

Anxiety in the Border Zone:
Transgressing Boundaries in *Leïla: revue illustrée de la femme* (Tunis, 1936-1940)
and in *Leïla: Hebdomadaire Tunisien Indépendant* (Tunis, 1940-1941)

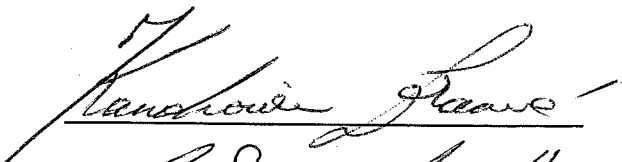
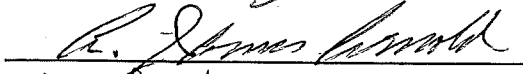
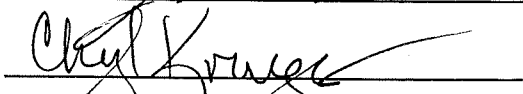
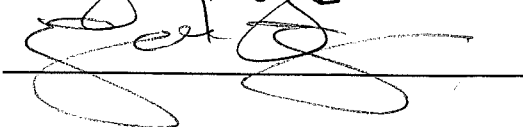
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Abstract

An examination of a Tunisian periodical in French, *Leïla* (1936-1941), published under French colonization reveals anxiety in a border zone, or middle terrain, where boundaries are tested and transgressed by Tunisian women and men in a search for new identities and a national culture. Feminist and nationalist voices come together in a forum in the first series of an irregular-appearing monthly magazine (Dec. 1936-Nov. 1940), which is transformed into a cultural weekly newspaper (1 Dec. 1940-8 July 1941) under the Vichy regime. I compare the two first issues, showing the changes that take place over time because the historical moment defines *Leïla*'s parameters and affects the meaning of its articles. I then place *Leïla* in its historical context to demonstrate the constraints that the founder, Mahmoud Zarrouk, and his editorial "team" faced and to show what was possible for Tunisians.

I make use of Walter Dignolo's concept of "border thinking" to delve into anxieties about changing roles. I propose that the women's magazine created a space in the print culture for Tunisians to speak for themselves. Nonetheless, I argue that elite efforts to redefine the role of Tunisian women in the home and society resulted in the artificial construction of a "New Muslim Woman" that served nationalist objectives, just as colonial feminist discourse created a negative representation of *la femme musulmane* that reflected Western stereotypes and misconceptions that served colonial objectives.

Finally, I propose that when the theme of women's emancipation disappeared in the second series, a group of critics stepped in to develop a cultural criticism that laid the foundations for a national culture serving the Independent Nation. I theorize a phenomenon I refer to as "whirlwinds," which swirled around specific scandals connected to the control of cultural production, especially in the domains of literature, theater, and music. I argue that these whirlwinds caused critics to spin their wheels on hopeless, contentious points, but at the same time pushed them to clearly define problems and propose solutions in order to encourage groups and individuals who contributed to a Tunisian national culture, thus keeping border thinking alive.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<i>List of Figures</i>	iv
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	v
<i>Introduction</i>	1
<i>Chapter 1: Laying the Groundwork and Encouraging Debates:</i>	
<i>Leïla's First Issues</i>	24
<i>Chapter 2: The Colonial Yoke and Hard Times:</i>	
<i>Production Challenges for Mahmoud Zarrouk</i>	74
<i>Chapter 3: The Attack on Colonial Feminism:</i>	
<i>Unstable Representations of the Muslim Woman</i>	130
<i>Chapter 4: The Construction of the New Muslim Woman for the New Nation:</i>	
<i>A National Feminism in the Making</i>	189
<i>Chapter 5: Writing a National Culture: Whirlwinds in the Border Zone</i>	
	254
<i>Conclusion</i>	323
<i>Selected Bibliography</i>	332
<i>Appendices</i>	348
Table of Contents: First Series, Dec. 1936 - Nov. 1940.....	349
Table of Contents: Second Series, 1 Dec. 1940 - 8 July 1941.....	359
Index of Advertisers.....	371
Index of Composers and Musicians.....	375
Index of Images.....	377
Index of People in "Carnet Rose".....	383
Index of Subjects.....	387
Index of Writers.....	409

List of Figures(from *Leïla* unless otherwise stated)

0.1	Dot-to-Dot (Dec. 1938, back inside cover).....	13
1.1	Majnoun Leïla by Aly Ben Salem (Dec. 1936, 17).....	26
1.2	Two women's heads by Aly Ben Salem (Dec. 1936, cover).....	28
1.3	Drawing of couple by Aly Ben Salem (Dec. 1936, 3).....	34
1.4	Revised drawing of couple by Aly Ben Salem (Feb. 1937, 2).....	37
1.5	Four women flying by Alexandre Roubtzoff (Dec. 1936, 8).....	43
1.6	Beauty pageant princesses (Dec. 1936, 10).....	45
1.7	"La Mode," anon. (Dec. 1936, 12).....	47
2.1	"La Caravane des protégés" by G.-L. Le Monnier (Mar. 1937, 17).....	84
3.1	"Fille d'Islam" in <i>Tunis Socialiste</i> (July-Aug. 1924).....	143
3.2	"Evolution de la bourgeoisie Tunisienne" by Le Monnier (Sept. 1937, 19).....	180
4.1	August and Sept 1940 covers.....	189
4.2	Egyptian university graduate (Aug. 1940, 25).....	210
4.3	Arbia Zaouche (Aug. 1940, 20).....	216
4.4	Pastilles Valda ad in <i>L'Action Tunisienne</i> (21 Jan. 1937).....	218
4.5	Primagaz ad (Dec. 1938, 21).....	219
4.6	Mlle Raouia's beauty salon ad (May 1940, 9).....	222
4.7	"L'Evolution du voile" by Le Monnier (Dec. 1936, 15).....	238
4.8	"La Mode," anon. (Mar. 1937, 21).....	240
4.9	California girls (Aug. 1940, 10).....	243
4.10	Japanese girls (Aug. 1940, 11).....	243
4.11	Paramount girls (Aug. 1939, cover).....	244
4.12	Weddad, singer (Aug. 1939, 21).....	246
4.13	Aviatrice and Kemal Ataturk (Jan. 1938, 7).....	247
5.1	Musicians by Jalel Ben Abdallah (June 1938, 10).....	309

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Finally, and most importantly, Mohamed Mamelouk deserves my deepest thanks, for he supported me, both morally and financially, throughout my graduate studies.

Introduction

While reading for a course on the French Empire, I was disturbed by certain texts that treated populations as a group without giving agency, such as Lucette Valensi's *Le Maghreb avant la prise d'Alger (1790-1830)* (1969), or Benjamin Stora's *Algeria, 1830-2000: A Short History* (2000), which emphasizes the formation of governments, laws, and policies in a "top-down" view. The absence of the voices of the people from such studies contributes to the creation of a smooth-surfaced description of power and its accompanying dominant discourses. For me, these biased texts provoked two simple questions: where were the colonized and how did they resist oppression? Looking across the French Empire to Indochina, Hue-Tam Ho Tai, in *Radicalism and the Origins of the Vietnamese Revolution* (1992), suggests that beneath the smooth surface of dominant discourse lay a tumultuous border zone or middle terrain where the colonized negotiated and resisted the terms of colonialism, and had something to say about themselves. She demonstrates that colonized elites made use of literature and periodicals—including women's periodicals—in French to resist French assimilation and to advance national consciousness. Soon thereafter, I happened upon *Tropiques* [Martinique] (1940-1945), headed by Aimé Césaire, one of the founders of the Négritude movement.¹ This literary periodical, published under extreme conditions (censorship, lack of paper, lack of readership, economic hardship, a racist Vichy government), defied all odds and expressed the voices of colonized intellectuals in creative and innovative ways while making use of literature, particularly surrealist poetry.

¹ Césaire met Léopold Senghor in Paris in the early 1930s. Césaire coined the term "Négritude" which developed into a cultural movement to resist French assimilation. Senghor describes Négritude as "la personnalité collective négro-africaine" and classifies it as a *Humanisme*. (Senghor 8)

These texts give reason for reflection; if colonized elites on opposite ends of the French Empire made use of literature and periodicals in French to resist the colonizer and cross boundaries, could this not happen in other colonies, particularly in Tunisia, my adopted country where I have spent half my life? The French-run *Afrique Littéraire* [Tunis] (1940-1945) drew my attention because the editors invited Tunisian elites to contribute articles, and it was contemporaneous with Césaire's *Tropiques*. Its editors used a humanist discourse to incorporate colonized elites into the rebuilding of France and the Empire, making *Afrique Littéraire* an ephemeral object of the historical moment and a reflection of French intellectual life in a peripheral zone posing as a center. A short article that suggested reading *Leïla* for a view on "la vie locale" caught my eye and sent me back to the archives.²

Although I was looking for a periodical along the lines of *Tropiques*, something with a combination of resistance to colonialism and an innovative use of literature to bypass censors, I realized that *Leïla* was an anomaly, interesting in its own right. *Leïla* was not just another women's magazine of fashion, beauty, recipes, and knitting patterns. Instead, it contained articles by both Tunisian and French women and men about changing roles for Tunisian women and about cultural subjects, including literature. A glance through the first issue showed that it opened onto an unstable border zone, a space where existing political and social boundaries (Empire/Nation, Tunisian/French, colonial/nationalist, modernity/tradition, male/female) were tested by educated Tunisian elites. Walter Mignolo's ideas on border thinking, discussed below, inspired me to look closer. Broadly stated, border thinking involves the ability to draw from all sides of

²"On trouve dans 'Leïla' des articles fort variés sur la vie tunisienne et les questions qui s'y rattachent; une grande place est réservée à la vie locale" ("La Revue 'Leïla,'" *Afrique Littéraire* Feb. 1941, 2).

borders to create a new center. I realized that I had stumbled upon the *perle rare* so coveted by researchers.

Through the examination of this Tunisian-run, French-language women's periodical,³ my objective is to explore the instability of the border zone. I propose that *Leïla* offers not only a forum for Tunisian elites, revealing anxieties about unstable identities, changing marriage patterns, and the role of women in the family and society, but allows for border thinking as well. I argue that while attacking negative French representations of the "Muslim Woman," writers in this periodical create a representation of what I label a "New Muslim Woman" and a "New Tunisian Woman" for the Independent Nation,⁴ contributing to the overriding goal of this periodical to write a Nation that includes women and to define a national culture.⁵

Leïla is firmly rooted in Tunisia's colonial period, in which the press dominated intellectual life—which was in turn dominated by political issues created by the colonial situation. In *Histoire de la littérature tunisienne* (1999), Jean Fontaine emphasizes the importance of the press: "Avant d'émerger, les individualités ouvrent en commun au sein

³I use the term "Tunisian-run" to refer to elites of the colonized population (both Muslim and Jewish) who created their own periodicals, and served as directors and editors, although early in the 20th century European managers were required by law for French-language periodicals.

⁴I capitalize "Independent Nation" and "New Nation" throughout this dissertation because the Nation is a very real character in the narrative about *Leïla*, ever-present in the background and making its presence felt as a concept willed into existence.

⁵Because the production of *Leïla* took place in Tunis and generally targeted elites of the Tunis region, I favor a definition of "culture" by Agnew and al. (*The City in Cultural Context*, 1984). They maintain that social, political, and economic factors result in practices and ideas—that is, culture—of various groups that make up the city. These practices in turn shape life in the city. They note: "Culture is created by thought and actions of both historical and living populations. Culture can change because it refers to material and symbolic contexts or limiting conditions for individual behavior." Stipulating that each new generation recreates its culture, they add: "Culture is the 'glue' of society, but it cannot exist independent of human action" (1-2). Thus, culture flows in two directions: from the social structure to various groups and individuals, and back again. However, this description defines culture on a local level. I would add that a wider Islamic and Arab culture, which includes history, language, literature, and art from across borders, affects Tunisian culture.

d'une presse devenant instrument de pression. C'est essentiellement une littérature de périodiques: les ouvrages en volume restent rares" (134).⁶ Fontaine notes that Tunisians used the press to make their needs known and to pressure the colonial government, in order to bring about economic and political reform that would benefit the colonized majority. Elites used the local press to be heard with varying degrees of success, as a period of heavy censorship affected literary production negatively (Fontaine, *Histoire* 136). Nonetheless, their persistence transformed the Tunisian press into the cradle of a national literature. I propose, then, that this dissertation contributes to understanding the origins of Maghrebian literature rooted in early national literatures. For the purposes of this study, I find Déjeux's definition of Maghrebian literature based on production to be the most pertinent because problems of publication connected to economic and political factors are common to the pre-independence and post-independence eras.⁷ He links the development of a Maghrebian literature to publishers, such as Editions du Seuil, Denoël,

⁶ For the colonial period, Tunisian printers produced 359 periodicals and only 150 books in both Arabic and French (Hassan 289). André Demeerseman notes in 1953 that nearly 100 Tunisian-run, Arabic specialized magazines had appeared since the beginning of the century (*Soixante Ans*, 7).

Jaafar Majed emphasizes the importance of the press as a foundation for Tunisian literature: "Il n'est nullement exagéré de dire que l'histoire de la presse littéraire en Tunisie est celle de la littérature tunisienne moderne; ..." (9). According to Majed, then, the literary press dominated literary production and served as the roots of Tunisian literature. In fact, Tunisian literature continued to be a literature of the press after independence, as the publication of books increased only in the 1970s (Fontaine, *Histoire* v. 3, 10-11).

⁷ Jacques Noiray defines French-language Maghrebian literature as excluding Europeans and requiring membership by birth and cultural heritage in the Maghreb community (9). He states that this feeling of belonging develops because of the exterior threat of French colonization. Noiray and Mildred Mortimer place the beginning of Maghrebian literature after World War II, when a first generation of writers (Ahmed Sefrioui, Albert Memmi, Mouloud Feraoun, Mhammed Dib, Mouloud Mammeri) wrote about problems of identity, the violence of colonial regimes, and nationalism (Noiray 14, Mortimer 3-4) while Noiray classifies any previous literature as "isolated phenomenon" (12). Jacqueline Arnaud gives a simpler definition: Arabo-Berber or Jewish writers whose families inhabited the Maghreb before its colonization constitute Maghrebian literature (33). She proposes 1945 as the date when a distinct Maghrebian personality appears (45). These three writers give examples of North African colonial writers that precede Maghrebian writers. However, this is deceptive because such a description implies that North African literature developed in a vacuum, or rather, with only French influence, ignoring other linguistic and cultural influences. On the contrary, as in the case of Tunisia, North African literature grew alongside of national literatures that can be found in the literary periodicals of the period and especially in *Leila*.

and Plon, who took an interest in Maghrebian writers in 1950 (*Littérature* 3). Déjeux points out that the preceding generation of writers are generally unrecognized and “passés sous silence” (13). Speaking of this forgotten generation, he notes: “Les écrivains ont d’abord pris la parole en tant que colonisés, revendiquant le combat pour la nation” (7). According to Déjeux, these writers took up the pen to improve conditions under colonization and worked for the national movement (13).

Proposing similar views, Fontaine emphasizes production and notes that Tunisian-run periodicals transmitted literature and ideas to the colonized population. Déjeux’s and Fontaine’s viewpoints suggest a continuity from the Protectorate era to the present that can be seen in the difficulties of publication of Maghrebian writers today. Consequently, to understand the writers who appeared after World War II, the preceding generation must not be forgotten. A consideration of pre-independence periodicals, including *Leïla*, shows that Tunisians are present and not silent. I argue that *Leïla* served as a transmitter of Tunisian culture during a period when obstacles to publication increased as the French attempted to impose silence on Tunisian elites. To bring *Leïla* to the forefront is to give Tunisians agency and break the silence that Déjeux sees. To dismiss writings preceding independence is to dismiss the generation that struggled under the colonial yoke.

Leïla was not an isolated phenomenon. Research on women’s periodicals in Turkey, the Levant, and Egypt reveals an active women’s culture linked to nationalism within Muslim societies. Studies such as Leila Ahmed’s *Women and Gender in Islam* (1992), Beth Baron’s *The Women’s Awakening in Egypt* (1994), and Elizabeth Thompson’s *Colonial Citizens: Republican Rights, Paternal Privilege, and Gender in French Syria and Lebanon* (2000) emphasize gender and look at women’s periodicals as

a group in order to seek tendencies. I propose a close reading of one periodical in order to broaden our perspective on women's emancipation in Tunisia, on Tunisian nationalist voices, and on writing during the colonial period that included the theorizing of a national culture. Within the physical restraints of the printed pages of *Leïla*, I argue that an exponential intellectual space blossoms where border thinking emerges, permitting the crystallization of a national identity in which women participate and the conceptualization of a national culture that included literature, theater, and music.⁸

My theoretical approach was derived from Mignolo's concept of "border thinking," found in *Local Histories/Global Designs: Coloniality, Subaltern Knowledges, and Border Thinking* (2000). This concept proved useful because it contains a certain flexibility that aids in looking across multiple domains, while avoiding the pitfalls of terminology that carries negative connotations, such as "center/periphery." Mignolo locates his concepts of local knowledges and border thinking within world systems formed by trade routes beginning with sixteenth-century Spain. However, as the Spanish lost their colonies, the world system altered and toward the end of the 19th century other European countries, and later the United States, became leading powers. Beginning with the 20th century, the imaginary of the "modern" world system was reduced to "West."⁹

According to Mignolo, colonization creates what he terms the "colonial difference." The colonial difference during the 18th and 19th centuries was the possession of a written history, whereas in the 20th century, it became the possession of "true

⁸I use the term "identity" to refer to a collective phenomenon, which motivates social and political actions in the anti-colonial struggle, rather than an individual selfhood. Homi Bhabha proposes a "beyond/au-delà" that does not limit identity to local constructions of class, gender, etc., but looks to "borderline engagements of cultural difference" (1994, 1-2). This notion allows for the presence of multiple borders and identities that contribute to a "Tunisian identity" discussed in Chapter 2.

⁹Mignolo defines the term "imaginary" as the particular way that a culture perceives and conceives the world (13).

knowledge,” that is, a “universal knowledge.” At the same time, the colonial difference absorbed knowledge found in the culture of the colonized, which was rehabilitated into “universal knowledge”. Thus, West met East, but in a space where “Occidentalism” dominated and the overarching imaginary of the “modern” world defined the rest of the world (ix-x). As Edward Said aptly points out in *Orientalism* (1978), the West relies on the East in order to describe itself as superior (3).

Furthermore, Mignolo proposes that the colonial difference provokes the colonized to turn to “border thinking,” which does not stand in diametrical opposition to colonial difference but takes place in a space “in-between,” a border zone where global designs must be adapted, adopted, rejected, integrated, or ignored (ix).¹⁰ Border thinking is the subaltern’s view of colonialism: it is a perspective from underneath that shows the cracks in the smooth surface of colonial discourse. On the one hand, “Occidentalism” serves as the metaphor for the colonial world system imaginary, while border thinking happens when that imaginary develops cracks (20-23). Border thinking remains within the imaginary of the world system, repressed because it is subversive, yet ever present.

At the same time, while challenging Occidentalism, the colonized defend local knowledge as “sustainable knowledge,” putting it on an equal footing with Western knowledge and incorporating it into border thinking. Local knowledge is not distanced into the past, or reduced to an object to be studied and classified. Rather, an attempt is made to move beyond Western concepts to defend local knowledge (7). In Tunisia, for example, local knowledges were defended by a major learning center of the Arab world, the Zitouna Mosque/University, which remains in the background of *Leila*’s production

¹⁰ For further considerations on the concept of boundaries as a space for mediation, see Inge E. Boer’s *Uncertain Territories: Boundaries in Cultural Analysis* (2006).

as a social and religious influence in Tunisian society. Border thinking allows for consideration of such local knowledges in addition to knowledge from multiple borders, which aids in the search for creative solutions and a testing of boundaries. Border thinking does not describe both sides of the border, but eliminates borders by erasing the knower and the known, the dominant and the subaltern, the classifier and the classified (18). More importantly, border thinking undermines notions of center and periphery because the border zone becomes the center in which the colonized view themselves as equal to the West, no longer inferior.

Mignolo's concept of border thinking is based on a different way of examining borders and their influence. For Mignolo, borders allow for a different logic that is not based on the territorial:

In the first place, I conceive of the system [modern/colonial world system] in terms of internal and external borders rather than centers, semiperipheries, and peripheries. Internal and external borders are not discrete entities but rather moments of a continuum in colonial expansion and in changes of national imperial hegemonies. (33)

The idea of multiple borders allows me to contextualize my study of Tunisian elites writing in a French-language women's and cultural periodical within the geographical and historical space of Tunisia which is located within the wider borders of 1) the Maghreb, 2) the Ottoman Empire, and 3) the Islamic Ummah while being in a dialogic situation with France and the French Empire. Thus, I propose to use the concept of a border zone (the space "in-between") that is made of internal and external boundaries, which can be tested and erased.

Because of the subversive nature of border thinking, which is often expressed and developed in the press, Mignolo notes that the colonizer seeks to control the press so that

border thinking cannot be voiced by the colonized (x). Mignolo's reference to control of the print culture of the colonized brings to mind two other notions that overlap with border thinking; Benedict Anderson's "imagined community" and James C. Scott's "hidden transcripts," which are pertinent to this study as well. According to Anderson in *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (1991), while sacred communities, languages, and lineages declined, new concepts of the sovereignty of states formed during the Enlightenment and the French Revolution, which challenged dynastic hierarchies. The sovereign state, that is, the "nation," based on "deep horizontal comradeship," became the emblem of freedom which was imagined as a community (7). At the same time, new apprehensions of time permitted the imagining of a community that formed the nation. Anderson argues that medieval time was not chronological time, which moved forward horizontally. Rather, events were linked to God in a vertical manner, creating an "instantaneous present" that contained the idea of the simultaneity of the past and the future. New conceptions of time allowed for events to be measured by the clock and calendar in "homogeneous, empty time," in which simultaneous events took place chronologically (24). The appearance of the novel (in which characters perform simultaneous actions in homogenous, empty time without necessarily knowing each other) and the newspaper created the technological means to represent the "imagined community" of the nation to a broad population (25-6).

The circulation of periodicals contributes to the formation of the imagined community, as the periodical parallels the nation because of its movement through chronological time established by the date at the top of the page. Anderson notes: "The idea of a sociological organism moving calendrically through homogeneous, empty time

is a precise analogue of the idea of the nation, which is also conceived as a solid community moving steadily down (or up) history” (26). Anderson emphasizes the importance of community: each reader knows that other readers are doing the same action at more or less the same time, and are thus able to imagine the community (33-35). Periodicals aid in the organization of the independent nation by connecting members of the community and unifying objectives.¹¹ Thus, editors’ efforts to recruit writers, dialogue with readers, and draw them into the *Leila* project contribute to the nation by creating an imagined community.

In addition, periodicals, including *Leila*, circulate in the public sphere and contain a public transcript written for public consumption. James C. Scott, in *Domination and the Arts of Resistance* (1990), defines “subordinate populations” as those having no political or civil rights and whose status is fixed by birth. He examines their resistance to political domination or an institutionalized arrangement for appropriating labor, goods, and services from a subordinate population (xi). Both women and the colonized fall into the category of “subordinate” according to Scott’s definitions. Subordinate groups interact with those in power in the “public transcript,” found in periodicals for example, but cannot contest the terms of subordination openly. Instead, they create a social space where a critique of power, that is, a “hidden transcript,” may be voiced safely (2).

If a researcher reads only the public transcript in the archives, he or she necessarily finds dominant discourses. Yet, the hidden transcript may be examined because subordinates express it, but in a disguised form found behind anonymity or in

¹¹According to Anderson, then, the “nation” is imagined as a community that is limited and sovereign, a “horizontal comradeship.” In addition, the roots of the imagined community are cultural and should be considered in the context of cultural systems, rather than political ideologies (7).

seemingly innocuous, non-confrontational situations (xi-xiii)—in this study's case, a women's and cultural periodical. Scott adds:

I argue that a partly sanitized, ambiguous, and coded version of the hidden transcript is always present in the public discourse of subordinate groups. Interpreting these texts which, after all, are designed to be evasive is not a straightforward matter. Ignoring them, however, reduces us to an understanding of historical subordination that rests either on these rare moments of open rebellion or on the hidden transcript itself, which is not just evasive but often altogether inaccessible. (19)

It is this coded version of hidden transcripts that surfaces in *Leïla*. While Tunisian-run, political newspapers contained varying levels of overt resistance that colonial administrators quickly censored, *Leïla* contained covert resistance where hidden transcripts appeared. *Leïla*'s pages contain several types of masking, depending on political events in the Protectorate that affected the degree to which colonial authorities scrutinized the Tunisian print culture to block hidden transcripts containing national sentiments.¹² Scott provides a tool that allowed me to discover diverse meanings that might not be obvious at first glance. I made use of Scott's notions of the hidden transcript when examining texts by Tunisian men, showing defense of a national identity and culture and resistance to colonial power in the tug-of-war over the "Muslim Woman," and by Tunisian women, showing demands for change within a patriarchal society.

By situating the twenty magazine issues of the first series (Dec. 1936-Nov. 1940) and the twenty newspaper issues of the second series (1 Dec. 1940-8 July 1941) of *Leïla*

¹²In 1931, a comment by René Vanlande demonstrates French concern about the possible subversive use of the French language for Tunisian nationalist purposes: "Et quand, dernièrement, on mit en service, à la frontière algéro-tunisienne, la gare de Rhilane, celle-ci fut pompeusement qualifiée de 'gare internationale'! (Voir le *Journal officiel tunisien*.) Internationale? On reconnaît donc officiellement que la Tunisie est une nation? De quel droit alors se gendarmer si, à l'Est de cette frontière [Tunisian-Algerian] politiquement consacrée, des indigènes se proclament *nationalistes*?" (Vanlande's italics) (12-13). "On" refers to those who possess the power to set standards and define, that is, the French. Vanlande examines the use of the word *internationale* for meanings that reveal the nationalist hidden transcript.

in the historical context (including nationalist, press, and feminist histories),¹³ I will demonstrate how textual practice, *Leïla*'s forum, and discourses were affected by the historical moment. Personal interviews with contributors and family members provided missing historical information that gives agency to Tunisians and fills out a description of the border zone located between the binary oppositions of colonialism and nationalism. Extensive archival research permitted me to conduct close readings and textual analysis of *Leïla*'s articles and other texts of the interwar period (French novels, travelogues, histories, Tunisian novels, and articles in French-language periodicals), allowing me to make comparisons and compile data and statistics.

¹³"Feminist" is a difficult term to pin down because of the variety of activities and political views possible. I use it in the broad sense of seeking a change in women's status. Siân Reynolds also describes feminism in this way (218) while Paul Smith limits its use: "The distinction between feminists and the 'women's movement' is that the second category was largely composed of single-issue organizations for women. Feminists went further, linking a series of women's demands and aspirations together. Feminism was not simply about demanding rights, it was about organizing women, and about reorganizing society to make better use of feminine resources" (3). Smith's definition does not work well when applied to colonial Tunisia because not all activity is immediately apparent. It is within *Leïla*'s first series that we find traces of women who organize fund raisers for Tunisian students, take part in political demonstrations, aid other women through their professions, and write articles that contribute to the formulation of new roles for women in Tunisian society.

I found *Leïla* speaking to me and leading me through corridors that opened onto broad horizons and exciting possibilities. However, the format of the periodical imposes

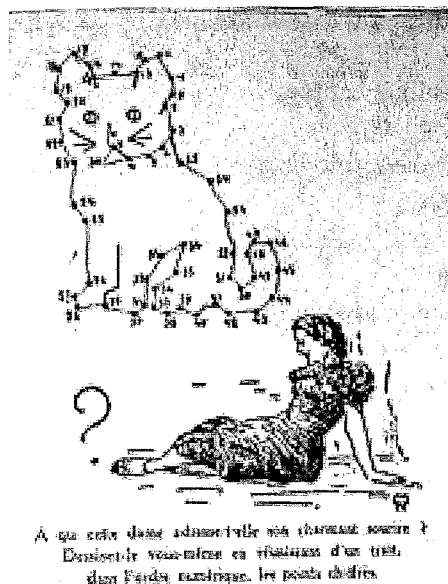


Fig. 0.1

its own methodology. From *Leïla*'s pages came the answers, simple and elegant, to questions. Ultimately, I realized that the examination of *Leïla* could only be approached by a method we learn as children during our first year at school: the Dot-to-Dot method. This was suggested to me by a drawing in *Leïla* (Dec. 1938, back inside cover, Fig. 0.1). Working through issue after issue, I connected the dots, and the shape of each subject emerged within a larger picture of the New Nation. I propose that the dispersed material masked an overall *programme*, allowing *Leïla* to pass by censors and transmit its encoded message of national consciousness to an imagined community of Tunisian elites.

Although the libraries in Tunis¹⁴ contain rich collections that attest to Tunisian elites' journalistic activities during the colonial era, few scholarly studies delve into this treasure chest.¹⁵ Mohamed Hamdane's useful *Guide des périodiques parus en Tunisie de*

¹⁴ Archives Nationales, Beit Bennani, Bibliothèque Nationale, Centre de Documentation Nationale, Institut de Belles Lettres Arabes (IBLA), Institut de Recherche du Maghreb Contemporain.

¹⁵ From 1881-1956, Tunisian Muslims published 403 periodicals (using all nationalities of printers), Tunisian Jews 147, the French 811, and Italians 94 (Hassan 310).

Some general studies provide brief descriptions. Mohamed Dabbab mentions *Leïla* in *Index des Revues et Journaux Tunisiens de Langue Française, de 1907 à l'Indépendance (1956)* (1973), an early effort to catalogue pre-Independence French-language periodicals run by Tunisians. Mustapha Chelbi's *Le Patrimoine journalistique de Tunisie* (1986) describes thirty-four Arabic-language periodicals and one French-language newspaper, Habib Bourguiba's *L'Action Tunisienne*. Dabbab, in *La Presse arabe de Tunisie de 1860 à la veille de la première guerre mondiale* (1990), examines Arabic-language periodicals

1838 au 20 Mars 1956: Fascicule 2 (en Langue Française) (1989) catalogues French-language periodicals (French- and Tunisian-run) and includes dates, orientation, format, directors, editors, location, and occasionally brief biographies. Mustapha Hassan explores political writing in Tunisian periodicals under colonization in *Communication et Société: L'Écrit politique en Tunisie: L'Exemple de la Presse (1881-1956)* (1990). He suggests that Tunisian printers and the periodicals they produced—plus education—contributed to the de-structuring of colonial ideology and the restructuring of a national identity fueled by a national consciousness of resistance on the cultural level. This supports my view of *Leïla* as a meeting of nationalist and feminist voices that contribute to the anti-colonial struggle on the cultural level and to a national identity.

Two works provide information on Arabic cultural and literary periodicals. In *Soixante ans de pensée tunisienne à travers les revues* (1955), André Demeerseman traces the history of intellectual currents in Tunisia through a study of specialized periodicals in Arabic, excluding newspapers. He records an intense intellectual activity in the press and examines Arabic periodicals as representative of Tunisian culture and thought. Although he avoids a critique of colonialism, referring to it as “les dures réalités auxquelles se heurte l’existence” (53), he provides an objective account of the Tunisian cultural press and furnishes valuable information and insights. Jaafar Majed continues in Demeerseman’s footsteps in *La Presse Littéraire en Tunisie de 1904 à 1955* (1979). His book is important for my study because he contextualizes literary periodicals in the colonial situation as instruments of combat on the cultural level (363), demonstrating the

and puts them into their historical context, and discusses tendencies, legal status, and problems of freedom of the press in the early colonial period.

importance of resistance to cultural assimilation. I suggest that *Leïla*, as a cultural periodical, contributes to this resistance with articles containing anti-colonial and nationalist subtexts, which lay the foundations for a national culture.

French authorities were, of course, aware of nationalist sentiments expressed in the Tunisian press. It should be noted that Mahmoud Zarrouk, *Leïla*'s founder, published in a restrictive climate of censorship, which must be taken into account. Several works examine the legalities of the press, problems with freedom of expression, and censorship. Ridha Zguidane's thesis, *Mutations socio-politiques et droit de la presse en Tunisie (1884-1975)* (1980), describes the different social and political positions of various groups in the Protectorate, and the legislation that affected the periodicals that represented them.¹⁶ André Duran-Angliviel's *La Législation de la Presse et les Libertés Publiques* (1936) is of particular interest because, as a French lawyer in the Protectorate, he was an eyewitness to the period of repression preceding the Popular Front government in France and *Leïla*'s appearance in 1936. He heavily criticized the colonial administration, proving that there was a French minority who positioned themselves against the colonial government.¹⁷ These works provide information about the details of French repression of the press, allowing me to contextualize the production of *Leïla* and to show what was possible under colonial oppression.

The dominant preoccupations of Tunisian elites, according to the majority of these studies, are the anti-colonial and national struggles. However, the tendency to write

¹⁶ In *Le Droit de l'information en Tunisie* (1989), Hamdane also discusses the legal aspects of freedom of the press in both the colonial and postcolonial periods.

¹⁷ André Duran-Angliviel (1877-1964) came to Tunis in 1905 and worked in journalism (especially at *La Dépêche Tunisienne*) until after World War I when he opened a law office and at the same time became a member of the Socialist Party (SFIO) and helped found the newspaper *Tunis Socialiste*. He was a member of the Bar of Tunis, the *Conseil de l'Ordre des Avocats*, and the Grand Council of Tunisia. (Corriou *Les Français* 98-99)

history from a nationalist perspective that opposes Eurocentric historiography inevitably obscures the rich middle terrain of the border zone. Sanctified by nationalists after independence, Tahar Haddad's *Notre Femme dans la loi islamique et la société* (1930) continues to draw the attention of scholars and the general public, while *Leïla* slumbers on the shelves of the Bibliothèque Nationale and the IBLA library. Although notions of the nation dominate in *Leïla*, I intend to show that women's voices demand to be heard and that *Leïla* aids in filling out the middle terrain if read carefully. Indeed, *Leïla* has not been thoroughly examined by scholars, although a number of histories of the Tunisian women's movement have been written. It has crept into at least one history text on Tunisia,¹⁸ and recent books and newspaper articles have brought this periodical's role in the feminist movement and the nationalist movement to the public's attention.¹⁹ Ahmed Younès, in "Parution de la première revue féminine, purement tunisienne" (2006), describes *Leïla* in the context of a glorious nationalist history: "Elle [la femme tunisienne] avait ainsi compris à l'instar de la femme algérienne, que le combat pour sa libération était lié à celui mené pour la libération, du pays du joug du colonialisme. Bien plus c'était le même combat." He combines the feminist and nationalist movements into one, maintaining the binary opposition of colonialism and nationalism. Such articles

¹⁸ In commenting on the activities of Tunisian women in the Neo-Destour Party in *A History of Modern Tunisia* (2004), Kenneth Perkins notes: "...the Neo-Dustur sponsored the publication, albeit in France, of a women's magazine, *Leïla*, which attempted to reconcile traditional and modern views on gender-related issues" (98). In reality, the magazine was neither sponsored by the Neo-Destour Party nor published in France. Beginning in December, 1936, the first three issues were printed by Gorse, Bascone & Muscat of Tunis (Hassan 282), and the fourth issue was printed by the Imprimerie Hadida with an assurance that it was printed in Tunis: "Achevé d'imprimer le 29 mai 1937 à Tunis." *Leïla* continued to be printed by this Tunisian Jewish printer until the May 27, 1941 issue, which was printed by the Impimerie l'Irada in Tunis. The Imprimerie l'Irada was connected to the Destour Party and was best known for *Irada* (*La Volonté*), an Arabic political newspaper.

¹⁹ Ilhem Marzouki briefly notes *Leïla*'s existence in *Le Mouvement des femmes en Tunisie au XXème siècle: Féminisme et politique* (1993, 60), as does Michelle Raccagni in *Origins of Feminism in Egypt and Tunisia* (1983, 235-237). Amel Sammoud's *Entrer dans l'histoire de l'information féministe en Tunisie* (2005) contains a two-page description of the periodical that summarizes previous scholarly work.

show that *Leïla* is being discussed currently, to the extent that it warrants an occasional newspaper article. In fact, Hafedh Boujmil of Nirvana Editions [Tunis] recently published a book about *Leïla* for the general public that includes studies by four scholars, including myself, who introduce articles, artwork, and photos from *Leïla*. In this dissertation, it is my goal to show that there is much more to be said on the subject of *Leïla* and I address misconceptions to set the record straight in the hope that this will open the door to further research. Circulating in a supposedly non-confrontational arena, this periodical opens upon a rich and turbulent border zone where identities are tested, boundaries transgressed, and limits pushed. *Leïla* contains articles on women's emancipation, as well as cultural subjects, including art, literature, literary criticism, history, theater, cinema, music, and radio, which contribute to the formation of national consciousness and a national culture.

Where is the key that unlocks the border zone of colonial Tunisia, the key to a space where the colonized searched for a national identity and culture to resist French domination? The reader needs only to start at the beginning and turn the first page of the first issue of *Leïla: revue illustrée de la femme*. To give readers a taste of the treasures found in *Leïla*, Chapter 1 takes them on a stroll through the pages of the two first issues, which contain the major themes and debates highlighted throughout publication. The comparison of the two first issues of the two series, one a monthly magazine (Dec. 1936-Nov. 1940) and the other a weekly newspaper (1 Dec. 1940-8 July 1941), reveals shifts in Tunisian society concerning women's emancipation and shows the effect of the historical moment on textual practice. I propose that the change in emphasis from women's emancipation in the first series to national culture in the second series reflects not only

economic hardship during World War II, but also an aggressive attack by the French at the cultural level that required Tunisians to battle for control over their own cultural production.

The historical moment sets *Leïla*'s parameters and affects the meaning of its texts. Chapter 2 focuses on the production difficulties that *Leïla*'s founder, Mahmoud Zarrouk, and his editors encountered. To begin, Zarrouk faced problems in finding editors, contributors, and a readership, accompanied by constant financial difficulties, and increased material shortages. A summary of the history of press censorship that intertwines with national history demonstrates what resistance was possible for Zarrouk in the colonial situation. I then consider the type of Tunisian identity that Zarrouk saw in Tunis, to which questions of language were connected. Zarrouk found foreign influences infiltrating into the Tunisian print culture, for his periodical was affected by both French women's periodicals and women's periodicals produced to the East, in Turkey, Egypt, and the Levant, where national politics and women's emancipation came together. This intersection is prominent in *Leïla*, reflecting the debate on women's emancipation that was important for the national movement. A general description of *Leïla* in its historical context is necessary, first of all, because a thorough description with *Leïla* as sole subject has not been written, to the best of my knowledge. Secondly, the historical context directly affects representations of the "Arab/Muslim Woman" resulting in conflict and anxiety in *Leïla*'s first series forum.

Consideration of historical background sets the stage for a discussion in Chapter 3 of Tunisians' reaction to a colonial discourse containing feminist elements from the *métropole*, for which I borrow Leïla Ahmed's term "colonial feminism" from *Women*

and Gender in Islam. This discourse emerges in a selection of French writings on the “Arab/Muslim Woman.” I argue that Tunisians must challenge French negative representations of the “Muslim Woman” in order to create the “New Muslim Woman,” a construction fashioned within *Leïla*’s pages. The attack on French texts presents difficulties, for as Edward Said notes, European Orientalist texts carry authority and “... acquire mass, density and referential power among themselves and thereafter in the culture at large” (*Orientalism* 20). Said creates a genealogy of writings showing the growth of Orientalist discourse by looking at the ensemble of relationships between works, which he views as an “analyzable formation.”²⁰ Borrowing Said’s ideas, I examine a sub-genre of texts on the “Muslim Woman,” which develops into a genealogy that creates its own truth about the “Muslim Woman.”

Within this genealogy the French authors’ gaze from the moral high ground of French colonization produces a representation of colonized women that passes as truth, while Tunisian texts must attack French representations to destroy them. An examination of French women writers’ books compared to the texts of their male compatriots reveals counter-hegemonic discourses that *Leïla* editors and writers either attacked or exploited. Yet, the researcher cannot always establish clear-cut boundaries between French and Tunisian writings because of the invasive nature of colonial feminist discourse, which infiltrated *Leïla* articles. In addition, French writers in *Leïla* tend to practice border thinking and seek creative solutions, thus blurring boundaries between the texts about the

²⁰Said emphasizes the author’s exteriority to his or her subject: “What he [the Orientalist author] says and writes, by virtue of the fact that it is said or written, is meant to indicate that the Orientalist is outside the Orient, both as an existential and as a moral fact. The principal product of this exteriority is of course representation...” (21). This representation written from the exterior generally excludes views of the colonized about themselves.

“Muslim Woman.” Nevertheless, attempts to disrupt colonial feminist discourse, whether by the French or by Tunisians, nevertheless, clear the way for and appear simultaneously with articles and images that propose new roles for Tunisian women.

In Chapter 4, I discuss *Leïla*'s proposed new roles for Tunisian women that led to the blossoming of the “New Muslim Woman,” a representation that expanded to become the “New Tunisian Woman.” Inevitably, the changes proposed in *Leïla* were connected to changes in the Tunisian family and the private sphere. Scholars note that reform in family structure was not simply due to Western ideas, but also resulted from internal changes in elite families, as the center of power shifted from the palace and the ruling families living there, and moved outside the palace.²¹ In *Being Ottoman: Family and the Politics of Modernity in the Province of Tunisia* (2007), Amy Aisen demonstrates that changes in Tunisian beylical²² family structures (where women wielded power) at the end of the 18th century and beginning of the 19th century were internal, as the center of power shifted and the government became centralized. However, colonization brought pressure upon the Tunisian family, creating friction. Constructions of the “New Muslim Woman” in *Leïla* reflect both change from the inside and the outside, providing challenges that provoked border thinking where elites tested new roles in the private and public spheres.

