

Memoir and Migration in Mali

ALIOUNE SOW



In the past year, I received a UF Faculty Enhancement Opportunity grant to pursue my work on memoirs, life narratives and biographies in Mali. The grant allowed me to pursue my research in Bamako this summer, where I collected narratives, spent time in the National Archives and the National library, and conducted several interviews with Malian authors and politicians. While working on memoirs, I continue my work on the transformations of the Malian literary landscape since democratization but also on the impact of the military power on Malian cultural productions since the coup in 1968. In this regard, I completed a paper on Malian cinema and the question of military power which is forthcoming in the journal *Critical Interventions*.

In February 2011, I co-convoked with Brigitte Weltman Aron, the annual Gwendolen Carter Conference examining the cultures

of memory, the commemorations and celebrations of the fiftieth anniversary of African political independences. The conference was multidisciplinary and speakers included the writer Alain Mabanckou, the cinema director Jean-Marie Teno, scholars Gregory Mann, Réda Bensmaïa, Mildred Mortimer, Cécile Canut, Didier Gondola, James Straker, Ken Walibora Walioula, Antoinette Tidjani Alou, Nicolas Argenti, Florence Bernault, Joana Grabsky and Nnamdi Elleh.

I also pursue my work with the ANR Miprimo, an interdisciplinary research project on migration directed by Cécile Canut from the Université Paris-Descartes and the Ceped. Focusing in particular on literature, my work examines the transformations of Malian theatre practices to respond to local discourses on migration. My research focuses on new initiatives but also on the transformations of conven-

tional practices and genres such as the *koteba* to engage with issues of migration. In June 2011, I presented a conference paper on this topic at the African Theatre Association in the UK.

Finally, my book *Vestiges et vertiges: récits d'enfance dans les littératures africaines* dedicated to childhood narratives in African literatures, was published by Artois Presses Université in May 2011.

Alioune Sow is associate professor in the Center for African Studies and the Department of Languages, Literatures & Cultures. His 2011 research was supported by a UF Faculty Enhancement Opportunity grant.