Institute of Art, Design & Technology – Dun Laoghaire
Department of Film and Media

'Tirailleur Sénégalais'
Decoding West African misrepresentation as a result of imperialism and myth.

Juliette Kilcoyne
N00191293

Supervised by: Dr. Michael Connerty

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This essay is entirely my own work except where cited and has not already been submitted for an award from this or any other educational institution.

Signed: 

Abstract

This thesis aims to discuss how the former French colony of Senegal's historical misrepresentation is a result of imperialism and myth. Western imagery and representations of the African continent have been circulating around the world for centuries, in the form of newspaper and magazine covers, postcards, posters, and so on. This racist imagery staggeringly circulates in the form of brands that still exist today. Ambiguous beliefs about West Africans began to appear, dating back to the slave trade era that took place in Senegal during the 18th and 19th century. Throughout important periods of the European colonisation of Africa, myths and beliefs have changed to suit Western imperialistic motives. This thesis explores that Africa, or the so-called image-Africa, was almost a European invention.

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Introduction

"You Senegalese Riflemen, my black brothers with warm hands, lying under ice and death. Who can sing to you but your brother in arms, your brother in blood?[…] I will tear the Banania smile off every wall in France."[1]

– Léopold Sédar Senghor, *'Hosties Noires',* 1948

Fig. 1 Banania in a french supermarket today

Fig. 2 Photograph of a Tirailleur Sénégalais

Growing up in France, I was very familiar with the banana flavoured hot-chocolate Banania. Almost every French family has a box of Banania somewhere at the back of their kitchen cupboard. Even the people that don't consume the drink likely have a vintage Banania poster, tin can or tray lying around their house. I never realised what the brand truly represented- I didn't have the cultural knowledge that I have today. Last summer, I visited France and went to my local *Carrefour*[2], when I noticed the brand's packaging. Immediately, I had a foreboding feeling- something about the brand's mascot didn't feel appropriate anymore. It no longer felt like my childhood comfort drink.

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[1] Léopold Sédar Senghor *"Hosties Noires"* Éditions du Seuil, Paris, 1949.

[2] *Carrefour* is a popular French supermarket-chain.

It felt offensive and immoral. There was something about the way the mascot was represented- perhaps his innocent grin, or his red hat? I went home that day and researched the history of Banania, which led me to immersing myself into the devastating world of French colonialism in Senegal. Before I discuss this topic any further, I would like to acknowledge that I am not of African descent, nor am I in any way trying to speak for an entire nation that has suffered devastating events throughout their history. I am in a privileged position, and I would like to truthfully and accurately analyse the history of colonialism and misrepresentation in Senegal, without any speculation.

Senegal is a former French colony, and this thesis aims to discuss how its historical misrepresentation is a result of imperialism and myth. Social groups in positions of power, have the ability to construct or change meanings and representations. The scramble for Africa occurred during the nineteenth century, whereby European countries were fighting for ownership and control of the African continent.[3] This rise of imperialism was generated by political and economic competition between Western adversaries. Imperialism has had a significant impact on the construction of West African narrative. Western representations of Africa constantly changed and were reinforced to further their economic agendas. This was done through the production of elements of visual communication such as propaganda, caricatures and stereotypes in the form of, for example, postcards, posters and newspaper covers.

To fully understand the cultural, political and psychological impacts of colonialism, I will be using the theories of Edward Said, Roland Barthes, Frantz Fanon, and Léopold Sédar Senghor. These theorists write about topics ranging from semiotics to imperialism and decolonisation, offering this thesis a rich framework for analysis. Roland Barthes was a French literary theorist, essayist, philosopher, critic, and semiotician. His book *"Mythologies"*[4] written in 1972 was revolutionary in the field of semiotics. This thesis will be using his concept of myth to frame my main argument: myth is created by people, and can easily be changed or destroyed, depending on the context where it exists. It is a mode of signification, a language that takes over reality. Barthes' essay *"The Rhetoric*

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[3] Thomas Pakenham *"The Scramble for Africa",* Abacus, London, 1991, p. 22.

[4] Roland Barthes *"Mythologies"* Hill and Wang, 1972.

Of The Image"[5] originally written in 1964, will also be used in the aim of decoding the images which will be referred to. To further analyse the meaning contained within these images, Frantz Fanon's writing will be explored. Fanon was best-known for his post-colonial writing. He was a French West Indian psychiatrist, and political philosopher from the French colony of Martinique. Fanon's book *"Black Skin, White Masks*"[6] published in 1986 will be used to analyse the psychological impacts colonialism has on Black people. In other words, he discusses the negative impacts racism and discrimination (as a result of colonialism) have on the human psyche. Fanon is an influential theorist, and writes from a place of experience which makes his insights ever so authentic. Similarly to Fanon, Edward W. Said is a post-colonial theorist. His powerful books *"Orientalism"*[7] written in 1973 and "*Culture and Imperialism"*[8] written in 1994 explore the themes of imperialism, power and Western views on the rest of the world. Although he mainly focuses on the West and the Orient, Said's theories can also apply to Western views on Africa. Finally, this thesis will employ Léopold Sédar Senghor's writings, and the movement he theorised called *Négritude*. Léopold Senghor was the first official president of Senegal after it gained independence in 1960. He was equally a poet and a cultural theorist. The concept of *Négritude* uncovers the sum of the cultural values of the black world and how they are expressed in the life, institutions and works of black men. His essay "*Négritude"*[9] published in 1974, will be utilised to develop this topic.

The first chapter of this thesis aims to provide historical context with an emphasis on visual culture. It will contextualise Senegal as a colony, and examine early Western representations of its natives. It specifically outlines the formation of Senegal as a French colony from as early as 1497, when it became capitalised by Europe and America. I will be discussing the slave trade era, as well as the Western depictions of racial hierarchies within it. I am also going to discuss the period of imperialistic expansion during the nineteenth century. Images and posters were created by France to glorify the vast empire they were creating- these involved representing Senegalese colonial recruits in a way to make them seem inferior.

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[5] Roland Barthes *"The Rhetoric of the Image in Heath, Stephen (Trans) Image, Music, Text."* New York: Hill and Wang.1977, pp. 32-51.

[6] Frantz Fanon *"Black Skin, White Masks"* Pluto Press, London, 1986.

[7] Edward W. Said *"Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient",* The Penguin Group, London, 1973.

[8] Edward W. Said *"Culture and Imperialism"* New York: Vintage Books, 1994.

[9] Léopold Sédar Senghor *"Negritude."* Indian Literature, vol. 17, no. 1/2, 1974, pp. 269–73.

Chapter two aims to analyse the creation of myth that took place during World War One. Pre-war and early images of the *Tirailleur Sénégalais* were chilling- the French wanted their army to induce fear in the eyes of the German troops. To retaliate, the Germans appropriated these images by reinforcing their nature. They created atrocity-propaganda in the aim of demonising these West African soldiers. France responded with the creation of a softer image of the soldier, in order to soothe the public's colonial anxieties. This representation of the *Grand Enfant*[10] lingers, and is still used today in brands like Banania, which I will discuss in more detail in chapter three.

Chapter three aims to outline the steps that were involved in the independence of Senegal. It will be investigating France's post-war status as well as the student protests that took place in Dakar, which ultimately led to the decolonisation and independence of Senegal in 1960. An event inspired by Léopold Sédar Senghor's theory on *Négritude* called 'the First World Festival of Black Arts' took place in Dakar in 1966. I will be looking at how the government of Senegal chose to represent the newly independent nation through the festival's visual identity. This chapter will equally discuss African cultural resistance in today's context, and explore new trends in the field of decolonisation. Museums and historical monuments hold important meaning, and I will be using Edward Said's book "*Culture and Imperialism*", 1994 to theorise my points. This chapter will also analyse the history of the brand Banania through its many rebrands, and poses a question around the cultural meaning it still holds today.

[10] 'Great Child' in English. Translated by author.

Chapter 1:
The formation of a colony in Senegal (1497-1914)

1.1. Racial hierarchies within the slave trade

"If one adds that many Europeans go to the colonies because it is possible for them to grow rich quickly there, that with rare exceptions the colonial is a merchant, or rather a trafficker, one will have grasped the psychology of the man who arouses in the autochthonous population 'the feeling of inferiority'." [11]

– Frantz Fanon, *'Black Skin, White Masks',* 1986

This sub-chapter will set out to explore the distinctive cultural landscapes of Gorée and Île Saint-Louis, which are locations widely associated with unfortunate historical events surrounding slavery in West Africa. Today, Gorée hosts many domestic and international tourists who visit the island to browse its picturesque architecture and rich history. This island is infamous for its unsettling and devastating past: early European settlements transformed it into prison zones for processing thousands of African slaves before their transport overseas to the Americas.[12] In West Africa, slavery existed for hundreds of years before European occupation. Surprisingly, the African Kingdom and African elites engaged in slave trading dating back to Arab control during the Middle Ages. Exports from the region such as gold, ivory and malagueta pepper were transported back to Europe via sub-Saharan trade routes.[13] Slavery increasingly established itself between the 15th and 17th centuries when West Africa fell under the control of the Mali and the Songhai Empires. In the 16th century, British, French, Dutch, Spanish and Portuguese colonies and the Americas generated a need for manual labour within their plantations. A triangular pattern developed between West Africa, America and Europe involving production, transportation and consumption.[14]

The slave trade operated in horrible, dehumanising conditions: captives were made to walk hundreds of kilometres with their hands tied behind their backs and necks connected by wooden poles. Rivers such as the Gambia and the Senegal (see fig. 3) became increasingly efficient and

[11] Fanon, op.cit, 1986, p. 108.

[12] Thomas A. Wikle *"Landscapes of the Slave Trade in Senegal and The Gambia"* Focus Geography, 2014, vol 57: 14-24, p. 15.

[13] Katherine Calvin *"Overseeing Senegal: French Prints of the Late-Eighteenth-Century Slave Trade"*, Journal 18, Issue 13, Race, 2022.

[14] Wikle, op.cit, p. 15.

strategic zones for slave transportation. Enslaved Africans were chained together in large groups, and transported across these rivers in small ships to be purchased by Europeans in coastal zones. When the ships weren't filled to capacity level, slaves were gathered and stored for up to several weeks at fortified locations around the Gorée Islands (see fig. 4).[15]

Fig. 3 Map of Gambia River

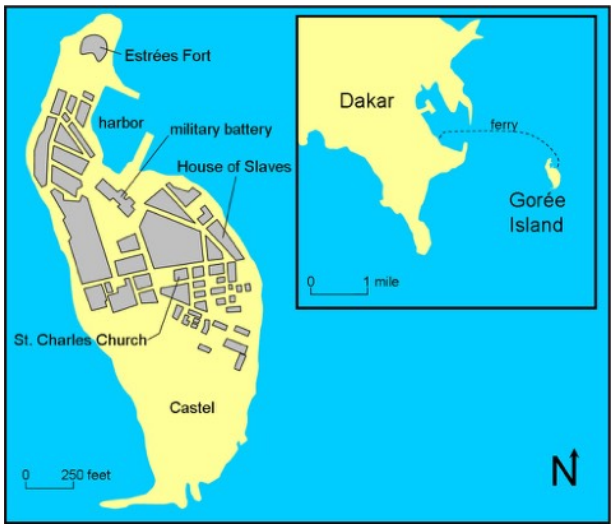

Fig. 4 Map of Gorée Islands

After decades of having an established slave trading station near the Senegal River and a permanent settlement for French plantations known as the city of Saint-Louis, the French captured Gorée Island from the Dutch in 1677. Many slave trading activities took place on this island. Gorée rapidly became a symbol for slave history and has been visited by many world leaders since its existence.

[15] Ibid

Slave fortification was the main activity taking place on this island. The French built slave stations purposefully on islands to prevent escape and attacks from outside groups.[16] Buildings, such as the *Maison des Esclaves*[17] (see fig. 5), were built to imprison these slaves until they could be loaded onto ships.[18] This house was built and lived in by a wealthy Senegalese Métis woman, who was part of the Eurafrican community of Senegal, something that will later be discussed in more detail.

Fig. 5 The House of Slaves, Senegal

Over the years, slaves became useful on the island: women were made to fulfil domestic roles and men were made to work on labour projects such as rock crushing and loading ships at the docks.[19] The social construct of Gorée became very complex, it was home to very wealthy European slave

[16] Wikle, op.cit, p. 21

[17] The House of Slaves, translated by author.

[18] Wikle, op.cit, p. 21

[19] Ibid

traders, a Eurafrican community[20], as well as freed slaves.[21] The exploration of the cultural landscapes of Senegal will continue as this sub-chapter will now be analysing visual representations of the slave trade era[22] and its social construct in Gorée and Île Saint-Louis.

