



# Reading The Tropes And Trajectories Of Amadou Hampâté Bâ's French Novel *L'étrange Destin De Wangrin* ("The Strange Destiny Of Wangrin")

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**Abstract:** This current article is a reading the tropes and trajectories of Amadou Hampate BA's French novel *L'étrange destin de Wangrin* ("The Strange Destiny of Wangrin") and which was written and published in French by Amadou Hampâté Bâ in 1973. He was one of the Malian famous writers, novelists, historians and traditionalists who had a strong passion of telling histories and stories across Mali and elsewhere, specifically in Africa. However, the said novel talks about the life of a man whose figurative name was Wangrin. Wangrin was from a Malian ethnic/tribal group which we call Bamanan and which is the most popular one in Mali. Because of that, their language is also the most spoken one across the entire country. Amadou Hampâté Bâ got to know Wangrin during his different visits with his uncle from the mother's side.

This uncle's name was Hammadoun Pâté and was also a best friend of Wangrin at that time. The uncle was considered as Amadou's adoptive father too because he was doing everything to him that he did for his own children. Amadou Hampâté Bâ followed his uncle when going to different places, especially Wangrin's shop. In such circumstances, they got to know each other when he was only twelve years old in 1912. Amadou Hampâté Bâ was only a little boy at this moment and he was very passionate in telling stories. He inherited this from a man whose name was *Kullel* ("Fulfuldé's Child") in their local language.

Therefore, *Kullel* was regarded as the most famous and greatest storyteller in their entire village at this time. He was living in the compound of Amadou's uncle. Which gave a great opportunity to Amadou to learn many stories with *Kullel*. Amadou also, in his turn, liked telling the same stories to people, a behavior which was appreciated so much by Wangrin and through which he was deeply impressed by the little boy Amadou. During a visit of Amadou and his uncle, Wangrin told to his new friend (Amadou Hampâté Bâ) that he would like from him to write down the story of his whole life which became later very confused and even strange given to different situations.

But he told to Amadou not to mention his right name in order to avoid any feeling of superiority or inferiority from his family's side in the future. So, he advised Amadou Hampâté Bâ to keep all his anonymity by calling him Wangrin rather than his right name. As already promised by Amadou Hampâté Bâ, he also wrote and published the novel on behalf of Wangrin as his name.

**Keywords:** colonization, rivalry, tradition, money, jealousy, education

## I. INTRODUCTION

The original version of this novel is written in French because the author, Amadou Hampâté Bâ is from a West African French speaking country (Mali). He wrote this novel *L'étrange destin de Wangrin* which in English literal translation is ("The Strange Destiny of Wangrin"). Why a Strange Destiny? – Because if we try to see the entire life of the main character (Wangrin), from the beginning, up to the last day of his life, we get to understand that he got a bad or even a terrible end during the last day of his life. Wangrin was a child from a traditional and royal family, which gave him the greatest opportunity to be taken and sent to the French School called at that time *L'Ecole des Otages* ("The School of Hostages").

However, this act was a rule established by the French colonizers in order to prevent from, whoever, supposed from the different royal families, succeeding his king father. He therefore became the most educated person in his whole village after the completion of his training. It should be said here that; he was a fruit of a French education which was something that everybody could not get as an opportunity at that time, especially when we image now the importance of going to school. It must additionally be said here that; just because most of children's parents were totally against to see their own children going to learn the French culture in that school.

A very few people did not benefit from this opportunity for the simple reason that their parents refused to let them go in order to attend the French Schools. The French School's name was *L'Ecole des Otages* ("The School of Hostages"). We called it like this due to the fact that the colonized people did not want at all to let their children attend the colonizers' schools just for sake of their cultures, dignity, honor and so on. As a tentative solution undertaken, the colonizers forced what we called at that time the indigenous people to let their children attend school or even take their children with force from them. The children from royal families specially underwent this situation. They were kept at that school and could only see their parents than during the holidays or vacations.

This process of taking their children by force and without their own will for attending school and the fact of keeping them with restriction gave birth to the name in French *L'Ecole des Otages* ("The School of Hostages"). Wangrin was taken to *L'Ecole des Otages* ("The School of Hostages") where he successfully got his Certificate of Primary School with distinction. At that time, the French colonizers' law did not allow what they called "Indigenous People" (the colonized people) going beyond such level of education. They decided as such for the simple reason that they were afraid of seeing one day, a child from one of their colonized countries becoming the most educated person with the same educational background like them.

It was somehow so selfish and so bad to such a point that it prevented many children of this so called "Indigenous Class" from getting higher degrees. Let us take an example on Wangrin to see if he was given such opportunity, he would be more educated than he was. Besides, he would have more progress for his professional career than he had before his reconversion to become a businessman. He was a very brilliant pupil when was taken to this School of Hostages and this is why he got his Certificate with distinction. Wangrin was very much appreciated by the French people and some even scared him.

After he got his Certificate of Primary School, he came back in his village *Nouibigou* in the country of *Mandé* ("one of the former big Empires in West Africa before the colonial period"). A moment later, he was appointed in *Diagaramba* by the "French Representative" ("the Commander") as a Teaching Instructor. He impressed everybody in his village and he was considered and respected by everyone. He became one of the very important personalities because by seeing him as an educated child of the village and who also could defend their causes.