If not examined carefully, scholars may find only the public transcript in *Leïla* that promotes the construction by men of “la femme musulmane” as a category, for nationalist lawyers carefully dictated guidelines for the patriotic Tunisian woman. One

²¹ See, for example, Lisa Pollard's *Nurturing the Nation: The Family Politics of Modernizing, Colonizing, and Liberating Egypt, 1805-1923* (2005, 9-10) and Mona Russell's *Creating the New Egyptian Woman: Consumerism, Education, and National Identity, 1863-1922* (2004), especially Chapter 2: “The House, City, and Nation that Ismail built.”

²² Tunisia's ruler was a “bey,” while “beylical families” refers to an extended (and powerful) family structure that included brothers, sisters, uncles, aunts, and cousins.

should not assume, however, that colonized women were powerless, an assumption contested by Marnia Lazreg. In her study on Algerian women, *The Eloquence of Silence: Algerian Women in Question* (1994), she points to a problem with the framing of the debate, and proposes that women were not duped into joining anything. They exercised agency, and were not passive participants; women willingly chose to fight against colonial power and achieved their primary goal of independence for the nation. Lazreg asserts that the secondary goal—advancing women’s rights—must be considered separately (118-9).²³ I agree with Lazreg, however, I find that the primary and secondary goals must be considered together when examining *Leïla*. Although I argue that feminist discourse and women’s emancipation remains controlled by nationalists in *Leïla*, nonetheless, women contribute knowingly to nationalist voices, while working for changes in role and status for themselves. Thus, Chapter 4 shows how this periodical, through its articles, artwork, and photographs, proposes interesting—and surprising—changes for Tunisian women that go beyond nationalist lawyers’ tentative formulations of a national feminism.

In the August 1940 magazine, the choice of a literary figure, the Egyptian Mayy Ziyadah, as a model for the “New Woman” suggests the importance of literature in *Leïla* and leads to a discussion in Chapter 5 of culture, particularly in the domains of literature, theater, and music. Frantz Fanon, in *Les Damnés de la Terre* (first published in 1961),

²³ For a discussion of the theoretical problems facing scholars concerning the study of women in the Maghreb, see Lazreg’s *The Eloquence of Silence: Algerian Women in Question*, Chapter 1, “Decolonizing feminism” (1994, 6-10) and Lamia Zayzafoon’s *The Production of the Muslim Woman: Negotiating Text, History, and Ideology* (2005, 3-9); for the Middle East, see Ellen Fleischman’s *The Nation and Its “New” Women: The Palestinian Women’s Movement, 1920-1948*, Chapter 1, “Introduction: Inscription into the National Narrative” (2003, 1-10). For a general view, see Chandra Talpade Mohanty’s *Feminism Without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity* (2003).

insists upon the importance of culture in the struggle against colonialism and theorizes a national literature that he terms *littérature de combat* because it informs national consciousness and opens “de nouvelles et d’illimitées perspectives” (169). Did *Leïla*’s literary and cultural activity contribute to national consciousness while Tunisians suffered economic setbacks and Vichy repression during World War II? In the second series, dialogue and the debate on women’s emancipation disappeared and the first series’ forum closed, making it difficult to communicate the message of national consciousness, even in a coded form.

This brings me back to my original question: how do the colonized resist oppression? I propose that in *Leïla*’s second series a group of critics replaced the forum and sought to develop a cultural criticism that laid the foundations for a national culture to serve the unmentioned Independent Nation—under the ever-vigilant eyes of French censors. In addition, I theorize a phenomenon I refer to as “whirlwinds,” which swirled around specific scandals in the cultural domain provoked by the colonial situation, and which caught up *Leïla* critics in their circular movement. I argue that these whirlwinds caused critics to spin their wheels on hopeless, contentious points, but at the same time pushed them to clearly define problems and propose solutions in order to encourage groups and individuals who contributed to a Tunisian national culture, thus keeping border thinking alive. I must also add that nowhere in French-language periodicals of the Protectorate, whether Tunisian-run or French-run, have I found such a sustained, deliberate, and well thought out criticism at the cultural level that reflects the dedicated and inspired work of a group of people. Thus, I conclude that the critical and cultural activity found in *Leïla*, begun in the first series magazine and developed in the second

series weekly newspaper, contributes to national consciousness by creating new models for a New Nation in line with Fanon's notions. He states:

Cette vigueur nouvelle dans ce secteur de la vie culturelle passe très souvent inaperçue. Pourtant sa contribution à la lutte nationale est capitale. En animant visages et corps, en prenant comme thème de création un groupe vissé sur un même socle l'artiste convie au mouvement organisé. (*Damnés* 170)

Fanon points out that literary activity generally goes unnoticed, *inaperçu*, which possibly assisted *Leïla* writers in passing by censors. In the meantime, *Leïla* critics looked to the future with hope and conviction, creating new models with the *vigueur nouvelle* emphasized by Fanon, despite nearly non-existent freedom of expression and personal liberties.

It is my hope that this dissertation will serve as a starting point for researchers in a number of domains, for the material found in *Leïla* is extensive. Throughout my study, I seek to break the silence around *Leïla* and, with the addition of a variety of indexes in the Appendices, to bring out from the shadows the people who formed the imagined community around *Leïla*, which included readers, contributors, advertisers, friends, and families. For example, the "Index of People in 'Carnet Rose'" lists the names and social activities of elite Tunis families, which would be useful in studies on urban society in the 1930s and early 1940s. This index reveals the identification of elite women as well, which demonstrates social changes concerning the recognition of women in the public sphere. In this way, I would give agency to Tunisians in the writing of their history and culture. For to write about the *Leïla* project has been a humbling and inspiring experience and I bow to the imagination and courage of the *Leïla* "équipe."

Chapter 1
Laying the Groundwork and Encouraging Debates:
Leïla's First Issues

Introduction: Leïla Appears

“Avez-vous vu *Leïla* ? C’est une nouvelle revue conçue dans un esprit moderne. Le premier numéro vient de paraître. Espérons que ce ne sera pas le dernier.”

—Tunisian woman quoted by Lucie Paul Margueritte (30)

So exclaimed a French writer’s Tunisian hostess when a new women’s magazine, *Leïla*, appeared in December 1936 in Tunis. In an investigation on women’s emancipation in Tunisia, Lucie Paul Margueritte recorded the frustration of upper class women who felt that the emancipation process had stalled in the mid-1930s. The first issue’s sophistication and broad range of topics concerning Tunisian women drew attention. Hopes ran high that *Leïla* would expand the debate on women’s emancipation in the public forum and include more women.

Leïla appeared at a propitious moment in the political scene of the French Protectorate. In 1936, the election of the leftist Popular Front to power in France caused a momentary lifting of French repression in Tunisia and a political opening that Tunisian nationalists hoped would permit dialogue and reform. A temporary relaxing of administrative and direct censorship of the Tunisian press allowed Zarrouk to undertake the *Leïla* project,¹ which opened a forum where border thinking developed. An independent nationalist himself, Zarrouk welcomed articles by well-known nationalists who attracted readers and added substance to the periodical (Ahmed Zarrouk, interview 15 Feb. 2005). However, with the demise of the Popular Front in France, civil liberties in

¹ I use the term “project” because this periodical owed its existence to a group of people with common goals organized around the founder, Mahmoud Zarrouk, that is, it was a group project. See Chapter 2 about the *Leïla* “team.”

Tunisia declined and hope for reform disappeared. As political newspapers closed due to censorship, Zarrouk managed to keep *Leïla* open as a women's periodical (read by both women and men) until November 1940, while encouraging hidden nationalist and feminist transcripts that contributed to a national identity. When transformed into a weekly newspaper in December 1940, *Leïla* posed as a specialized cultural periodical about intellectual life in Tunisia, which catered to a predominately male readership. I propose that each series is unique in its own manner and that both open upon an unusual border zone where a middle terrain emerges between colonial and nationalist discourse. Here contributors test male/female boundaries and will into existence a cultural criticism in the search for creative solutions that point to border thinking.

Indeed, *Leïla's* presence in an unstable, shifting border zone raises numerous questions about identities and about boundaries between Tunisians and the French, colonialism and nationalism, modernity and tradition, and finally, between men and women. This chapter highlights the first issue of the women's magazine (Dec. 1936-Nov. 1940) and of the weekly newspaper (1 Dec. 1940-8 July 1941), which contain the major questions debated throughout *Leïla's* publication. Within the first magazine, nationalist lawyers lay the foundations for a national feminism. At the same time, women make their opinions known and test boundaries, while men's anxieties about modifications in women's roles surface. I suggest that the name of the magazine signifies both a Tunisian woman and a Tunisian man, however, the name "Leïla" eventually excludes women, signaling changes in publication and editorial policies due to the effect of the historical moment on textual practice. The comparison of the two first issues shows that as political and economic problems increased in the Protectorate, the focus and objectives of the

Leïla project shifted from women's emancipation to national culture. I argue that a concerted attack at the cultural level by the French forced *Leïla*'s team to alter strategies and develop a cultural criticism that defined this national culture.

What's in a Name?

Investigating the publishing of *Leïla* has inevitably led me to wonder about the name chosen by its founder, Mahmoud Zarrouk, and his editors. Within the literary environment of the 1930s, the name "Leïla" appeared in Mahmoud Aslan's announcement in *Entre Deux Mondes* (1933) and in *Scènes de la Vie du Bled* (1933) of the future publication of his novel, *Les Yeux noirs de Leïla*. When it was finally published in 1940, Zarrouk wrote a critique about Aslan's novel, contextualizing it into a wider

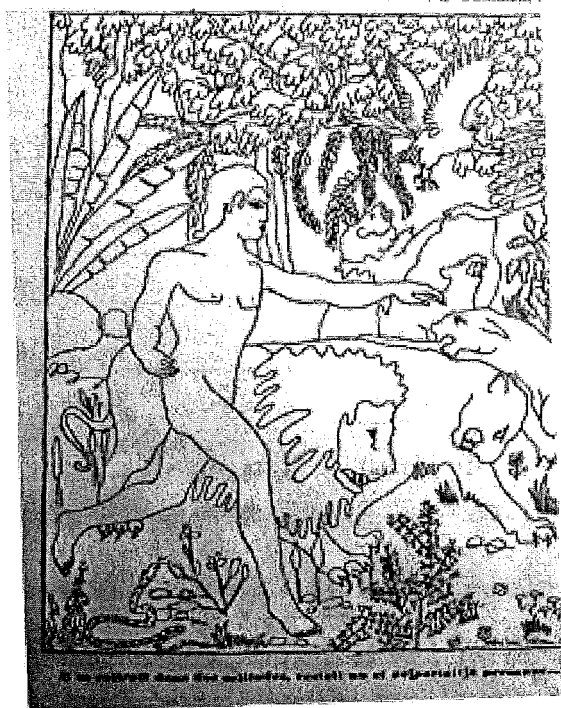


Fig. 1.1

who went insane for Leïla) begins an article titled "La belle légende de Majnoun Leïla"

view on Tunisian literature ("Les Yeux noirs de Leïla," May 1940, 15).² It is possible, then, that Mahmoud Zarrouk was aware of Aslan's project before 1936 and inspired by such literary ideas.

While the choice of name is never explicitly explained in the magazine, the reader finds a clue towards the end of the first issue (Dec. 1936). A quote from the poet Kaïs Ebn El Mouallah ("Majnoun Leïla"—the man

² See Chapter 5 (282-285) for a discussion of Zarrouk's article on Aslan's novel.

(17): “J’aime le nom de Leïla, j’aime les noms qui ressemblent au sien.” The name calls forth a famous love story easily recognized by the magazine’s contemporary readers. Kaïs could not marry Leïla because her father chose another man to be her husband. Thus, “Leïla” is not only a woman’s name, but represents the story of a man and a woman facing problems in society because of their love. However, the male gaze dominates as Kaïs immortalizes Leïla through his poetry. Aly Ben Salem’s drawing (Fig. 1.1), which illustrates the article, represents the poet, Kaïs, rather than his beloved Leïla. The woman remains present through the diminutive name of the poet “Majnoun Leïla,” but invisible.

By locating the name “Leïla” in an Islamic society and anchoring it in an Arabic literary tradition,³ the periodical’s name signals a defense of an Arab/Tunisian identity. The choice of “Leïla” reclaims and updates a literary tradition, making it a part of a contemporary Tunisian identity with a dominant male gaze. The signification shifts and is unstable, however. Certain articles that present the editors’ agenda carry the signature of “Leïla,” thus the name signifies the editors, both men and women, in a collective identity. At other times, “Leïla” serves as a metonym for the magazine’s female readers. A title such as “Leïla, tes soeurs étaient en prison” (Mar. 1939, 2) addresses Tunisian women directly, as a group. Shifting further with the passage of time, the name becomes hollow of meaning because the writing of a national culture under Vichy repression takes precedence in the second series in 1941.

³ The editor takes care to indicate the source of this story in the opening paragraph. It is translated from the Arabic version by Mohamed Ebn Chaker El Koubbi in *Faouat el Ouafra*. (Mar. 1939, 2)

The First Issue: An Elegant Magazine



Fig. 1.2

femme” (Fig. 1.2). It is an elegantly designed magazine with glossy paper

and numerous illustrations created with an eye to visual aesthetics. Opening it, the reader finds the inside cover divided into fifteen boxes, each containing an advertisement.

Businesses range from a transportation company to a phonograph album store, with only a fabric store aimed specifically at a women’s clientele. This note of ambiguity may make the reader wonder if this is a magazine only for women.

⁴ Aly (or Ali) Ben Salem (1910-2001), son of the director of a primary school, attended the *Ecole de Beaux-Arts* of Tunis in 1930, wrote articles for *Tunis-Soir*, *Le Jeune Tunisien*, and *La voix du guenillard* from 1932-1934. He won the *Prix de Peinture du Gouvernement tunisien* in 1936 and became a well-known artist. (Corriou, *Les Français* 206)

The first issue of the first series (Dec. 1936-Nov. 1940) is indeed an eye-catcher. It is in a magazine format (24.5 x 29.5 cm) with a light violet-pink cover and Aly Ben Salem’s⁴ art deco design of two women’s heads in black, creating a stark contrast to the embedded title “Leïla” in yellow-green. The subtitle below reads: “revue de la

At the top of the first page a heading states that M. Zarrouk is the director, A. Chabby and “Mlle Radhia” are the editors, and the periodical’s office is located on Tunis’s main street, Jules Ferry Avenue (now Ave. Habib Bourguiba), in the Colisée—a busy commercial center. An editorial, which takes the place of a table of contents, appears to dissipate any doubt about readership. “Notre Programme: A nos chères lectrices” addresses a feminine readership directly: “Cette revue a été créée pour vous et elle compte principalement sur votre concours pour la faire prospérer” (Dec. 1936, 1). With the use of “nous” and “vous,” the editors emphasize communication and create a reading community in which women are asked to participate actively in order to make *Leïla* succeed. The magazine reflects the interests of this community of women, including entertainment, but also improvement of women’s status as well:

Tout ce qui vous intéresse de près, ou de loin, tout ce qui peut vous être profitable ou amusant, vous le trouverez dans ces pages luxueuses et illustrée dont la lecture vous aidera a mieux comprendre et aimer la vie... “LEILA” est pour la défense de la Tunisienne et pour son évolution sociale et intellectuelle, contre les vieilles traditions injustifiables qui rendent les mariages aussi onéreux que difficiles, tourmentent la jeunesse et inquiètent les familles. (Dec. 1936, 1)

The editors seek to interest their readers in participating in their project, and by doing so, they bring Tunisian women into the public sphere: “Que nos lectrices nous fassent part de leurs suggestions, de leurs vœux et de leurs désirs... Nous faisons appel à la bonne volonté de toutes nos collaboratrices éventuelles pour qu’elles participant à la vie de cette revue.” According to the editorial, the periodical will bring together and “harmonize” articles by contributors, suggesting a coherent editorial agenda guiding the content.

The tone is light: “Nos efforts tendront à la créer [*Leïla*] à votre image, fine et gracieuse.” The editorial’s author emphasizes the youth of the *Leïla* team. Words such as

agreeable, profitable, amusant, plaisir, and harmoniser contribute to the tone and to a certain patriarchal view of women's lack of interest in subjects such as politics and economics. Yet beneath the light tone, a glimmering of the hidden transcript of the colonized, appears when the editorial announces that its mission is to defend the Tunisian woman and her social and intellectual *évolution*. The qualification that made this statement innocuous to French readers (and censors) is that this defense is against the old, unjustifiable Tunisian traditions that made married life difficult.

Left unsaid is the fact that traditions have become out-of-date. Albert Memmi points out that colonizers say they respect the customs of the colonized, but do not allow any change (which would threaten colonization) by favoring *les éléments retrogrades* (127). According to Memmi, the choice for the colonized is assimilation (acceptance of the dominant French culture) or *petrification* of autochthon culture (130-1). This binary opposition does not allow a third possibility; an effort by the colonized to change the elements of their culture that they consider destructive, to cross boundaries, and to practice border thinking. This would mean jettisoning elements detrimental to the anti-colonial and nationalist struggles while adopting and adapting others, which by 1936 included women's emancipation. In addition, the term *évolution* signified the march toward independence, which could not be openly proclaimed but required masking.⁵ Thus, *Leïla's* promises of challenging tradition and encouraging the *évolution* of the Tunisian woman contain a subversive anti-colonial subtext, coincide with political

⁵ Subversive use of the term *évolution* can be found in nationalist newspapers of the period, especially *L'Etendard Tunisien* (1929-1930), *La Voix du Tunisien* (1930-1931), and *L'Action Tunisienne* (1932-1933).

objectives and social reforms proposed by national movements, and suggest a testing of boundaries.

Turning the page, the reader discovers that the light tone evaporates when Mohamed Nomane, a well-known nationalist lawyer, elaborates on the main concern of the first series; women's emancipation linked to the national movement. His prestige and age (he was sixty-four when *Leïla* appeared) gave him the authoritative voice to establish ground rules for a national feminism and to speak for women.⁶

Orientation of the First Series

According to Nomane, *Leïla* must contribute to the evolution of the "femme musulmane," not objectify her. He locates the Muslim woman within the Muslim world and within an unnamed nationalist movement. In his article, "Un mot sur ce que doit être la femme musulmane" (2), an underlying tension caused by the colonial situation can be detected. He argues that there are two ways of stopping change: hurrying it or blocking it. Nomane does not intend to hurry: he refuses an immediate overhaul of patriarchal society under the eyes of the colonizer. At the same time, he does not directly attack a colonial administration that does little for Tunisian women (seen in the lack of schools, for example). Instead, he promotes a gradual change within Muslim society that must deal with its "vieilles habitudes."

⁶ Mohamed Nomane (1872-1955) was born in Tunis, attended the Alaoui College, taught from 1895-1908, became a lawyer and member of the Tunis Bar in 1908, and was a journalist. Deported to France for his participation in the Tramway boycott of 1912, he then went to Istanbul. He returned to Tunis in 1913. He was a nationalist but against the popular Destour Party and its leader Abdelaziz Thaalbi (founder of the Destour Party in 1920) that many elites followed. He was a member of the Reformist Party in 1922, and of the French-run Socialist Party in 1929, and wrote in the Socialist newspaper, *Tunis Socialiste*. (Bakalti, 83-4; Zmerli, 58-63)

Although Nomane promotes education for women and elimination of the veil, he stands against adopting Western habits and customs. With a policing voice he judges what is permissible: “Les bals et autres promiscuités ne doivent point être considérés comme des indices ou des signes, encore moins des causes d’évolution.” Changes, he argues, must take place within “sa propre civilisation.” This insistence to put Islamic civilization on an equal footing with French civilization creates what Mignolo terms sustainable knowledge (7), contributing to a marked anti-colonial subtext.

Nomane casts aside Western influences due to a belief that women must remain segregated: “La dame musulmane peut parfaitement recevoir ses amies dans son salon où le vilain sexe n’a rien à voir.” Using the threat of violence as a means of control, he explains that women must be protected in the street against “mal élevés.” The public sphere, according to Nomane, must be kept orderly, and the presence of women risks creating disorder. Nomane shows acute anxiety about boundaries between the public and private spheres, as well as between the colonized and the colonizer, especially about interference from the colonizer, seen in his use of the term *immixtion* (interference in others’ affairs):

Pour que la femme ne soit pas arrêtée dans son évolution en Tunisie, il faut écarter toute immixtion. Il faut laisser à la société musulmane elle-même de tracer les étapes de cette évolution – ou les admettre et les accepter quand elles sont édictées par la loi naturelle de l’évolution.

It is the society of the colonized majority that will determine women’s emancipation.

That is, men will decide, as they represent the law that Nomane (a lawyer himself) points to. Although, he insists upon a classic separation of the public sphere of men and the private sphere of women, Nomane’s discussion of changes for women suggests new ways

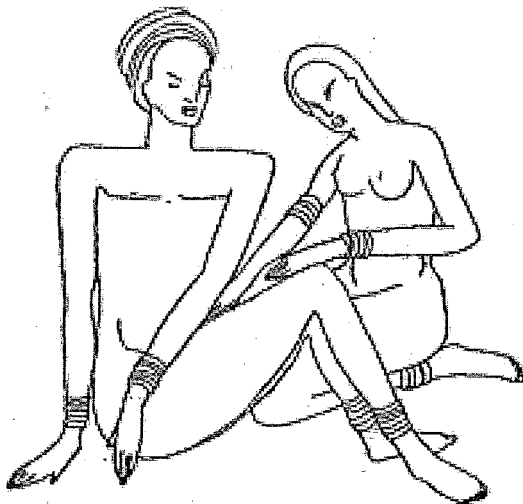
of viewing the family. The gradual reform that he proposes for women will contribute to a reformed family, the unit upon which the New Nation is based. Thus, he locates a new role for women within a broader notion of the Nation.

To offset the threat of French colonization, Nomane crosses over territorial borders set by the West, describing Tunisia as part of the "Orient," connected to it by religion and language. He points out change to the East, in other Islamic countries such as Egypt and Turkey. However, Nomane considers the testing of borders to be a male prerogative, proposing a strict framework in which Muslim women may evolve. He argues that such a framework does not limit freedoms by insisting that all women are subject to social constraints, but rather he maintains them: "Toutes sont soumises à des restrictions prévues par la société elle-même dans son propre intérêt." Ultimately, Nomane maintains social constraints limiting women's freedom to circulate in public. Here the historical moment makes itself felt, as *son propre intérêt* can be interpreted as the defense of Tunisian identity, religion, and culture that fuel the march toward the New Nation. Thus, without direct reference to nationalism, Nomane insists that nationalism takes precedence over other priorities, including women's emancipation.

Women crossing boundaries between "modern" and "traditional" behavior make Nomane nervous. He ends with a critique of women who seek change, labeling them "demi-savantes," and "illettrées voulant singer les grandes dames du monde occidental." He argues: "Les efforts désespérés qu'elles font les empêcheront de rester elles-mêmes, c'est-à-dire sous leur véritable jour, ce qui déçoit leurs amis." Nomane's notion that women are not true to themselves suggests an intrinsic culture that cannot be acquired through a French education and that the Tunisian woman's identity is not a construction

but a fundamental part of Tunisian society, evolving with the society. The *veritable jour* refers to a typical ideology of motherhood that Nomane promotes. He expresses the anxiety that his compatriots feel about unapproved change in women, reflecting the desire to maintain stable male/female boundaries. This raises the question of Nomane's intended audience.⁷ Nomane's opinions reflect the overall stance of the men writing in *Leïla*, and concern men more than women. Although he dictates conduct to women by defining *la femme musulmane*, he also attempts to convince Tunisian men of the necessity of change, reassuring them that it will be slow, contained, and not a threat to the Nation. The advertising at the bottom of the page for a café, men's shirts, and bottled water reassures men that the magazine recognizes them.

Lettre d'un jeune homme à matier
par RACHAD



Nomane's article sets the tone for the magazine and expresses in general terms the elite male (nationalist) Tunisian view of women. Yet, other voices speak and cracks in the façade appear allowing hidden transcripts to appear. On the third page, a sparring match develops between "Mlle Radhia" (not the editor) and "Rachad"

Fig. 1.3

(pseudonym for a male Tunisian writer). Their juxtaposed articles "Propos

⁷ Through the March 1939 issue, he contributes eleven articles, seven of which address the subject of the Tunisian woman's role in the family and society, and often refer to the law, reflecting his legal profession.

d'une jeune fille en fleur!..." (3) and "Lettre d'un jeune homme à marier" (3) wrap around a drawing (Fig. 1.3), a second contribution by Aly Ben Salem, that illustrates Rachad's article. The line drawing depicts a nude couple sitting on the floor: the man, sitting rigidly straight, looks straight ahead, while a woman sits to his side, facing him and reaching out to him in a servile manner with head bowed. Although the woman touches the man, the man's hands rest on the side of his body that is away from the woman, avoiding contact. The woman's servile position represents Rachad's views on women well.

Rachad insists that he supports women's emancipation, but quickly moves on to heap criticism upon women whom he labels condescendingly "nos charmantes émancipées":

De nombreuses déceptions, fruits amers d'observations personnelles, sont venues refroidir graduellement mon enthousiasme et altérer la foi que j'avais dans le bien-fondé de leur cause. L'usage que font nos émancipées des libertés acquises nous a cruellement désillusionnés. Vous avez fait de nous des désenchantés, mesdemoiselles.(3)

Rachad's underlying assumption reflects common male attitudes and echoes Nomane's preceding article: ultimately, women exist to serve men, and therefore women's emancipation must be pleasing, or at least useful, to men. Rachad continues: "Nous attendions que sous l'effet de cette émancipation, notre génération nous révélât des jeunes filles actives et cultivées, dignes d'être pour nous des compagnes intelligentes et dévouées sur les durs sentiers de la vie" (4). Women do not exist independently, but are men's companions and should never indulge in "frivolité." Their intelligence must be used for the good of the community. Rachad criticizes emancipated women's interest in shopping, film, fashion, and gossip, a complaint that appears regularly throughout *Leila's*

publication. He adds that women should be elegant and have good taste to please men, since they are destined to become men's companions. Rachad eagerly explains to women what their tastes and behavior should be to fulfill their role as man's companion: "Sachez qu'il nous déplairait de vivre avec des femmes incultes et coquettes, ne sachant parler que de modes et de cinéma et dont la légèreté ne nous permettrait pas de leur faire partager nos soucis." A superficial reading of this passage suggests that the women's role remains limited to mother and companion with a heap of burdens stacked on top. However, even the controlled changes proposed by Rachad will bring changes to the family, the building block of the New Nation.

Leïla is intriguing because of the glimpses of contradictions that appear in its pages. An advertisement several pages after Rachad's article indicates men's interest in fashion as well: "Par sa coupe impeccable/ Par le choix de ses tissus / Chaâbane / est le tailleur de l'homme de goût" (13). This blind spot in male vision does not escape Radhia. Although not addressing Rachad directly, she responds by attacking male public behavior. Whereas Nomane, in the previous article, implies that women must be protected in the street and beware, thus curtailing their movement, Radhia loudly criticizes predatory males, calling them *mammifères mâles* and *suiveurs*. She points out that they spoil women's enjoyment when they take a walk, particularly those that are veiled. Whereas the men writing in *Leïla* generally advocate the elimination of the veil, Radhia takes a contrary position. The problem, she argues, is not the veil and how women dress, but rather, it is men's behavior that constrains women's freedom to circulate.

Radhia spits fire in her anger, and does not ask to be protected. She puts the responsibility squarely on men, demanding that they learn street manners and stop their

abuse. She mocks men: “Mais vous ne vous rendez pas compte, messieurs les suiveurs, combien vous êtes gênants et ridicules!” She also points out that she is expected to be pretty and dress elegantly, putting her in an ambiguous position, a double bind: “Il m’arrive des fois de regretter d’avoir ‘un minois agréable’ ... et de porter des toilettes élégantes, car il suffit qu’une jeune fille remplisse ces deux conditions pour être la victime toute désignée de ces acharnés suiveurs.” Radhia is punished for conforming to the current standards of beauty in the upper classes and finds this an injustice. Not to be stopped, she delivers a slap in the face, or rather a knock-out punch, that jumps across boundaries and across the page at Rachad:

Quand donc cesseront-ils de croire que nous nous faisons belles pour les séduire et les entraîner sur les sentiers du péché? Les hommes sont trop faciles à séduire pour que nous nous donnions tant de peines et de soins pour cela. Si nous nous habillons avec élégance, sachez-le une fois pour toutes, c’est uniquement par souci de dignité personnelle et de goût.

Radhia does not just cut men down to size, she takes them out of the center. Instead, she



puts women into the center, insisting upon their dignity and taste, whereas she finds men to be boring, tactless, and inexcusable in their public behavior.

Radhia’s and Rachad’s articles continue as a series in seven and eight issues respectively. The editors juxtapose

them, or separate them by

Fig. 1.4

only a few pages, maintaining

tension and a lively debate. After the first issue, a different drawing by Aly Ben Salem

appears with Mlle Radhia's articles (Fig. 1.4). In this second drawing, a kneeling woman, this time dressed, is in the forefront looking ahead and a man to her side looks at her and reaches out to her (Feb. 1937, 2). It appears that Radhia won the first round.

Bahri Guiga's name in bold black letters in the title of an article, "Notre ami Me Bahri Guiga nous écrit," grabs the reader's attention on the fifth page. An anti-colonial, nationalist subtext makes its presence felt by the sheer weight of Guiga's name.⁸ This well-known nationalist lawyer lends his name and reputation to *Leïla* by way of a short letter of encouragement, offering a stamp of approval. He considers *Leïla* a means to help Tunisian women take their place in society in a social role: "Certes j'ai plaisir à voir la femme tunisienne aussi bien habillée que l'européenne et parfois même aussi bien instruite, mais je désespère de trouver parmi nos concitoyennes, celles dont l'activité ressemble à ces admirables Turques ou Egyptiennes dont la vie est un pur sacrifice en faveur des tout-petits, des orphelins et des malades" (5). Guiga crosses borders and emphasizes Turkey and Egypt as examples of an approved type of change in women's activities. He underlines the need for benevolent social projects to contribute not to the French Protectorate, but to a Tunisian Muslim society that will form the base of the Independent Nation. Guiga steers carefully away from any mention of political activities as well, setting a path for women to follow that includes education and social welfare.

The patriarchal policing voice of the older woman that coincides with men's desire to relegate the woman to a secondary status surfaces in "Conseils d'une mère à sa

⁸Bahri Guiga was active in the Destour party, then in 1934 he became a co-founder of the Neo-Destour Party with Habib Bourguiba, Mahmud Matari, and another *Leïla* contributor, Tahar Sfar (Perkins 92-96), resigning with Matari and Sfar in 1937 to protest Bourguiba's call to direct confrontation with the French (101). He contributed to short-lived political newspapers such as *L'Etendard Tunisien* (1929-1930), *La Voix du Tunisien* (1930-1931), and *L'Action Tunisienne* (1932-1933).

filles" (5) reprinted from an Algerian periodical, *La Voix des Humbles*.⁹ The newly-wed woman must respect her husband: "Ton époux sera, par l'autorité qu'il exercera sur toi, ton gardien et ton maître." She must be pleasant to look upon and take care of her husband and look after *his* house: "... n'oublie pas l'heure de ses repas et ne trouble pas son sommeil car l'impatience de la faim est une flamme dévorante et l'interruption d'un somme une chose détestable. Veille sur sa maison et ménage son bien..." In this firm delineation of boundaries, the man remains at the center while the woman's role is limited to companion and wife.

Several pages later, however, "Raouf," in "Un Abime à combler" (11) expresses a different view from "Rachad" or from the mother's advice. He does not see women serving men or existing to please men. On the contrary, he asserts that women are misrepresented as passive and isolated. He points to an ancestral and healthy women's culture that leaves men on the outside:

Elle [la femme tunisienne] s'en est même si bien accommodé au cours des siècles qu'elle a su imposer sa souveraine volonté à l'homme pour tout ce qui a trait à la vie familiale, à ses traditions immuables et à ses rites quasi sacrés. Il s'est créé, en quelque sorte, un véritable univers féminin, royaume clos et mystérieux, fermé jalousement au sexe fort, contre les représentants duquel une stricte défiance est de rigueur.

Raouf makes it clear that women have their own lives and communities that exclude men.

He argues that they wield power in the home, which causes men to fear and despise them:

"L'homme n'est plus aux yeux de la femme ainsi formée qu'une sorte d'animal d'un genre particulier, animal parfois fantastique et capricieux qu'il importe de dompter et de

⁹ *La Voix des humbles* (1922-1928, 1930s) was a monthly periodical of the "Association des institutrices d'origine indigène d'Algérie," a group of intermediaries that sought to maintain a good relationship with the colonial administration. Against religion, especially Islam, this group promoted secular French culture. (Ihaddadan 383-5).

subjuguer, si l'on ne parvient à l'appivoiser." Raouf suggests that men react in a negative manner to women's closed society, hence creating tension in the home. His anxiety can be seen in his final sentence: "Abîme effrayant...et qu'il faut combler à tout prix..." Raouf describes a gulf between men and women that sabotages men and affects their actions in the public sphere. Here the public and private domains overlap revealing a slippage of boundaries. Where does power lie? Raouf calls for a closing of the gulf to form a common front. Like Rachad, Raouf blames women, and demands a sharing of power in the home, but without offering to share power outside the home. Raouf demonstrates male anxiety over the fact that women are not passive nor victims—they have developed their own culture so that they are not left out. Ironically, men feel left out because of this reversal of power. For Raouf, women have tricked men into making the home a the private sphere that has become women's fortress rather than their prison.

A third contribution by the artist Ali Ben Salem, an article titled "La Femme Musulmane" (16), promotes views that are less male-oriented than the above-mentioned articles. Ben Salem supports women's emancipation while locating it within an unnamed nationalist movement. He speaks about the activity and power of the youth, and the creation of a new life: "Or nous avons la conviction que notre jeunesse est une source d'activité belle et puissante, belle comme toutes les choses naissantes, puissantes parce qu'elle a foi en elle-même." He insists that discussions must cease and women's emancipation must become a concrete action that contributes to a wider (nationalist) action: "Dès que l'unité pour l'action sera étendue, nous récolterons les fruits de nos efforts. Nous aurons la fierté d'avoir créé notre vie et de l'avoir modelée selon l'idéal que

nous avons conçu.” Ali Ben Salem invites women into the public sphere and demonstrates border thinking by questioning boundaries and seeking a middle ground.

Thus, as we have seen, there exist two separate worlds, one male and one female, that need to be merged in order to create an inclusive nation. *Leïla* serves to create the imagined community that includes both groups, and the forum provided contributes to better understanding as different viewpoints emerge and confront each other and boundaries are tested in the border zone.

On the Lighter Side

The editors worked to make *Leïla* cosmopolitan by including foreign writers and subjects. “Notre correspondante” Marlène Daisy contributes a short “Lettre de Paris...” in which she briefly discusses women’s emancipation in France: “... l’émancipation de la femme en Europe, même relativement récente, est trop souvent un acte, ou plutôt une nouvelle habitude, purement extérieure et formelle...” (4). Undermining colonial discourse, she discusses similar problems rather than differences. Daisy insists upon the importance of education for all women. Marlène Daisy later contributes to two later issues, including an article, “Réflexions d’une jeune Française: Autour de l’évolution de la femme musulmane” (Sept. 1937, 16), which cuts across the male patriarchal boundaries of colonialism and nationalism to propose new ways of conceptualizing border zones.

Mlle Meriem writes a column, “Nos petits enfants,” that appears in five issues, through September 1937. Her article is based on the notion that basic psychology will help parents better understand and raise their children. However, preference is given to the male child, who serves as the norm: “La psychologie d’un petit bonhomme de 5 à 6

ans fera donc le sujet de notre prochaine causerie...Progressivement, par degrés, nous l'aiderons à se créer une personnalité forte, virile, capable de supporter les revers, et bien armée pour la lutte de chaque jour." Such words as *fort*, *virile*, *bien*, *armée*, and *lutte* contribute to a masculine register, a register of battle that suggests the anti-colonial struggle that the male child must shoulder one day. The struggle remains in the domain of men.

A literary critique follows. In "Chronique Littéraire: Giraudoux et la jeune fille" (7), one of the editors of *Leïla*, Abdul-Méjid Chabby, examines Jean Giraudoux's creation of young female characters. Emphasizing the act of creation within a work of art and taking away the humanity of young women by referring to them as "créature" or "créatures enchanteresses," Chabby unconsciously repeats the Pygmalion myth, but with a nationalist element added. Chabby belonged to the *Jeunesse Scolaire* (affiliated with Sadiki College) and the Neo-Destour Party, both hotbeds of nationalism. Literary criticism serves to camouflage Chabby's construction of the New Tunisian Woman for the New Nation. Chabby's first models of a New Tunisian Woman, however, reside on the patriarchal notion of woman as companion and servant to men with men at the center in an active role, serving as the norm, while women occupy a passive, supportive role. Chabby attempts to define an ideal (young) woman through Giraudoux's texts: "Après leur avoir inculqué cet amour délirant de la vie, Giraudoux se refuse à laisser ses héroïnes partir à la recherche du bonheur. Pour elles, la vie doit se résoudre en une stoïque et inlassable attente." Chabby summarizes the important points in Giraudoux's texts and offers no critique of the type of woman created. She is weak and passive, submits to destiny, adapts to constraints, and forgives men: "La sensation immédiate qu'elles ont des

limites du possible et une connaissance parfaite de leur faiblesse, leur permettent d'évoluer avec *aisance* dans le chaos du monde." The ideal heroin then does not change or seek emancipation, but simply bends with the wind, never questioning the status quo. Chabby creates a contradiction. He suggests that by indulging and pitying men, this ideal woman is superior: "Elles ne sont qu'indulgence et pitié pour l'homme, même quand il les blesse, car elles se savent infiniment supérieures à lui." Chabby defines the ideal woman as separated from political and economic reality and non-interfering. He apparently intends the description to be a general compliment for women and to help men understand them. However, ultimately Pygmalion reigns, as does patriarchy. Here, the New Muslim Woman is a passive construction.

The next two pages contain a poem titled "Les Ombres" (8-9) by Skander (a

pseudonym for Salah Farhat),¹⁰ illustrated with a 1935 drawing by Alexandre Roubtzoff (Fig. 1.5) of four nude women



A. Roubtzoff Tunisie 1935

Fig. 1.5 flying through

¹⁰ In the recently published book, *Leïla, revue illustrée de la femme, 1936-1941* (2007), it was suggested that Skander was Roubtzoff himself, for "Skander" is the Arabic form of Alexander (85). However, Skander's sons contacted Hafedh Boujmil, the editor, to identify Skander as Salah Farhat (1894-1979), a famous nationalist lawyer. He attended the French lycée Carnot (Tunis), took Arabic courses at the Zitouna University, then attended the University of Algiers, where he obtained a law degree in 1917. He was one of the founders of the Destour Party in 1920 and appointed Secrétaire Général in 1935, just before *Leïla's* appearance. He signed his own name for political articles in *Le Libéral* (1924-1926), *L'Etendard Tunisien* (1929), and *La Voix du Tunisien* (1930), however, his use of a pseudonym for poetry that tended to be intimate and sensual, labeled "neo-romantic" by Fontaine (*Histoire*, t. 2, 236) made sense for the period, considering his high-ranking status in the nationalist movement. (Moncef Farhat, interview 16 July 2007). See Chapter 5 (267-269) for a further discussion of Skander's poetry.

the air (8), and with a drawing on the following page of plants and a mosque by the French artist, G.-L. Le Monnier, which appears to be an afterthought or filler (9). He begins his poem with a quote from the famous 7th century poet, Kaïs Ebn El Mouallah (“Majnoun Leïla” —the man crazy for Leïla), whose story follows towards the end of the magazine: “Je suis fou de Leïla, Leïla est folle d’un autre, et Celle qui est folle de moi je ne l’aimerai jamais !” The poem shows a romantic influence with themes of nature and love, and images of forests and the sea. The use of alexandrines and common rime patterns (AA/BB/CC/etc.) set an example for future poetry that tends to be imitative of French romantic poetry.

Following Skander’s poem, three photographs of elegantly-dressed, beautiful European women draw the reader’s attention. It is difficult to determine the author of the accompanying article, “Après le Tournoi de Beauté: Réflexions...” (10-11), because it is signed “LEILA.” This signature stands for the editorial position of the periodical and Zarrouk or either of his two editors could have penned it. However, the author remains anonymous for good reason. To begin, the first line rings heavy with irony: “Le public tunisois a donc pu, ces jours-ci, satisfaire sa curiosité, matière en laquelle il est au premier plan.” As a warm-up exercise, the author criticizes the curiosity of Tunis residents for material things and Tunisian women’s pretensions to elegant dress and interest in the superficial, then delivers a blistering critique of the 1936 Miss Europe Beauty Pageant. A European beauty pageant in Tunis? This invasion of European “royalty” provokes a thinly-veiled anti-colonial subtext. Indeed, the underlying premise of “Afrique Latine” and the oft-repeated assertion that Tunis was the bread basket of

Rome supports the extension of Europe to include the Maghreb, thus making it perfectly natural, from a colonial point of view, for the Miss Europe contest to be judged

Fig. 1.6 in Tunis.



And reign they do, attired in satin evening dresses and flaunting their *décolleté*. The largest photograph (Fig. 1.6) displays the seven “Misses” in front of an exotic, panoramic view of the Lake of Tunis and the city, framed in palm trees. Described as “les reines,” these young women represent the notion of royalty—princesses and a queen—who reign, albeit in an artificially created (Western) world.

The idea is not lost on the author who instead treats them as a group moving from place to place, like a herd. The anonymous writer withholds names and personal details rendering these women anonymous as well, rather than describing them as individuals. The use of the word “gueule” towards the end of the article, degrades them to animals: “... et, une fois ‘Miss Europe’ élue, il se trouvera quelques-uns pour dire: ‘Tant de chahut pour une telle gueule!!!’” The author seethes contempt—not for individual women, but for the whole concept and for the organizers who teasingly keep the group distant from the crowds and unapproachable “pour chatouiller et exciter notre curiosité.”

