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"Fulbe-ness" in Fulbe Oral Literature of Cameroon

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Abstract

The oral literature of the Fulbe reflects their attitude toward the definition of their identity, and their images of "Fulbe-ness." "Fulbe-ness" can be seen in the amateur oral literature such as folktales, riddles, proverbs, sayings, etc. It is also apparent in the professional oral literature, such as historical poems, pastoral poems, and narratives.

Through the survey of all the available sources, both published and unpublished, and the comparison with the sources from the other regions, these points will be elucidated and the regionality as well as the particularity of Cameroonian Fulbe oral literature in the Fulbe world will be discussed.

I. Introduction

There are several traditional key words and concepts with which one can easily grasp the Fulbe-ness. These are related to: 1) *pulaaku* 'Fulbe-ness'¹⁾; 2) pastoralism; and 3) Islam. These concepts as found in the oral literature will be discussed.

The materials employed in the analysis include published works, transcribed texts, and raw tapes.

1. Geographical Background

Geographically, there are four regions where the Fulbe live: 1) Diamaré; 2) Benoué; 3) Adamaoua, in the East Cameroon; and 4) Cameroon highland, in the West Cameroon. This paper will deal with the literature of the first three regions and the surrounding areas.

In Northern Cameroon there are about fifty ethnic groups, one of which is the Fulbe. The groups are divided into a kind of dichotomy between the Moslem Fulbe and non-Moslem non-Fulbe (*haabe*). Besides the Fulbe, the Moslems include the Kanuri, the Hausa, the Shuwa Arabs, and the Mandara.

The Fulbe say there are three Fulfulde dialects: Maroua, Garoua, and Ngaoundéré Fulfulde. Maroua Fulfulde, called *fuunaangeere*, is considered to be the most conservative and authentic in Cameroon. The other two dialects are call-

1) For an exhaustive discussion on *pulaaku*, see VerEecke (1988).

ed *hiirnaangeere*. Besides these, there are other dialects of small Fulbe groups, particularly the Mbororo who are nomadic pastoralists.

We should note that Diamaré is located in the northeastern end of the Sokoto Caliphate. Although Maroua has been a center of Islamic teaching and practice, there has been less Moslem influence in Maroua's hinterland.

It should not be forgotten that Northern Cameroon is also a junction of the Eastern and Western Sudan, so that Fulbe literature has been affected by this geographical situation.

2. Historical Background

The history of the Fulbe of Northern Cameroon can be divided into the following eras²⁾:

- 1) Departure from Malle and migration to the east
- 2) Arriving at the present Cameroon and staying as *Fulbe kitaaku* 'pre-jihad Fulbe'
- 3) Post-jihad till the coming of the Germans (1804-1901)
- 4) "European" era (*Zamanu nasaara*) (1901-1960)
- 5) The Ahidjo era (1960-1982)
- 6) The Paul Biya³⁾ era (1982-)

Fulbe literature reflects the emotions and feelings of the people of each historical era. Naturally, each piece in any genre of Fulbe oral literature was shaped in the course of the history. Although nobody knows when the pieces were created, some elements suggest close ties with a certain era, e.g. spells and charms used with spitting (*moccoore/moccooje*) may have originated with the pre-Islamic Fulbe. The spells and charms called *aayaare/aayaaje*, the container of which is called *layaaru*, were adopted after Fulbe Islamization. Although most of the folktales have a very long history, some of them, such as stories in which a jinn (spirit) appears, arrived with Islam.⁴⁾

For example, the story of *Ukba*, an Arab man and *Bajju Manngo* or *Bajjo Mannga*, a Sarakolle woman (Mohammadou 1976: 28-29), appears to have been

2) For detailed studies on the history of Northern Cameroon see Mohammadou (1976, 1978, 1982, 1983, 1988).

3) In a song sung in 1984 by the singers from Tignère in the court of Ngaoundéré together with praise songs to the *laamiido* of Ngaoundéré, one can see their political persuasion at a glance:

Ngawndere jabbi.
Jabbaama Pol Biya.
Aadamaawa Ngawndere.
 'Ngaoundéré welcomes you.
 You are welcome, Paul Biya.
 Adamawa, Ngaoundéré'.

4) Someone who behaves abnormally is called *ginnaad'o* 'someone possessed by *ginnawol* or jinn.'

created after the Islamization of Fulbe in Malle.⁵⁾

The songs used in Fulbe rites of passage, such as the circumcision rite, were not necessarily created after Islamization. Fulbe circumcision used to take place after a boy reached the age of puberty. After Islamization, some Islamic expressions were added to the ritual. In Diamaré and Benoué, the novices sing songs in Fulfulde. But in Adamaoua, they sing in Mbum (See East 1938; Eguchi 1973, 1976, 1987).

Some items of Fulbe oral literature tell us the approximate time of their creation. For example, one of the *mbooku* poems entitled *Be mboodaay kambe* 'The Europeans were not good' (Eguchi 1992) discusses the British and German invasions. It must have been created immediately after these incidents.