But Wangrin's main mission was to convince as many as young villagers to come to school. One of the best wishes of the "French Representative" ("the Commander") was that, but something which was not until this moment considered and appreciated by the eldest people of his village. Wangrin should come to the French Representative's office for his weekly report every end of the week. It is during these exchanges between the two men that The French Representative realized that Wangrin was even more skillful than he was told about it by his fellow French citizens. They remained in this situation until one day, he was called by the same French Representative and announced that he would be his office Interpreter.

This new appointment was not that surprising because Wangrin, beyond his excellent oral and written skills in French, could also speak more than eight different local languages across West African countries. But it is not to forget that the author, Amadou Hampâté Bâ and Wangrin, the main character of the novel, spent three months on their work, which was the narration of Wangrin's entire life story. They were assisted during all the process by Wangrin's *griot* ("West African storyteller and whose main role is to maintain peace between people") whose name was Dieli-Madi. It took three months for them to complete the whole process.

## 1. Type of the Novel and the Beginning of Wangrin's Career

This novel is a historical one because the author was telling us the whole life story of the main character who was Wangrin. Therefore, Wangrin, after his graduation from what we called at that time, The School of Hostages, he started working in *Diagaramba*, the Capital City of the Empire of *Namaci*. He was appointed by the "French Representative" ("the Commander") at this position as a Teaching Instructor and his mission was to create a school where the French culture and, of course, the French language as well would be taught. The French Commander who was at the same time, the Representative of the French Colony, would pay a monthly visit in Wangrin's school.

At the same time, he required Wangrin to come in his office every Thursday for a weekly report of his created school, history to be aware exactly and closely about what was going on inside the said French School opened by Wangrin. They remained as such until, one day, after a conversation with Wangrin (conversation between the French Commander and Wangrin), he proposed to Wangrin an appointment a working position as an Interpreter inside his office just because Wangrin knew very well how to speak French oppositely to the old rifleman. That old rifleman was the Interpreter of the "French Representative" ("the Commander").

From what he told to Wangrin, this old rifleman was imposed to him as his Interpreter. So, he was not appreciating at all the linguistic skills of him just because he was speaking *Forofifon naspa* ("a non-standard French language which has no grammatical rule, etc."). In other word, *Forofifon naspa* was what we could call ("a bronken French") with no grammatical rules. This old rifleman's name was Racoutié and who led Wangrin in the office of the French Representative just after his arrival in *Diagaramba*. In this sense, Wangrin was received first by the king Bouagui and was offered many gifts by him. But the king charged his *Maabo Sammyala* ("the king's *griot*: his spokesman") to give all the gifts to Wangrin.

This was a traditional custom in African ancient cultures, especially, in that of Mali as well; that a king would not directly interact with a third person. He would rather do it via his *griot* ("spokesman"). Hence, the king Bouagui was a very peaceful man except if someone tried to interfere on his path. He was after received by the prince Lakim Fal, the eldest son of the king Bouagui. In the end, Wangrin was received by the Youth's Association of *Waaldé Wenndou*. After his reception by the *Waaldé Wenndou* Youth's Association, his house was cleaned by the young ladies of the Association as they always used to do it. That action symbolized their close brotherhood relationship.

## 2. Wangrin's Welcoming Ceremony in *Diagaramba* and the Beginning of his Conflict with the Interpreter Rifle Old man Racoutié

From now on, Wangrin should not consider himself as an isolated man nor a foreigner any more in *Diagaramba*. So, it remained now to Wangrin to learn how to speak *Fulfuldé* ("Fulani language"). But until now, what Wangrin ignored was that; he had an invisible rival or even an invisible enemy. This was one of the big issues in this story and that invisible rival or enemy was Racoutié, the old man Interpreter of the Commander who spoke *Forofifon naspa* ("broken French"). One day, after Racoutié went to attend a class which was held by Wangrin, he was so jealous at him that he went out immediately. Then, he started spoiling Wangrin's name by telling people that Wangrin was nothing than a bearded baby.

He also added that Wangrin did not know anything than spending all his time in running with his pupils and singing, jumping. That was something that made unpleasant Wangrin when he heard this from people who were for his side. The two men were living close one another. But Racoutié was feeling a terrible fear towards Wangrin so as not to be seen himself replaced by him one fine day; because he already knew how good and

fluent the latter was to speak French with *couleur vin de Bordeaux* ("Bordeaux's wine color") according to Racoutié himself.

However, Racoutié was one hundred percent sure of Wangrin's skillfulness in the French language. Despite of all of this, he could not stop telling bad things on Wangrin's name. He would even call him sometimes an adult-child or a bearded baby in front of people. He was always humiliating Wangrin publicly. He even added: " What do you think of an adult who spends all his time in running, jumping, dancing, singing with children, otherwise, that he himself, is a baby or an idiot?" Severely mortified by this backbiting, Wangrin opened up about it to his *griot* Kountena.