It is very important to understand the complexity of the social and economic construct of Senegal during the age of the slave trade. Senegal functioned with a multi-tiered economy. A Eurafrican community existed, and did so long before the French colony of Senegal even formed. The mixed-race population were descendants of Portuguese merchants called *Lançados* whom were allowed to live along coastal regions with local women in the 15th century. This community later became known under the term *habitants*- a group of people which consisted of free residents: either Black, *métis* or of Eurafrican descent, who had been able to acquire wealth.[23] *Habitants* controlled much of the trade through local produce, they owned houses and boats, and owned slaves that usually worked on these boats.[24] This social group was essential in facilitating the French slave operations: they were able to use their diverse cultural and commercial knowledge to deal with both colonials and African authorities. The complexities of the social construct of Senegal during this era and how they were represented by artist Jacques Grasset will now be analysed, through the lens of Edward Said, and Roland Barthes' theoretical writings.

As Said states, "the Orient was almost a European invention".[25] This statement may also apply to Africa, or as Kaspin describes it, the 'image-Africa'.[26] Imaginations of Africa were rooted in Europe's unchallenged centrality.[27] For years, European knowledge of Africa proved to be very shallow. Only small archives of reports, insignificant glimpses and ambiguous rumours were travelling around the European continent before the slave trade era. The lack of images and reliable evidence to do with the African continent made Western views align with notions of exoticism, obscenity and

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[20] Mixed-race people of African and European descent.

[21] Calvin, op.cit

[22] The period of time referred to took place during the 18th and the 19th century.

[23] Calvin, op.cit

[24] Martin A. Klein *"Slaves, Gum, and Peanuts: Adaptation to the End of the Slave Trade in Senegal, 1817-48."* The William and Mary Quarterly, vol. 66, no. 4, 2009, pp. 895–914. *JSTOR*, http://www.jstor.org/stable/40467546. Accessed on 08.02.2023.

[25] Said, op.cit, 1973, p. 1.

[26] Deborah Kaspin *"Landau, Paul Images and Empires: Visuality in Colonial and Postcolonial Africa."* University of California Press, 2002, p. 2

[27] Said, op.cit, 1973, p. 8.

incomprehension. The image they fabricated was a derivative of Western demands and prejudices. This changed during the expansion of the slave trade era: Western views were tainted in response to the degradation of millions of Africans.[28] From the beginning of this devastating time-period, the West deliberately distinguished itself as Africa's contrasting image, idea and experience.[29]

A large distinction made between Westerners and Africans was the difference between their skin colour and physical attributes. Frantz Fanon, a Black, French West Indian essayist discusses this from his own point of view, stating that his blackness and his ethnic features were "deafened by cannibalism, backwardness, fetishism, racial stigmas" and "slave traders".[30] This following image analysis aims to examine how Canadian-born, white artist Jacques Grasset de Saint-Sauveur (1757-1810) wanted to accurately depict the social construct and racial hierarchy of Senegal during the slave trade era. Grasset criticised the treatment of slaves by European colonisers, and wanted to prove the unreliability of visual perceptions, eg; skin colour, in the context of understanding how the early slave trade functioned.[31]

[28] Kaspin, op.cit, p. 2.

[29] Said, op.cit, 1973, p. 1.

[30] Fanon, op.cit, p. 60.

[31] Calvin, op.cit

Fig. 6 'Négresse de qualité de l'Isle St. Louis dans le Sénégal' Jacques Grasset, 1797

The image in fig. 6 was created by Jacques Grasset de Saint-Sauveur in 1797. It is a print that is part of his broader collection 'Costumes de différents pays'. Many of Grasset's prints were ambiguous: they challenged visual perceptions of racial hierarchies.[32] For example, following Barthes' concept of the pure image, the women in fig. 6 are evidently both Black and of Senegalese descent.[33] By unraveling meaning through their clothing and other signifiers, one can deduce their opposing social statuses. The linguistic message, as Barthes describes it,[34] is at the bottom of the image and translates to 'Quality negress from St. Louis Island in Senegal. Accompanied by her slave.'[35] It is important to note that at the time, Black women were all given derogatory terms, no matter their positioning on the social scale. Native women of a higher social standing were still women of property: they were married to white men, thus were labelled as 'signares'.[36] It was frowned upon for men to marry the locals, but this became a common practice to benefit social advancement. *Signares* were known for being business-women, building their own fortunes through slave-trading. They would flaunt their wealth by wearing beautiful, voluminous dresses while promenading through the city.[37] In this instance, this *signages*' state of superiority is also communicated by her proximity to the unclothed, gold chained slave stood next to her. This slave also protects her master from the rain by holding an ornamented umbrella over her head. Only *signares* would dare to stand with such proximity to their slaves.[38] It is also important to note that describing this woman as a "quality negress" reiterates the false assumption of European identity being superior to all other non-European peoples and cultures.[39] In their eyes, she is only of 'quality' because of her relationship with a white, European man.

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[32] Ibid

[33] Barthes, 1977, p. 153.

[34] Ibid

[35] Translated by author.

[36] Calvin, op.cit

[37] Rédaction Africanews "*Divisive legacy of Senegal's female traders 'signares' "* africanews, Nov. 2021. Url: https://www.africanews.com/2021/11/12/divisive-legacy-of-senegal-s-female-traders-signares//. Accessed on 12.02.2023.

[38] Calvin, op.cit

[39] Said, op.cit, 1973, p. 7.

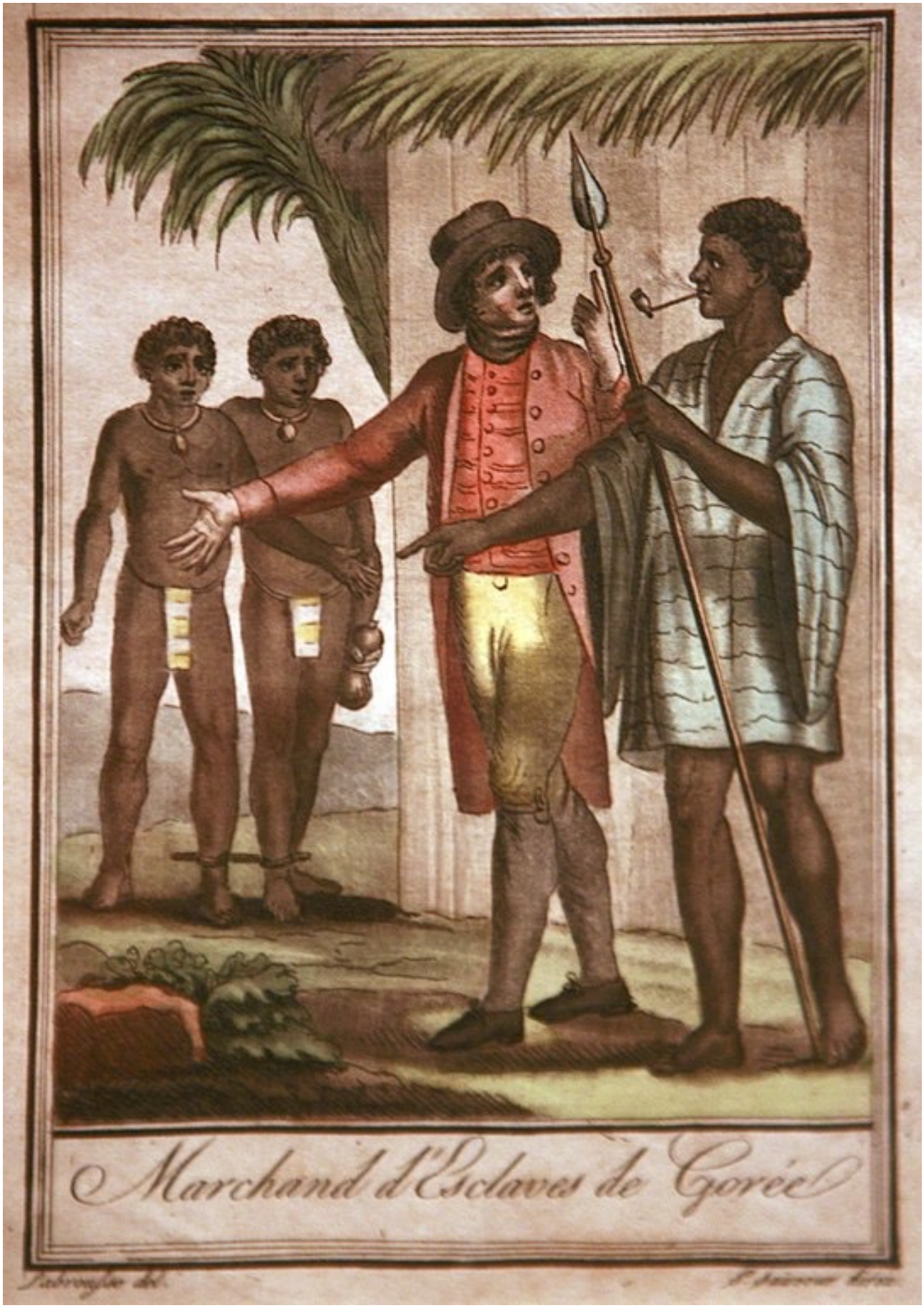

Fig. 7 'Marchand d'Esclaves de Gorée' Jacques Grasset, 1797

Similarly, fig. 7, titled 'Slave Merchant of Gorée'[40] depicts a comparable scene. The juxtaposition of the linguistic message and the pure image causes a sense of ambiguity. A Black man wearing a light-blue tunic, holding a spear and a pipe is amicably conversing with a white European man. Both are pointing towards two unclothed Black men, wearing gold chains, signifying their status as slaves.[41] Their skin colour is visibly different, adding to the abnormal nature of seeing them participate in a mercantile exchange. There is uncertainty surrounding the question of who is selling and who is buying the slaves. This exhibits the economic agency of the Senegalese locals and their importance in the facilitation of the French slave operations.[42] Grasset proves once again the unreliability of visual perceptions such as skin colour, in exploring the complexity of the social and cultural landscapes of Gorée and Île Saint-Louis. He challenges the idea of European culture being visibly superior, by creating enigmatic images of unusual relationships between the Black and white communities of the Senegalese slave trade era.[43]

[40] Translated by author.

[41] Calvin, op.cit

[42] Ibid

[43] Said, op.cit, 1973, p. 7.

1.2. The scramble for Africa

The construction of narrative and myth is prominent in African history. Western notions of superiority and dominance over the African continent were prevalent during the 19th century.[44] Europeans had not yet discovered inland regions of Africa beyond the trading posts on the coastal strips.[45] By the mid 1870's, much of the continent was still very mysterious to Europe.[46] Greatly so, a metaphor was created by an American explorer named Henry M. Stanley: Africa, the *Dark Continent*.[47] It is believed that the term was invented by European leaders in order to justify their colonialist acts: the enslavement of Black people and exploitation of African resources.[48] The term *Dark Continent* was spread by missionaries, travellers and literary authors who used it for a variety of reasons including intellectual, political and dramatic motives. Science, capitalism and Christianity were the main factors addressed in the European mission of civilising and colonising the African continent. Christianity and the Western form of government is presented as light, which dismisses any other form of belief, and indigenous, non-Christian doctrine.[49] Furthermore, a certain degree of exoticism and fantasy was associated with these unknown parts of Africa: "Forests were implacable; beasts and crocodiles lay in wait, floating in sinister silence on the great rivers. Danger, disease, and death were part of the unchartered reality as well as the exotic fantasy."[50] This image is compelling, untamed, wild and evil. A romanticised conception of these lands formed, whereby the myth of a hostile, disease-ridden, wild environment is as equally magically seductive.[51]

Throughout the 1880's, this no-man's land was uncovered without delay.[52] The scramble for Africa turned into a rapid but important period of discovery, exploitation and annexation. European

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[44] Lucy Jarosz *"Constructing the Dark Continent: Metaphor as Geographic Representation of Africa"*, Geografiska Annaler: Series B, Human Geography, 74:2, 105-115, 1992, p. 105.

[45] Pakenham, op.cit, p. 24.

[46] Ibid

[47] Jarosz, op.cit, p. 106.

[48] Angela Thompsell "*Why Was Africa Called the Dark Continent?*" ThoughtCo, Aug. 26, 2021. Url:https://www.thoughtco.com/why-africa-called-the-dark-continent-43310. Accessed on 06.12.2022.

[49] Jarosz, op.cit, p. 107.

