

HUMANITIES INSTITUTE
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The Franc (1994)

Djibril Diop Mambéty (1945-1998)

OVERVIEW

Auteur Djibril Diop Mambéty was born in 1945, in Colobane, Senegal. He died in 1998 in Paris after a long battle with lung cancer. Mambéty's first artistic love was theater. He then transitioned to film though having no formal training in the trade. After a few shorts, Mambéty gained international recognition with *Touki Bouki*, which won him the International Critics Award at the 1973 Cannes Film Festival and the International Federation of Film Critics Prize (FIPRESCI Prize) at the 1973 Moscow International Film Festival. In 1992, Mambéty directed *Hyenas*, an adaptation of Friedrich Dürrenmatt's play *The Visit*. He later directed *Le Franc/The Franc* (1994) and *La Petite Vendeuse de Soleil/The Little Girl Who Sold the Sun* (1999), both part of his unfinished trilogy *Contes des Petites Gens* (Tales of the Little People). Mambéty's films are celebrated for their non-linear narratives, surreal imagery, and sharp social criticism.

Film *The Franc* is a medium-length film that inaugurates Djibril Diop Mambéty's unfinished trilogy, *Tales of Ordinary People*. Through the lens of Camusian absurdism, the film critiques neo-colonial economic systems that undermine African sovereignty, particularly emphasizing the CFA franc's governance by French institutions. By situating postcolonial poverty within these externally imposed structures, Mambéty underscores the enduring constraints on African agency. While *The Franc* did not garner major international awards, it has been widely acclaimed for its critical depth and cinematic innovation.

Background *The Franc* was shot in Dakar, Senegal, following the 1994 devaluation of the CFA (African Financial Community) franc. This economic crisis informs both the film's narrative and production. Dieye Ma Dieye, a non-professional actor, delivers a compelling performance as Marigo, while Aminata Fall, a renowned Senegalese blues singer, lends her formidable presence to the role of the landlady. The languages spoken in the film are Wolof, French, and English.

MAIN CHARACTERS

Marigo (Dieye Ma): A Senegalese man who buys a lottery ticket in the hope of escaping a life of poverty
The Landlady (Aminata Fall): Marigo's landlady, who torments and humiliates him for unpaid rent
The Cashier (uncredited): a young woman at the lottery office, who empathizes with Marigo

SYNOPSIS

The Franc follows the misadventures of Marigo, a Senegalese man renting a wooden shack in a communal courtyard of a poor neighborhood in Dakar. Struggling to pay his rent, Marigo can barely afford more than *kola* nuts, the hunger-staving snack chewed all day by the impoverished to quiet the growls of empty stomachs. Set against the backdrop of Senegal's second devaluation of the CFA franc, in 1994, the film reflects economic despair. When Marigo's impatient landlady confiscates his beloved musical instrument, he sinks into depression. But he refuses to surrender to fate, and he buys a lottery ticket and glues it to his door with strong adhesive, so he won't lose it. When he discovers he's won the jackpot, he must detach the ticket, an epic task. Marigo hauls the entire door to the ocean, hoping the Atlantic's waves will help free the ticket. After a fierce struggle with the sea and jagged rocks, the ticket finally comes off, and Marigo bursts with joy. Yet the film ends in suspense: after enduring so many salty thrashings, is the ticket's verification number still legible? Will Marigo ever claim his prize?

SCENES

Marigo lives in a slum A slum of wooden houses appears, covered with rusted metal sheets in a suburb of Dakar. A Quranic teacher, whip in hand, makes small children in rags recite the precepts of the Quran. Marigo rents a studio in one of the courtyards of the slum. His furniture consists of a bed. On one of the walls hangs a picture of Marigo's spiritual guide, Yaadikooke, a mythological Robin Hood-like Senegalese character.