Therefore, Kountena said: " O Wangrin! My friend! When a morally and physically unclean man kicks you in the shadows, you have to give him ten publicly. Otherwise, the bastard will go around saying that the nature deprived you of limbs to respond. Show Racoutié that you are far from being a paralytic. Prove to him that God has not only given you good limb, but that the appendages of your trunk are ending in sharper claws and more powerful than those of the lion and the great leopard."

- What should I do? Asked Wangrin to Kountena.
- Let us go and confide in old Jaawando Adougui Mansou.

When they went to *Jaawando*'s house, the old man and the most listened and considered person by the whole community because of his wisdom.

Wangrin's *griot* Kountena took the speech in addressing to the old man *Jaawando*. Our father, we are here today in your house to ask for protection of my friend Wangrin. We would also like from you to consider him as your own son. That was an honor which deeply touched *Jaawando* and he reassured them that; they could reply on his every time support whenever they wished it from him. Now, Wangrin, he was one hundred percent sure that he had just got a host family in *Diagaramba*. They, then asked for road with the old man *Jaawando* in giving him some presents they had brought; which is something symbolic and sign of respect in Malian cultures. After, Kountena, suggested Wangrin to go and ask for protection with *Tierno Siddi* who was the big *marabout* ("a Muslim holy man or mystic, especially in parts of Africa").

There, they did the same thing and they were accepted by that one too. As long as they left *Tierno Siddi*'s house, Kountena reassured Wangrin not to worry again about Racoutié's side. The rifle old man and the Interpreter of the French Representative who systematically turned himself into Wangrin's number one enemy. Kountena told Wangrin that if Racoutié tried again to miss him respect publicly as he used to do it, he should not hesitate to show to Racoutié that he was an authentic *Bamanan* from *Noubigou*. This meant that Wangrin should be ready for taking revenge from his opponent Racoutié.

One Sunday, when "indigenous civil servants" ("name given by the French colonizers") were gathered to have chat each other, Racoutié did not miss repeating his habit which was to publicly downgrade Wangrin. He stood up and said: " I am Racoutié, former Sergeant of *Fantirimori* ("colonial infantry") class number 1885, ID number 6666. I am currently the Interpreter of the "French Representative" ("the Commander"). I am his eyes, his ears and his mouth. Today, thank God, I am the closest person to the French Representative's ears. The great favors which I, Racoutié, enjoy with the great white chief, earn me the mortal jealousy of the one whom I refuse to name because it would be too honored.

But I swear by the quality of milk that I have sucked from my mother's breast, my enemy will know that the breasts to whom I owe the day, have not secreted a liquid for a scoundrel or an idiot. Before, the end of a short cycle of a few sunrises and sunsets, I will make him feel bitterly who I am. I will make him taste first-hand how I treat any ill-educated adult who insists on remaining a toddler while smoothing a beard that has only grown on his chin to better demonstrate his imbecility and not his moral and intellectual maturity." This declaration vexed everyone unexpectedly, but made laugh some people in a thoughtless way.

Everybody kept quiet and even the traditional guitar player who did not know any more what exactly to play. Wangrin immediately stood up because he knew this address from Racoutié was for him though Racoutié did not directly mention Wangrin's name. Wangrin addressed to Racoutié in saying: " O man, you who boasts of having been marked with the number 6666, just like a bovine, know that if a man can ignore which dish of food is intended for him when several are served at the same time. On the other hand, he will not be forgiven not to be so stupid as not to be able to discern the allusions made to him. When a man insults his enemies without naming them, he hides behind anonymity to avoid having a determined enemy to call him for account.

But everything changes when he specifies by saying "the enemy with whom I fought hand to hand last night ". As it happens, I am that enemy for you. I do not have a hundred thousand cowrie shells to give. Even if I had them, I would be careful not to use them to buy souls. You were planning to prove to me before long that you sucked a fortifying milk from your mother. I advise you to prove it to me right now. Otherwise, it could be that tomorrow you find great misfortune at your door". Racoutié, surprised by Wangrin's exit and reply, slapped him on the right cheek. Without losing the calm that demonstrates his strength, Wangrin burst out laughing and said: "Out of consideration for those present, I will let this slap pass."

Instead of trying to repair his wrong, Racoutié gave a second slap on Wangrin's left cheek. Wangrin cried out: " It is pity that I do not have a third cheek to receive another slap, because it seems that the palm of your hand is full of slap? Faced with Wangrin's impassivity, Racoutié became even angrier. He frothed with rage and raised his hand to give a third slap. Wangrin grabbed Racoutié's hand and before the latter could regain his composure, he twisted it on his back. He took advantage of this uncomfortable position and with a turn of his hips, tipped him over and spread him on the ground under the weight of his own body. Racoutié got to know at that time that it was not as easy as he thought in fighting Wangrin. He was humiliated in front of everyone. He got his jaw shifted by Wangrin and his nose was bleeding severely.

Meanwhile, *Alkati* ("the district guard in charge of the city police") came with his huge sword. He blew his whistle, dispersed the crowd, then separated the wrestlers and said to them: " You are both people from the administration. There can be no question for me to lock you in until tomorrow I should. Therefore, I leave you free, but I order you to be in front of the Commander's Office tomorrow morning at eight o'clock sharp". Wangrin and Racoutié's quarrel was on everybody's lip during the whole night in the village. Everybody was astonished to the way Wangrin got to beat his opponent Racoutié. For them, it should rather be the contrary because Racoutié was physically stronger than Wangrin. But something everyone forgot to realize, which was that; the strength does not matter much sometimes during a fight, also the technique. And Wangrin had already this technique.