This author writes a double critique, not only of the superficially constructed “princesses” and the colonial powers they represent, but also of Tunisian women who follow Western taste and dream of Paris. The author attacks the colonial idea of appropriation (the occupation of Tunis and its reduction to a periphery) by making Tunis a center and taking importance away from Paris, the center. Thus, Tunis appears to be a *grande* city like Paris with all the excitement around the organized events of the Pageant that celebrates the world’s beauties:

On avait l’impression d’être dans une grande cité comme Paris, et de vivre comme on vit à Paris—rêve de beaucoup de nos concitoyennes. A Paris, il n’y a pas de soleil, il pleut tout le temps et il fait froid,¹¹ pourquoi alors ce seul nom procure-t-il une si grande frénésie et une telle envie ? Est-ce la manie des gens de renier leur propre pays ?

The author turns around the comparison of Tunis to Paris, where Paris is the norm, and undercuts it, mocking Paris for its cold, listless weather that can in no way compare to the brilliant Tunisian sunlight. The final question reminds Tunisian readers of national consciousness by challenging them about their loyalty to their country. The use of “leur propre pays” grates, as the French occupy Tunisia. The final sentence, a rhetorical question of “Cela valait-il la peine?” ironically implies the contrary “cela ne valait pas la peine,” thus questioning the value of such an imposed Western event.

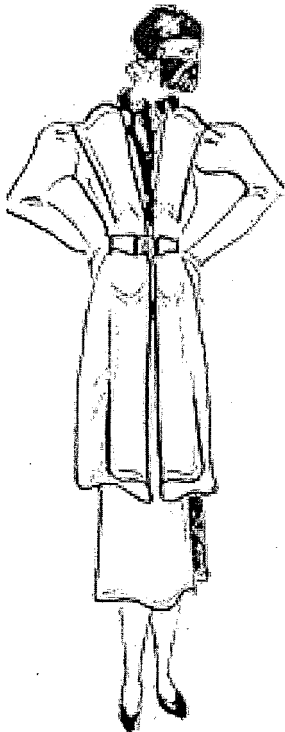
Another article penned by “LEILA” and promoting an editorial stand of the periodical follows. Entitled “La Mode” (12), it would appear to present the lighter subject

¹¹ The argument of weather appears banal, however in colonial discourse, the French refuse to give Tunisians an edge for their superior climate. For example, a Tunisian character in Charles Géniaux’s *Les Musulmanes* (1909, discussed in Chapter 3, 139-141) says: “Le ciel est souvent noir à pleurer et l’atmosphère fumeuse du grand Paris m’a été douloureuse. Mais ensuite, quand j’ai vu comme les esprits étaient clairs là-bas, j’ai compris qu’il valait mieux avoir le soleil dans sa conscience qu’au-dessus de sa tête...” (118). For Géniaux, then, it is not the weather, but the culture that enlightens, harkening back to the intellectual heritage of the Enlightenment. (Ironically, Géniaux liked to spend winters in Tunis when possible). Thus, in response to dominant discourse, the author of “Après le Tournoi de beauté” insists upon the advantage of weather, and implies that one can only be unhappy in a cold climate.

of fashion. Yet, the editorial agenda of the periodical dominates here as well.

Addressed to the female readership, “Nos charmantes lectrices,” this article proposes to educate Tunisian women to the changing styles in the Protectorate, while attacking “une vieille tradition,” that of the veil. The author views the veil as a habit that is kept only because of tradition. Reflecting the French notion that the status of women serves as an indicator of the health of a society, the author states: “A un grand mal [le voile], il faut un remède décisif et brutal presque, si on désire éviter que le mal n’attaque les parties saines.” The author combines women’s status and women’s dress into one. Promoting an adapted Western dress (with a short face veil, Fig. 1.7) while maintaining that it will not destroy *la personnalité* (e.g. Tunisian national identity), the author states:

Dans cette revue...on trouvera inséré dans chaque numéro, un article qui mettra au courant des changements et des tendances de cette mode, afin d’inciter les hésitants à reconnaître tout ce qui est vraiment beau, élégant et sobre pour éviter, le jour où il vous sera utile de vous servir de vos connaissances, de tomber dans le ridicule et le bouffe, comme il m’est arrivé plusieurs fois de le remarquer.



This quote has a tinge of tyranny about it. The writer appears to encourage (*inciter*) readers, yet imposes taste, the *vraiment beau*. The last part of the last sentence, especially the verb *remarquer*, suggests a judgemental gaze, possibly a male gaze that defines value. It seems reasonable that a man wrote the majority of this article or was looking over a woman writer’s shoulder because the didactic tone preaching at women separates the author from the female readership.

Fig. 1.7

The author has noticed how Tunisian women

have difficulty adapting to Western dress. It is not something that the author admits happening to himself or herself. He or she plays on the fear of looking the fool. Western dress is not necessarily superior, but the veil is inferior because it is imposed by a tradition that slows down change in Tunisian society. These views demonstrate an ideological stance. The author defines the veil as no more than a tradition, separating it from religious significance. However, a note of ambiguity persists: “Un jour viendra—et on le verra sûrement—que, libérée des chaînes du passé inutile, il se créera une nouvelle mode qui, en naissant, prendra ses bases dans l’ancienne tradition.” When the influence of tradition has been broken to make way for the new, then that tradition may be re-examined and re-appropriated into dressing styles. At the bottom of the page an advertisement for a French seamstress, France Denis, located in the center of Tunis, announces “Haute Couture.” Care has been taken to match the article with the advertised service, reinforcing the desirability of change in dressing habits.

The controversy over “traditional” and Western dress focuses on women and the veil. M. Sadok Zmerli¹² attacks the custom of the veil in “Tribune Libre: Une opinion sur le voile” (15-16), calling it *ce poison* while insisting that the Byzantines created it in order to discern the privileged classes. Tunisian bourgeois consequently maintained it as a sign of their status. He mockingly describes a new arrival in town:

C’est ainsi, que de nos jours, un brave Bédouin de la campagne s’empressera de faire prendre le voile à sa femme et à ses filles s’il vient habiter la ville, afin que

¹² Sadok Zmerli (about 1885-1983) attended Sadiki College until 1906, then became the youngest journalist of the political newspaper *Le Tunisien* (1907-1911) founded by Ali Bach Hamba. Deported briefly to Southern Tunisia in 1911, then expelled from Tunisia after the Tramway Boycotts in 1912, he joined Bach Hamba in Istanbul. He eventually returned to Tunisia, left the Destour Party and joined Hassan Guellaty in the Reformist Party, which failed in the 1930s. He became the head of cabinet for the Minister of Justice of the Tunisian (colonized) government. In 1942, Moncef Bey appointed him Director of Protocol. He eventually retired in Sidi-Bou-Saïd to write about the people and events he had known during the colonial period. (Fontaine, *Histoire* v. 3, 206-7, Tlatli 9-23).

l'on ne le prenne pas pour un homme de peu, manquant de savoir vivre et ignorant les règles en usage chez les personnes bien pensantes.

Zmerli hints at class divisions and the social problems of the rural exodus, to which he connects the veil. Indeed, for Zmerli, the veil becomes a metaphor for all problems because it is the easiest and most visible object to attack and to change:

Le seul argument des défenseurs du voile, c'est la crainte de l'eupéanisation à outrance de la femme musulmane et le danger de la vie trop libre. Mieux vaut encore cette liberté et ses dangers que la mort lente et le suicide moral de toute une race, de tout un peuple!

Thus, the veil becomes the cause of the moral and physical destruction of all Tunisians. Like Rachad, Zmerli sees men as the norm when describing social problems: "Le jeune musulman est le seul pour qui le mariage n'est qu'un simple accouplement, laborieusement préparé par les familles, avec une femme dont il ignore tout." According to Zmerli, the young Muslim man is the only one who suffers: women apparently do not have opinions on the subject. The young man is a martyr to marriage and a victim of society. This is an article to convince men of the need for change, however, the message is phallogocentric. The author uses women to talk about men.

Once again from the male point of view, Zmerli argues that between *musulmans évolués* and Tunisian Muslim women there is a gap because women are slaves due to the veil. As we have seen, Mlle Radhia expressed a contrary opinion. The veil is not what hinders women, but the difficulty of circulating freely because of social factors, particularly predatory men. Zmerli avoids more concrete problems that have to do with colonization, such as lack of schools, and transfers the burden of liberation onto women, making them, not men, responsible for a social problem. He argues for men:

... le jeune indigène instruit et francisé se sent, presque malgré lui, poussé vers

les filles d'Europe, plus près de lui par la culture commune et par ce quelque chose de l'esprit qui rapproche tous les êtres humains de même formation intellectuelle. Les jeunes filles de sa propre race...lui paraissent beaucoup plus étrangères. (16)

Zmerli continues to the end of his article, complaining that young men marry out of social duty. He moves the reader to pity for young Tunisian men, while disguising a social problem of class. In reality, educated Tunisians were a tiny minority. The underlying supposition that if women stop veiling, problems dividing the sexes will be resolved is simplistic. Only outer appearances would be altered with no profound social changes taking place—such as women acquiring an education and employment in the public sphere, and participating in the political and economic realms of the country. Zmerli addresses a problem in the private sphere, avoiding the larger questions of emancipation.

However, the editors hope to provoke a wider debate on dress that concerns both Tunisian men and women. In “Le Costume” (13), the editors announce a column named “Tribune Libre,” of which Zmerli’s article is the first, and invite readers to participate. The political aspect of dress in the colonial situation carries an anti-colonial subtext as reference to the independent nation of Turkey crops up:

Nos lectrices et lecteurs se rendent sûrement compte de l'importance de la question. Le vieil adage qui prétend que “l'habit ne fait pas le moine” n'a-t-il pas été mis en défaut ces dernières années dans un grand pays musulman de l'Europe Orientale ?

A rapport is created between Western dress and the “modern” Independent Nation, of which Turkey serves as a model, referred to as *Europe Orientale*. The use of this term suggests that Turkey is a part of Europe and has made the leap into “modernity,” and that

Europeans accept Turkey on an equal footing. Allusion is made to Mustapha Kamel Ataturk's efforts to persuade Turks to adopt Western dress—and thus become Western.

This announcement shares a page with five other short articles that create links to the Tunisian community, thus contributing to the imagined community that is the base of national consciousness and of a Tunisian national identity. The editors acknowledge other periodicals by thanking those who announced *Leïla's* publication ("A la presse," 13). In addition to the above-mentioned subject of clothing, they also propose the opening of a debate on the controversial subject of mixed marriages in the following issue ("Le mariage mixte," 13), of which the first article would be written by a well-known nationalist, Mongi Slim.¹³ This strategy of advertising well-known nationalists who contribute articles entices readers and establishes the reputation of the magazine as a public forum.

On the same page, in "Carnet Rose," the editors extend congratulatory messages to prominent personalities for engagements, marriages, births, and promotions. This regular column appears in ten issues through August 1940. Despite its seeming banality, it demonstrates two general points worth noting. First of all, "Carnet Rose" defines an acceptable marriage through example, that is, a union between a Tunisian man and a Tunisian woman. Unions of Tunisian men with French women do not appear, while the union of a French man with a Tunisian Muslim woman is taboo. Thus, the first column extends best wishes for the marriage of General Aziz Lakhouat, son of the Tunisian

¹³ Although the following issue contains an article on mixed marriage, it is not written by Mongi Slim, but by "Mlle Jamila," titled "Le mariage mixte: Sirènes d'outre-mer..." (Feb. 1937, 13).

government's prime minister, S. E. Sidi El Hadi Lakhouat. This column, then, reflects the maintenance of elite power located in a patriarchal hierarchy.

A second point concerns forms of address. Although men are identified by first and last name and often by function in "Carnet Rose," women are often identified only by their family name preceded by the polite form of address in French, "Mlle," yet this limited form of recognition signals a discreet testing of boundaries. A comment by Myriam Harry, the French author of *Tunis la Blanche* (1909, discussed in Chapter 3, 148-154), demonstrates the amount of change that the *Leïla* policy entails. After receiving an invitation for the double wedding of a prominent Tunisian store owner in the Médina, she notes: "Naturellement, le nom des fiancées étaient omis" (127). Harry witnessed a complete absence of the circulation of Tunisian women's names in public. Thus *Leïla* marks an important change in social practice concerning women. Though the *Leïla* editors maintained a policy of discreet identification of women, nevertheless, some names appeared. Over a dozen women are identified by first and last name in the "Carnet Rose" column.¹⁴ In the "Necrologie" column of the August 1940 issue (19), a woman is identified by her complete name and maiden name, "Mme Zohra Menchari, née Hadjoudj" after her death.¹⁵ Respect for the privacy of women throughout the existence of *Leïla* is de rigueur. For today's readers, this may appear to be a distancing of women, nevertheless, the periodical timidly makes space for women, naming women writers in the public sphere (whose presence was unusual for the period) by first name or using

¹⁴ See "Index of People in 'Carnet Rose'" in the Appendices (383-386).

¹⁵ In the same issue, a memorial article ("In Memoriam: Une douce voix s'est tue...", Aug. 1940, 20-21) about "Selma," the first North African Arabic-language "speakerine" of the radio, reveals her true identity, Arbia Zaouche. It mentions that she contributed to the periodical under the pseudonym of "Assia" ("Chronique mondaine: Plaisirs d'été," Sept. 1937, 18). See Chapter 4 (215-217).

pseudonyms. However, this was more than a question of social etiquette. The use of pseudonyms shielded contributors from colonial authorities who kept records on periodicals and those involved (Dabbab 153-155).¹⁶ It also protected contributors from angry readers, as the views expressed were controversial and the debate over women's emancipation roused emotions.

One of the short articles, "A la fête féminine des Etudiants" (13) mentions a "soirée" organized by a Tunisian woman's group, "Comité féminin de secours aux étudiants" to raise funds for Tunisian students in French universities. This article is interesting for two reasons. First of all, an early trace appears of Muslim women organizing around Bechira Ben M'rad whose name is mentioned. Secondly, this activity, although it appears banal, represents nationalist activity and carries with it a history of resistance. In 1930, an article in *La Voix du Tunisien*, "Est-ce une offensive contre l'instruction des Tunisiens" (12 July 1930) by Dr. Mahmoud Materi, discusses an incident during the summer of 1929.¹⁷ He describes how, after two successful fund-raising concerts of Arab music for the "Association des Etudiants musulmans de l'Afrique du nord" (AEMNA)¹⁸ organized by a group of Tunisian alumni, authorities forbade the third party: "Mais voilà qu'à l'annonce de la troisième fête, tout l'appareil

¹⁶ This is one of the reasons that Tunisian journalists frequently made use of pseudonyms or wrote anonymously from the beginning of the 20th century. Demeerseman notes this common practice in the Arabic-language specialized press up to the 1950s (11).

¹⁷ In the summer of 1929, Tunisian AEMNA alumni organized 13 "soirées" and gathered 56,000 francs, because the Department of Public Instruction funded few Muslim students to study in French universities. It was at this point that the authorities stepped in (Vermeren 23-24). In his article, Materi criticizes the double standards of the administration, noting that no European fund-raising parties required an administrative permission. A year later, after going through all the "requirements" for permission, and being told to not discuss this in the press, the group still had not heard from the Interior ministry. Consequently, they took their complaints to the press to make Tunisians aware that French colonial administrators blocked education for Tunisians by stopping fund-raising efforts.

¹⁸ The "Association des Etudiants musulmans de l'Afrique du Nord" was organized in 1927, known as the "cent quinze" for its address at 115 Blvd St. Michel, Paris. Tunisians formed the majority of members, and French authorities were well aware that it was a hotbed for nationalism. (Vermeren 23)

administrative et répressif se met en mouvement: les caïds, les contrôleurs civils, la sûreté, la Direction de l'Intérieur et même la Résidence sont alertés. Nos fêtes sont interdites jusqu'à nouvel ordre." According to the article, colonial administrators found a beylical decree that stated that a special permission was required to collect contributions (*souscriptions*) and that, in addition, the AEMNA was a foreign organization for which special recognition was required in Tunis. In *Leïla*, women's action offered a way around such administrative road-blocks and feminists contributed to the nationalist movement. Failure to mention the AEMNA indicates that elites learned their lesson of naming a nationalist organization in the press. Thus, this benign article signifies resistance to colonial repression and presence of a recognizable nationalist subtext.

Announcements of community and individual activities, such as in "Carnet Rose" or "A la fête féminine des Etudiants," connect *Leïla* to its readership. In addition, through letters to the magazine, the editors dialogue with readers. "Beaucoup de nos amies et amis nous ont écrit dès qu'ils ont appris la préparation de cette revue" (19), explains a note at the end of the magazine. The editors propose a column containing answers to readers' correspondence titled "Leïla répond" (19-20). As in the first-page editorial, the editors invite readers to communicate their interests and suggestions, reaffirming the direct link to the readership sought in the beginning. The first name or initials of the reader appear in capital letters followed by advice made up of a sentence or two concerning beauty, personal, and family problems. Advice may refer back to the magazine's articles. A reply to "Farida" states: "Ne regrettez rien si vous n'avez pas vu les "misses"; je vous envie" (19). This type of commentary reinforces the critical point of view in the article "Après le tournoi de beauté" (10-11) and promotes a Tunisian

definition of beauty, rather than a European one. The notion of Tunisian beauty parallels the idea of the emerging nation that defines itself from within, rather than from an exterior colonial gaze. Making use of readers' correspondence, the editors establish a conversation between themselves and the readership that creates a welcoming forum. Even such a seemingly trite aspect of the magazine serves to define and defend Tunisian identity, thus encouraging national consciousness. "Leïla répond" appears as a regular column for the first six issues (through Jan.1938), then inexplicably stops.

Not only does *Leïla* attend to culture in the form of art and literature, it also reserves a prominent place for entertainment that includes music performance and production, theater, cinema, and, later, television. "Chronique du disque" (13) recommends two new recordings by Oum Kalsoum, "Ya bechir el ounsi" and "Ya leïl noujoumek chouhoud." The author finds only one Tunisian recording to recommend, "Ya Machkaya," with a text in Tunisian dialect by M. Bourguiba that he describes as: "... d'un caractère poétique indéniable..." Here music and poetry coincide and tentative beginnings of a literary and cultural critique appear in which Tunisian intellectuals theorize a distinct Tunisian national culture, encouraging innovation.

The first issue contains encouragement for a national theater as well. In "Haut les rideaux" (18), a writer using the pen name "Fauteuil 47" expresses the public's desires: "Il est certain qu'Ouassila Sabry et sa troupe attireront la sympathie du public, si elle prend l'audace de créer du nouveau et de l'original." Thus, while announcing a new Tunisian theatrical group, he/she also makes concrete suggestions for a Tunisian culture that stagnated under colonization. An emphasis on creativity that reinforces Tunisian identity, rather than tradition, coincides with the stated goals of the first editorial and

demonstrates border thinking. This article covers the topics of theater and film. A play put on by the Essor¹⁹ is discussed; a Marx brothers film (“Une nuit à l’opéra”) is critiqued; an Egyptian film is crucified; and two films by Oum Kalsoum are mentioned. These articles are not simply descriptive, but also critical. They encourage readers to question Tunisian and Arab cultural activities in an effort to improve the quality of culture, while at the same time critiquing Western culture and whispering an anti-colonial subtext to formulate a national culture. For example, complaining that local movie theaters have not shown “Ouidad,” an Oum Kalsoum film, the author adds: “Il est certain que le cinéma qui présenterait l’un de ces films, jouera à guichets fermés.” Here is a hint of a thirst for Arab culture, suggesting a critique of French-dominated movie theaters that play to French interests.

Culture remains an important aspect of this periodical throughout its existence, whether it be music, literature, theater, art, or history. *Leïla* contributes to the defining and defense of a Tunisian national culture that is part of Tunisian identity, which is present in the first series and developed into a well-theorized cultural criticism in the second series. Bringing in nationalist contributors such as Tahar Sfar, Bahri Guiga, and Tahar Lakhdar, the editors signal to readers the nationalist orientation of *Leïla*, even though they refuse to put forward a political agenda found in newspapers of the period. Thus, *Leïla* is located in a border zone that encourages border thinking. Contributors defend Tunisian identity, history, and culture, and define a new social role for the

¹⁹Alexandre Fichet, an art teacher at the Collège Alaoui in Tunis, founded “l’Essor” in 1905 for his students. The group performed for ceremonies and festive occasions. In 1910, “l’Essor” became a member of a Parisian-based group, *Théâtre pour tous*. It also sponsored debates, conferences and published a periodical every two years (Chatelain 37).

Tunisian woman, making a space for her in the public sphere, and eventually the New Nation, which remains present but unmentioned.

On the Commercial Side

An examination of the *Leïla* project shows a meeting of interests. Zarrouk sought to promote a national consciousness by inviting different voices from the nationalist movements to the *Leïla* forum and by inviting women to participate as contributors and as readers in order to bring them into the public sphere of the magazine. Thus, nationalists and feminists come together in its pages. At the same time, *Leïla* was a commercial venture. The first issue contained fifty-eight advertisements inserted on the inside covers and at the bottom of twelve of the twenty pages. The editors also camouflaged advertising by the mention of businesses within texts. For example, a short article (“Une charmante dictatrice,” Dec. 1936, 17) about the singer, Chafia Rochdi, emphasizes her performance at the Grand Café d’Alger. Her name first appears in an ad for the Grand Café d’Alger on the front interior cover and again at the end of the magazine in a short article, “Le chant, la danse: Chafia au Café d’Alger” (19).²⁰

When giving advice in “Leïla répond” (19-20), the editors favor the magazine’s advertisers and insert their names and addresses into replies. The editors reserve this preferential treatment for regular advertising clients such as Aziz Senoussi (or Snoussi), whose ads appear in eight issues of the first series, and Benani, whose ads appear in six

²⁰ Chafia Rochdi (pseudonym for Zakia Marrakchi, 1910-1989), an orphan born in Sfax, began singing at weddings at the age of twelve. She sang in several orchestras (Habib El Manaâ’s, Fadhila Khetmi’s, and El Mostakbel El Tamthili) before creating her own, *Noujoum El Fen*, and becoming the principal singer of La Rachidia. When Mustapha Sfar, founder of La Rachidia, passed away in 1941, she left to sing in weddings where she earned more (Corriou, *Les Français* 213-214).

issues of the first series.²¹ A reply to “Hamida” declares: “Vos pieds sensibles seront chaussés avec élégance et confort par Draoui, 210, rue de la Kasbah.” Unlike the two advertisers mentioned, Draoui did not advertise in *Leïla* until January 1938. However, he became a steady client, advertising in fifteen issues in the first series and ten issues in the second series.

As previously noted, *Leïla* writers participated in a forum through their articles and demonstrated border thinking in discussions on the Tunisian woman’s new role in the New Nation. Additionally, columns such as “Carnet Rose” connected *Leïla* to the community and a dialogue developed through the column “Leïla répond,” which responded to readers’ letters and contributed to the formation of an imagined community that included Tunisian women. This was not to be the case, however, for the second series, which changed into a weekly newspaper.

First Issue of the Second Series

Responding to reader interest and economic necessity, the first series magazine went through changes during its five years of existence. Although the title “Leïla” remained intact, the subtitle expanded and contracted as the *Leïla* team negotiated an increasingly difficult economic and political climate leading into World War II. The 1936 title, *Leïla: revue illustrée de la femme*, expanded to *Leïla: revue illustrée de la femme: Périodique Social — Littéraire — Artistique* in the second issue (Feb. 1937) showing its emphasis on culture and society, rather than fashion and beauty. It contracted to *Leïla: Périodique Social — Littéraire — Artistique* in the March 1939 issue indicating an intention to include men by eliminating *femme* from the title. With the reduction of size

²¹ In the first issue, Senoussi’s ad appears on the front interior cover and Bennani’s is on page two.

to 16 x 24 cm. due to increased paper prices and scarcity in August 1940, the title expanded to *Leïla: Périodique Social—Littéraire—Artistique, Revue mensuelle illustrée pour l'évolution et l'émancipation de la femme musulmane nord-africaine* after a summer hiatus. This lengthy title spells out the editors' intentions of focusing on women's emancipation (without excluding men), but also broadens the vision of *Leïla* to include women from Algeria and Morocco with the use of "nord-africaine." This title expresses a more dogmatic tone with a political tinge as the needs of the Tunisian Muslim community changed during a period of increased colonial repression.

Thus, after the publication of twenty issues of an elegant magazine from December 1936 to November 1940, a drastic change occurred on 1 December 1940 when *Leïla* became a weekly newspaper. Changes in format accompanied changes in content reflecting more economic concerns and interest in entertainment. Present in every issue, Vichy propaganda made Zarrouk appear to be a Petainist. *Leïla* as a monthly periodical reflects different priorities from those of the weekly newspaper. Demeerseman notes: "Elle [la revue] nous donne la pensée décantée, réfléchiée et quelque peu dégagée des contingences secondaires, auxquelles s'arrête obligatoirement le journal" (5).²² The

²² André Demeerseman (1901-1993), a French member of the White Fathers (Société des Missionnaires d'Afrique), came to Tunisia in 1922 and became director of IBLA (1933-1947) where he also taught Arabic. Politically engaged, he mixed with the colonized, attended courses at the Khaldounia (Tunisian learning center that supplemented courses of the Zitouna University), and studied political economy and Arabic literature under nationalist intellectuals (Bendana 208). In 1930 he addressed a letter to his archbishop, stating that the Eucharistic Congress of 1930 in Carthage was a provocation to the Tunisian population (220). He published numerous articles and essays on the Arabic language, Tunisian culture, Tunisian women and the family, etc (217-221). The *Leïla* staff published one of his articles on Tunisian women ("Leïla et la presse," Dec. 1938, 9) and his conference presentation "La Compréhension Franco-Tunisienne," (1 Mar. 1941, 4).

Ultimately, however, Demeerseman defines a divide between the Orient and the West. He writes for a European audience, arguing that the study of Tunisian textual production allows an understanding of the Tunisian people: "[...] nous sommes entrés en contact avec l'âme d'un peuple, nous avons sympathisé à ses efforts et mieux compris ses angoisses" (90-1).

first series of *Leïla* is concerned with current events only from a distance. In the March 1938 issue, Tahar Lakhdar comments on the trial of four Tunisian girls that took place on December 28, 1938 (“Leïla, tes soeurs étaient en prison,” 2). They had been arrested at the arrival ceremony of a new General Resident, Eirik Labonne, for proclaiming “Vive la France, Vive la Tunisie, Vive S.A. le Bey, Vive M. Labonne, Vive le Destour, Vive Bourguiba.” Lakhdar uses this information to lead into a discussion on French deafness to Tunisian needs, which is followed by an article encouraging women’s participation in politics and the public sphere (“La Femme tunisienne et la vie publique,” Mar. 1939, 3). This distancing of events allowed *Leïla* to be considered non-threatening and pass by colonial censors. On the other hand, the weekly newspaper of the second series reflects a need for more timely news as Tunisian-run periodicals disappeared under Vichy repression.

Gone are the distinctive cover, glossy paper, drawings, paintings, photographs, and the sophisticated style. Gone also are the women editors and contributors and the overall theme of women’s emancipation. Printed on newsprint in a 30 x 45 cm format, the editors reduce the second series to eight pages from the twenty-four pages of the first series, and then to four pages after the eighth issue in February 1941. The title, *Leïla: Hebdomadaire Tunisien Indépendant*, suggests a new orientation that the first editorial explains (“Leïla vous parle,” 1 Dec. 1940, 1). Whereas the first editorial of the first series addresses only women using the French feminine form *lectrices*, the first editorial of the second series addresses a general audience (*lecteurs*). The editor states that the change to a weekly newspaper allows a greater contact with *Leïla*’s reading public, which has

requested more cultural news. This statement is misleading and shows, rather, the editor's attempt to impose order on a situation that is beyond Tunisians' control.

This shift in focus is, in part, due to hard times because survival for all Tunisians took precedence over the debate on women's role in society. However, especially after the Armistice and the arrival of a Vichy General Resident (Admiral Jean-Pierre Esteva²³) in 1940, I suggest that, in addition, changes in French attitudes forced Tunisians to alter strategies. The French no longer appeared interested in Muslim women because the subject of women's emancipation was drowned in the ideology of motherhood under the Vichy regime.²⁴ Rather, an aggressive attack came at the cultural level requiring a response from Tunisians. Morgan Corriou refers to a French "machine de guerre culturelle" that included the control and use of the cinema and radio for mass propaganda purposes and to impose French culture, in order to bind subjects of the Empire to the center (*Les Français* 265). She notes the creation of a service of information which "...place définitivement une partie de la vie culturelle, celle qui est la plus dépendante des grands medias d'information, aux impératifs de la propagande" (346). Culture served French propaganda, creating an illusion of continuity, and thus affirming French power. In addition, culture served to make inhabitants of the Protectorate forget their problems

²³ Admiral Jean-Pierre Esteva (1880-19..) replaced General Resident Marcel Peyrouton in July 1940, having no diplomatic experience. During World War II, he served as commander-in-chief of the French fleet in the Mediterranean. Corriou comments: "Célibataire, chrétien exalté, austère et insipide, l'amiral Esteva semble bien être, dans la France de Vichy, l'homme de la situation" (367).

²⁴ For example, French texts concerning Tunisian women reflect earlier debates (from 1924, 1929, 1930) on women's emancipation (see Chapter 3), however, I have had difficulty in locating texts from the war years. True, Mahmoud Aslan's *Les Yeux noirs de Leïla* was published in 1940, however, its publication had been announced in 1933 and was consequently long overdue. See Chapter 5 (282-285) for a discussion of Mahmoud Zarrouk's critical article about Zarrouk's novel. Furthermore, an examination of *Afrique Littéraire* (1940-1944), a French-run cultural periodical published in Tunis during World War II (which mentions *Leïla*) reveals no traces of colonial feminist discourse or literature containing negative representations of the Oriental/Muslim/Arab Woman.

(368). Corriou proposes: “L’absence de toute manifestation culturelle apparaîtrait en effet comme synonyme d’un amoindrissement de la France, tant politique et culture sont liées dans la Tunisie du protectorat. La domination culturelle est une marque de la prépondérance française.” Given the political importance of culture under Vichy, then, cultural subjects replaced the debate on women’s emancipation in *Leïla*.

Unlike the first series editorial that had a light tone and avoided formulating objectives, the second series editorial presents its goals: “Nous sentions depuis déjà longtemps la nécessité d’une publication hebdomadaire s’attachant à diffuser les choses de l’esprit.” The focus of the *Leïla* project widens to include currents of ideas and cultural activities that constitute intellectual life in Tunisian society. A nationalist subtext, which counters the required Vichy propaganda, appears with the use of the term *évolution*:

C’est que la Littérature et les Arts doivent occuper une grande place dans la vie d’un peuple en pleine évolution intellectuelle et sociale. Mais il est indispensable de diriger cette évolution, de lui assigner une ligne de conduite mûrement réfléchie pour que l’ambiance littéraire et artistique soit assainie, rajeunie et débarrassée des intrus qui s’ingénient à la conduire au gré de leurs seuls intérêts basés sur le matérialisme le plus sordide. (1)

The editor places culture at the center because it represents the intellectual life of Tunisian society and thus serves as resistance to the pressures of those exploiting the country, referred to as *les intrus*, that is, French colonizers. Tunisian art and literature are part of Tunisian identity and the *Leïla* team makes a point of defending that identity. Noting the *Leïla* staff’s five-year experience in publishing in the social and cultural domains, the editor states: “La vie intellectuelle en Tunisie a besoin de guides avertis n’ayant en vue que le relèvement du pays dans cet important domaine qui — cela va sans dire — doit primer tous les autres.” The *guides avertis* are critics who have the

opportunity to develop a literary and cultural criticism by honing their skills within *Leïla's* pages. These critics serve the Nation, referred to in the phrase *le relèvement du pays*, and theorize and encourage a national literature, theater, and music. Although women's emancipation may fall by the wayside in the weekly newspaper, the shift to theoretical criticism serves to write and define the Nation by Tunisians themselves, transmitting the message of national consciousness despite heavy repression.

Thus, the second series emphasizes theater, radio, music, and literary awards. Although articles on these subjects appear in the first series, a shift toward the arts in the public sphere occurs as literature takes a back seat to entertainment (*divertissement*). In the first issue, cultural articles are scattered throughout the newspaper. In "Le Théâtre," S. Ridha defines, defends, and critiques a Tunisian theater whose creation dates from 1908 (4). A second article describes a historical play, "Omar Ibnou Abdel Aziz" (6), that introduces the new season at the Municipal Theater. Beginning in the second issue, such articles are grouped in a section titled "Divertissements divers," sandwiched into the middle of the newspaper. *Leïla* bases its reputation, in part, on its critical reviews in this section. Whereas the first issue of the first series praises Chafia Rochdi, the main singer of the Rachidia, profusely, "Radio: Aux Ecoutes" (4) in the first issue of the second series attacks the Rachidia's singer: "Sa principale vedette [Chafia Rochdi], déjà bien débordée par d'incessants abus de ses médiocres talents, revient avec un débit haletant, déverser à qui veut l'entendre, un flot de fadeurs." The author, "L'Auditeur," also makes suggestions for radio announcers on behalf of the Tunisian radio audience: "Sachez que vous parlez à un public qui lit les journaux d'où son bannis les très nombreuses fleurs de rhétorique dont vous émaillez votre noble style." The theorizing of a national music is

integrally related to the radio, an important new technology in the Protectorate and in *Leïla*.

Creative writing finds a place in a regular column, "Le conte de *Leïla*." The first story, "Les Trois Khibar" (2), is typical of the series. It presents a folkloric tale that takes place in a distant, pre-Protectorate Arab past. In this story, three sons are informed upon their father's death that only two of them will inherit. They must discover which brother is excluded. Women's presence is reduced to an invisible (and unfaithful) mother. This column represents a closing of the ranks within patriarchy as economic survival becomes difficult. The male gaze dominates and the authoritative patriarchal male voice of the author, "Le Vieux Conteur," leaves women silent in the telling, nearly absent.

Whereas poetry was highlighted in the first series and illustrated with artwork, poems are sandwiched in among miscellaneous subjects in only eight issues of the second series. On the last page of the first issue, "Les Feuilles" (8), an anonymous poem, appears. Containing four verses of 16, 8, 4, and 12 lines, the poem is in alexandrines accompanied by an ABAB rime pattern common to much of the poetry in the first series and similar to the first poem of the first issue of the first series, "Les Ombres." However, although we find romantic themes of nature and the seasons, an emphasis on decline and death in nature suggests a malaise which other poems of the second series express. This malaise coincides with World War II and worsening conditions in Tunisia.

In addition, the newspaper format invited direct colonial censorship. The problem of how to pass by censors forced Zarrouk and his editors to curry favor with articles such as "A l'Aube d'une vie nouvelle" (Zarrouk 1). This article promotes the Vichy motto, "Travail, famille, patrie": "Il faut faire le tour de ces concepts, pénétrer leurs immenses

richesses, découvrir leurs beautés, avec la même curiosité aimante que nous mettons à mieux connaître un être cher pour le chérir davantage.” However, this tactic of currying favor was only partially effective. A 15-line blank spot at the end of a current events article, “L’Egypte et la guerre,” stands out, especially as space is precious and every centimeter contains articles or advertising. The author maintains a neutral position on the war between London on one side and Berlin and Rome on the other. A suggestion that Egypt would be better off free of British colonization is the only visible anti-colonial subtext that can be squeezed in. The author notes that the Egyptian government would probably remain neutral faced with an Italian invasion...and then the censor steps in. Newspaper editors left these blanks to signal censorship to readers. As in a crossword puzzle, this technique forced readers to fill in the blanks and reflect on the possibilities of the intentions of the author.²⁵ The frequent empty spaces appearing in the second series leave no doubt that the practice was intentional.

Two short articles complete the first page, one about a new legal service created for *Leila* readers, and another that complains about the illicit increase in the price of shoes. The articles of the first page reflect the political, legal, and economic problems that override the debate on women’s emancipation. On the second page, continuing this line of thought, “La Bedouine dans l’économie du pays” appears to address women’s status, but instead discusses economy. The “paysanne” becomes a metonym for “la paysannerie” and hence an economic class, which is also a feminine noun in French that

²⁵ An early example in the French-language press can be found in *Tunisia* (a Tunisian Jewish newspaper, 1914-1919), which used not only blank spaces, but occasionally stated within blanks: “Passage supprimé par le service du visa de presse” (24 Feb. 1916) or “Article censuré” (20 May 1917). *L’Avenir Social* (French Socialist newspaper in Tunisia, 1919-1921) also made use of this technique (30 Mar. 1919, 6 Apr. 1919, etc.).

is found in the article: “Des circonstances inattendues attirent les regards sur la situation de la paysanne tunisienne, “la bédouine” et par ricochet sur la paysannerie en général” (2). “Elle” signifies class rather than sex as the author describes how the peasant class that once was part of artisan production is reduced to mendacity, which in turn affects small businesses. The author also makes it clear that the reduction of the peasant class is not the fault of peasants as he makes a “before and after” argument, recalling a time when people could live adequately in rural regions. Although not directly naming colonization, the anti-colonial critique could not be ignored by contemporary readers. There is no need to elaborate, as readers have a local knowledge that provides the key to reading between the lines: “Les causes sont connues, trop même.” A critique of colonial administrative practices creeps in: “Que l’Autorité supérieure recrute des compétences pour leur demander leur avis en écartant tous ceux qui ont toujours cru que pour réussir il faut plaire.” According to this article, Tunisians can make a difference by supporting each other. This article asserts that Tunisians no longer buy locally produced goods, preferring European goods and styles, resulting in the isolation of the rural population:

Tout le monde est intéressé au relèvement de l’artisanat et du petit commerce. Mais il ne suffit pas de produire des photogravures représentant des “beradei” [saddlemakers] confectionnant des “berdaa” [saddles] sans songer à ceux qui jadis les leur achetaient et qui ont cessé de leur rendre visite.

This is an example of creating a national consciousness that includes all classes. This article calls for Tunisians to support the rural poor financially by buying locally.

An article on the last page, “La Crise de la Lingerie” (8), makes a similar argument. Because of the reduced number of consumer items in the marketplace, the

author suggests returning to the growing and production of linen as a cottage industry, which will create jobs, provided Tunisians buy from the local market. The author of “Les Chaouchis” (8) argues for raising a specific breed of sheep that produces the wool required for chéchia production (men’s felt hats) to avoid importing wool and to create jobs. And another article, “Les vers à soie” (5), proposes the establishment of a silk industry and encourages the planting of mulberry trees to sustain the raising of silk worms.

A short article, “De l’Economie Nouvelle: Le Travail à la tâche” (3), adopts a pedagogical tone to lecture on professional conscience and production. However, the concluding remarks reveal the intentions of the author: “Un salaire minimum augmenté d’une prime variable de rendement, pourront en attendant l’évolution sociale qui s’impose aujourd’hui, améliorer sensiblement la production économique et contribuer au bien-être général.” On behalf of Tunisians, the author demands a guaranteed minimum wage. This demand must be couched in other declarations to get by the censor.²⁶

“En poursuivant sa mission éducatrice, *Leïla* a décidé d’ouvrir cette rubrique destiné aux travailleurs de la terre,” states an announcement (“Le Retour à la terre,” 2). In an effort to expand national consciousness and community, the editors of *Leïla* intend to address the needs of Tunisian farmers. This also ties in with the new economic theme of the newspaper. “Ceux de la terre” by Rachid (2) counsels farmers in their selection of grains to plant, and gives practical advice for obtaining funds. Another article addresses the problem of water for the rural population (“Paysannat et Hydraulique”). Quoting *La Tunisie Française* (a right-wing colonial newspaper) on studies about the presence of

²⁶ Such demands on the colonial administration during WWII result in direct censorship as in the second part of Zarrouk’s article, “A l’Aube d’une vie nouvelle, II,” (7 Dec. 40, 3).

underground water in Tunisia, the article serves to express the needs of Tunisian farmers to the colonial administration: “Nous osons espérer qu’avec M. Gosselin [new director of public works] le problème de l’Hydraulique sera résolu” (7). Thus, as previous French-language Tunisian newspapers have done, the *Leïla* team attempts to inform the French colonial government of the needs and demands of the colonized, making use of French as a political tool.

Indeed, *Leïla* exists in a dialogic situation. Spellings of names are unstable resulting in multiple spellings of a name that represents one person (Ali or Aly Ben Salem, Senoussi or Snoussi). These are more than just typographical errors. The reader notices slippage in the language, where French dominates, but Arabic makes its presence felt. It is clear to Tunisians that their names in Arabic are written in only one manner, but the multiple spellings in French suggest a resistance to the imposition of the dominant language of the colonizer. The problem of the use of the French language crops up in “Réflexions anodines: Civilités” (3) by M. Rafik. As noted by Ashcroft et al., control of language is the prerogative of imperial power as language contributes to hierarchal structures by defining conceptions of “truth” and “order” (7). To counter this, the colonized must appropriate the language of domination (10). M. Rafik defends the appropriation of French to Tunisian ways under guise of a discussion about politeness:

... les Tunisiens se tutoient entre eux. Et l’usage du tutoiement est général quelle que soit la personne à laquelle on s’adresse, le mot “vous” restant uniquement réservé au pluriel. Cela ne signifie pas que les Tunisiens soient mal éduqués ou impolis. C’est la règle qui veut que l’on dise “tu” à une seule personne, et “vous” à plusieurs personnes.

For the author, the use of language is attached to the country where it is spoken. He does not criticize the French, however, he defends forms of Tunisian politeness. The

underlying tensions of polyglossia surface,²⁷ where the “invisible” language of the colonized (Arabic) makes its presence felt by dictating forms of polite address in the language of the colonizer and thus affecting usage.