[50] Ibid

[51] Ibid

[52] Pakenham, op.cit, p. 24.

powers aimed to create a sense of duality between the West and Africa. This is why, over-time, Africa has become one of Europe's most recurring images of 'the other'.[53] This notion of duality between the Western world and its ideologies being 'light', and African customs and cultural rituals being 'dark', is evident through metaphor in a range of Western idioms, varying from film, mass print media, literature, and travel art.[54] These oppositional adjectives create a sense of contrast between the two continents, reinforcing the image of the 'Enlightened' West. This web of dualities spans from light/dark, found/lost, civilised/savage, tame/wild and so forth, as previously mentioned.[55] An irony lies upon the fact that African natives were, in reality and in certain aspects, much more advanced than Europeans and Westerners. For example, Africans were responsible for developing mathematical systems, creating calendars and charting the sun, as well as sailing to continents such as South America and Asia long before Europeans did.[56] This myth of European, white people representing lightness and purity, and Africans representing darkness and danger became very established in the Western world: "We reach here the very principle of myth: it transforms history into nature."[57] It is believed that Europeans constructed this myth to encourage their political and economic agenda.[58]

Along with the fabrication of a narrative which favoured Western hegemony over Africa, grew a need to further develop the European military agenda.[59] Colonial armies began to form under European rule. The term *Tirailleurs Sénégalais* dates back from as far as 1857: it was named after the first permanent units of Black African soldiers under French rule in West Africa. Throughout the 19th century, the *Tirailleurs Sénégalais* went through significant transformations. The colonial army began with 500 soldiers in 1857, rose to 1 600 soldiers in 1886, and finally held 17 356 soldiers in 1914.[60]

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[53] Said, op.cit, 1973, p. 1.

[54] Jarosz, op.cit, p. 107.

[55] Jarosz, op.cit, p. 106.

[56] Thompsell, op.cit

[57] Barthes, op.cit, 1972, p. 128.

[58] Thompsell, op.cit

[59] Said, op.cit, 1973, p. 1.

[60] Myron Echenberg "'*Colonial Conscripts' The Tirailleurs Senegalais in French West Africa, 1857-1960"* Heinemann Educational Books, Inc, Portsmouth, NH, 1991, p. 7.

The Conquest Era was a key period of growth for the *Tirailleurs Sénégalais.* During this time, slavery was becoming a very controversial practice: it was ultimately in crisis. Many anti-slavery policies began to prevail as European colonialists declared their presence on the continent.[61] The context in which French Military conscription in the latter half of this decade needs to be understood is through the uncertainty of relationships between slaves and their masters. Slaves found it difficult to fully free themselves from their masters: instead, it was easier for them to adjust to a new form of authority. The French Colonial Army aimed to stimulate the growth of the *Tirailleurs Sénégalais* by introducing new facilitating methods of recruitment, which would sequentially further their agenda to conquer West Africa.[62]

[61] Echenberg, op.cit, p. 11.

[62] Ibid, p. 12.

Fig. 8 'Le commandant marchand à travers l'Afrique' Michel Morphy, 1900

Fig. 9 'Mission Marchand' Le Petit Journal, 1899

The illustrations above in figs. 8 and 9 depict a notable period within the era of the French Conquest of Africa. Fig. 8 corresponds to the cover of the first issue of a series of 140 fifteen-page booklets, published by H. Geffroy in Paris, bi-weekly from 1900. 'Le commandant Marchand à travers l'Afrique' includes illustrations by lithographer Jean-Paul Pinayre, and text provided by novelist Michel Morphy, describing the events that took place during the famous Congo-Nile mission.[63] This mission is also depicted in fig. 9, a cover designed for the 'Petit Journal', a conservative daily Parisian newspaper published between 1863-1944.

The agenda of French imperialistic expansion was amplified through this project: France decided to link its possessions from Dakar to Djibouti by introducing a military exploration mission to Africa. The figure-head of this operation was Jean-Baptiste Marchand, officer of the *Tirailleurs Sénégalais* since 1887. The *Tirailleurs Sénégalais* were a well established military force within Africa at this stage. They were symbolic to the glorification of the French Empire. Pinayre's lithograph carries this message by visually communicating ideas of French nationalism and African exoticism. He uses vibrant colours and realism to attract the viewers attention. As the commandant Marchand stands above his fallen soldier, he orders his troops to attack the enemy: they stand below the French flag and are determined by his authority.[64] Fig. 10 below is a real photograph of the *Tirailleurs Sénégalais* that took part in the Congo-Nil mission.

[63] Alban Sumpf *"Le général Marchand"*, Histoire par l'image, May 2009. Url: histoire-image.org/etudes/general-marchand. Accessed on 19.10.2022. Translated by author.

[64] Ibid

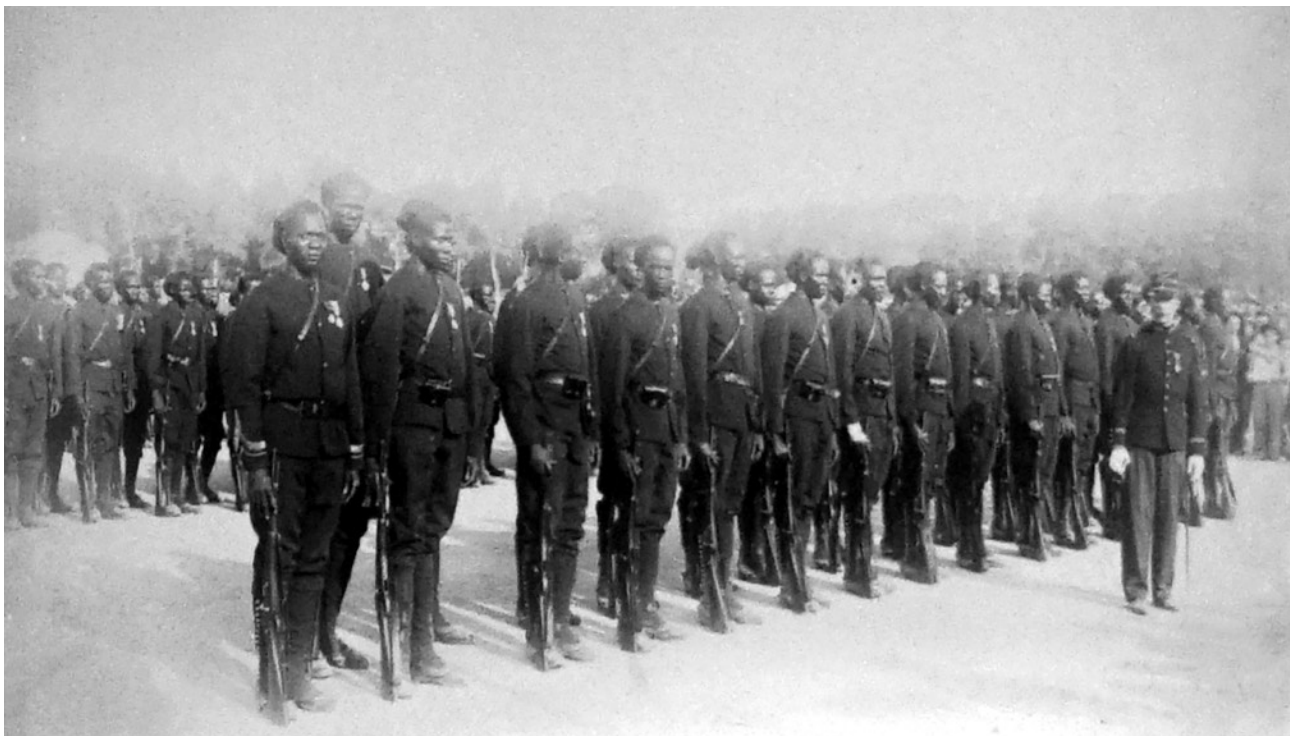

Fig. 10 Mission Congo-Nil, photograph of the *Tirailleurs Sénégalais*

The term ‘underdevelopment’ in the context of a country or a continent, is relatively ambiguous. For years, humans have been left alone within their own societies, and have developed at different rates. The reason for this lies upon the notions of different environments and ‘superstructures’ of human society (social relations, government, patterns of behaviour, systems of belief).[65] Walter Rodney, historian and political activist from Guyana, deeply explores the topic of the relationship between Europe and Africa, and the parallel between their development status, in his book “*How Europe Underdeveloped Africa”*[66] written in 1973. Rodney explores the idea that development and underdevelopment are comparative terms: they have a ‘dialetical relationship’, they both help to produce each other.[67]

The status of European development rose at the same rate of the status of African underdevelopment. This is because of European exploitation: “All of the countries named as ‘underdeveloped' in the world are exploited by others; and the underdevelopment with which the

[65] Walter Rodney *“How Europe Underdeveloped Africa”*, Bogle-L’Ouverture Publications, London, 1973.

[66] Ibid, p. 16.

[67] Ibid, p. 116.

world is now pre-occupied is a product of capitalist, imperialist and colonialist exploitation."[68] In the case of the African continent and its countries such as Senegal, their societies were developing independently until they were invaded by French capitalistic power. As Rodney explains, this increase in exploitation led to the 'the export of surplus ensued', which deprived Africa's access to natural resources and labour.[69] An example of labour being taken from societies is the conscription of their men which made West African societies lack in a resource for male labour. Consequently, this disadvantaged them and assisted in the underdevelopment of their superstructure.

Notions of African underdevelopment, such as the *Dark Continent*, the myth of a wild, hostile, disease-ridden environment, were racist beliefs that were circulating all throughout Europe at the time and remain to this day. Many of these beliefs derived from the consumption of visual images, the glorification and civilising mission of French Military commanders and their loyal Black soldiers. The idea of the soldiers loyalty and determination for France isn't necessarily true; in fact, these soldiers were likely reluctant to fight, in fear of risking their lives. The European consumption of these types of images amplified the racist structure of the Western world: "Europe has a racist structure".[70] This could allude to the fact that Western racist views on Africa are a result of false assumptions and constructed narrative: these views are a consequence of mythical speech.[71]

Furthermore, this reiterates Said's theory of the Orient (in this instance, the 'image-Africa') being a European invention. The image-Africa was created and governed by general ideas surrounding who and what was an African person, as well as empirical reality.[72] Most all, Western conceptions and myths were created to satisfy a battery of "desires, repressions, investments and projections."[73] Evidently, there are many layers that need uncovering to fully understand the complexity of Western colonial motives.

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[68] Ibid

[69] Ibid

[70] Fanon, op.cit, p. 92.

[71] Barthes, op.cit, 1972, p. 106.

[72] Said, op.cit, 1973, p. 8.

[73] Ibid

Chapter 2:
Propaganda of the *Tirailleur Sénégalais* in World War One

2.1. Early images of the Senegalese rifleman (1914-1915)

The breakout of World War One in 1914 was caused by an accumulation of reasons, ranging from political to economical and nationalist motives. Importantly, the *Ententes* between the allies were a significant reason for countries to fear the enemy and develop a need to protect themselves. When Germany declared war on France, they began their invasion by commanding their troops to cross the frontier into Belgium on the morning of August the 4th, 1914. This moment marked the beginning of an on-going rivalry between France and Germany.

Over-time, Germany and France developed a range of political tactics to gain popularity and to provoke fearful reactions. One of these tactics was the use of propaganda: "Propaganda is the management of collective attitudes by the manipulation of significant symbols."[74] This statement is a basic outline of the hypothesis that will be used to analyse the propagandist images of the *Tirailleur Sénégalais* that were being produced during World War One. The tone and content of this propaganda created during this time period, particularly in terms of racial representation, was largely intensified due to the pressures of the war. This chapter will be investigating these visuals using Roland Barthes' concept of semiology. Along this postulation, Barthes' concept of the construction of myth which was previously examined in chapter one will be reiterated, whilst suggesting further analysis through Frantz Fanon's theory of the Black dependency complex.

The French superiority complex is a mentality that dates back to the French Revolution. This moment in history caused France to believe they were the most important country in the world. They firmly believed they had a mission to civilise the 'uncivilised'. During the scramble for Africa, the French became familiar with the continent through an illustrated press and ethnographic exhibitions. Over-time, the French sought to justify their hostility and mistreatment towards the African continent through racial stereotyping and scientific theories.[75] When came the first battles

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[74] Harold D. Lasswell *"The Theory of Political Propaganda."* The American Political Science Review, vol. 21, no. 3, 1927, pp. 627-31, p. 629.

[75] Nicole M. Zehfuss *"From Stereotype to Individual: World War I Experiences with 'Tirailleurs Sénégalais.'"* French Colonial History, vol. 6, 2005, pp. 137–57. *JSTOR*, http://www.jstor.org/stable/41935183. Accessed 08.02.2023, p. 139.

of World War One, these false assumptions and racial generalisations were tactically amplified by the French press, to suit their military needs. The performance of the *Tirailleurs Sénégalais* in Belgium in 1914 is described as being one of the highest points of French Military mythology. A valiant picture emerged as the Senegalese soldiers revelled in glory. Although this glorified representation of the loyal and courageous African soldier rose to popularity, shaped itself an underlying gruesome image of the soldiers: that of 'barbarian ruthlessness'.[76] These African troops acquired the reputation of being blood-curling head cutters on the battlefield. This stereotype became inherently popular among French media and the French press, as it tactically managed to establish fear within the eyes of German Military troops.[77] This chapter will now be analysing a series of propagandist images created by French illustrators during this period of time.

