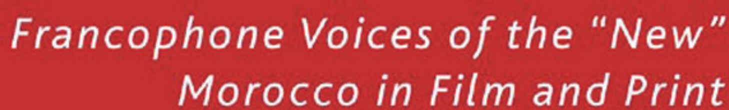

Francophone Voices of the "New" Morocco in Film and Print

(Re)presenting a Society in Transition

VALÉRIE K. ORLANDO

Francophone Voices of the “New” Morocco in Film and Print

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Of Suffocated Hearts and Tortured Souls: Seeking Subjecthood through Madness in Women's Writing of Africa and the Caribbean (2003)

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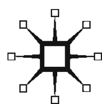

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A tous mes amis marocains qui m'ont montré comment "voir" le Maroc.
To all my Moroccan friends who showed me how to "see" Morocco.

In memory of my grandmother Ella Clarke Nuite, 1904–2007.

In memory of philosopher Abdelkébir Khatibi (1938–2009).

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Contents

Permissions ix

Preface xi

Acknowledgments xxi

Introduction: Enunciating the Unsaid and the Historically "Inconceivable" in the Words of Contemporary Francophone Morocco 1

1 The Power of Engagement: Writing in/on the Front Lines of Politics and Culture in the New Morocco 21

2 The Texts of Human Rights: Moroccan Prison Testimonials by Victims of the Lead Years 45

3 Publishing Women: The Feminine Voices of Social Activists 71

4 Sexuality, Gender, and the Homoerotic Novel of the New Morocco 107

5 *TelQuel: Morocco as It Is* in the Journals, Magazines, and Newspapers of the Francophone Press 129

6 The Humanist Individual in Contemporary Morocco 157

7 Morocco on the Screen: Cinema in the New Morocco 187

Conclusion 227

Selected Filmography of Moroccan Films: 1999–2008 231

Notes 235

Bibliography 247

Index 257

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Preface

Francophone Voices of the "New" Morocco in Film and Print: (Re)presenting a Society in Transition is the fruit of a seven-month Fulbright research grant to the Maghreb during early 2007. This book assesses to what extent Moroccan francophone literature, press, and film reflect the sociocultural and political transitions that have taken place in Morocco since 1999 and King Mohamed VI's (popularly known as "M6") coronation. This new era marks the end of almost thirty years of repression under King Hassan II, known as *Les Années de plomb* (The Lead Years).[1] For many authors, filmmakers, and journalists, the Lead Years are still a festering wound that has not healed. The work of these intellectually engaged movers and shakers of Moroccan society all affirm that the years of torture, abuse, and violation of civil rights still need to be fully acknowledged and studied in the context of Morocco's post-independence history. To date in *Le Nouveau Maroc* (the New Morocco), little political action has rectified the legacy of abuses carried out during the Lead Years. Although the government of Mohamed VI has sought to improve material means and living conditions for all Moroccans, there is much that needs to be done in terms of repairing historical memory. It remains to be seen, for example, how the *refoulement de mémoire* (repressed memory) of the entire country will be exposed and catalogued for and to future generations. As author Touria Oulehri writes in her most recent book, *Les Conspirateurs sont parmi nous* (The Conspirators are Among Us, 2006), Moroccans themselves must assume responsibility for purging the past in order for the country to move forward.

The Lead Years, as well as many contemporary issues, provide the themes for the majority of the novels, journal and newspaper articles, and films that are analyzed in this book. Most of these can only be found in Morocco. Nearly all the works of prose, while published in French, are not sold anywhere but in the large bookstores of Rabat

and Casablanca. Moroccan authors told me they write for fellow Moroccans and no one else. They are invested in the changes that are transpiring in their country, and recognize that there is still much more work to be done. Authors and filmmakers' works are predominantly critical and sociopolitically engaged, and dedicated to instructing, enlightening, and exposing topics that in the past have been taboo in Moroccan society.

Literature of French Expression

Contemporary literature written since 1999 represents a "third generation" of Moroccan writing in French. It is grounded in a rich literary tradition established in the country in the 1950s. Contemporary authors are no longer concerned with colonial polemics. Rather, as scholar Abdallah Mdarhri Alaoui notes, they seek to found original debates while exploring a new Morocco that is exemplary of "toutes les langues parlées et écrites de ce pays riche par ses traditions, expressions et ouvertures sur les autres cultures" (all the spoken and written languages of this country that is rich because of its traditions, expressions and openness to other cultures) (148).