The last article on the last page, “Mode ou pas mode” by “Jamila,”²⁸ gives the reader an idea of the extent of women’s participation in the second series. Jamila addresses women, “Mes chères amies,” on a personal level using a condescending manner that borders on the chatty: “La Mode, mes bonnes petites amies, est à la fois un mal et un bien.” This writer wants to abolish makeup: “Dites-vous bien aussi qu’un visage maquillé ne saurait être propre, puisqu’il est barbouillé.” Unlike Radhia in the magazine’s first issue, who maintains that women do not make themselves beautiful for men and thus displaces men in the patriarchal hierarchy, Jamila defends patriarchy by insisting that the male gaze determines beauty: “La femme est belle aux yeux de celui qui l’aime. Et il n’est pas de femmes si laides soient-elles qui n’aient des adorateurs.” In later issues she acknowledges or answers letters, creating a link to readership that was lost when “Leïla répond” disappeared after the January 1938 issue of the first series. However, the triteness of Jamila’s column, which appears in seventeen of the twenty issues of the second series, negates any real communication. This appears to be an attempt to satisfy the established female readership, but serves as a space-filler instead, a vestige of the first series.

²⁷ Bakhtin considers polyglossia, that is, the presence of two or more languages in one culture, fruitful in literary writing because languages animate one another, thus expanding creativity (65). A novel discussed in *Leïla* (May 1940, 15), Mahmoud Aslan’s *Les Yeux noirs de Leïla* (1940), is an interesting example of polyglossia in Tunisia. Although written in French, the Tunisian forms of politeness sound stilted and are a direct translation from Arabic. Aslan creates a Tunisian world that is separate from the French colony and yet affected by it.

²⁸ This is not Jamila Malki who contributed an article, “Solution pratique” (Mar. 1938, 4), to *Leïla*.

Neglect of women readers signals a closing of the public sphere to Tunisian women in general. Articles on miscellaneous subjects target a male readership, such as an article on Scouting (“Si Nous parlions un peu de...Scoutisme,” 6), and the sports section that highlights soccer (“Leïla et les Sports: Notre point de vue,” 5; “Echos sportif,” 7). Readers expecting information on how women view sports or their entry into the sports domain in “Leïla et les Sports” are disappointed. Such articles exclude women: “En Tunisie, où le Sport en général et le Football-Association en particulier attirent le grand public, ...” (5). Here “le grand public” refers strictly to men, as sporting events such as soccer matches were a male domain closed to Tunisian women. Indeed, the title of the article represents the extent of change in the second series. Whereas the use of the name “Leïla” in the first series represents the Tunisian woman and includes the Tunisian man, in the second series “Leïla” represents the newspaper project that targets men and only incidentally includes women. The editors link “Leïla” to the male public sphere, emptying the name of meaning. Thus, they detach women from article subjects resulting in titles such as “Leïla et les Sports,” which has nothing to do with the “Leïla” of the first series, that is, the Tunisian woman.

If any doubt exists about the position of *Leïla* on women’s emancipation, an unsigned article, “Sans Titre” (3) puts all doubts to rest. This article is a series of seven short subjects that reflect Vichy propaganda present in the general press. Promoting an ideology of motherhood found in right-wing and Fascist discourses of the period,²⁹ the author states:

²⁹ For a discussion of the ideology of motherhood and women under Fascism in Europe, see, for example, *Women, Gender and Fascism in Europe, 1919-1945* (Kevin Passmore, ed., 2003).

Le retour de la femme au foyer apparaîtra à certaines affranchies comme le début d'une époque de régression sociale...Le travail extérieur et son corollaire le célibat, en donnant à la femme l'illusion de l'indépendance économique et de la délivrance des liens du mariage, n'ont engendré, en réalité, que des conceptions erronées des véritables desseins de la nature. Le retour de la femme au foyer est simplement un retour au bon sens. (3)

Men define women as wife, mother, and companion to men within the private sphere of the home. In this view, there can be no mixing of private and public lives and women are treated as separate beings from men, not as part of a common humanity. This view allows for a different set of rules for women, thus, working women must necessarily be unmarried, although working men can be married. An underlying assumption that women want to escape marriage suggests that the author ignores the articles by women in the first series. The author dictates terms, and the forum that the first series opened disappears. This situation mirrors circumstances in France, where, under the Vichy government, free feminist movements disappeared and women became the *ange du foyer* who served as the base for the new motto of *Famille, Travail, Patrie* (P. Smith 251). Reflecting ideologies of the period, the door that was opened a crack for women in the first series closes with a slam in the second series.

Whereas a lively debate on women's emancipation takes place in the first issue between Radhia and Rachad, with others contributing, in the first issue of the second series the debate is reduced to a fifteen-line article (130 words) on the last page, in "De la décence" (8). The first paragraph summarizes Radhia's argument that women must be free to circulate without the nuisance of predatory males. However, this idea is expressed from a male point of view, with male demands on women's dress and behavior following:

Mais pour que nos femmes, nos soeurs, nos filles puissent circuler, etc..., il est bon qu'elles soient correctement vêtues, qu'elles observent la décence désirable et que rien dans leur attitude ou leur démarche n'inspire à certains individus ... les instincts dont il est question plus haut ["certains instincts que l'on n'a pas besoin de définir"].

Not only must women conduct themselves decently, but they become responsible for not provoking base behavior in men. In the concluding paragraph, a patriarchal policing voice puts full responsibility on women: "Pour que la première partie de l'exposé soit appliquée à la lettre [women circulating], il faut absolument que la deuxième partie du même exposé soit entièrement remplie [women's control over their public behavior]." The construction of the sentence puts women's good public behavior (that conforms to male standards) first, as the precondition for men's improved public behavior. The words *absolument* and *entièrement* emphasize this precondition as non-negotiable.

Conclusion

As noted at the beginning of this chapter, Radhia, who represents young Tunisian women, delivers a knock-out punch to Rachad, who represents young Tunisian men, in the first issue of the first series. When women get into the fray and speak for themselves a female hidden transcript comes to life, demonstrating border thinking and a willingness to negotiate creative solutions. These views do not threaten the national movement, but are highly critical of men's behavior in the street. The overlapping of private and public spheres, and male anxiety about this, surfaces with the effect that men want to be in the center and dominate. Raouf demonstrates male anxiety about women's power in the home, and being left out.

However, with the passage of time and a worsening of the political and economic climate of World War II, nationalists win the battle and contain the Tunisian woman.

While contributing to the formation of national consciousness, the second series emphasizes concrete solutions to economic and social problems while speaking in the name of Tunisians in order to voice their demands. A critical aspect serves to encourage concrete improvements, especially in the cultural domain where a national literature, theater, and music are theorized. This is where border thinking takes place, if somewhat curtailed. However, many suggestions appear superficial because Tunisians are unable to deal with political problems at the base, which can be seen in a tug of war over control of cultural production in the weekly newspaper. More importantly, absent is the forum of debate that includes men and women from across ideological lines found in the first series. Being defined by historical parameters, *Leila* represents what is possible during the period. A consideration of this periodical in its historical context in Chapter 2 reveals to what extent Tunisians were able to resist colonialism, advance national consciousness, and write the Nation.

Chapter 2
The Colonial Yoke and Hard Times:
Production Challenges for Mahmoud Zarrouk

Introduction: Zarrouk Speaks

“*La critique est aisée...*” retorted Mahmoud Zarrouk, in the second issue’s editorial (Feb. 1937, 1). The founder of *Leïla* made his first appearance in writing to defend his project, emphasizing the need for a women’s periodical and *Leïla*’s encouraging reception: “Rarement, la nécessité d’un périodique comme le nôtre s’est faite aussi expressément sentir. Et rarement une revue a été aussi chaleureusement accueillie.” He then replied to two critiques, one financial, suggesting discontent with the high price of the magazine, and the other political, indicating criticism for lack of an agenda with political and nationalist objectives. This text hints at the expectations of readers and problems of the Tunisian print culture that Zarrouk and his editors navigated. Whereas the first editorial, “*Leïla vous parle,*” is signed “*Leïla,*” Zarrouk’s signed editorial shows by its combativeness that *Leïla* was his creation and that he participated directly in *Leïla*’s production.

Considering the times, the reader may wonder whether Zarrouk planned for women to assume a new role in the public sphere of the periodical, or whether women were simply an object of discussion within a wider nationalist debate. Scholars view women’s presence in the nationalist struggle during the colonial period in different ways. Souad Chater, a Tunisian historian writing on the women’s movement, describes women’s emancipation during this period as a taboo subject for men. According to her, the possibility of dissension in the ranks of the nationalist movement due to controversy over change in women’s status caused nationalist leaders to hesitate and to attempt to

control women's participation and activities. On the other hand, some Tunisian historians, such as Souad Bakalti and Emna Ben Miled, propose that women participated in the nationalist movement but that historiography has since forgotten them. Although these views may appear antithetical, they are two aspects of the problem of male domination of women's emancipation. A study of *Leïla* shows that Chater, Bakalti, and Ben Miled are right because the first series was both nationalist and feminist, while the second series turned away from women. This periodical subordinated women's emancipation to the nationalist movement, thus confirming Chater's view of the domination of the nationalist discourse attempting to control women. And yet, the first series of *Leïla* opened upon a border zone that has been overlooked by researchers, which reflects the gendering of history referred to by Bakalti and Ben Miled. In *Leïla*, women voiced their opinions, making their presence known, however, beyond this, I suggest that the *Leïla* project attempted something unheard of—a writing of the Independent Nation that included women's full participation—making it worthy of closer study.

As we have seen in the preceding chapter, *Leïla* went through changes from the first to second series due to pressures from a repressive colonial situation and the advent of World War II. Battling production difficulties, Mahmoud Zarrouk kept *Leïla* in print until July 1941. This chapter focuses on the problems that Zarrouk faced: the search for an editorial team and contributors that included women, the creation of a readership of women as well as men, and numerous financial difficulties. Other production difficulties ensued, such as heavy French censorship, and paper and printing supply shortages. I argue that Zarrouk contributed to an editorial policy with clear goals (despite his insistence to the contrary) through his articles and by his choice of editors to form a

“team.” I suggest that an examination of the historical context in which Zarrouk worked reveals what was possible and what was not, and allows us to appreciate the middle ground explored in the *Leïla* forum, where boundaries were tested and border thinking surfaced timidly—and then flowered.

Zarrouk and his “Jeune Equipe”

Mahmoud Zarrouk’s youth and training did not suggest that he would found and direct a periodical. Zarrouk (1901-1958) was from an established, well-to-do family that had been connected to the beylical court. He and his family lived in Sidi-Bou-Saïd, a small, coastal town that is now a suburb of Tunis. He attended Sadiki College (a model secondary school founded in 1876), where he knew Habib Bourguiba,¹ and then worked in an administrative job at the Ministry of Justice. Zarrouk came into confrontation with the French colonial administration when his French wife left with his son, Hédi. Pressured to accept a divorce in which his wife had custody of their son, Zarrouk refused, then lost his job, forcing him to acquiesce.² One day, while sitting at the beach, he had the idea for a monthly Tunisian women’s magazine (Fatma Zarrouk, interview 27 Mar. 2007). In addition to requiring a job, he saw the need for such a periodical as none existed, making it a matter of principle as well as a commercial venture (Ahmed Zarrouk, interview 15 Feb. 2005).

¹ Habib Bourguiba (1903-2000) was a lawyer and cofounder of the Neo-Destour Party in 1934, the first prime minister in 1956, then president from 1958-1987. He was particularly criticized for his willingness to compromise and work with the French by opposition leaders (Perkins xi).

² Hédi Zarrouk (renamed Maurice Laury-Boucher, 1927-2006) describes his childhood and youth with his French mother and French step-father in Tunis in *La Maison sur la colline* (2005). Mahmoud Zarrouk’s loss is alluded to in a column of responses to readers’ letters in *Leïla*: “Hedia—Notre Directeur est très touché de votre gentille lettre. En effet il est le grand ami des petits enfants, n’est-il pas séparé injustement de son cher petit ?” (*Leïla*, “Leïla répond,” Mar. 1937, 24). Note the feminine form, Hédia, of Hédi, which suggests a message in a bottle cast to sea for Mahmoud’s son.

The first editorial, “Notre programme: à nos chères lectrices” (Dec. 1936, 1), announces a “jeune équipe” that was literally young. Zarrouk recruited his team and contributors from the community around him and did not hesitate to turn to secondary school students for their enthusiasm and youthful views. Artist Jallal Ben Abdallah created the second issue’s (Feb. 1937) cover at the age of sixteen (conversation, 12 Jan. 2006). It was more difficult to find educated women. Zarrouk’s efforts were hampered by a lack of educated Tunisian women able to express themselves on a professional level in French. Women’s participation was also affected by a fear of drawing the attention of French authorities and by the pressures of a society where everyone knew, or knew of, everyone else. Saïda Sahly, who contributed articles to six issues, is identified as an “élève au Lycée Armand-Fallières” (now the “Lycée de la rue de Russie”) (June 1938, 2). Jamila Malki contributed one article (“Solution Pratique,” Mar. 1938, 4) when she was a seventeen-year-old student at the Ecole Paul Cambon (now the “Lycée de la rue de Marseille”).³ Saïda Foudhaily tells how her father, an acquaintance of Zarrouk, told her to write two articles for *Leïla*, suggesting that Zarrouk contacted male friends who had daughters (Fallali, conversations, April 2007).

Thus, Zarrouk not only sought a female readership, but actively encouraged women’s participation as well. Fifteen Tunisian women (23% of Tunisian/Arab contributors) and seven French women (27% of French contributors) wrote articles in the first series. Zarrouk’s efforts to bring women into the public sphere of the periodical are

³ Jamila Malki (1921-2006) attended the Rue de Russie girls’ school and obtained the French baccalauréat at the Ecole Paul Cambon. She traveled several times to France where her brother lived in Marseille before marrying in 1942. In the 1960s, she organized and served as director of the first state-run *crèche* or day-care center. She later opened a boutique of art objects on Rue d’Alger in Tunis. (Ben Arfa, telephone conversation).

one of his keys to success. To the best of my knowledge he can be credited with a first in Tunisian journalism, for one of *Leïla*'s two editors is the first Tunisian woman editor. She is identified as "Mlle. Radhia" in the first four issues, and finally her full name, Radhia Daly, appears in a short article in the fifth issue. The article, "Du Nouveau à 'Leïla'," announces a reorganization: "Nos lectrices apprendront avec plaisir que la collaboration féminine à notre Revue va prendre dès notre prochain numéro, une tournure active et officielle" (Sept. 1937, 23). Zarrouk was willing to perform a major overhaul of his organization and step back into the shadows in order to bring women onto the team, despite social constraints and the lack of educated women.

The most remarkable aspect of this announcement is that Dr. Tewhida Ben Cheikh⁴ would become the director of *Leïla* and Radhia Daly would become the chief editor. Based on this article, scholars and journalists have assumed that Ben Cheikh did take over that position for the first series of the periodical.⁵ Ultimately, however, Ben

⁴ Tewhida Ben Cheikh (1909-present) attended the Ecole de la rue du Pacha through secondary school, then the lycée Armand Faillières (now the Lycée de la rue de Russie) where she obtained the baccalauréat in 1927. Dr. Emile Burnet (director of the Pasteur Institute in Tunis) and his wife helped her attend medical school in Paris. The exceptional nature of the aid she received confirms the rule that higher education for Tunisian women was extremely difficult to obtain, especially abroad. Upon her return to Tunis in 1936, she worked privately, as a general practitioner, and eventually specialized in gynecology because she drew numerous female clients. (Blili, 23-27).

⁵ Souad Bakalti writes: "A partir de septembre 1937, la direction de la revue fut assurée par Tewhida Ben Cheikh (première femme médecin). Elle signait ses articles sous le pseudonyme "Leïla" et consacra aux questions de santé une rubrique intitulée "la doctoresse vous parle" (1996, 103). Leïla Blili reports the same information (19, 30), and Amel Sammoud makes similar statements, quoting Béchir Mouldi's conference paper "L'histoire du journalisme féministe en Tunisie," (Sousse, 8 Dec. 1998). In his January 6, 2006 newspaper article, Ahmed Younès follows suit.

Dr. Ben Cheikh recently refuted allegations that she had participated in *Leïla* when she was interviewed for a newspaper article, "Rencontre avec Tewhida Ben Cheikh, première femme médecin" (*Es-Sabah*, 22 Dec. 2005, 6) by Saïda Bouhlel. The article states: "Elle ne se rappelle pas du tout qu'elle a écrit dans le journal *Leïla* ou qu'elle a collaboré. Quant à son fils Fayçal il a dit qu'il n'avait jamais entendu sa mère parler de ses contributions dans le journal *Leïla*." The article suggests that, at the age of 99, Dr. Ben Cheikh could not answer all questions. Her daughter confirmed that her mother's memory was fading during a telephone conversation with me in 2005. It is possible that Dr. Ben Cheikh would never have spoken of *Leïla* to her family, as the periodical fell into oblivion when publication ceased and Tunisians faced the economic hardships of World War II. She explained that "[...] elle n'a pas appartenu à des

Cheikh refused while Daly accepted. Two Tunisian women at the head of a periodical would have been an unprecedented event in the male-dominated Tunisian press, and the renown of Tewhida Ben Cheikh, first woman medical doctor of the Maghreb, would have brought extensive recognition to *Leïla*. An article, "Une Doctoresse tunisienne," celebrating Ben Cheikh and her achievement had already appeared prior to this in the third issue (Mar. 1937, 18). This article shows that the *Leïla* team viewed Ben Cheikh as a symbol of women's emancipation: "En elle, nous saluons non seulement la brillante doctoresse, mais aussi le symbole de l'évolution de la femme musulmane, telle que nous la comprenons et telle que nous la voudrions qu'elle se fasse." Here the editorial team (represented by the signature "Leïla") demonstrates a will to create a New Muslim Woman, referred to as the evolving "femme musulmane." Not only does the article focus on her education, but it emphasizes Ben Cheikh's completion of a diploma and her future professional life in Tunisia. Referring to Ben Cheikh's brilliant performance on the doctoral exams in Paris and her return to "son pays natal," the article implies that Ben Cheikh will put her studies to work to serve her country in a nurturing role to help Tunisian women. The article links her to her family only indirectly, focusing rather on individual effort: "Notre nouvelle doctoresse appartient d'ailleurs à une famille qui s'est toujours distinguée par le goût de l'instruction, aussi bien chez les femmes que chez les hommes." The editors thus insist upon the importance of families that encourage education for women, however, they do not evoke an ideology of motherhood that would tie Ben Cheikh down to the family as a better household manager and mother. Her

mouvements politiques et qu'elle a choisi d'être loin de la politique." It is possible that Dr. Ben Cheikh refused to be the director of *Leïla* because she viewed it in a political light.

patriotic duty is rather to serve the “pays” as a doctor, not as a mother of children of the Nation.

After her refusal to become director of *Leïla*, no mention of Ben Cheikh can be found after the fifth issue. Considering her reputation, the *Leïla* staff would certainly have wanted to publicize her presence and contributions, thus giving their periodical an edge over competitors and attracting readers. It is probable that she discussed plans for the periodical with Mahmoud Zarrouk or someone connected to the periodical in 1937 considering the fifth issue’s triumphant announcement about the periodical’s new director, Tewhida Ben Cheikh. She appears to have written an unsigned medical article (“La Doctoresse vous parle” May 1937, 7) that did not become a regular column, contrary to Souad Bakalti’s suggestion.⁶ On the other hand, her presence as an early model for the New Muslim Woman—who is educated, present in the public sphere, and exercises a profession to contribute to the New Nation—makes Tewhida Ben Cheikh an important figure in *Leïla*. The editors demonstrate border thinking because they go beyond limits set by nationalists’ early articles on the Tunisian woman’s new role.⁷

Although it is not certain that Zarrouk paid a staff, nevertheless, several people served as editors who organized the magazine. With the passage of time, and as publication became more and more difficult, the insistence upon the “jeune équipe” found in the first issue of the first series was repeated: “Ce qu’il faut, pour que *Leïla* résiste à tous les assauts, c’est une équipe de rédactrices et de rédacteurs dévoués et désintéressés ... Ce sont des collaboratrices et des collaborateurs d’action qu’il nous faut. Et cette équipe, on l’aura...” (“Leïla vous parle,” May 1940, 1). The insistence that the

⁶ Apparently, Dr. Ben Cheikh has simply forgotten this one article about women’s headaches.

⁷ See Chapter 4 (200-205) for Tahar Sfar’s and Mohamed Nomane’s contributions to a national feminism.

team will exist in the future (*on l'aura*) indicates problems in coordinating it in the present. In addition, an editorial committee in which women participate is referred to: "L'équipe féminine sera largement représentée au sein du Comité de Rédaction," however, once again the future tense is used. Thus, the production of *Leïla* had an organization behind it, or, with problems developing over time, a will to have an organization—undoubtedly Zarrowk's will. At the same time, the insistence upon a team of all contributors reinforced the notion that *Leïla* owed its existence to a communal effort that included readers, making this project part of the imagined community that contributed to national consciousness.

In fact, *Leïla* was a group project. Throughout the five years of publication over fifty articles are signed by "Leïla" in both the first and second series.⁸ Usually placed within quotation marks, this signature signals an editorial stance representing the editors—and Zarrowk. I include Zarrowk in the editorial stance because he is the director and common denominator of *Leïla*. His name appears on the first page of every issue, either as "Directeur-fondateur" in the first series, or as "Directeur-gérant" in the second series. The repeated use of "fondateur" suggests that the magazine was a project closer to his heart, for which he proclaimed his 'paternity,' and remained actively involved, while he distanced himself somewhat from the weekly newspaper on the edge of extinction. Indeed, for Zarrowk, *Leïla* was not simply a straight-forward periodical for women, as he considered himself the "directeur-fondateur d'un organe féministe, ..." ("Autour d'une fête," Mar. 1938, 17), that is, his project represented women and allowed for the

⁸ The editors make a clear difference between the "Leïla" signature of the editorial team, and any writer who might sign with the same name, by using "Mlle Leïla" for contributors.

expression of feminist voices. His preference for the first series is also reflected by the seventeen articles he signed under his own name in the first series, while he contributed only five signed articles in the second series.⁹ It is possible that Zarrouk wrote under the “Leïla” signature as well, given the numerous articles that appear. Although there is no concrete proof, one of Zarrouk’s articles, “Le Prix d’Honneur de la Poésie Arabe” (8 Feb. 1941, 1), is followed by “Le Prix des Lettres Arabes” (16 Mar. 1941, 2) under the “Leïla” signature. The second article might be his, as this subject is important for the newspaper.¹⁰

In addition to his efforts to recruit editors and contributors from his entourage, Zarrouk guided the *Leïla* project through his articles, which often concerned major topics found in the periodical. He promoted women’s entry into the social domain and hoped to see them organize orphanages in “Une Belle Œuvre à Réaliser: Pour les orphelines,” (Sept. 1937, 22) and in “Autour d’une fête” (Mar. 1938, 17). He contributed to the expansion of new roles for Tunisian women in the public sphere by encouraging women’s participation in political and nationalist activities and in resistance to colonialism in “La Femme tunisienne à l’action” (Dec. 1938, 15). He defended Arab and Tunisian culture that included the writing of a Tunisian national literature in his article, “Les Yeux noirs de Leïla” (May 1940, 15), and in “Le Prix d’Honneur de la Poésie Arabe” (8 Feb. 1941, 1). Above all, Zarrouk defended his project against criticism in “Leïla vous parle: La Critique est aisée,” (Feb. 1937, 1) and in “On réclame un programme” (Sept. 1940, 1), and against all odds in Tunisian print culture.

⁹ See the “Index of Writers” in the Appendices for a list of Zarrouk’s articles.

¹⁰ See Chapter 5 (267-296) for the importance of literature and prizes in the writing of the Nation in *Leïla*.

For the first two years of publication, the editorial team functioned relatively smoothly. Zarrouk headed the *Leïla* team as director. Radhia Daly served as editor for the first ten issues, working with fellow-editor Abdul-Méjid Chabby for the first five issues (Dec. 1936-Sept. 1937), and then she became the sole editor for the next five issues (Jan. 1938-Dec. 1938) when Chabby left and Guy-Louis Le Monnier, a French artist, stepped in as artistic director for seven issues (Jan. 1938-July 1939). Zarrouk's problems soon multiplied, however. In the September 1938 issue, it was announced that Abdul-Méjid Chabby, after a serious illness, would return *bientôt* ("Nos Echos," 11). *Bientôt* proved to be a year later, when Chabby became chief editor in August 1940. In the meantime, Zarrouk had difficulty finding editors, as the March and July 1939 issues are produced by Zarrouk and Le Monnier alone. Marking this slump, there is a reduction in the number of images.¹¹ Zarrouk and Le Monnier eliminated "revue illustrée de la femme" from the title suggesting problems with the search for and production of images and/or the cost of reproduction of images. A reduction in articles as well reflects organizational problems: with Daly and Chabby editing, *Leïla* contained 27 to 30 articles in 1937, 22 to 26 in 1938, but slumped to 15 articles in July 1939. The price increased to five francs, indicating that Zarrouk's difficulties did not concern only the recruitment of editors.

Zarrouk's tenacity to keep publishing *Leïla* was made possible by the steadfastness of Daly and Le Monnier, especially. Le Monnier, who lived in Sidi-Bou-

¹¹ The first issue (Dec. 1936) contained 18 images. From Feb. 1937 to Dec. 1938 issues contained from 12 to 18 images. In the first half of 1939 issues contained 7 to 10 images, however, in the second half, there were no images except for two repeated covers, one repeated illustration, and a couple of repeated ads. After the Aug. 1940 extravaganza (14 images), there was another slump, with a repeated cover, a repeated photo, and 2 repeated drawings. The second series newspapers contain only a sporadically repeated drawing by G.-L. Le Monnier to illustrate the "Divertissements Divers" pages, reflecting that times were tough.

Saïd, was a pillar of the periodical and contributed extensively, even before and after his commitment as artistic director. His work appears in fifteen issues of the first series: a dozen drawings and caricatures, nine poems, a short story, and eight articles with varied topics, ranging from art shows (“Les Expositions de peinture,” Mar. 1938, 13) to social and political issues (“Les Orphelins de Metlaoui,” Sept. 1937, 21), including an article with his views on the veil, “A Propos du voile: Celles qui ne se voilent pas!” (June 1938, 8). *Le Monnier* apparently carried enough weight in the Protectorate to be used as a



Fig. 2.1

LA CARAVANE DES PROTÉGÉS

shield against administrative censorship.¹² Certain caricatures are highly critical of French colonialism, such as “Evolution de la bourgeoisie Tunisienne à travers un demi-siècle,” (Sept. 1937, 19) discussed in Chapter 3 (179-181), and “La Caravane des

¹² Le Monnier ceased being artistic director when he accepted to direct a new art museum in Tunis (“Un nouveau musée à Tunis,” Aug. 1938, 12). He was Painter/Decorator for the Municipal Theater as well (“Les Expositions,” *Leila*, 24 Jan. 1941, 2).

protégés,” (Mar. 1937, 17, Fig. 2.1), reprinted in *L'Action Tunisienne* (30 July 1937), the only French-language Tunisian-run political newspaper in production in 1937.

After Le Monnier's departure, “Mlle. M. Aida” (possibly Aida Mamlouk), took over as editor in August 1939, editing five issues (Aug. 1939-May 1940), and brought energy to the production of *Leïla* as three issues appeared in a row (October, November, and December). The twenty-three articles in Aug. 1939 signal a comeback. However, a decline in the number of articles after the Aug. 1939 issue and the appearance of only one issue between the Dec. 1939 and Aug. 1940 issues—May 1940, Aida's last—indicates another slump. The return of Chabby as *rédacteur en chef* marks a new beginning, or so it would seem. Chabby did a good deal of the work himself, contributing four articles and a poem to the August 1940 issue. The hope for a new start can be seen in the number of images included, fourteen in all, and the increase in articles to twenty-three. However, a decline to fourteen articles in the final issue in Nov. 1940 combined with the disappearance of images coincided with increased pressures from World War II that took their toll on political and economic life in Tunis. The creation of a weekly newspaper appears to be a last-ditch attempt to keep *Leïla* alive. Although Zarrouk ran the newspaper without a recognized “team” (all mention of editors disappears), nonetheless a group of critics formed that promoted the coherent objectives of a group project, hence the term “team” remains appropriate.¹³

¹³The newspaper of the second series contained thirty articles, declining to seventeen at the end. The more numerous articles in the newspaper are due to the short subjects common to this type of periodical. See Chapter 5 for information on the *Leïla* critics of the second series.

Promises, Promises, Promises

Zarrouk intended *Leïla* to appear monthly. The editorial of the first issue states that *Leïla* is a monthly publication, “paraissant une fois par mois” (“Notre Programme: à nos chères lectrices,” Dec. 1936, 1), however, it appeared only about every third month in the first series.¹⁴ The *Leïla* editors did not hesitate to justify themselves and to point out the difficulties they faced to their readership: “C’est au prix de lourds sacrifices que nous avons fait de cette publication, une revue vivante, moderne, traitant de toutes les questions qui favorisent l’évolution du pays dans l’ordre et la sérénité” (“Au seuil de la 3^{me} année,” Mar. 1939, 13). The editors’ overriding motive, which makes sacrifices worthwhile, is *l’évolution du pays*, that is, the march toward the Independent Nation.

After the slumps in 1939 and 1940, the *Leïla* team again promised a monthly magazine, in an effort to make a comeback: “...à partir de ce numéro, *Leïla* paraîtra régulièrement tous les mois et sera distribuée et mise en vente le premier de chaque mois” (Aug. 1940, inside cover). However, a change in format to a smaller size because of economic restrictions forbodes ill. Indeed, the September 1940 issue was late:

En effet, la nouvelle réglementation de la distribution du gaz, nécessaire au fonctionnement de la linotypie, impose aux imprimeries une activité réduite et nous a surpris soudainement sans que nous ayons pu y remédier à temps. Nous avons, depuis, pris les dispositions nécessaires pour que le numéro prochain paraisse à la date voulue, c’est-à-dire, au début du mois de Ramadan.
 (“A nos LECTRICES et LECTEURS,” Sept. 1940, inside cover)

Zarrouk and his team were already apologizing after their fresh start in August for problems connected to rationing and disappearing necessities in the Protectorate.

¹⁴ After the first issue in December 1936, four issues were published in 1937, five in 1938, six in 1939, four in 1940, the last magazine appearing in November 1940. Issues appeared at a monthly interval only three times (February and March 1937, July and August 1939, August and September 1940). 1939 was a good year, with three of the six issues appearing in a row, October, November, and December.

Furthermore, to entice readers and to reassure them that *Leïla* would appear in a month, a summary of the September 1940 issue was included in the August 1940 issue (inside cover). However, this effort shows that Zarrouk had difficulty obtaining articles on a regular basis promised by writers. Of the seven titles listed, only one appears in the September 1940 issue. Part of the problem may have been that writers were most likely not remunerated financially, and thus Zarrouk depended upon their good will to work within deadlines.¹⁵

Zarrouks's Financial Challenges

Financial problems hounded Zarrouk. First of all, funding depended on sales and subscriptions: "... elle [*Leïla*] compte principalement sur votre concours pour la faire prospérer" (Dec. 1936, 1). Zarrouk was under pressure to publish *Leïla* on a regular basis, especially as it was his sole source of income (A. Zarrouk, interview, 15 Feb. 2005) and he was not funded by and did not represent an association or political party with contributing members:

Il nous revient que certains lecteurs et lectrices de *Leïla* prétendent que notre publication est le fruit d'une association de capitaux dont le chiffre serait assez important. Nous nous en voudrions de démentir cette assertion ... Mais ce que nous ne saurions passer sous silence, c'est cette contradiction si élégamment conciliée en la personne de notre directeur, M. Mahmoud Zarrouk, qui par ses qualités d'administrateur comme par ses capacités intellectuelles et son goût artistique, a su faire porter sur lui tous les suffrages des amis de *Leïla*. Après avoir mis au monde l'idée de notre publication, il a assuré la mise en œuvre de son idée d'une façon telle que nous serions des ingrats ou des insensibles si nous ne criions pas au miracle. ("Mise au point," Feb. 1937, 24)

¹⁵ André Demeerseman points out that journalism for Tunisians was not a financially rewarding business because of the limited reading public. He notes: "On conviendra que les intellectuels ne sont pas, en principe, des hommes fortunés; ... ils n'avaient d'autre ressource que leur dévouement à la chose publique" (*Soixante Ans* 9). Indeed, many male contributors to periodicals, including *Leïla*, had other sources of income, tending to be white collar professionals dedicated to the national struggle.

Signed “Les Amis de ‘Leïla’,” this short article inserted on the last page, defends the price of the periodical, but also defends Zarrouk, stating that *Leïla* is his creation and that he has made its publication possible. Mahmoud Aslan commended Zarrouk for his commitment to the *Leïla* project into which he invested his savings as well as his time, according to Aslan (“La Femme tunisienne et la vie intellectuelle,” June 1938, 7).

Secondly, *Leïla* cost 4 francs at the end of 1936. A comparison with other periodicals of the 1930s shows how expensive this is. A daily newspaper or a periodical in a newspaper format cost 30 centimes (100 centimes = 1 franc) while literary periodicals ranged from 75 centimes to one and a half francs.¹⁶ The price for a subscription indicates Zarrouk’s intentions: set at 50 francs per year, monthly issues would be less than 5 francs. However, averaging five issues annually, the subscriber paid double the price, 10 francs per issue. This relatively high price limited readership to the affluent.

Adding to financial difficulties, there was a problem of non-paying subscribers, as seen in the editorial of the January 1938 issue that named the ten Tunisians (the majority were city elites) who had paid their subscriptions, plus “les dames algériennes et françaises” (Jan. 38, 1). Again in December 1939, an article accuses non-paying subscribers of being parasites:

Leïla a ses parasites. Et elle les a en assez grand nombre, issus par-dessus le marché, de la meilleure société ! Ces parasites sont des abonnés qui reçoivent régulièrement la Revue, la parcourent et la conservent; car *Leïla* présentée sur du

¹⁶ For example, *La Jeunesse littéraire: organe des jeunes musulmans* (Oct. 1935-Oct. 1936) published a four- to six-page periodical for 30 centimes. A daily newspaper such as *Tunis-Soir* sold for 30 centimes. The French-dominated literary periodical, *Mirages* (1931-1933), with 40-50 pages, sold for 1 franc. *Tunis Littéraire et Artistique* (1934) cost 75 centimes, *Tunis Artistique et Littéraire* (1938) cost 1 franc, and the sixteen-page women’s periodical *Renâitre* (1939) sold for 1fr50.

beau papier, n'est pas bonne à jeter au panier. Ils ont souscrit des abonnements qu'ils refusent de payer. Or, un abonnement à *Leïla* n'est pas la mer à boire. ("Leïla et les parasites!" 17)

The writer expresses irritation for having to remind subscribers to pay, through the term "parasites" and the use of exclamation marks. Recruiting subscribers remained a persistent problem. The tone changed in the second series to a plea for help in advertisement form:

Lisez *Leïla*
Abonnez-Vous!
Faites-nous des abonnés! *Leïla* traite de tout
Diffusez-la autour de vous
(14 Dec. 1940, 3)

Here Zarrouk and his team call upon their readership to circulate the newspaper and ask readers to recruit new subscribers in order to keep it in production.

Off-setting subscription and sales difficulties, advertising appears to have kept the periodical afloat, and took on a patriotic flavor when a policy to buy locally was encouraged: "Soutenons ceux qui nous défendent, combattons ouvertement ceux qui nous attaquent. Aidez ceux qui nous aident. Adressez-vous, de préférence, à ceux qui nous confient leur publicité. Faites des abonnés" (Sept. 1937, 22). To buy from *Leïla*'s advertisers and to subscribe to *Leïla* is a contribution to the *Leïla* project, to the anti-colonial struggle, and consequently, to the New Nation. Admittedly dependant upon "la clientèle publicitaire," Zarrouk found new advertisers for every issue until the end of 1940, when the economic difficulties of the war period increased. The first issue contained 58 advertisements, ranging from restaurants to home furnishings. Following issues of the first series averaged 29 advertisements per issue, and the second series averaged twelve advertisements per issue.

The rise in the cost of labor and especially the 350% increase in the cost of paper added to financial problems: "Ce papier que nous achetions quand "Leïla" était à ses débuts, un franc dix centimes le kilo, nous le payons aujourd'hui à raison de trente-cinq francs le kilo" (May 1940, 1). The near disappearance of the French-controlled paper supply provoked this hefty hike as the international situation deteriorated. From 1939 to 1940, the supply of imported paper dropped 90% and continued to drop through 1943 (Bendana, *Revue* 339). Printers found it increasingly difficult to obtain ink and replace machines and equipment, which were imported. In such an unstable environment, it became a feat for Tunisians to publish, demonstrating the will of the colonized to participate in the print culture that contributed to the imagined community and to the building of the New Nation.

Although the production of *Leïla* required many hands and minds, Zarrouk's role in the survival of the periodical cannot be underestimated. As with other periodicals that showed longevity due to the dedication of one individual, Zarrouk played a nurturing role from the beginning to the end.¹⁷ He at first ran it out of his home in Sidi-Bou-Saïd, then the administrative office was moved into an office in "Le Colisée," a commercial building on the busy main street of Tunis, Ave. Jules Ferry (now Ave. Habib Bourguiba) from which it operated from Sept. 1937 to Nov. 1940. With the deepening economic crisis due to World War II, Zarrouk ran the second series out of his home again. Because of his persistence, *Leïla* met with success in terms of longevity and quantity compared to other periodicals. Encountering similar problems of production, 52% of Tunisian-run

¹⁷ For example, Ali Bach Hamba directed *Le Tunisien* (1907-1911), Arthur Pellegrin was behind *La Kahéna* (1929-1950), Armand Guibert directed *Mirages* (1931-1933), Mahmoud Aslan published *Le Petit Tunisois* (1934-1957), and Georges Albert-Astre nurtured *Afrique Littéraire* (1940-1944).

cultural and literary periodicals lasted less than a year and nearly 20% lasted no more than one to two years (Hassan 350). In 1939, Hédi Fayache published only four issues of the women's periodical, *Renâitre* (Hamdane 251), yet *Leïla* lasted for five years. Only a daily newspaper such as *La Voix du Tunisien* could attain up to 10,000 printings of each issue (329). Specialized periodicals had a more limited circulation: for example, *Renâitre* had 1000 printings of each issue and *Tunis Artistique et Littéraire* (1938) had only 500 (289). Printings of *Leïla*'s first series (1936-40) ranged from 700 to 1000 of each issue, and the second series (1941)—in a newspaper format—increased to 2000 printings of each issue.

Leïla's "Programme"

The formulaic title of the first editorial, "Notre programme: à nos chères lectrices" (Dec. 1936, 1) follows a tradition in Tunisian journalism in which a political agenda or objectives are set out in the first issue of a newspaper.¹⁸ However, the only objectives stated in the first issue are "la défense de la Tunisienne et pour son évolution sociale et intellectuelle." The writer states that the periodical will bring together and "harmonize" articles by contributors, suggesting a coherent editorial agenda guiding content. However a political agenda remains hidden, and only the "Notre Programme" whispers of the anti-colonial struggle of the past. The reader finds the general position of the *Leïla* team in the regular first-page column "Leïla vous parle," which appeared in twelve of the twenty issues of the first series, and in fifteen of the twenty issues of the

¹⁸This formula has several variations: "Notre Programme," *Le Tunisien* (7 Feb. 1907) ; "Nos Idées., Notre But," *La Tunisie Nouvelle* (3 Oct. 1920); "Notre Programme," *L'Echo de la Presse* (3 Feb. 1922); "Notre Programme," *Le Libéral* (29 Nov. 1924); "Déclaration," *L'Etendard Tunisien* (4 Jan. 1929); "Aspirations," *La Voix du Peuple* (11 Mar. 1933).

second series. Taking the place of a table of contents and suggesting a dialogue, this open letter to readers is an editorial in disguise, titled "Editorial" only once, in the Oct. 1939 issue. I propose that the *Leïla* team felt the need to disguise an expression of overall objectives, thus hiding their political objectives of promoting the Independent Nation, in order to navigate the colonial situation. This is suggested by the more frequent appearance of "Leïla vous parle" in the second series newspapers, when the dialogue of the forum disappeared, replaced by an attempt to address social and economic problems and to develop a cultural criticism that contributed to the writing of the New Nation. In the second issue of the first series, Zarrouk responds to criticism for the lack of stated objectives:

Nous avons pensé qu'il fallait agir d'abord, au lieu de perdre notre temps en discussions théoriques. Notre revue ne cherchera pas non plus à imposer un point de vue partial. La politique du coup de poing sur la table n'a jamais donné de bons résultats. Nous voulons agir par la persuasion et c'est la seule méthode efficace. ("Leïla vous parle: La critique est aisée..." Feb. 1937, 1)

Superficially, it would seem that the *Leïla* "programme" is to have no "programme." Taking a conciliatory stand that allows a forum to blossom, Zarrouk argues that *Leïla* is independent and impartial.

Standing behind this position, the *Leïla* editorial team maintains that the periodical is apolitical, repeating that they do not take sides in political parties (June 1938, 1; Dec. 1938, 1): "Nous sommes plus que jamais décidés à lutter pour les causes saines et justes, sans choir dans les basses polémiques de partis" (Mar. 1938, 1).

