

MY BLACK
WOMAN
STORY

MARIAMA BA

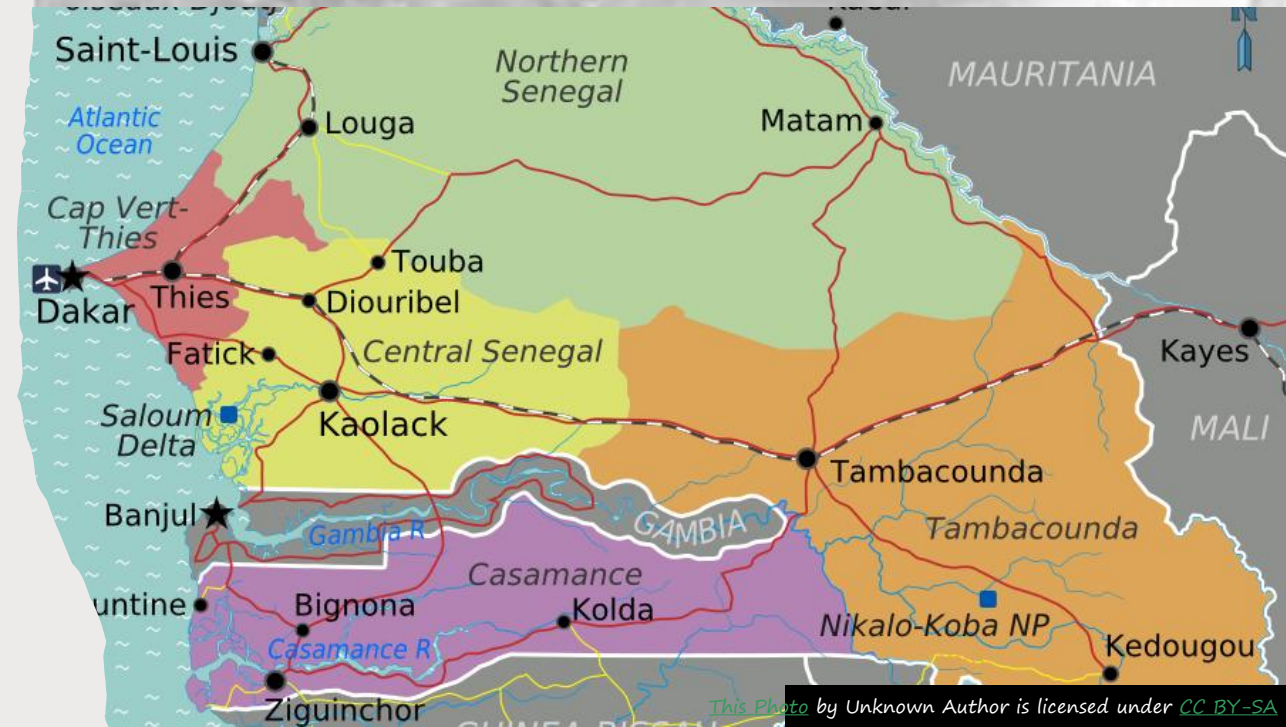


INTRODUCTION

- Colonization has buried a long history of African women leaders leaving behind a gaping wound that has since been nourished by sexism and discrimination.
- The feeling of injustice in this Africa post-colonial has permitted the emergence of women who dedicated their life to fight this gender inequalities
- Among all the illustrious names that have impacted the continent in this period, the Senegalese feminist writer, Mariama Ba is probably one of the most important.