Authors see themselves as activists—socially engaged, bearing witness to, and translating the transitions in their society. In keeping with Jean-Paul Sartre's thesis in his 1948 *Qu'est-ce que la littérature?* (What is Literature?), Moroccan authors consider their roles in society as keepers of social consciousness at a time that is uncertain and replete with unknowns. Like Sartre and the activist "engagés" authors writing on the French left in the aftermath of Europe's decimation, Moroccan authors feel that it is their duty to write and produce for their society in order to effectuate change. With respect to writing, Sartre emphatically claimed that "It is not true that one writes for oneself" (49–50).[2] Authors are expected to act as "guides" for society (Sartre, 1948, 52). According to the Sartrian model, literary guides must "dévoile" (unveil) their culture as they explain what they reveal (53). At no time in Moroccan history has writing, and creative works in general, been so crucial to contributing to the contemporary dialogues and intellectual discussions that are shaping the political practices, cultural mores, and societal trends of a country in transition.

One of the goals of this study is to determine why Moroccan authors choose to write in French instead of Arabic now, forty years after independence from France. Why is French still used if the

colonial power left in 1956? What do these authors gain by writing in a language that is not accessible, at least in the literary sense, to the majority of Moroccans? The illiteracy rate of the country is estimated at 50 percent, and among educated people, only a small number is able to read in French. Such statistics have been debated in both the francophone and arabophone press and led imminent author Edmond Amran El Maleh to ask these questions at a conference held on Moroccan writing in February 2007: "Quelle est la situation du roman au Maroc?" (What is the status of the novel in Morocco?) and "Y a-t-il une crise du roman au Maroc?" (Is the novel in crisis in Morocco?).[3] Perhaps Moroccan writing of French expression is best thought of as exemplifying the ideal of "la littérature mineure" (minor literature) as described by philosophers Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari in their seminal work *Kafka: La littérature mineure* (*Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, 1986). Minor literature is not considered "less than," but rather is used as a tool, devised in a space that allows authors to "live in a language that is not their own" (19). Minor literature is always socioculturally and politically engaged, and the author who contributes to it never writes in a cloistered room away from the fray:

> Minor literature is completely different; its cramped space forces each individual intrigue to connect immediately to politics. The individual concern thus becomes all the more necessary, indispensable, magnified, because a whole other story is vibrating within it. In this way, the family triangle connects to other triangles—commercial, economic, bureaucratic, juridical—that determine its values. (17)

Despite this literature's "minor" status, Moroccan publishing houses dedicated to printing novels in French are thriving. Yet, as many authors and journalists note, the francophone voice of the country is just one linguistic mode of expression used in Morocco. The most pressing questions with respect to language are: Is the country "polyglot," as philosopher Abdelkébir Khatibi would say, or "schizophrenic," according to journalists writing for *TelQuel*? And, does *plurilinguisme* (the "plural-lingual") celebrate the richness of the country's multiculturalism or create linguistic chaos?

In general, Moroccans tend to view their polyglot nation as positive. Author Youssouf Amine Elalamy, who has published both in French and Darija (Moroccan dialectical, primarily oral, Arabic), notes, "il faut une ouverture sur l'idée de la langue comme une de la

création et pas une langue simplement pour la communication…au niveau de la production…créer en darija ou français permettra à certaines gens de créer tout simplement" (we must be open to looking at language as a means of creation and not as just a language for communication…it must be viewed at the level of production…creating in Darija or French will allow people simply to create).[4] In general, the novel is a reflection of this rich source of linguistic possibilities. No matter the language in which it is written, an author's prose can be viewed as a vital indicator of the well-being of a society and its culture. As Elalamy suggests, in Morocco, "le roman a toujours reflété son époque" (the novel has always reflected its era) and has been an essential tool in chronicling sociocultural and political transitions.[5]

In addition to the creative aspect of language choice, there are also personal reasons why some authors choose to write in French. When asked to elaborate on language choice, most authors said they favored French because it is the language in which they feel most comfortable. Although the presence of French in the country is the result of colonial occupation, the language still allows the author a certain freedom of voice and spirit that s/he claims not to find in standard Arabic. Women authors, in particular, argue that the French language allows for a more intimate "I," removing the author from the collective and the omnipresent traditions and cultural mores of Moroccan society that impede one's liberty and individualism. French is a language that allows for "total liberty" because it enables the author to circumvent social taboos. French "is not the language of the subconscious" nor does it represent the public voice of the nation, "it's not the language of the *doxa*" (Devergnas-Dieumegard, 2003, n.p.).