Nonetheless, it is clear to a discerning reader that concerns over the emancipation of the Tunisian woman coincide with the political programs of nationalist parties. In addition, the French authorities, forever on the lookout for nationalist subversion, should not be

underestimated. For example, *Leïla* drew the interest of Robert Montagne,¹⁹ a French sociologist and colonial administrator, in 1938. He recognized the importance of such a periodical in his article, “Une Revue féministe tunisienne en langue française,” which indicates that *Leïla* circulated and provoked debate among Tunisians, causing concern for French authorities. Montagne noted that:

... les collaborateurs masculins baignent dans un milieu social préoccupé surtout de politique, agité par la crise des Destours. On ne s'étonnera donc pas que nos jeunes Tunisiens, conscients de leurs responsabilités nationales cherchent non seulement à résoudre pour eux-mêmes et pour leurs sœurs la crise du mariage, mais aussi à rénover la société en donnant à la femme le sens de ses devoirs patriotiques... De part et d'autre, on est bien loin d'avoir une doctrine; des tendances diverses et souvent contradictoires se manifestent dans chaque camp. (96)

This contradicts the *Leïla* editors' insistence that the magazine is apolitical. Because of its independent nature, Montagne apparently saw this periodical as political, but not nationalist, although it reflected the crises and debates of the period.

As one of the most influential colonial administrators of the period, Montagne expressed views that demonstrate the obstacles that the colonized faced. He praised the *Leïla* team, but added a caustic comment: “Malgré ses allures très modernes et la correction absolue de langue française dont font preuve rédacteurs et rédactrices, *Leïla*

¹⁹ Robert Montagne (1892-1954), after attending the French Naval Academy, was sent to Morocco to work in the colonial administration. He learned Arabic there as well as research methods of direct observation. He did numerous studies on the social organization of Moroccan Berbers, including a doctoral thesis in 1930. Beginning in 1936, Montagne published political articles written for the decision makers of the French colonial administration, which discussed nationalist movements. Founder of the *Centre des Hautes Etudes d'Administration Musulmanes* in Paris in 1936, he became a member of the College of France in 1948. He showed no interest in the conditions under which *Leïla* was produced, and in fact, any mention of the colonial system is absent. His research activity contributed to the smooth functioning of the colonial administration. Valensi notes: “Mais sur aucun des sujets abordés—nationalisme arabe, mouvements de jeunesse, féminisme, etc.—Montagne ne fait appel aux intéressés; qui ont pourtant des représentants à Paris” (26). To allow the colonized to express an opinion or create information themselves would not be useful to colonial authorities. (Valensi, “Robert Montagne”).

In the card catalogue at the Bibliothèque Nationale de Tunis I found mention of Montagne's book with the same title as the article, published a year later in Paris. However I have been unable to locate it.

est bien une revue arabe" (96). He does not explain that it is Arab because of a focus on Tunisian art work or discussion of Tunisian social, political, and economic problems, but points to subscribers who do not pay and the irregular publication "à intervalles imprévisibles" (96). For Montagne, the term *arabe* has a negative connotation based on the stereotypes of Orientalist discourse built upon differences between the West and the Orient, which allow him to make such a comment without justification (Said, 2-3). However, because of his views and the manner in which *Leïla* was structured, Montagne was unable to locate any type of overall doctrine. This suggests that the *Leïla* team succeeded in passing a message of national consciousness and nationalism discreetly, for overall objectives proved to be the writing of the Nation and the defense of a national culture in which women had a place.

Drawing such attention meant that articles expressing a national hidden transcript required masking or reading between the lines. As the Independent Nation could not be proclaimed, certain words took on double meanings in the French-language Tunisian press, such as *évolution*, which signified change, but also the march toward the independent nation, or *la personnalité tunisienne*, *la race tunisienne*, and even *la race musulmane*. These were expressions for a national identity that were connected to a defense of Arab/Tunisian history found in the press and were required due to the colonizer's monopoly on historiography.²⁰ During the Protectorate, celebrations of colonization (the Eucharistic Congress in 1930, the 50th anniversary of the Protectorate, and the French Military Veteran's Congress in 1931) stimulated a French interest in a

²⁰ According to Mignolo, the colonizer used the "colonial difference" to dominate local populations. The "colonial difference" created a superiority gauged by the possession of a written history and the ability to write one in the nineteenth century, and by the possession of a universal knowledge that contained these histories in the twentieth century (ix).

written history that included French colonization.²¹ In response, Tunisians concentrated on the writing of a Tunisian history to write the Independent Nation—without naming it. In *Leïla*, over thirty history articles, or nearly 5% of the total number of articles, contribute to the defense of a Tunisian identity anchored in a glorious Arab/Islamic history.²² In this border zone, border thinking develops and identities are tested as writers select and bring forward distant historical events, connecting them to the present. Articles about famous Arab women, especially Tunisian women such as Aziza Othmana, Princess Atf, Aicha El Manoubia, and Princess Oum El-Oulou, create models for the New Muslim Woman, and serve to convince the general male public that Islam

²¹For a critical French version of the Cinquantenaire, see René Vanlande's *Attention en Tunisie! Après les Lampions du Cinquantenaire*, Chapter IX, "Florilège du Cinquantenaire." He questions the smooth surface of the colonial propaganda about the Military Veteran's Congress that portrays Tunisians as having an "attachement indéfectible à la France" (20). He includes a description of the Congress and a consideration of Tunisian views (19-24).

In "Aurons-nous une Histoire de la Tunisie?" published in the *Tunis Socialiste* newspaper (1 Mar. 1929), Arthur Pellegrin asked when a History of Tunisia would be written, a question resulting from debate in the Grand Council (consultative body divided into separate sections—French and Tunisian—that had no power to legislate). Pellegrin suggested that a book about Tunisia should be written in relationship to French colonization, a history for the occupier about the country he "loves." The idea had a political aspect as the Grand Council wanted a history book to be published by the 50th anniversary of the French Protectorate in 1931. Pellegrin proposed that the first half of the book should cover two thousand years of history, and fifty years of "civilization" (French, that is) in the second half, implying that the most important historical event for Tunisia was French conquest. For him, the epistemological system that French civilization brought to the Protectorate allowed for a synthesis of Tunisian history that could finally be written. Following his own advice, he finally wrote *Histoire de la Tunisie depuis les origines jusqu'à nos jours* published in 1938.

²²In *L'Afrique du Nord en marche*, Charles-André Julien argues that movements of Arab unity and reformers in the East (Djemal Ed-Din el Afghani, Cheikh Mohammed Abdo, Cheikh Rachid Rida, Cheikh Arslan) influenced resistance and nationalism in the Maghreb. According to Julien, Egyptian newspapers spread the ideals of Arab unity across the Maghreb. He notes three fundamental concepts at the base of propaganda: a concept of language, a concept of ethnicity, and a concept of history (25-31): "Ainsi l'utilisation de l'histoire, sous sa double forme panarabe et nationale, confirme les musulmans dans leur orgueil du passé et leur confiance dans l'avenir" (31). The concept of history, then, refers to a glorious Islamic history dating from the 7th to 12th centuries, but also to local histories such as the pre-Protectorate Husseinite period in Tunisia (1705-1881).

André Demeerseman also finds these subjects (Arabic language, literature, culture, history, and Islam) in Tunisian-run cultural periodicals of the colonial period. Although he avoids the use of the word "nationalism," Demeerseman proposes that Tunisian writers defended their cultural identity while seeking renewal and reform (*Soixante ans*, 19-57).

does not forbid women's education and emancipation.²³ Two articles concern the pre-colonial history of the Tunis neighborhoods Bab El-Benat (anon., "Bab El-Benat," Nov. 1939, 15) and Bab El Khadra (anon., "Sous les fiscus," Sept. 1939, 4). A political subtext hiding behind the trivial appears at the end of "Sous les fiscus." In a nostalgic description of the gardens near Bab El Khadra, a veiled reference to the colonial yoke during World War II appears: "Nous avons autre chose à faire que des recherches historiques et la lutte pour la vie est devenue tellement âpre qu'elle nous fait négliger bien des devoirs sérieux." Because of the struggle for survival and for independence, Tunisians had to make use of established history texts, for to contribute to historical research had become a luxury.

Coinciding with the narrowing of dialogue between French authorities and Tunisian elites in 1938, the inclusion in *Leïla* of two articles by well-known nationalists reinforces a Tunisian identity anchored in Arab history and tradition. In "Méfions-nous du faux modernisme" (Jan. 1938, 11), Ferid Bourguiba attacks the Orientalist binary relationship of an inert Islamic Orient and a modern Europe where progress is located. He argues that Islamic traditions have stood the test of time and are *forces vivantes* while *modernisme* is artificial. Intertextual references aid in masking a call to resist the colonizer. Tahar Lakdhar draws a parallel between the arguments of two French historians and the contemporary colonial situation in "Veillons à notre personnalité," (Mar. 1938, 18). He explains that Stéphane Gsell and M.G. Hardy propose that the

²³ Nomane, Mohamed, "Une belle figure de l'histoire de la Tunisie: Aziza Othmana," (Sept. 1937, 12); anon., "Aziza Othmana," (1 Jan. 1941, 2); anon., "La Kahena," (June 1938, 13); Abdulwahab, H.H. "La Princesse Atf," (Aug. 1939, 10); anon., "Aicha El Manoubia," (Aug. 1939, 14); anon., "La Princesse Oum El-Oulou" (Oct. 1939, 6). For a discussion of these role models, see Chapter 4 (206-208).

Berbers resisted foreign civilizations, such as the Romans, and borrowed only what was necessary.²⁴ Lakhdar first argues that Tunisians are Berbers (*plus ou moins*), then, by referring to two French historians, he is able to write about resistance to French colonialism without naming it. He quotes M.G. Hardy: “C’est un des caractères les plus marqués de l’âme berbère que cette capacité de survivre aux plus longs étouffements, de reprendre aux civilisations étrangères ce qui leur convient et de se retrouver ensuite avec sa sève originelle.” The word *étouffements* takes on an added significance due to the insertion of the quote into an article about the defense of Tunisian identity under French colonization. It not only refers to previous invasions but all colonization, including French occupation. Lakhdar ends with: “Veillons jalousement à notre personnalité. C’est à ce prix qu’est la vie sereine de nos enfants.” These articles show that Tunisian elites stress the defense of Tunisian identity, *notre personnalité*, and look confidently to independence, *la vie sereine*, in the future because for them French departure is only a question of time. A protectorate is only a temporary arrangement.

In addition to this defense of Arab/Tunisian history and identity, *Leïla* editors selected articles that define and defend a Tunisian culture, which served to write the Nation. Fully 20% of the articles in the first series are literary (literary critique, poetry, short stories). Articles about cultural activities and literary and cultural critique concerning radio, cinema, theater, and music constitute 21% of the second series while creative writing drops to 7%. What was most daring and original about the editorial team’s choice of articles in the first series was the inclusion of articles (27%) about and

²⁴ Stéphane Gsell, *Histoire Ancienne de l’Afrique du Nord*; M.G. Hardy, *La Tunisie*. The fact that Lakhdar refers to these French historians suggests that they were perceived by nationalists as being less partisan than others.

by women that defined a New Muslim Woman. This representation overlapped with a New Tunisian Woman who contributed to the construction of the New Nation. The editorial stance shifted in the second series to a concerted effort to develop a cultural criticism that contributed to the writing of the New Nation. The testing of boundaries in this border zone resulted in creative solutions, demonstrating border thinking on the part of Zarrouk and his team. They created a space in the public sphere for women—a first in the Tunisian press—and for critics to theorize a national culture.

What was Possible for Zarrouk and His Team?

Leila found a niche and a readership due to the constraints placed upon the Tunisian press in general. This periodical provided a way around censorship while encouraging a national consciousness. However, Zarrouk could feel the colonial administration breathing down his neck. Ahmed Zarrouk, nephew of Mahmoud Zarrouk, affirms that pressure from the colonial government through indirect censorship created problems, as permission to print was frequently delayed—intentionally (interview, 15 Feb. 2005). Consequently, Zarrouk, who knew Habib Bourguiba and other nationalists, such as Bahri Guiga (A. Zarrouk, interview, 15 Feb. 2005), must have been aware that French colonial authorities had a long history of controlling the press, particularly the Tunisian press. Although the French government extended the Law of July 29, 1881 (which established freedom of the press) to Tunisia in 1884, Arabic- and Hebrew-language periodicals could be censored by an arbitrary administrative decision without legal recourse (Decree of 6 May 1893) (Arfaoui 8-9). As the colonial government classified French-language periodicals under the Law of 29 July 1881, officials could not

suspend them through an arbitrary administrative decision (Hamdane, *Guide* 14).²⁵

Theoretically, it would be easier for Tunisian elites to publish in French, however, literacy in French was negligible among the Tunisian population. Administrative censorship was reinforced by activities of the police and various agents of the Protectorate who gathered information on periodicals and the people involved. Journalists were subject to police surveillance, especially when they traveled to the interior of the country or abroad (Dabbab 153-155). In addition, periodicals were required to have a *récépissé de déclaration*, a special receipt obtained from the colonial administration in order to publish, which could be withheld arbitrarily (Arfaoui 14). After World War I, nationalist activity increased and colonial officials varied their methods of repression.²⁶

In February 1920, the French allowed Arabic newspapers to reappear, after a shut down of eight years resulting from demonstrations in 1912. At the same time, the Destour Party, a "liberal constitutional party" of city elites, was founded in March 1920 demanding a constitution within the Protectorate framework.²⁷ Party members quickly learned to make use of the press to promote their political agenda and exploit social tensions as the Tunisian population grew faster than the European population, while employment stagnated. With increased nationalist texts in newspapers, activities of the Destour Party, and strikes organized by the Tunisian labor union (CGTT, *Conseil*

²⁵ However, French authorities' conception of legality was elastic. They suspended Tunisian-run French-language newspapers such as *Le Combat Social*, *Le Prolétaire*, *Le Libéral*, etc, in 1925 and 1926, as they had done for *Le Tunisien* in 1912. (Hassan 392). Mohamed Dabbab notes that reasons for administrative suspensions (which were frequent) were rarely stated in official documents (162-3).

²⁶ For example, the Decree of 23 January 1919 closed dangerous or unhealthy commercial premises, and consequently affected Tunisian printers in old buildings with cheap rents located in the Medina. This decree did not affect non-Tunisian printers located in the European section of Tunis, which suggests it was a pretext for authorities to inhibit the print culture of the colonized (Hassan 272).

²⁷ Two French jurists were consulted by Destour leaders and confirmed that the 1861 constitution (torpedoed by the French) was still valid and functional under the Protectorate (Martin, 168-9).

Général de Travailleurs Tunisiens) in 1924 and 1925, a period of repression occurred from 1922-1926. For a ten-year period, the required *récépissé de déclaration* was accorded to only one or two new newspapers while French authorities harassed existing newspapers (Arfaoui 14). The 1929 international economic crisis struck a heavy blow to the colonial structure with a second one occurring in 1934 as European farmers, already indebted due to mechanization, were hit by a fluctuating international market. Such economic problems added to the tension between the Destour Party and the colonial government (Arfaoui 18; Martin 139-141).

Because of difficulties for the Arabic press, nationalists created French-language newspapers to voice demands, such as *L'Etendard Tunisien* (1929), *La Voix du Tunisien* (1930), and *L'Action Tunisienne* (1932). The colonial government quickly extended the measures used against the Arabic press to the Tunisian French-language press in the Decree of 27 May 1933 after a campaign against naturalization by nationalists (Arfaoui 19). French authorities suspended *La Voix du Tunisien*, *L'Action Tunisienne*, and *La Voix du Peuple*, and at the same time dissolved the Destour Party for good measure. A French newspaper, *Tunis Socialiste*, was suspended in 1934 because it printed articles by Tunisian nationalists who had lost venues for publishing. During this period of repression, the Neo-Destour party split off from the Destour Party in 1934. A year later, André Duran-Angliviel, a socialist lawyer and eyewitness, commented on civil liberties in the Protectorate:

En 1935, le silence règne sur la Tunisie. C'est ce que les esprits avisés appellent: l'ordre. Nul n'a le droit de contester l'utilité ou la probité de certains actes du Pouvoir. Le devoir est de se taire, sous peine d'amende, de prison ou d'exil. La presse ne peut subsister qu'à la condition de servir étroitement les intérêts du Pouvoir de plus en plus centralisé entre les mains du Résident général qui exige

en faveur de ses actes et de sa personnalité les marques extérieures d'un respect plus ordinairement réservé à l'infaillibilité. (8)

Here the Resident General is presented as a tyrant and Duran-Angliviel describes a tyranny, not a republic. His ironic tone puts into relief the questionable reasoning behind censorship, which contributed to oppression. Duran-Angliviel's words proved correct as authorities soon suspended the Neo-Destour newspaper, *El Amal (Action)* while boycotts and demonstrations in conjunction with the labor union spiraled out of control. French colonial authorities arrested Neo-Destour leaders and exiled them to the desert of Southern Tunisia (El Mechat, 56-7; Martin, 176-7).

This brief historical summary shows the build-up of tension caused by French colonial repression that Zarrouk witnessed and that preceded the publication of *Leïla*. The five-year period during which he published was equally turbulent. The arrival of a Popular Front General Resident who pardoned Neo-Destour leaders brought a momentary reprieve. The Decree of 6 Aug. 1936 for the press made only a *récépissé de déclaration* necessary to publish. Hamdane notes: "Cette conjuncture a été favorable à l'essor de la presse nationale durant deux ans" (*Droit* 35). However, two years of drought that brought famine to rural areas (1936-1937), the Popular Front's defeat in France, and a closing of dialogue led to the events of 8 and 9 April 1938. The Neo-Destour Party called for a general strike and peaceful demonstrations turned violent and resulted in the declaration of a state of siege (Martin 179-180). In reaction to Tunisian political activity, authorities muzzled the press with the Decree of 28 June 1938, which allowed the arbitrary suspension of publications for any "error." The colonial government ended the state of siege in August 1938, but reinstated it in September 1939 for the length of World War II.

Several decrees from August 1938 through September 1939 shackled the press further, forbidding publication of information that would help a foreign nation or influence the population negatively (Hamdane, *Droit* 34-36). Following the Armistice, both French and Tunisian sections of the *Grand Conseil*, the consultative body of the Tunisian Protectorate, reiterated their loyalty to the Vichy government of France, ushering in a period of extreme right ideology. Consequently, the restrictions on the freedom of expression and civil liberties resulted in an end to dialogue and a closing of the public forum that were important elements of *Leïla's* first series.²⁸

These, then, were the constraints under which Zarrouk, the *Leïla* editors, writers, and readers lived and worked, and which are hinted at in *Leïla*: “Espérons que le public saura apprécier à sa juste valeur l’effort que nous fournissons pour satisfaire son bon goût dans des moments difficiles entre tous” (Aug. 1940, inside cover). Proof of censorship appears in the second series with the appearance of blank spaces, as noted in Chapter 1. Further proof of the intentional nature of this practice occurs in the second series article “La Radio: La Radio-Nationale” (21 Dec. 1940, 4) when a critic makes a point: “‘Samra Zaabana’ est d’une inspiration à censurer au nom des bonnes moeurs.” An intentional blank space of five lines follows that jokingly imitates the censor’s cuts. The blank spaces used to mark censorship appear in every issue in the first month and a half of publication²⁹—and then they inexplicably stop. As I have not found any noticeable differences between the last issue containing a blank space and the following issue, I

²⁸Mustapha Hassen establishes a partial list of no less than twenty-seven suspended Tunisian newspapers from August 1936 to August 1939 (405-8). When French authorities suspended *Tounès* in August 1939, Tunisians presented a petition of 630 signatures to the French-run *La Presse*—to no avail (“La suspension d’un journal et les Destouriens,” *La Presse*, 14 Mar. 1939).

²⁹ 1 Dec. 1940, 7 Dec. 1940, 14 Dec. 1940, 21 Dec. 1940, 8 Jan. 1941.

conclude that the blank spaces were censored as well. This does not mean that censorship stopped. On the contrary, traces of the censor's hand remain present, for although the blank spaces disappear, an occasional sentence ending in mid-air is tucked into a text. Such is the case at the beginning of an article about music, in which an *Art national* is defended: "Ceux qui prétendent qu'en Tunisie il n'existe pas d'*Art national*, de musique d'inspiration tunisienne" ... The reader must imagine the end of the sentence. Notably, the author uses a pseudonym (*L'Amateur*), a practice in the second series that often signifies the presence of encoded national messages.

The reader may easily identify French censorship in the second series newspaper, but did the first series escape notice because it was a women's magazine? The first two issues (Dec. 1936, Feb. 1937) appear to have sneaked through the mines of colonial censorship, however, in the March 1938 issue a verse from Skander's (pseudonym for nationalist lawyer Salah Farhat) anti-colonial poem, "Fraternité" (12-13) is sliced out and replaced by three lines of dots, "....."³⁰ The emphatic use of dots (no less than three lines) signals the passage of the French censor to readers, encouraging them to fill in what is missing. Consequently, this clear case of censorship made me look at the use of lines of dots or ellipses ("...") as a subversive method in the first series magazine to inform readers that the *Leïla* team had attempted to say more than what was on the actual page. This allowed readers to understand meanings of the hidden transcript.

Although the use of ellipses probably indicated editorial cuts in certain articles, nonetheless, I argue that many resulted from the French censor. A number of articles express obvious national or anti-colonial sentiments or critiques, such as, "Sauvons notre

³⁰ The original text appears in *Chants de l'Amour* by Salah Farhat. See Chapter 5 (269-270) for a discussion of this poem.

théâtre” (Dec. 1938, 14) which contains three cuts, “Favoritisme” (Zarrouk, Mar. 1939, 5), which is cut once, or “Les conceptions rascistes d’Hitler et la famille germanique” (Sfar, Dec. 1939, 2-3) with four cuts. In addition, specific issues contain more articles with the use of ellipses than others, suggesting a connection between *Leïla*, crackdowns in French censorship, and political events. March 1939 had three censored articles, Nov. 1939 two, Dec. 1939 three, and May 1940 two.³¹ The record for one article occurred in the Dec. 1939 issue, in which “L’Homme au foyer” contains 20 cuts indicated by ellipses, in addition to a set of two lines of dots for added emphasis. It could be argued that some of these cuts are editorial, however, the presence of an unfinished sentence indicates the censor’s hand: “Ce qui n’est plus conforme aux nouveaux usages de la vie contemporaine...” (7). The reader must imagine the rest.

Thus, censorship affected both the first series magazine and the second series weekly newspaper frequently. However, repression extended beyond control of the press to affect other activities. Certain articles in *Leïla* may appear benign, yet behind many there are meanings that a contemporary reader would understand. This is where hidden transcripts of resistance surface. As noted in Chapter 1 (53-4), even an article on a fund-raising party (*fête*) organized by Tunisian women signified resistance to colonial repression.

³¹ “Favoritisme” (Zarrouk, Mar. 1939, 5), “Le ridicule ne tue pas” (Rafik, Mar. 1939, 14), “L’Embellissement de la Hara et le Musulman” (Mar. 1939, 9), “Usages de la bourgeoisie décadente” (Nov. 1939, 13), “Réponse à la lettre de Moncef” (Nov. 1939, 19), “Les conceptions rascistes d’Hitler et la famille germanique” (Dec. 1939, 2-3), “L’Homme au foyer” (Dec. 1939, 7-8), “Un mariage silencieux” (Dec. 1939, 18-19), “A la recherche de la Félicité conjugale” (Rafik, May 1940, 2), “Remords” (Gacem, May 1940, 13).

Zarrouk and His Compatriots: Who are Tunisians?

Zarrouk's use of French for a women's magazine to defend a national identity appears to confirm Benedict Anderson's idea that the colonized were introduced to ideas of nation in colonial schools with the language of the colonizer (140). However, Brinkley Messick insists that the Islamic Shari'a contains progressive thought, an "idiom of prenationalist political expression," and he demonstrates that the West was not the sole source of notions of nationhood and that Islam also provided a source (3). I agree with Messick and I argue that Zarrouk and *Leïla* contributors defended a Tunisian identity because they possessed a strong sense of their own history and the nation anchored in Islam. This was accompanied by a desire for reform rooted in the Ottoman reform period of the first half of the 19th century. Although European influences cannot be ignored, nevertheless, Tunisian elites generated reform and criticism anchored in Islam (K. Chater, *Dépendances* 492).³²

The Tunisian multiple identity, made up of Ottoman, Berber, Arabic, and other elements, suggests that Tunisians were tolerant of other groups in the Beylik. Scholarly literature occasionally refers to Tunisia as a "mosaic," that is, a variety of communities that co-exist peacefully.³³ However, the apparent exterior harmony of the mosaic was an

³² A number of historians (Arthur Pellegrin, L. C. Brown, Charles-Robert Ageron) suggest that 19th century reform came from the outside of Tunisia or North Africa, especially from France, however, Khalifa Chater shows that notions of nation, including *oumran* (an entire country seen as a whole) and the *watan* (national state/country), formed internally during the reign of Ahmed Bey (1837-1855) (Chater, *Dépendances* 492).

³³ A multiple identity that included an Ottoman/Islamic identity persisted into the 20th century. Demeersemen notes the influence of the East in Arabic cultural periodicals: "La première impression, très forte, celle-là, est qu'elles [les revues tunisiennes] entraînent leurs lecteurs en Orient, un Orient qui s'occidentalise, qui se modernise, mais un Orient" (91). For an interesting essay on Arab-Muslim identity that transcends borders see Hichem Djait's *La Personnalité et le devenir arabo-islamiques*.

The Tunisian mosaic is centuries old. Waves of incoming populations included Italian Jews from Livourne (Italy), Andalusian Muslims and Jews from Spain, Ottomans from around the Mediterranean region, Maltese, and Sicilians. Valensi considers the marketplace a key factor to connect communities and maintain harmony because it served as a common ground where tradesmen from each group came together

illusion during the colonial period. Jacques Alexandropoulos notes: "...le bilan implicite paraît en fait celui d'une société où l'on retrouvait à la fois une discrimination omniprésente et un certain sentiment d'appartenance à un même ensemble fortement caractérisé: tension perpétuelle, commune à la mosaïque et à la société coloniale" (Intro. 9). Colonialism imposed a hierarchy and a European privilege that went beyond the economic (Memmi 15) and that blocked the possibility of a "melting pot." Hédi Zarrouk, Mahmoud's son, remembers Tunis society under colonization:

Des coupes transversales divisaient le petit monde urbain, voulant ignorer les liens que tissaient des intérêts partagés et des occupations communes. Il fallait constamment garder une certaine conscience de son identité, celle du groupe auquel on appartenait, et qui ne pouvait en aucun cas se confondre avec d'autres. Un substrat social d'interdits aussi nombreux que divergents subsistaient dans un non-dit permanent. (53-4)

Hédi Zarrouk relates the divisions hiding under an apparently smooth surface, and the social constraints they entailed. The term "mosaic," then, is useful to this study because it contains the paradox of harmony and tension, while including diversity, and thus helps us understand the debate on identity found in *Leïla*.

A reduction of multiple identities in the mosaic surfaces in *Leïla* where the defined and defended Tunisian identity is limited to Muslim and Jewish Tunisians, found in the constructions of a New Muslim Woman and a New Tunisian Woman that co-exist

("La Mosaïque" 27-8). For the colonial period, Albert Memmi is more cynical and sees the colonizer (the European community) and the colonial majority chained together in a mutually destructive relationship imposed by colonialism (12).

Several small minorities and a large majority constitute the Tunisian mosaic. Demographic statistics for foreign communities appeared in 1906. Italians formed the largest minority with 102,885 inhabitants, while the French and the Maltese trailed with 32,610 and 12,162 inhabitants respectively. In 1921 a census of the autochthon population was taken that recorded one and a half million inhabitants (Kazdaghli, "Les Français" 39). In 1937, Yves Chatelain estimated the Tunisian Muslim population at around two million (21). It reached 3,400,000 by 1956 while Europeans made up only about 8% of the total population (Martin, 134-6). In *Magrebian Mosaic: A Literature in Transition*, Mildred Mortimer places Tunisia within the wider context of a Maghreb made up of a mosaic of peoples.

and overlap. However, it excludes European Christians although *Leïla* editors included certain articles by French women.³⁴ Geographically defined by the borders of the French Protectorate, a Tunisian national identity was nevertheless based on an Arab/Islamic identity with a language, history, culture, and literature shared with other Muslim/Arab countries. How did Tunisians view themselves? In 1907, Tunisians used the terminology of the colonizer, designating themselves as *indigène* or *musulman* in the first French-language newspaper written by Tunisians for Tunisians, *Le Tunisien* (1907-1912), while the French of Tunisia called themselves *Tunisiens*.³⁵ By 1936, Tunisians re-appropriated the term *Tunisien*. References in *Leïla* to members of the colonized Muslim majority and Jewish minority appear as *la Tunisienne* (Dec. 1936, 1) and *des Tunisiens et des Tunisiennes* (Dec. 1936, 6), whereas *les dames Françaises* (Jan. 1938, 1) refers to French women in Tunisia. The change in terminology reveals the presence of a growing national consciousness and a desire to encourage that national consciousness in readers. However, identity terminology remains unstable in *Leïla*: G.-L. Le Monnier uses the term *Tunisien* for French residents of Tunisia in an article about an art exhibition (“Le Salon d’Été au Bar Dixi du Kram,” Sept. 1938, 7). Consequently, while identities were

³⁴ Valensi blames the eventual success of the national movement for a reduction in Tunisian identities and a shrinking of the mosaic. She suggests that history

a mis fin à ce cosmopolitisme social, culturel et politique qui a marqué la Tunisie des XIXe et XXe siècles, au profit du nationalisme. Celui-ci, rendant le pays à ses propriétaires légitimes, les rassemblant dans une nation homogène et moderne, a déchaussé sans merci les menues composantes non-musulmanes et non-tunisiennes de la mosaïque. (29)

Valensi points to one of the negative aspects of nation-formation, the need for homogeneity of the population. However, reduction of the mosaic was begun under the French, especially during World War II.

³⁵ For texts that demonstrate the French terms of identity see Albert Canal’s *La Littérature et la Presse tunisiennes, de l’occupation à 1900* (1924) and Yves Chatelain’s *La Vie Littéraire et Intellectuelle en Tunisie de 1900 à 1937* (1937).

defined and transformed and the colonized worked to subvert French colonial definitions about themselves, friction occurred as the French lost ground.³⁶

Why French?

Why did Zarrouk and his editors decide to use French, rather than Arabic, for their periodical, even translating articles from Arabic into French? Zarrouk was part of the bi-lingual elite educated in Sadiki College, well-known as a hotbed of nationalism, which offered instruction in French and other European languages, while the Zitouna University, a prestigious learning center of the Maghreb attached to the Zitouna Mosque, dispensed education in Arabic (Martin 126). The imposition of French during colonization through the educational system and print culture created a binary relationship of a primary, official language of the minority (French) and a secondary language of the colonized majority (Arabic), with bi-lingual elites in the middle.³⁷ Colonization created a divide between the two languages, accentuating the gap between privileged Europeans and colonized populations. Because of this relationship of force, the use of French by Tunisians was problematic. Attitudes toward language, however, dated well before colonization, and were affected by geography and history.

A plurality of languages was part of pre-colonial Tunisian culture for the Carthage/Tunis area, which depended on commerce from the time of the Phoenicians in

³⁶ The events of World War II caused a polarization in identities. Marcel Sauvage, a French poet exiled in Tunis, defended Maréchal Pétain and proclaimed emotionally: "Nous sommes Français et voulons le demeurer" (*Afrique Littéraire*, "A Propos d'écriture: S'il vous plaît messieurs," Nov. 1940, 3). Even as the French abandoned the term *Tunisien*, they did not give it to Tunisian Muslims, but continued to label them *Musulmans*.

³⁷ In *Linguistique et colonialisme* (1974), Calvet theorizes the relationship between European linguistic theory and colonialism. According to Calvet, the domination of one language over another ultimately aims at the destruction of the dominated language, which he refers to as linguistic cannibalism or *glottophagie*. He maintains that preceding the 19th century, linguistic theories began as a study of difference but developed into theories of superiority, and when exported to the colonies the French language came to represent not just a language but a superior French culture and civilization serving colonialism (39).

814 B.C., and witnessed the passage of Romans, Vandals, Byzantines, Arabs, Spaniards, and Ottomans. Negotiation was central to the diplomacy of this small country as it managed to maintain autonomy under the Ottoman Empire and to stave off Italian colonial ambitions and French imperialism until 1881. This complex history created a predisposition for the use of other languages alongside Arabic. Ultimately, Tunisians wielded the French language as an instrument.³⁸ *Leïla* writers addressed messages to the colonial government in order to make demands of the colonized known. For example, the *Leïla* editors continued to print demands for an Arabic literature award endowed by the colonial government comparable to the *Prix de Carthage* for French literature, even though the editors had organized a privately funded *Prix de la Poésie arabe*: “Tout en félicitant M. Longobardi, lauréat du Prix de Carthage 1941, il serait souhaitable de gratifier aussi les Lettres Arabes d’un Prix annuel” (“*Leïla* vous parle,” 24 Mar. 1941, 2). Control of programming at the state-run radio station was a highly contested domain as well: “Au nom de l’Art, cher Comité musical de la Radio, exercez votre droit; opposez votre veto; arrêtez ce flot débordant de médiocrités et rappelez-vous le principe que l’Art n’admet pas la médiocrité.” Such messages reveal power struggles over cultural production, which the colonized must confront.

Publication in French did not push Arabic into the background. On the contrary, the battle over Arabic demonstrates the importance of language in colonial oppression and in the nationalist movement. Calvet argues that the colonized resist linguistic

³⁸ In addition, the orality of dialectal Tunisian Arabic bridged gaps by allowing for the absorption of words from other languages, and contributed to the diglossia of Tunisian culture.

The Young Tunisians, an early political group inspired by the Young Turks, used French to make the needs of the Tunisian people known to the colonial administration in *Le Tunisien* (1907-1911), as did members of and the Destour party in the 1920s. The use of French became political and ideological for members of the Neo-Destour party educated in French-Arabic schools in the 1930s.

cannibalism (*glottophagie*) on a religious level when religion is linked to a language, as in the case of Arabic, and on the level of national consciousness: “Mais le plus sûr ressort de cette résistance est constitué par la conscience nationale du peuple opprimé qui le fera éventuellement se dresser contre l’opresseur” (81). Contributing to a defense of Arab culture, articles on entertainment include Arabic songs and movies. In addition, a strong emphasis is placed on women’s education in Arabic. Nonetheless, the fact that Zarrouk published in French demonstrates ambiguity around issues of language in the border zone, and indicates that there existed a large enough group of women educated in French to sustain this periodical and challenge proposed limits.

When Zarrouk Looked Across Borders: The Broader Picture

Numerous *Leïla* articles attest to influence from the East, whispering of the multiple borders of Tunisian identity, remnants of the Ottoman Empire. Zarrouk and his team looked to Egypt and Turkey for models of women’s emancipation, which could be found in literature and periodicals that crossed borders. In “Leïla et la Presse,” (Dec. 1938, 9) the author points to Egyptian periodicals and films that have influenced women’s emancipation in urban families: “Cette modernisation emprunte son dynamisme à la fois aux idées que l’on se fait de la femme et de la famille françaises et des détails que l’on recueille dans les revues et les films de provenance égyptienne.” A section from Qassim Amin’s 1899 book, *The Liberation of Women (Tahrir al-mar’a)* is translated from the English version in “Emancipation de la femme en Egypte” (Sept. 1938, 20-21). And an article from the Egyptian women’s periodical *El Masria*, “Voix d’outre-tombe: Dialogue de Rousseau et Platon sur l’instruction de la jeune fille,” (Aug. 1940, 28) by Fikria Abdul-Mejid shows that periodicals from Egypt, including women’s periodicals,

circulated in Tunisia. The influence of Turkey is equally evident, especially as it served as a political model for an independent republic. "Les Beaux-Arts et la Femme Turque" (June 1937, 10) appears to be taken from a Turkish periodical for it begins with "Notre pays a raison d'être fier du grand nombre des peintres modernes . . .," and continues to discuss Turkish painters, both male and female. A photo of the first Turkish woman pilot, Sabiha Gektchen, is a symbol of the emancipated Turkish woman (Jan. 1938, 7), and A. Melnikov's article "Kemal Ataturk," a tribute to Ataturk after his death, contains a pronounced nationalist discourse (Dec. 1938, 22). The presence of these articles shows the influence of Tunisia's multiple borders that contribute to border thinking found in *Leïla* and is proof of the circulation of foreign publications and the ideas they contain.

Reform in the Ottoman Empire included the creation of women's periodicals that played an active role in disseminating information about health, child care, and home economics as early as 1839 (Toksa, quoted by Kandiyoti 130).³⁹ Riding on a wave of reform, women's periodicals thrived until the late 1930s in Turkey, Egypt, and the Levant. Although *Leïla* was unusual for Tunisia because of the dearth of periodicals for Tunisian women in the 1930s, nonetheless, it was a part of the Muslim woman's entry into the public sphere across the region. Women's periodicals tackled the problems of seclusion and segregation, marriage and divorce, education, mobility, and veiling. Disturbing the patriarchal social structure, these questions were entangled with political issues related to nation-building and were discussed throughout the region, including

³⁹ Kandiyoti discusses Zehra Toksa's article "Haremden Kadın Partisine Giden Yolda Kadın Dergileri, Gündemleri ve Öncü Kadınlar," *Defter*, Spring 1994, 116-42.

Tunisia. Consequently, it is not surprising to find that the articles in *Leila* penned by Tunisian women demonstrate their desire to participate in the Independent Nation, while renegotiating their status in Tunisian society.

For Zarrouk and his team, Turkey served as an example of nationhood. A direct link between women's emancipation and national politics appeared in Turkey at the time of independence in 1922. Egalitarian feminism was an integral part of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk's project of "modernity," and the unveiling of women supposed the end of women's seclusion and segregation. Promoting women's entry into the public sphere, Ataturk wrested power from religious institutions that had controlled women's status under the Ottomans. The Ataturk model thus involved state intervention on the behalf of women as opposed to decisions made by religious authorities or by women themselves (Thompson, 129-30). Reinforcing changes with legal reform, the government replaced the Shari'a with the Civil Code in 1926 and women gained suffrage in 1934. Women were caught in a bind, however, as they were told to work for the nation in the public sphere while upholding the traditional roles of wife and mother in the private sphere. Additionally, women were burdened with "modern" homemaking techniques required for the new role of household manager (Arat 99-100), which appears later in *Leila* as part of the construction of the New Muslim Woman.⁴⁰

In Egypt as well women's emancipation and nationalist politics intersected.

Women elites contributed to resistance to British occupation, which lasted until 1952.

Supporting the nationalist cause, women's periodicals and social organizations

⁴⁰ For a critique of feminism under the Ataturk regime see Yeşim Arat's "The Project of Modernity and Women in Turkey" and Deniz Kandiyoti's "Gendering the Modern: On Missing Dimensions in the Study of Turkish Modernity."

participated in the debate on women's status and aided in opening the public sphere to women. The early women's press of the late 19th century was dominated by Syrian women living in Cairo.⁴¹ Around 1907 Egyptian Muslim women became active in the press, their activities coinciding with an increase in nationalist activities. Whereas Arabic political newspapers ran into difficulties with the colonial administration's increased restrictions, women's periodicals, not considered threatening, went unnoticed by censors (Baron, *The Women's Awakening* 31). It is within this veiled, untouched space that opposition to the colonial order arose, accompanied by a desire for change within the patriarchal order. Baron writes:

Finally, although the periodicals were not ostensibly concerned with national politics, they were interested in hierarchies of power posited on gender and the redefinition of male-female roles and family relations that accompanied the rise of nationalism in Egypt (37).

Thus, these periodicals contributed to nationalism and nation-building. By 1919, nearly thirty women's journals had been created over a thirty year period (36) and in 1925, Huda Charaoui founded a monthly women's periodical in French that championed women's emancipation throughout the 1930s (Bakalti, 1996, 34). Egyptian periodicals circulated in Tunisia, serving as models for the Tunisian press.

As a French protectorate from 1881, Tunisia was subject to direct French rule and French intellectual currents as well. French views on women can be traced in *Leïla*, which contains several articles from French periodicals and women's magazines. Claire Charles Géniaux's article, "Chez les dévoilées de Tunisie" (Feb. 1937, 22), is reprinted from the magazine *Femme de France*. "Musulmans, vos femmes aussi sont des êtres

⁴¹ Beth Baron notes four periodicals founded by women: Hind Nawful's *al-Fatah* (The Young Woman, 1892) Louisa Habbalin's *al-Firdaus* (Paradise, 1896), Alexandra Avierino's *Anis al-Jalis* (The Intimate Companion, 1898), and Esther Moyal's *Al-'A'ila* (The family, 1899). (*Women's Awakening* 114-21)

humains" (Jan. 1938, 18) by Lucienne Jean-Darrouy is taken from *La Flèche*, and "Le Mariage" (Jan. 1938, 18) is reprinted from *La Maison*. Although such articles suggest that French women promoted women's emancipation in the Protectorate, educated Tunisian women took interest in the progress of French women as well. For example, one of the women contributors to *Leila*, Jamila Malki, obtained a book on women, *L'Agnès d'aujourd'hui ou Femme Moderne* (1934) by Paul de la Magdeleine, during a trip to France in 1942, showing a will to seek information and not be passive in the struggle over women's role and representation.⁴² Through periodicals or through other publications such as books, then, French ideas circulated among Tunisian elites as they observed French attitudes to the growing feminist movements in France during the 1920s and 1930s.

Although French feminist organizations developed in the 1860s, they nonetheless remained marginal until after World War I (Smith 13-14), while French women faced numerous inequalities. Girls' education was separate, and only in 1923-24 did the syllabus for girls secondary schools become the same as for boys, which allowed girls to sit for the baccalaureate exams and continue at the university (Reynolds 49). Career paths open to women were limited to education, nursing or low-grade clerical work, especially typing (93-4). Adding to women's burdens, domestic labor required many hours a day, as most households did not have running water, few owned washing machines, and men participated little (90). The Civil Code of 1804 made married women subject to their spouses as minors, and it was still in effect with few changes during the interwar years.

⁴² This book, dedicated to Jamila Malki by the author and dated January 19, 1942, may be found at Beït Bennani in Tunis.