EARLY LIFE

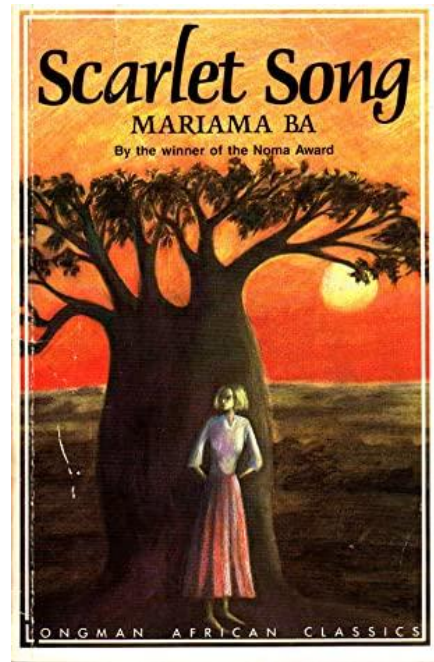
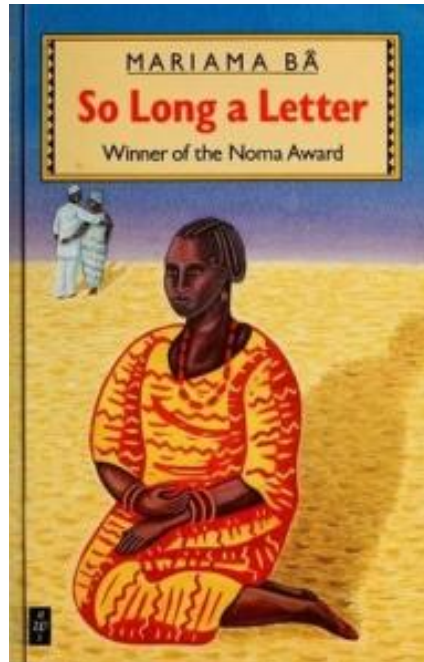
- Mariama Bâ was born in Dakar on April 17, 1929, into an educated Muslim Senegalese family of Lebu ethnicity.
- She first attended religious and Koranic school, however, with the insistence of her father, she was enrolled in 1943 in the Ecole Normale for girls in Rufisque, at 25 miles away from Dakar.



- After receiving her certificate in 1947, she started working as schoolteacher.
- Mariama had nine children and was married to a Senegalese member of Parliament Obeye Diop. But the couple divorced, and she was forced to raise her children alone.