As already scheduled by *Alkati*, the next day morning, the two men got together in front of the Commander's Office. Abougui Mansou immediately entered in the Commander's Office and started accusing Racoutié. Racoutié was totally wrong because he was the first to verbally attack Wangrin. Not only that, he was also the first to raise his hand on Wangrin. He did these two wrong things in front of everyone and he could not deny at all his facts. But Wangrin succeeded to control himself in avoiding to repost against Racoutié. At eight o'clock, *Alkati* went in the Commander's Office and reported the quarrel to him. The Commander fined Racoutié heavily, not only because Racoutié humiliated him as his Interpreter, but also, he had already received the visit of Abougui Mansou in the previous night. During this evening visit of Abougui Mansou in the Commander's place, he transmitted the message of all the notables of *Diagaramba* village to the Commander that they would not hesitate at all to protest in case the Commander judged in favor of Racoutié just because he is his Interpreter.

Abougui Mansou added to the Commander: " Do not forget that Wangrin is a member of *Waaldé Wenndou*, the most influential Youth's Association in *Diagaramba*. This association was capable to go for any kind of troubles or risks in case of lack of justice". The worst of all was to have Abougui Mansou against someone in *Diagaramba* and the Commander did know that already. When the "French Representative" ("the Commander") heard this report from Abougui Mansou, he opened his own investigation. Then, he even went to try convincing Wangrin to avoid the situation getting worse. In the meantime, Racoutié became an object of mockery by everybody. Even children did not respect him anymore. Nobody greeted him no more on the street

as it used to be. He was humiliated and he was feeling ashamed. To avoid all these situations, he asked the Commander to transfer him in another area, a thing that was accepted by the Commander.

The Commander sent a letter to his hierarchy about Racoutié's transfer by requesting at the same time Wangrin as his Interpreter. It was at that time that Wangrin also started his excellent career of Interpreter. Wangrin was appreciated by everyone in *Diagaramba* because of his kindness. He was a kind of individual who was always ready to come to poor people in help no matter what happened. It even happened sometimes to him to illegally take money from the rich people with his intelligence so as to solve the financial issue of a poor person. Wangrin was a very smart person. This gift which was given to him helped him escaping so many difficult and complicated situations. He was sometimes appreciated by some French administrators, but not quite by some others.

Wangrin got many other opponents and enemies during his career. Some were from his own side, people from the same area like him, but also, others from the colonial administrators' side. One of the most known enemies from his area side was Romo. Romo did everything to eliminate Wangrin, but he could not unfortunately just because Wangrin was always smarter than him in front every single trap he tried for Wangrin. Romo also used to be an Interpreter in the colonial administration, but did not have the same competences like Wangrin. And definitely, he got shifted by Wangrin in the same position. That was something, Romo could not understand and accept as well. As a result, that situation turned him to hate Wangrin deep in his heart. He became the number one enemy for Wangrin until the last day of Wangrin's life. The second and fearing enemy of Wangrin was Jean-Jacques de Villermoz. He was the Deputy of the Commander and a very lazy person. Because of his laziness, he would always sign in blank documents in advance and leave them with Wangrin.

This very bad behavior from Jean-Jacques Villermoz cost him very expensive and even plunged him in a very difficult situation. Wangrin took advantage of this bad behavior from Jean-Jacques de Villermoz to do something else as his own business. In the end, the dirty business of Wangrin was discovered, but on behalf of Jean-Jacques de Villermoz because he had his signature on all the official documents with fake declarations. The discovery of this bad source of making money feared everybody, staring by the Commander, Wangrin himself, but the one who was the most struck by the fact was Jean-Jacques de Villermoz. He was suspended for a long period; something which made him hate Wangrin deep in his heart; because he knew that he was not responsible for that at all, but he had nothing as evidence to prove it. On all the documents, he had his signature.

### 3. End of Wangrin's Career and the Last Moment of his Life

Finally, Wangrin got many difficulties and he went through several tough situations. But because of his smartness, he succeeded to escape many of them. From one hand, he was not that always in good terms with the French people and another hand, he had absolutely no right to screw his guards over his enemy brother Romo. The latter had sworn to take his revenge over Wangrin no matter what. Romo was convinced that; it is because of Wangrin's conspiracy with the French people that he was overthrown by Wangrin in order to take his working position as Interpreter in the Office of the French Representative in *Dioussola*. Romo went through so many temptations trying to compete with Wangrin, but he could not and he would always newly get something else bad as trap from Wangrin than the previous ones.

Wangrin was so many times smarter than Romo. Beyond of all of that; he was more educated than Romo because Romo did not get this opportunity that Wangrin got to attend the French School of Hostages. That school was the most prestigious one at that time over all the French colonies in West Africa. So, as a result, Wangrin was more skillful and more experienced than Romo, especially in speaking French orally. That competences Wangrin had, gave him another chance to easily make himself understand with the French Representative. We should not forget in all this story that Wangrin did not come in *Dioussola* by his own choice or his own will. He was sent to there just after he won his case with Jean-Jacques de Villermoz. This case won by Wangrin was something shameful for the French community because they could not believe at all that such kind of situation could happen between a French citizen and their so-called "indigenous man" ("colonized man"). They could not therefore accept that; a barefoot negro like Wangrin according to what they were calling him, could dare putting them down.

