Preface

1. See Goody 1967; for a recent and thoughtful study of the term Lobi and Lobi arts, see Gundlach 2019.
2. For additional information about Mapping Senufo, see Gagliardi and Huggett 2017; Gagliardi 2020a; Gagliardi and Petridis 2021.

Note on Names

1. For an analysis of how the discipline of geography has, in recent decades, intersected with the United States government’s intelligence community and military initiatives, including an assessment of activities of the NGA based on limited available data, see Crampton et al. 2014. The authors characterize the NGA as “the country’s premier geographical intelligence agency” (2014, 196) and assert that its “primary mission is combat support of military operations” (2014, 201). See also Crampton 2015.


5. See Gagliardi 2014, 51.

Introduction


2. Arnold Rubin’s essay appeared in print thirteen years after William Seitz investigated assemblage in twentieth-century European and Euro-American art practices through the contentious 1961 exhibition, The Art of Assemblage, at New York’s Museum of Modern Art (Seitz 1961). Seitz’s 1961 exhibition may have contributed to Rubin’s focus on accumulation in African arts. Rubin does not cite Seitz in his essay. However, Rubin acknowledges that his essay responds to the critique of Africanist art historians for “having abandoned traditional art historical and critical perspectives in favor of the gathering and organization of masses of minutely particularized behavioral information.” Rubin adds, “These observations impressed me as timely and cogent, and as posing a challenge to which the present essay is intended as a response” (1974, 6). Thus, in thinking about the accumulative nature of African arts, Rubin may have sought to apply concepts and perspectives prevalent in discussions of arts from other parts of the world to African arts.

3. I thank Joseph Moore for the recommendation to read Michael Taussig’s Defacement: Public Secrecy and the Labor of the Negative (1999) during a conversation about my research when I was in the early stages of preparing this manuscript. I also thank C. Jean Campbell as well as students in several of my undergraduate and graduate seminars for reading the book and discussing it with me.

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4. Africanist art historians and other art enthusiasts variously use the terms *traditional*, *historical*, or *classical* to describe certain works, yet they also recognize the imperfectness of the terms. Susan Vogel (2005, 15) addresses the uneasy distinction between African arts characterized as traditional or classical and arts regarded as contemporary. Power association arts typically fall in the former category, even though people in West Africa continue to create and maintain them in conjunction with the organizations’ activities. The distinctions between so-called historical or classical arts and contemporary arts seem to relate more to whether makers work in studios or live in urban centers and whether or how they intersect with the international art market and global contemporary art circuits. Vogel’s comments follow from a long-standing discussion about the term *tradition* in relation to the arts. Twelve years before Vogel published her essay, Suzanne Preston Blier wrote, “‘Custom’ and ‘tradition’ are words that one hears frequently in the context of African societies and art. African art texts and label captions proclaim proudly that this or that work is ‘traditional,’ conveying through this means a sense of formal or iconologic continuity with some remote and ‘idyllic’ past” (1993, 152). Blier also explained, “Like fetish and magic, custom (and tradition) frequently denote a fictive frame, a means of legitimization for things defined as much or more by fancy (yearnings, recollection) as by fact” (1993, 153). See also Lamp 1999; Doris 2011, 3-34.

5. Other missionaries reportedly disassembled power objects. For example, historian Nanina Guyer refers to mid-twentieth-century missionaries in Sierra Leone who “[took] magic substances apart in public” (2018, 34) as part of their efforts to diminish the prestige and authority of local organizations.

6. For additional information about the expedition, see, for example, Griaule et al. 2015.

7. For example, see Henry 1910; Zeltner 1910; Monteil 1924; Tauxier 1927; Travélé 1929; Labouret 1934; Dieterlen 1951; Zahan 1960; Dieterlen and Cissé 1972; Colleyn and Jonckers 1983; McNaughton 1988, 2001; Brett-Smith 1994, 1997; Aden 2003. Compare Colleyn 2009a, 2009b. See also Eberhard et al. 2020. While *Bamana* and *Mande* are terms used to name a language group and language family, the terms may not always signal linguistic distinctions.


9. Investigation of seemingly established facts and sources to support them requires constant attention in any field. In a March 2019 presentation on the late
nineteenth- and early twentieth-century artist Khalil Saleeby, anthropologist Kirsten Scheid observed a similar phenomenon in writings about the artist. Scheid explains, “ Assertions [about Saleeby] that had particular weight in relation to specific socially shared issues, once lifted and losing all attribution of authorship, become hallowed fact but utterly hollowed of meaning.” Scheid adds, “We can only defer to [such assertions] because they are both too vague to make sense and too loose from context to be contestable” (Scheid 2019; emphasis in the original presentation text). Scheid cautions against unquestioning acceptance of oft-repeated statements about the artist. She urges scholars to situate information about the artist within particular contexts and to trace the spread of ideas even when earlier authors do not cite their sources. Similar attention to repetition and the genealogy of ideas may benefit scholarship on topics beyond the study of Saleeby. I thank Scheid for sharing with me a copy of her presentation text. See also the note in chapter two about Joseph Henry’s, Charles Monteil’s, and Louis Tauxier’s statements about human remains in power objects.


11. For studies of how certain practices, including efforts to harness potent materials and energies in order to effect change, intersect with political and economic activities in broader spheres, see, for example, Geschiere 1997; Piot 1999; Ferme 2001.

12. Fiona Siegenthaler, Ugochukwu-Smooth C. Nzewi, and Nadine Siegert (2018) consider complex rural-urban exchanges as well as blurred boundaries between spaces variously considered rural and urban in their introduction to a collection of articles published in *Critical Interventions*. The authors assert that scholars of African arts have in recent decades tended to “[focus] attention on the remit of the urban context without attending to how the rural is imbricated in the urban, in the production of new art forms, as well as maintaining older artistic traditions” (Siegenthaler et al. 2018, 243). My research on power association chapters based in rural communities of western Burkina Faso shows sustained and significant involvement of urban dwellers in rural practices, further demonstrating entanglements between areas scholars once approached as separate.

13. For example, see Dieterlen 1951; Zahan 1960, 1974, 1980; Dieterlen and Cissé 1972.


17. In its definition of village, National Geographic Encyclopedia explains, “Some geographers specifically define a village as having between 500 and 2500 inhabitants.” By this measure, Sokouraba still would not be a village. National Geographic Encyclopedia’s definition of village also refers to a range of criteria for distinguishing villages from other types of settlements. See National Geographic Encyclopedia, “Village,” accessed December 17, 2018, https://www.nationalgeographic.org/encyclopedia/village/.


19. Linguists situate Sicité and Dzuungoo in two different language families. SIL International classifies Sicité as a dialect of the Suppyire-Sicité language, one of more than a dozen Senufo languages that are part of the larger Gur-language family. People I met in western Burkina Faso also told me there are different versions of Sicité such that the form of Sicité common in Sokouraba is distinguishable from the form of Sicité used in other towns. Dzuungoo, like Bamanakan and Jula, a regional lingua franca, is part of the Mande-language family. SIL International considers the Mande-language family as distinct from the Gur-language family (Eberhard et al. 2020). The terms Tagwara and Tagwa refer to the region encompassing communities of Sicité speakers and also to Sicité speakers in the region (see Diamitani 1999, 48–54; Bangali 2002, 49–51). The terms differ from Tagwana, the word used to name another Senufo language.

20. For a discussion of how nineteenth-century efforts to map races reflected evolutionary theories of the time and informed twentieth-century scholarly pursuits, see Crampton 2013.

21. Steven Nelson, chair of my dissertation committee, reflects on some of his core scholarly commitments in an episode of In the Foreground: Conversations on Art & Writing, a podcast produced by Caro Fowler of the Research & Academic Program at the Clark Art Institute in Williamstown, Massachusetts (Nelson 2020). He explains that in his own research, he has sought to show the ways in which scholarly theories do and do not relate to real-world experiences, to ask probing questions, to listen to women when other observers may have focused only on the voices of men, to write accessible narratives that account for his own position as researcher-writer, and to consider instances when distinguishing between fact and fiction may detract from assessing the ways in which a particular story may have persuasive power. Nelson’s concerns coincide with many of my own. I have not yet been able to determine the extent to which I brought the concerns to my exchanges with Nelson, who helped me think about a shared set of commitments as

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I advanced my research goals, and the extent to which Nelson’s concerns informed my own.

22. For historiographic studies of the field of African art history from different perspectives, see, for example, Adams 1989; Petridis 2001; Biro 2018; Monroe 2019.

23. Anthropologist Vincent Crapanzano (2003, 8) asserts, “We have a propensity to spatialize the temporal rather than temporalize the spatial.” The tenacity of the “one tribe–one style” model may reflect such a tendency. I thank Allen F. Roberts for directing my attention to Crapanzano’s book.

24. Scholars of African arts had previously debated coverage of the continent versus depth of study in a particular area. For example, see Drewal 1990. See also Visonà 2010, 8.


27. See also Drewal 1990, 46; Vogel 1999, 49, 94fn12. Monographs devoted to arts recognized as Yoruba include Drewal and Drewal 1983; Drewal 1992; Lawal 1996, 2012; Doris 2011; Abiodun 2014; Willis 2018.

28. Sara Ahmed draws attention to problematic biases and power dynamics that common citational practices have entailed. I thank Scheid for drawing my attention to Ahmed’s concept of a “citational relational” and for discussing the concept with me. See also Scheid 2017.

29. During her February 1, 2018, MAP IT Little Dots, Big Ideas lecture “Design for Humanistic Inquiry” at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia, Nicole Coleman reflected on choices scholars make that result in the abandonment of information or efforts to marshal it into the future. She specifically addressed choices digital humanists make about what data to study and how to study them in the digital age. She said, “not only are we shaping the historical record with every decision we make today about what we keep and what we discard, [but] we may shut ourselves off from the possibility of engaging with the past if we do not act to influence the technologies that will help us access it.” Decisions about vocabularies and frameworks that scholars of African arts make now will shape future study.