3. Socio-Cultural Background

The Fulbe have differentiated themselves from various other groups, depending on the situation. They themselves have been modifying their identity and adopting new identities. The opposition of Fulbe versus non-Fulbe (*haaɓe*) has been perpetual throughout their history. After Fulbe Islamization, the concept *haaɓe* came to mean "pagans." Today Adamoua's Islamized population such as the Hausa is no longer considered to be *haaɓe*.⁶⁾

The Kanuri and the Fulbe have joking relationships, called *dendiraagu*⁷⁾, and have had closer ties through complementary occupational differentiation, although this has been changing gradually, as seen in the following *mbooku* poem :

Sirata woowi ko woowaay-no.

Sirata woowi bira laawa.

Palmata mari fenndirde.

Mammadi woni kaydaljo.

'The Kanuri are used to what they never were.

The Kanuri are used to milk and stir milk.

Palmata has a large calabash for sour milk.

Mammadi is a head herder.' (Eguchi n. d. d)

Changes in the Fulbe identity were brought about by jihad (Islamic holy war).

La conquête, intérieure ou extérieure, du pouvoir par un groupement, ou plutôt un ensemble de groupements, constituant, tant sur le plan ethnique que sur le plan religieux, une minorité a abouti en effet à la

5) The story of Tyanaba cannot be heard in Cameroon. The story of the Fulbe and the cattle coming out of water might be heard but is not recorded in Cameroon (cf. Wilson-Haffenden: 92-102).

The story of the underworld origin of the first human beings (Eguchi n. d. e) may be a remnant of pre-Islamic years.

6) In some areas, such as Northern Togo, even the Moslem Hausa are always viewed as *haaɓe*.

7) See Lacroix (1965 : 20).

constitution d'une société fortement hiérarchisée, dont la stratification s'ordonne selon des critères qui tendent à confondre appartenance "raciale" et appartenance religieuse et à assurer de ce fait aux *fulbe* une place privilégiée, en vertu d'une équation: musulman = Peul (Lacroix 1965: 18).

Since the nominal end of slavery (which itself came about during the jihad) during the 1930s in response to pressure by the Europeans, the Fulbe have not differentiated openly between themselves and former slaves, or between the types of slave status, *riimaybe* (freed slaves) and *maccube* (slaves). Psychologically and socially, however, this differentiation is still very much in existence.

The Fulbe living in the northern part of Diamaré came into contact with the Shuwa Arabs. They carried out cattle raids against each other. One can see their familiarity with the Shuwa in a saying like *Ko Suwa anndi e ngedu?* 'What do the Shuwa know about sharing meat?'

The distinction between *sarawta* (rulers), who have sovereignty and who are better off, and *talaka* (commoners, members of the populace) (Abraham 1962) arose mainly during this century (cf. Azarya 1978 : 31). The rulers have been good sponsors of professional entertainers. In the modern era, nouveaux riches who earned wealth through various kinds of trade have also emerged. Their role in changing the society cannot be ignored.

After Cameroon became independent in 1960, the "authentic" Fulbe became even more insistent about conserving their status as the cultural core people of the region. At this time, the opposition between the northerners and the southerners (*mannje mannje* 'people of palm oil', *yimbe fombina* 'people of south') emerged. Under the flag of the north, in Ahidjo's time, the participation of the Fulbe-ized northerners in the political realm increased.⁸⁾ Although they involved the newly Fulbe-ized peoples and other northerners as partners to stand against the southerners politically, they emphasized the prestige in being the cultural core by using their pure and beautiful Fulfulde (*Fulfulde laamnde*) which stands against the vulgar Fulfulde (*bilkiire*) spoken by marginal people.⁹⁾ Their prestige was assured by the beauty of traditional oral literature such as mbooku. Since 1982 northerners have believed that the dominance of the Fulbe is gradually weakening because a southerner has become president.

8) Adamaoua is a place where they meet the southerners. An ajamiya poet sings : *gariize godde haabe fumbinaare uzul majuusatun aadatun nanddaa ba 'aada dibi* 'Des autres villages, ceux des Païen du Sud, la coutume païenne ne ressemble pas à la coutume de Dibi' (Lacroix 1965: 268-269).

9) East(1967) calls this phenomenon the deterioration of Fulfulde. Lacroix (1962 : 78) names deteriorated Fulfulde spoken by non-Fulbe *kambariire*.

4. From Pastoralism to Sedentarism

During the 20th century the number of "pure" Fulbe pastoralists in Cameroon has been decreasing, and sedentarization and urbanization have been increasing, especially since independence. Thus, the number of individuals who have experience in cattle herding in the bush is decreasing.¹⁰⁾ However, the remnants of the pastoralist experience can be seen anywhere in the oral literature of the Fulbe, in folktales (*taalol/taali*): there are many stories of cattle, cattle herders out in the bush, milk, etc. The *daacol* song is the crystalization of this pastoral experience.