So, in order to take their revenge over Wangrin, the French government decided to deal with the situation as such after Jean-Jacques lost his case against Wangrin. This transfer to *Dioussola* was not at all appreciated by Wangrin, but he had absolutely no other choice or decision to make than going there. Once he arrived in *Dioussola*, he was again appreciated by everyone there just because of kindness and caring behavior towards everybody, especially, towards people in need. *Dioussola* was the last place where Wangrin served as an indigenous civil servant under the French colonial rule. It was also where he ended his story because he finally resigned from his status as an Interpreter to become a well-known trader/businessman in all *Dioussola* city. During a stay in Dakar ("Capital City of Senegal"), he unluckily met a French so-called couple, but which cost him severely later for the remaining of his life.

Wangrin saw for the first time the so-called lady Madam Terreau in a café-restaurant in Dakar during his stay. The lady got interested in him because she knew that Wangrin might be a rich man. She did her best to get in touch with Wangrin so as to succeed getting what she exactly wanted from him. She definitely succeeded to it as a woman and beautiful too. He was feeling in love towards the so-called Madam Terreau. He proposed to "them" ("Madam Terreau and her so-called husband, Mr. Terreau") to join him in his country for a business purpose. Because Mr. Terreau knew much more in mechanics, they agreed to open a garage in Wangrin's country. But Wangrin would be the CEO ("Chief Executive Officer"). The so-called couple Terreau came in Soudan ("current Republic of Mali"). They started their business as already planned with Wangrin and everything was going well. They were making money and that additional project multiplied Wangrin's source of revenue.

Because he was still feeling something else special towards the so-called Madam Terreau, he could not abstain himself telling his feeling to her. One day, he told to her that since the very first day he saw her in that café-restaurant, he fell in love with her. But because his ancient spirits forbid him to go for love with a married woman, then he did not tell or propose anything to her. It was at that time that; the truth was discovered by Wangrin when the so-called Madam Terreau explained him everything clearly. She laughed out loudly and told him: " From confidence to confidence, I am not legally married to Mr. Terreau. In France, I was Secretary to a great Minister of whom I was also his mistress. But he was involved in a shady financial affair. His government fell and the police became interested in me. Afraid that I would not speak, my boss entrusted me to a ship Captain to come to Dakar."

Then, Wangrin asked her about Mr. Terreau and she told him that she did not know much about Mr. Terreau's past. She added that, it might be the same situation like hers, or something linked to love issues probably. Wangrin told her that; because everybody already knows you as Madam Terreau, I will also continue to call you so. Wangrin told her not to report anything to her supposed husband Mr. Terreau about what would happen between them. He caressed her hand gently and ended up patting her on the back, saying: " You and I, Madam Terreau, where shall we not go? From that moment, they started living romantically until one day, Mme. Terreau proposed to Wangrin a glass of mixed alcohol because he was complaining not feeling that well in his body. He was feeling very stressed because he had one million things to solve at the same time.

Wangrin had so many things to handle at the same time. So, it was absolutely normal he got such kind of anxiety, but he was not understanding that. He took this glass of mixed alcohol and Madam Terreau gave him a second one and more again. Definitely, he got drunk and fell asleep. He became completely unconscious because he had never ever drunk any kind of substance like alcohol and let alone a mixed alcohol. When he came back to his conscience, he asked to Madam Terreau about what happened to him. She explained him what happened. That first time of drinking a mixed alcohol became something part of Wangrin's life from that moment. He became more and more addicted to alcohol. He started losing his aptitude of managing his own business.

Therefore, Madam Terreau became his everything in terms of managerial stuff of his business. She was an educated woman and she had a Degree in Accountancy according to what her so-called husband Mr. Terreau said to Wangrin. For this reason, Wangrin even left to her the management of the financial issue of the company he was the CEO. In the meantime, Wangrin was getting deeper and deeper in his attitude of drunkard and he