Fig. 11 "Le dos au feu, le ventre à table", Paul Dufresne, 1914

[76] Echenberg, op.cit, p. 33.

[77] Ibid

Fig. 11 depicts a postcard created by Paul Dufresne in 1914. Charles-Paul Dufresne was a prolific Parisian illustrator that created a series of wartime postcards. These postcards were made in the aim of depicting popular sayings in unconventional, offbeat settings. Dufresne had an ability to create an image with a double meaning: light-hearted in one sense, haunting in another. These postcards were consumed by the general public, and intended to be sold due to their combined attributes: exoticism, public knowledge, military humour and sensationalism.[78] This type of imagery was widely consumed by the French public, and due to its accessible nature, became a rapid way to send messages across France and abroad, thus a key means of disseminating images widely and establishing visual stereotypes internationally. This image is very tactical as it sends a message to the enemy: although the *force noire*[79] may seem like harmless, naïve, child-like soldiers as seen in figs. 12 and 13, they are really savages in combat. To discuss fig. 11, I will be using Roland Barthes' method of semiology. Barthes focuses on examining and uncovering the different layers of meaning an image can hold.

Fig. 12 "Gloire à la plus grande France" 1910

Fig. 13 Photograph of a *Tirailleur Sénégalais*

[78] Alexandre Sumpf *"Les tirailleurs sénégalais dans la Grande Guerre"*, Histoire par l'image, 08.09.2022. Url: https://histoire-image.org/etudes/tirailleurs-senegalais-grande-guerre. Accessed on 12.02.2023. Translated by author.

[79] Translates to the Black force- the French colonial army. Translation by author.

Firstly, the linguistic message contained within this illustration will be addressed.[80] The juxtaposition of this image against the text is rather unsettling. The expression 'Le dos au feu, le ventre à table' translates to 'Back to the fire, belly toward the table'.[81] This expression ultimately means to be sat comfortably, at ease. This is unnerving, because the events taking place in this image are anything but settling. Using Barthes' notion of the denoted image to describe the pure image that is displayed, can be seen in the centre of the composition, a Senegalese soldier wearing a blue and gold uniform, and a red military hat. He is calmly enjoying a hot meal, oblivious to his surroundings. His proportions are exaggerated- he has very large hands and a wide face, his lips are of a chilling red, and his teeth are pearly white. On his left can be seen the feet of a dead man, who seems to have been crushed by a pile of beams. In the background, a harrowing event is taking place. A group of *Tirailleurs Sénégalais* seem to be chasing and attempting to murder the enemy with their bayonets.

Fig. 14 'La cuisine des tirailleurs', E.R Paris, 1916.

[80] Barthes, op.cit, 1977, p. 155.

[81] Translated by author.

The images in figs. 14, 15, and 16 depict a similar message to Paul Dufresne's, whereby the Senegalese soldiers are represented as cannibalistic savages. Fig. 14 shows the soldiers cooking German Emperor Herr Wilhelm over a fire as fig. 15 depicts a *Tirailleur Sénégalais* squashing a Turkish soldier with his bayonet, as he ominously smiles into the viewers eyes.

Fig. 15 "Le Sénégalais aux Dardanelles" Lubin de Beauvais, 1915

The two images in fig. 16 illustrate scenes of a French military camp where a seemingly innocent and child-like Senegalese soldier brings severed heads to his Generals, to seek their approval.

Fig. 16 'Nos bons Sénégalais' ED Paris, c. 1915

The final part of Barthes's theory of semiotic analysis, is to analyse the connoted image: this is the cultural and symbolic message the image provides to its viewer.[82] Like many other postcards that were produced at the time, the general aim of this type of propaganda was for French social and political powers to manage German attitudes towards the French Army.[83] All of the images above have a common motive: to represent the *Tirailleur Sénégalais* in a terrifying way.

Significant symbols within Western culture have the ability to be changed and constructed, depending on the needs of the propagandist: "If we state the strategy of propaganda in cultural terms, we may say that it involves the presentation of an object in a culture in such a manner that certain cultural attitudes will be organized toward it. The problem of the propagandist is to intensify the attitudes favorable to his purpose, to reverse the attitudes hostile to it, and to attract the in- different"[84]. Similarly to Barthes' views on mythology, significant symbols make up systems of values depending on their cultural settings. In the images above, the object, the Senegalese soldier is represented through a system of Western values, whereby a black, African man is stereotyped and enhanced to appear as a cannibalistic savage. The myth-consumer, the German population, understands this message as dangerous and threatening for them, which is favourable to the French within the context of the war. They used this propaganda and this creation of myth as a tactical weapon against Germany, to send them the message that their army needed to be feared: after all, myth is a system of communication, it is at its core a simple message.[85]

[82] Barthes, op.cit, 1977, p. 160.

[83] Lasswell, op.cit, p. 629.

[84] Ibid

[85] Barthes, op.cit, 1977, p. 130.

2.2. Tactical propaganda and changing views

The reaction France got from Germany was as expected: public terror and anxiety. This provoked a strategic response from their own side, whereby the Germans press came out with a propagandist campaign against the French army. This involved representing the *Tirailleurs Sénégalais* as ruthless cannibals and reducing them down to the level of savagery.[86] These accusations were intentional, as they illustrated how merciless and desperate the French army were to hire primitive cannibals: "The myth of African military achievement in the First World War can be contrasted with a series of countermyths, opinions which emphasized the negative aspects of African service."[87] The German press repetitively emphasised how undisciplined, unreliable and ineffective the *force noire* was.[88] These claims were manifested visually as well as textually; effectively what is known as being 'atrocity-propaganda'. This technique of propaganda was specifically used in World War One. It sought to gather war support and provide a moral explanation for it, by foregrounding the atrocities and crimes the opponent was committing.[89] The nature of atrocity-propaganda varied between books, newspapers, pamphlets, sketches, posters, postcards and many more. This thesis will now analyse some examples of German propaganda demonising Senegalese soldiers for their own benefit, to further prove this point.

[86] Myron Echenberg, op.cit, p. 33.

[87] Ibid

[88] Ibid

[89] Jo Fox *"Atrocity Propaganda"* British Library, 29.01.2014. Url: https://www.bl.uk/world-war-one/articles/atrocity-propaganda. Accessed on 12.02.2023.

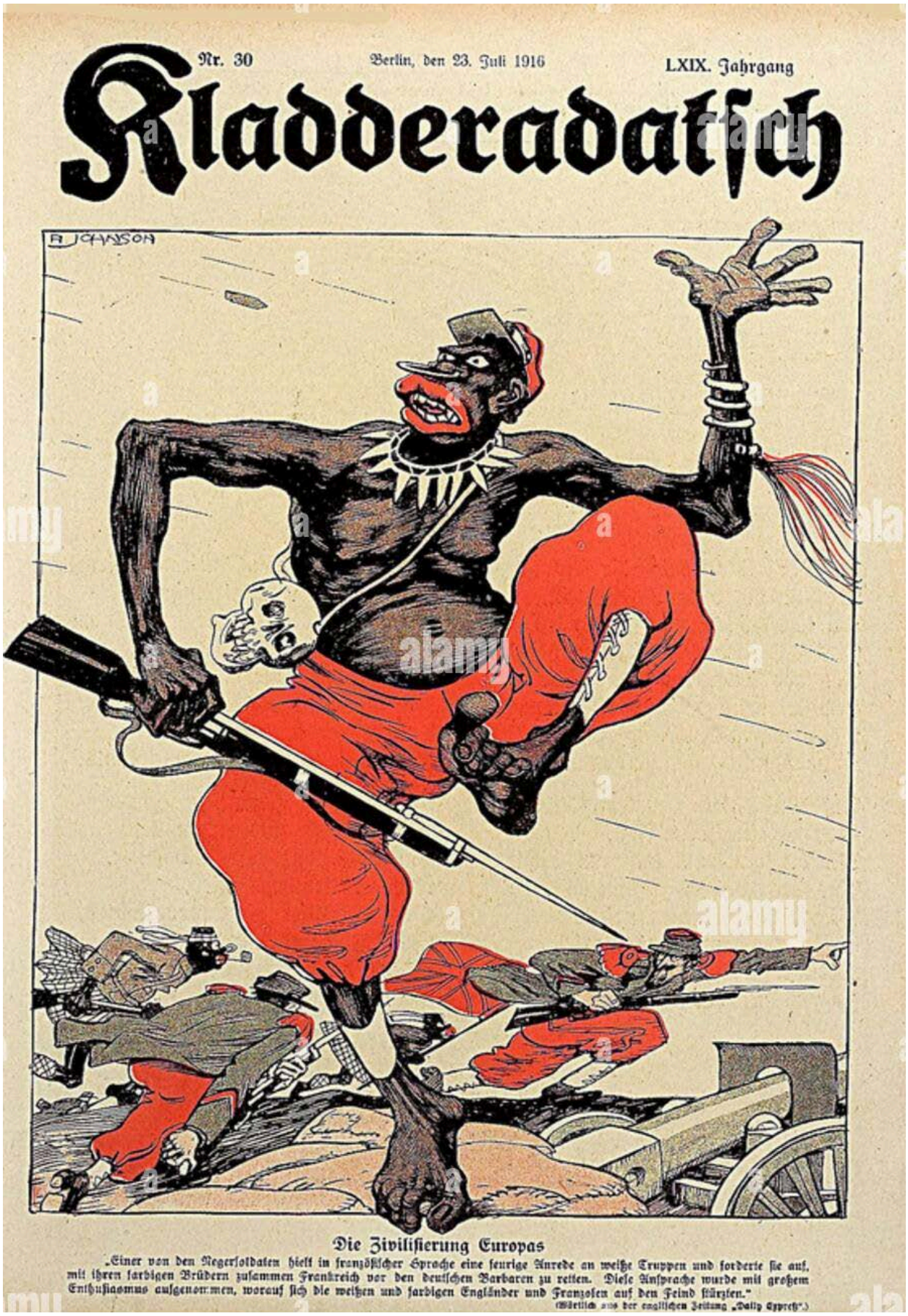

Fig. 17 'The civilisations of Europe' Kladderadatsch, 1916

Kladderadatsch was a satirical German magazine which was published almost daily between 1849 and 1944. Its readership consisted mainly of the growing middle-class in Germany.[90] It was famous for creating highly exaggerated atrocity-propaganda as a means to mock and criticise the French army. Fig. 17 will be critically analysed through its language, its non-coded message, and its coded message.[91] Firstly, the linguistic message will be analysed. The caption below, translating to 'One of the negro/nigger soldiers delivered a passionate address to white troops. He asked them, together with his colored brethren, to save France from the German barbarians'[92], gives context to this image. The type of language Barthes would describe this as is 'relay': it is included within the story the image tells, e.g. comic strips, cartoons.[93] This linguistic message adds a layer of context and satire to the image, enabling the audience to understand its intention of mockery and demonisation. The text therefore has a 'representative value' as Barthes calls it, and allows for the image to have a deeper meaning.[94]

To further this analysis, the denoted image will be described. In the foreground, can be seen a startled, untamed, bewildered African soldier. He appears bare-chested, wears a large nose ring, a fetish necklace and a skull hanging from his neck. He clenches his bayonet and has a very intimidating persona due to the exaggerated proportions of his lips and his hands. This attempt at showing how undisciplined and demonic Senegalese soldiers were is apparent in many other images that were shared at the time.

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[90] John Simkin *"Kladderadatsch"* Spartacus Educational, Jan. 2020. Url: https://spartacus-educational.com/ARTkladd.htm. Accessed on 17.12.2022.

[91] Barthes, op.cit, 1977, p. 154.

[92] Translated by author.

[93] Barthes, op.cit, 1977, p. 157.

[94] Ibid, p. 155.

