

THE ART OF PEACE IN SENEGAL: ABOULAYE (PAPE) TALL'S
"ADÉLIA" AND ANNE PIETTE'S "COMMANDOS INSOLITES"

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In September 2003, I flew to Africa as a Fulbright scholar to teach literature and foreign language pedagogy, and to collaborate with writers on producing a collection of short stories. Though I did not know any authors there personally, I knew what I wanted to accomplish with them: to improve the image of African women through stories. While Senegalese literature had already depicted women demonstrating strength and grace in challenging circumstances, reading about a woman jumping into a well in response to ill treatment motivated me to undertake this project. The image of woman as bearer and nurturer of life was evoked in my interviews with authors. In two of the short stories created for the collection, characters use stories to explain their climactic decision to find the face of oneself in "the Other," or vice versa, instead of demonising the enemy, and thus nurture life. The arts, including literary art, are important resources in identifying ways to move beyond the fear and conflict born of ignorance, and of birthing community by highlighting what binds us.

The embedded stories in Anne Piette's "Commandos Insolites" ("Unusual Commandos")¹ and Pape Tall's "Adélia" reveal recognition of the enemy in ourselves, and of our kinship to the one firing on us, as compelling motives to curb violence. While the authors were not asked specifically to write about peace for this collection of short stories, they produced literary art on this theme compelling enough to merit attention in and of itself. In addition, description and analysis of these stories offer insight into teaching about conflict resolution through tales which hold up a mirror, and which invite us to consider the enemy.

While my initial project focused on the theme of women and social justice rather than peace, the two are of course connected, and the fundamental reason for the exchange that supported my stay in Senegal emanates from the