II. Genres and Fulbe-ness

1. Genres

These are the main folk classifications of genres of the Fulbe literature: *gimol/gimi*, *yimre/gime* 'poem, song', *habaru/habaruuji* 'news, history', *haala/haalaaji* 'story, word', *geccol/gecci* 'story', *kissawol/kissaaaji*, *kicawol/kiccaaaji* 'legend', *taalol/taali* 'story', *balndol/balndi* 'proverb', *moccoore/moccooje* 'magical formula', and *annditanamwol/annditanamji* 'riddle'. The reality of the oral literature cannot be captured by these terms alone. For example, tongue twisters, imitating comical conversations and children's rhymes, do not have a folk taxonomy. They are expressed with compound words.¹¹⁾ The genres can better be explained by the groups to which they belong, for example, Moslem teachers, hunters, cattle herders, age groups, or gender. There is also a kind of literature employed in rites of passage in which only the participants know the literature, such as songs used in the circumcision ceremonies (See Eguchi 1973, and Mayssal 1965: 59-65).

The literature can also be classified according to those who sponsor the performers. Some storytellers tell stories only to men, e.g., Baaba Zandu, Maamudu Wafdu, etc., and some pieces of literature appear only at certain times of the calendar year. For example, the song of *laylatu* is sung only on the twenty-seventh night of Ramadan (Mayssal 1965: 67-69).

2. Amateur Singing

In many of Cameroonian cities, women and children have continued to sing. The religious leaders have not been able to censure them inside the private space of their compounds. The singers use a long gourd called *zantuuru* and sing various songs. Some religious women sing *busraa'u* in the compound with their female company (cf. Haafkens 1983). There is a long repertory of *zantuuru* songs,

10) Livestock constitute crucial factors in Fulbe studies (Frantz 1981).

11) For the genres of oral literature in Adamawa, see Pfeffer (1939), Mohammadou (1963), and Eguchi (1976). For *Habaruuji* which corresponds to Cameroonian *kiistawol/kiistaaaji*, see Abu-Manga (1987?).

some of which have a long tradition, and others which were created quite recently. A bride, with her zantuuru sings inside the women's compound with her girl friends. Some songs instruct the bride about how to behave as a new wife:

Bintu, a debbo naa? To a debbo goonga kam, gora te'e ma nawla naa? Cikaayel a laybataa, Cuurel a wuuwataa. 'Bintu, are you a wife? If you were a true wife, how could your husband take a co-wife? You do not wash your little cooking pot. You do not sweep the little hut.' (M. Eguchi 1973)

This song represents women's attitudes toward marriage and polygamy. Since the girls' first marriages are decided by their parents, they have no choice. Some wait for the day their husbands will divorce them. They sing songs which have their boy friends' names in them. In the good old days before mechanical mills were introduced, they used to sing the same kind of songs as they ground millet for the whole family.

Lullabies, children's rhymes, and play songs were also sung in the compound. Some songs, like those praying for rain, have survived modernization and are sung by children.¹²⁾

3. Professional Singers

In the Fulbe oral literature there are two ways of performing: first, singing *yimgo*, and second, telling *wolwgo haalaaji*. In Northern Cameroon today, ordinary Fulbe men do not sing. Only professional entertainers called *wammbaabe* sing (cf. the situation in Futa Toro). But there is no longer a musician's caste, and a free man may join a musicians' group. This profession is looked down upon, probably because members make their living by begging (*toraago*), sometimes forcibly by insulting people when they do not give the expected gift. It seems that after the jihad, most of the singers and musicians have disappeared from religious centers such as Maroua, Garoua, Ngaoundéré, and the singing tradition is still active in the rural areas. Usmaan bii Fooduye (Usman dan Fodio) says in his *Ma'ama'aare*:

Singer, stop, do not waste your time
 In singing the praise of men.
 Sing the praises of the Prophet and be content.
 It is to praising him that you should hold fast to obtain your desires.
 And those who have eloquence, let them come and explain it by commentary... (Hiskett 1975: 17).

Since the jihad, court music has consisted mainly of drum and similar instruments (cf. Hiskett 1960). There have been musicians in the religiously important cities such as Maroua, Miskin and other cities, who are non-Fulbe, namely,

12) In these songs the wish of pastoralists is expressed by such terms as rain, cows, and milk (Mayssal 1965: 53-57; Eguchi 1974).

Hausa and Kanuri (Erlman 1983: 199-200). From the point of view of oral literature they have not been important. But fortunately, in the Yillaga lamidate of Rey-Buuba, far from the above-mentioned religious centers, they have kept up the praise songs, called *yeerwa* (cf. *geerewol*),¹³ which are still sung in Fulfulde.

Those Fulbe who were in the rural areas, far from the Islamic centers, especially, cattle herders and hunters, kept singing their songs. Around the end of the 19th century, they began coming to towns, villages, and cities to sing professionally. They are *mboo'en* and *daacoobe*. It is well-known that hunters sing, but no hunters came to the cities to sing in Cameroon. There is one hunter-singer called Buuba Ladde from Binndir, Chad.

At the time of the jihad, the Fulbe started composing Islamic poems with which they popularize the teachings of the jihad leaders. These poems were first composed and written in *ajamiya* script by the leaders, and then the texts were given to singers (*shaa'iri*). These religious poems, *gime pulfule*, adopted Arab metrics. They were composed and sung by *mallum'en*. Some rather liberal *mallum'en* composed many quasi-religious songs. The best known compilation of these songs is Lacroix's *Poésie peule d'Adamaoua* (1965). The religious poems are composed orally and preserved in memory rather than in writing. They have the combined features of the oral and more formal traditions (Arnott 1985: 89-90).

