, and bibliography are in Mary Nooter Roberts and Allen Roberts, *Memory: Luba Art and the Making of*

History (Munich: Prestel for the Museum for African Art, New York, 1996), Chapters 4 and 5.

32 Early colonial writers asserted that because his followers were illiterate peasants, Bamba equated prayer with work so that the ignorant might find salvation. For baldly political reasons, some even charged that such devotions were tantamount to slavery or communism; see P. Couty, J. Copans, J. Roch, and G. Rocheteau, "Maintenance sociale et changement économique au Sénégal, pt. 1: Doctrine économique et pratique du travail chez les Mourides," *Travaux et Documents de l'ORSTOM* (Paris, 1972), and Copans, *Marabouts de l'arachide;* cf. Dumont, *La pensée religieuse,* 116. In contrast, later Senegalese nationalists like Leopold Senghor stressed that work for the Mourides is a "functional form of prayer" (cited in Couty et al., op cit., 71).

33 Roberts, "System D," 92. While the great majority of Mourides are Senegalese of Wolof ethnicity, others have converted to the Mouride Tarixa. Bubakar Fané is a Bambara from Mali, for example, and we have met a number of French and U.S. nationals who are Mourides.

34 Coulon, "Prophets of God," 363. Popular Mouride writing is in Wade, *Destinée,* 55, and Magassouba, *Islam au Sénégal,* 35. Contemporary Mouride fiction is reviewed by Debra Boyd-Buggs, "Mouridism in Senegalese Fiction," and Mbye Cham, "Islam in Senegalese Literature and Film," both in *Faces of Islam in African Literature,* ed. K. Harrow (Portsmouth, N.H.: Heinemann, 1991), 201–44 and 163–86, respectively.

35 Victoria Ebin, "À la recherche de nouveaux 'poissons': Stratégies commerciales mourides par le temps de crise," *Politique africaine* 45, special issue: "Sénégal: La démocracie à l'épreuve" (1992): 86–99; Cruise O'Brien, "Charisma Comes," 136, 140; David Hecht, "(Un)Civil Signs in Senegal," in *Invisible Governance: The Art of African Micropolitics,* ed. D. Hecht and M. Simone (New York: Autonomedia, 1994), 110–1; Louis Brenner, ed., *Muslim Identity and Social Change in Sub-Saharan Africa* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), 222; cf. Tshikala Biaya, "Le pouvoir ethnique – concept, lieux de pouvoir et pratiques contre l'État dans la modernité africaine: Analyse comparée des Mourides (Sénégal) et Luba (Congo-Zaïre)," *Anthropologie et Sociétés* 22, no. 1 (1998): 105–35, esp. 115–9, and Coulon, *Musulmans au pouvoir,* 20–34 and passim.

36 "The Man of Refusal" is discussed in Cruise O'Brien, "Charisma Comes," 150; cf. Robinson, "Beyond Resistance," 150, and Stewart, "Colonial Justice," 57.

37 Nasr, *Islamic Art,* 4.

38 Compare Louis Brenner, "Sufism in Africa," in *Spirituality in Africa,* ed. J. Olupona (forthcoming). In our own recent explorations of how Africans understand the efficacy of their arts, we have sought a departure from Africanist scholarship that "unwittingly remove[s] the 'African' in African art" (Rowland Abiodun, "Understanding Yoruba Art and Æsthetics: The Concept of *Ase,*" *African Arts* 27, no. 3 [1994]: 68–78, 102–3). See Roberts and Roberts, *Memory;* idem, *The Shape of Belief* (San Francisco: Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, 1996); and idem, *A Sense of Wonder* (Seattle: University of Washington Press for the Phoenix Art Museum, 1997).

39 The enormous literature on world Sufism virtually ignores African participation, let alone African contributions to Sufism; in Schimmel's compendious *Mystical Dimensions,* for example, Africa receives nary a word. As René Bravmann has commented ("Islamic Spirits and African Artistry in Trans-Saharan Perspective," in *Islamic Art and Culture in Sub-Saharan Africa,* ed. K. Ådahl and B. Sahlström, *Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis,* Figura Nova Series 27 [1995]: 57), "humanists concerned with Islam in Africa often feel as if they stand alone." For cogent discussion of why this might be so, see Launay, *Beyond the Stream,* 15 and passim.