Today it must be noted that social class as well as generation influence Moroccans' proficiency in French. The language has always been used by the elite classes of Morocco who send their children to schools such as Lycée Descartes in Rabat and Lycée Lyautey in Casablanca, both of which are attached to the "mission française." Immediately following independence, Morocco's French educational infrastructure was very good and, for this reason, older generations of Moroccan authors attained high levels of proficiency in French. Today, this is less the case as Arabization programs have influenced the norms of the Moroccan school system.

Scholars observe that Moroccan French is unique in its tone and style due to the linguistic plurality of the country. As Annie Devergnas-Dieumegard explains, whenever a Moroccan writer of French expression picks up a pen s/he is "irrigated by three linguistic currents": a

sublangue (Darija or Berber); a *surlangue* (Classical Arabic); and the *xénolangue* (French). French is "the intruder, but also the language of modernism, the language that one applies oneself to learn by scholastic obligation, to possess, sometimes in the strongest of senses, with zeal or rage in order to exorcise it" (Devergnas-Dieumegard, 2003, n.p.).

It is through French that some of the most pressing questions about Moroccan society, culture, and politics are discussed. As author and activist Rida Lamrini says "nous sommes un pays qui se cherche" (we are a country looking for itself), but also "nous vivons dans un pays qui bouge" (we live in a country that is on the move); and it is through writing that Moroccans explore the intricacies of their new, post–Lead Years' identity as they recount the changing sociocultural and political mores that are taking place.[6]

Films of the New Morocco

In the same manner as literature, the films made by Moroccan filmmakers (both living abroad and at home) document the transitions taking place in contemporary society. Whether made in French, Arabic, or a mixture of the two, language becomes secondary to the images that contemporary filmmakers seek to convey to their audiences. For the most part, films made since 1999 are socially engaging, made in a social-realist style that seeks to not only entertain, but also educate audiences about the sociocultural and political transitions that are taking place in Moroccan society. Since 1999, films have taken up sensitive and taboo issues that were once impossible to discuss in Moroccan society. History is being reviewed and retold to remind and educate Moroccans of and about the atrocities that took place during the Lead Years. Human rights' abuses, torture, women's emancipation, freedom of speech, poverty, unemployment, and the plight of street children are some of the themes of today's Moroccan cinema. No stone is left unturned, as the country explores new paths to a more equitable and all-inclusive society.

What is most noticeable about the literature, film, and media production of contemporary Morocco is that they act as sociocultural and political reflectors of contemporary life. Not only are they a product of transitions taking place, they are also vectors of change themselves. The active sociocultural and political milieus in Morocco are the foundations of authors' works; whether these works are fiction, testimonials, or autobiography.

Documenting New Voices in Texts and Films

This book captures the intricacies of the current themes of post-1999 Morocco. It offers comprehensive and nuanced analyses of the dynamics of the current cultural production of men and women who not only write and make films but who also, through their activism, are contributing to the innovations of the New Morocco.

This study aims to foster a dialogue with an effervescent part of the world that is often little understood by the United States. As mentioned earlier, most of the literary works discussed here are found only in the numerous small, but very well-stocked, francophone bookstores of Rabat, Casablanca, and Fès.[7] Indeed, the Librairie Les Belles Images, Librairie Livre Service, and Librairie Kalila wa Dimna, all well situated on or near Avenue Mohammed V in Rabat and stocked with the latest in Moroccan francophone writing, are treasure troves essential to finding the texts that explain the transitions taking place now.[8] In recent years, the proliferation of small, but thriving, publishing houses in the large, major cities of the country has contributed to the sustainability of francophone intellectual studies. They are an imperative link to future debates on reform, modernity, and cultural transitions in the twenty-first century.

The book's introduction explores the history of Moroccan francophone writing from the tumultuous pre-independence period of the early1950s, through the dark Lead Years that endured until 1999 and the death of King Hassan II. It also offers an overview of the history of filmmaking in Morocco since independence. Cinema, like literature in the last decade, has reflected Morocco's own brand of "culture wars." Issues of what language to use (Arabic, French, Berber), budgets, funding, and distribution have replaced the former malaise over censorship of any subject deemed taboo by the monarchy.