30. Language has served as an important factor in determining the identity of a particular cultural or ethnic group as well as interconnections among groups (compare Gundlach 2019, 2n7). Yet scholars, including linguists, are increasingly

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recognizing the colonial construction of language groups (e.g., Fabian 1986; Blommaert 2008; Irvine 2008). See also Mahir Saul’s observations and hypotheses regarding languages in western Burkina Faso and the “heterogeneity of the category Jula” in a discussion of Mande languages sent to the Mande Studies Association Listserv on January 4, 2019.

31. A prayer card for the missionary identifies him as Rév. Père Germain Nadal. The card lists the date of his birth as March 11, 1900, and the date of his death in Bobo-Dioulasso as January 31, 1962 (François Jaquinod, interview by the author, June 24, 2007). Nadal was reportedly born in Quins, France. See also “Le Père Germain Nadal,” in Notices Nécrologiques XIII, 229–234, consulted at the Archives des Missionnaires d’Afrique, Rome, Italy. This information updates a transcription error in my dissertation identifying the year of Nadal’s death as one year later (Gagliardi 2010, 311).

32. According to François Jaquinod, most Catholic missionaries working at the Catholic mission in Bobo-Dioulasso wrote notes in diaries that they subsequently sent to Rome (François Jaquinod, interview by the author, June 15, 2007).

33. The record for the photograph (FR ANOM 30Fi5/14) was accessed through the Archives nationales d’outre-mer (ANOM) Instruments de recherche en ligne (IREL) Base Ulysse on May 13, 2018, http://anom.archivesnationales.culture.gouv.fr/ulysses/. I also consulted the physical document at ANOM on 28 July 2016.


37. Anita Glaze’s Art and Death in a Senufo Village earned a number of reviews, many of them positive. Philip L. Ravenhill, then based at the Université d’Abidjan, exclaimed the book should “become a standard by which other works on African art will be judged” (Ravenhill 1982). Daniel McCall called Glaze’s book a “tour de force” (McCall 1982). See also Willett 1982; Gilbert 1983; Shepard 1985.

38. In his review of Glaze’s book, McCall (1982, 550) refers to the wealth of detail Glaze provides in the book’s notes. The comment resonates. When I first read the book and whenever I have returned to it, I have observed a tension between Glaze’s efforts to describe a broad context for Senufo arts in the main text and her attention to specific details in the book’s notes. I have wondered what Glaze’s analysis would have looked like had she set aside the attempt to show a broad context for Senufo arts and instead made the detailed information in her notes focal points for the

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main text. I also recognize that at the time she was writing, scholars of African arts sought to present broad trends within a particular cultural or ethnic group.

39. *Ethnologue* identifies Cebaara as a Senufo language also recognized by the alternate names “Senadi, Senari, Syenere, Sénoufo-Sénanri, Tiebaara, [and] Tyebala.” The source identifies more than fifteen dialects of Cebaara. It lists them as “Kafire, Kasara, Kufuru, Tagbari (Mbengui-Niellé), Patara, Pogara, Tyebara, Tagara, Tenere, Takpasyeeri (Messeni), Southwest Senari, Kandere (Tengrela), Papara, Fodara, Kulere, [and] Nafara.” *Ethnologue* further explains “Korhogo dialect is central. The Kulele speak Kulere dialect scattered throughout the Senoufo area” (Eberhard et al. 2020). The language information Glaze (1981, 1–6) provided nearly forty years earlier bears many similarities to but does not exactly coincide with details in *Ethnologue*. Glaze refers to the “Central Senufo (Senari)” (1981, 2), divides the group into different clusters, and lists dialects or subgroups within the larger group. She distinguishes “Central Senufo (Senari)” from the “Northern Senufo,” “Southern Senufo,” and “Eastern Senufo.” The “Fodonon” and “Kufulo” subgroups she names within the “Southern Senufo” and “Central Senufo (Senari)” groups, respectively, do not correspond exactly with the spellings of languages or dialects in *Ethnologue*.

40. For example, see Appadurai 1988; Amselle (1990) 1998; Roberts and Roberts 1996. See also Roberts and Roberts 2007; Roberts 2013, 9–12.

41. Mando Nanta Goïta, personal communication, September 5, 2004. See also Goïta n.d.

42. I contacted Lamissa Bangali (personal communication, November 25, 2019) to confirm my recollection of his response to my dissertation.


45. I thank Alice Matthews, who served as a graduate research assistant in the fall of 2019 at the Clark Art Institute in Williamstown, Massachusetts. She alerted me to the book after her serendipitous find of it in a library. I also thank Matthews for her conversations with me about art and evidence.

46. I read and reread Strother (1998) and Reed (2003) while I was in Sokouraba. The two books provided me with key insights into how to conduct field-based research and write about it with attention to specific details and individual experiences.

47. When I financed the construction of houses for Dahaba Ouattara and myself, I imagined returning to Sokouraba once a year or every few years to maintain existing relationships and develop new ones. I also wanted to deepen and sharpen my understandings of power associations, their arts, and the area. Unfortunately,
political developments in Burkina Faso since 2014 and in the greater region since 2011 and 2012, including the death of Muammar Gaddafi and conflict in Mali, have threatened stability within and beyond Burkina Faso. Reports have implicated members of hunters’ organizations or people dressed as members of hunters’ associations in some of the violence. Burkinabe friends and colleagues as well as other people familiar with developments in Burkina Faso, Côte d’Ivoire, and Mali have provided a range of assessments, and some individuals’ judgments have changed significantly over time. Some people have also explicitly expressed concern about the possibility of my presence endangering or otherwise negatively affecting my Burkinabe friends and colleagues. With no clear precedents by which to gauge the situation and widespread uncertainty about how it will evolve, I have not returned to Burkina Faso since 2014. Diada Lompo and Aubrey Graham offered me especially useful insights during separate conversations with each of them about the feasibility and advisability of returning to Sokouraba. I thank Lompo, Graham, and other colleagues and friends for their conversations with me about security concerns in Burkina Faso and elsewhere as well as strategies for navigating them. For information and analyses regarding political instability and security threats in Burkina Faso and Mali since 2012, see, for example, LeFaso.net 2014, 2019, 2020; The Economist 2016, 2018; Searcey and Barry 2017; MacDougall 2018; Douce 2018; Vendrely 2019; Bays 2019; Dofini 2019; Marks 2019; Le Monde 2019; Dewast 2020; Human Rights Watch 2020; Mednick 2020; Maclean 2020.

48. For scholars who have preferred to anonymize names of people and places, see, for example, Glaze 1981, xv; Brett-Smith 1994, 1–2; 2001, 105n10.


51. See also Brett-Smith 1997, 75n10.

52. See also author’s notes, February 21, 2007.


55. See also McNaughton 1979a, 29.

56. See also Strother 2000, 69–70.


59. Konomba Traoré, interview by the author, August 26, 2006. See also Porgo 2000.

60. Kassim Koné observes, “A Mande proverb states that as silence in speech is not empty of meaning, darkness also is not empty, but filled with spiritual and material things” (2022, 248).
62. Karfa Coulibaly also said that he had heard Europeans had machines into which they could plug objects to see their contents (interview by the author, January 20, 2012). I had previously heard similar statements (e.g., Do Ouattara, interview by the author, March 25, 2006; Yaya Bangali, interview by the author, March 22, 2007; author’s notes, January 3, 2012). But some power association leaders expressed greater concern about X-radiography of power association arts (Yaya Bangali, interview by the author, January 21, 2012; Moukanitien Traoré, interview by the author, January 21, 2012). Compare Malé 1999.
64. Visual and verbal artists working in other contexts and in other areas of the world have commented on preferences for ambiguity despite appeals for disclosure. For example, curator Ulrich Loock (2012) reflects on the words of poet Édouard Glissant, who stated that “as far as [he] was concerned, a person has the right to be opaque.” In a recorded conversation with Steven Nelson that took place at the Broad, a museum dedicated to contemporary arts, visual artist Julie Mehretu reflects on the “privilege of opacity” in a world that expects transparency about one’s identity and intentions. Mehretu asserts that “it is not the artist’s role or author’s role to be transparent or to . . . be descriptive.” See Mehretu and Nelson 2016. Compare McNaughton 2013.

1. Power Associations

1. Karfa Coulibaly, interview by the author, July 11, 2007. Mélégué Traoré confirmed that he had sent posters to his brother, Drissa Traoré. Mélégué Traoré also indicated that politics and his family’s work with Kono are linked. However, he offered no further explanation (Mélégué Traoré, interview by the author, August 31, 2006).
2. See also Brett-Smith 1997, 72–73n3; Colleyn 2001, 244.
3. While I argue that the phrase power associations better reflects prominent aspects of the organizations than other terms and phrases do, translators at times revert to older phrases when translating power association from English into French without consulting me (e.g., Gagliardi 2020b).
4. Beryl Larry Bellman writes, “The negative values normally attributed to secrecy come from the view that it is a kind of deviant or antisocial behavior. Secrecy is often associated with illegal or extralegal political groups that are either subversive or self-serving at the expense of the larger community and with the subcultures involved with illicit drugs and alternative sexual lifestyles.” See Bellman 1984, 4.
5. Till Förster (2018, 136) argues that while many authors refer to *poro* organizations in Senufo communities in northern Côte d’Ivoire as *secret societies*, the phrase *village society* more accurately characterizes the activities of the organizations that foster a sense of belonging to a place.


7. The concept of nyama is central to Patrick McNaughton’s analyses of power association arts (McNaughton 1977, 1979a, 1979b, 1988, 2001, 2008). In the early twentieth century, Joseph Henry (1910, 26–28) described nyama as a never-disappearing force, power, or energy in living beings that remains even after death. Drawing on linguist Charles S. Bird’s description of nyama, McNaughton defines the term in English as “energy of action” (McNaughton 1988, 15; see also Bird and Kendall 1980, 16–17; Brett-Smith 1994, 38–47; Colleyn 2001, 246). Eluding direct translation in French or English, *nyama* implies capacity for dynamic change, positive or negative. See also Conrad and Frank 1995.