40 Nasr, *Islamic Art,* 5–6.

41 Ibid, 128–9, 6.

42 Laibi, *Soufisme et art visuel,* 14.

43 The work of Assane Dione, a taalibe of Serigne Faye and the principal artist of Faye's imagorium, will be discussed later in this chapter. He is a well-traveled, self-deprecating man in his late thirties who has a post-secondary education and speaks to us in fluent French, which we translate here.

44 Samb, *Le Magal;* Coulon, *Musulmans au pouvoir,* 55.

45 Eric Ross, "Touba: Spiritual Metropolis in the Modern World," *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 29, no. 2 (1995): 222–59, esp. 223, 226–7.

46 Samb, Le Magal; cf. Ali Mazrui, *The Africans: A Triple Heritage* (Boston: Little Brown, 1986), 152. Such a critic is cited in Joel Millman, "Profiting from One's Prayers," 1996 APF article on the World Wide Web, obtained through a search under the rubric "Mouride" and read October 1997. Such intolerant views of Mourides have been voiced for many years; see Marty, "Les Mourides," 44–5.

47 M. Dia, "L'hospitalité à l'honneur," *Le matin* (Dakar), 15 June 1998.

48 Allen Roberts attended the 103d Magal on 13 June 1998, and wishes to thank Serigne Abdou Fattah Mbacké, a grandson of Sheikh Amadu Bamba, for his warm hospitality. The "carnivalesque" nature of the Magal is reinforced by allegations of bawdy activities during the nights of the Magal in Mbacké, the town just adjacent to Touba and outside its sacred precincts (Samb, *Le Magal,* 10).

49 The Great Mosque was built under the direction of a European architectural firm, and is a magnificent structure of universalist Islamic architecture. See Ross, "Touba," and Samb, *Le Magal.* Mouride vernacular architecture is a subject of our larger research program.

50 Colors may have symbolic significance, as when Serigne Faye and his taalibes wear blue robes with reference to how the profundity of Bamba's knowledge is like the ocean's depths, and yellow slippers to reflect the enlightenment of the saint.

51 Assane Sylla, *La philosophie morale des Wolof* (Dakar: IFAN Université de Dakar, 1994), 66. Such a double sense of beauty has deep roots in Wolof history, judging from the sumptuaries found in a thirteenth-century grave near St. Louis, Senegal; see Françine Ndiaye, *Le Musée de Dakar: Arts et traditions artisanales en Afrique de l'Ouest* (St.-Amand-Montrond [France]: Imp. Bussière for le Musée de Dakar – SÉPIA, 1994), 126.

52 Roberts and Roberts, "L'Aura d'Amadou Bamba," 28; cf. Hecht, "(Un)Civil Signs," 110–1; ENDA, "SET: des murs qui parlent," *Études et Recherches* (Dakar), 143 (1991): 27.

53 To date, we have been unable to reconstruct the particular history of the 1913 photograph, nor have we discovered how and when it became available for popular use. Oumar Ba, now retired from the Senegalese National Archives, has been unable to find the original negative, despite years of trying (pers. comm. 1997). According to Monsieur Ba, the various copies of the photograph now available, including those in his own book *(Ahmadou Bamba, face aux autorités coloniale (1889–1927)* [Dakar: SIPS, 1979], 11), are all derived from the 1913 photograph, which was published by Paul Marty in *Études sur l'Islam aux Sénégal,* 2 vols. (Paris: Éds. Leroux, 1917). David Robinson has been told that the actual photographer may have been a French colonial administrator named Jean-Baptiste Theveniant, and that a second photo may exist (pers. comm. 1998). "Second photos" that we have examined in Senegal have proven to be photocopies of drawings or paintings, and the allusion may be more like Papisto Boy's, cited earlier in this chapter, to an image possessing the great immediacy of a

photograph. On whether or not photography is subject to the same restrictions that conservative Muslims would impose on other forms of visual representation, see Schimmel, *Deciphering the Signs*, 34.