Chapter one, "The Power of Engagement: Writing in/on the Front Lines of Politics and Culture in the New Morocco," focuses on the works of Rida Lamrini (*La Saga des Puissants de Casablanca*, The Saga of the Powerful of Casablanca, a trilogy published between 1999 and 2004) and Touria Oulehri (*Les Conspirateurs sont parmi nous*, The Conspirators are Among Us, 2006). These authors exemplify the politically committed, public intellectual-author that Frantz Fanon and Jean-Paul Sartre envisioned as being crucial to the decolonization of minds and politics in burgeoning African nations. Lamrini and Oulehri's voices extend beyond the literary realm to promote sociopolitical and cultural dialogues that force readers to think about

poverty, corruption, the exploitation of children, and the vestiges of the Lead Years in contemporary society.

Chapter two, "The Texts of Human Rights: Moroccan Prison Testimonials by Victims of the Lead Years," examines the films and literature about and by those who were once incarcerated and subjected to human rights' abuses. Moroccan authors, who were formerly prison detainees, have today written some of the most painful *témoignages* (testimonials) of our time. Through the filters of memory and the revisioning of history, they bring to light some of the more obscure details of the Lead Years, a past sequestered in Morocco's national psyche. What is now reported and what was previously suppressed, or simply left untold, has been the subject of many francophone testimonial novels and poetry written by former political prisoners such as Ahmed Marzouki's *Tazmamart: Cellule 10* (2000) and Abdelfettah Fakihani's *Le Couloir : Bribes de vérité sur les années de plomb* (The Hallway: Fragments of Truth from the Lead Years, 2005). On screen, several prominent films made in Moroccan Arabic since 1999 offer audiences a glimpse into the horrors of the past. These include: *Jawhara* (Saâd Chraïbi, 2003), the film version of *La Chambre noire* (The Black Room, Hassan Benjelloun, 2004), and *Mémoire en detention* (Detention Memoir, Jillali Ferhati, 2004).

Chapter three, "Publishing Women: The Feminine Voices of Social Activists," reveals the fact that women's writing, whether in the form of a novel, poetry, testimonial, or autobiography discloses overwhelmingly the challenges faced by women in contemporary society. Women's literary production has created a new feminine voice that articulates and contextualizes the issues that impact women's lives in Morocco. These issues include the constraints of family, certain religious and cultural traditions that impede their emancipation, sexuality, and relationships with men, and legal status in society. This chapter explores and analyzes novels by Siham Benchekroun (*Oser vivre!* Dare to Live!, 2002), Houria Boussejra (*Le Corps dérobé*, The Body Revealed, 1999; *Les Femmes inachevées*, Incomplete Women, 2000; *Les Impunis: ou les obsessions interdites*, The Unpunished: Or Forbidden Obsessions, 2004), and Aïcha Ech-Channa (*Miseria: Témoignages,* Misery: Testimonials, 2004), to name but a few.

Chapter four, "Sexuality, Gender, and the Homoerotic Novel of the New Morocco," considers novels that reveal a "pensée-autre" (another way of thinking) as conceptualized by philosopher Abdelkébir Khatibi. Libertine novels present an alternative way of thinking about otherness, sexuality, and marginalization in Moroccan society. They

incite readers to think about gender, sexual freedom, and the emancipation of both men and women from the fetters of traditionalism inherent in Moroccan society. The alternative sexual mores defined in Rachid O.'s groundbreaking *L'Enfant ébloui* (The Dazzled Child, 1995), which was the first novel of its kind to reveal the world of young gay men in Morocco, encouraged later authors such as Nedjma (*L'Amande,* The Almond, 2004)*,* Bahaa Trabelsi (*Une vie à trois,* Ménage à Trois, 2000), and Abdellah Taïa (*Le rouge du tarbouche*, The Red of the Fes Hat, 2005) to engage daring themes and push the limits of sociocultural conformity. These latter works investigate the *non-dit*—the unsaid or that which often cannot be uttered—in Moroccan contemporary society.