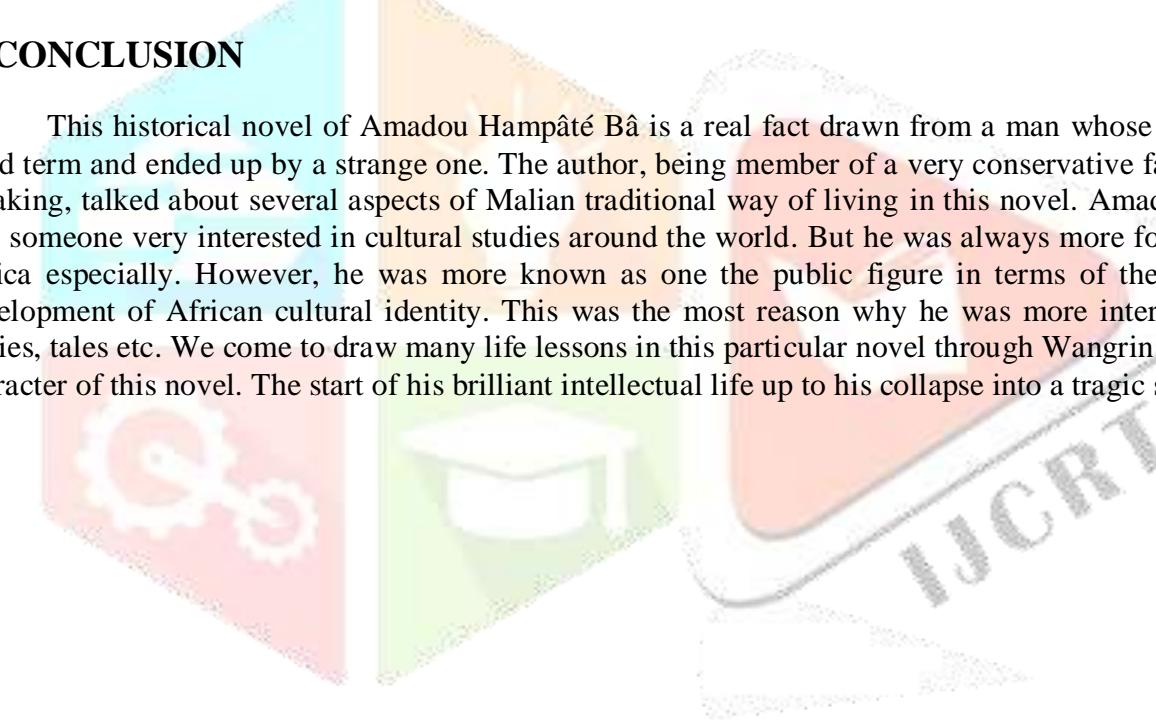
was no more able to look after his own business. After several temptations from the couple Terreau trying to get him back on the right path, Wangrin could not be recuperated unfortunately.

And at the same time, the couple Terreau was blamed by the rest of the Europeans for being the employees of a negro. As a result, one fine day, Wangrin was surprised to notice that the so-called couple Terreau was no more in *Dioussola*. Mr. Terreau and Madam Terreau vanished in the nature without leaving any trace behind them. Nobody knew how; when and where they succeeded to leave the city out of sight of no one. The worst of all that was they completely disappeared with a great amount of Wangrin's money. They were searched everywhere, but no way to find them out. Wangrin's bankruptcy and misfortune began from that day.

He became very hopeless and he could not find any other mean to release himself from this heartbreak than keeping drinking alcohol. He became someone else to people because of his alcohol addiction. He would sometimes invite some of his mates to drink as something common in alcohol addicted people's life. The day one does not have money to pay for drinking, someone who has it, will serve the others. Wangrin remained like this for long time. He would tell stories to people including his own story so as to give a life lesson to them. One day night, when he was fully drunk, he made a misstep and fell into a pit filled with water under a pouring rain. He could not get up and died there mysteriously on the street. That was the strange end of Wangrin's life. In other words, the strange destiny of Wangrin which is actually the translated title of this particular novel.

## II. CONCLUSION

This historical novel of Amadou Hampâté Bâ is a real fact drawn from a man whose life started by a good term and ended up by a strange one. The author, being member of a very conservative family, culturally speaking, talked about several aspects of Malian traditional way of living in this novel. Amadou Hampâté Bâ was someone very interested in cultural studies around the world. But he was always more focused on that of Africa especially. However, he was more known as one the public figure in terms of the promotion and development of African cultural identity. This was the most reason why he was more interested in writing stories, tales etc. We come to draw many life lessons in this particular novel through Wangrin who is the main character of this novel. The start of his brilliant intellectual life up to his collapse into a tragic situational end.



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## Bibliography of the Author

Amadou Hampâté Bâ was born in January-February 1900 in *Bandiagara* ("district of Mopti region in Mali"). Son of Hampâté Bâ, descendant of a noble family of *Peuhl* or *Fulani* ("an ethnic/tribal group in the northern part of Mali") and Kadidja Pâté, daughter of Pâté Poulo Diallo, a Fulani pastoral initiation master *Silatigui* means in English ("a guider or a leader"). This pastoral initiation master gave up everything in order to follow El Hadj Omar's disciples to whom he will become his companion and friend.

Three years after the birth of the "child" ("Amadou Hampâté Bâ"), His father Hampâté Bâ passed away. Kadidja Pâté got married for the second time with Tidjani Amadou Ali Thiam, a Chief Toucouleur noble of the Province of *Louta*. The latter (Chief) officially adopted the "author" ("Amadou Hampâté Bâ"). Amadou Hampâté Bâ was removed from his job position after local incidents. He was sentenced to imprisonment and exile, a period within which he spent several years in *Bougouni* ("a region of Mali"), area of *Bamanan* people ("the major ethnic/tribal group in Mali").

It is there for the first time that the young Amadou Hampâté Bâ discovered the world of *Bamanan* traditions.

1908 – He came back to *Bandiagara* in Koranic School after the release of his adoptive father and had later as his spiritual master Tierno Bokar Salif Tall.