54 Morgan, *Visual Piety*, 17.

55 Youssou N'dour, "Mame Bamba," sung in English and Wolof, on *The Guide (Wommat)*, compact disc, band 4 (New York: Chaos Recordings, Columbia Records, Sony Music Entertainment, 1994).

56 Sylla, *La philosophie morale*, 64.

57 Cited in Morgan, *Visual Piety*, 32–3.

58 Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1990), 52, 69, 23.

59 Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1981), 5; Freedberg, *Power of Images*, 32; cf. Linda Williams, "Corporealized Observers: Visual Pornographies and the 'Carnal Density of Vision,'" in *Fugitive Images, From Photography to Video*, ed. Patrice Petro (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), 3–41, esp. 5.

60 Further examples of the hidden signs of the 1913 photograph are presented in Roberts and Roberts, "L'Aura d'Amadou Bamba." See Morgan, *Visual Piety*, Chapter 4, for a comparative case of "reading the face of Jesus" in Warner Sallman's paintings from the 1940s.

61 Kate Linker, "Artifacts of Artifice," *Art in America*, July 1998, 74–9, 106.

62 At play here may be a more basic tendency to dismiss mysticism in favor of the growing "rationalization" of Islam in some parts of Africa; see Louis Brenner, "Representations of Power and Powerlessness among West African Muslims," in *L'invention religieuse en Afrique*, ed. J.-P. Chrétien (Paris: Éds. Khartala, 1993), 213–34; and Westerlund and Rosander, *African Islam*. Furthermore, Mourides are no different from people anywhere: Individuals vary as to the degree to which they accept mystical explanations beyond rational ones.

63 At the climax of a long audience with Caliph Saliou Mbacké in May 1997, Allen Roberts was offered a cloth filled with sacred sand. Friends accompanying him requested small amounts, for the saint's baraka in the sand was augmented by the caliph's own baraka, derived from his heritage, piety, and good works. Cf. Cruise O'Brien, "Introduction," 4.

64 See Louis Brenner, "Concepts of Tariqa in West Africa" in Cruise O'Brien and Coulon, *Charisma and Brotherhood*, 33–52; cf. Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, 98.

65 David Hecht ("Substance Not Shadows," *Art Forum*, summer 1991, 94–7) mentions sculptures of Bamba, but offers no examples or explanation. Three-dimensional sculpture does not appear to have been an expressive form of pre-Islamic Wolof; see Sylla, *La philosophie morale*, 63–4).

66 Ernst Gombrich, *Shadows: The Depiction of Cast Shadows in Western Art* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press for National Gallery Publications, London, 1994), 18; Michael Baxandall, *Shadows and Enlightenment* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1994), 144.

67 Jun'ichiro Tanizaki, *In Praise of Shadows* (New Haven, Conn.: Leete's Island Books, 1977), 20–1.

68 "Dichotomous beings" are important to many African cosmogonies, and this story may reflect a pre- or extra-Islamic narrative structure from Wolof culture. See Allen Roberts, "Where the King Is Coming From," in *Body and Space: Symbolic Models of Unity and*

Division in African Cosmology and Experience, ed. A. Jacobson-Widding *Uppsala Studies in Cultural Anthropology* 16 (1991): 249–69.

69 Mark Taylor, "Reframing Postmodernisms," in *Shadow of Spirit: Postmodernism and Religion,* ed. P. Berry and A. Wernick (New York: Routledge, 1992), 11, 26. Taylor also writes that "spirit is shadowless when every trace of *altarity* has been elided" (17). The key word here is given great play in Taylor's book *Altarity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), as a reference both to the "high place" where sacrifices were made in Roman and subsequent times, and through homophonous punning, to alterity, difference, and transformation. Spirit is shadowless, then, when it is so remote that one cannot approach it for transcendent interaction. Bamba provides spiritual proximity to Mourides that the Prophet cannot.