8. *Nyàmbe* is the standard Senufo Sîcîté spelling of the term, but in Sokouraba, it is pronounced differently. Nestor Zanga Lassina Traoré, personal communication, August 26, 2007. See also Lamissa Bangali 2002, 226n1.

9. Zanga Traoré, interview by the author, May 4, 2006; Yaya Bangali, interview by the author, January 12, 2007; Missa Coulibaly, interview by the author, April 9, 2007; Tayirigué Ouattara, interview by the author, June 20, 2007; N’gartin Coulibaly, interview by the author, June 22, 2007; Karfâ Coulibaly, interview by the author, January 5, 2012; Bè Coulibaly, interview by the author, January 5, 2012.


12. Bè Coulibaly, interview by the author, April 26, 2006. Bè Coulibaly explained that people may take a child born to a woman who has lost many children and place the child on a pile of garbage. Other women retrieve the child from the pile and return the child to the child’s mother. He said the child may then receive the name Nyama. Coulibaly, interview by the author, January 5, 2012. For a short discussion of *nyama* defined as garbage or refuse, see Bird et al. 1995, 28–29, 35n1. Brett-Smith distinguishes *nyámà* from *nyámàn*, the latter of which she describes as “strikingly similar” to the former. She adds that “the nasalized ending of *nyámàn* is often lost in the quick flow of conversation, and frequently one can distinguish the two words only by their context” (2001, 127).


*Notes*
When Traoré made the comment, we were watching video footage of the event that Dahaba Ouattara had captured.

14. Yaya Bangali, interviews by the author, January 12, 2007; March 22, 2007. When I asked Yaya Bangali to define nyama during the earlier interview, he told me that he did not know how to define it. He did not elaborate on a definition when he used the word in a second interview to describe what happens during a Wara performance.

15. See also Diamitani 1999, xvii, 73, 120, 123.

16. For example, see Karfa Coulibaly, interview by the author, January 5, 2012; Bè Coulibaly, interview by the author, January 5, 2012; Dahaba Ouattara, personal communication, January 8, 2012.


18. For example, see Kochnitzky 1948, 2; Rubin 1974; MacGaffey 1977, 1988, 1994, 1998; Pietz 1985, 1987; Blier 1993; Doris 2011, 15–16. See also Strother 2014/2015; 2016, 229–234; 2016/2017. Compare Kelly 2007, 1–2. Other scholars consider the term fetish a useful one to use or investigate. For example, see Colleyn 2009b; Latour 2010; Bouttiaux 2016, 15; Morris and Leonard 2017. See also MacGaffey 2014/2015.


20. For example, Louis Tauxier (1927, 300) recounts a story that a man named Maléki told about Komo performers at the time of El Hadj Oumar’s conquest of Ségou in 1861. Moussa Travélé (1929, 147) cites a man named Bala Dembélé, who reportedly said that he was citing a third man, an elder named Baba Diara, in a description of Komo. According to Travélé’s indirect information, Komo activities took place “before the occupation of Samory” in the second half of the nineteenth century.

21. Roland Colin, who from 1952 to 1954 worked for the French colonial administration in Sikasso, a city in present-day Mali, writes that French colonial officials often devoted more attention to Islam than local organizations due to their concerns that Islam could pose greater threats than the local organizations to the French (Colin 2004, 223).

22. Tauxier explains in a footnote that the observations come from notes dated 1913. He adds that he is not sure if the practice had been maintained (Tauxier 1927, 281n1).


24. See “Renseignements Monographiques par M. E. MAGUET, Administrateur-Adjoint, Commandant le Cercle Sikasso, 1911–1913” for Gongasso
[Canton du Fama] in a folder titled “Monographies,” consulted at archives of the Centre de Recherche pour la Sauvegarde et la Promotion de la Culture Sénoufo in Sikasso, Mali.

25. For other accounts of French destruction of altars and power objects in the three-corner region, see, for example, Royer 1999, 346n15; Mann 2003, 272n39.

26. See “Cercle de Sikasso, Canton du Zégué dougou, Village de Nagna, le 2 Juin 1953” in a folder entitled “Monographies,” consulted at the archives of the Centre de Recherche pour la Sauvegarde et la Promotion de la Culture Sénoufo in Sikasso, Mali.


28. András Zempléni (1990, 201) describes Poro, with a capital P, as “the very basis of Senufo’s ethnic identity.” For other descriptions of poro in the context of Senufo culture or identity, see, for example, Holas 1957a, 1957b, 1978; Knops 1958, 1980; Bochet 1959, 1964, 1965, 1973, 1993; Goldwater 1964, 9; Jamin 1973; Ouattara 1979a, 1979b, 1979c, 1979d, 1979e; Glaze 1981; Förster 1988, 1993, 1997, 2018; Colin 2004, 211–217; Ouattara 2008. However, not all scholars agree that poro, often written with a capital P, is a necessary feature of Senufo identity, and not every community identified as Senufo in the three-corner region currently supports a compulsory male initiation association or remembers having supported one (e.g., Bangali 2002, 11–12, 36–39; Diamitani 1999, 2–3; 2011, 56). For studies of poro organizations across western West Africa, see, for example, Harley 1941; Bellman 1984; Ferme 2001; Højbjerg 2007; McGovern 2012; Gaborit 2014; Guyer 2015.


30. Glaze writes, “The evidence indicates that the blacksmith Kunugbaha masquerade performs an essential and possibly unique role at the funeral ceremonies of village elders and associated members of the men and women’s organizations” (1981, 142).

31. Glaze also notes that information she “collected in 1975 and 1978–79 indicates that some masking traditions have no direct connection with the Poro society originally” (1981, 207). See also McNaughton 1982a, 495–496.

32. The Museum Rietberg used the German title Bamana: Afrikanische Kunst aus Mali for the exhibition.

33. See page 19, “Reg. Nr. 89, II. West-Sudan 1907/08, L. Frobenius: Ethn. Ergänzung V (Orig.), Senufo-Stämme, Bobo-Bariba-Kurastämme,” Frobenius-Institut an der Johann Wolfgang Goethe Universität, Frankfurt/Main, Folder LF91. I thank Lucas Hafner and Sam Vangheluwe for transcribing the original German text and Sam Vangheluwe for his translation of it.

34. Maxime de Formanoir arrives at a similar conclusion about Mboyo or Boyo, which he describes as “a little known initiation society” (2018) in central Africa.

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35. *Gris gris* in French often refers to small protective devices or amulets. Here the term seems to refer to power objects or the organizations that support them. See “Renseignements Monographiques par M. E. MAGUET, Administrateur-Adjoint, Commandant le Cercle Sikasso, 1911–1913, Doumanaba, 16 Octobre 1911” in a folder titled “Monographies,” consulted at archives of the Centre de Recherche pour la Sauvegarde et la Promotion de la Culture Sénoufo in Sikasso, Mali.

36. Colin (personal communication, June 18, 2019) told me his administrative responsibilities included conducting censuses in the Sikasso area. He said some towns were accessible by car and other towns were reachable only by horse. When he arrived in a town, he sat at a table with a notebook. He asked a representative from each family to account for each person in the family. Colin said he used the opportunity to collect additional information for the “monographies” or reports he wrote. He included in his exchanges with townspeople questions about power association chapters, their leaders, and their origins. According to Colin, people in the Sikasso area distinguished him from one of his predecessors, who had earned a reputation for hasty visits to gather information. Colin added that his knowledge of Jula facilitated dialogue.

37. See “Cercle de Sikasso, Canton du Zéguédougou, Village de Wakoro, le 31 Mai 1953” in a folder entitled “Monographies,” consulted at the archives of the Centre de Recherche pour la Sauvegarde et la Promotion de la Culture Sénoufo in Sikasso, Mali.

38. See “Cercle de Sikasso, Canton du Zéguédougou, Village de Sourounto, le 4 Juin 1953” in a folder entitled “Monographies,” consulted at the archives of the Centre de Recherche pour la Sauvegarde et la Promotion de la Culture Sénoufo in Sikasso, Mali. *Ethnologue* identifies nine languages within the larger Fula language family (Eberhard et al. 2020).

39. For example, Edgard Maguet indicates that even though power associations were commonplace in Senufo communities in 1911, people used Bamana-language terms in their names for power objects and the songs they sang for them. See “Renseignements Monographiques par M. E. MAGUET, Administrateur-Adjoint, Commandant le Cercle Sikasso, 1911–1913, Doumanaba, 16 Octobre 1911” in a folder titled “Monographies,” consulted at the archives of the Centre de Recherche pour la Sauvegarde et la Promotion de la Culture Sénoufo in Sikasso, Mali.

40. See “Cercle de Sikasso, Canton du Zéguédougou, Village de Ngana, le 12 Avril 1953” in a folder entitled “Monographies,” consulted at the archives of the Centre de Recherche pour la Sauvegarde et la Promotion de la Culture Sénoufo in Sikasso, Mali. See also Colin 2004, 141–142. Colin describes Ngana as a “rich” town due to the amount of millet its inhabitants cultivated (Colin 2004, 142).

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42. Dougouni appears as the approved spelling for three of the four results. Dogoni appears as the approved spelling and Dougouni as the variant for one of the results. The search was conducted on January 5, 2019, and again on January 1, 2021.

43. See “Cercle de Sikasso, Canton du Zéguédougou, Village de Dougouni, le 30 Mai 1953” in a folder entitled “Monographies,” consulted at the archives of the Centre de Recherche pour la Sauvegarde et la Promotion de la Culture Sénoufo in Sikasso, Mali.


45. For historical studies that address the role of the Rassemblement Démocratique Africain in Mali in the mid-twentieth century, see, for example, Mann 2006 and Cooper 2014.


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48. A search for Torokoro in the GEOnet Names Server database administered by the United States National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency yielded coordinates in present-day Mali for six separate populated places with the name and one ruin with the name as well as places with names including Torokoro in them, such as Torokorobougou, Torokoron, and Torokorosso. The search was conducted on January 1, 2021.