4. *Daacoobe*

Daacol and mbooku belong to the genre of *gimol/gimi* 'poem, song' and both are vocal and sung in the towns at present. The main differences between them are location of performance and in the style of Fulfulde they use. The daacol songs were sung in the bush with *Fulfulde laddeere* 'the bush Fulfulde' by cattle herders, and the mbooku songs, in the town with *Fulfulde yimbe wuro* 'Fulfulde of the town people'.¹⁴

The main singer sings verses composed of several tens of syllables. Then, his partner responds with comments about the person sung about in the song.

In the past there were various groups of daacol singers, but there are now only two groups of *daacoobe* known in Diamaré: the one first led by Buuba Gerdele (1910?-1985) from Giñlay, Bogo, succeeded by Aadama Buuba, and the other led by Hammadu Malle from Bugay, Kalfu. They are all from the Juba lineage of the Toorodbe clan.

According to Buuba Gerdele, he learned his art in around 1930 from his predecessors, Buuba and Maana. The singer who invented daacol is sung about in the song as *Buuba Ngel Jamre Gulooyel Geene, Wuli Geene, Aawi Dayye*. This singer must have been active at the turn of the century.

13) The song sung at the dance of *geerewol* must be related to *yeerwa*. Both have a common root *yeer-* 'to swing one's body'. Here we can see cultural continuity between the sedentarized Fulbe and their nomadic counterparts.

14) Interview with Buuba Gerdele.

In the northeastern part of Diamaré, there are wide stretches of grassy lands (*yaayre/jaaje*). During the rainy season they are inundated, but during the dry season they offer the best pasture. During the dry season the cattle herders take their cattle there and stay till the coming of the rainy season. In daacol songs they sing about trees in the bush, plains, hills, rivers, wild beasts such as elephants, wild hogs, hyenas, etc. Here is an example from Buuba Gerdele:

Karwa henndu maa duule, hubbi kare, moori jaaje, sancu kumaareeje, benndini baareeje, nyukkotoondu wonnani geebiido. 'The wind at the beginning of the dry season accompanied by clouds blows through the *karal* (=dry season millet field). It plaits the grass in the open land, and unplaits the crowns of crested cranes. The secretly blowing wind ripens the fruits of trees, and spoils things of a careless person.'
Diga duule duuri ngaraayi, pure kabbara ndiggo mbiddo nyeka. 'From a long time before the coming of the rain clouds, grey clouds crowd, and produce thunder. It comes near and rains silently.'

In addition, they sing about their fellow herders (*waynaabe na'i*) either dead or alive, their wives and favorite cows. They praise the generosity of these herders and appreciate their love for cattle.

Diga Yaaya duranno, Yaaya wi'ino maayugo naawaayi ba maaya wudina yeete. 'Yaaya used to say while grazing cattle that dying is not hard, but dying leaving a live cow behind is harder.' (Eguchi n. d. b)

In these songs, each grazing ground in the bush has a head person (*amiiri*). The *amiiri* (< Arabic) might be a real,¹⁵⁾ or a fictitious person. Most, however, were only mentioned as anonymous *amiiri*. This anonymity suggests that daacol has a long tradition. These verses give rough but practical descriptions of the territory:

Amiiri Barkeejewol wadi baade. Jiddere Zaada, beel Bara wadi Burgu. Bara bange buruuje. Mazira yimbo ngo zaadeeje, colliire nde colli, to lugge Jugulde, Cuvuna weendu mboḥooje. 'In the territory of the head of Barkeeeje, there are anthills, and a Zaada hill. There is Burgu near a small pond of Bara. Bara is near open land. Mazira is a village with a grassy valley nearby. It has trees for building square mud huts. There is a bush with birds. There is a grassy valley of Jugulde. In Cuvuna there is a pond with pelicans.' (Eguchi n. d. b)

Later, they gradually started singing praise songs of leaders living in towns. They now insult those who do not give them any present for their songs. They claim to be *kata yimbe* 'sieve of men' with which to distinguish the stingy from the

15) In daacol singers prefer using metaphorical euphemisms, e.g. *ngaari* 'bull' for husband, *kata* 'sieve' for judge, examiner etc.

generous. Because of the wealth enjoyed by the cattle herders, however, they must have been receiving ample rewards. The generous patrons are Fulbe herdsman. Their various attributes are :

ittiibe bukiji 'those who have no material problems', *waynaabe nafaŋbe* 'generous herdsman' (Eguchi n. d. b), *jogiibe, hokkoobe* 'those who would give' (Eguchi n. d. c), etc.

Those who cannot be regarded as generous are insulted in the song.

The verses added after they moved from the bush to the villages and towns contain the real names of patrons. They are different from the *amiiri*-series and start with the following expressions :

caananaa-mi 'greet someone for me', *ciftoren-maa* 'let us remember', *mi siftora* 'I will remember', *gayni yaman-maa-mi* 'let me know about a herdsman', *toye...* 'where...', etc.

These expressions precede the description of the one to be praised:

abba mo kaabel jagaraayel 'father of a cow with small patches of black and white which has given birth', *hamma finiinge, Hama Yaaji* 'elder brother of a cow with black around her eyes, Hama Yaaji', *mo suume madamye* 'one whose madam-like cow with white lips', etc.