70 On the divine light of Islam, see Jean-Michel Hirt, *Le miroir du Prophète* (Paris: Bernard Grasset, 1993), 128–47; and Schimmel, *Deciphering the Signs,* 12, 68–9, and passim.

71 Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions,* 413; cf. Ahmadou Tall, *Niche des Secrets* (Dakar: Niamagne Éds, 1994).

72. Compare Susan Stewart, *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1993), 95.

73 Compare Susan Stewart, "Death and Life, in That Order, in the Works of Charles Willson Peale," in *Visual Display: Culture Beyond Appearances,* ed. L. Cooke and P. Wollen (Seattle, Wash.: Bay Press for the Dia Center for the Arts, 1995), 31–53, 310–8.

74 Fodé Camara's work is presented in Susan Vogel and Ima Ebong, eds., *Africa Explores: 20th Century African Art* (Munich: Prestel for the Center for African Art, New York, 1991), 184–5, 220–2; and Axt and Sy, *Anthology of Contemporary Fine Arts,* 182–3.

75 For example, Henri Marchal, *Signe et calligraphie* (Paris: Éds. ADEIAO for the Musée national des arts africains et océaniens, 1986); or Mohamed Abusahib, "The impact of Islam on African Art: The case of the Sudan," in *Islamic Art and Culture in Sub-Saharan Africa,* ed. K. Ådahl and B. Sahlström, *Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis,* Figura Nova Series 27 (1995), 139–48.

76 On "writing with light," see Victor Stoichita, *A Short History of the Shadow* (London: Reaktion Books, 1997), 200.

77 Gilles Deleuze, cited in Stoichita, *A Short History,* 217.

78 Umar b. Sa'id al-Futi, cited in Brenner, "Sufism in Africa."

79 Definitions and uses of memory by African peoples have been among our recent preoccupations; see Roberts and Roberts, *Memory.*

80 Mouride sacred music and dance have yet to be studied in detail, but see Fiona McLaughlin, "Islam and Popular Music in Senegal," Africa 67, no. 1 (1997): 560–81; and Deborah Heath, "The Politics of Appropriateness and Appropriation: Recontextualizing Women's Dance in Urban Senegal," *American Ethnologist* 21, no. 1 (1994): 88–103.

81 A great deal is made of this (or these) "eye[s] of the soul" in the literature of Sufism; see, for example, Laibi, *Soufisme et art visuel,* 15 and passim.

82 As Louis Brenner states ("Sufism in Africa"), "as a spiritual discipline, Sufism shares many epistemological and practical features with non-Muslim African religious practice[s]." For non-Muslim case studies of African visualities and visualizations based upon such a dialectic, see the essays in Nooter, *Secrecy,* and in particular, Mary Nooter, "The Impact of the Unseen," 234–40.

83 The Diomande mask is illustrated and discussed in Roberts and Roberts, *Sense of Wonder,* 38–9, 68; cf. Bravmann, *African Islam,* 44–5.

84 Bravmann, op cit., 31; Hirt, *Miroir du Prophet,* 15.

85 William Murphy cited in Nooter, "Impact of the Unseen," 236.

86 Michelle Gilbert, "The Leopard Who Sleeps in a Basket: Akuapem Secrecy in Everyday Life and in Royal Metaphor," in Nooter, *Secrecy,* 122–39, esp. 129.

87 Color symbolism associated with profound secrecy is presented in Allen Roberts, "Insight, or *Not* Seeing is Believing," in Nooter, *Secrecy,* 64–80.

88 Allen Roberts, "An Eye in the Sky, One Deep in the Earth: Elements of Zaose Religion," in *Ethnologiques: Hommages à Marcel Griaule,* ed. S. de Ganay, A. and J.-P. Lebeuf, and D. Zahan (Paris: Éds. Hermann, 1987), 291–306.

89 Roberts and Roberts *Memory,* 204.

90 Allen Roberts, "Social and Historical Contexts of Tabwa Art," in *The Rising of a New Moon: A Century of Tabwa Art,* ed. A. Roberts and E. Maurer (Seattle: University of Washington Press for the University of Michigan Museum of Art, 1985), 1–48.