51. For example, see Nampé Traoré, interview by the author, February 23, 2007.

52. L’eau de Moussa was centered in a small settlement beyond the center of Sinématiali. On January 7, 2014, Constantine Petridis and I visited the site with Kassoum Coulibaly, Dahaba Ouattara, and Adama Koné. While we were there, Petridis and I interviewed Madjara Soro, who identified herself as a descendant of Moussa, and Padie Seydou Soro with the translation assistance of Adama Koné. Madjara Soro and Padie Seydou Soro, interview by the author and Constantine Petridis, January 7, 2014; Tenena Victor Yao, interview by the author and Constantine Petridis, January 6, 2014; Gnao Tuo, interview by the author and Constantine Petridis, January 7, 2014.

Notes
A number of people in western Burkina Faso talked with me about l’eau de Moussa, and they often recounted similar details. A few of them recalled the earlier Massa movement. For example, see Lamissa Bangali, interview by the author, August 18, 2006; Mathieu Traoré and Jean-Claude Djamoutani, personal communication, September 14, 2006; Bè Coulibaly, interviews by the author, September 18, 2006; January 16, 2007; February 27, 2007; Drissa Traoré, interview by the author, October 17, 2006; Yacouba Ouagninko Tou, interview by the author, October 22, 2006; Adoulaye Traoré, interview by the author, January 15, 2007; Karamogo Coulibaly, interview by the author, January 27, 2007; Gnangori Coulibaly, interview by the author, January 27, 2007; Sita Traoré, interview by the author, January 28, 2007; Lauren Entz, personal communication, February 12, 2007; Karfa Coulibaly, interview by the author, February 20, 2007; Nampé Traoré, interview by the author, February 23, 2007; Do Ouattara, interview by the author, February 26, 2007; Seydou Traoré, interview by the author, February 27, 2007. See also Diamitani 1999, 141–143.

See also the discussion of Do Ouattara in chapter 3.


While Colin expresses concern about the disappearance of power association chapters and the power objects they maintained due to Massa in the report of January 2, 1953, his documentation from individual towns signals that people in different locales acknowledged that Massa prohibited certain objects or activities but that they did not uniformly adhere to the mandates. For example, in the report from his November 24, 1952, visit to the town of Fima, Colin notes that the town’s residents had not discarded their power objects but had suspended sacrifices for their single Komo, single Konro (Kono), and three Wara chapters to dedicate themselves to Massa. A report from his visit to the town of “Fougouélé” (possibly Fangouélé) five days earlier indicates that people in the town acquired Massa but decided not to abandon their other power objects, despite Massa’s instruction to do so. Colin apparently visited the town of Lofiné on November 30, 1952, and learned that people there had not discarded their power objects but also expressed content with Massa for the moment. The reports reflect still other reactions in other towns. See documents in a folder entitled “Monographie (Dyou), Enquête sur les villages du Folona, 1952,” consulted at the archives of the Centre de Recherche pour la Sauvegarde et la Promotion de la Culture Sénoufo in Sikasso, Mali.

the archives of the Centre de Recherche pour la Sauvegarde et la Promotion de la Culture Sénoufo in Sikasso, Mali.

58. Another archival document demonstrates that other observers within the colonial administration expressed concern about what embrace of Massa could contribute to the promotion of Islam in the three-corner region. The authors of the document advised that the administration refrain from favoring or opposing Massa. See “Note de synthèse sur le ‘Culte de San,” signed LM / MK, consulted at archives of the Service Historique de la Défense, in Vincennes, France, 10T191. See also Mann 2003.

59. See Portron 2008. See also Zobel 1996, 628; compare Reed 2003, 40–44; Fischer 2008, 35.

60. For example, see Epelboin et al. 2013. In her coverage of computerized tomography scans of a helmet mask (1997.24) in the collection of the Dallas Museum of Art (DMA), Nancy Kenney reports that “a small loss in the fragile encrusted coating on the [helmet] mask allowed a glimpse at a folded-up Arabic-language pamphlet in the back of its base. Peering at it, [Roslyn] Walker and [Fran] Baas made out the Arabic word for charity” (2020). Michael C. Carlos Museum conservators Renée Stein and Brittany Dolph Dinneen traveled with me to the DMA’s conservation lab on May 24–25, 2016, to examine the same helmet mask with Bass. During our two-day intensive study of the complex object, the four of us uncovered the bundle with Arabic script but did not read the writing at that time.

61. For example, see Henry 1910, 130–134; Monteil 1924, 270; Travélé 1929, 129, 139; Diarra et al. 1996; Conrad 2001; Colleyn 2009a, 43–44.

62. See Monteil 1924, 270. See also Henry 1910, 130–134; Travélé 1929, 129.

63. McNaughton describes other origin stories related to blacksmiths and notes that “this sort of eclectic interaction with Near Eastern religions occurs often in Mande traditions of all kinds, partly because Islam has been present for so long in the Western Sudan and partly because people use Islam and Judaism metaphorically to make various kinds of points, some of which in fact express disguised anti-Muslim sentiments” (1995, 47).

64. For example, see Diarra et al. 1996; Conrad 2001.


66. A parallel case could be made for Fakoli and the Sunjata epic. Dahaba Ouattara told me that he learned about Sunjata and the history of the Mali Empire in school. However, he did not think that people in or around his hometown of Sokouraba who did not go to school learned about Sunjata and his exploits (Dahaba Ouattara, personal communication, September 6, 2008). Compare Austen 2007, 33–34. For an extensive account of Fajigi, or M’Fa Jigi, see Diarra et al. 1996.

68. See also Portron 2008.
69. For example, see Do Ouattara, interviews by the author, March 11, 2006; March 25, 2006; Zanga Traoré, interview by the author, March 17, 2006; Yaya Bangali, interviews by the author, March 28, 2006; May 6, 2006; Ibrahim Traoré, interviews by the author, April 25, 2006; June 30, 2006; Drissa Traoré, interview by the author, October 17, 2006; Soungalo Traoré, interview by the author, March 16, 2007; Moukanitien Traoré, interview by the author, June 1, 2007. See also McNaughton 2000, 179; Colley 2001, 191; 2009a, 26; 2009b, 53–55. Referring to Senufo-speaking communities of northern Côte d’Ivoire, Zempléni (1990, 204) specifies that the Senufo terms *pori*, which he translates as “to be initiated” and “to marry,” and *Poro* are related. Compare Förster 1997, 252; Mills 2003, vol. 2, 941–942; Ouattara 2012, 276–278.
70. People I interviewed did not divulge details about what aspiring power association leaders need to do or what they must acquire in order to install an association chapter. I did not want people to think that I was trying to figure out how to establish my own chapter. I also recognized that such information could constitute some of the most highly guarded knowledge that power association leaders acquire. Therefore, I felt it was inappropriate to ask detailed questions about the process.
71. For example, see Ibrahim Traoré, interview by the author, June 30, 2006; Koniba Traoré, personal communication, January 23, 2007; author’s notes, February 27, 2007.
73. Do Ouattara, interview by the author, September 22, 2006.
76. Do Ouattara (interview by the author, September 22, 2006) explained that power association leaders aim to help individuals and communities and to protect them from criminal sorcery.
77. See Strother 1998, 13, 259. The qualification of some sorcery as criminal suggests that criminality is not an inherent characteristic of sorcery. See also McNaughton 1995, 51.
78. Dahaba Ouattara, personal communication, February 9, 2009.

2. Assemblages

1. Compare Cooksey 2004. Susan Elizabeth Cooksey contrasts visible exteriors of divination rooms in the area of “Toussiana” (Touziana), a town in western Burkina Faso, with the dark, interior spaces of the rooms. She explains that
objects within divination rooms “are either unseen or transformed through the accumulation of dust, dirt, and sacrificial substances, long-term wear, by wrapping with cloth, or other physical means” (2004, 94).

2. French colonial administrators Charles Monteil (1924, 270–271) and Louis Tauxier (1927, 283) cite Joseph Henry’s description of human remains in Komo boliv. Tauxier’s reference to Henry’s text is direct. While Monteil does not explicitly acknowledge his source, his references to boliv containing human remains in “Tiguini” and “Kégué” parallel Henry’s references to boliv in “Tigini” and “Kégné” (see also Henry 1910, 140). Monteil may have obtained information about the contents of boliv in the two towns on his own, or he may have read Henry’s text.

3. According to Henry (1910, 251), the term boli refers to “any bad fetish, meaning an object serving as the residence of an evil spirit or demon.”

4. For example, see MacGaffey 1977, 1988; Strother 2000, 2014/2015, 2016/2017; Doris 2011.

5. Jean-Paul Colleyn (2001, 2009a) has endeavored to identify regional differences in power association helmet mask forms, presumably based on his extensive research in present-day Mali.

6. I safeguarded photographs of helmet masks and other power objects in European and North American collections in a photo album that I hid in my house. I was concerned with ensuring that women and other people not authorized to see power association arts in western Burkina Faso did not see the images. I also wanted to let specialists I interviewed know that I had already seen certain objects in publications and museums in Europe and North America. Before deciding to show restricted images to someone, I consulted with Dahaba Ouattara to determine whether and when I should reveal the images. I often reiterated during my conversations and interviews with people that I was not interested in acquiring secret information but rather was interested in learning only the details that the person or people talking with me wanted to share. People commented on images I showed them, but I found it difficult to cross-check and verify comments about the photographs people offered. For example, see Bè Coulibaly, interview by the author, March 9, 2006; Yaya Coulibaly, interviews by the author, January 12, 2007; January 28, 2007; Karfa Coulibaly, interview by the author, January 31, 2007; Do Ouattara, interview by the author, February 26, 2007; N’gartina Coulibaly, interview by the author, April 27, 2007; Moukanitien Traoré, interview by the author, May 21, 2007; author’s notes, March 9, 2006, February 26, 2007, March 11, 2007. Compare Ibrahim Traoré Banakourou, personal communication, October 27–28, 2018.