Women could not vote, or acquire or dispose of property, and had no say in raising children. French nationality could be lost if a woman married a foreigner (Smith 10, 202-6). In 1946, universal suffrage was granted and men and women were declared equal, however, women were still subject to their spouses where the family was concerned, as men remained the *chef de famille* (211).

Nevertheless, French women organized during the interwar period to face the political problems that affected their status, and published periodicals to promote their views.⁴³ Raymonde Macharde, a leftist, edited her own *Journal de la Femme* (Smith 32), and *Le Droit des Femmes* was created by the *Ligue Française pour les Droits des Femmes*, which also leaned to the left, catered to professional and intellectual women, and worked to protect and improve women's legal rights (34-5). Some periodicals became associated with certain political groups. *La Française*, founded in 1906, represented views of the *Conseil National des Femmes Françaises* and was loosely linked to the Radical Party (16-17). The *Fédération Nationale des Femmes* was associated with the *Fédération Républicaine* (right-wing and Catholic), and published *Le Devoir national*, which became *Le Devoir des Femmes* in 1935 (55). Political parties also created women's sections that published women's periodicals. *L'Ouvrière* was attached to the Communist Party, and *La Voix des Femmes* to the Socialist party, however, both of these were more concerned with class politics than with feminist ideas (80-3).⁴⁴

⁴³ This entry of women into journalism affected the quality of publications for the better, according to Evelyne Sullerot who cynically quips: "Enfin, le grand intérêt de ce survol vient de l'imbrication des journaux faits *pour* les femmes et des journaux faits *par* les femmes. Ils ne se ressemblent pas. Les plus frivoles furent toujours dirigés par des hommes" (6). Sullerot implies that the male gaze inaccurately defines women as frivolous, a problem found in *Leïla*, and that women improve the quality of periodicals when they define themselves through their own writing and creation of periodicals.

⁴⁴ For an interesting account of the French feminist movement during the interwar period see Siân Reynolds' *France Between the Wars: Gender and Politics*.

French ideas and debates on women's status filtered into the colonies, but were adapted to the colonial situation.⁴⁵ *Leila* fits into a wider phenomenon of colonized women's periodicals across the French Empire. As far away as Indochina, the Vietnamese made use of women's periodicals and literature to get around French colonial censorship in the 1920s and early 1930s.⁴⁶ Hue-Tam Ho Tai describes the popular woman's periodical *Ladies' News* (*Phu Nu Tan Van*) founded in 1929. A commercial venture, it contained a variety of articles ranging from health and child-rearing to literary essays and social reportage. She notes:

... the journal became perhaps the most important vehicle of non-Communist progressive ... ideas in the South. Since it was widely understood that debates on women had wider implications, the influence of *Ladies' News* extended far beyond the confines of traditional women's issues. Within months of its launching, the authorities were dubbing it the "organ of feminism and nationalism. (Tai 206)

Here nationalism and feminism come together in the women's periodical. Discussions on women's topics led to other subjects that required masking, such as nationalist preoccupations. Inevitably, colonial authorities attempted to understand the hidden transcript found in women's periodicals, which made the task of publishing a nationalist message difficult.

In the French mandates of Syria and Lebanon, a minority of elite, upper-class women worked to change women's status in 1918. However, setbacks occurred as women's suffrage was voted down in 1920 in the Syrian Congress and in 1923 in the Lebanese Representative Council, reflecting male anxiety over change—aggravated by

⁴⁵ See Chapter 3 for a further discussion of colonial feminism.

⁴⁶ For further information on the Vietnamese feminist movement and the use of women's issues in anti-colonial literature see Hue-Tam Ho Tai's *Radicalism and the Origins of the Vietnamese Revolution*, especially Chapter 4, 88-113.

the colonial situation—in the gender hierarchy. Inevitably, because of their political nature, issues concerning women coincided with male power struggles. In an effort to maintain authority, religious elites brought questions of women's status and veiling into the realm of religious law in the late 1920s (Thompson 118-123) while the French sat on the sidelines and watched. Thompson notes that French attitudes were different in the Maghreb where they attempted to unveil the Muslim woman (125). In addition, French policy more actively encouraged women's education in the Levant than in the Maghreb, reflecting differences in French attitudes toward the larger Christian populations in the Levant, and in colonial administrative structures of the mandates as compared to protectorates and colonies. This encouragement eventually contributed to an increase in literacy rates and consequently in the reading public. Thirteen magazines edited by women for women were published from 1918-1933 (214). These magazines created a space where women could voice their opinions on all subjects, without male mediation. However, due to financial problems, competition from Egyptian magazines, and the incorporation of women journalists into male-run newspapers (to write the "women's page"), women's magazines disappeared in the 1930s. Their disappearance also coincided with rising hostility to the women's movement (216) that reflected a worsening international economic and political climate, which also affected the production of *Leila*.

When Zarrouk Looked Around Tunis: *Leïla* within the Tunisian Women's

Movement

Zarrouk and his team participated in a wider movement of women's emancipation that included the circulation of women's periodicals.⁴⁷ However, in order to exist, a periodical required a literate readership, making education a major concern. The Tunisian women's movement is especially connected to the history of women's education, which took on political importance as Tunisian political parties demanded increased schools funded by the colonial administration. At first, only the well-to-do could afford education. Private instruction at home for both men and women was possible in bourgeois and aristocratic families.⁴⁸ A small number of upper-class women were well-versed in both Arabic and French because of private instruction (Khaddar Zangar 119). Ahmed Zarrouk estimates that of approximately 80 female relatives of his uncle, Mahmoud Zarrouk, 25% of them had private instruction that allowed them to read French-language publications (interview, 15 Feb. 2005). Tunisians generally considered French schools for Muslim girls as instruments of the colonizer that the upper classes avoided, because from the beginning of the twentieth century Tunisian women's education had been a key topic of debate in French colonial discourse. The French were divided into two camps. On the one hand, French settlers often opposed education for Muslims. At most, they approved of a minimal education for Tunisian boys necessary to

⁴⁷ For histories of the Tunisian women's movement, see for example, Souad Bakalti's *La Femme tunisienne au temps de la colonisation (1881-1956)* (1996), Emna Ben Miled's *Les Tunisiennes ont-elles une histoire?* (1998), Souad Chater's *La Femme tunisienne: citoyenne ou sujet... ?* (1978), and Ilhem Marzouki's *Le Mouvement des femmes en Tunisie au XXème siècle: Féminisme et politique* (1993).

⁴⁸ Fontaine notes that this is the case for the poet Mustapha Agha (1877-1946), born into an aristocratic family (*Histoire*, v. II, 160). Ben Miled records the educational experiences of two Tunisian women and how they worked around social constraints to acquire education (239-240). See *Les Tunisiennes ont-elles une histoire?* Chapter 7, "Les Dévoilées."

create a docile labor force (Sellami 35). On the other hand, colonial officials from France tended to promote an education for the colonized that would meet the needs of the colonial administration, that is, for the creation of low-level clerks and interpreters.

At the same time, officials considered the Muslim woman potentially useful because she played a key role as the keeper of tradition who instilled values in the Muslim family and could be influenced to accept French culture and values. The Resident General's wife oversaw the opening of a private Muslim girls' school, *Ecole Louise René Millet*, in 1900 in Tunis, and a *Certificat d'études primaires* was awarded upon completion of the program (Sellami 35; Khaddar Zangar 121).⁴⁹ Education or indoctrination? The fact that the school did not offer a secondary education to young Muslim women until 1945 suggests the latter. Girls desiring further education attended the French lycées (Sellami, 40). Thus, women were seen as a means to penetrate the private sphere of the Muslim family, and their education served in an effort to dominate and bind the traditions of the Muslim family to French (Christian) culture, while men were educated to provide a cheap, reliable labor pool for French settlers and low-ranking administrative clerks and interpreters for the colonial government.

In 1908, public Franco-Arab primary schools for Muslim girls opened and by 1920 fourteen schools existed with 1,224 students (Khaddar Zangar 122) out of a total of 12,077 Muslim students attending modern Qu'ranic schools or Franco-Arab schools (Vermeren, 20). However, girls' education was essentially a professional training,

⁴⁹ The school was also known as *Ecole de la Rue du Pacha*. It cost the colonial administration nothing as the Tunisian Department of Habous (Muslim religious donations) funded it (Sellami 35). The school offered a primary school instruction in Arabic, French, history, the sciences, hygiene, and handiwork to five girls, and grew to 565 students by 1928. Respecting Muslim convention, these upper class girls came to school veiled and accompanied. (Khaddar Zangar 121)

conducted in French, with instruction in Arabic only three-quarters of an hour per day. The schools recruited young girls from the lower classes to contribute to cottage industries (Khaddar Zangar 123). Enrollments continued to increase and by 1929 there were 3,173 female students out of a total of 31,030 Muslim students. In 1942, there were 7,104 female students out of a total of 43,127 Muslim students (Vermeren 20). These figures show that female enrollments went from 10% of the total student population in 1929 to 16% in 1942, demonstrating that education for women gained ground slowly, making it a major concern for Zarrouk and his team.

The debate concerning the Tunisian woman acquired ideological significance during the 1920s. The newly-formed Destour Party promoted the education of Tunisian women to aid in the emancipation of Tunisian society from the colonizer, while French socialists living in Tunis attempted to bring Tunisian women into the debate. They argued that education (implying French education) would emancipate the young Muslim woman and make her equal to her European sisters. Tahar Haddad⁵⁰ wrote on women's education in *Notre Femme dans la loi islamique et la société* (1930). The final chapter of his book is a discussion and critique of the contemporary educational system. He contrasts the public schools for Muslim girls (schools of apprenticeship in handcrafts) with the private school of Rue du Pacha (Ecole Louise René Millet), the only elementary school for Muslim girls in the country, noting the inadequate instruction in Arabic for all schools.

He promulgates an education to "dispenser à nos filles un enseignement national selon un

⁵⁰ Tahar Haddad (1899-1935) was born in Tunis to a modest family from the South (Al Hamma), attended a Qur'anic school, then the secondary school of the Zitouna Mosque where he obtained a diploma to become a notary. He served as secretary for the *Société de Bienfaisance* and enrolled in the *Ecole de Droit* of Tunis. He was briefly a member of the Destour Party, and in 1924 founded the first labor union (*Confédération Générale Tunisienne du Travail*) with Muhammad Ali al Hammi. In 1927, he wrote *Les travailleurs tunisiens et la naissance du mouvement syndical*, and in 1930, *Notre femme dans la loi islamique et la société* for which he was ostracized. (Bakalti, 1996, 48-9, Balegh 1-13).

programme conçu par nous-mêmes” (226). The phrase “conçu par nous-mêmes” is important as it indicates Tunisians’ insistence to take control of their own society, beginning with the formation of the young. He proposed that women be considered as citizens equal to men and capable of responsibility. Without a valid education, there could be no social emancipation. With education, women would be able to contribute to society. Haddad’s book is a call for action on the national level. He states:

Si nous n’agissons pas, ce ne sera pas le gouvernement du Protectorat qui donnera satisfaction à nos revendications. La misère se manifeste parmi nous sous plusieurs aspects que les générations futures ne pourront se l’imaginer et la lourde tâche qui nous attend s’amplifie autant que nous en retardons le commencement (196).

Haddad insists that Tunisians cannot depend on the colonial administration to solve their problems. He links women’s status with economic and social problems, which the colonial administration aggravates. In order to convince his readers that emancipation from colonialism is connected to women’s education and emancipation, he bases his arguments on Islamic texts, including the Qu’ran, along with economic and financial factors.⁵¹

Haddad provoked a vigorous debate that shook the status quo and contributed to change at the political level. Participants at the Destour Congress of 12 and 13 May 1933 formulated a plan of action that included the political education of women as well as obligatory education for all (El Mechat 9). In the meantime, a small group of upper class educated Tunisian women organized, forming the *Association des Femmes Musulmanes* (1932-1936) under the direction of the wife of the French General Resident Manceron. Although they indulged in benign activities such as fund-raising for charitable activities,

⁵¹ See Chapter 3 (166-171) for a discussion of Tahar Haddad and colonial feminist discourse.

male anxiety about the Westernizing influence of the Residence surfaced. Nationalists such as Chedly Khairallah voiced criticism, once again demonstrating the complex relationship between Muslim women, the colonial administration, and nationalists (Bakalti, 1989, 86-8).

Under the protective umbrella of an educational institution, the Zitouna University, other women's groups formed. Sensitive to political struggles in the Protectorate and offsetting influence from the Résidence, Bechira Ben M'rad created the first organization uniquely for Tunisian women (the UMFT or *Union Musulmane des Femmes de Tunisie*) with the approval of the Zitounian milieu in 1937. This organization existed until independence in 1956. Recruiting members through an inter-family network, the UMFT brought together educated women from what Marzouki qualifies as "élites traditionalistes tunisoises" as well as "nouvelles élites nationalistes et 'modernisantes'" (39). Souad Chater emphasizes the nationalist aspect of this organization, pointing out that it helped students, especially those studying abroad, did charitable works, and supported both the Destour and Neo-Destour parties by spreading information about their activities and collecting funds for them (81-82). On the other hand, Marzouki maintains that the UMFT remained under Zitounian influence with "des visées politico-morales d'ordre stratégique pour cette aristocratie de la religion, à savoir la stabilité et la pérennité de son statut social" (40). As other women's organizations formed (the *Section Féminine de l'Association des Jeunes Musulmans* in 1944, and the *Club de la Jeune Fille Tunisienne* in 1954), Marzouki insists upon the continuing role of members of the Zitouna University: "Tous ces groupes, ayant leurs prolongements dans l'institution de la Zitouna, se voulaient être une émergence de la réalité du pays et se revêtaient d'une

coloration musulmane et nationaliste” (36). This suggests that the Zitouna University maintained enough influence to protect groups connected to it, as civil liberties such as the right to assembly were limited and official permits were difficult to obtain.

The presence of the Zitouna University in the feminist movement points to an established center of knowledge that contributed to the anti-colonial struggle.⁵² Under colonialism local knowledges served to defend identity and resist cultural assimilation. The battle over the Tunisian woman’s identity, role, and education were important aspects of this resistance, which explains Zitounian (male) efforts to influence women’s groups. French colonizers and Tunisian elites viewed the women’s movement as a strategic site of contention with important implications for both colonial control and Tunisian nationalism. At the same time, a phenomenon of male anxiety about women’s demands for education and change in role and status surfaced as men attempted to channel emancipation for their own priorities, which appear later in *Leila*.

However, unlike in Egypt, the Levant, Turkey, or France, Tunisian women’s periodicals did not appear until the late 1930s. French Catholic periodicals circulated first, catering to settler and European communities in Tunisia. European women created the biennial *Bulletin du comité des Dames amies de Carthages* from 1921 to 1924 (Hamdane, 1989, 106). *Fleurs de Tunisie: Bulletin de la Jeunesse Féminine Catholique* remained in print from February 1933 to May 1940 and was run by Fr. Hervé Bazin who also served as director of *Tunisie Catholique* (386).

⁵² Mignolo sees centers of local knowledge as important tools of resistance for the colonized to create “sustainable knowledges” equal to Western epistemologies (ix).

In addition, a smattering of women's magazines appeared in Tunisia shortly after Mahmoud Zarrouk launched *Leïla*. Four issues of *Pour Madame* were published in 1937, the 5th issue appearing 15 January 1938 (239), thirteen issues of the weekly journal *Bien-Aimée* appeared in 1939 (90), and four issues of *Renaître* appeared in 1939. Little is known about *Pour Madame*, as it has disappeared from the Bibliothèque Nationale de Tunis. *Bien-Aimée*, directed by 'the Comtesse Katia,' and *Pour Madame* were French-run journals. *Renaître* was founded and edited by Tunisian male elites.⁵³ Compared to the editors of *Leïla*, the *Renaître* editors' efforts to bring women into the debate on emancipation were limited, as only two of the three existing issues contain an article with an apparently female signature.⁵⁴ The appearance of these magazines at the same time as *Leïla* after a dearth in the feminine press suggests that editors looked to Zarrouk's success and hoped to speak to a growing women's readership. However, the short duration of these periodicals reflects the fragility of this new readership, which caused financial complications for publications. In addition, the ephemeral nature of these periodicals resulted in a negligible contribution to the debates on women's emancipation that were central to the first series of *Leïla*.

Zarrouk's Search for Readers

Did Zarrouk intend *Leïla* to cater to women only? The question of readership is important in order to understand the formation of identities and women's presence during

⁵³ Hédi Fayache served as director, Rachid Ben Hamida as chief editor, and Mahmoud Aslan, Béchir Daoud, and Habib Mrad as contributing editors (Hamdane, 251). Other male writers included Slim Ben Ghachem, F. Bonnet-Dupeyron, François Darbon, De Buyer, Hadi, Naamane Kchouk, A. Mammeri, Mo-Ka, Paul, Rachid, Shebabo. It is possible that women published under male pseudonyms, however, I have not found any traces of this subterfuge.

⁵⁴ "Les angoisses d'une jeune musulmane" (June 1939, 10) by Mille A.K., and "Propos de femmes" (July 1939, 15-16) by Rafika.

this period. Potential women readers were limited to those able to read French, that is, those from families of urban elites, particularly in and around the capital. A French visitor to Tunis, Lucie Paul Margueritte, documents the presence of the first issue of *Leïla* in an upper class Tunisian home in her travelogue, *Tunisiennes* (1937), as noted in Chapter 1. Given French censorship, colonial attitudes towards the Muslim woman, and mounting nationalism, it is not surprising that this periodical circulated among male intellectuals of the period as well and was debated as it passed from hand to hand (Driss, interview, 1 Apr. 2005). Mahmoud Aslan notes that "... aujourd'hui *Leïla* est le livre de chevet de bien de femmes et d'hommes de Tunisie, qui songent à l'avenir" ("La Femme tunisienne et la vie intellectuelle," June 1938, 7). Indeed, articles and artwork from *Leïla* appeared elsewhere in the Tunisian press. For example, Habib Bourguiba's and Bahri Guiga's *L'Action Tunisienne* reprinted G.-L. Le Monnier's caricature, "La Caravane des protégés" (*Leïla*, Mar. 1937, 17) citing its source as "eïla" (a typographical error) 30 July 1937, and *Le Petit Tunisois* reprinted Kalsoum's *Légendes d'oiseaux* (*Leïla*, May 1937, 6) 1 June 1937. André Demeerseman was a *Leïla* reader as well, for he quoted Saïda Sahly's article, "Le coin des Lectrices: L'instruction de la jeune fille musulmane" (Jan. 1938, 17) in "Caractères généraux de l'évolution féminine" (*IBLA* Apr. 1938, 32) (Bond 51).⁵⁵

In addition, *Leïla* contains cultural and theoretical subject matter, as opposed to practical subjects with household hints, suggesting that its readership came from families that could afford servants. Only twice do recipes appear, once for a cake ("Les recettes de

⁵⁵ In turn, the *Leïla* editorial team quoted Demeerseman's article, "L'influence des femmes et des jeunes filles dans la famille" (*Grand Lacs* July-Sept. 1938), in which he expressed views on women's emancipation in line with *Leïla*'s editorial stance. ("Leïla et la Press," Dec. 1938, 9)

Leïla: Gateau de five o'clock," June 1938, 5), and a second time for toothpaste and ink reflecting the lack of basic consumer goods due to World War II ("Les Recettes de Leïla," 24 Apr. 1941, 2). The periodical itself gives hints about its readership. In a list of subscribers ("Leïla vous parle" Jan. 1938, 1), names of urban elites stand out: the Hadjouj, Sakkat, and Hadad families are mentioned as well as Doctor Abdul-Moula, the wife of General Sfar (Cheikh of the Medina), and Mlle Ouasila Ben Salem, who wrote for the periodical and was the sister of the artist Aly Ben Salem, also a contributor. Algerian and French women were also among the subscribers, according to the article.

My brief analysis of advertising throughout the first and second series reveals the expected readership that advertisers hoped to reach and how the editors imagined their public. For the first series, fully 21% of the advertisements were aimed at a male clientele. Advertisers included tailors, barbers, men's clothing stores, and bicycle and automobile accessories stores. If advertisements for such male bastions as restaurants and cafés are included, the percentage increases to 31%. Items for the home and kitchen (including food) account for 22%, while 40% of the advertisements targeted a female clientele. Jewelry, women's clothing, beauty products, and the services of beauty institutes are offered.⁵⁶ Although discussion of women's emancipation nearly disappears in the second series (1941), advertising aimed at women increases to 54%, and decreases to 19% for home and kitchen and to 27% for men. This suggests that an increased number of women gained mobility and were viewed by merchants as potential clients, indicating changing consumer patterns. These statistics also suggest that both men and women read *Leïla*, although the first editorial addresses itself only to women. Out of a

⁵⁶ The remaining 7% is a miscellaneous category that includes a music academy, insurance companies, pharmacies, a pilgrimage cruise, and a fortune teller.

total of 155 advertisers in both series, 15% were European, and of the total only 3% were found in La Marsa, Carthage, and Sidi-Bou-Saïd, small towns north of Tunis. The remaining 97% were located in Tunis, indicating that the majority of the readership lived in Tunis or in the area.

How many Tunisians read *Leïla*? This would be difficult to estimate as the periodical, because of its size, price, and variety of contents, is a form that interests many and circulates easily among friends. Demeerseman noted in 1955 that "... l'audience d'une revue, en pays islamique, dépasse largement le nombre de ses abonnés" (*Soixante ans* 6). It seems reasonable to suppose that each copy had five or six readers, making the readership large enough (four to six thousand) for Zarrouk to draw advertisers, allowing him to produce *Leïla* for nearly five years, an impressive accomplishment for the period.

Conclusion

From late 1936 until 1941, *Leïla* and *Le Petit Tunisois: Hebdomadaire politique, social et littéraire* (1934-1957), created by Mahmoud Aslan, were the only French-language Tunisian-run periodicals that managed to publish with any regularity. In the political domain, *L'Action Tunisienne: organe de défense des intérêts tunisiens*, directed by Habib Bourguiba and Bahri Guiga, reopened (after being suspended in May 1933) from December 1936 to April 1938, when it was once again suspended. Other periodicals, such as *Tunis Nationaliste* (1937), *Tunis Artistique et Littéraire* (1938), and *Renâître* (1938), were so short-lived that their contribution was negligible. Because *Leïla* writers criticized the colonial order only indirectly, Zarrouk and his team maneuvered in the minefields of censorship with some success.

However, to place Zarrouk and his project within the historical context is to document a sad decline. To say that Zarrouk and his editors faced multiple difficulties in the production of *Leïla* borders on the trite. With the approach of World War II and increased French repression, women lost ground as survival and nationalism became priorities, until women faded from the public forum—and the public forum faded as well, signaling restraints on border thinking. And yet, we must salute the participants' courage under the colonial yoke, for despite constant challenges, these people, both the recognized and the anonymous contributors of *Leïla*, accomplished something unusual for the period—in fact, something that had never seriously been attempted before in Tunisia. Zarrouk and his editors created an imagined community, which encompassed readers, with a specific goal: the writing of a New Nation that included women, and not just any woman, but a New Tunisian Woman with full participation in the public sphere, to accompany a New Tunisian Man. Together they would right the social and political injustices unleashed upon Tunisian society by French occupation. It was within the border zone, which *Leïla's* forum opened onto, that new roles were formulated and tested and opinions expressed—by women as well as men. Border thinking flowered temporarily, and persisted in a more limited form to the end despite repression.

In the third issue's first-page letter to readers, we find the objectives of the editorial agenda clearly stated:

... l'esprit de cette revue ...: instruire la Tunisienne de ses droits et de ses devoirs envers ses compatriotes et ceux-ci de leurs droits et devoirs envers elle, afin de créer au sein de ce peuple l'harmonie sociale et intellectuelle, sans laquelle aucune *évolution* n'est possible. (my emphasis)
 ("Leïla vous parle: Des noms ou des idées" Mar. 1937, 1)

The goal was not only to improve the status of Tunisian women, but to convince Tunisian men that they must change their attitudes toward women as well. Responsibility was placed squarely upon men, as well as women, for without a mutual respect and participation, *évolution*—the march toward the independent nation—was not possible. On the other hand, French writers, influenced by colonial feminist discourse, pointed to a backward society that could only approach modernity if Tunisian women unveiled and were educated in French schools, placing the burden of reform upon women. In order for Tunisians to open the door to a New Tunisian Woman, it became necessary to shut the door on the negative representations of colonized women, especially the Muslim Woman, created by a tradition of French writings about Tunisian women. The next chapter focuses on how colonial feminist discourse developed, and how *Leïla* contributors, both Tunisian and French, attacked it.

Chapter 3
The Attack on Colonial Feminism:
Unstable Representations of the Muslim Woman

Introduction: Vindictive Literary Criticism

Une dame française, de préférence d'âge canonique, s'en vient de France chez nous toutes les deux ou trois années, se pencher avec une maternelle sollicitude sur le *problème* de la femme musulmane ! [Khaled's emphasis] —Khaled

So sputtered Khaled (a pseudonym) in his literary critique, "Encore Un," (*Leïla*, Mar. 1938, 6). His virulent attack on French women writers, and especially on Lucie Paul Margueritte and her 1937 book, *Tunisiennes*, is relentless and insulting. Khaled sought to break a tradition of European writings about Muslim women in Tunisia that dated from the end of the nineteenth century. However, he attacked women writers rather than men, bringing gender into the equation. What provoked his anger? I argue that he was irritated with a colonial feminist discourse, which, in the mouths of French men, was easily refuted because it was extreme, making it a binary opposition to nationalist ideology. On the other hand, in the mouths of French women, colonial feminist discourse was more difficult to disrupt because elements of a counter-hegemonic discourse appeared in their texts. This slippery middle terrain was difficult to push to an opposition, which would serve the anti-colonial struggle. When Lucie Paul Margueritte attempted to accurately report Tunisian women's opinions, reflecting the influence of reporting trends in the interwar period, she transgressed colonizer/colonized and male/female boundaries, and made Khaled nervous.¹ His article serves as a touchstone for this chapter because it

¹ Jean-Marc Moura notes that as technologies improved (radio, cinema, photography, aviation) in the interwar period, the reporting of current events became important, as opposed to the adventure-oriented, or history-oriented travelogue (*La Littérature des lointains*, 143-145).

represents an extreme: Khaled is so outraged by the border transgression of French women that his writing approaches the outrageous.

Khaled's article serves as an example of anxiety in the border zone. Tunisian male writers who dominated debates in *Leïla* by their numbers, and in some cases, by their prestige, generally sought to draw Tunisian women away from French influence. Consequently, the possibility of a woman-to-woman connection beyond patriarchal control caused anxiety. While Margueritte crossed into the colonized woman's world, Khaled, the colonized, stepped over dominant colonial boundaries by attacking Western women. This chapter focuses on the making and unmaking of colonial feminist discourse and the transgression of French/Tunisian, colonial/national, and male/female boundaries that occurred in *Leïla*. I have borrowed the notion of colonial feminism from Leïla Ahmed.² Tunisians themselves viewed French constructions of the Arab/Muslim Woman as Orientalist. Attacking French focus on the veil, Khaled writes ironically: "Nous envisageons fort bien, nous Orientaux tout court et qui ne jouissons pas de l'honneur par conséquent de prétendre au titre d'*Orientalistes*, nous envisageons aisément, disais-je, la femme européenne sans penser à son cotillon ou son béguin" [Khaled's emphasis] ("N'en Jetez Plus," Dec. 1938, 2). It is Orientalists who classify Muslim women by an article of clothing. Khaled keeps boundaries between *Orientaux* and *Orientalistes* in place, locating himself on the side of the *Orientaux* and describing negative aspects of the other side, thus shoring up binary oppositions.

²See Leïla Ahmed's *Women and Gender in Islam: Historical Roots of a Modern Debate* (1992), especially Chapter 8: "The Discourse of the Veil: Qassim Amin's Tahrir al-Mar'a (The Liberation of Woman) 1899."

Despite binary oppositions, surprisingly, border thinking appears in the literature of the period and on the part of both French and Tunisian writers in *Leïla*. Nationalist efforts to defend a Tunisian national identity, termed *la personnalité tunisienne*, filtered into the pages of *Leïla*, whose editors made strategic use of empathetic French writers. *Leïla* articles by Tunisian and French writers challenged negative representations of the colonized woman, thus transgressing established boundaries and practicing border thinking. Ultimately, *Leïla*'s editors and contributors sought to disrupt a colonial feminist discourse that created a negative, Orientalist representation of the Muslim (Tunisian) woman. At the same time, other *Leïla* authors worked to define a new role for women, that is, for the New Muslim Woman and the New Tunisian Woman for the Independent Nation.

This attack, expressed in the textual form of the periodical, confronted a dominant discourse on its own terrain, the text, and in the dominant language, French. I propose that the result of the *Leïla* articles was to create an authority that negated colonial feminist representations. This was necessary because colonial feminism paralleled Orientalist discourse, anchoring itself in textuality. In *Orientalism* (1978), Said notes that each work on the Orient affiliates itself with others, thus creating an intertextuality that sustains authority.³ Like Orientalist discourse, then, colonial feminist discourse was a construction and served the colonial project. Thus, the attack on colonial feminist representations served the anti-colonial project, while the construction of the New

³Said creates a genealogy of writings showing the growth of Orientalist discourse by looking at the ensemble of relationships between works that he views as an "analyzable formation." He emphasizes the author's exteriority to his or her subject: "What he [the Orientalist author] says and writes, by virtue of the fact that it is said or written, is meant to indicate that the Orientalist is outside the Orient, both as an existential and as a moral fact. The principal product of this exteriority is of course representation..." (21). This representation written from the exterior generally excludes views of the colonized about themselves or the colonizer.

Muslim Woman, discussed in the next chapter, contributed to the national agenda.

Borrowing Said's ideas, I consider a sub-genre of late 19th and early 20th century French texts on the "Muslim woman," which developed into a genealogy that created its own truth about the "Muslim woman" and that reflected colonial feminist discourse. The French texts contain the following elements of colonial feminism to varying degrees: a definition of the colonized woman that reduces her to a few essential characteristics and reifies her in relationship to the colonial situation; the Western woman as an ideal model; an attack on Islam that includes condemnation of the veil and segregation; an attack on local Tunisian society that points to the poor treatment of women as a sign of an inferior or sick society; a paternalist, patriarchal view that keeps men at the center and in power. In turn, these aspects serve colonialism. I suggest that the French definition of the "Muslim woman" dominates in the colonial situation, at least in part, due to French writings that gained authority through self-referential intertextuality.⁴ This authority had to be disrupted by Tunisians in order to express their own self-representations.

To show what the *Leïla* project faced in the colonial situation, I first discuss the genealogy of texts about the "Muslim woman" that demonstrates competing representations. This genealogy contains three branches: French male writers, French female writers, and Tunisian male and female writers.⁵ Although Khaled targets French female writers, I discuss French male writers to pinpoint the basic elements of colonial feminist discourse, and to tease out differences between the two French branches. I have

⁴Gérard Genette defines intertextuality as simply "la présence effective d'un texte dans un autre" (8).

⁵ I group Tunisian men and women together because of the few texts written by women. Generally, women writers in *Leïla* are less concerned with attacking French representations and more concerned with concrete changes in daily life.

chosen texts by writers of some renown or influence in Tunisia. Examples of the French male branch include Dr. Witold-Charles Lemanski's writings on the Tunisian woman from 1899 to 1913, which are foundational for the genealogy, Charles Géniaux's *Les Musulmanes* (1909), and Arthur Pellegrin's *Fille d'Islam* (1924). Then I turn to the female branch with Myriam Harry's *Tunis la blanche* (1910), Claire Géniaux's *Le Cyprès* (1918) and *L'âme musulmane en Tunisie* (1934), and Lucie Paul Margueritte's *Tunisiennes* (1937).⁶ The Tunisian branch, which includes *Leïla*, generally attacks constructions of the French branches or creates new representations of the Tunisian woman.

Before examining *Leïla*'s role in the destruction and construction of Tunisian women's identities, I discuss how Tunisians reacted to the representations of colonial feminist discourse preceding its publication in 1936. This includes the 1929 debate on unveiling Tunisian women provoked by the French Socialist Party in Tunis, and Tahar Haddad's 1930 book *Notre Femme dans la loi islamique et la société*, which contributes to the Tunisian branch of the genealogy. Haddad is important because of the degree of scandal and debate his book caused, and also because of an infiltration of colonial feminist discourse in his writing. Nevertheless, he put the equality of women within a nationalist context. Although *Leïla* contains no mention of him, Haddad paved the way for a writing of women's emancipation within the nationalist context that re-surfaced six

⁶ Additional texts of this genealogy: Mahmoud Aslan's *Les Yeux noirs de Leïla* (1940), A.-R. De Lens's *Le Harem entr'ouvert* (1919), Henri De Montety's *Femmes de Tunisie* (1958), Myriam Harry's *Madame Petit-Jardin* (1930), Théodore Valensi's *Parmi les Encens du Harem... Yasmina* (1922). Looking across the Maghreb, other texts come to mind: Magali Boisnard's *Les Endormies* (1909), François Bonjean's *Confidences d'une Fille de la Nuit* (1939), the numerous works of Marie Bugéja (1921-1939), Djamilia Debeche's *Leïla, jeune fille d'Algérie* (nd), Isabelle Eberhardt's *Pages d'Islam* (1922), Jeanne Sorrel's *Pages Africaines: L'Afrique du Nord vue par les littérateurs* (1938), and Jérôme and Jean Tharaud's *Fez ou les bourgeois de l'Islam* (1930) and *Rabat ou les heures marocaines* (1921).

years later in *Leïla*. However, reflecting shifting boundaries, unstable identities, and the strength of the French dominant discourse, colonial feminist discourse infiltrated *Leïla* as well. Nearly 80% of texts about women contain elements of colonial feminist discourse, especially the notion that women must become educated if Tunisian society is to move forward.

In the Tunisian branch of the genealogy, boundaries become fuzzy because of the influence of the historical context and an intertextuality that makes its presence felt in *Leïla*. I include two French women's articles that the *Leïla* editors exploited to attack colonial definitions of the Muslim woman: Claire Géniaux's "Chez les dé-voilées de Tunisie" (Feb. 1937, 22), and articles by Marlène Daisy. In addition, a caricature by the French artist G.-L. Le Monnier, who served as the magazine's art director, graphically undermines the colonial notion that the French improved Tunisians' condition through their civilizing mission and policies of *mise en valeur*.⁷ Finally, I suggest that while attacking French women writers, Khaled's "Encore Un" contains patriarchal parallels to the French branch of the genealogy, especially to Lemanski's comments on French women writers. Lemanski provides a precedent for Khaled, giving him the patriarchal right to name, to create representations, to critique, and to define all women. The guarded domain of the male gaze is reserved for men, whether colonizer or colonized, especially when the subject concerns women.

⁷ For information on the French civilizing mission as a discourse, see Alice L. Conklin's *A Mission to Civilize: The Republican Idea of Empire in France and West Africa, 1895-1930* (1997). Conklin pinpoints a fundamental contradiction in the relationship between Republican France and its empire—that of a democracy with colonies where *citoyens* governed *subjects*. She examines the development of the civilizing mission discourse connected to the development of French colonial policy. The combination created the illusion that democracy and colonialism went hand in hand.

The Good French Doctor: Witold-Charles Lemanski and “La Psychologie de la Femme Arabe” (1899)⁸

After his arrival in Tunis in 1893, Witold-Charles Lemanski visited Tunisians’ homes as a medical doctor, and, based on his experiences, posed as an authority on Tunisian life, entering forbidden spaces with his scientific eye of observation.⁹ His early articles on Tunisian women, for example, “La Psychologie de la Femme Arabe: La Pudeur” appearing in 1899, served as a reference for other European travelers and residents of the Protectorate. Indeed, Lucie Margueritte quotes him in *Tunisiennes* (1936), using intertextuality to establish her own authority based on Lemanski’s. I found no less than eight articles published in periodicals from 1899 to 1911 on “la femme arabe” or “la musulmane,” indicating a subject of predilection for him and the general (French) public. I consider Lemanski’s articles foundational because of their early appearance at the turn of the century and because he attempts to correct existing representations of the Oriental women, insisting that his version is accurate due to his observations informed by scientific training.

⁸ Dr. Witold-Charles Lemanski (1862-1977) was born in the Loire region. After medical studies in Paris, he began work in 1893 at the “Hôpital civil français” in Tunis, and opened a private practice. He was director and editor of *La Tunisie Illustrée*, where he published numerous articles on Tunisia. He served on the “Conseil d’hygiène” in Tunis, published medical articles in *Le Figaro*, and a monthly column, “L’hygiène,” in *La Tunisie Illustrée*, as well as numerous medical studies related to the Protectorate (Lambert 263). *Mœurs arabes. Scènes vécues*, compiled in 1913, contained his previously published articles on *la femme arabe* and *la musulmane*.

⁹ Michel Foucault argues that medical personnel serve to extend power structures by enforcing discipline through, for example, regular medical examinations of “objects.” Medical analyses and classifications contribute to a body of knowledge constituting the “medical discipline.” (187-188). George Mosse also notes a connection between the medical profession and structures of control linked to European nationalisms and respectability (9-11). Thus, Lemanski’s work, including his many writings and his role on the Hygiene Council in Tunis, contributed to colonial structures of power and discipline.

The French woman, or rather the French Christian woman serves as Lemanski's model. He promotes the myth of equality and freedom of French women: "La concurrence féminine chez nous existe partout. Nos contemporaines ont prouvé qu'elles pouvaient être professeurs, avocats, médecins pharmaciens, en attendant qu'elles deviennent députés, sénateurs et peut-être soldats" (1913, 27-28). Such flaunting of French women's emancipation was problematic as professional activities were limited to a minute minority, which failed to threaten male hierarchy. Lemanski's model is active, invests the public sphere, and travels within the mother country and abroad. Charles Géniaux and Arthur Pellegrin promote this model of equality in their texts:

Lemanski represents women on a physical level: French women have grace and beauty, while Tunisian women are seductive and dress with naivety, reflecting their naïve characters. He calls them *les emmurées* and *les éternelles invisibles*. These labels show that he applies a Western criterion to how social life is organized among the colonized. After years of observation and research, Lemanski denounces the passivity of the Arab woman:

La passivité presque complète s'accuse dans le caractère de la femme arabe, vaincue à la longue dans ses aspirations instinctives, constamment refoulées par la maîtrise de l'homme. Et cette passivité est faite de résignation comme de nonchaloir : la créature sans cesse dominée peut-elle s'insurger, se révolter et reprendre un peu de volonté ? ... C'est l'enfant avec sa grâce et son charme, mais privé d'énergie et de vigueur... [C'est] un prototype féminin sans variations notables. Point de changement, point de modification de par le temps et de par la mode. (*Mœurs* 21)

He defines Arab women as helpless victims and children due to a male domination that has robbed them of will power. In addition, Lemanski argues that religion creates the passivity of the Arab woman, which is her essential characteristic. He defines the gender

identity of the Arab woman ideologically, by her religion, rather than by spatial contingency: “Toute la psychologie de la femme arabe réside dans la loi religieuse révélée: le Coran est un livre saint, en même temps qu’un code et une philosophie” (“L’Assimilation de la Femme Arabe,” *La Tunisie Illustrée*, Jan. 1910, 7). Thus, a religious text, the Qur’an, sets the parameters for Lemanski’s description of the Arab woman, placing her within an ahistorical context.

Lemanski critiques representations of the Arab/Muslim woman found in French literature, but especially representations written by French women, discussed in “La Femme Arabe devant la Littérature Française” (*La Tunisie Illustrée* June 1910, 8-10). Lemanski circumscribes the action of penetrating Muslim women’s quarters within the male domain.¹⁰ Consequently, he considers French women writers’ efforts to enter into the private sphere and to observe Arab women to be erroneous and useless. He believes that women writers observe and analyze poorly:

Les femmes ont surtout tendance à s’insurger et à se révolter à la vue de leurs semblables, mises ainsi dans une sorte d’esclavage déshonorant. Elles étudient moins qu’elles ne s’enflamment en apôtres de civilisation... Au lieu de noter des traits et des symptômes, elles s’apitoient et rêvent un relèvement de la musulmane, rapide et complet (9).

He states that *la femme arabe* must be studied from a neutral point of view in order to understand her better and define her characteristic traits. This sounds oddly like the male

¹⁰For a glimpse of the vast secondary literature on Western views of the harem, see, for example, Leila Ahmed’s “Western Ethnocentrism and Perceptions of the Harem” (1982), Malek Alloula’s *The Colonial Harem* (1986), Julia Clancy-Smith’s “Islam, Gender, and Identities in the Making of French Algeria, 1830-1962” (1998), *L’Orient des femmes* (2002) edited by Marie-Elise Palmier-Chatelain and Pauline Lavagne d’Ortigue, Raina Lewis’s *Rethinking Orientalism: Women, Travel and the Ottoman Harem* (2004), especially “Chapter One: Harem Travellers.”

gaze that Mulvey discusses.¹¹ Lemanski implies that French women's emotions dictate their conduct and affect their ability to analyze what they see, making them poor writers.

Despite the fact that he has typical patriarchal views of the period towards all women and promotes colonial feminism, Lemanski describes well 1) a French male point of view, 2) French efforts at trying to define and analyze the Tunisian private sphere of the family, and their failure to do so, and 3) a phenomenon of French women writers attempting to discover the secrets of the Tunisian woman's private world,¹² and to give their help to emancipate her—and their perceived failure. Thus Lemanski touches upon the difficulties found in writing about Tunisian women that a French visitor stumbles upon.

The Sympathetic French Visitor: Charles Géniaux and *Les Musulmanes* (1909)

In the preface of *Les Musulmanes*, Charles Géniaux (1870-1931) insists that his book is an accurate description of the life of Muslim women due to his wife's observations conducted when she visited Muslim women at home, and he intends to contribute to the emancipation of Muslim women (viii).¹³ Géniaux claims that Tunisian women are *oisives*, they have nothing to do, which he contrasts to French women who work, albeit too much. *Oisiveté*, the essential character trait, dominates the image of the

¹¹ See Laura Mulvey's "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" (1975).