Chapter five, "*TelQuel: Morocco as it is* in the Journals, Magazines, and Newspapers of the Francophone Press," studies how Moroccan print media, such as the newsmagazine, *TelQuel: Le Maroc tel qu'il est* (loosely translated: "As it is: Morocco as it is"), are changing the political climate of the country. Increasingly, the editors of *TelQuel* have taken dangerous steps to democratize the news media both in Arabic (*Nichane, TelQuel's* twin) and French in Morocco. Francophone journalists writing today are primarily young thirty-something, Western-educated males including Ahmed Réda Benchemsi (founder of *TelQuel*), Ali Amar (*Le Journal*), Ali Lmrabet (*La vie économique*), and Taïbi Chadi (*Le Journal Hebdomadaire*). This chapter also explores women's fashion magazines, such as *Citadine* and *Femmes du Maroc,* as indicators of the sociocultural and political transitions taking place in Morocco. Since the most recent reforms of the *Moudawana*[9] (the Moroccan Family Code that before February 2004 guaranteed few legal rights to women), the news media has increasingly featured debates about sexuality and, particularly, women's rights in society.

Chapter six, "The Humanist Individual in Contemporary Morocco" analyzes the works of authors who explore a view of humanism rooted in universal conceptions of the human condition. Humanists respond literarily to the challenges of current societal and political crises in Morocco and across the globe. The prose of authors Souad Bahéchar (*Le Concert des cloches*, The Concert of Bells, 2005), Mahi Binebine (*Cannibales*, Cannibals, 2001), Youssouf Amine Elalamy (*Les Clandestins*, Sea Drinkers, 2001), Fouad Laroui (*Méfiez-vous des parachutistes,* Be Wary of Parachutists, 1999), and Mohamed Nedali (*Morceaux de choix: Les amours d'un apprenti boucher,* Choice Morsels: The Loves of an Apprentice Butcher, 2003)

exemplifies a bittersweet literature, revealing these authors' dedication to a common humanity. They set the narratives of their novels on neutral ground in order to attempt to negotiate between the conflicting views of East and West, the young and old, the traditional and the modern.

Chapter seven, "Morocco on the Screen: Cinema in the New Morocco," examines Moroccan cinematic discourse that has, in recent years, forced open a Pandora's Box of societal taboos. Filmmakers confront socioculturally and politically sensitive topics in order to analyze the transitions taking place in their contemporary culture. The focus of analysis in this chapter offers a comparison between films made with foreign funding and those filmed and produced solely in Morocco. The debates surrounding language use (French as opposed to Arabic), resources, and audiences targeted are some of the issues discussed. Contemporary filmmaking, whether funded from abroad or at home, considers some of the most socioculturally divisive topics of the day. Films such as *Marock* (2005) by Laïla Marrakchi, *Tabite or Not Tabite* (2005) by Nabyl Lahlou, and *Le Grand Voyage* (2004) by Ismaïl Ferroukhi have provided audiences with endless original and challenging sociocultural perspectives on which to reflect.

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Introduction

Enunciating the Unsaid and the Historically "Inconceivable" in the Words of Contemporary Francophone Morocco

"Is there a future for Morocco?" is a resounding question inherent in the contemporary literature of the post–Lead Years. The future of the country is also bound up in questions of identity, for a country and a people, as it tries to resolve the historic silences of its past. Those who were oppressed or effaced are now weighing in on the reconstruction of a past that has never been told. In his novel *Amours sorcières* (Enchanted Loves, 2003), renowned Moroccan francophone author Tahar Ben Jelloun asks the question "C'est quoi être marocain? . . . Nous vivons dans une société semi-logique, une société où le rationnel voisine avec les superstitions, la magie, la sorcellerie, les croyances occultes, etc" (What is it to be Moroccan? . . . We live in a semi-logical society, a society where the rational is juxtaposed with superstitions, magic, sorcery, supernatural beliefs, etc.) (48–49). In these brief lines, Ben Jelloun captures the contemporary challenges of Morocco, a country that is today in social, cultural, and political transition.

Ben Jelloun's anguish over questions of identity is echoed more poignantly in the recent 2006 essay written by Rida Lamrini, entitled *Y a-t-il un avenir au Maroc, me demanda Yasmina* (Is There a Future for Morocco, Yasmina Asked Me). The slim volume is written as a dialogue between Lamrini, the head of an association for development in Morocco, and one of his interns, Yasmina. The young woman, born in France of Moroccan immigrant parents, chooses to return to her homeland in order to be "useful." Metaphorically, the conversation between Lamrini, a man in his late fifties, and the twenty-something Yasmina, depicts the divisions between, and expectations

of, generations and genders today in Morocco. Lamrini's essay reveals the defining issues of the new millennium faced by those who desire to leave the country and those who want to stay and invest, hoping for change.[1]