8. For example, Oumar Ouattara, interview by the author, June 30, 2006; Konomba Traoré, interview by the author, August 21, 2006; Tayirigué Ouattara,

9. For example, Yaya Bangali, interview by the author, December 14, 2005; Karfa Coulibaly, interviews by the author, August 31, 2004; December 10, 2005; March 9, 2006; Do Ouattara, interview by the author, September 22, 2006; Ibrahim Traoré, interviews by the author, June 30, 2006; September 22, 2006; Moukanitien Traoré, interview by the author, January 21, 2012.

10. The number 300 may refer to a literal or figurative counting of different plant types incorporated in power association assemblages. The point I understood is that the objects may contain a significant amount of plant matter from a vast array of plants that specialists study. Ibrahim Traoré Banakourou, personal communication, March 17, 2018, September 16, 2018. Compare Do Ouattara, interview by the author, March 11, 2006; Lamissa Bangali, interview by the author, August 18, 2006.

11. Matthew Francis Rarey’s research on seventeenth- and eighteenth-century pouches, known in Portuguese as bolsas de mandinga, and information about them gleaned through eighteenth-century records from the Portuguese Inquisition suggests a longer history of accumulative arts linked to efforts to concentrate power in West Africa and also across the Atlantic Ocean. Rarey demonstrates that the name applied to the pouches refers to a population identified as Mandinga, the Portuguese spelling for Mandinka. Related terms include Mande, Manding, Mandingo, and Mandingue (Rarey 2018, 2023; Eberhard et al. 2020; see also Tautain 1886; McNaughton 1988, xvii).

12. For example, see objects currently housed at the musée du quai Branly–Jacques Chirac and identified with the following accession numbers: 71.1883.45.11, 71.1883.45.22, 71.1889.2-3, 71.1889.2.5.

13. References to ears may be important to at least certain power associations. When I commissioned the late blacksmith Bè Coulibaly (interview by the author, April 4, 2006) to carve a power association helmet mask armature, he indicated that specialists add power-packed material to the helmet mask near where a performer’s ears are when he wears the helmet mask. Writing about Komo in 1929, Moussa Travélé, who served as an interpreter for the French colonial administration, described a hand gesture Komo initiates learn that refers to the “‘ears’ of the Komo” (Travélé 1929, 131).

14. Writing about power objects he refers to as minkisi in central Africa, Wyatt MacGaffey (2014/2015) considers a different process. He recognizes that certain sculptures may have come from the same workshop, and he posits that the makers may have added metal implements to wooden armatures before specialists started to add other elements to the assemblages to achieve certain goals. Compare Hersak 2010. See also Diamitani 1999, 100–101, 117–124.
See also the introduction for a reference to Nayland Blake’s thoughts about the importance of process in the making of boliw versus the “flash-of-inspiration” idea for the construction of other arts. Process instead of completion constitutes an important feature of works produced in other times and places. For example, Marvin Trachtenberg (2010) considers that modern European and Euro-American notions of time and authorship emphasize the maker, the artist’s original conception, and the end point for a work’s creation. He contrasts such conceptions with views of making that are evident in architecture from the thirteenth through the fifteenth centuries in present-day Italy. Trachtenberg demonstrates the importance of process rather than completion to the design and construction of the buildings.


I thank Ellen Howe for examining the helmet mask with me in the conservation lab of the Metropolitan Museum of Art (Met) on April 14, 2009, and June 29, 2009. Chris Higa joined us in the lab on both occasions. Thanks also to Alisa LaGamma for facilitating the visits.


Mr. and Mrs. Morton Lipkin gave the helmet mask (MET 1978.412.426) to the MPA in April 1961. An April 8, 1961, letter from Morton Lipkin to the museum on Stolper Galleries letterhead as well as an April 14, 1961, letter from Robert Goldwater to Mr. and Mrs. Lipkin and addressed to the Lipkins care of Stolper Galleries in New York suggest that Stolper Galleries facilitated Mr. and Mrs. Lipkin’s gift of a “Kono wood mask with quills and bird skull” to the MPA. Morton Lipkin to Museum of Primitive Art, April 8, 1961, and Robert Goldwater to Mr. and Mrs. Lipkin, April 14, 1961, Collection documents–Purchases, Purchases–L, AR.1999.4.23, box 5, folder 1, consulted at the Visual Resource Archive, Department of the Arts of Africa, Oceania, and the Americas, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

I thank Ellen Pearlstein and Robin O’Hern for talking with me about qualitative differences in terms used to identify or characterize materials in power association objects. See also O’Hern 2012, 28; O’Hern et al. 2016, 78.
21. Notes attributed to R. Hugershoff, a member of the team that Leo Frobenius led through the three-corner region from 1907 to 1909, refer to animal sacrifices performed in conjunction with efforts to achieve particular outcomes. The notes also suggest that at the time, people in the area stated their goals or promises before sacrificing an animal. See, for example, “Reg. Nr. 85, II. West-Sudan 1907/08, L. Frobenius: Ethn. Ergänzung I (Orig.), Senufo,” consulted at the Frobenius-Institut an der Johann Wolfgang Goethe Universität, Frankfurt/Main, Folder LF87, 8, 10, 15, 17–19, 61–62; transcription by Lucas Hafner and Sam Vangheluwe, translation by Sam Vangheluwe.


23. The term mud may have pejorative connotations. I thank Katarzyna Pieprzak for talking with me about the term and for sharing her analysis of it in a study of architecture in Morocco (Pieprzak n.d.). At times, terms such as earth or mud in descriptions of an object's surface matter may reflect a museum's or collector's characterization of the surface contents based on appearance instead of an author's understanding (e.g., see Gagliardi 2014, 202, 203, 262, 263).

24. Ellen Howe introduced me to the conservation-based study of power association arts when I was a fellow at the Met from the fall of 2008 to the summer of 2009, and she introduced me to Ellen Pearlstein. I thank Howe and Pearlstein as well as Robin O’Hern, Renée Stein, Brittany Dolph Dinneen, Fran Baas, Colleen Snyder, and Cybele Tom as well as Clara Gronzotto and Kenneth Sunderland for their willingness to pursue technical analysis of power association assemblages, to exchange ideas about the objects, and to share findings. I also thank Constantine Petridis for encouraging ongoing conservation-based research and inter-institutional collaborations.

25. See also notes attributed to R. Hugershoff that identify plants and their healing properties or poisonous potentials. The author also refers to basi in power association contexts and appears to apply the term to objects rather than to medicines or other potent matter used in the creation of power objects. See, for example, “Reg. Nr. 85, II. West-Sudan 1907/08, L. Frobenius: Ethn. Ergänzung I (Orig.), Senufo,” consulted at the Frobenius-Institut an der Johann Wolfgang Goethe Universität, Frankfurt/Main, Folder LF87, 18, 21, 22, 35, 59, 62–63, 64–65, 71; transcription by Lucas Hafner and Sam Vangheluwe, translation by Sam Vangheluwe. Sarah Brett-Smith defines basiw (pl.; basi, sing.) as “medicines, remedies” (Brett-Smith 2001, 10518).

26. For example, see McNaughton 1979a, 2001; Brett-Smith 1983, 1994; Colleyn 2001, 2009a, 2009b; Conrad 2001; O’Hern 2012. Ibrahim Traoré Banakourou, personal communication, September 16, 2018. I also thank InHae Yap for the list of materials reportedly included in power association objects that she compiled for me in the winter and spring of 2017.

28. According to the language specialist Nestor Zanga Lassina Traoré, fáriyá is the standard Senufo Sicité spelling of the term, but people in Sokouraba pronounce the term differently (Nestor Zanga Lassina Traoré, personal communication, August 26, 2007).


32. Anne-Marie Traoré, interview by the author, August 14, 2006. See also McNaughton 1982a, 499–500.

33. When I showed Ibrahim Traoré Banakourou a photograph of the power object, he wondered if someone had used an actual knife or a wooden object carved in the shape of a knife as a starting point for constructing the assemblage. He noted the possibility of scanning the object to assess its interior elements. Ibrahim Traoré Banakourou, personal communication, September 16, 2018.

34. For example, see Geary 1994, 32, 34.

35. Karfa Coulibaly, interviews by the author, March 9, 2006; April 7, 2006. See also Gagliardi 2010, 119–122.

36. For example, see Do Ouattara, interview by the author, March 25, 2006; Karfa Coulibaly, interview by the author, June 29, 2006; Lamissa Bangali, interview by the author, August 18, 2006; Yaya Bangali, interview by the author, January 12, 2007. See also McNaughton 1979a, 32–35.


38. For example, see McNaughton 1982b; Cashion 1984; Ouattara 2008, 96–122; Hellweg 2011; Förster 2012; Gagliardi 2013. See also Lorenzo 2014.


40. Karfa Coulibaly (interview by the author, July 21, 2007) indicated that it was difficult to find animal horns for helmet masks because there are not a lot of animals available to hunt.

41. Karfa Coulibaly, interview by the author, August 21, 2004; see also Do Ouattara, interview by the author, March 25, 2006.

42. Bè Coulibaly, interviews by the author, August 31, 2004; January 25, 2006; September 18, 2006.


45. Power association leaders or other people familiar with the organizations may recognize possibilities for similar risks in the inclusion of a power association object in a collection of a museum or an art enthusiast, especially if people in charge of the collection do not know exact details of the manufacture or use of the object. See also Malé 1999.

46. For example, see Ibrahim Traoré Banakourou, personal communication, September 16, 2018.

47. Specialists I interviewed at times referred to their own learning processes or the experiences of their elders or apprentices. For example, see Do Ouattara, interviews by the author, March 25, 2006; June 30, 2006; May 30, 2007; Yaya Bangali, interviews by the author, March 26, 2006; March 22, 2007; Ibrahim Traoré, interviews by the author, September 22, 2006; May 8, 2007; Karfa Coulibaly, interviews by the author, January 18, 2007; February 23, 2007; March 10, 2007; Youhali Hebié, interview by the author, March 24, 2007; Tayirigué Ouattara and Gaoussou Ouattara, interview by the author, June 20, 2007; Téléboro Ouattara, interview by the author, June 23, 2007. See also McNaughton 1982a; 1988, 42–40; 2001, 176–178; Collyen 2009a, 10–11, 20.