An unforgiving landlady Marigo's sleep is disturbed by the image of his landlady demanding that he pay his overdue rent. He wakes up, sits on his bed, and places his feet on the wooden floor. Without standing, he reaches for a large clay water jar in the corner of his room. He scoops a bowl of water, takes a sip, brushes his teeth with his index finger, gargles, and spits into a bucket near his bed. Then, he gets dressed and kisses the photo of his mentor.



A failed attempt at exit From his room, Marigo spies on his landlady through the gaps in his wooden wall. Outside, she shouts and curses him, demanding payment for the six months of rent he owes her. Marigo waits patiently for her to tire and leave so he can finally step out. When he believes she has gone, he opens his door and tiptoes out. But the woman, hidden, catches him off guard. She dumps a basin of water over him, cursing him as she strikes him with the empty container.



Marigo misses his instrument Marigo manages to escape his landlady's wrath and sets off along the dunes, following the shoreline. From time to time, he stops, turning abruptly as if responding to an unseen call. Yet, there is no one. At each pause, an image forces itself into his mind, himself playing the metallic keys of his *congoma*, the musical instrument his landlady confiscated for unpaid rent.



Marigo's lottery ticket wins the jackpot Marigo goes to the city and, for his only meal, shares a few *kola* nuts with his friend, a lottery ticket seller. His friend convinces him to buy a ticket with the number 555 and to keep it safe, assuring him that luck will be on his side. Marigo buys a ticket and hides it in the lining of his felt hat. Marigo returns home and selects a hiding place for his lottery ticket. He decides to glue it to his door, covering it with the poster of his mystical mentor. The next morning, he presses a kiss onto the poster, then steps out to wander the city. As he strolls, the radio crackles with two announcements, the devaluation of the CFA currency and the lottery draw. Marigo's number has won the jackpot.



Marigo is evicted Marigo returns home to retrieve his winning ticket and claim his prize. He realizes that his landlady has thrown his belongings in the courtyard, a sign of eviction. She is taunting him playing his confiscated instrument. The door is left open, and his guide's poster is still on it, protecting his lottery ticket.



Marigo goes to claim his prize Despite his efforts, Marigo is unable to peel the ticket off the door. Determined, he removes the door from its hinges and balances it on his head. His landlady watches in stunned disbelief, convinced that confiscating his instrument has driven him mad. She calls out to him, pleading for him to come back and reclaim his instrument. But Marigo does not stop. He steps out of the courtyard, carrying the door. The landlady cries that Marigo has lost his mind, and that it is all her fault. Marigo takes a bus to Dakar to collect his check. Determined not to part with his door, he travels on the luggage rack atop the bus. Along the way, visions flood his mind. He sees himself as a saxophonist reveling in his own glory, taunting the BCEAO (Central Bank of West African States). Marigo reaches the headquarters of LONASE (National Lottery of Senegal) and steps up to the counter, still carrying his door.



Marigo must unglue his ticket Marigo presents his ticket, still glued to the door, to the receptionist, who congratulates him upon realizing he is the lucky lottery winner. However, her excitement fades when she notices that the ticket is glued to his door. Visibly concerned, she explains to Marigo that the control number required for verification is on the back of the ticket. She advises Marigo to remove the ticket from the door and claim his prize.



Finally Marigo celebrates Marigo wanders through the dumps of Dakar, lost in thought. Then, an idea strikes him, to submerge the door in the sea. He ties the door to his wrists with two ropes and lets it sink into the water. The sea is rough, and a powerful wave hurls him toward the rocks. He loses consciousness. When he awakens, he sees the door floating in the distance, separated from the poster of his guide. Believing he has lost his ticket, Marigo bursts into tears. But as he holds his head in despair, he suddenly realizes that the ticket is stuck to his forehead. Marigo exults. He laughs, he sings, he dances. The film ends with Marigo's triumphant celebration.



CHARACTER ANALYSIS

MARIGO Marigo is a resilient dreamer whose unyielding determination propels him through a life marked by hardship and humiliation. His optimism, reflected in his absurd yet hopeful journey with a lottery ticket glued to a door, captures both the defiance and imaginative survival of the marginalized.