The *jiikoobe* refer to the generous person as follows :

Pullo 'A Pullo', *Dum wi'ete Pullo* 'That's a Pullo', *Pullo fakat* 'Indeed, a Pullo', *Pullo bee goonga* 'Certainly, he's a Pullo', etc.

5. *Mbooku*

The average line of a *mbooku* poem consists of 8.6 syllables. An average poem has 212 lines. The songs are sung antiphonally, namely, before the soloist *ardo* 'master singer' finishes singing a line, the chorus, consisting of several singers *jaboobe*, repeats the first line of the poem.¹⁶⁾

There are 52 titles classified according to the chorus verse (*jabre*) in my corpus.¹⁷⁾

Traditionally there have been three big titles which occupy more than 65% of my corpus: 1) *Hayaa jam baago* 'There is no peace', 2) *Be ndawran (i) Zigila* 'They made a plot to arrest Zigila', and 3) *Weelo*¹⁸⁾ 'Hunger'. The rest consists of

16) In the corpus there are 32 soloists.

17) My corpus, collected in between 1966 to 1976, and in 1985 in Diamaré, consists of 25,003 lines.

18) There are five different chorus verses and their contents vary. This suggests several origins.

various praise songs (12.5%), caricature songs (4.5%), and others (18%).¹⁹

Since most of the mbooku poems treat historical incidents such as the coming of the Europeans, the activities of Rabeh, or the plight of Jubeyru of Yola, etc., most of them must have been created with the feelings of crisis around the turn of this century. The basic tone of this genre is represented by the verse *Hayaa jam baago* 'Alas, there is no peace'; namely, the Fulbe dominance was threatened by powers from outside. They were obliged to go through changes. This change is sung about in *Ee, zamanu wonni* 'Eh, the world got worse'.

The mbooku singers visited each village and sang these songs. They said :

Mbooyo woni gabil mallum. Jannga waazina jood'iibe. 'A mbooku singer is almost like a Moslem learned man. He reads and preaches to the sitting audience.'

Those who claim to be "true and pure" Fulbe tell that mbooku poems are considered to be a special genre which truly represents the Fulbe culture and spirit. The Fulfulde suffix *-ku* signifies the abstract nature of something, and can often be translated as the spirit of something. Thus, *mboo-ku* can be translated as the spirit of *mboo*. Probably this mbooku is a combination of the established Moslem Fulbe spirit and the sense of *jam baago* 'there is no peace'.

Thus, there are expressions which emphasize this Fulbe-ness :

Mbooku dum fiyo men Fulbe. 'Mbooku performance is Fulbe play of ours' *Mbooku woni gimol Fulbe, Mbooku dum woni gimol Fulbe* 'Mbooku is a Fulbe song' *Mbooku woni gimi Fulbe.* 'Mbooku is Fulbe songs.' (Eguchi n. d. d)

The mbooku poems also absorbed and incorporated many other elements of Fulbe oral literature. Proverbs, which are the concentration of wisdom, are no exception. The mbooku singers made the best use of them. For example,

Fulbe mbalndataa fewre 'the Fulbe do not tell a lie with proverbs.' (Eguchi n. d. d)²⁰

Although many of its peoples are sedentary, cattle occupies an important position among them. The relationship between the Fulbe and cattle (*Fulbe bee na'i, guurooji*, pl. of *wuurooye*) is sung about in the mbooku as follows :

Fulbe banndu na'i muudum, Fulbe banndu na'on muudum 'The Fulbe and cattle are kin (and cannot be separated)', *Fulbe kiisanoo na'i mum, Fulbe hiitanoo na'i mum* 'The Fulbe count on their cattle.'

19) See Eguchi (1978, 1980, 1984).

20) The Dageeja Mbororo say: *balndol dum diftinoore* 'A proverb is a lesson' *goddo mo anndi balndi dageeja e mo anndi pulaaku* 'The one who knows the Dageeja proverbs knows their pulaaku' (Adamou & Labatut 1974: 5).

6. *Gime Pulfule*

As mentioned above, the *gime pulfule* 'written religious Fulfulde poems' were started mainly at the time of the jihad. Many such strictly religious poems (created mostly in the 19th century) are still read and sung, in the area's mosques and at home, by mallaam'en, and beggars. More manuscripts are found in Adamaoua than in Diamaré. They are discussed in East (1967: 14-17), Taylor (1953: 121-123), Haafkens (1983), Eguchi (1976a), Abu-Manga (1980), Abu-Manga and Mukoshy (1987), and Mohammad (1988).

Besides these classics, many ajamiya poems have been created by various poets, especially in the middle of the 20th century. Lacroix distinguishes three genres of these :

- 1) *waajuuje* 'sermons'
- 2) *mantooje* 'praises'
- 3) *fuluuluje* 'chattings' (Lacroix 1965: 40).

The *waajuuje* inherit the orthodox religious tradition since the time of the jihad. The two others also are influenced by the orthodox style and rhythm of Islam poetry (Lacroix 1965: 42).