48. See also McNaughton 1979a, 31–35.

49. Karfa Coulibaly, interview by the author, July 21, 2007. Henry (1910, 49–56) writes about the dangers of kortiov. He also claims that in February of 1908, a Komo leader hurled a korti at the missionary. Henry reports he did not feel well for five or ten minutes after the incident (Henry 1910, 54n1). See also McNaughton 1988, 44.


55. Adoulaye Traoré, personal communication, January 9, 2007. When I began my fieldwork in western Burkina Faso in 2004, digital cameras were not yet commonplace in the United States or Burkina Faso. In fact, when I returned to Burkina Faso in 2005, I carried with me an analog single-lens reflex (SLR) camera as well as a digital SLR (DSLR) camera. I used both devices but decided shortly after my arrival in Burkina Faso to rely on the DSLR camera as my primary device. An important part of my research method included transferring my digital files to CD-ROMs, selecting some images for printing, and then mailing the discs to the

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United States. The American friend who received the discs obtained prints of the selected images and mailed the prints back to me. I distributed the prints to people I had photographed, and they regularly admired the images. At times, individuals specifically requested I take photographs of them because they wanted the prints. I found that the distribution of photographs helped me develop relationships. The prints also provided opportunities for further discussion. Compare Cameron 2013.


59. Lamissa Bangali, interview by the author, August 18, 2006.


62. Do Ouattara, interviews by the author, March 11, 2006; March 25, 2006. Ouattara showed me documents in his father’s name issued by the French colonial government that list dates of the elder Ouattara’s service in France, Madagascar, Senegal, and Tunisia. German ethnologist and medical doctor Hans Himmelheber (1954/1955, 56–57) also refers to power objects that soldiers from the three-corner region carried with them while in service during the Second World War.

63. I thank Renée Stein for the conversation that helped me elucidate this point.

64. Compare Colleyn 2009b, 55, 74.

65. Compare description of “the four griot women in the Bassi house ‘Balolo-djo’” in notes attributed to R. Hugershoff, “Reg. Nr. 85, II. West-Sudan 1907/08, L. Frobenius: Ethn. Ergänzung I (Orig.), Senuffo,” consulted at the Frobenius-Institut an der Johann Wolfgang Goethe Universität, Frankfurt/Main, Folder LF87, 65; transcription by Lucas Hafner and Sam Vangheluwe, translation by Sam Vangheluwe.

3. Performers and Performances

1. For example, see Do Ouattara, interviews by the author, March 25, 2006; May 30, 2007; Dahaba Ouattara, personal communication, April 6, 2006, April 26, 2006, May 20, 2007; Lamissa Bangali, interviews by the author, August 18, 2006; May 21, 2007; Mélégué Traoré, interview by the author, August 31, 2006; Ibrahim Traoré, interview by the author, September 22, 2006; Karfa Coulibaly, interview by the author, January 18, 2007; Aly Traoré, interview by the author, March 12,
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3. Name withheld on request, interview by the author, July 6, 2006.
4. See author’s notes, March 27, 2006.
6. The performance began late on Saturday, April 29, 2006. See author’s notes, April 26, 2006, May 3, 2006, May 4, 2006, May 6, 2006, May 7, 2006, May 10, 2006. Details about the note I wrote for Mélégué Traoré and incorporation of the note into the Kono performance at Bougoula on April 29, 2006, do not appear in my field notes for reasons that elude me, given many other details I recorded in my notebooks. However, on several occasions, I have asked Dahaba Ouattara if my recollection of the account coincides with his. In November 2019, he sent me a WhatsApp message recounting the event (Dahaba Ouattara, personal communication, November 19, 2019). I also described the same event in my dissertation (Gagliardi 2010, 215–216). And my May 19, 2006, response to an undated email from Anne-Marie Traoré with the subject line “Mélégué TRAORE” coincides with my recollection that Mélégué Traoré’s wife, Anne-Marie Traoré, contacted me via email after her husband received the note from me in Bougoula. The mode of information gathering may not be unique to the April 2006 performance in Bougoula. Moussa Travélé, who worked for the French colonial government, relates that Komo performers made pronouncements based on details they gathered before a performance (Travélé 1929, 132).
7. I thank Till Förster for directing me to Erika Fischer-Lichte’s work on performance after he read an early version of this chapter, which I presented at the 2016 African Studies Association annual meeting in Washington DC.
8. Introducing ideas presented through the exhibition “The Language of Beauty in African Art” and its companion publication, Constantine Petridis writes, “Our focus is on concepts that are collective and shared by cultural groups rather than personal and individual. This communal nature also typifies most of the traditional or historical African arts” (2022, 33). Other frameworks have also
shaped twentieth-century studies of masquerade. For example, Will Rea considers the enduring impact of Victor Turner’s distinction between “ordinary life” and “the ‘liminal’” on study of African arts and performances. Rea further suggests that Turner’s framework has limited scholarly understanding of certain arts and performances (Rea 2017; see especially 105–106).

9. Patrick McNaughton (2008) dedicated an entire book to the study of a single performance he witnessed in 1978 and the performer Sidi Ballo, who captured McNaughton’s attention. Other scholars have focused on the particularities of individual masquerades. For example, see Förster 1997, 2012; Strother 1998; Reed 2003, 2016, 2018; Bouttiaux 2009; Haxaire 2009; Carlson 2010; Fenton 2016, 2022; Anderson 2018; Homann 2018. See also Gagliardi 2018a, 2018b; McNaughton 2018.

10. The sight of performers’ faces in the 1950 photograph of a power association performance attributed to Germain Nadal suggests that masks may not always conceal the humanness of performers and transform them into nonhuman entities. Z. S. Strother observes that “scholars have been loath to acknowledge contradictions in costuming that make the human dancer all too visible” (Strother forthcoming). Strother traced the related concept of transformation in studies of masquerade in Theories of Masquerading, a graduate seminar she offered at the University of California, Los Angeles, in the spring of 2005. My participation in the seminar as a graduate student provided a foundation for my own understandings of masquerade. Since 2005, Strother has further developed her analysis of transformation (see Strother 2013, 17–20; 2017). Compare Fischer-Lichte 2008, 75–137.


14. See also the discussion of scales of analysis in Gagliardi and Petridis 2021.


16. Do Ouattara (interviews by the author, March 11, 2006; September 22, 2006) told me on two separate occasions that in the early 1980s, he collected his father’s pension for his father, who used the pension to augment the power of the family’s Komo chapter. On one occasion, he indicated that the pension amounted to a hundred thousand West African CFA francs (fCFA, also known as XOF) every three months. He added that at the time, the fCFA held greater value than

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it did at the time of the interview (Do Ouattara, interview by the author, September 22, 2006).


18. For example, see Lamissa Bangali, interview by the author, August 18, 2006; Do Ouattara, interview by the author, February 26, 2007.


22. Batteries charged by solar panels began to replace generators by 2012, but the cost of solar panels at the time was still expensive for many inhabitants of rural towns in western Burkina Faso.


29. When I inquired about the offering, Mélégué Traoré told me that the former president of Gabon’s national assembly, Guy Nzouba-Ndama, must have offered at least a cow (Mélégué Traoré, interview by the author, August 31, 2006). He did not provide additional details. See author’s notes, September 2, 2006.


31. Scholars have documented politicians’ involvement in rural organizations and events in other areas of West Africa. For example, anthropologist Charles Piot (1999) examines the late President Gnassingbé Eyadéma’s participation in events in rural Kabre communities of present-day Togo. Piot argues that Eyadéma’s
participation in local initiatory wrestling matches reflected a nostalgia for local ceremonies and rural life. Piot also challenges the idea that events in rural African communities are rooted in an ahistorical or unchanging tradition. He posits that the events reflect rural communities’ engagement with modernity. Ethnomusicologist Daniel Reed (2003) demonstrates the relevance of Dan Ge masquerades to politicians, Christians, Muslims, and other constituents in northern Côte d’Ivoire in the 1990s. See also Bouttiaux 2009; Förster 2012.

33. See author’s notes, March 25, 2006, October 13, 2006; see author’s photographs, August 4, 2013. Dahaba Ouattara (personal communication, December 2, 2017) reported that Do Ouattara continues to draw crowds from Côte d’Ivoire and Mali.
35. In the past, certain Wara chapters may have prohibited women from viewing Wara performances. In an April 12, 1953, report on the town of Ngana in the cercle of Sikasso, French colonial administrator Roland Colin refers to “Waratie” or “Wara” and “Wara Mousso” or “Nia” (probably Nya) events that involved the burning of straw. He indicates that “les femmes et les circoncis” (women and circumcised men) risked becoming ill if they saw performances of either organization. But he also explains that “tous les hommes circoncis” (all circumcised men) were affiliated with the Wara, thus suggesting that he meant to write that women and uncircumcised men, rather than circumcised men, risked becoming ill if they saw the Wara performance. Colin specifies that women and uncircumcised men were not allowed to see the town’s Kono. See “Cercle de Sikasso, Canton du Zeguedougou, Village de Ngana, le 12 Avril 1953,” in a folder titled “Monographies” consulted at the archives at the Centre de Recherche pour la Sauvegarde et la Promotion de la Culture Sénoufo in Sikasso, Mali.

4. Unseeing Audiences

1. An earlier version of this chapter appeared as an article in Africa: Journal of the International African Institute as part of a collection of essays on the theme of art and the individual in African masquerades that I guest edited (Gagliardi 2018b; see also Gagliardi 2018a). The text here includes some revisions and additions.
3. For example, see Gallieni 1885, 328; Delahosse 1912, vol. 3, 122–123; Travélé 1929, 138; McNaughton 1988, 130; Brett-Smith 1997; Diamitani 1999, 98; Colley 2009a, 37; cf. Henry 1910, 25, 151; Tauxier 1927, 279; Bangali 2002, 29n6, 150, 248.