1912 – He was automatically requisitioned for the French School as the son of a Chief first in *Bandiagara* ("district of Mopti region in Mali"), then at the Regional School of *Djenné* ("district of Mopti region in Mali").

1915 – He ran away to join his mother in *Kati* ("a sub district of Bamako") after obtaining his Certificate of Studies.

1917 – He resumed his studies at the Primary School of the Military Base of *Kati*. After, he went to the Regional School of Bamako where he got his second Certificate of Studies. He then went to the Professional School of Bamako where he prepared for the entrance exam to the *Ecole Normale William Pointy* ("The William Pointy Normal School") in *Gorée* ("Senegal").

End of 1921 – His mother formally opposed his departure to *Gorée* ("Senegal") after he got his entrance exam to the *Ecole Normale William Pointy* ("The William Pointy Normal School"). He then refused to join the group of departing students. The Governor automatically assigned him to the most distant post in *Ouagadougou* ("Capital City of the current Republic of Burkina Faso") as punishment. He served there as a temporary writer in an essentially precarious and revocable capacity.

From 1922 to 1932 – He held several administrative positions in *Haute-Volta* ("current Republic of Burkina Faso"), then he rose to the administrative levels through internal competitions.

1933 – He spent six months in *Bandiagara* with Tierno Bokar who plentifully taught him his spiritual knowledge.

From 1933 to 1942 – He became the first Secretary of the town hall of *Bamako* ("Capital City of the Republic of Mali") as the Clerk of the Colonial Administration. Then, he occasionally became the Governor's Interpreter without belonging to the Staff of Interpreters.

1942 – After several years of difficulties due to his membership in a branch of the Islamic brotherhood *Tidjaniya*, which is frowned upon by the French authorities, he is seconded to the *IFAN* (*Institut Français d'Afrique Noire*) - ("French Institute of Black Africa") in *Dakar* ("Capital City of Senegal"). However, Professor Theodore Monod, founding Director of this Institute managed to assign him elsewhere.

Amadou Hampâté Bâ, now, protected from any harassment, devotes himself his full time to his vocation as a researcher. Assigned to the "Ethnology" Section, he carried out field investigations and collected oral traditions. He continued his long investigation of fifteen years which resulted in the writing of the *Peuhl* or *Fulani* Empire of *Macina* ("a northern sub region of Mali"). A historical work produced only by data from oral tradition. He completed this work with Jacques Daget. From this time, Amadou Hampâté Bâ began to publish numerous articles in different African journals as well as in the *IFAN* bulletin.

1944 – He presents for the first time the prose text of the *Peulh* or *Fulani* Initiatory Tale *Kaidara*, which he got the French West African Prize for Scientific and Documentary Works.

From 1942 to 1958 – He worked for *IFAN* as Senior Preparer and Technical Agent in Senegal, Guinea, and “French Sudan” (“current Republic of Mali”). He carried out major fact-finding tours in Senegal, Guinea, Niger, *Haute-Volta* (“current Republic of Burkina Faso”), French Sudan, Mauritania and the north of Ivory Coast. He started it there in *Peulh* or *Fulani* area first where he lived in Mali, then in *Haute-Volta*. In the first phase, he recorded everything from memory. In a second one, he did it from the age of twenty-one or twenty-two when he went to *Ouagadougou* (“Capital City of the current Republic of Burkina Faso”). He systematically noted everything in writing (handwritten documents which will give rise to an important Amadou Hampâté Bâ’s archives).

1946 – He refused to stand for elections as Delegate to the Constituent Assembly under the French Colonial Administration. This was due to the principles of his religion which discouraged any command or political functions.

1951 – At the suggestion of Professor Monod, he obtained a UNESCO Scholarship for one year in Paris. It was there that he established friendships with the Africanists and Orientalists circles of those Cities (Marcel Griaule, Germaine Dieterden and Louis Massignon). From then on, he began to give series of conferences on *Peulh*’s or *Fulani*’s civilization and culture at the Sorbonne.

1957 – He was appointed Administrator of *SORAFROM* (*Société de Radiodiffusion Française Outre-mer*) – (“French Overseas Broadcasting Company”). He produced numerous cultural broadcasts there.

1958 – He became President of the Editorial Board of the monthly *Afrique en marche* (“Africa on the move”). This newspaper appeared for a year in which he published numerous “tales and historical accounts” (“narratives”). After the independence of Mali in 1960, he founded the Institute of Human Sciences in Bamako, which he headed until 1961.

1960 – He was part of the Mali delegation to the UNESCO general conference.

1962 – He was elected to UNESCO as a member of the Executive Council for four years. This mandate was exceptionally renewed for him in 1966. In the same year 1962, he became Extraordinary Ambassador and Minister Plenipotentiary of Mali in Ivory Coast (1962-1966). Though his religion’s principles forbid him any political functions, he agreed to provide this service to his country temporary after the break of Mali with Senegal (the breakup of the Mali Federation). However, Mali needed the free disposal of the port of Abidjan and Amadou Hampâté Bâ was charged with this mission because of his old friendship with President Houphouet-Boigny (“former President of the Republic of Ivory Coast”). He withdrew from his functions when Mali resumed its normal relations with Senegal and regained the disposal of the port of Dakar.