¹² The notion of the secret recalls Foucault: when the secrets of an individual are revealed, that individual can be controlled. See *Surveiller et Punir*, especially "Les corps dociles" (137-171).

¹³ In *Les Musulmanes*, Nijma and Nefissa, daughters of the wealthy Si Sadok Bou-Okkaz, attend a French school until the age of twelve. Si Sadok then hires a French woman to tutor them. Nijma is engaged to Hassan, a medical student in Paris who believes in women's emancipation. Si Sadok arranges for Nefissa to marry Chewki, a well-to-do shop owner. However, Nefissa dislikes Chewki and falls in love with her tutor's brother, René. She marries Chewki, but arranges to run off with René. While escaping, Nefissa falls and dies. Nijma marries Hassan and they move to the French section of town, where she becomes "Europeanized." When they return to the Medina, Nijma's family repudiates them.

sexually available woman, imprisoned in the harem, whose only activity is to be beautiful in order to serve her husband. Géniaux thus implies a horizontal position (and sexual activity) for all Tunisian women—represented by the minority of Tunisian elite women—vs. a vertical position for French women. He emphasizes the importance of the woman's body and the ritual of beauty: “S'épiler, se farder, s'embaumer, pousser l'art des onguents, du massage et des bains jusqu'à sa perfection, faire de son corps un chef-d'œuvre, rien n'était plus important lorsqu'on voulait régner sur le cœur de son mari...” (4). In addition to this focus on beauty rituals, he describes clothing and jewelry in detail, extending the image of a jewel to his main character, Nefissa, reifying her.

Colonial feminist discourse allows the French to use the colonized woman to discuss other subjects related to colonial domination. It is no coincidence that the publication of *Les Musulmanes* in 1909 is the same year as the debate on whether or not Arabic was a dead language, at the Institute of Carthage and in its periodical, *Revue Tunisienne*. Géniaux insists upon the importance of acquiring French as a prerequisite to Western definitions of progress: “Un Mahométan versé dans la langue française est accessible à beaucoup de sentiments inconnus des autres Tunisiens retranchés dans leur arabe, château-fort de leur immobilité intellectuelle” (178). Here he associates the Arabic language with intellectual stagnation, and criticizes Tunisians for defending it without embracing French.¹⁴ For Géniaux, the French language serves as a vehicle for “modernity.”

¹⁴Inverting Géniaux's notion reveals the dominant discourse of colonialism, for he fails to comment on the French in Tunisia who refuse to learn Arabic. His criterion for Tunisians is more stringent than for the French. Ali Bach Hamba's suggestion in *Le Tunisien* that “franco-arabe” schools, with both French and Arabic taught, should be open to all, kicked off the 1909 debate of whether Arabic was a dead language or not at the *Institut de Carthage*.

Géniaux gives a slight variation to the main argument of colonial feminism that society is decadent or ill because of women's status dictated by Islam. According to him: "La décadence de l'Islam n'avait pas d'autre cause que la condition des femmes" (166). By claiming that women's segregation has caused Islam's decadence, he displaces blame onto Tunisians, rather than implicating colonization and colonial discourse, which actively attacked Islam. Going a step further, Géniaux feminizes the Tunisian population, "... la douce population Tunisienne qu'on ne saurait fréquenter sans l'aimer..." (viii). In his eyes, the Tunisian woman represents the Tunisian man and Tunisian society. Thus the colonizer penetrates and occupies the feminized colonized subject more easily. However, a Tunisian-born Frenchman reveals the violence of this penetration when the images of the beloved Tunisian woman and population degenerate into that of a prostitute.

The Tunisian-born Frenchman: Arthur Pellegrin and *Fille d'Islam* (1924)

Due to his involvement with the French Socialist Party of Tunis (SFIO) and the Société des Ecrivains de l'Afrique Nord (SEAN), Arthur Pellegrin was influential in intellectual circles in Tunis.¹⁵ The publication of his *Histoire de la Tunisie depuis les origines jusqu'à nos jours* (1938) contributed to a dominant colonial discourse that minimized the negative impact of colonization on Tunisian society and emphasized the

¹⁵ Arthur Pellegrin (1891-1956) was born in Souk-El-Khemis, grew up in Hammam-Lif (a coastal suburb of Tunis) where his father owned a casino, attended the Collège Alaoui, then entered the French-owned Tunisian Railroad Company. He contributed to *La Tunisie illustrée* and wrote some fiction, *Les Aventures de Ragamouche* (1932) being the most well-known. He founded the *Société des Ecrivains de l'Afrique du Nord* (SEAN) in 1920, serving as the head editor of *La Kahena*, its periodical. (Corriou 2005, 91-94)

French civilizing mission.¹⁶ In Pellegrin's 1924 serial novel, *Fille d'Islam*, a colonial discourse that attacks Tunisian women, men, and Islam contributes to colonial feminism.

A seventeen-year old shepherd girl from a distant rural region goes to Tunis to work, and slides into prostitution. Such is Pellegrin's central character who represents the Muslim woman, reduced to *filles* in the title, suggesting the French term *filles de joie* (prostitute), and consequently insulting Muslim Tunisians. I include this novel because the historical moment motivated the creation of this text, which contains a colonial feminist discourse pushed to an extreme. This novel coincided with the Socialist Party's efforts to organize meetings to discuss the colonized woman's emancipation beginning in January 1924, which focused on unveiling. Pellegrin contributed to the public debate, or rather fanned the flames, with a serial novel printed in forty-nine installments during July and August 1924 in the Socialist Party's newspaper, *Tunis Socialiste*.¹⁷ To the best of my knowledge, it was never published in book form, thus it remained an ephemeral contribution to the debate of the moment.¹⁸

¹⁶Pellegrin proposes that external factors dominate Tunisian history. He describes the history of Tunisia as a series of colonizations (236), explained by the passivity of the "indigenous" population: "Impossible de tirer de la masse indigène, au cours de trente siècles d'histoire, un grand homme d'Etat qui ait eu le sens de l'indépendance de son pays et qui fut capable de le gouverner" (238-9). Insisting on France as a source of modernity, contrasted with the incompetence of local populations and the lack of a national identity, Pellegrin emphasizes the inevitability of colonization. In a teleological analysis, he sees the establishment of the French Consulate in Tunis in 1577 as the beginning of a permanent French presence that logically leads to the French Protectorate. According to Pellegrin, the history of the French Protectorate (beginning in 1881) was decisive for Tunisian destiny.

¹⁷Tunisians occasionally contributed to the French-run *Tunis Socialiste*, and a lively debate took place between it and the Tunisian-run *Etendard Tunisien* in 1929 over the veil, confirming that Tunisian elites read *Tunis Socialiste*.

¹⁸The story begins with a snake charmer whose largest, most deadly serpent escapes when a woman, screaming she has been robbed, distracts the crowd and the charmer. A policeman takes the woman, Zina, a seventeen-year old prostitute, and the snake charmer to the police station where she tells the commissioner that the snake charmer might work with the thief. Having no proof, the commissioner sends them away, and the snake charmer curses her, wishing that the escaped serpent would kill her. Between this incident and the end, when the curse comes to pass, Zina leaves her room in the red-light district of the Medina to take an apartment in another neighborhood of the Medina, and finds a well-to-do middle-aged Tunisian widower to keep her. Then, when he marries, she happens upon a Tunisian-born French artist, Pascal

This novel generated discussion that obliged Pellegrin to defend his point of view in “A propos de ‘Fille d’Islam’: Psychologie de la femme indigène” (*Tunis Socialiste*, 3 Aug. 1924) half-way through the novel’s publication. He explains that critiques about the realism of certain “sensual” (a polite term for “sexual”) scenes miss the point. This is a *roman à these* in which he intends to: “Donner de la femme indigène et du milieu où elle évolue, une représentation qui puisse convenir dans la majorité des cas.” He proposes to create a general description of the Muslim woman’s psychology in order to reveal “les mobiles secrets” that result from her social environment. According to Pellegrin, her behavior is not her fault. However, the choice of a prostitute to represent Muslim women suggests a paradox. Dalenda and Abdelhamid Largueche describe prostitutes in Tunisia as: “Etant exclue et n’ayant plus d’attaches avouées, elle [the prostitute] ne souille plus l’honneur et ne porte plus d’atteinte à l’identité morale du groupe dont elle est issue” (23). The main character, Zina, falls into this category. Repudiated by her family, she is alone, abandoned, living on the margins of society. It is

a far stretch of the imagination to have her

represent Muslim women in general. Zina

contaminates the constructed gender identity of

women for her example renders all women

prostitutes or sex objects.¹⁹

Fig. 3.1



A black and white drawing of a veiled woman’s head is at the beginning of each

installment (Fig. 3.1). The anonymous nature of the face, with a mosque in the

Gaulier. Throughout the story, the shadowy presence of the serpent hidden in the background affects Zina’s actions and emotions.

¹⁹ In fact, Pellegrin’s character suggests French literary models such as Manon Lescaut or Zola’s Nana.

background that signifies her religion, suggests that this could be a woman anywhere in the Orient. The almond-shaped eyes, shaped like the female sexual organs, represent all Muslim women and are of an exaggerated size that draw attention to the only identifiable human characteristic of the face.²⁰ Whereas Pellegrin at first describes Zina's eyes as black, we discover they are green when she meets her French lover, Pascal. For Pellegrin, black eyes, seen as such due to the use of *khol* (a black eyeliner), are common to all Muslim women whether or not the iris is actually black. These eyes gaze directly at the reader, revealed, and proffer an invitation. Like the shifting eye color, Zina's clothing changes when she meets Pascal. Veiled at the beginning, she goes out with him wearing Western clothes towards the end. Thus Pellegrin proceeds to construct an Orientalist view of the colonized woman that codifies and reifies her with an essentialist physical description, and at the same time that allows him to critique the society she lives in because of her perceived status, that is, as a sex object.

This ahistorical construction contains multiple identity labels that shift, making it unstable and empty of meaning because Pellegrin uses them interchangeably. Depending on the occasion, Zina is Muslim, Arab, Oriental, Berber, or *Mauresque*. What is stable throughout the story and defines the colonized woman is her *sensualité*:

Et nous affirmons dans notre livre que pour la femme arabe, l'amour sensuel est la chose essentielle. Dans sa vie, tout converge pour faire d'elle la ... fille d'Islam, l'être à plaisir, le jouet de l'homme, et la dominatrice des hommes ... Le but de la claustration est de soustraire l'épouse ou la fille à la convoitise du mâle étranger. Le voile est la claustration publique...

("A propos de 'Fille d'Islam': Psychologie de la femme indigène." *Tunis Socialiste*, 3 Aug. 1924)

²⁰ For an explanation of the signification of the eyes in the Maghreb, see Malek Chebel's *Le Corps dans la tradition au Maghreb*, 41-45.

Pellegrin considers Zina's most essential trait to be sexual obsession and availability, which erases other personality traits. She exists only for men's physical pleasure. Pascal arrives at any time of the day or night, expecting Zina to wait for him and on him—since she has nothing else to do. The constant presence of sexuality and unused sexual energy overflows into illicit lesbian sexuality, hinted at in a description of a Tunisian wedding reception for women, reminding the reader of Western perceptions of the harem as perversion.²¹ The female guests listen to singers and watch belly-dancers: "Et Zina ressentait comme une ardeur dans ses veines, une bouffée de chaleur contracta ses cuisses" (9 Aug. 1924). In addition to her overriding sexual capacities, the Muslim woman is naïve, simple, and slow of movement due to her inactive life: "Elle [Zina] allait d'un meuble à l'autre avec la paresse de mouvement commune à toutes les femmes d'Orient" (4 Aug. 1924). Indeed, she is almost a piece of furniture for she rarely leaves her apartment and only twice does she venture out of the Medina, with disagreeable results. Pellegrin compares the perceived slowness of the languorous Oriental woman to a European model, in this case, a young, beautiful, blond, energetic English missionary raised in Tunisia, Miss Nelly.

Contrasted to Zina's immobility, Miss Nelly moves between the European city and the Medina in Tunis with ease, and travels to Switzerland for vacation. When Zina meets her, she feels liberated, she has "le coeur affranchi." Yet, Miss Nelly attempts to convert Zina, gives her a Bible, and visits the prostitute to read it to her. For Zina to be

²¹ Leïla Ahmed notes: "What recurs in Western men's accounts of the harem is prurient speculation, often taking the form of downright assertion, about women's sexual relations with each other within the harem. Yet, however confident their statements, Western men had in fact no conceivable means of access to harems" ("Western Ethnocentrism" 524). It appears unlikely that Pellegrin had access to the inner sanctum of Tunisian homes, thus his description reflects his own views and imagination rather than a social reality.

free of the evil that haunts her, that is, the serpent that represents Islam, Zina must convert to Christianity. Pellegrin's model of the European woman is a proselytizing Christian that stands in opposition to Zina.

Pellegrin blatantly attacks Islam. Admitting that his anti-Islam views will shock *les vieux turbans* (religious elites of the Zitouna Mosque/University), he proposes to demonstrate :

... le déterminisme de l'islam, l'influence de la religion sur la situation de la femme indigène. En symbolisant l'islam sous la forme active du Serpent, esprit du mal, selon la figuration poétique admise par les siècles, je rends plus sensible les conséquences sociales et plus spécialement féminines du cléralisme mahométant. ("Propos")

Here we find the argument at the base of colonial feminism—that women's inferior status is due to Islam, which burdens colonized society with *un dogme périmé* and superstitions. Like Lemanski, Pellegrin defines Tunisian women's identity ideologically, contained within the parameters of religion. He describes a stagnating culture due to Islam, without consideration of the disastrous effects of colonization.²² Scenes with the serpent frame the story making the attack on Islam a theme as important as the Muslim woman. The representation of Islam and of evil united in the form of the serpent, and the representation of the Muslim woman as a prostitute who cannot escape the serpent signifies that Islam pushes women into the role of a sex slave.

²² For example, Pellegrin has a blind spot when discussing prostitution, as French colonization aggravated it. Dalenda and Abdelhamid Larguèche argue that before colonization, local authorities were able to control prostitution in the Medina, by designating certain closed spaces for prostitutes, generally located in the periphery neighborhoods of the Medina (48-51). As the economic center of the city shifted from the Medina to the European city in Tunis, Europeans gained power and penetrated the Medina where they established taverns and gambling houses with access to prostitutes usually coming from impoverished neighborhoods (65). For further information on prostitution in Tunis's Medina just before colonization, see Dalenda and Abdelhamid Larguèche's *Marginales en terre d'Islam* (1992), especially chapter 1, "Anthropologie de la prostitution dans la ville arabe."

These authors assert that they respect the colonized. Lemanski converses with Tunisian elites and enters their homes. Géniaux mentions his Tunisian friends in his preface and apologizes if he should offend them (ix). Pellegrin respects “les indigènes en tant que *hommes*, mais je regrette de les voir courber sous le joug des superstitions et d’un dogme périmé” (“Propos”). They do not intend to assimilate the Arab woman: she provides an excuse to attack Islam and Muslim identity, which is part of the multiple Tunisian identity discussed in the previous chapter. For them, the status of Muslim women is a religious question, not only in Tunisia, but across the Islamic Ummah. Women must renounce Islam to obtain a change in status. They promote French education as a means to emancipate Tunisian women, disregarding Arabic-language education or the possibility of Tunisian-run schools. These writers generally disregard economic, class, and political aspects, such as colonization, that affect change. For them, use of the Arab/Muslim woman’s body allows the French to colonize Tunisian society more effectively.

The Women’s Branch of the Genealogy

Orientalist discourse, as defined by Edward Said in *Orientalism*, filters into French women’s writings about the Arab/Muslim woman. However, according to Reina Lewis, women writers created a gendered counter-discourse that challenged the stereotypes of Orientalist discourse. Lewis argues that women viewed difference less pejoratively and absolutely than Said’s model implies. She proposes that even though these Western women created so-called imperialist images and texts, they recognized differences of class, religion, and nation that created irregularities in Orientalist discourse (*Gendering Orientalism* 3). French women’s texts demonstrate their unusual position of

being both on the inside and the outside of ideology, which permits a double critique.²³ They represent the French colonizer, and yet are absent from French and colonial government. They enter into Tunisian women's private spaces as women, yet show they are foreign by their critique of Tunisian customs. Although Lemanski, the good French doctor, dismisses European women's writings on Tunisian women, I propose that they showed more perception than men.

A French Woman from the Orient: Myriam Harry and *Tunis la Blanche* (1910)

Myriam Harry's influence on the texts of the genealogy can be seen in Lucie Margueritte's *Tunisiennes* where Margueritte mentions her name and follows a similar travelogue format as Harry's *Tunis la Blanche* (1910).²⁴ Lucie and Eve Margueritte's *Deux frères, deux sœurs: Deux époques littéraires* (1951) describes connections between Harry, Parisian literary circles, and other French writers of the genealogy. The Margueritte sisters describe a Parisian milieu of French writers interested in North Africa who socialized together, including Jérôme and Jean Tharaud, François Bonjean, and Harry.

Harry exploited a multiple identity as a French woman born in the Levant to gain the sympathy of Tunisians and access to their homes, shops, and ceremonies. As the narrator of her travelogue, she serves as the Western model for the emancipated woman, however, she brings nuance and diversity to this model because she was viewed by

²³ Teresa de Lauretis argues that feminists are both inside and outside of ideology, which permits a unique perspective (10).

²⁴ Myriam Harry (1869-1958) was born in Jerusalem as Maria Shapira. She traveled extensively but eventually settled in France and married a sculptor, Emile Perrault. Her novel *Madame Petit-Jardin* (1909) takes place in Tunisia.

Tunisians as a *fille de Syrie*,²⁵ spoke Arabic, and traveled to other Arab countries, particularly Syria, Egypt, and Palestine, to which she refers in the text. She embodies the freedom to explore both “Tunis la Française” and “Tunis la Musulmane,” including red-light districts. Entering confidently into private and public spaces, she describes and defines the colonized through the gaze of the colonizer (the male gaze). Her text carries an Orientalist discourse of the feminized other, as the title suggests, that allows her to explore and inhabit the female body of North Africa with the reader. Nevertheless she demonstrates not only curiosity about Tunisians, but also sympathy for them, and she commands a degree of respect from them—according to her account. The narrator speaks with people across class and religious lines, and Harry expresses diverse viewpoints in direct reported speech, whereas Lemanski, writing at the same time, only gives brief interpretations of conversations with Tunisians.

Harry shows appreciation for the Medina (the Arab city) and annoyance with the French part of Tunis and French society. According to her, French-style feminism would disrupt Tunisian life and destroy the fabric of society: “O sainte Manoubia, maraboute occidentale, préservez quand même du féminisme cette calme terre d’Islam” (258). Defining Tunisia by its religion while mixing East and West by referring to Manoubia as Western, she is unable to see the compatibility of Islam and feminism or women’s rights. Due to Harry’s questioning of Western feminism’s application in “terre d’Islam,” Hédia Khadhar considers her to be in opposition to Charles Géniaux’s views found in *Les Musulmanes* because she expresses an “anti-féminisme coloniale” (45). I disagree for

²⁵ The use of “fille” suggests innocence, the innocent traveler—who is not so innocent—seeking knowledge. See Mary Louise Pratt’s *Imperial Eyes*, especially chapter 4: “Anti-conquest II: The Mystique of Reciprocity.”

although Harry's comments suggest a counter-hegemonic aspect, nevertheless, her text is influenced by colonial feminist discourse. For example, she abhors Tunisian women's veiling style:

Ah! ces spectres à masque noir, quelle note de tristesse ils jettent en nous ce premier jour ! Jamais nous n'avons rien vu de plus disgracieux, de plus hideux; de plus lugubre que ce voile des Tunisiennes, composé d'une bande en crêpe de laine sombre qu'elles appliquent deux fois si étroitement autour de la tête, sur le front d'abord, sur le bas du visage ensuite, que de loin on dirait une gourme horrible et écailleuse. Ah! que nous aimions mieux la mousseline, pourtant si baroquement historiée, des femmes de Syrie; et combien l'*azar* des Egyptiennes, qui sépare les yeux par une colonnette d'or et se termine en barbe de pharaon, nous semble joli, comparé à cette cangue funéraire! (15-16)

Harry expresses an aesthetic distaste through images of death. Veiled women are *spectres*, associated with black masks and their perceived ugliness is *lugubre*. She labels the veil *un linceul immaculé*, a shroud that represents a walking death, which corresponds to the metaphors she creates for the women she sees in public: *des paquets de linges, des ensevelies, des mortes vivantes, des séquestrées éternelles, des momies éblouissantes*. Unable to differentiate individuals in public, she describes Tunisian women negatively and as a group. Referring to the black face covering, she states that they wear “sur leur visage invisible le deuil de leur esclavage millénaire” (16). Harry sees the harem as slavery connected to a slow death and mutes descriptions of blatant sexuality and availability.²⁶ She associates Tunisian women with other women from Muslim countries, yet detaches them from the Muslim world with terms of death—

²⁶ Harry's 1930 novel, *Madame Petit Jardin*, maintains the same images of women as *paquets de linge*. However, as the story is about a young Frenchman sent to a government post in Tunisia who buys and “marries” a Tunisian, Lalla Janina, Harry suggests sexual appetite and availability connected to captivity and prostitution, and influenced by deteriorating economic conditions aggravated by colonization. In her 1931 travelogue, *La Tunisie Enchantée*, Tunisian women disappear out of her writing as she ventures into southern Tunisia, describing the land, monuments, visible social activity, and legends.

Tunisian women wear a *cangue funéraire*, a description suggesting distaste that is not extended to other Muslim women.

Educated, French-speaking Tunisian women perplex Harry. When she speaks to them directly she nuances her descriptions of them and the reader feels that the narrator comes close to establishing a respectful woman-to-woman relationship. For example, a young, “Europeanized” woman, who she meets in a Tunisian home, speaks a “pure” French, wears Western clothes, accepts a traditional marriage, and dons an enveloping *sifsari* when she goes out.²⁷ Harry records something surprising: an intentional attack on European assumptions about Tunisian women by the “Europeanized” Tunisian woman—who collects postcards:

On aime beaucoup les cartes de la Tunisie; toutes me supplient ‘envoyez-moi surtout des chameaux ou bien des odalisques’. C’est même ainsi que j’ai trouvé une grande amie inconnue, qui s’appelle Madeleine et habite Paris... Elle me raconte tout ce qu’elle fait; ses parties de tennis et ses promenades en automobile avec un camarade de son frère. Moi, comme je ne veux pas être en retard, j’invente des flirts avec mes cousins, étudiants à la grande mosquée, des pique-niques à dos de dromadaires, des danses de ventre champêtres et des matinées à Karagouz. Elle n’en revient pas! “Ah! Comme c’est étrange—m’écrit-elle—tout ce que vous me racontez! Imaginez-vous qu’ici on fait courir le bruit que vous êtes des séquestrées, des emmurées, des mortes-vivantes privées de la société des mâles. Et je pleurais votre sort macabre de toute mon âme! Et voilà que vous m’apprenez que l’on ne sait rien de vrai sur vous et que votre véritable existence est peut-être plus folichonne que la nôtre! Aussi vais-je remettre vos lettres au camarade de mon frère,... un jeune écrivain, qui composera un roman avec. (153)

The *mise en abîme*, the paralleling of the French author who writes about Tunisian women to Harry’s narrator, reveals the slippery terrain of identity construction into which the authors in the genealogy venture. This Tunisian woman demystifies the colonial gaze

²⁷ The term “Europeanized” meant that a Tunisian woman had a French education or had been taught French under a tutor at home and had possibly traveled to Europe. This implied that she viewed French culture positively. By 1936, this term referred to the adoption of Western dress over Tunisian styles as well. For French writers, “Europeanized” connoted “modernity.” For Tunisian writers, it carried negative connotations that bordered on betrayal to Tunisian society if changes were uncontrolled and frivolous.

contained in an artifact of French popular culture, the postcard, by attaching a different description to it. This new description challenges the representation of the Muslim woman who speaks only Arabic, the silent Other.

In addition, the gaze of the writer parallels the gaze of the photographer who produced postcard images, creating another *mise en abîme*. Malek Alloula points out that the photographer created images of the Oriental woman in his studio that represented the Frenchman's phantasm of the hidden Oriental woman and her accessibility rather than an image based on the reality of women's lives (xiv).²⁸ Harry creates this image of the "Europeanized" Tunisian woman for the reader. However, is the postcard-collecting Tunisian woman a fiction? Possibly, yet, it is not consistent with Harry's other descriptions of Tunisian women. It seems probable that Harry stumbled upon an articulate, educated woman that did not fit into Harry's notions of Tunisian women. When the "Europeanized" woman leaves with a friend, the narrator appears to meditate on the meaning of their conversation: "... et, toute songeuse, je les regardai s'éloigner sur le pavé cahoteux de cette Rue du Chameau" (154). This final sentence of the chapter creates ambiguity concerning the French-speaking Tunisian woman caused by the narrator's inability to define and classify her, which hangs in the air and remains unresolved for the reader.

The writers of the male branch of the genealogy fail to mention colonialism, much less critique it. They describe French domination in an ahistorical manner, as natural and permanent, at best referring to a civilizing mission. However, Harry recognizes the fact of

²⁸By means of an examination of the humble postcard of the colonial period in Algeria, Malek Alloula shows how visual Orientalist representations of colonial women were constructed and he demonstrates the connection between French phantasm and the French political agenda of colonialism. See *The Colonial Harem* (1986).

colonization, calling it the French “occupation” and she nuances her ideas. On the one hand, her writing reflects a modernity and orientalist discourse seen in images such as the upright European and the squatting Arab, and she emphasizes the divide between the modern European city of Tunis and the traditional Arab city, the Medina. The tram-way, as a symbol of modernity, new technologies, and French presence, goes between the cities, linking the two, and penetrating the old city. A pessimistic friend says:

Les tram-ways, voyez-vous, c’est notre force ici, notre supériorité étalée à travers la ville et reconnue par les Arabes, qui, pour le reste, nous jugent des êtres inférieurs. C’est notre seul contact avec eux, la seule tentative de notre progrès à laquelle ils ne sont pas demeurés tacitement fermés. (98)

By describing her friend as pessimistic, Harry distances herself from this view, suggesting she does not agree, while she demonstrates the depth of the divide between the colonizer and the colonized, and shows the refusal of Tunisians to accept French superiority.

On the other hand, Harry critiques colonialism by reporting a variety of view points expressed in conversations with the French of Tunisia, elderly Tunisian men, and young Tunisian men and women, recording Tunisian critiques of the colonial system. She questions French influence: “... je songe à cette race jadis si puissante, à cette antique race si noble, si artiste, si intelligente, et qui semble porter en elle le délabrement fleuri de sa ville ... Maintenant, qui sait vers quel dilemme moderne nous la conduisons? Vers le bonheur ou vers la dissolution?” (125). Although she distances Tunisians’ history into antiquity, she is sympathetic and sensitive to a local identity that is a source of pride. For Harry, the changes that French colonization brings remain problematic and she doubts their benefits to Tunisian culture and society.

Reflecting linguistic problems concerning the labeling of identities during this period, the reader finds confusion about what is *islamique* and *musulman*. “Tunisian” was generally not used for the colonized as it would introduce ambiguity because the French born in Tunisia were referred to as “Tunisian.” In fact, Harry uses “Tunisian” for French relatives and friends. Thus, something like “le bournous islamique” meant rather a Tunisian cloak, having nothing to do with religion. Despite this ambiguity and unlike the male authors discussed above, Harry does not attack Islam, nor suggest that women must convert to be emancipated. She makes an occasional erroneous statement about religious practices, such as placing Aïde Sghaier right after the 27th day of Ramadan, the Night of Decree, and reports legends about marabouts that are based on hearsay, however, she does not offend. She accepts Islam more readily, however, she fails to see the possibility of progressive thought or reform stemming from it. In this sense, colonial feminist discourse influences her writing on the Muslim woman reflected in her distaste for veiled women.

The Sympathetic French Visitor’s Wife: Claire Géniaux and *L’âme musulmane en Tunisie* (1934)

Claire Géniaux served as her husband’s (Charles) research assistant to investigate the private life of Tunisian families.²⁹ However, she was a vocal feminist and an author in her own right who used her observations for books and articles such as her novel *Le*

²⁹Claire Charles Géniaux (18.-19..). With her husband, Charles, Claire wrote several novels (*Le Cyprès* (1918), *Une Affranchie* (1924), *Font-Colombes ou l’amour et l’art* (1930)), and novels under her own name as well (*Le Sort le plus beau !*, *Un héros national*, *L’amour a brisé la chaîne* (1939), *A l’amour tout est possible* (1946), *Une jeune fille passionnée* (1948)) in addition to her travelogue, *L’Ame musulmane en Tunisie*. She contributed an article, “Le Cimetière,” to *Le Minaret* [Tunis] in which she comments on Tunisian women (March 1908, 103-105). This early article precedes Charles’ *Les Musulmanes* of 1909.

Cyprès (1918)³⁰ and later *L'âme musulmane en Tunisie* (1934). More daring than her husband, Géniaux crossed boundaries and developed border thinking by challenging borders. In *Le Cyprès*, Géniaux explores the possibility of intermarriage between a Tunisian (Muslim) man with a French (Christian) woman as a means for improving the Tunisian woman's status, based on the assumption that the French woman will provide a model from within the Tunisian family unit and throw open the shutters and doors. Géniaux modifies the idea of penetration of the Tunisian family's inner sanctum. Connected to Géniaux's belief that French women can affect change among Tunisian women is the belief that Tunisian women will bring about a change in Islam: "... l'évolution de l'Islam, dans le sens que nous désirons, se fera surtout par les femmes." The ambiguity of the "nous"—it possibly refers to women in general, French women, or the French in general, that is, the French colonizer—suggests control of this process by the French who impose a model. Here we see the mixing of religion and French feminism that characterizes the colonial feminist discourse.

Le Cyprès tells the story of a French-educated Tunisian who falls in love with a woman from the French bourgeoisie of Tunis—who refuses to marry him for fear of losing her freedom. With good reason, from a French point of view, as, generally, the appearance of French women characters assimilated into Islamic culture through

³⁰ Although Claire Géniaux co-authored *Le Cyprès* with her husband, it is probable that Claire wrote it under Charles' wing, as he was an established author. In the "Avertissement" the first person pronoun "je" or some form of the possessive pronoun "mon" appears nine times, while the first person plural pronoun "nous" is used only four times, which suggests that one person wrote the novel. In addition, the author states: "A Alger, à Tunis, elles sont quelques-unes,--parmi mes amies les plus chères,--qui désirent sincèrement un relèvement de leur condition morale et sociale." It is improbable that Charles would write such a statement because he would not have close friends who were Tunisian women. As mentioned above, he gave credit in *Les Musulmanes* to Claire for entering women's quarters and researching Tunisian women's life-styles. Consequently, I conclude that Claire wrote *Le Cyprès*, or at least the majority of it.

marriage to Tunisians (always wealthy) reflects anxiety over fear of contamination, loss of freedom, and being absorbed by the colonized majority. These characters look like Tunisian women, with black hair, *khol* (black eye-liner) around their eyes, and Tunisian clothing, and have difficulty speaking their mother language...or even remembering their maiden names, demonstrating a total loss of identity.³¹ Avoiding these stereotypes, Géniaux explores the French woman's point of view and at first finishes her novel with a happy ending, that is, a wedding. After speaking with young Tunisian elites in 1917 who expressed the problems involved, she changed her final chapter: "Quelques exemples qui me furent donnés d'unions malheureuses, ébranlèrent ma foi en la possibilité d'un mariage avec une Française pour mon tirailleur et, dans la crainte de sembler encourager ce genre d'union, je modifiai, avec regret, la conclusion de mon livre" (iii). Géniaux's moral concern about not encouraging marriages that would create problems shows that the writers in this genealogy consider their texts to be pedagogical and informative—they write *romans à thèse*. The originality of Géniaux's novel is the French woman who considers crossing boundaries, which was a more realistic possibility than the fantasies of male writers who brought together French men with Tunisian women.³²

Géniaux returned to Tunisia after her husband's death in 1931 for a visit that resulted in *L'âme musulmane en Tunisie*. Like other travel literature on Tunisia, the

³¹ The French tutor, Josseline, in *Les Musulmanes* by Charles Géniaux, visits a school friend, Julienne Allala, who she fails to recognize (86-94). In Myriam Harry's *Tunis la Blanche*, the narrator meets a French woman married to a Tunisian at a wedding celebration whose name, Julie, is transformed into "Joulie" and who enjoys the festivities as an insider, unlike the narrator who must observe and analyze from the outside (140-144).

³² The phenomenon of French women married to foreigners was related to historical events. Reynolds discusses the effects of World War I that devastated a whole generation of young men. For example, immigrant laborers did not just fill a breach in the labor force, but provided much-needed husbands for French women as well. See *France Between the Wars: Gender and politics*, Chapter 1: "Demography and Its Discontents."

author begins with the arrival by boat in the port of Tunis, however, rather than focusing on the city she focuses on the Sidi-Bel-Hassen cemetery on a hilltop in Tunis where Tij-ba, a Tunisian woman friend, is buried. Using similar death imagery as Harry, Géniaux sets the tone for the book and evokes the tomb as a symbol of the Arab houses where Muslim women are buried, literally, for adultery (supposedly they are secretly buried under the central patio), or symbolically (10). She implies that her book examines Tunisian women's lives: "J'ai hâte de savoir à présent quels progrès se sont accomplis dans l'évolution des musulmanes depuis la mort de ma charmante amie" (12). However, in the next chapter, she finds that Tunisian women have changed little. Thus, as seen in the other texts of the genealogy, a discussion about the Tunisian woman opens a discussion on other topics. Only four of eighteen chapters concern women and emancipation in Tunisia.

This author mutes her attack on religion, however, she views Islam negatively, unable to understand why Georges Perrin, a French artist who she visits, converted to Islam. She sees women's *claustration* as a requirement of Islam, which parallels the isolation of Tunisian men—as if religion separates Tunisians from the "modern" world:

Combien ces beldis, cadis, muftis, si parfaitement beaux et harmonieux, sont logiques en demeurant enfermés volontairement dans leur Islam! Ils forment un tout harmonieux. Ils nous méprisent parce qu'ils nous ignorent et ne cherchent pas à nous connaître. Isolés par leur religion et leurs mœurs familiales, ils n'ont aucun contact avec les maîtres temporaires qu'Allah leur envoya comme une plaie et qu'ils subissent avec une dédaigneuse résignation. (54)

Referring to French colonization as *une plaie*, Géniaux looks sympathetically upon the plight of Tunisians under the colonial yoke. Yet, she recognizes that political changes

have come about for a minority of Tunisian elites educated in French schools, which would seem to suggest that “progress” requires a French education.

However, Géniaux’s writing undergoes a radical change compared to the earlier texts mentioned above. For, despite her critiques of Tunisian women and society, she supports the Tunisian nationalist movement. Although she contributes to colonial discourse with the use of a colonial feminist discourse containing a Western model, nevertheless, she critiques colonialism as well, creating a counter-hegemonic discourse. She expresses this on a personal level by describing the character and activities of the well-known nationalist, Chedly Khairallah, son of her friend Tij-ba. She deftly uses her descriptions of the life of Tij-ba and the Tunisian home at the beginning of her book to lead into a discussion of Tunisian nationalism several chapters later:

Toute la rancœur accumulée depuis l’occupation française chez les Tunisiens qui, d’année en année, ont vu leurs espoirs s’évanouir, s’est fait jour chez les principaux promoteurs du mouvement nationaliste. Ils ne cherchent pas, comme le faisaient leurs aînés, à établir une loyale et étroite collaboration entre les Français, mais veulent secouer la tutelle de la nation protectrice, dût leur pays en pâtir. (55)

Like Harry, Géniaux recognizes French presence as an occupation. Rather than blaming Tunisian nationalists, she considers the French responsible for the state of the Protectorate and the abuse of Tunisians rights. Compared to her observations made during earlier visits, she notes a change over time for the worse.

Géniaux demonstrates not only a willingness to listen to Khairallah’s view point, but to understand it.³³ Thus she is able to differentiate between nationalisms, and astutely describes local notions of nationhood:

³³ For a more typical French colonial view on Chedly Khairallah and nationalists, see René Vanlande’s *Attention en Tunisie ! Après les Lampions du Cinquantenaire* (1931, 95-116). He records an interview with Chedly Khairallah in direct reported speech, demonstrating a willingness to listen, but not to understand.

S'il [Chedly Khairallah] admire Mustapha-Kemal dans son œuvre de libération, il est loin d'en approuver tous les moyens. Le dictateur d'Ankara veut faire des Turcs des hommes que rien ne distinguera des Occidentaux et, capables de lutter contre eux en employant les mêmes armes, tandis que les destouriens, tout en préconisant certaines réformes indispensables, entendent demeurer musulmans, fidèles à leur religion, à leur statut personnel, à leur culture, à leurs mœurs familiales ... (60)

Géniaux records that Tunisian nationalists view the Kemalist model with hesitation and prefer to take a more moderate course that protects local identity, religion, and culture.

Consequently, Khairallah in fact supports the veil as a political strategy although Géniaux notes that his sisters do not, suggesting a breach between men's and women's priorities.

Géniaux appears to be more interested in Tunisian men, particularly Tunis elites and nationalists, than Tunisian women. Colonial feminist discourse dominates her writing because she propagates a patriarchal view that keeps men at the center and in power, and maintains a Western model for women that condemns the practice of veiling and segregation. However, her understanding and support of the nationalist movement during this time period and within this literature is so surprising that *L'âme musulmane en Tunisie* is worthy of notice because it demonstrates border thinking.

Sponsored by the State: Lucie Paul Margueritte and *Les Tunisiennes* (1937)

Lucie Paul Margueritte came to Tunisia with the stated purpose of documenting *un theme délicat*—the Tunisian woman's private world that French men were unable to enter.³⁴ A jury awarded her the *Bourse du Protectorat Tunisien*, a travel grant to the

When expressing the French position, he views Khairallah condescendingly: "Ce n'est pas être dupe que de tendre la main à l'enfant prodigue, même si, trop souvent, il s'est montré mauvais fils !" (115) Here we find a typical orientalist trope of the colonized portrayed as children that enhances French superiority.

³⁴ Lucie Paul Margueritte (1886-195..) was the daughter of the French writer Paul Margueritte. She frequented Parisian literary and artistic milieus, which included writers such as Stéphane Mallarmé, Alphonse Daudet, Guillaume Apollinaire, and Louis Bertrand, through her father and her uncle, Victor Margueritte. She traveled extensively with her family, spending winters in Algeria, Corsica, Nice, Italy, and the island of Jersey. She began publishing stories in magazines at the age of eighteen. After three years

Protectorate to conduct research and write. She was already an established writer who hailed from a family of literati with connections to Algeria, when she arrived in Tunis. Given Lucie's pride in a family history that included a French general in Algiers, it is not surprising that she failed to question colonialism in *Tunisiennes*. Although she was not the verbal feminist that Claire Géniaux was, she read and quoted Géniaux, and praised the feminist novels written by her uncle, Victor Margueritte.³⁵ Like Myriam Harry and Claire Géniaux, Lucie Margueritte's narrator serves as the European model against which to measure Tunisian women as she enters private and forbidden spaces. The theme of penetrating a hidden world recurs, reinforced by Orientalist notions of the strange. She insists: "J'en ai apprécié les beautés les plus *secrètes*" [Margueritte's emphasis](5) . She distances herself from the city she visits in order to study it, by placing it within a strange world: she refers to *la féerie, enchantements, ces choses belles et étranges*, she makes reference to *1001 nuits*, and she is herself *ensorcelée*, bewitched. She sees princesses served by black servants, jewelry of gold, clothing made from silks and brocades, which gives a false idea of the effects of French colonization upon Tunisian economic conditions.

of marriage and a divorce, she lived with her sister Eve, also a writer (eventually widowed) and they raised Eve's son Michel, living from their writing. In 1923 she was invited to Prague and in 1928 to Bucharest where she interviewed Queen Marie. In 1932 she attended the 10th Congress of the Latin Press held in Egypt, in 1933 she was invited to Morocco to write on Berber songs, in 1936 she visited Tunisia, and in 1938 she traveled to Algeria. A prolific author, she published seven plays and over twenty novels and collections of short stories and prose poems, besides her regular contributions to French periodicals. (E. & L. Margueritte, *Deux frères, deux sœurs: deux époques littéraires*)

³⁵ Victor Margueritte (1866-1942) wrote a trilogy about women's emancipation after World War I: *La garçonne* (1922), *Le compagnon* (1923), and *Le couple* (1924). *La garçonne* and *Ton corps est à toi* (1927) are mentioned in Lucie and Eve Paul Margueritte's memoirs *Deux frères, deux sœurs: Deux époques littéraires* (1951).

Yet, despite the influence of Orientalist discourse and texts, Margueritte expresses a view of Tunisian women in the street that is markedly different from her predecessors: “Sous les arcades de l’avenue de France des femmes du peuple, voilées de leur *asaba*, pénètrent dans les magasins. Auprès de ces femmes empaquetées de la tête aux pieds, dont on ne voit pas toujours les yeux mais qui ne les ont pas dans leur poche, j’ai l’impression d’être nue” (69). Margueritte still sees the *paquet* described by Harry and Claire Géniaux, and yet she recognizes that veiled women are not blind. Furthermore, she expresses an uneasy feeling that the veiled women observe her and that she is under the microscope as a foreigner, thus turning the tables. Although she describes Tunisian clothing in detail, nevertheless, she is less condescending towards Tunisian women as she attempts to establish contact with them. Avoiding critiques on religion, Margueritte separates the veil from Islam and correctly reports that it is a practice of city dwellers.