Notes
4. For example, see Henry 1910, 25, 151; Tauxier 1927, 279; Travélé 1929, 138; McNaughton 1979a, 37; 1988, 130; Brett-Smith 1997; Diamitani 1999, 98; Colleyn 2009a, 37; Jespers 2001, 56; 2013, 41.


6. Sebou Mathieu Traoré and Lassina Nestor Zanga Traoré also talked with me about the challenges of talking with women and documenting their perspectives. See author’s notes, June 18, 2007.


8. Dahaba Ouattara advised me to work with a female research assistant during the annual marriage festivities in July 2006 and July 2007, and he recommended that I hire Mamina Traoré, who lived in Ouagadougou at the time but returned to Sokouraba for the events. I pursued Ouattara’s suggestion and invited Traoré to work with me. I thank Mamina for the time and thought she devoted to the effort.


12. As Anne-Marie Traoré and I talked, I mentioned that an American acquaintance had suggested I try to hide and catch a glimpse of the masqueraders. I added that I had no interest in sneaking a peek or otherwise violating the trust placed in me.


14. Moussa Travélé (1929, 146–147) describes the beating to death of a pregnant woman who saw a Komo performer. Sarah Brett-Smith details another rare account she collected of a more immediate and overtly violent assault on and murder of a woman who reportedly saw an object she was not authorized to see (Brett-Smith 1994, 319n15; see also Brett-Smith 1997, 73n5; 2005, 148; 2014, 26).


17. Karfa Coulibaly, interview by the author, September 23, 2006; compare Yaya Bangali, interview by the author, January 12, 2012; Karfa Coulibaly, interviews by

20. Jacques Traoré, personal communication, July 7, 2006; Tchipé Traoré, Kletio Sangare, Tafokon Traoré, Nariyere Coulibaly, Tible Traoré, Soubanyo Traoré, Nyowa Traoré, and Kafoulou Traoré, interview by the author, July 9, 2006. For a thoughtful and nuanced discussion that highlights the importance of considering perspectives of elder women in another area of West Africa and recognizes varied viewpoints regarding the practice of excision, see Kart 2020.
21. For an early twentieth-century description of a different event in the three-corner region that reportedly involved women and barred men from participating with women, see “rain and caterpillar sorcery” in notes attributed to R. Hugershoff, “Reg. Nr. 85, II. West-Sudan 1907/08, L. Frobenius: Ethn. Ergänzung I (Orig.), Senuffo,” consulted at the Frobenius-Institut an der Johann Wolfgang Goethe Universität, Frankfurt/Main, Folder LF87, 67–69; transcription by Lucas Hafner and Sam Vangheluwe, translation by Sam Vangheluwe.
22. As noted in chapter one, nyàmbé is the standard Sicité spelling of the term, but in Sokouraba, it is pronounced differently (Nestor Zanga Lassina Traoré, personal communication, August 26, 2007). See also Bangali 2002, 226n1.
23. Other scholars have established the importance of considering women’s contributions to masquerade practices (for example, see Pernet 1982; Adams 1989, 75–76; Aronson 1991). Historian John Thabiti Willis (2014, 2018) demonstrates the importance of women to Egungun masquerade practices in southern Nigeria. Willis also considers how missionary accounts shaped understandings (see, for example, Willis 2018, 22, 91–125). Anthropologist Nicolas Argenti (2007) also acknowledges the role of women in masquerades in his study of the art in Cameroon. Argenti writes, “Later in life, adult women become central to masked performances, despite the rhetoric of female exclusion: not only do they prepare food for the dancers, musicians, and other participants, which is an essential part of the celebration, but they also dance and sing in their own right” (2007, 189).
24. Karfa Coulibaly (interview by the author, January 18, 2007) explained that for a woman, listening to a Kono performance differs from listening to and seeing the event. He said that seeing the event is too dangerous for her. Henry (1910, 151–152) suggests that he once saw women catch a glimpse of masqueraders. He adds that the women could not completely discern what they saw nor admit that they had seen the performers. Compare Dramane Koné and Sita Traoré, interview by the author, January 25, 2007; author’s notes, January 26, 2007. See also Delafosse 1912, vol. 3, 177; Travélé 1929; Jespers 1995, 2001; Diamitani 2004; Colleyn 2009a, 36–37;

25. Dahaba Ouattara (personal communication, April 6, 2006) had previously told me a story about a Kono performer detecting a light illuminated in a woman's house during a performance. As the story went, the performer sought refuge from a power object more powerful than Kono and entered the woman's house, where the woman was with her baby. Scared she would die, the woman wanted to scream. But the Kono performer advised her not to scream. He said if she said nothing, she would not die. When Ouattara and I talked specifically about my attendance at the performance of the Bangali family Komo chapter, Ouattara left me to think that women keep a lamp lit in their rooms overnight for children (author's notes, May 19, 2007).

31. Tlibé Traoré, interviews by the author, January 8, 2012; January 17, 2012; See also author's notes, January 8, 2012.
32. Brett-Smith (2014, 26) describes an oppressive environment for “Bamana women,” a group that includes women familiar with Komo, Kono, and other power associations. She explains, “Bamana women are the foundation of a society built on hierarchy and masculine power.” However, she also suggests that within this context, women’s silence can be a form of agency.
33. Lamissa Bangali, interview by the author, September 6, 2006.
34. See “Reg. Nr. 89, II. West-Sudan 1907/08, L. Frobenius: Ethn. Ergänzung V (Orig.), Senufo-Stämme, Bobo-Bariba-Kurastämme,” consulted at the Frobenius-Institut an der Johann Wolfgang Goethe Universität, Frankfurt/Main, Folder LF91, 21; transcription by Lucas Hafner and Sam Vangheluwe, translation by Sam Vangheluwe. See also Sam Vangheluwe, personal communication, June 9, 2019.
36. For example, see Pernet 1982, 45–46; Tonkin 1983, 169; Cole 2010, 122; see also Bamberger 1974; Taussig 1999, 109–126. And see Willis (2014, 2018) for discussion of the importance of women and women’s capacities to Egungun masquerade practices in southern Nigeria.

Notes
42. Yaya Bangali, interview by the author, January 12, 2012; Karfa Coulibaly, interviews by the author, April 18, 2007; January 20, 2012; Youhali Hebié, interview by the author, April 6, 2007; Tiotio Ouattara, interview by the author, August 5, 2013; Ibrahim Traoré, interview by the author, January 11, 2012; Moukanitien Traoré, interview by the author, January 9, 2012. See also author’s notes, June 18, 2007; Tiblé Traoré, interviews by the author, January 8, 2012; January 17, 2012.
43. Tiotio Ouattara, interview by the author, August 5, 2013.
44. Yaya Bangali, interviews by the author, May 6, 2006; January 12, 2007; Coulibaly Karfa, interview by the author, April 18, 2007; Sita Traoré and Dramane Koné, interview by the author, January 25, 2007; See also author’s notes, March 3, 2007. In addition, Sebou Mathieu Traoré and Lassina Nestor Zanga Traoré told me about a woman, whom they did not name, in Karangasso, a Malian town near the border with Burkina, considered the proprietor of Komo but nevertheless prohibited from seeing Komo. See author’s notes, June 18, 2007.

5. Komo on Screen

1. Souleymane Cissé uses a Bamanakan orthography in the film credits for Yeelen, and his name is listed as Solomani Sisé. However, Souleymane Cissé is the spelling that appears more commonly in print, and it is the spelling that I use throughout this text. The spellings of names of other people involved in the film’s production as well as the spellings of names of the film’s characters vary among sources.

2. My analysis of audiences for Yeelen focuses primarily but not entirely on responses to the film circulating in France and the United States. Awa Toé’s interview with Cissé in Bamako, cited later in this chapter, offers one reaction to the film in Mali. During a visit to Lamissa Bangali’s house in Sokouraba, Burkina Faso, in January 2012, I spotted a DVD case that appeared to contain a copy of Yeelen. Bangali’s son, Piéko Bangali, was staying in the house at the time, and I did not have an opportunity to interview him about the film (author’s notes, January 9, 2012). I planned to watch Yeelen with power association leader Karfa Coulibaly and my research associate Dahaba Ouattara during a trip to northern Côte d’Ivoire in late December 2016 and early January 2017. I imagined asking them questions about...
the film. I also intended to see if other people in the area would talk with me about it. Unfortunately, a head-on collision near Korhogo on the day after my arrival in the country interrupted my plans. I was medically evacuated by airplane from the country on the day after the accident. When Coulibaly and Ouattara visited me in a Korhogo hospital hours before my evacuation, I tried to watch the film with them on my laptop. But after we started to watch *Yeelen* together in my hospital room, they informed me that the situation made it difficult for them to focus on the film. We aborted the effort. In March 2018, I watched scenes from *Yeelen* with Ibrahim Traoré Banakourou in Amsterdam, the Netherlands. Traoré, whose family traces its history to the three-corner region and other areas of West Africa, studied Komo with his grandfather in Bougoula, Mali, and has continued to study with specialists across the region since the early 2000s, when he moved from Mali to the Netherlands. Traoré and I discussed the scenes during our meeting in Amsterdam and later corresponded about the film via email and a telephone conversation (Ibrahim Traoré Banakourou, personal communication, March 17, 2018, April 6, 2018; email communication, March 21, 2018).


4. Moussa Travéle (1929, 139n1) defines *soma* as a “title given to the master of Komo; it signifies talent in the science of the affairs of Komo.”


8. See also Cissé in Panh 1991.

9. I thank Z. S. Strother for her discussions with me about *Yeelen* and publications about it, including Manthia Diawara’s texts.