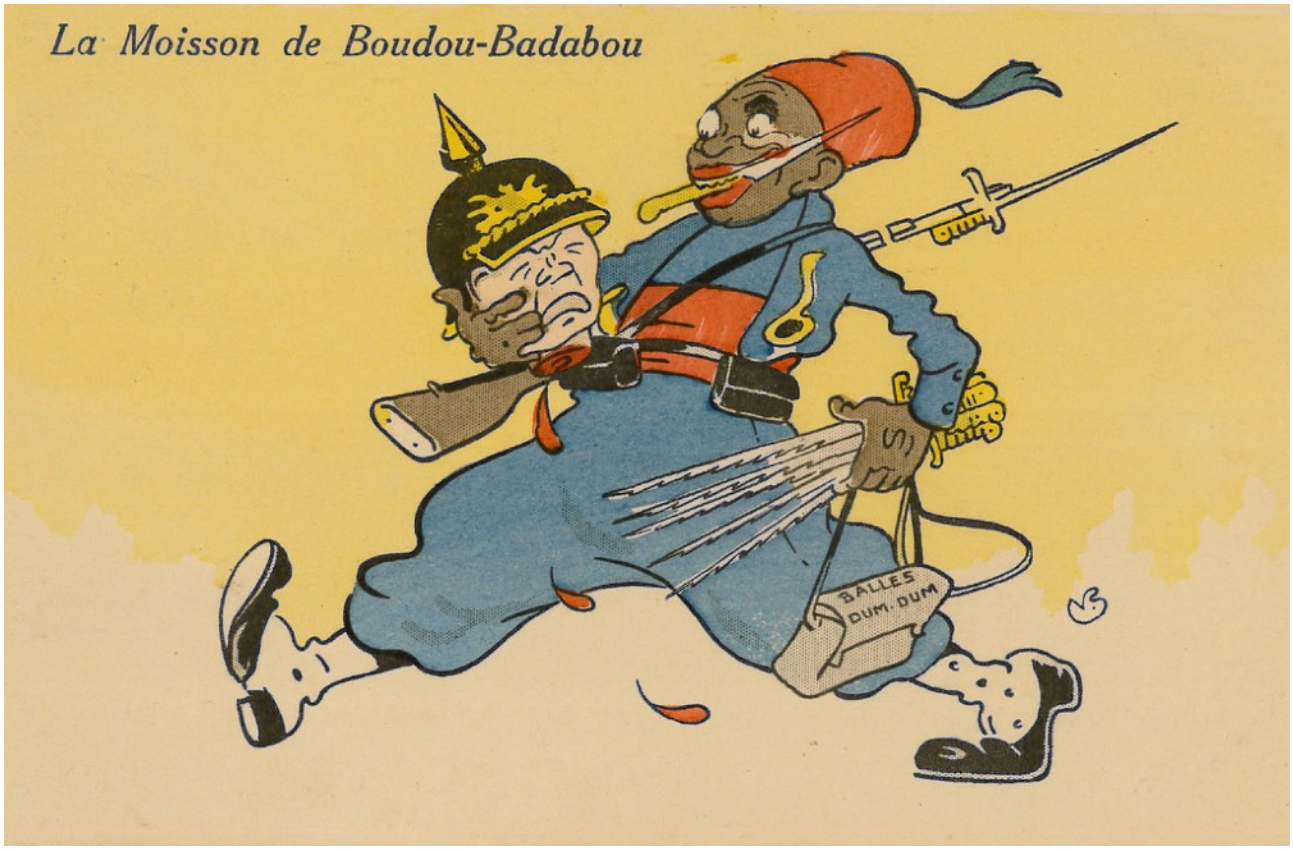

Fig. 18 'La Moisson de Boudou-Badabou' circa 1916

Fig. 19 'Brutalité, Bestialité, Égalité' 1923

Figs. 18 and 19 are examples of other atrocity-propaganda that was produced at the time. Fig. 18, 'la Moisson de Boudou-Badabou', was one of the most famous caricatures depicting Senegalese soldier savagery: it illustrates a blood-thirsty *Tirailleur* with a bloody knife clenched between his teeth, very large red lips, carrying a severed German head is his hands. Similarly, fig. 19 represents a Senegalese soldier also clenching a knife between his teeth, with an ironic version of the French slogan beneath him translating to 'brutality, bestiality, equality'[95].

The connotation, or signification of these images falls under the context in which they've been produced. By revisiting the theory of propaganda being the management of collective attitudes by the manipulation of significant symbols, it is evident that the representation of the *Tirailleur Sénégalais* has been manipulated by the Germans in order to further their political agenda.[96] The German press twisted and exaggerated ideas behind these African soldiers: "Every cultural group has its vested values […] An object toward which it is hoped to arouse hostility must be presented as a menace to as many of these values as possible."[97] Germany was taking advantage of pre-conceived racist notions the West had about African people, specifically values around physical attributes and character: as Frantz Fanon notes "For the myth of the bad nigger is part of the collective unconscious"[98]. They used these conceptions to initiate fear in the eyes of the French public and to gain support from other countries across Europe: "Propaganda may be carried on by organizations which rely almost exclusively upon it or which use it as an auxiliary implement among several means of social control"[99]. Social and political control were at the heart of Germany's agenda when creating these images.

Colonial anxieties rose as German propaganda got back to France and the public feared their own military force. Efforts to mobilise the equivocal representation of the jungle-like savage were made, and the French worked at softening the image of the *Tirailleur Sénégalais*. Social representation 'theorises the ways in which society creates models, narratives, rhetoric and arguments that

[95] Translated by author.

[96] Lasswell, op.cit, p. 627.

[97] Ibid, p. 630.

[98] Fanon, op.cit, p. 92.

[99] Lasswell, op.cit, p. 627.

interpret -make sense of- new information.'[100] During this time, France needed to change the social representation, and the narrative surrounding the *Tirailleur Sénégalais*. The French press[101] decided to soothe public anxieties with more 'congenial stereotypes'.[102] Paternalistic characterisations propagated by the advocates of *la force noire* rapidly became the norm: the savage beasts turn into the 'great child'[103], the 'noble savage'.[104] Although the new image depicts a noble and courageous soldier, its glorification derives mainly from the French leaders who were 'instrumental in bringing it about'.[105]

Fig. 20 'La France protectrice, une et indivisible'

[100] Glynis M. Breakwell *"Identity and Social Representations."* Identity Process Theory: Identity, Social Action and Social Change, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2014, pp. 118–134, p. 118.

[101] Examples include weekly magazines such as La Vie Parisienne, or satirical/caricatural journals such as La Baïonette.

[102] Joe Lunn *"Remembering the 'Tirailleurs Sénégalais' and the Great War: Oral History as a Methodology of Inclusion in French Colonial Studies."* French Colonial History, vol. 10, Michigan State University Press, 2009, pp. 125–49, p. 128.

[103] Ibid

[104] Ibid, p. 127.

[105] Ibid, p. 129.

Fig. 21 'Banana y'a bon' 1915

Fig. 22 'Un raffiné' circa 1916

Fig. 23 'Une blanche vaut deux noirs' La Vie Parisienne, 1916

Fig. 24 'Fantaisie en blanc et noir' La Vie Parisienne, circa 1916

The images above, figs. 20, 21, 22, 23 and 24 portray the new image of the *Tirailleur*, the great child. They have a similar purpose which is to persuade and reassure the French public. Control and authority are themes they tried to get across in this new propaganda campaign: the notion of the 'jungle-savage' finally being tamed, and most of all being approachable. Fig. 20 depicts the child soldiers lined up surrounding the Arc de Triomphe in Paris, being mothered by Marianne.[106] The caption reads 'to my children from the black continent: France, protector, one and indivisible'. Similarly, in figs. 23 and 24, the African soldier is shown being protected and cared for by a white female nurse, and fantasised about by a white lady. This testifies to the notion of creating a new approachable, friendly and congenial stereotype, which can also be seen in fig. 22. The most ground-breaking image of the G*rand Enfant* was the creation of fig. 21 a new advertisement campaign for the brand Banania, which I will discuss in more detail in chapter three. In the centre of the composition, is a smiling *Tirailleur Sénégalais* drinking a cup of Banania[107]. He seems very child-like and innocent, as the photo is captioned with a form of pidgin French 'it's good'. This sentence became Banania's brand slogan for decades after the production of this image, which will be further discussed in chapter three.

The French press were rather successful in changing the social representation of the *Tirailleur Sénégalais:* "If the plan is to draw out positive attitudes toward an object, it must be presented, not as a menace and an obstruction, nor as despicable or absurd, but as a protector of our values, a champion of our dreams, and a model of virtue and propriety."[108] By following this example, the West African soldier became a protector of France, an honourable symbol. Although this may seem like a positive motive, deep-rooted ideas of superiority, dominance and racism are underlying.

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[106] Marianne has been the national personification of the French Republic since the French Revolution, as a personification of liberty, equality, fraternity and reason, as well as a portrayal of the Goddess of Liberty.

[107] A popular drink among trench soldiers in World War One.

[108] Lasswell, op.cit, p. 630.

Fig. 25 'Postcard of three soldiers during a battle' circa 1916

Frantz Fanon's theory of the black dependency complex will now be used to tackle an analysis of fig. 25. The forced assimilation of these Senegalese soldiers into European culture, the primitive tag they are given, the complete destruction of their own culture has resulted in a deeply-rooted inferiority complex.[109] The caption below translates from Italian and French: 'to say that they are the ones that taught us civility!'.[110] The nature of this image is intended to be humorous, but it is evident that there is a clear underlying message here: the French claim to be responsible for the civilisation of these countries. This may subconsciously reinforce a Black person's sense of loyalty and gratitude toward their coloniser. As Fanon stated: "The feeling of inferiority of the colonised is correlative to the European's feeling of superiority."[111] This image was fabricated by the coloniser, it is merely mythical speech. Has its existence altered the psychological effect or reinforced the inferiority complex of a Black person at the time? Did it spark anger or rage? Unfortunately, this may be something we will never know. Attempts at answering these questions will be further explored in the following chapter.

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[109] Messay Kebede *"The Rehabilitation of Violence and the Violence of Rehabilitation: Fanon and Colonialism."* Journal of Black Studies, vol. 31, no. 5, 2001, pp. 539–62. *JSTOR*, http://www.jstor.org/stable/2668075. Accessed on 8.02.2023, p. 540.

[110] Translated by author.

[111] Fanon, op.cit, p. 93.

Chapter 3:
Decolonisation and the legacy of the Senegalese rifleman
(1930 to present day)

3.1. The African Renaissance (1945-1966)

"No one has the right to erase my culture, because a community without culture is a people without human beings."

– Léopold Sédar Senghor

Said explores in the introduction to *'Culture and Imperialism'* written in 1994, the idea of resistance: 'Yet it was the case nearly everywhere in the non-European world that the coming of the white man brought forth some sort of resistance'.[112] To form his argument, he discusses 'the response to Western dominance which culminated in the great movement of decolonisation all across the Third World.'[113] To give context to this following chapter, Said's theory of resistance will be used to analyse Senegal's movement towards independence. Cultural resistance was becoming widespread, and the assertion of nationalist identities, the creation of political associations and parties began to appear in efforts of achieving self-determination and national independence.[114]

The immediate aftermath of World War Two led to the reform of the political landscape in French West Africa. These reforms were introduced in 1945 to liberalise laws surrounding political life in the country. This meant that certain colonised people were able to form associations and political parties, although this included only a small portion of citizens whom were part of the university-educated *élite*. In 1946, the National Assembly passed the law *Lamine Gueye* that awarded gradual French citizenship to all the indigenous population of the French colonies. These French-educated *élite* were a portion of natives who managed to lead this nationalist narrative of an anti-colonial movement, which successfully led to the decolonisation and political independence of French West Africa.[115]

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[112] Said, op.cit, 1994. Introduction XII

[113] Ibid

[114] Ibid

[115] Tony Chafer *"The End of Empire in French West Africa : France's Successful Decolonization"* Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2002.

A protest which took place in Dakar upon the visit of French President Auriol in 1947 can be seen in figs. 26, 27, and 28 below. These photographs depict groups of Senegalese protestors dressed in polished suits and hats, which could signify their social stance as 'educated *élites*'. They are holding up posters, which share a collective linguistic message. Statements such as 'combatants and prisoners of war 1939-45 unhappy returnees', 'here we are after 300 years', 'students cry sabotage'[116] are powerful, symbolic messages. The culmination of these historical events in response to Western dominance was finally emerging.

Fig. 26 Protest in Dakar during the visit of President Auriol, 1947

Fig. 27 Protest in Dakar during the visit of President Auriol, 1947

Fig. 28 Protest in Dakar during the visit of President Auriol, 1947

[116] Translated by author.