Resilient Marigo endures poverty, humiliation, and misfortune without surrendering to despair. His ability to persist through hardship, both emotional and physical, reflects an unshakable inner strength.

Dream-driven Marigo's actions are fueled by a deep longing for transformation. Whether it's buying a lottery ticket or consulting his spiritual guide, Marigo clings to the hope that life can change, no matter how improbable it seems.

Quixotic-optimistic Marigo navigates life with a surreal optimism that borders on the absurd. From gluing his ticket to a door to hauling that door across the city and into the ocean, his journey blurs the line between desperation and imagination, lending him a poetic, almost mythical air.

THE LANDLADY The landlady in *The Franc* is a domineering presence, quick to impose her authority through harsh reprimands and punitive actions, such as seizing Marigo's instrument. Her impatience and humiliating behavior reflect both her personal frustration and the broader social tensions at play within the film's portrayal of urban poverty.

Authoritarian The landlady is an authoritarian person. She exerts strict control over her tenants, enforcing rent collection with little empathy. Her decision to confiscate Marigo's instrument underscores her dominance and lack of flexibility.

Impatient Marigo's landlady is an impatient character. From the early hours of the morning, she berates Marigo, showing little tolerance for his delays or excuses. Her constant harassment reflects a no-nonsense attitude shaped by her own economic pressures.

Humiliating She doesn't hesitate to shame Marigo publicly, even throwing water in his face. This act of degradation highlights the power imbalance between landlord and tenant and adds to the film's critique of social hierarchies.

THE LOTTERY CASHIER/RECEPTIONIST The lottery receptionist in *The Franc* shows quiet empathy and sincere encouragement. Her warm concern and hopeful support offer a rare moment of kindness in Marigo's difficult journey.

Empathetic The receptionist's empathy is evident in her immediate concern for Marigo's predicament. Rather than treating him as just another ticket holder, she recognizes the human struggle behind his unconventional situation. Her worry about the condition of the glued ticket reveals a deep understanding of what this potential win means for someone like Marigo.

Encouraging The cashier's encouragement manifests subtly but sincerely. Through her hopeful tone and supportive demeanor, she becomes an emotional ally in Marigo's journey. Despite the absurdity of the situation, she wants him to succeed and quietly roots for him to overcome this last obstacle. In a world where bureaucracy often feels indifferent, her optimism serves as a brief but meaningful gesture of solidarity.

THEMES

Poverty Mambéty shows that poverty is more than a lack of material wealth. It is a force that shapes destinies, dictates choices, and constrains even the most basic human experiences. It strips individuals of agency, forcing them into cycles of survival where dignity becomes secondary to necessity. In most of his films, Mambéty shows how scarcity is not just financial but existential, affecting education, nutrition, and the environment itself. In societies where poverty is pervasive, it permeates every interaction, leaving little room for long-term ambition or escape. Poverty in *The Franc* is a pervasive force shaping lives, decisions, and even the environment. Mambéty captures how in its reach, poverty affects both people and animals in their struggle for survival.

Illustrative moments: In the opening scenes, in the courtyard of a slum, a child wanders, his nakedness taken as normal by the people around him, who hardly notice his presence. The child is a quiet testament to the normalization of hardship. A distance away, some ragged students of a severe, stick-carrying Quranic master endure another form of deprivation: Wearing torn clothes in their environment of bleak prospects, they are being educated through a rigid system of indoctrination enforced by fear. Beyond these human suffering, the desolate grazing ground littered with plastic waste that Marigo crosses, carrying his door on his head, highlights the depths of scarcity. Cattle, unable to find food, resort to chewing plastic waste, in a tragic violation of nature's order and a brutal metaphor for survival in an unforgiving world.