The title of Lamrini's essay, "Is there a future for Morocco," reflects the general sociopolitical and cultural climate of Morocco at the writing of this book. The country is caught between its past and its future. Interestingly, Lamrini states that he deleted the question mark at the end of his title because he felt that it would more aptly convey the message that Morocco is at a crossroads, playing a "wait-and-see" game. At a *rencontre littéraire* (literary discussion) held at the Institut Français in Rabat for secondary school students who had read his work and prepared discussion questions for him, a young woman asked Lamrini: "alors, quelle est la réponse, y a-t-il un avenir?" (so what is the answer, is there a future?) He responded: "Il y a sept ans j'aurais dit 'non,' mais maintenant je ne dirais 'oui' qu'avec 'mais si…'" (Seven years ago I would have said "no," but now I would only say "yes," with a "but if"…).[2] Lamrini explains that until Morocco tackles "the question," which focuses on economics, but in fact is also comprised of many ancillary political, social, and cultural issues, the country will be unable to move forward. Too many problems have gone unsolved since independence, and fixing the general "système," remarks Lamrini, "est la clé de toute solution" (is the key to every solution) (31). Lamini's book provides an essential cornerstone to this study. It also exemplifies the voice of dissent, distinctively rendered in a unique Moroccan French that fuels the critical dialogues necessary for shaping the intellectual debates needed for sociopolitical change in Morocco.

Evidence of a country in transition abounds when walking the streets of Rabat. Cosmopolitan and dynamic, the vibrant, wide palm-lined Mohamed V and Moulay Rachid boulevards are filled with upscale boutiques frequented by well-dressed professionals talking on cell phones. In the local gym in Rabat there are large photos hanging on the walls of a young King Mohamed VI jet-skiing—a symbol of active youth, vitality, and modernity. He evokes the metaphors for what the younger generations of Moroccans hope will become the norm for their country. The streets of Rabat are symbols of modernity and the fast-paced world of our global age. Yet, these same vast boulevards are in stark contrast to the tiny back alleys of misery that are occupied by beggars and uneducated laborers who live in extreme poverty. Outside the large cities of Rabat and Casablanca, the disparity between rich and poor is even more apparent.[3]

Voices of Protest in a Country in Transition

Like many former colonized countries in the postcolonial era, Morocco seeks to rectify its past by reconstructing its history to reflect the voices that have been effaced by violence, human rights' abuses, and oppressive regimes since the end of French occupation in 1956. Since 1999, Morocco has turned many pages of its dark past known as *Les Années de plomb*, "The Lead Years" of King Hassan II's reign (1963–1999), in order to move forward to embrace the global age, all the while wrestling to keep its cultural uniqueness intact. Transition has created a schizophrenic state that is continuously contradicting itself on a variety of subjects, from matters of human rights and freedom of the press to economic reform. It is for this reason that on the one hand the liberal, generally leftist, francophone press can openly critique the government, and on the other find itself drawn into the courts, obliged to pay heavy fines for having "offended" the powers that be. A telling example of this schizophrenia is the recent condemnation of *Nichane,* the Arabic sister journal of *TelQuel.* Journalists wrote a December 2006 article on "les blagues" (jokes) known as "les Noukat: ces blagues populaires qui font le sel de la vie quotidienne des Marocains" (Noukat: these popular jokes that are the salt of everyday life for Moroccans). Often sexually explicit and politically oriented, the jokes noted in the seemingly banal article were immediately scrutinized and condemned by the state for their "odieux affront fait aux musulmans" (odious affront to Muslims). As explained in a featured article in *TelQuel* entitled "Un effrayant malentendu" (a frightening misunderstanding), the journalists had only wished to highlight a cultural practice that has existed for years in Moroccan culture. The contributing reporters faced three–five years in prison and heavy fines. After much debate, the presiding judge threw out the case on January 15, 2007, acquitting the journalists, but banning the journal *Nichane*. The incident is just one among many that exemplifies the constant struggle between the old guard, which strives to hold onto power, and the new voices of democratic Morocco ("Un effrayant malentendu," 6–8).[4]