World War Two marked a new phase in imperialism. There had been a visible shift in the balance of power between Europe and the United States. The war weakened the economies of Britain and France subjecting them to American pressure. French and British colonies now had a greater importance and value to their colonisers. For example, Algeria became a vital touchstone for trading gas and oil to France.[117]

The colonial powers, France and Britain, were faced with three major types of pressure to decolonise. Firstly, there were demands made by the new superpowers: the United States and the Soviet Union. In 1947, Winston Churchill and Franklin D. Roosevelt signed the Atlantic Charter, stating that formal colonies must respect the rights of all peoples to choose their form of government, and restore forms of sovereign rights and self-government to societies that have been deprived of them. Secondly, the French and British governments were faced with the pressure of internal lobbying favouring progress towards decolonisation. Post-war political parties such as the communist Party in France, and the Labour Party in Britain, each had a more liberal attitude towards decolonisation. Lastly, nationalist movements and anti-colonial movements were becoming increasingly prevalent. The colonies were voicing their demands for a 'radical restructuring' of power relations between themselves and the metropoles, if not complete independence.[118] It was only in January of 1959, that Senegal merged with the French Sudan to form the Federation of Mali which gained independence in June of 1960 upon agreements signed with France on April the 4th 1960.[119] From this day onwards, influential poet, politician, and cultural theorist Léopold Sédar Senghor became the very first president of Senegal.

Léopold Sédar Senghor, much like Frantz Fanon, was a significant post-colonial writer and theorist. He specialised in post-colonial literature, and became a protagonist for the *Négritude* movement. Senghor belonged to a small group of students who met in Paris in the 1930's to launch the *Négritude* movement.[120] As far as post-colonial theory goes, Senghor was the most crucial character in the process of Senegal's decolonisation and assertion of national identity.

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[117] Ibid

[118] Goldberg, op.cit, pp. 667-669.

[119] Senegal's day of Independence.

[120] Léopold Sédar Senghor *"Negritude."* Indian Literature, vol. 17, no. 1/2, 1974, pp. 269–73. JSTOR, http://www.jstor.org/stable/23329885. Accessed 30.11.2022.

In his article 'Négritude', Senghor explains that this word 'expresses the same for the whole range of values of civilisation of all black peoples in the world'.[121] He describes the meaning of the word in terms of politics, and how it represents the pattern of community mindedness. In the traditional African world, society was made up of 'concentric communities' where various groups were linked by a system of 'reciprocal integration'.[122] He then describes the word in terms of the arts: 'the values of negritude can essentially be summed up in the rhythm and the symbolic image.'[123] African works of art such as poetry, narration, painting, sculpture, music and dance are what Senghor describes as a set of 'rhythmical images'.[124] The notion of African art representing a rhythmical image, is synonymous with Senghor's concept of Jazz and modern music conquering the world.

It is with these visions Senghor had on *Négritude*, that an inspired festival celebrating black culture was created 'It is to President Léopold Sédar Senghor […] that we owe the inspiration which has led to the First World Festival of Negro Arts'[125]. This festival took take place in Dakar, the capital of Senegal, for twenty three days in April of 1966.[126] It was organised under the patronage of the Government of Senegal, of U.N.E.S.C.O and of the Société Africaine de Culture.

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[121] Ibid

[122] Ibid

[123] Ibid

[124] Ibid, p. 270.

[125] William Fagg *"The Negro Arts: preparing for the Dakar festival."* Journal of the Royal Society of Arts, vol. 114, no. 5117, 1966, pp. 409–25, p. 409.

[126] Ibid

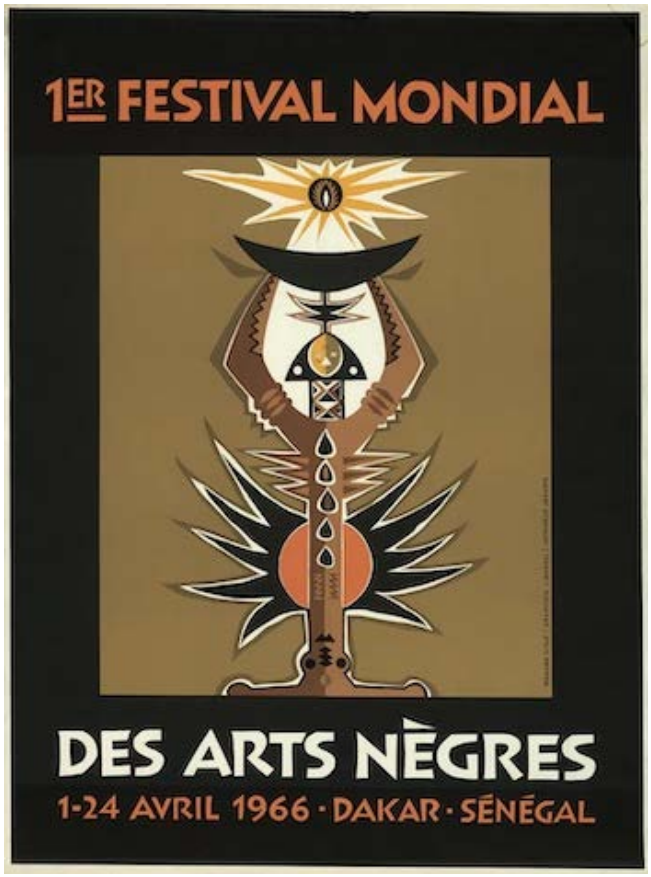

Fig 29 Poster for the First World Festival of Black Arts, 1966

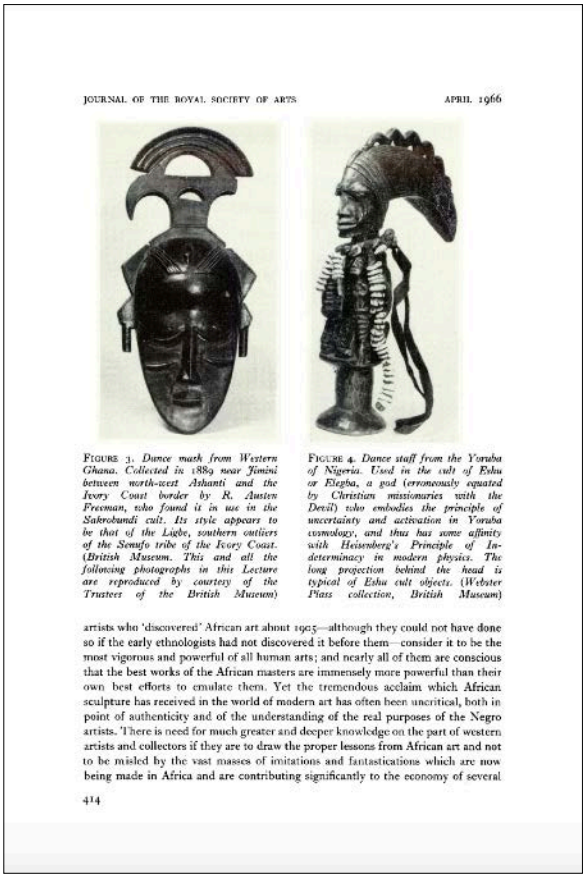
JOURNAL OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY OF ARTS APRIL 1966

FIGURE 3. *Dance mask from Western Ghana. Collected in 1889 near Jimini between north-west Ashanti and the Ivory Coast border by R. Austen Freeman, who found it in use in the Sakrobundi cult. Its style appears to be that of the Ligbe, southern outliers of the Senufo tribe of the Ivory Coast. (British Museum. This and all the following photographs in this Lecture are reproduced by courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum)*

FIGURE 4. *Dance staff from the Yoruba of Nigeria. Used in the cult of Eshu or Elegba, a god (erroneously equated by Christian missionaries with the Devil) who embodies the principle of uncertainty and activation in Yoruba cosmology, and thus has some affinity with Heisenberg's Principle of Indeterminacy in modern physics. The long projection behind the head is typical of Eshu cult objects. (Webster Plass collection, British Museum)*

artists who 'discovered' African art about 1905—although they could not have done so if the early ethnologists had not discovered it before them—consider it to be the most vigorous and powerful of all human arts; and nearly all of them are conscious that the best works of the African masters are immensely more powerful than their own best efforts to emulate them. Yet the tremendous acclaim which African sculpture has received in the world of modern art has often been uncritical, both in point of authenticity and of the understanding of the real purposes of the Negro artists. There is need for much greater and deeper knowledge on the part of western artists and collectors if they are to draw the proper lessons from African art and not to be misled by the vast masses of imitations and fantasticitations which are now being made in Africa and are contributing significantly to the economy of several

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Fig 30 Page 414 of festival programme, 1966

The principal aims of this festival were to promote the appreciation of Africa's contribution to world civilisation, enable black people to travel across the world to reconnect with their original sources, to value the contribution African art had on modern day trends and thinking, and an opportunity for African artists to network with international elites.[127] In other words, the festival was created to display and celebrate a range of different African cultures. The visual identity for the festival, as seen in fig. 29 placed a large emphasis on celebrating tribal art. The programme for the festival (see fig. 30) also discusses these tribal sculptures in detail along with their places of origin. According to the work of various ethnologists, African art is an art of belief 'it is the translation into sculptural form of their tribal belief.'[128] Art, religion and society are completely integrated, art is not a separate concept or activity.[129] Countries in Africa create these objects to represent their national and tribal

[127] Philippe Scipion *"New Developments in French-Speaking Africa."* Civilisations, vol. 16, no. 2, 1966, pp. 253–66. *JSTOR*, http://www.jstor.org/stable/41230955. Accessed on 9.02.2023.

[128] Fagg, op.cit, p. 416.

[129] Ibid

identity. Placing these objects in the limelight to represent their respective countries is a form of national celebration and cultural resistance. This festival was a driving force in letting African countries reclaim their identity and dis-associate themselves from any European associations; it marked the beginning of Africa decolonising itself from the West.[130]

[130] Kaspin, op.cit, p. 2.

3.2. Reclaiming cultural heritage

Other forms of cultural resistance have taken place since Léopold Sédar Senghor's presidential reign. Said states that cultural resistance is formed through the 'rediscovery and repatriation of what had been suppressed in the natives' past by the process of imperialism.'[131] He believed that Africans who were decolonising found it necessary to reimagine an Africa relinquished of its imperial past.[132] This is why, in recent years, West Africans are evaluating the continuing presence of the French army on their territories.[133]

The shift in this geo-political context has highlighted the vast amounts of objects of African heritage stored in European museums.[134] An agency emerged around the reclamation of this heritage, and amidst a heated discussion around this topic, French president Emmanuel Macron issued a report restituting several objects held in French museums back to Africa in 2018.[135] As a result, a new museum formed in Dakar, Senegal, named 'The Museum of Black Civilisations'.[136] This museum displays artefacts that have been stored in France and other European countries for centuries (see figs. 31, 32 and 33).

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[131] Said, op.cit, 1994, p. 210.

[132] Ibid

[133] Ferdinand De Jong *"Senegal is decolonising its heritage, and in the process reclaiming its future"*, The Conversation, 18.03.2022. Url: https://theconversation.com/senegal-is-decolonising-its-heritage-and-in-the-process-reclaiming-its-future-182448. Accessed on 9.02.2023.

[134] Ibid

[135] Ibid

[136] Amanda Thomas-Johnson *"Museum of Black Civilisations aims to 'decolonise knowledge'"*, Aljazeera, 5.12.1018. Url: https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2018/12/5/museum-of-black-civilisations-aims-to-decolonise-knowledge. Accessed on 07.02.2023.

Fig. 31 A bronze from Benin depicting the warrior king Oba Ewuare the Great in his war costume, 1440.

Fig. 32 A Benin bronze that originated in a territory that's part of Nigeria today.