This is the environment in which Marigo is trapped, living in a cramped studio, relying on kola nuts for sustenance, and struggling to pay his rent.

Religious syncretism Senegal's spiritual landscape is strongly shaped by syncretism, where Islamic devotion, indigenous traditions, and mystical beliefs merge into a dynamic and hybrid system. Djibril Diop Mambéty's films show this fusion, depicting faith not as rigid doctrine but as a lived experience that influences destinies. In *Touki Bouki*, the sweeping aerial view of a crowded mosque and the muezzin's call to prayer establish Islam's presence, yet Mambéty's storytelling suggests an ongoing dialogue between ancestral and religious identities. *The Franc* further reflects this interplay, where faith, fate, and mysticism blur into a surreal, almost mythical reality. Mambéty captures Senegal's spiritual syncretism, illustrating how religious traditions evolve, merge, and persist, shaping not only personal beliefs but the broader cultural imagination.

Illustrative moments: Though Marigo is a devout Muslim and lives in an environment that continually reinforces his faith, through his constant fingering of prayer beads, the muezzin's call to prayer, and the presence of a Quranic master instructing his attentive young pupils, his spirituality is not confined solely to Islam. Marigo invokes his ancestors each morning by pouring water on his doorstep to ward off evil spirits and invite fortune to himself. Marigo demonstrates deep reverence for his spiritual mystical mentor by kissing the poster of his mystical master, which he keeps fixed on his door, relying on his guidance as a source of protection and direction. And when, on his way to Dakar, the day of the lottery draw, Marigo's right foot (not the left) strikes a stone, and he stumbles, Marigo, like many Africans, takes it as a promising sign that the day has begun on the right path. The interplay between faith, superstition and practicality governs Marigo's choices. He trusts in Muslim faith and his mystical mentor's wisdom, yet he seeks worldly solutions to his struggles, placing hope in a lottery ticket as a potential key to his escape from hardship.

Control/oppression Oppression manifests through both economic and ideological control, shaping the lives of the vulnerable and dictating their choices. Those in power, whether through wealth or institutional authority, enforce submission by limiting autonomy and instilling fear. Financial dominance, as seen in Marigo's plight, reduces individuals to mere subjects of debt, where survival depends on appeasing those who hold material resources. Beyond unpaid rent, Marigo's landlady's cruelty is an assertion of control, a reminder that poverty strips people of dignity and agency. Similarly, ideological oppression operates through rigid systems that demand obedience rather than understanding. Thus, the Quranic teacher's whip is both an instrument of discipline and a tool of coercion, ensuring that knowledge is absorbed through fear rather than curiosity. Both the figures of the landlady and the teacher represent deep-rooted structures designed to maintain hierarchy, reinforcing the idea that resistance leads to punishment. Marigo's suffering reflects how oppression functions to keep the marginalized in their place. His story illustrates the broader reality of control, where power is wielded not just through force but through the manipulation of necessity and belief.

Illustrative moments: Marigo's poverty places him at the mercy of his landlady. She insults him, confiscates his musical instrument, drenches him with water, and strikes him. She wields power through her financial dominance and her relentless demands for payment. With her curses and humiliation, she tells Marigo that she is among those who own, and he is among those who owe. She dictates his reality by watching his everyday movement and by deciding when he can move freely and when he must hide, and Marigo's attempts to avoid her control often fails as she thwarts his escapes.



Struggle/survival Struggle in Senegal's urban context unfolds as a continuous negotiation with forces that constrain individual autonomy and dignity. Economic instability shapes how people move through the city, often requiring indirect strategies for survival. Debt functions not just as a financial burden but as a form of social control, influencing relationships and reinforcing existing hierarchies. Beyond material lack, hardship affects personal identity, where even creative expression is subject to external pressures. Poverty leaves lasting physical and psychological effects, trapping individuals in cycles of dependency. Through Mambéty's cinematic lens, everyday experiences take on symbolic weight, revealing the subtle mechanisms of oppression. *The Franc* presents survival as an act of adaptation and resilience, requiring constant navigation of both visible challenges and hidden obstacles. In this world, struggle is not an exception but the defining rhythm of daily life.