Lacroix recognizes the early poetical tradition of the nomadic Fulbe in Massina, namely, *mergi*, in both the classical and praise poems (Lacroix 1965: 45). These poets know of the glorious past and the establishment of the Fulbe society. They also experienced the arrival of the Europeans and the independence of Cameroon. Their poems reflect these dramatic social situations faithfully.

The poets have always been conscious of Arabic and call their own language *ajamiya*, or Fulfulde. Thus,

hed'a faamanam tartiibu noon fulfulde am 'Ecoute, comprends cette composition en mon peul...' (Lacroix 1965: 100-101) *yimre mi timmini fakkat fulfulde/ yimre yeriima yahya famtu wolde* 'J'ai achevé un chant qui assurément (est en) peul. Chant du Prince Yahia, comprends mon discours!' (Lacroix 1965: 309) *yimbe nane yimaande 'am ngam bello/ dow 'ajamiyya gimdi 'am ngam pullo* 'Gens! écoutez mon chant car je suis Bello! il est en 'ajami parce que je suis Peul' (Lacroix 1965: 475).

The sedentary Moslem Fulbe were considered to be superior to other ethnic groups, and Fulbe society was praised :

anndaado kambari ²¹⁾ *fabi waawani hausa'en o mari haabe laamani fulbe 'abdullaahi* 'Il est connu pour avoir soin des Kambaris et aider

21) *kambariijo* 'a foreigner', generally Hausa or Kanuri, brought up in Adamawa, but who speaks Fulani imperfectly (Taylor 1932).

les Haoussas, il possède les infidèles et règne sur les Peuls, Abdoullahi.' (Lacroix 1965 : 146-147) *yaa jam'aare juulbe waynaabeeji barka nulaado kebruden xayruuji* 'Oh, peuple de Croyants, Pasteurs nombreux! La Grâce de l'Envoyé nous a fait obtenir des bienfaits' (Lacroix 1965: 392-393).

One of the most frequent epithets of admiration is "white"²²:

noon fulbe raneebe laatiibe fulbe uzul/ sukaabe bee dotti'en wonbe he fulbe dibi 'Ainsi il commande à des Peuls blancs, de vrais Peuls, jeunes gens et hommes murs se trouvent parmi les Peuls de Dibi' (Lacroix 1965: 270-271). *mamma daneejo pertiido pottudo bod'do/ kirniido mi seedake juulbe ndaa debbo* 'Mamma la blanche, l'intelligente, la plaisante, la belle, l'agréable, j'en témoigne, Croyants, voici une femme!' (Lacroix 1965: 580-581)

Poets naturally used this epithet very frequently. Their statements included, "as white as an Arab" or simply "as an Arab":

gaasa 'a tamma gaajiyel 'arabbe/ 'ubbo yeriima semtini mooriibe 'A ses cheveux, tu la prendrais pour la benjamine des Arabes. Oubbo, prince (sse) qui fait honte à celles qui se coiffent.' (Lacroix 1965: 624-625)

The proud Fulbe met the Europeans (*nasaara*, or *annasaara*) and underwent colonization. Probably due to Indirect Rule, they were able to maintain their ruling position. As a result, the Europeans were objects of admiration in the poems. This contrasts with the situation in Diamaré. The mbooku says: *Be mboodaay kambe*. 'They are not good.'

mi yecca dum ko 'arti nder ko ngiid'en/ he fiji kayfiyaaji 'annasaaraa 'Je parlerai (d'abord) de ce que nous avons commencé de voir parmi les choses merveilleuses de l'Européens' (Lacroix 1965: 400-401).

After independence, President Ahidjo was praised because of his Fulbe identity:

gorko dariido keydo deydey laamu/ 'ibnu moodibbo garwa min 'ii-maanu 'Homme debout, qui suffit pour régner. Fils de notre Docteur de la Foi à Garoua' (Lacroix 1965: 346-347), *lenyol fuh walla lenyol mum ban no 'alla wi'i yaa 'allah 'am tabitin 'ahiijo may-nasaraa* 'Chaque race aide sa race ainsi que Dieu l'a prescrit, oh Dieu, perpétue Ahidjo le Victorieux!' (Lacroix 1965 : 434-435)

22) The concept of "white" is treated as one of the formulas employed in Lacroix's anthology (Aspel 1976).

Gime pulfule is also a by-product of folklore. The following verse reminds us of a Fulbe proverb: *Laamiido, debbo, maayo, jemma, tagu hoolataako di* 'One cannot trust a chief, a woman, a river, and night':

mi nanngi mi fuddi yinugo 'amma mi hultori ngam naataago hallani pullo mi yidaa be kirrita 'Je saisis (les chevaux), je commençai à nager mais j'avais peur car entrer (dans l'eau) est dangereux pour un Peul, mais je ne voulais pas qu'ils apperçoivent.' (Lacroix 1965: 152-153)

7. Haalaaji

1) Folktales (*taalol/taali*)

There is not a great difference between the folktales (*taalol/taali*) of sedentary Fulbe and those of the nomadic pastoralists. Although there is great similarity among the folktales of the various peoples of Culture Area VII (Herskovits' classification) in terms of tale types, Fulbe tales may contain certain Fulbe-like elements. In many West African folktales, a cattle herd and a Pullo herdman appear. In the stories told by the Fulbe, who are traditional pastoralists, there are somewhat more detailed depictions of cattle herding, milk, the relation between the rain and the productivity of milk, etc.