10. For example, see Cissé and Senga 1987, 134. In the credits for the film, Cissé acknowledges entities in Mali, Burkina Faso, France, Germany, and Japan, in that order.


13. For example, see Cissé 1984, 973.

14. See undated typed notes, consulted at the Archives départementales de la Seine-Saint-Denis, Fonds de l’Association technique de recherches et d’informations audiovisuelles (ATRIA), 257J/398 PANH Rithy. When I consulted the notes at the Archives départementales de la Seine-Saint-Denis, outside Paris, France, I had not previously seen any reference to the materials in published sources on Yeelen or Cissé’s film practice.


16. Cissé 1984, 973. See also undated typed notes, consulted at the Archives départementales de la Seine-Saint-Denis, Fonds de l’Association technique de recherches et d’informations audiovisuelles (ATRIA), 257J/398 PANH Rithy.


19. Visual artists and authors who identify in some way as African or as linked to the African continent have reported that they have encountered expectations of authenticity, especially among European and North American audiences. Common conceptions of authenticity or African authenticity may puzzle, frustrate, or fuel visual artists and authors, who often see narrowness in the notions. For example, visual artist Yinka Shonibare repeatedly recounts a moment when an instructor at his art school in London questioned Shonibare’s artistic engagement with Perestroika, a political movement in the Soviet Union in the 1980s. The instructor asked him to create “‘authentic African art.’” Shonibare wondered about the kinds of work that constituted such art. His instructor’s expectations prompted Shonibare to investigate perceptions of authenticity and entangled identities in his art practice (e.g., Kaplan and Shonibare 2002; Sontag 2009; see also Enwezor 1997; Hynes
Similarly, in her widely viewed TEDGlobal talk of 2009, “The Danger of a Single Story,” Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, who has earned degrees from American universities, recalls that one of her professors once deemed one of her stories as not being “authentically African.” Adichie recognized a critique in the comment. She explains, “I was quite willing to contend that there were a number of things wrong with the novel, that it had failed in a number of places, but I had not quite imagined that it had failed at achieving something called African authenticity. In fact, I did not know what African authenticity was” (Adichie 2009). Compare Wainaina 2005.

20. I cite the dialogue in Yeelen as presented in the English subtitles for the film provided by A. Whitelaw and W. Byron. The credits also refer to Titra Film, Subtitling Paris (Compare L’Avant-scène cinéma 1998, 33–48).

21. Kassim Koné characterizes the scene as a “dramatized yet realistic Kɔmɔ ceremony” and reflects on the song featured in it (2022, 247).

22. Nyanankoro’s mother is the one major character in the film whose name is unclear. In Panh’s 1991 documentary on Souleymane Cissé, Sumba Traoré, who plays the mother, is identified with the character Mâh. An undated and unsigned synopsis as well as an undated and unsigned script for the film identifies the character’s name as Banièba. See Archives départementales de la Seine-Saint-Denis, Fonds de l’Association technique de recherches et d’informations audiovisuelles (ATRIA), 257J/166–7 CISSÉ Souleymane.


24. Undated typed notes, consulted at the Archives départementales de la Seine-Saint-Denis, Fonds de l’Association technique de recherches et d’informations audiovisuelles (ATRIA), 257J/398 PANH Rithy.

25. Ibrahim Traoré Banakourou described actual pestles that power association leaders use to track criminals (personal communication, March 17, 2018).

26. The synopsis varies from the final film in other ways. Bafing, played by Isimayila Sar, who died during the production of the film, is identified as Nyanankoro’s father rather than his uncle in the synopsis, suggesting that the synopsis reflects an early conception of the film. After Sar’s death, Cissé rewrote the film. See “Yeelen (La Lumiere), © Souleymane Cisse,” consulted at the Archives départementales de la Seine-Saint-Denis, Fonds de l’Association technique de recherches et d’informations audiovisuelles (ATRIA), 257J/166–7 CISSÉ Souleymane (Compare L’Avant-scène cinéma 1998, 7–26).


28. Ibrahim Traoré Banakourou (personal communication, March 17, 2018) suggested a slightly different meaning for these words. He indicated that the
meaning of what the Komo leader says in Bamanankan refers more broadly to the objects and installations of Komo and not specifically to the mask.

29. Delinda Collier claims that “Cissé was especially interested in Stanley Kubrick’s 2001: A Space Odyssey” (2020, 56), and she uses imagery from Yeelen and 2001 to support her statement. Collier focuses her discussion on a comparison of the scene of Nyanankoro creating a power object at the mound in Cissé’s film with the “Dawn of Man” sequence in Kubrick’s film (Collier 2020, 55–60). Other observers have also compared Yeelen to Kubrick’s 1968 film (e.g., Stein 1987; Cousins 2012). Film director and critic Mark Cousins states that “Yeelen is as big as Lawrence of Arabia. As shape-shifting as 2001: A Space Odyssey. A magic-realist film, and one of cinema’s most complex works of art” (Cousins 2012). An early instance of the comparison of Yeelen to 2001 appears in the November 1987 issue of Film Comment, published by the Film Society of Lincoln Center. In the issue, film critic Elliott Stein (1987, 68) includes Yeelen in his review of the twenty-fifth New York Film Festival. Stein characterizes Cissé’s film as “the best African film ever made.” He notes the film is “one for film history books as yet unwritten.” He also states, “There are moments [in Yeelen] which may evoke 2001 or Star Wars.” Stein’s comments apparently shaped subsequent descriptions of Yeelen. For example, Stein’s praise for Yeelen in Film Comment starts the overview of Cissé’s film included on Martin Roberts’s spring 1996 syllabus for 21F 853 African Cinemas at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (February 16, 1996, http://web.mit.edu/course/21/21f.853/OldFiles/21f853-home.html). The overview also indicates that Yeelen “may remind viewers of 2001: A Space Odyssey.” A schedule for the Society of Research on African Cultures African Film Festival 97 at Montclair State University (November 14, 1997, https://www.sorac.net/site/1997/11/sorac-african-film-festival-97/) repeats the same information about Yeelen that appears on Roberts’s syllabus. But Stein’s 1987 assessment of Yeelen offers additional nuance. While the film critic names 2001 and Star Wars in his review of Yeelen, he resists close comparisons. He asserts that “these [attempts to compare Yeelen to 2001 or Star Wars] are also likely to be outsider references—attempts, perhaps futile, to come to terms with an extraordinary enclosed world which seems to embody universal themes.” Collier offers an analysis that challenges Stein’s thoughts about close comparison. As someone who has studied cinema from around the world, Cissé may have a broad range of references in mind as he works.

30. For example, see Clifford 1988, 55–91; Richards 2006.

31. For example, see Jansen 2000; Van Beek and Jansen 2000. See also McNaughton 2000, 182; Austen 2007, 328n29.


33. For example, see Rouch and Dieterlen 1969.

Notes
34. Undated typed notes, consulted at the Archives départementales de la Seine-Saint-Denis, Fonds de l’Association technique de recherches et d’informations audiovisuelles (ATRIA), 257J/398 PANH Rithy.
37. Undated typed notes, consulted at the Archives départementales de la Seine-Saint-Denis, Fonds de l’Association technique de recherches et d’informations audiovisuelles (ATRIA), 257J/398 PANH Rithy.
38. Undated typed notes, consulted at the Archives départementales de la Seine-Saint-Denis, Fonds de l’Association technique de recherches et d’informations audiovisuelles (ATRIA), 257J/398 PANH Rithy.
39. Undated typed notes, consulted at the Archives départementales de la Seine-Saint-Denis, Fonds de l’Association technique de recherches et d’informations audiovisuelles (ATRIA), 257J/398 PANH Rithy.
40. Typed notes, consulted at the Archives départementales de la Seine-Saint-Denis, Fonds de l’Association technique de recherches et d’informations audiovisuelles (ATRIA), 257J/398 PANH Rithy.
42. Cissé recuperated a scene featuring Sar and Balla Moussa Keïta, who plays Ruma Boly, to honor Sar in Yeelen. Cissé casts Sar in the role of Nyanankoro’s uncle Bafing. He follows it with a short scene of Sar cresting a hill under the setting sun. The sunset scene honors Sar and his death. It also prefigures the film’s final scene. In the accompanying song, Salif Keïta’s lyrics praise wise elders and caution them to avoid conflict with younger generations (Ibrahim Traoré Banakourou, email communication, March 21, 2018; personal communication, April 6, 2018). Cissé constructs a scene that—in less than a minute—honors a key actor and summarizes a critical theme in the film. See also comments about Sar, identified in the document as Saar, and Sar’s death in typed notes, consulted at the Archives départementales de la Seine-Saint-Denis, Fonds de l’Association technique de recherches et d’informations audiovisuelles (ATRIA), 257J/398 PANH Rithy.
43. Members of the film crew Jean-Noël Ferragut (interviews by the author, June 21, 2017; June 26, 2017), Jean-Michel Humeau (interview by the author, June 26, 2017), and Daniel Ollivier (interview by the author, June 24, 2017) described some of the same challenges. See also “Souleymane Cissé: Cinéaste de notre temps, un film de Rithy Panh,” undated film prospectus, 12, consulted at the Archives départementales de la Seine-Saint-Denis, Fonds de l’Association technique de recherches et d’informations audiovisuelles (ATRIA), 257J/398 PANH Rithy.

Notes
44. I thank film scholar Karla Oeler for sharing with me her insights into the self-reflexive aspect of the film (Karla Oeler, personal communication, December 8, 2016, May 31, 2017). See also Lelièvre 2013.


46. Undated film prospectus, 12, consulted at the Archives départementales de la Seine-Saint-Denis, Fonds de l’Association technique de recherches et d’informations audiovisuelles (ATRIA), 257J/398 PANH Rithy.


49. See notes for “Souleymane Cissé: Cinéaste de notre temps, un film de Rithy Panh,” consulted at the Archives départementales de la Seine-Saint-Denis, Fonds de l’Association technique de recherches et d’informations audiovisuelles (ATRIA), 257J/398 PANH Rithy.

Coda