Illustrative moments: Marigo's existence is a continuous battle for survival. He navigates his debts with caution, waiting for the right moment to slip past his landlady, an element that transforms the simple act of stepping outside into an ordeal. His financial hardship robs him of dignity, forcing him into evasive tactics rather than direct confrontation. Music is his escape, his identity, but his landlady confiscates his musical instrument (*congoma*) for unpaid rent, stripping him of his identity and his form of expression. Marigo, carrying his door on his head, must navigate a narrow alleyway while a cart driver pushes his load toward him and a porter, weighed down by a sack of grain, attempts to squeeze past from behind. This comical and tragic scene captures the relentless challenges faced by Senegalese people trapped in the grip of poverty.



Determination Mambéty tackles determination as a force that drives individuals to persist despite adversity, transforming obstacles into challenges rather than barriers. It requires endurance and a refusal to relinquish hope, even when circumstances seem insurmountable. For those facing economic hardship, determination might often manifest in small, defiant acts, such as choosing to believe in possibility, clinging to dreams, and navigating daily struggles with resilience so as to find unconventional solutions and to push forward despite societal constraints. Marigo's unwillingness to surrender to his condition, his unwavering faith in his lottery ticket, his relentless journey through Dakar's streets, and his epic fight against the waves of the Atlantic Ocean signal probable end to his condition of poverty. His struggle is to keep hope alive in a world that seeks to strip it away. Mambéty's message is that individual determination can transform hardship into prosperity as the film ends on Marigo celebrating the future and his ability to cheat fate.

Illustrative moments: In *The Franc*, determination is woven into Marigo's relentless pursuit of hope despite his dire circumstances. One striking illustration is his unwavering belief in the lottery ticket, on which he spends his last resources, resolving to eat *kola* nuts for lunch, and which he glues on his door, behind the picture of his mystical guardian angel. Although his financial struggles leave him powerless in many aspects of life, he clings to the possibility of winning, refusing to surrender to despair. His determination is further emphasized when he carries his door through the narrow alleyways of his neighborhood, through the street of Dakar, through the landfills, on top of the bus, navigating obstacles with persistence, despite the absurdity of the situation. Marigo does not abandon his goal, even when burdened by physical and societal constraints. Although he lacks direct power, Marigo finds ways to maneuver within his limitations, demonstrating a determination that is both subtle and profound.



Quest At the core of *The Franc* lies a compelling quest for dignity, autonomy, and hope amid deeply entrenched material hardship. Marigo's journey is shaped not only by the external pressures of economic instability and marginalization but also by a profound internal desire for transformation. His pursuit of a lottery win symbolizes financial relief and becomes a vehicle for reclaiming agency in a world where opportunity is elusive and daily existence is burdened by scarcity. Infused with spiritual faith and quiet determination, Marigo's quest reflects a larger struggle faced by many whose lives are governed by unequal access to resources and mobility. As his aspirations clash with the harsh conditions around him, the film reveals the paradox of pursuing personal liberation within an environment that continually narrows the paths to change.

Illustrative moments: Marigo is a struggling man. For nourishment, he survives on *kola* nuts, the caffeine-rich seeds believed to ease hunger. His landlady has confiscated his musical instrument due to unpaid rent and harasses him from the break of dawn, disrupting his sleep. Yet Marigo does not despair: He clings to hope, seeking a better tomorrow. He buys a lottery ticket and entrusts his quest to the goodwill of his mystical mentor and to Allah. Marigo's journey is driven by a relentless desire to escape, from poverty, from debt, from the weight of daily hardship. Each step Marigo takes, wandering through the city, guarding his ticket, is fueled by the hope of transformation. He seeks not just wealth, but freedom from a life defined by scarcity. Yet even when fate appears to favor Marigo, an ominous shadow remains; the radio announces the devaluation of the CFA franc, threatening to erase his victory and leaving the outcome of his quest uncertain.