2) Riddles (*annditanamwol/annditanamji*)

The keys to answer to riddles (*annditanamji*) depend on the empirical knowledge of daily life. Some are ubiquitous:

Ndottiijo don nder suudu. Wakkude don yaasi. 'The old man is in the hut. The beard is outside.' Ans. *yiite don nder sundu. Cuurka don haa yaasi.* 'The fire is in the hut. The smoke, is outside'. *Gabagaawol am ngol mi nyalla yaago jokkataako e ngol haadi.* 'I spend all day going along on this cloth of mine, but cannot reach the end of it.' Ans. *Laawol.* 'Road.'

Many expressions related to cattle, milk, calabash, etc. reflect the Fulbe culture:

Baalgel daneji. 'A sleeping place for white cows'. Ans. *Geeraade.* 'Eggs.' *Jimmito rufataa.* 'It is upside-down but it does not spill out.' Ans. *Enndu nagge.* 'Breast of a cow.' *Gooto wurtina, teemedde nastintaa.* 'One person takes it out. Even a hundred people cannot put it in'. Ans. *Enndu nagge* or *danyugo binngel.* 'Udder of a cow which one milks, or, giving birth to a baby.'

I understand however, that there are no riddles which are concerned with *pulaaku*, *neddaaku*, or *njuulndamku*.

3) Proverbs (*balndol/balndi*)

Some proverbs denote moral qualities which are elements of *pulaaku*:

Ndikka maayugo dow semteende. 'Better to die than be shamed'.
Munyal defan hayre. 'With patience one can cook a stone'.

Quasi-proverbs, however, often offer ambiguous statements if they are used out of context:

Pullo booro nganyaandi, itti wiige soodi nganyaandi. 'A Pullo is a bag full of malice. He took a heifer and bought malice with it.'
Pullo booro nganyaandi, yara ndiyam ira wawru. 'A Pullo is a bag full of malice. He drinks water and then fills in the well.'
To Pullo bood'dum, yam waandu. 'If you think that a Pullo is a good person, ask a monkey.'

One can also see in some cases strong expressions of *pulaaku*, especially, shame by way of suicide instead of other solutions, but I understand they are rare.²³⁾

A more detailed study of this topic will require a vast amount of time. There are simply too many materials.²⁴⁾

4) Legendary stories (*kissaaji, kiistaaji*)

The best known storyteller of *kiistawol/kiistaaji* (<*hiis-* 'to remember') is Baaba Zandu (-1977) who left almost 600 stories.²⁵⁾ He is one of the *wammbaabe* who never entertained women. This is very Fulbe-like in this society where men and women are in many ways separated.

The main scene of his stories is an ordinary lamidate where a *laamiido*, *alkaali*, their wives, children, *faada* of the *laamiido*, and ordinary citizens live. An incident

23) Cobern and others tried to relate folktales of the Mbororo and *pulaaku* in order to use folktales for literacy materials. Lessons relating to the kind of values important in Fulbe society, e.g. the *Laawol Pulaaku*, are taught in the tales. Following, thirteen examples are shown :

- 1) Jealousy and greed are bad.
- 2) Patience is a virtue.
- 3) Good deeds are rewarded.
- 4) Be kind and not wicked.
- 5) Modesty and reserve (especially sexual) are always proper.
- 6) Always avoid boastfulness and arrogance.
- 7) Cooperation benefits all.
- 8) It is best to be honest.
- 9) Cooperation benefits all.
- 10) Cleanliness is a virtue.
- 11) Work hard or lose your cattle. (Cobern *et al.* 1984: 131)

I understand all these lessons of virtue can be found in any West African story except No.11. Here the symbol of wealth is cattle. But in other situations this can be replaced by something else.

24) Even my corpus comprises more than one thousand stories.

25) Some of them are published, see Noye (1980, 1982, 1983).

happens and breaks the status quo, which is prohibited by pulaaku or the shari'a. The problems caused by the incident are then solved by the moral laws. Of course, the *kissaa*ji are also stories to entertain the audience, and the problems look too difficult to solve, but the storyteller gives the answer, e.g.

There is a chief who loves to keep a monkey with him. The monkey does a lot of harm to the villagers. Villagers hesitate to complain. A young man kills the monkey. The chief arrests him. Then the moodibo judges that the young man is right. The chief is removed from the chief's throne. He is expelled to the bush to play with monkeys (Eguchi n. d. a).

3) Storytellers' stories (*Haalaaji yewtoobe*)

When a *hiirde* 'evening gathering' inviting daacol singers is held, the singers sing and talk in-between the songs. If they keep singing, people may become bored. The story-telling sessions occurring during these intervals make the audience laugh.

The origin of these sessions appears to lie in Fulbe traditions. Nowadays, some stories are told by daacol musicians such as Buuba Gerdele, Nadfa, Tudiri and *maaba daneejo/maaba'en raneebe* 'eulogists' such as Abba Ulakdi, Maamudu Wafdu, Laanyel Pamaro, etc.