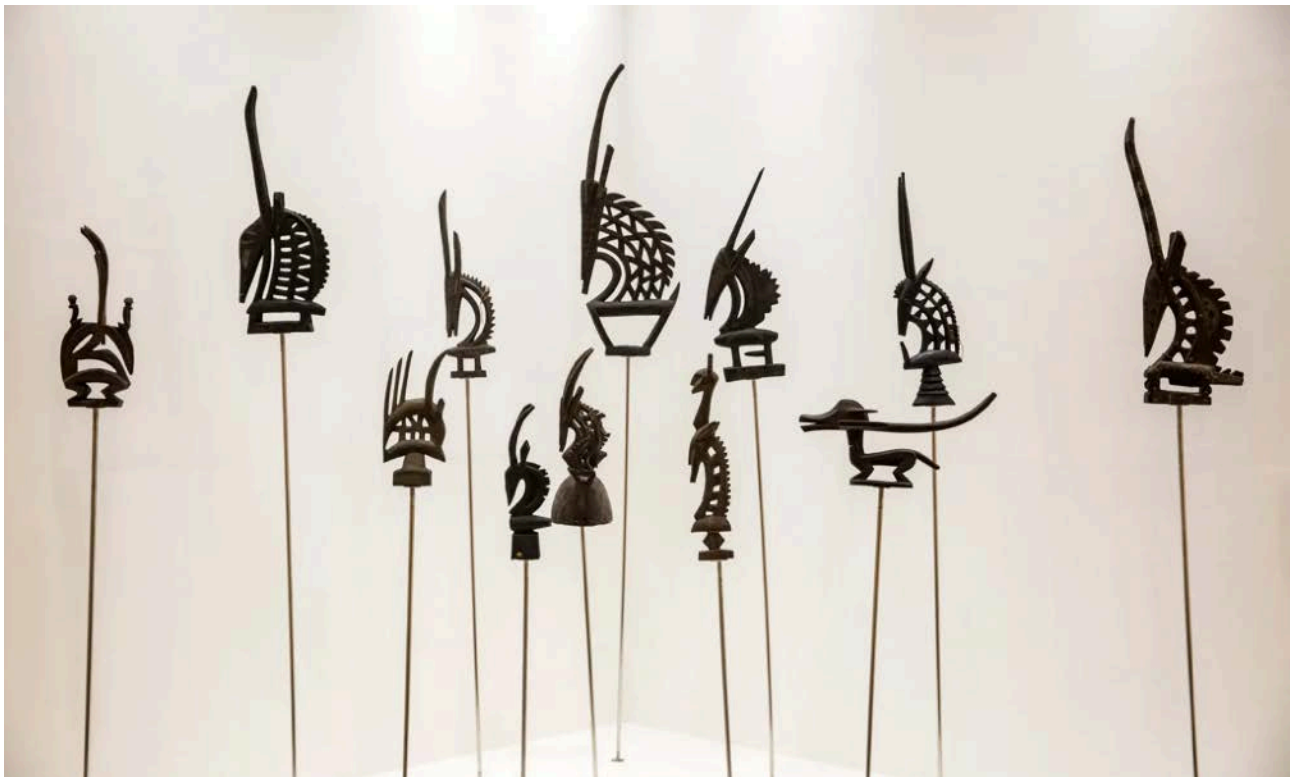

Fig. 33 19th-century wooden Bambara masks from Mali at the new Museum of Black Civilisations.

Other examples of displayed artefacts include works from modern-day artists. Fig. 34 shows an example of a display by a Senegalese fashion designer named Oumou Sy.[137]

Fig. 34 "The Forest of Africa Across the Universe", Oumou Sy.

[137] Dionne Searcey *"Senegal's Museum of Black Civilizations Welcomes Some Treasures Home"* The New York Times, 15.01.2019. Url: https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/15/arts/design/museum-of-black-civilizations-restitution-senegal-macron.html. Accessed on 09.02.2023.

Museums do not play an exclusive role in the cultural decolonisation of Africa- monuments have an equal amount of significance. Historical sites such as the House of Slaves on Gorée Island was listed as a World Heritage site in 1978.[138] Since then, the monument has been placed on the map and it is now completely invulnerable. Through time, this site has been visited by many leading figures, such as George Bush, Barack and Michelle Obama, whom described it as an evil slave fortress, comparing it to Nazi concentration camps (see fig. 36).[139]

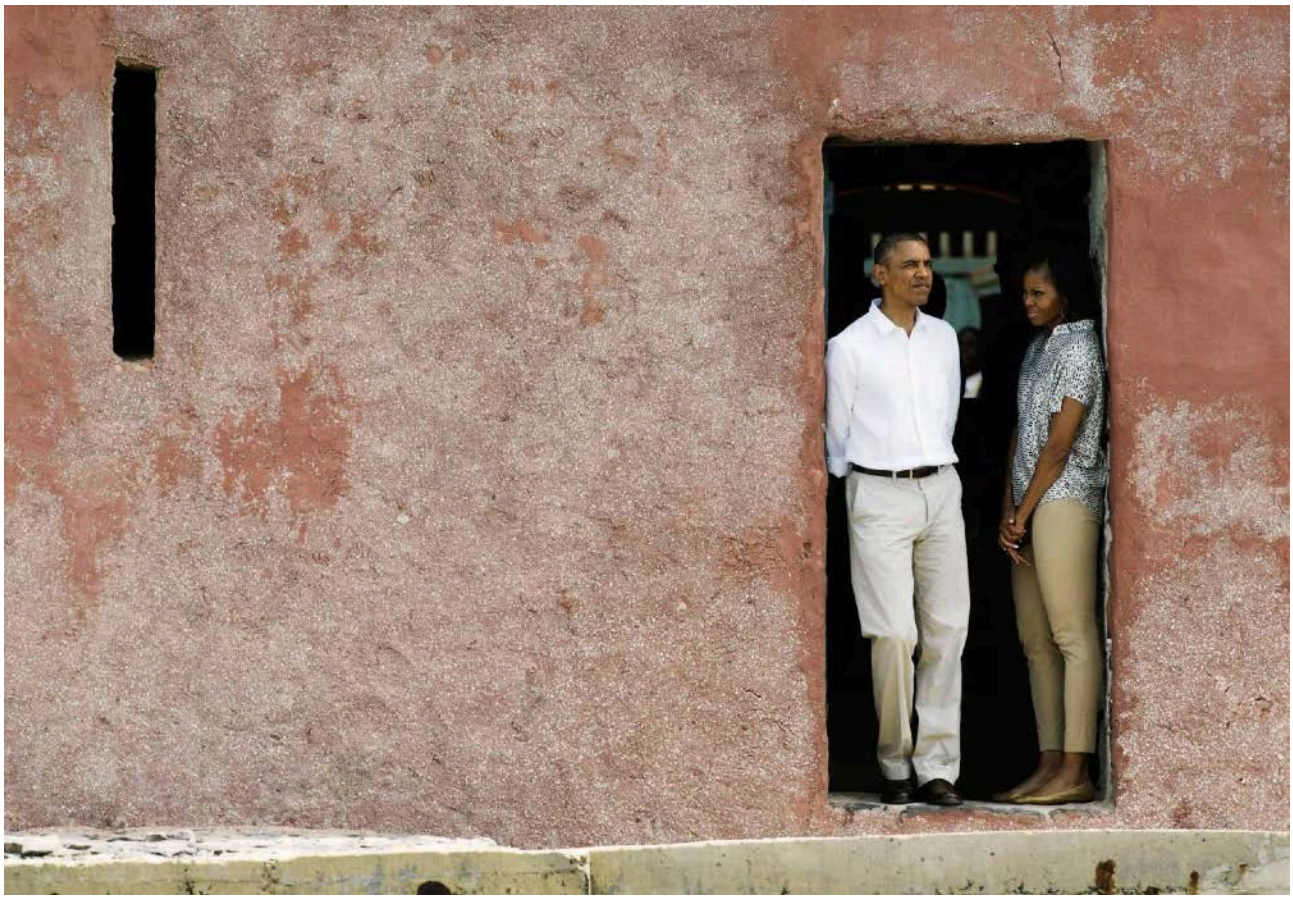

Fig. 35 Barack and Michelle Obama visit the House of Slaves, Dakar, 2013.

Today, this site serves as a location of pilgrimage for people of African descent, and atonement for white Europeans.[140] As Said explains, Africans "bear their past within them- as scars of humiliating

[138] De Jong, op.cit

[139] Paul Harris *"Obama deeply moved by 'evil' slave fortress"* The Guardian, 12.07.2009. Url: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2009/jul/12/barack-obama. Accessed on 10.02.2023.

[140] De Jong, op.cit

wounds”[141]. This house acts as an important reminder of what their ancestors endured, it acts as a physical, long-standing scar.

Another important monument that acts as a current symbol of Senegalese resistance, is the statue of Demba and Dupont.[142] This monument was placed in Dakar in 1923 as a commemoration of African military contribution made to France during World War One. The two brothers, Demba and Dupont, were imagined to have fought together in the French army.[143] The Senegalese government removed it after the country gained its independence, but it was reinstated in 2004 during the commemoration of the struggle against Nazi rule.[144]

Fig. 36 Demba and Dupont, Dakar, Senegal.

[141] Said, op.cit, 1994, p. 212.

[142] De Jong, op.cit

[143] Ibid

[144] Ibid

This monument played a large role in African cultural resistance, whereby Senegalese natives wanted to achieve recognition for their role in the liberation of Europe during World War One. They are fighting for it on the same territory which was once ruled by a consciousness that assumed a role of superiority.[145] Museums and monuments play a large role in the relationship between Senegal and France, or Africa and Europe. Africa is still in the process of reclaiming its cultural heritage, which is still an on-going and incomplete project of decolonisation.

[145] Said, op.cit, 1994, p. 210.

3.2. Banania: a controversial brand

"I will tear the Banania smile off every wall in France."[146]

–Léopold Sédar Senghor, *'Hosties noires',* 1948

There are brands today that exist as anchors to the past. They represent Western ignorance and racist attitudes, and act as a physical reminder of the hardships and pain that colonised people were submitted to. They remind us of the power and hegemony the West still has over their former colonies today. They also represent cultural meaning through language: a conveyor of messages through systems of signs and symbols.[147] Language is a form of 'media', through which thoughts, ideas and feelings are represented in a culture.[148] American brand Aunt Jemima, the familiar iconography associated with the Jim Crow-era perceptions of Black women, and Uncle Ben's which dates back to 1946 equally rooted in Crow's perceptions of a Black servant still exist today, but have made efforts to re-brand themselves to be more progressive. These brands and their original racist natures reinforce stereotypes and myths which are part of the 'collective unconscious'[149] of the Western world: "photography, cinema, reporting, sport, shows, publicity, all these can serve as a support to mythical speech."[150] I will now be analysing the famous French brand Banania, which has dealt with vast amounts of backlash by writers and theorists such as Frantz Fanon and Léopold Sédar Senghor.

During the early stages of World War One, the *Tirailleurs Sénégalais* were commodified through the advertising campaign of Banania.[151] Banania was a hot drink made from banana flour, cereal, sugar and cacao, and was discovered by journalist named Pierre Lardet on his visit to Nicaragua.[152]

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[146] Senghor, op.cit, 1949.

[147] Stuart Hall *"Representation Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices"* The Open University, Milton Keynes, 1997, p. 1.

[148] Ibid

[149] Fanon, op.cit, p. 108.

[150] Barthes, op.cit, 1972, p. 108.

[151] Laura Rice *"African Conscripts/European Conflicts: Race, Memory, and the Lessons of War."* Cultural Critique, no. 45, 2000, pp. 109–49. *JSTOR*, https://doi.org/10.2307/1354369. Accessed 5.12.2022, p. 121.

[152] Ibid

Fig. 37 First poster for Banania, 1915.

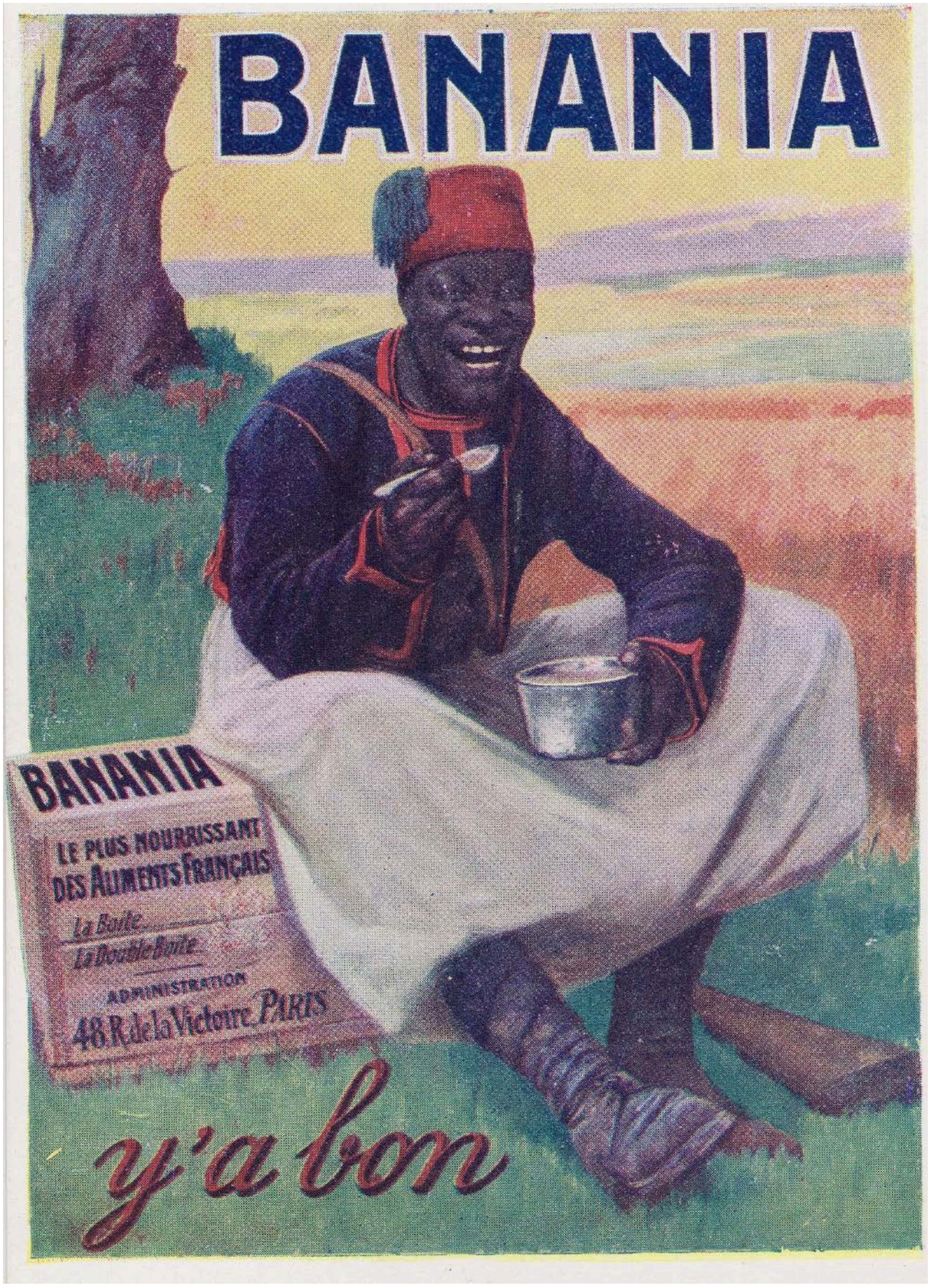

Fig. 38 Second poster for Banania, 1915.