Hope Hope is an anchor in the face of uncertainty, a force that drives individuals forward despite the weight of their circumstances. It is the belief that tomorrow holds possibilities unseen, that the tides of misfortune may shift, however improbable it seems. Hope is active, persistent, and often defiant in its refusal to accept despair. Whether rooted in faith, ambition, or sheer willpower, hope can shape actions, turning longing into movement and expectation into resolve. For people confronted with hardship, hope becomes a form of resistance, an insistence that life can offer more than its present difficulties. Yet hope is also fragile; it exists on the delicate boundary between aspiration and disillusionment. It can elevate, empower, and transform, but it can also lead one to chase illusions, to trust in an uncertain future that may never materialize. This tension manifests in Marigo's journey, where hope propels him toward a potential escape from hardship. Marigo's faith in luck and divine intervention sustains him, leading him to stake his future on a lottery ticket. But as his triumph meets the unpredictable forces of destiny, the question lingers: does hope truly reshape fate, or is it merely another mirage taunting one on the horizon?

Illustrative moments: Despite the relentless hardships surrounding him, Marigo refuses to succumb to despair. His unwavering belief in luck and his trust in the possibility of a better future propel him forward. He buys a lottery ticket, glues it on his door, behind a poster of his spiritual mentor, kisses the image each morning, and walks through his days counting his prayer beads, each act an attempt to compel divine intervention in shaping his destiny. The lottery ticket, though small and fragile, carries significance beyond mere numbers; it is a beacon of hope, a glimmer of potential. When fortune finally smiles upon him, affirming that even in the darkest moments luck can shift, Marigo is euphoric. He unhinges his door and carries it to Dakar, determined to claim his prize. Yet hope is fragile. With the ticket's validity in question and the uncertainty surrounding the CFA currency's fate, one must ask: has destiny truly granted Marigo an escape, or is it merely another fleeting mirage? The film offers no definitive answer. In a climactic struggle against the waves and rocks by the sea, Marigo triumphantly celebrates. But as the audience watches, the lingering uncertainty remains. Has his victory endured, or has the sea washed away the very proof of his fortune, the ticket's verification number, crashing all his hope?



Fate Life, as Camus would put it, is an absurd reality, an unpredictable sequence of events where certainty is little more than an illusion. People strive for control, seeking stability, wealth, happiness, or justice, yet time and circumstance conspire against people in ways both subtle and cruel. Victory, when it comes, is rarely absolute; it is almost always tangled in complications, unforeseen obstacles, and ironic twists that undermine its very promise. This absurdist reality takes shape in Marigo's journey, where his triumph, winning the jackpot, becomes its own labyrinth of difficulties. Marigo's fortune does not bring immediate relief but plunges him into an escalating series of ridiculous hurdles, forcing him to carry his own door, dive into the sea, and wrestle with fate itself. Even at the film's end, his celebration remains precarious, haunted by the lingering uncertainty of whether his ticket will even be readable. His joy, though genuine, is shadowed by the eternal mockery of chance.

Illustrative moment: Marigo's lottery win does not guarantee his escape from hardship. His ticket, glued to his door for safekeeping, becomes an obstacle rather than salvation. His attempts to retrieve it spiral into chaos. He unhinges the door, carries it on his head through the narrow alleys of his shantytown, and boards a bus to the business district of Dakar. At the lottery office, Marigo is told to unglue the ticket from the door, so that its verification number on the back can be read. Marigo's misadventures start all over again, culminating in a desperate effort to submerge the door in the sea. Even after detaching the ticket, new uncertainties arise. Will the verification number remain intact? Will the ticket still be valid? The film offers no definitive resolution, leaving Marigo's fate unresolved, given that luck may prove as fickle as struggle itself. Marigo's final celebration, his laughter, song, and dance, is a fragile triumph.