The Historical Legacies of Colonialism: Founding the Moroccan Francophone Novel

From 1912 to 1956, Morocco was a French protectorate. However, some scholars explain that to call it a protectorate would be a "myth"

because, as Jacqueline Kaye and Abdelhamid Zoubir point out in *The Ambiguous Compromise* (1990), "French policy in Morocco aimed to undermine both the secular and religious authority of the Sultan" in order to install complete French colonial domination (11). As with other regions under its colonial tutelage in North Africa, France also implemented a "Berber policy" intended to weaken Arab-Islamic institutions in the country. Typical of Western colonial regimes, "divide and conquer" was the modus operandi during French occupation of the Maghreb. If a comparison must be made between the varying degrees of French colonial imperialism in the region, then occupation should be studied at the level of indigenous policies. In Morocco, as in Algeria, Berbers and Arabs were pitted against each other in order to subdue indigenous revolt. However, as scholars note, French colonialism in Morocco was not as "genocidal in intention as in Algeria, for there was never the intention of making [the country] a 'colonie du peuplement' " (a settled colony) (11). In Algeria, land was confiscated and people were displaced. However, in Morocco, unlike in Algeria, "the French cultivated the traditions of the Moroccan people" (13). By no means should France's colonial policy in Morocco be viewed as positive. However, the colonizer's imprint on Morocco is vastly different than on Algeria because France's colonial missions in both countries were quite divergent. In Morocco, France concentrated on cultivating a mythical realm, immersed in oriental imagery. It was hoped that this fascinating space would encourage the French adventurer to come and *see* the country. Morocco "became a vast national park" wherein "the traditions of its people became subject to the interpretation of the French and were written down" by an array of orientalists who commercialized and packaged what they saw or heard about (13). It is for this reason that Morocco under the French, and certainly due to the work of General Hubert Lyautey (1854–1934),[5] who was responsible for "managing" the culture of the country, became the oriental fantasy that Europeans craved (13). This ideal led to a literary *imaginaire* as Edward Saïd describes in *Orientalism* (1979): "Orientalism expresses and represents…culturally and even ideologically…a mode of discourse with supporting institutions, vocabulary, scholarship, imagery, doctrines, even colonial bureaucracies and colonial styles" (2).

France's reliance on the burgeoning field of ethnology to justify its colonial regime succeeded in mythologizing an entirely *new* civilization in Morocco based on a set of "linguistic, ethnic [and] religious definitions of identity" (Kaye et al., 13). Berber culture, viewed

by the French as more mysterious because of certain pagan and animist rites, was encouraged as a means of subduing the influence of Arab Islam, considered too unified, rebellious, and generally hostile to the French civilizing mission. Berber *maraboutism*[6] and fraternities, important in Berber belief, were encouraged in order to undermine the importance of the Arab mosque in Moroccan society. France hoped that by creating schisms between Muslims and Berber-animists contradictions would appear within Moroccan society and thus make the people believe they were not unified by religious conviction (16). Morocco, therefore, would need the presence of the paternal colonizer to maintain order. France became the author of Moroccan history and identity for the West, creating an ideal that would render virtually impossible discrimination between orientalized myth and reality, fiction and fact. The mythical layers of a fragmented identity, created by the colonial machine, remained and were later used during King Hassan II's reign. A master of dissimulation, he maintained the status quo, manipulating and victimizing the population for years. At the same time, the sustained high illiteracy rate (50 percent) has continued to contribute to Morocco's impeded self-analysis, since many people do not have the analytical tools to question and scrutinize the difference between myth and reality.

Moroccan literature reflects elaborate, French colonial fictional imaginings and indigenous, primarily Berber oral tradition. Both these realms contributed to the Moroccan literary identity immediately following independence. Even today, Moroccan francophone authors seeking to recapture the past through literature, waver between the mythical and the real in their efforts to depict the reality of their history. Well-known Moroccan poet and author Abdelkébir Khatibi explains the nature of what he views as a strained identity, divided between fact and fiction. For Khatibi, these authors live a *bilangue* (dual language) legacy comprised of an Arab-Berber identity, rich in mythical representations, cultivated in a centuries old (primarily Berber influenced) oral tradition and, at the same time, the French rationalist model of education they have experienced since primary school. In terms of writing, the mythical example is based on an extensive and profound linguistic heritage, favoring the traditional *halqua* (storytelling circles) where performance narratives are acted out in front of an audience.[7] The French model is built from a body of knowledge that relies on the individualist's penchant for controlled storyline—*récit*—where reality, recounted in linear fashion, is rendered first and foremost. In *La Violence du texte* (The Violence of the