Above in fig. 38 is a poster that served as the first advertising campaign for Banania in 1915. It depicts an Antillean woman surrounded by musa, as the drink pours out of her hands along with the words 'vigour' 'health' 'energy' and 'strength'.[153] This image was quickly dropped and replaced with the poster in fig. 39: the famous and iconic campaign depicting the new *Tirailleur Sénégalais*, the 'great child'.[154] This was done in efforts to mobilise the equivocal representation of the jungle-like savage in the early stages of World War One, as previously stated in chapter two. This image proves to be problematic firstly through its caricatural nature: the exaggerated features of the soldiers physical appearance such as his large hands and lips, and his innocent grin. Arthur Maurice and Frederick Cooper wrote in their book *'The History of the Nineteenth Century in Caricature'* in 1904*:* "What appeals to the public, however, is a coarser type, a gross exaggeration of prominent features, a wilful distortion, resulting in ridicule or glorification."[155] In this instance, this notion of an intended exaggeration or distortion of a subject's features to create a sense of ridicule or glorification is valid in both senses. The ultimate goal here was to create an inferior stereotype of the *Tirailleur Sénégalais* to make him seem more approachable and loyal, in efforts to soothe the French colonial anxieties that were prevalent at the time. As Maurice and Cooper stated, a caricature's success depends upon its timeliness. The goal of this caricature was not to reflect public opinion, but to guide it.[156] In a second sense, the controversy surrounding this preliminary advertisement derived from its slogan 'Y'a bon!'. This sentence mimicked the *Tirailleur*'s form of pidgin French, translating loosely to 'It good'.[157] The combination of this familiar image and derogative slogan created the new image of the *Tirailleur Sénégalais* that we all know today: the *Grand Enfant*.[158] As Maurice and Cooper explained 'Oftentimes the caricature degenerates into a mere symbol', which is precisely what Banania did by reducing this man, and this nation down to a simple, belittling symbol.

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[153] Translated by author.

[154] Joe Lunn, op.cit, p. 128.

[155] Arthur Bartlett Maurice and Frederic Taber Cooper *"The History Of The Nineteenth Century in Caricature"* London, Grant Richards, 1904.

[156] Ibid

[157] Rice, op.cit, p. 121.

[158] This French term translates in English to 'The Big Child'.

Fig. 39 Banania tin cans.

Fig. 40 Banania tin can.

Fig. 41 Banania thermometer.

The symbol of the Banania soldier became part of the 'French rhetoric about the mentality of the colonised in black Africa'.[159] It was commodified and produced at a large scale, covering a large variety of ephemera, from tin cans to thermometers (as seen in fig. 39, 40, and 41), to cards that are still sold as vintage postcards across France today (see fig. 42).

[159] Rice, op.cit, p. 121.

Fig. 42 Vintage postcards on sale near the Base du Mont Saint-Michel, Normandy.

Over the years, Banania has undertaken many re-brands: so many, that a large library of Banania images exists to be looked at and collected today. The most drastic re-brand was done in 1977, when Banania decided to remove the 'y'a bon' slogan.

Fig. 43 Timeline of Banania re-brands.

As can be seen in fig. 43 above, 1977 was also the year where the brand decided to change its mascot to a grinning child-like face. They kept the symbol of the *Tirailleur Sénégalais* but made it more discreet- it was no longer the main image of the brand. Between 1977 and 1984, the symbol was modified and finally reduced down to the simplicity of the soldier's red hat, incorporated into the logotype. It was in 1987 where they completely removed any symbol relevant to the West African soldier, which was a step forward in erasing all racist iconography that was historically associated with the brand. However, in 1999, Banania seemed to have brought back the iconic image of the *Grand Enfant*. It was almost identical to the version created in 1959: the very dark skin, the exaggerated red lips and the symbolic red hat.

In 2003, the *Collectif des Antillais, Guyanais et Réunionnais*, which consisted of 40 000 members claimed 'y'a bon' as racist.[160] They forced the brand to give up its copyrights to the slogan, even though it hadn't been in use since 1977. This would've prevented them from using it again,

[160] Anonymous, *"Y'a bon Banania: Le Mrap réclame en appel le respect d'un accord"* 20minutes, 24.03.2011. Url: https://www.20minutes.fr/societe/693452-20110324-societe-y-bon-banania-mrap-reclame-appel-respect-accord. Accessed on 09.02.2023.

following the trend of reintroducing the racist mascot. Following this occurrence, they rebranded again in 2004.

Fig. 44 Banania, 2004.

Fig. 45 Banania, 2023.

As seen in fig. 44, Banania decided to introduce what they called the Senegalese rifleman's grandson- once again, a representation reminiscent to the older versions they created of the soldier. The racist iconography associated with the brand was dulled over-time, and Banania no longer uses stereotypical features to represent the *Tirailleur* today (seen in fig. 45).

As a French colonial brand, Banania is still assuming its power over Senegal: "meanings are inevitably implicated in relations of power- especially between those who are doing the exhibiting and those who are being exhibited".[161] The *Tirailleur Sénégalais* was reduced down to a

[161] Hall, op.cit, p. 8.

commodified symbol, and produced at a large-scale, likely to have been consumed by many individuals across the world. It has become part of the Western collective unconscious, as such. It is part of the many images that fuel the French tourism industry today, if we refer back to fig. 42. Banania was ultimately treating the West African soldier as 'an object in the midst of other objects'- a notion Frantz Fanon feels is relevant to his own sense of identity.[162] The soldier is portrayed as 'happy', which in a sense erases him of his entire culture and narrative. The symbol of the Senegalese soldier, the 'grinning Banania *tirailleur*'[163] disguises the horrors, the chilling experiences, the discrimination and racism they suffered for centuries.[164] This is why the act of Banania using this mascot today is still very problematic and controversial. It acts as an anchor to the past, as a constant reminder of the hardships the Senegalese nation went through, the racial stereotyping and imperialist culture. Not only does the use of the brand refer back to racist attitudes of the past, it also draws attention to those of the present.

[162] Fanon, op.cit, p. 89.

[163] Rice, op.cit, p. 122.

[164] Ibid

Conclusion

"The conquest of the earth, which mostly means the taking it away from those who have a different complexion or slightly flatter noses than ourselves, is not a pretty thing when you look into it too much." [165]

– Joseph Conrad, *'Heart of Darkness'* (1899)

Western imagery and representations of the African continent have been circulating around the world for centuries, in the form of newspaper and magazine covers, postcards, posters, and so on. This racist imagery staggeringly circulates in the form of brands that still exist today. Ambiguous beliefs about West Africans began to appear, dating back to the slave trade era that took place in Senegal during the 18th and 19th century. Throughout important periods of the European colonisation of Africa, myths and beliefs have changed to suit Western imperialistic motives. This thesis concludes that Africa, or the so-called image-Africa, was almost a European invention. Over time, the West has created a strong sense of duality and contrast between itself and Africa. This dialectical relationship was created by European powers to rationalise the annexation, exploitation and complete colonisation of most of the African continent. This duality was emphasised through visual ephemera and literature that was circulating across the European continent all throughout the 18th, 19th and 20th century.

Unfortunately, remains of this imagery still linger today. The *Tirailleur Sénégalais*, a glorified Senegalese soldier who served in the French army during the World War One and Two, has been widely commodified over the last century. Hundreds of images of the *Tirailleur* were created during this time, while their signifiers were distorted and amplified to benefit imperialistic competition and war tactics between Western powers. The example this thesis explores is the use of propaganda between France and Germany during World War One, and how narratives and myths were created and changed to influence the public opinion of the French Colonial Army and their *Tiralleurs Sénégalais*. The constant contortion of these meanings acts as a metaphor for how Senegalese natives were tampered with for centuries, in horrifying ways. This is why the commodification of

[165] Joseph Conrad *"Heart of Darkness"* Charlottesville, Va, University of Virginia Library, 1996, p. 63.

the *Tirailleur Sénégalais*, a symbol for French colonialism in Senegal, is seen as being problematic in Banania, a brand that uses it as iconography today.

An interesting direction that would enrich this thesis could include research on the personal experiences and negative effects of the colonisation of their motherland West Africans were, and still are succumbed to. As Westerners, we are used to consuming information about Africa through

a Western lens. It would be interesting to explore our own perceptions in contrast to African perceptions about themselves. This would provide an insightful perspective on the psychological effects our misrepresentation of Africa has had, and still has, on African people. This thesis dabbled in this idea using Frantz Fanon's theory of the Black dependency complex- but Fanon explores this theory as a whole, and doesn't specifically discuss the direct effects of racist imagery. Certain questions include: how were these images of the *Tirailleur Sénégalais* received in Senegal? How were they circulated? Were the natives even aware of the existence of these images at the time of their production? Another intriguing approach would be to interview Senegalese natives and descendants on how they react to present racist imagery (an example being the brand Banania). How do they feel about the existence of this brand? Do they find it offensive or problematic? Are they aware of what this brand represents?

Debates around the topic of European colonialism have recently risen in popularity. As political decolonisation was achieved for many African countries decades ago, cultural decolonisation is now becoming a more prevalent issue. As 95% of African heritage is held outside of Africa, many demands have been made by natives addressing European museums to send back these artefacts to their countries of origin.[166] This demonstrates that the voices of minorities are now louder than ever, Africans are rebelling against Western hegemony, and are progressively reclaiming their heritage. An example of this is the Museum of Black Civilisations in Dakar, Senegal, that demanded French museums to send them back their native artefacts, as mentioned in chapter 3. Emmanuel Macron signed a report in 2018 to restitute many African artefacts back to this new museum in

[166] Johnson, op.cit

Dakar. Unfortunately, not all countries are taking part in this- Britain have explained that there is a law named the British Museum Act 1963 that forbids them to send any looted objects back to their countries of origin.[167] This confirms Said's notion of Europe having a superiority complex and a sense of entitlement, which evidently, still applies today.

Another way Europeans still assume dominance over Africa is demonstrated in the French hot-chocolate brand, Banania. The big debate around this brand considers if its present use of the icon of the *Tirailleur Sénégalais* is or isn't objectively racist. It has re-branded many times and erased much of its racial stereotyping and iconography over the last few decades. Although the image itself isn't directly racist anymore, the meaning behind it bears a devastating reality. When a country suffers from colonisation, its entire identity is erased. It is a difficult concept to grasp when one has never been affected by it. What may seem like an innocent, childish cartoon of a soldier who used to enjoy this hot-chocolate in the trenches of World War One, is actually a reminder of everything Senegal has lost and suffered due to French colonisation. They lost thousands of men, women and children, their culture and objects were stolen from them, lies and myths were created to demean them and justify these terrible acts committed against them. The simple icon of this Senegalese soldier, that was forced into serving the French army in World War One, bears a heavy and painful past. Its existence in French popular culture and supermarkets today, acts as a visual echo of the unjustified French colonisation of Senegal, and the tragic European colonisation of Africa.

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[167] Eddy Frankel *"Should London museums return their stolen colonial artefacts?"*, Time Out, 11.11.2022. Url: https://www.timeout.com/london/art/should-london-museums-return-their-stolen-colonial-artefacts#:~:text=There's%20literally%20a%20British%20law,please%20have%20this%20artefact%20back%3F. Accessed on 12.02.2023.

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