THE CFA Mambéty repeatedly explores the impact of the CFA franc in his films, revealing its grip on Africa's economy. In *Hyenas*, Ramatou embodies the harmful influence of a currency controlled by France, paralleling the role of the World Bank. *The Franc* presents Marigo's desperate pursuit of financial security, as devaluations and his elusive lottery ticket keep prosperity beyond his reach. *The Little Girl Who Sold the Sun* further emphasizes the issue, with the devaluation making front-page news. Mambéty's fixation on the CFA franc reflects the continent's uncertainty, shaped by external forces that manipulate its economy. His satire exposes the absurdity of financial systems that trap the poor in hardship, using Marigo's struggle to cash his lottery ticket as a critique of institutions that frustrate rather than uplift. The constant threat of devaluation underscores Africa's dependence on a currency controlled by France, deepening economic instability.

Illustrative moment: Marigo is tormented by money wherever he goes. His landlady wakes him with harsh scolding, reminding him of his unpaid rent and humiliating him by throwing a basin of water in his face as he tries to slip away unnoticed. In the bustling Dakar market, just as he finally decides to take a chance by purchasing a lottery ticket, his hopes are shattered by relentless radio announcements about the currency's devaluation. Nonetheless, Marigo buys a ticket. On the day of the draw, Marigo clutches his prayer beads, anxiously waiting to see if he is among the lucky winners, only for the radio to announce yet another devaluation, making it clear that, win or lose, the grand prize will be practically worthless, and poverty will continue to haunt him.

Resilience and determination In *The Franc*, Mambéty constructs a powerful portrait of resilience, determination, and persistence in the face of relentless hardship. Marigo, emblematic of many marginalized individuals, refuses to be crushed by poverty or humiliation. His daily existence is marked by scarcity and struggle, yet he presses on, fueled by the belief that life holds more than the hand he has been dealt with. His unwavering focus on reclaiming dignity and hope becomes an act of defiance against a reality that constantly denies him both. Mambéty shows that resilience is not passive endurance but active refusal to yield; determination becomes the force propelling Marigo beyond ridicule and exhaustion; and persistence transforms a man's dream into an epic journey. Within this emotional and psychological terrain, the film offers dramatic illustrations of Marigo's trials; moments that make visible the strength it takes to keep moving forward when every door, quite literally, becomes a burden to carry.

Illustrative moment: Marigo faces relentless obstacles in his quest for a better future. His landlady berates him, confiscates his beloved musical instrument for unpaid rent, and strikes him. In the city of Dakar, he nearly gets strangled by an aggressive dwarf after attempting to snatch a banknote dropped by a passer-by. When he finally buys a lottery ticket, radio broadcasts about the CFA franc's devaluation cast doubt on the value of his potential winnings. Against all odds, he wins, but his ticket is stubbornly stuck to his door. Determined, he carries the door through the city, even riding atop a bus with it. At the lottery office, he is told the ticket must be removed for verification, pushing him toward an epic struggle with the waves of the sea, where he goes to wash the glue off his ticket. Battling waves and jagged rocks, he finally prevails. Through Marigo's journey, Mambéty brilliantly captures the resilience and determination of the Senegalese people, making his fight a testament to survival.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How would you explain the title of the film?
2. How does Marigo's journey reflect broader struggles faced by individuals in postcolonial urban societies?
3. In what ways does Mambéty use humor and absurdity to critique economic inequality and social injustice?
4. What symbolic significance does the glued lottery ticket carry throughout the film?
5. How do the landlady and the lottery receptionist serve to highlight different dimensions of Marigo's character?
6. To what extent does spirituality guide Marigo's actions, and how is this faith portrayed in the film?
7. What does the film suggest about the limits of hope in the face of structural barriers and economic hardship?
8. Imagine and describe a sequel to *The Franc*.