All the discussions are based on the life of Fulbe commoners. The daacol musicians make fun of stingy people, their own failure in a love affair, etc. The *maaba daneejo* claims that he never criticizes others. Here is one example by Abba Ulakdi (Eguchi n. d. e):

If you are poor, you cannot get milk, a horse or a new wife. Don't get disappointed. Go and get peanuts, and make gruel with them. It looks and tastes like milk. Go and get sandals. They are a "horse." Mount it and go on a trip away from home. You'll learn many new things. When you come home from a long journey, even your old wife looks like a "new bride."

Among these *maaba'en raneebe*, Maamudu Wafdu also never entertained women.

8. Emergence of Popular Literature

Independence opened a new era in which northerners could move about freely without any risk. Because of this change, the importance of Fulfulde grew and it became the regional language among different ethnic groups. There are new types of entertainers such as Yerima Namkay from Guider who manages with this *lingua franca*. The development of broadcasting by Radio Garoua and Sawtu Linnjiila from Ngaoundéré (later closed) helped spread the oral literature, including that performed in *bilkiire* or the *lingua franca*. The literature does not emphasize Fulbe-ness but rather the identity of northerners.

There are genres which put more emphasis on music than words. In particular, those sung at evening get-togethers to collect donations (*dubdo*) accompanied by calabashes and other loud instruments²⁶⁾ are very noisy and difficult to understand. The words are rather simple and are repeated, sometimes, for hours. From the point of view of content they are very poor. But from the point of view of social function they are very interesting. They have the features of popular literature. Often in this kind of literature the performers use French words. e.g.

Abu delege 'Abu the delegate', *Meetir fore* 'Master of forest', *Yuni eer nashonal* 'Unity, National Air', etc. (Erlmann 1980: 238-267)

The avoidance of addressing and referring to people directly by name is one aspect of Fulbe culture. Thus, instead of addressing somebody directly, people try to use a *soomoo* 'respect name', or *jammoore* 'nickname'. In traditional literature, they even use indirect expressions such as *Ngaari wayne*, *sirla wayne* 'someone's bull, someone's trousers' instead of *gorko wayne*, *bii-wayne* 'someone's husband, someone's child'. In popular literature, however, they use more direct expressions.²⁷⁾ The Fulbe think that direct expressions are embarrassing. Thus, popular literature is somewhat embarrassing to the traditionalists.

III. Conclusion

1. Fulfulde and Depth of Fulbe-ness

In Fulbe oral literature, Fulbe-ness is most clearly shown in the use of Fulfulde. As noted there are several kinds of Fulfulde in Northern Cameroon. The Diamaré dialect is considered to be the most conservative and authentic. The Fulfulde of the professional entertainers (*wammbaabe*) of oral literature in the Diamaré area is more sophisticated than that of amateurs. Thus, the Fulfulde of the professional entertainers in Diamaré preserves the most difficult Fulfulde. In contrast, the Fulfulde used in some of the popular literature is called *bilkiire*, vulgar tongue, which is despised by the "core" Fulbe for its incompleteness. This social dialect is the result of expansion of Fulbe culture or Fulbe-ization. It has a poor vocabulary, but is understood by vast numbers of marginal people.

The literature told in sophisticated Fulfulde such as *mbooku*, *daacol*, puts emphasis on Fulbe-ness.

2. Pastoralism

Pastoralism is well reflected in the Fulbe oral literature. *Daacol* is a typical pastoralist oral literature. In most of the traditional oral literature one can observe

26) As such instruments there are: *garayya*, *dummba*, *ciidal*, etc. In Ngaoundéré a musical instrument borrowed from the Mbum called *timmbiri* 'finger piano' is used.

27) For examples from Futa Jallon see Koval & Zubko (1986: 35).

the pastoralist elements.²⁸⁾

3. Change of Fulbe Identity

Diachronically, the notion of pulaaku has gone through various modifications according to the circumstances. Roughly speaking, three incidents led the Fulbe identity to change: Islamization, sedentarization, and colonization. The oral literature reflects these changes of identity.

4. Islamization

The jihad made the Fulbe fervent Moslems, and this changed their identity. Thus, the Fulbe established the notion of Fulbe identity = *juulbe* (Moslems). They also Islamized other ethnic groups and subdued them. Through their monopoly of Islam, they became superior to the other peoples. The influence of Islam on the Fulbe can be seen anywhere in their literature. It is found throughout the Fulfulde literature, especially professional literature.²⁹⁾

Based on their own interpretation of Islam, the Fulbe reacted to the great social changes caused by the expansion of colonial power at the beginning of the 20th century. This can be seen especially in the mbooku poems of Diamaré, one of the main themes of which has eschatological implications. The strong foreign impact united the Fulbe and sharpened their identity.

5. Modernization and Popular Literature

After independence, a Pullo man (Ahidjo) became the head of state of Cameroon. The Fulbe were proud of the ethnic background of the president. After his removal in 1982, they were forced to behave differently toward their country. This phenomenon can be observed in the popular literature, but it requires further studies based on good collection of materials.

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28) The following examples are "purely" pastoral: Seydou (1981,1982), Savane (1987), etc. There is a stylistic similarity between those and the poems sung by non-professional singers in Cameroon.

29) The Guinean examples of the mixture of traditional Fulbe and Moslem styles can be seen in Sow (1966, 1971).

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