From 1965 to 1966 – He actively participated in the preparation of the conference of Bamako on February 28<sup>th</sup> / March 05<sup>th</sup> 1966 on behalf of UNESCO. The said conference was focused on the development of a unified alphabetical system for the transcription of African languages. It was also the presentation of a memorandum on the action to be taken urgently by UNESCO for the unification of the alphabets of national languages in West Africa. During this period, he took part to many conferences and seminars across the world. The majority of his conferences and seminars were on African civilizations and cultures. He was also founding member of the *Société Africaine de Culture* (“African Society of Culture”). He also participated in the first festival of Negro Arts.

1970 – End of his mandate at UNESCO, he now devoted himself to his own work while continuing his tours around the world. He wrote and published numerous titles including: *L’étrange destin de Wangrin* (“The Strange Destiny of Wangrin”) for which he received the *Grand Prix Littéraire de l’Afrique Noire* (“The Literary Grand Prize of Black Africa”) in 1974; *Jesus vu par un Musulman* (“Jesus seen by a Muslim”) in 1976; *Le Conte Drolatique Peulh* (“The Fulani Funny Tale”) *Petit Bodiel* (“Little Bodiel”) and the Prose version by *Kaidara* in 1977. A rewritten and completed version of life and Teaching by Tierno Bokar in 1980. The Fantastic and Initiatory *Peulh* or *Fulani* Tale; *Njeddo Dewal mère de la calamité* (“Njeddo Dewal mother

of calamity") in 1985; a collection of tales and stories from Mali; *La Poignée de Poussière* ("The Handful of Dust") in 1987.

Until 1986, he regularly received visitors and devoted himself to the literacy of young *Peulh* or *Fulani* people. At the end of his life, he no longer wrote, but he supervised the classification and micro-screening of his manuscript archives which today constitute the "Amadou Hampâté Bâ's Fund". He also worked on editing his autobiography which will be published after his passing. He passed away on May 15<sup>th</sup> 1991 in Abidjan (Ivory Coast). His novel which title was *Amkoullel, l'enfant Peulh* ("Amkullel, the *Fulani* Child") was published in 1991. Some years later, another which title was *Oui, mon Commandant!* ("Yes, my Commander!") was published in 1994.

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- ❖ Aspects of African civilization, edition *Présence Africaine* ("African Presence"), Paris, 1972. Work produced from four conferences or articles by Amadou Hampâté Bâ.
- ❖ *L'étrange destin de Wangrin* ("The Strange Destiny of Wangrin"), collection 10-18, *Presse de la Cité*, Paris, 1973. *Grand Prix Littéraire de l'Afrique Noire* ("Black Africa Grand Literary Prize") of the ADELFI in 1974. *Prix Littéraire Francophone International* ("International Francophone Literary Prize") in 1983.
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- ❖ *La Poignée de la Poussière* ("The Handful of Dust"), Tales and Stories from Mali, NEA of Abidjan, 1987.

## Posthumous Editions and Reissues

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  - ❖ *Oui, mon Commandant!* ("Yes, my Commander!"), Memoirs II, 1994, Babel n° 211, 1996.
  - ❖ In the footsteps of *Amkoullel*, the *Fulani* Child, 1998; Babel n° 452, 2000. Photographs by Philippe Dupuich.
- **To Ivorian News/EDICEF print ex-NEA titles of Abidjan)** (Resumption of out-of-print ex-NEA titles of Abidjan)
  - ❖ *Jesus vu par un Musulman* ("Jesus seen by a Muslim"), 1993.

- ❖ *Petit Bodiel* ("Little Bodiel"), 1993.
- ❖ *La Poignée de Poussière* ("The Handful of Dust"), 1994.
- ❖ *Njeddo Dewal, mère de la calamité* ("Njeddo Dewal, mother of calamity"), 1994.
- ❖ *Kaidara, Fulani Initiatory Tale*, 1994.

- **To Stock Editions**

- ❖ *Jesus vu par un Musulman* ("Jesus seen by a Muslim"), 1994, enriched with an afterword and additional texts.
- ❖ *Petit Bodiel* ("Little Bodiel") and other tales of the Savanna, 1994, bringing together *Petit Bodiel* ("Little Bodiel") and *La Poignée de Poussière* ("The Handful of Dust"), enriched with an afterword.
- ❖ *Les Contes Initiatiques Peulhs* ("The Fulani Initiatory Tales"), 1994, bringing together *Njeddo Dewal*, mother of calamity and *Kaidara*, enriched with an afterword.
- ❖ *Il n'y a pas de petite querelle ou de nouveaux contes de la Savane* ("There is no little quarrel or new tales from the Savanna"), 1999.

- **To Threshold Editions**

- ❖ *Contes des Sages d'Afrique* ("Tales of Wise People of Africa), 2004

- **To Pocket Editions**

- ❖ *Contes Initiatiques Peulhs* ("Fulani Initiatory Tales"), 2000, bringing together *Njeddo Dewal*, mother of calamity and *Kaidara*.
- ❖ *Petit Bodiel* ("Little Bodiel") and other tales from the Savanna, 2006.
- ❖ *Il n'y a pas de petite querelle : nouveaux contes de la Savane* ("There is no little quarrel : new tales from the Savanna"), 2006.