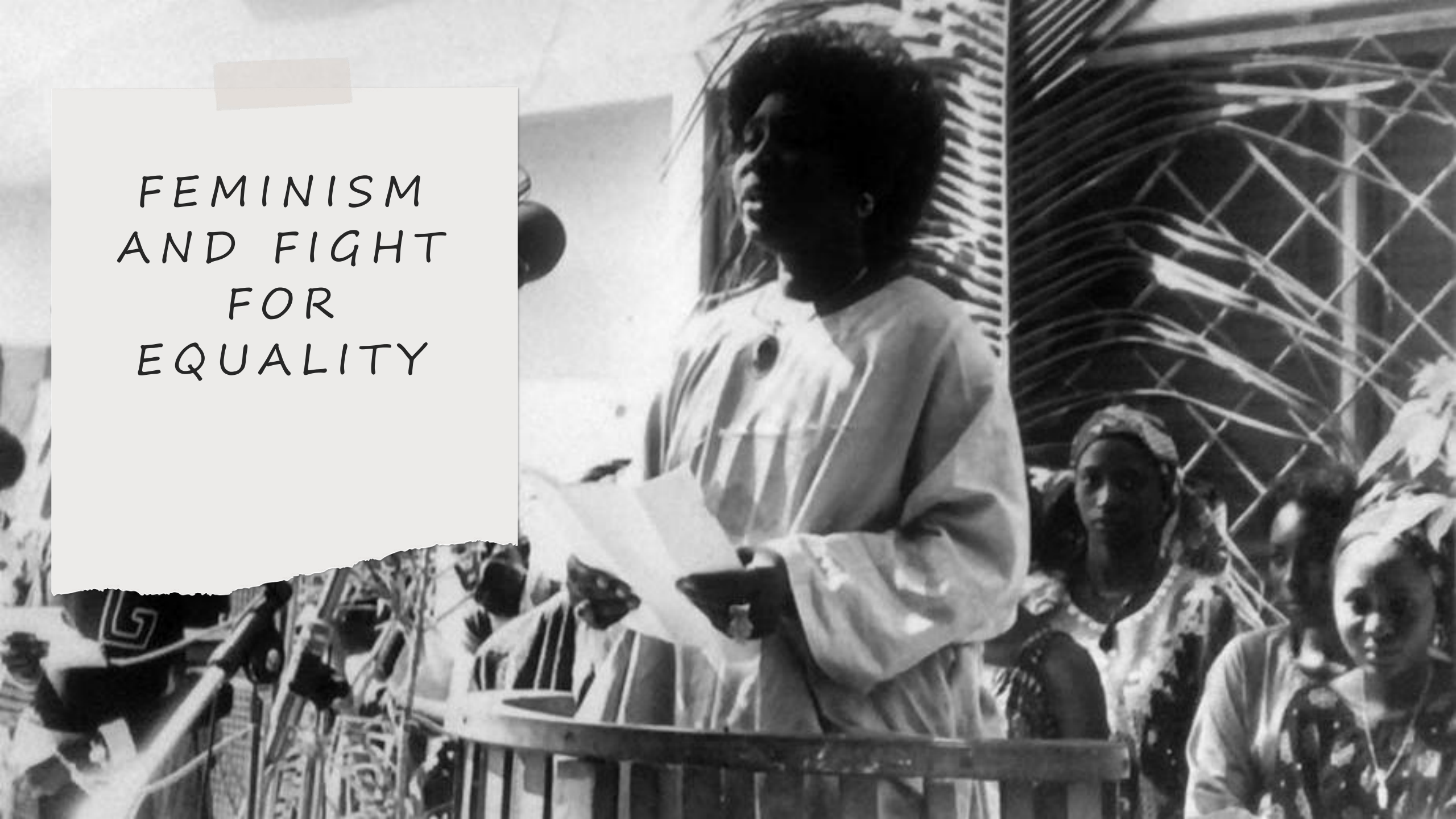


WORK AND BOOKS



- Mariama's painful experience of marriage with the politician provided her the inspiration to write her first and most popular novel *Une Si Longue Lettre* (*So Long a Letter*) which was published in 1979.
- Her second novel, *Scarlet Song*, published posthumously in 1986 explore the theme of interracial relationship and the conditions and struggle of women to overcome the traditional system and gender discrimination.

FEMINISM
AND FIGHT
FOR
EQUALITY



- Mariama Bâ fought for better recognition of women's issues. Growing up in a conservative environment and family, she was in an early aware of inequality and sexism within Senegalese but also African society.
- Bâ found her light and the purpose on her fight in writing. She mainly wrote about the struggle of women in modern African society caught between the traditional and the modern society. She was also concerned and explored various themes about feminism such as the exploitation of women, violence against women, the lack of educational opportunities, and their mistreatment in the Senegalese community.
- Finally, She has been a critic of the neocolonialism system that later became the newly independent African nations.

- Her two novels mentioned above, *So Long a Letter* and *Scarlet Song* point out the conditions of women in contemporary African society, especially in marriage. They highlight a society as well made to keep women subjugated, silent, and accepting of their fate for religious and traditional reasons while men can enjoy their freedom to choose and discard their wives.
- The novel *So Long Letter* is seen as autobiographical. Mariama Ba said accordingly that it “first a cry from the heart of the Senegalese women ... But it is also a cry which can symbolize the cry of women everywhere.” Putting in a main character of her novel courage and “greatness of soul” that she feels she lacked.
- In *Scarlet Song*, she also depicts the plight of women in African society. She also advocates again against polygamy that she firmly thinks it was never good for women, who were forced into it “by men, by society, by tradition” According her it wastool used to merely legalized and legitimized men’s behavior

CONCLUSION



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- Throughout her life, Mariama Bâ made women's rights and feminism her main fight. She's been especially active in the women's movement and her novels and work have brought light to women's issues, especially in marriage. Bâ firmly thought the problem of marginalized women in modern African society and Islam could be reduced by working more on rejecting the idea of polygamy and the "extended family system".
- Mariama Bâ died in Dakar in 1981 after fighting cancer for a long time. Nevertheless, throughout her life, Mariama has been a feminist and vocal activist for women's rights in Senegal and Africa in general.
- She also stayed faithful of her convictions and Muslim faith and tried to reconnect with her culture.

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