Admittedly flawed by inaccuracies, Margueritte’s text remains unusual for the period because she makes an effort to record Tunisian women’s opinions and views accurately. She crosses colonizer/colonized boundaries, which dictate that the colonizer speaks for and describes the colonized, and male/female boundaries, which dictate that men speak for women. She takes the time to ask Tunisian women what they think. She documents changes that are taking place within the private sphere, and she adds *Leïla*, which one of her Tunisian hostesses shows her, to her intertext of French works.³⁶ Margueritte emphasizes this intertext and gives it recognition by quoting parts of an article on the veil by Mohamed Sadok Zmerli (“Tribune libre: Une opinion sur le voile,”

³⁶Margueritte quotes Dr. Lemanski (62) and mentions *Fille d’Islam* by Arthur Pellegrin (60) as well.

Leïla, Dec. 1936, 15), a well-known Tunisian nationalist.³⁷ Another intertext concerns an article by Claire Géniaux, “Chez les dévoilées de Tunisie” that is reprinted in *Leïla*.³⁸ She records the reaction of an educated Tunisian woman to Géniaux’s article. A reader of *Leïla* can discover a male nationalist’s point of view by reading Khaled’s vocal article in *Leïla*, but how do Tunisian women react to a Frenchwoman’s description of them? Margueritte gives us a glimpse as she records this acquaintance’s words: “Avez-vous lu cet article de Claire Géniaux sur les musulmanes évoluées ? Je le trouve désobligeant. L’auteur nous reproche d’être superficielles, de n’admirer que Greta Garbo et de chercher à lui ressembler par la manière dont nous nous coiffons” (59-60). Margueritte almost jumps in to defend her compatriot, Géniaux, when the Tunisian woman qualifies her statement:

Il y a des jeunes écervelées qui ne pensent qu’à des futilités... Quelques jeunes femmes grisées par des libertés trop soudaines prennent une assurance déplaisante... Ces affranchies ont fait le plus grand tort à la cause féminine. Elles ont donné des armes aux traditionalistes. Ils prônent maintenant pour la femme l’enseignement en langue arabe qui est nettement insuffisant. C’est que, voyez-vous, la femme instruite n’accepte plus de vivre claustrée. Rien n’est plus cruel que cette réclusion pour celle qui espérait vivre à l’européenne. (60)

This appears to be a relatively accurate recounting of a Tunisian woman’s views as it is a double critique and similar views can be found in *Leïla*. First of all, it is in line with the

³⁷ Mohamed Sadok Zmerli (1885?-1983) attended Sadiki Collège, was associated with reformist Zitounian elites, joined the *Jeune Tunisien* group and contributed to *Le Tunisien* (1907-11). An advocate of women’s emancipation, he spoke at the 1908 Colonial Congress of North Africa about the need for women’s education. Expulsed after the February 1912 tramway boycott, he joined Ali Bach Hamba in Istanbul. He returned to Tunisia, eventually leaving the Destour Party to join Hassan Guellaty in a new Reformist Party. When it failed, Zmerli withdrew from political life and worked as a bureaucrat for the Ministry of Justice. (Tlatli, 9-24; Fontaine, 206-7).

³⁸ It is unclear whether the article discussed in Margueritte’s book is printed in *Femme de France* or in *Leïla*. It seems probable that it is the *Femme de France* 3 August 1936 issue under discussion, as the *Leïla* article appears only in February 1937. Margueritte arrived in Tunisia for a six-week visit at the beginning of December 1936, or so she informs her readers. This suggests that elite Tunisian women read French women’s periodicals as well.

critique found in Khaled's article of a condescending maternalism and paternalism in French descriptions of Muslim women. The young woman quoted points out the superficial aspect of Géniaux's assessment, indicating that she is offended, by using the polite term *désobligeant*. Secondly, Tunisian women are not necessarily against an education in French. They realistically point out that the educational resources in Arabic-language education for women are seriously deficient, termed *nettement insuffisant* in this passage. It is interesting to speculate on what this young Tunisian woman's critique of Margueritte's book would be. To her credit, Margueritte gives voice to Tunisian women, and allows the reader to observe the circulation of information, ideas and debates in Tunis. However, colonial feminist discourse remains in the background throughout her descriptions of Tunisian women.

This discourse contains a representation of difference that applies to all colonized women in a totalitarian manner. It incorporates the images it creates into a structure that becomes autonomous and stands for the lived reality of women in Tunisia. French female writers, as compared to the French male writers of my genealogy, serve to prepare the way for a different writing on Tunisian women and by Tunisian women that appears in *Leïla*.³⁹ And although they describe Tunisian women as sequestered or cloistered, nevertheless the French women writers discussed above witness numerous social activities in which Tunisian women participate.

³⁹Jean-Marc Moura argues that ultimately colonial literature—in contrast to exotic literature produced in the métropole—produces a description of the *étrangeté* (strangeness, difference) of colonies from the interior that serves as a transition: “Peu importe que ces préjugés empruntent l’argument d’autorité du témoin qui a connu ces pays lointains, ils précèdent seulement et d’une certaine manière préparent l’avènement d’une autre parole” (*La Littérature des lointains* 141).

Tunisian Reactions to Colonial Feminist Discourse and the Veil

The pre-eminence of the veil over other debates concerning women's emancipation in the political arena indicates the presence of colonial feminist discourse. In fact, only a minority of Tunisian city women veiled.⁴⁰ A glance at this debate serves to contextualize views in *Leïla* where contributors attacked French representations of the Muslim woman. As noted above, colonial feminist discourse and its critique of the veil prevailed in French texts on Muslim women from the end of the 19th century. However, in 1924, French socialists (SFIO) in Tunis, such as Joachim Durel, André Duran-Angliviel, Arthur Pellegrin, André Bruneau, and Mohamed Nomane,⁴¹ began a campaign against the veil, and organized debates on the subject.⁴² When a Tunisian woman, Habiba Menchari, denounced the veil and raised further questions about women's silence at the 8 Jan. 1929 meeting, prominent nationalists swiftly condemned her (Bakalti, 1996, 64).

In "Une Soirée à l'Essor: La Femme musulmane et le 'hijab'" (*L'Etendard Tunisien* 11 Jan. 1929), Bahri Guiga, who was a *Leïla* contributor in 1936,⁴³ described the heated debate and Bourguiba's 8 January 1929 speech in which he defended the veil and

⁴⁰ For a discussion on veiling in Tunisia, see Emna Ben Miled's *Les Tunisiennes ont-elle une histoire?* Chapter 7, "Les Dévoilées." For a thoughtful anthropological view of the veil and *hijab* as dressing customs, see Fadwa El Guindi's *Veil: Privacy and Resistance*. Fatima Mernissi's *The Veil and the Male Elite* provides a Muslim feminist's account of the origins of the hijab. See Chapter 5, "The Hijab, the Veil."

⁴¹ Mohamed Nomane (1872-1955). Born in Tunis, he attended the Alaoui College, taught from 1895-1908, became a lawyer and member of the Tunis Bar in 1908, and was a journalist. Deported to France for his participation in the Tramway boycott of 1912, he then went to Istanbul. He returned to Tunis in 1913. He was a nationalist but against the popular Destour Party. He was a member of the Reformist Party in 1922, and then he entered the French-run Socialist Party in 1929, and wrote in the Socialist newspaper, *Tunis Socialiste*. He also wrote thirteen articles for *Leïla*. (Zmerli 58-63)

⁴² Although Tunisian non-members attended the debates, Tunisian membership in the Socialist organization was problematic. French socialists criticized the colonial administration, however, they generally supported French presence in Tunisia. For a description and analysis of this debate based on newspaper articles of the period, see Ilhem Marzouki's "Le voile des colonisées: Tunisie, 1924-1936."

⁴³ The first issue of *Leïla* contains Bahri Guiga's stamp of approval in the form of a letter, "Notre ami Me Bahri Guiga nous écrit..." (Dec. 1936, 5). His position on the veil changes in *Leïla*, where he expresses pleasure in seeing Tunisian women as well dressed as European women.

referred to *la personnalité tunisienne*. This was a discreet reference to a Tunisian national identity that reappeared in *Leïla* eight years later.⁴⁴ Guiga insisted that for Bourguiba the veil was “un des signes distinctifs de l’individualité,” another reference to Tunisian national identity. Thus, the defense of identity against assimilation was a major preoccupation for Bourguiba and Guiga, and with reason. Guiga cites the socialist Joachim Durel⁴⁵ who asserts that those who wear a fez are underpaid by employers who discriminate because of Tunisian dress: “Et M. Durel qui salue le premier hijab à terre termine en souhaitant voir, à la prochaine réunion, tomber le premier fez remplacé par un chapeau, ‘symbole d’intelligence et de force’.” Durel associated the question of the veil with the fez, attacking Tunisian dress and customs. Tunisian leaders reacted by extending the expression of resistance to men’s Tunisian dress as well as to women’s veiling.⁴⁶ In contrast, Mohamed Nomane, who wrote in *Tunis Socialiste*, was against Muslim legislation and claimed that “laïcité” (the French concept of secularity) was the only method of evolution for Muslim society.⁴⁷

However, the debate continued to focalize on the veil as the most visible marker of Tunisian identity. Tunisian elites situated questions about the veil within the broader anti-colonial battle, while the veil represented women’s segregation and inferiority for the

⁴⁴ For example, in Tahar Lakhdar’s “Veillons à notre personnalité” (*Leïla*, Mar. 1938, 18).

⁴⁵ Joachim Durel (1878-19..) was general secretary of the French Socialist Party of Tunisia. He was born and educated in Toulouse and came to Tunisia in 1898 where he became a professor of letters at the Alaoui College and then at the Lycée Carnot. Among his students were Habib Bourguiba, Mustapha Zmerli, Salah-Eddine Tlatli, and Mahmoud Aslan. (Arrouas, 1932, 82; Zmerli, 103).

⁴⁶ Bourguiba attacked Durel’s position in “Le ‘Durellisme’ ou le Socialiasme boiteux” (*L’Etendard Tunisien*, 1 Feb. 1929), stating:

C’est que l’opinion de M. Durel sur le voile n’est pas un fait isolé. Elle découle logiquement de tout le programme colonial du Parti ... Seulement le programme qu’il préconise pour assurer notre bonheur risque de tourner à notre désavantage et d’aboutir à tout autre chose qu’à notre relèvement social. “Notre désavantage” refers to an assimilation that would grind the colonized population into the ground, making them imitation Frenchmen.

⁴⁷By 1936, Nomane’s position changed radically, when he wrote “Un mot sur ce que doit être la femme musulmane” in the first issue of *Leïla* (Dec. 1936, 2). See Chapter 4 (203-205).

French, reflecting colonial feminist discourse. As a result, political debate about Tunisian dress vs. Western dress expanded beyond measure and submerged the debate on the status of Tunisian women. Due to cultural and ideological meanings of the veil, Tunisian political leaders did not generally oppose it through the early 1930s for fear of dividing the (male) ranks of nationalists when they most required unity, thus making Tunisian women carriers of a national identity and a broader Muslim identity.⁴⁸ Nevertheless, by 1936, nationalists' opinions on anti-colonial strategies linked to women had changed, to which *Leïla's* articles attest, as the general consensus questioned the veil and sought to convince the public of its abolition.

Internalizing Colonial Feminist Discourse: Tahar Haddad

Tahar Haddad's book, *Notre Femme dans la loi islamique et la société*, first appeared in 1930, just after the 1929 debates on the veil. This text not only provoked further debate, but caused a scandal that stands out in the history of Tunisian feminism. Lamia Zayzafoon argues that ideas from colonial discourses that circulated in reformist milieus affected Haddad's writing:

... he was exposed to the discourse of modernity and Western thought through translation and contact with the Tunisian literary and political circles such as la Khaldounia (literary club), the Association of the Former Students of the Sadiki College, and Jama'at Tahta Asour, a literary circle that included nationalist Intellectuals ... (98)

Haddad links the progress of Tunisian society to change in women's status—the future of the Tunisian people depended upon the emancipation of Tunisian women, which parallels French colonial discourse that asserts Tunisian society is inferior because of women's

⁴⁸Lamia Zayzafoon notes that Bourguiba himself dressed in Western clothes. His silence on his personal (and men's) consumption of Western products demonstrates the creation of different roles for men and women by nationalists. The Tunisian woman represented a Tunisian identity through the veil, while men were protectors of that identity (102).

inferior status. However, Haddad realized that the debate on women was fueled by French colonial policy, which viewed the Oriental woman as the key to penetration of the Tunisian private sphere. He consistently emphasized that the need for education was essential to progress, pointing out that the French discussed the education and emancipation of Tunisian women for political reasons (18).

For a model of women's emancipation, Haddad turns to the European woman, although he recognizes the need for improvement. He notes that : "...les pays européens commencent déjà à appliquer ces idées progressistes et ont déjà fait place à la femme au parlement, ils lui ont cédé même des sièges dans leurs gouvernements" (17). However, Haddad's effort to bring the Tunisian woman into the public sphere and make her a member of the nation overrides colonial feminist discourse: "Si elle est 'la moitié de l'homme', elle est aussi la moitié de la nation; que ce soit par sa valeur sociale ou par son nombre, elle représente une force dans l'équilibre social" (15). Haddad insists upon the formation and progress of the nation and criticizes those who believe that the home is the domain of women and that the "evolution" and progress of a people is the domain of men. This is one of the earliest Tunisian attempts to erase, or at least attenuate, the classic division between masculine and feminine spaces, provoking shifts in boundaries that created anxiety among men.

As shown in the texts of the French branches of the genealogy, the trope of women's emancipation leads to discussions on other subjects, and Haddad made good use of it to conceal an anti-colonial critique imbedded in his chapter "Images de paupérisme et de déchéance sociale." Here feminist and nationalist discourses coincide. Haddad describes the breakdown in the agricultural system and the impoverishment of

the masses, which affects women's lives as well. Not only is this a demand for the emancipation of the Tunisian woman, but the book calls for action on the national level.

At the end of the chapter, he states:

Si nous n'agissons pas, ce ne sera pas le gouvernement du Protectorat qui donnera satisfaction à nos revendications. La misère se manifeste parmi nous sous plusieurs aspects que les générations futures ne pourront se l'imaginer et la lourde tâche qui nous attend s'amplifie autant que nous en retardons le commencement. (196)

Haddad insists that Tunisians cannot depend on the colonial administration to solve their problems. He links women's status with economic and social problems, which the colonial administration aggravates. In order to convince his readers that emancipation from colonialism is connected to women's emancipation, he bases his arguments on Islamic texts, including the Qu'ran, along with economic and financial factors. He takes the controversial stance that the veil is a handicap for women that affects social relations and ultimately the economy. It affects her mobility, keeping her cloistered and separate from the male population, further reinforcing the spatial contingency of female gender identity.

Although Haddad uses religious arguments throughout his book, he sees the question of veiling to be a social rather than a religious problem that slows the progress of society. He considers the debate surrounding the veil secondary:

Il faut reconnaître plutôt que le plus urgent, c'est d'unir nos efforts afin de constituer pour la femme un système d'éducation et un programme d'enseignement qui lui assurent une évolution réelle au lieu de perdre un temps précieux dans des débats stériles. (217)

Haddad proposes education as the key to change in women's status. Haddad's book, however, created a loud controversy, especially among the cheikhs of the Zitouna

University, where his diplomas were rescinded and he was unable to complete his studies at the “Ecole de Droit de Tunis” (Sellami 38). Bechira Ben Mrad,⁴⁹ daughter of Cheikh Ben Mrad who opposed Haddad, reveals strong nationalist sentiments motivating, at least in part, the cheikhs’ actions:

... c’est mon père Mohamed Salah Ben Mrad qui m’a inculqué l’amour de Mon pays et qui m’a encouragée, ainsi que mes sœurs, à participer à la lutte de libération nationale et à l’émancipation de la femme ... Mon père, au moment de la colonisation, considérait que la femme est le dernier rempart contre la colonisation. Il ne fallait en aucun cas permettre à la culture occidentale de l’affaiblir ou de l’assimiler.

(*Réalités*, 42 (17 Aug. 1984), quoted by Marzouki, 38)

The dissension between Haddad and the Zitounian community appears, then, to be more than a split between “traditional/conservative” factions and “modern” ones, as Ilhem Marzouki,⁵⁰ Souad Bakalti (1996, 55), and Souad Chater (75) suggest. It is a disagreement about how to fight colonialism. The debate spilled over into the nationalist movement whose leaders believed the emancipation of women would create a *dépersonnalisation* that favored assimilation and the *francisation* of Tunisians. More importantly, they felt that the debate was premature, and they feared dissension at a time when their primary preoccupation was Tunisian unity in the anti-colonial struggle (Bakalti 1996, 58). Only after Haddad’s death in 1935 did the controversy settle enough for Ezzedine Belhaj to publish a book in Arabic, *El jins ellatif* (*The Weaker Sex*, 1936), on women’s culture in which he praised Haddad (Bakalti 1996, 60). Nonetheless,

⁴⁹Bechira Ben Mrad started primary school but was soon withdrawn upon the insistence of an “uncle.” Her father brought her tutors from the Zitouna to prepare her for the *Certificat d’Etudes*. (Marzouki 37). She was the founder of the UMFT (1936-56), the first Tunisian feminist organization.

⁵⁰“Ces divergences à significations et prolongements multiples se cristalliseront, dans les débuts des années 30, autour de deux protagonistes représentant, d’une part les forces du changement [T.Haddad] et d’autre part, les piliers du conservatisme [the Zitouna cheikhs] ...” (Marzouki 33).

Haddad's name never appears within the pages of *Leila*, suggesting that the subject remained taboo.

Haddad's text is important because it shows colonial feminism at work and its effect on Tunisian elites and women's emancipation. Ideas similar to Tahar Haddad's had circulated in the Ottoman Empire, of which Tunisia was a part, since the end of the nineteenth century. Tunisians voiced proposals for women's education as early as 1905. Ideas about religious reforms concerning family, divorce, and polygamy were not new. Why the excessive reaction, then? Haddad falls into the trap of colonial feminism by using the European woman as an example and making Europe the (silent) referent. These two referents impose a Western criterion of evaluation making it necessary for the colonized to follow a Western path and for Muslim women to change in order for Muslim societies to advance. The underlying assumption in Haddad's writings is that in order to improve their status, Muslim women must abandon their own customs and adopt Western ways, albeit modified and under male supervision.

Noting opposition, Haddad writes: "Cette divergence dans les attitudes ne peut être étonnante quand nous regardons avec objectivité sincère le tableau d'une société malade, envahie par les différentes formes d'un modernisme inconnu qui menace de nous jeter sans expérience dans le courant de la vie occidentale" (213). For Haddad, as for the Egyptian Qasim Amin, Muslim society is ailing and backward, and he emphasizes it with the frequent mention of "modernity" related to European societies. Like Amin, Haddad rearticulates the colonial thesis of Muslim inferiority and European superiority and does not question male domination, but maintains patriarchal social structures.

Rather than a modern/traditional division, I suggest that the educated public's reaction to

the rearticulated colonial thesis at the base of Haddad's book fueled the controversy when the anti-colonial struggle was a priority.

Disrupting Colonial Feminist Discourse in *Leïla*

While the *Leïla* team promoted a new role for the Muslim woman to contribute to improving Tunisian society, that is, to work towards the Independent Nation, engrained negative colonial feminist representations of the Arab/Muslim woman needed to be confronted to wipe the slate clean for the creation of the New Muslim Woman for the New Nation. Khaled's strident article drew my attention to the problem of countering French representations of Tunisian women, sending me on a search for other such articles. In fact there are few, as *Leïla*'s editorial policy is rather to create new roles and open up the public sphere to Tunisian women. At the same time certain ideas of colonial feminist discourse infiltrate into articles that concern Tunisian women, such as the attack on the veil, indicating the perniciousness of this discourse and a build up of the self-referential intertextual truth of the genealogy of writings on colonized women, discussed above. However, countering negative representations indirectly, Tunisian women contributors write about themselves, demonstrating that they are not the voiceless victims to which colonial feminist descriptions would reduce them. They refuse to be limited to a few essential characteristics by writing about their lives, aspirations, concerns, and demands. Not only do their texts question negative representations, but Tunisian women actively contribute to new models of the New Muslim Woman and the New Tunisian Woman, therefore, a discussion of their writings follows in Chapter 4.

In addition, the *Leïla* staff strategically uses French contributors in several different ways. Although Claire Géniaux's article contains a modernity discourse that is

part of colonial feminist discourse, her name stands for pro-nationalist sympathies, thus contributing to national consciousness. Marlène Daisy's articles attack colonial feminist discourse by criticizing women's status in France and by seeking similarities with Tunisian women, rather than differences. In a caricature, G.-L. Le Monnier openly criticizes aspects of colonial discourse shared with colonial feminist discourse. These French writers contribute to border thinking and create links between the French branches and the Tunisian branch of the genealogy, breaking down barriers and crossing boundaries. Finally, a Tunisian nationalist, Khaled, attacks the French women's branch of the genealogy of writings on the Tunisian woman, putting up barriers again.⁵¹

Echoes of Nationalism: Claire Géniaux's "Chez les dévoilées de Tunisie"

What is the value of a French woman's article in this Tunisian periodical, and in this case, an article that is reprinted from a French magazine (*Femme de France* 3 Aug. 1936)? As noted in chapter 2, *Leïla's* editors developed an editorial stance and chose articles that coincided with their objectives. First of all, Géniaux demonstrates in "Chez les dévoilées de Tunisie" (Feb. 1937, 22) that the Tunisian woman's role is changing, which is in line with the goals of the periodical. In the introduction, the editor notes that Géniaux makes "des observations judicieuses sur le grand pas accompli par la jeune Tunisienne vers sa libération" (22). Secondly, Géniaux gives voice to Tunisian women by reporting conversations with those who seek emancipation, although they represent a small minority of wealthy elites. Like Margueritte, she takes the time to ask questions,

⁵¹ A second article by Khaled, "N'en Jetez Plus" (Dec. 1938, 2), defends the use of the veil and attacks the French focus on the veil as a meaningless reduction. In the second series, "Sans Titre," a column of short subjects, signed A.F. (7 Dec. 1940, 3), critiques colonial feminist constructions of the Tunisian woman as well.

listen, and record opinions. Lastly, the introduction qualifies Claire Géniaux and her husband, Charles Géniaux, as “indiscutablement des amis des Tunisiens et des Tunisiennes” (22). The naming of the colonized as Tunisians rather than as Muslims by the editors distinctly separates French writers from Tunisians and *Leïla*'s readership. Nonetheless, as recognized French writers of the period, Géniaux and her husband lent reputability to the periodical.

It is notable that this article, containing a colonial feminist discourse and no hint of a political critique of colonialism or interest in the Tunisian nationalist movement, was chosen to be published by the editors, as compared to other texts by the author. I suggest that this is a case of hidden transcripts surfacing that demonstrates how *Leïla* editors developed national consciousness and promoted the nationalist movement without naming them. Such techniques and references assume that readers have acquired a certain local knowledge, for example that they have read Géniaux's *L'âme musulmane en Tunisie*, allowing them to read between the lines or interpret signs. Did *Leïla*'s readers have access to Géniaux's book or similar texts? The references in *Leïla* suggest that the books of my genealogy were available in bookstores in Tunis and circulated among the educated. I also propose that if a researcher finds a book from the inter-war period in a library in Tunis today, it is probable that it was available during the colonial period. The requirement of acquiring a local knowledge in order to interpret signs became clear to me when I stumbled upon Claire Géniaux's pro-nationalist chapter in *L'âme musulmane* (51-60), which shed new light on her article in *Leïla*. Claire Géniaux's 1934 pro-nationalist text on Chedly Khairallah in *L'âme musulmane en Tunisie*, discussed above, hovers in

the background and is suggested by the warm reception of the French couple in the introduction to Claire's article, reflected in the words *indiscutablement des amis*.

French women writers observed the private sphere of the Tunisian family and Tunisian women by attending parties, especially wedding or engagement celebrations. Harry, Claire Géniaux, and Margueritte all devote a chapter in their travelogues to such celebrations. Géniaux repeats the experience, proposing a second reflection on the changes that had taken place for Tunisian women since Géniaux's last visit to Tunisia, ten years before. A Tunisian lawyer invites her to his engagement party where she discusses emancipation with the Tunisian women at the party. Géniaux records their critique of Tunisian men, the majority of whom do not allow mixed company in their homes and do not desire an educated wife, according to the women interviewed. Géniaux sees hope for the future as these women seek a better life for their daughters: "Je compte bien faire de mes filles de créatures conscientes et solidement instruites!" Géniaux also records a gap between educated male elites, and educated female elites who complain about the level of education available for women:

Nos frères, élevés cependant dans vos lycées et vos facultés, nous traitent de pécores! ... et si vous interrogez les Musulmans se prétendant évolués, ils se plaindront que l'on nous ait lâché la bride beaucoup trop tôt. Depuis que Mustapha Kemal a complètement libéré les Turques et interdit le port du voile, il a cessé d'être un grand homme aux yeux des Tunisiens, alors qu'il est devenu une idole, à nous femmes, qui aspirons à plus de liberté et de dignité.

Here Géniaux records the frustration of Tunisian women elites, which Margueritte notes in *Tunisiennes*. These women look to Turkey for models of change whereas Géniaux shows Chedly Khairallah's tepid attitude toward Mustapha Kemal from a nationalist point of view in *L'âme musulmane en Tunisie*. Géniaux's pro-nationalist stand is unusual

for the period and she demonstrates understanding of the political terrain in Tunisia.

Certainly her sympathies cannot be questioned.

Or can they? In fact, Khaled attacks all French women writers who construct a representation of the Arab/Muslim woman, suggesting an effort on his part to maintain a divide between nationalist discourse and feminist or colonial feminist discourse.

However, political discourses become muddied as gender issues come to the forefront.

Making Correspondances: Marlène Daisy, the Foreign Correspondant

The *Leïla* editors present Marlène Daisy (apparently a pseudonym) as “notre correspondante parisienne” (Sept. 1937, 16), showing their desire to incorporate sympathetic European women’s voices and widen horizons, seeking community and hence disrupting colonial feminist discourse which emphasizes difference. Marlène Daisy contributes four articles to *Leïla* that are characterized by a feminist discourse, an attempt to establish a relationship of equality with the *Leïla* readership, and a relative absence of colonial feminist discourse. In the first issue, she emphasizes a common ground:

... je parle ici autant pour les femmes européennes que pour les femmes tunisiennes—que l’émancipation de la femme en Europe, même relativement récente, est trop souvent un acte, ou plutôt une nouvelle habitude, purement extérieure et formelle ... En un mot, l’éducation des femmes est à faire entièrement; et autant, je vous assure, chez nous que chez vous.
 (“Lettre de Paris...,” Dec. 1936, 4)

This writer views changes for women as recent and not yet well anchored in French society, thus she refuses to promote the myth of the emancipated French woman who enjoys equality. In “Chronique Littéraire: L’Ecole des Femmes” (Mar. 1937, 10), Marlène Daisy establishes a rapport of equality by addressing *Leïla* readers as “mes soeurs,” and uses Molière’s characters in *L’Ecole des Femmes* to discuss women’s role in

society, showing that French women have had the same problem of segregation as Tunisian women: "... Agnès, avant d'être jalousement gardée dans la maison de son tuteur, fut élevée dans un couvent ... comme ce fut longtemps ici pour les filles de la bourgeoisie et des hautes classes ..." She suggests that the problem of women's segregation has to do with society's gender constructions and not religion, as it happened to Christian women as well. Rather than criticizing Tunisian society, she examines her own society and women's role in the public sphere:

... il est peu de jeunes filles, de jeunes femmes, qui font des études ou travaillent dans une ville, seules, dont la vie ne soit pas l'objet de la part des gens de la province, des campagnes surtout, de commentaires ironiques, assaisonnés de malveillant sous-entendus...

Marlène Daisy's complaint is similar to *Leïla's* women contributors. Women circulating in the public sphere are subject to verbal harassment, a problem that Radhia addresses in the first issue (see Chapter 1, 36-37).

After a visit to Tunisia, Marlène Daisy writes a final article. The title, "Réflexions d'une jeune française: Autour de l'évolution de la femme musulmane" (Sept. 1937, 16), rings suspiciously of colonial feminist discourse, with two sides facing each other: the young French woman and the constructed "Muslim woman." However, the reader is not to be disappointed, for this article makes logical arguments that disrupt colonial feminist discourse. Daisy first questions the image of the silent, unrecognizable veiled figure that represents the "Muslim woman":

Silhouettes blanches: une démarche, un regard, une voix; voix sans visage, regards pénétrants, impénétrables. Mystérieuses silhouettes blanches? ... de loin, toujours. De près, non, ... Chacune de vous, je la puis évoquer. Mais l'autre, cette abstraction qu'est "la femme tunisienne", qu'est-elle, qu'a-t-elle de commun avec vous? Et puis, me disait-on, à quoi bon ajouter cette épithète? Comme si notre situation à toutes n'était pas sensiblement la même; comme si, au

cours de la vie, les mêmes problèmes essentiels ne se posaient pas pour chacune, qu'elle soit Américaine, Tunisienne, Chinoise ou Européenne. Entreprendre de définir la femme tunisienne, ce serait aussi sot que prétentieux, en même temps que vain, fort heureusement.

A voice and eyes are the only recognizable human characteristics of the white silhouette that remains anonymous from a distance. However, Marlène Daisy breaches the distance to discover individual women like herself. The mystery of the Other, *l'autre*, fades when she finds a middle terrain where all women face similar problems around the world, and French women do not proclaim their equality with men, but admit further work is required. Although the title refers to *la femme musulmane*, Daisy uses *la femme tunisienne* in her article, collapsing them into one representation. Nonetheless, she critiques that representation by naming the Tunisian woman *Tunisienne*, and placing this term on an equal footing with *Americaine*, *Chinoise*, and *Européenne*. She notes that European women are unaware of changes for women in North Africa and express surprise that harems no longer exist. In one sentence she rejects the intertextual authority of the genealogy of texts on Muslim women, which blame Islam for women's segregation: "Oui, c'en est fini d'un Islam de littérature." She attacks the principle premise of colonial feminist discourse, seen especially in the French male authors of the genealogy examined in this chapter, that Islam is the cause of women's perceived inferior status, recognizing this notion as a construction found in literature. She considers the debate on the veil to be secondary: "La suppression du voile, objet d'actuelles polémiques, semble n'avoir surtout qu'une valeur symbolique: elle sera, traduite au grand jour, l'expression d'un affranchissement à l'égard de coutumes rétrogrades et finalement injustifiées." A glimmer of the colonial feminist discourse appears in a critique of

Tunisian customs that she labels *retrograde* and considers outdated, and a critique of the veil, viewed as a custom enforced by older women. This attitude reflects critiques of the veil by other contributors such as Zmerli (discussed in Chapter 1) in *Leïla*.

Nevertheless, Marlène Daisy attempts to create equality between women on a middle terrain in previous articles, and in this article she further attacks the model of the European/French woman held up to colonized women as the measuring stick of women's emancipation in colonial feminist writings. She insists that notions about emancipation in Europe have been exaggerated in Tunisia. In fact, she turns the tables and proposes Tunisian women whom she has met as models for French women: "... il en est certaines, la majorité déjà dans les classes bourgeoises, qui se sont élevées à une vie plus consciente et plus riche, et desquelles bien des Européennes trouveraient à apprendre." Her insistence upon European women's ignorance about the women of North Africa suggests this is an obstacle to connecting to women across borders.

At the same time, Marlène Daisy notes problems for Tunisian women due to male patriarchy. She attacks the male hierarchy that protects its power and privilege: "Quelle parcimonie à accorder des faveurs, quand il n'y aurait qu'à reconnaître le nécessaire! Tant il est vrai que les sénateurs—ou leurs pareils—nulle part ne veulent perdre leurs droits!" Here an indirect critique of colonialism surfaces in the mention of elected officials: French senators contributed to government policies for the Empire, and the French Resident General possessed total authority, advised by a consultative body, the *Grand Conseil*, which was dominated by French colonists.

"Il ne s'agit pas pour la Tunisienne de perdre sa civilisation, sa culture propre. Il s'agit, dans le cadre de la vie musulmane, de donner à la femme les conditions les plus

propices à son épanouissement complet,” asserts Marlène Daisy as she attempts to bridge distance and find common factors between women while recognizing that each society has its own culture that must be respected by others. Compared to other French writers of the genealogy, Marlène Daisy creates a counter-hegemonic discourse that finds a middle terrain of communication and support between women of different societies and cultures, thus demonstrating border thinking. She attacks the model of the emancipated French woman and the representation of the “Muslim woman,” takes religion out of the debate, refuses the authority of the genealogy of writings on the Arab/Muslim woman, that contrasts with the French texts of the genealogy, and discredits the political hierarchy of male patriarchy. This article reinforces the editorial stance of *Leïla*, effectively disrupting colonial feminist discourse, which allows for new representations of Tunisian women to be formulated.

Caricaturing Colonial Government: Le Monnier as a Shield

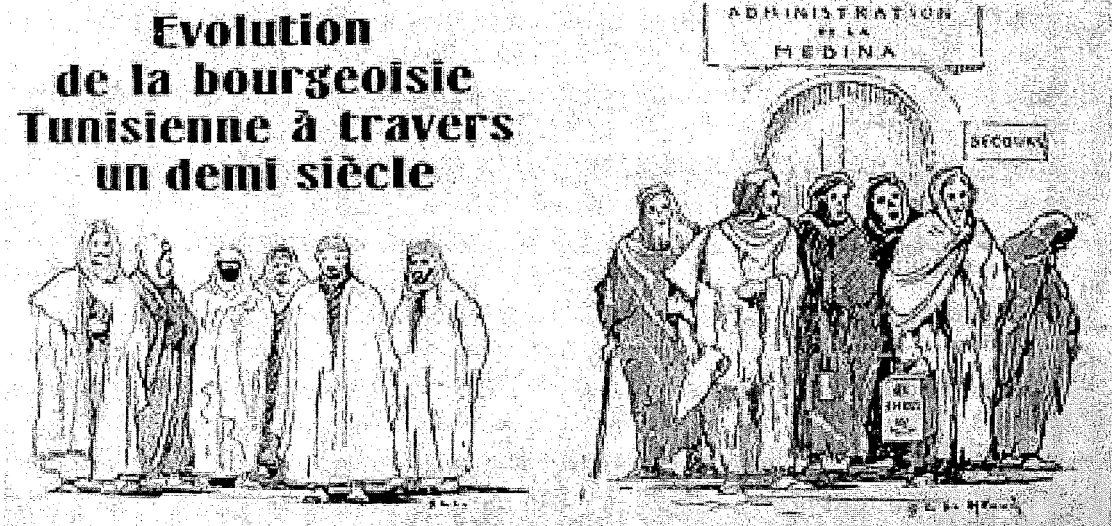
As we have seen, French writers focused on descriptions of Tunisian women’s clothing, whether traditional dress, veil, or Western dress. These descriptions contributed to a “modernity” discourse: to wear traditional Tunisian clothes (foutah, blousa, etc.) signified one was “traditional” and part of an inferior “indigenous” society, while to wear Western styles signified one was “modern” and had been touched by the French civilizing mission. As noted above, the debate in the 1920s organized by Socialists was not just an attack on Tunisian women’s veiling, but extended to Tunisian men’s clothing as well. This debate contained an underlying assumption that Europeanization took the colonized from an inferior state to a superior state. For example, Zina, in Pellegrin’s *Fille d’Islam*, possesses a few simple items of clothing at the beginning, however, descriptions

of her clothing while with her French lover become lengthy and detailed. She possesses a wardrobe that contains rich fabrics as well as numerous items requiring a new *garderobe*. Thus a French presence brings abundance in clothing (and in food as well).

In *Leïla*, the general consensus that Tunisian women should abandon the veil in order to participate more actively in the future nation has more to do with ideology than with development. In a caricature, “Evolution de la bourgeoisie Tunisienne à travers un demi siècle,” (Sept. 1937, 19, Fig. 3.2), Le Monnier critiques the notion

of abundance due to colonization, which reflects the economic concept of

Fig. 3.2



French *mise-en-valeur* of the country linked to colonial feminist discourse. Le Monnier attacks the idea of economic prosperity brought to Tunisians by the French, showing that the Tunisian lot is not rags to riches, but riches to rags. His drawing shows a healthy, well-fed, and well-dressed Tunis middle class before colonization, which turns into skeletal paupers begging for aid from the municipal government during colonization. Wearing Tunisian dress during an affluent period without the French, the group now wears rags, rather than European dress which would indicate an “evolution” towards

modernity according to colonial and colonial feminist discourses. A veiled woman stands erect with head held high in the middle of the “before” group, but bends over looking down at the ground on the edge of the “after” group, suggesting that French colonization has marginalized Tunisian women even more.

Oh, Those Interfering French Women!: Khaled’s “Encore Un”

The three branches of the genealogy of writings on Tunisian women come together in Khaled’s 1938 article, “Encore Un” (Mar. 1938, 6), which critiques Lucie Paul Margueritte’s *Tunisiennes*. From the beginning, he approaches his subject not creatively, but in a utilitarian manner, with the intent to degrade the text and destroy the representation of Tunisian women in colonial feminist discourse. As noted above, Margueritte’s travelogue contains a build up of intertextuality that refers to Lemanski, Harry, and other French writers. Consequently, her book represents other French writings about Tunisian women that create the representations of the Muslim woman. Khaled indirectly condemns not only Margueritte’s book, then, but all texts of the French branches of the genealogy. The title of the article, “Encore Un,” calls forth the genealogy, but Khaled focuses on the French women’s branch, making it explicitly clear that Margueritte’s book is not the first text written from a Frenchwoman’s viewpoint concerning Tunisian women. Hence, Khaled also targets Claire Géniaux’s article, “Chez les dévoilées de Tunisie,” and her books, as well as Myriam Harry’s books mentioned above.⁵²

⁵² Another French woman is mentioned in the June 1938 editorial “Leïla vous parle.” The *Leïla* editors extend a welcome to Mme Andrée Viollis (a pseudonym for Françoise Caroline Claudius Jacquet de La Verrère, 1870-1950), a famous French political journalist researching in Tunis after the April 1938 events. Emphasis is placed on her role as an ambassador to explain the needs of Tunisians in France: “Nous espérons que l’enquête qu’elle poursuit en Tunisie portera ses fruits, que sa voix autorisée sera entendue et

The quote at the beginning of this chapter shows that Khaled insists upon a recurring phenomenon, viewing all female visitors with the same eye, as intruders. He attacks French women writers on a physical level by commenting on their advanced age, thus suggesting they are not in full possession of their intellectual capacities and questioning their authority. Being male in a patriarchal hierarchy allows this writer to attack female writers as Lemanski has done before him. By emphasizing the word *problème* in the phrase *problème de la femme musulmane*, Khaled suggests that French writers seek difference, rather than similarities, and come to propose solutions for the colonized with an authority based on the superior position of the colonizer, which Tunisians do not welcome. Using word games, sarcasm, and irony, Khaled's tone is mocking and his attack is personal and intimate. He mentions Margueritte's name, her association with the Resident General's wife, and inserts sarcastic descriptions: "Elle démaillote ses papillottes..." or "... son bonnet de nuit pour un gaillard petit bibi ...". Leaning towards vulgarity, Khaled destroys the distance between himself and his subject, taking a superior position that the male gaze allows through a demeaning description.

Suggesting an anti-colonial subtext, the perceived "maternalism" of French women that Khaled views negatively parallels the paternalist discourse of the civilizing mission of French colonialism. However, by insisting upon "maternalism," Khaled prudently limits his attack to the French women's branch of the genealogy. The high density of quotes found in the article shows that Khaled uses intertextuality to disrupt

comprise dans la Métropole malgré la différence de latitude qui nous sépare d'elle." This demonstrates a pragmatic attitude on the part of the *Leïla* team, however, boundaries are carefully drawn: Viollis' mission is to contact and inform the French once she completes her research, not to create links to Tunisian women or interfere in the emancipation process. She published a series of articles on the situation in Tunisia July-Aug. 1938 in *Vendredi*, a Popular Front newspaper that Viollis directed with André Chamson and Jean Guèhenno. Gallimard published these articles in a book, *Notre Tunisie* (1939). (Durand 10).

colonial feminist discourse and destroy norms of French writing by re-writing Margueritte's text, which serves as a metonymy for the French women's branch of the genealogy. Khaled addresses French women writers through Margueritte. He rewrites her text into something new, deforming her observations and point of view and thus negating the intertextual space where French writers of the genealogy base their authority.⁵³ He presents the reader with choice quotes that demonstrate Margueritte's errors, naïveté, and what appears to be intellectual dishonesty. For example, he criticizes her repetition of hearsay, using irony: "Et nous voici Porte Bab-Benat ou Porte des Filles, ainsi nommés, nous dit Madame Lucie Paul Margueritte, de ce *qu'autrefois s'y élevait un Palais Matrimonial où les jeunes filles musulmanes venaient s'exposer au regard des jeunes gens qui pouvaient les demander en mariage* ! [Khaled's emphasis] L'auteur a dû confondre avec la rue El-Mekhtar." He refuses to correct Margueritte's error in an explanatory manner. Instead, in one short sentence, he torpedoes Margueritte's authority with a reference—again leaning towards vulgarity—that residents of Tunis would recognize, but which excludes Margueritte, a visitor. The "rue El-Mekhtar" was a red-light district in Tunis where women stood in balconies for viewing by clients.⁵⁴

This level of vulgarity may be provoked by certain passages in Margueritte's travelogue where she reinforces Orientalist stereotypes. For example, according to her, Arabs are over-sexed, as can be seen in the market where *excitants*, such as peppers, pimentos, and cinnamon, are sold, as well as aphrodisiacs, such as cumin, caraway, tea,

⁵³ Limat-Letellier notes that intertextuality's role is to perturb a text, "de détourner les codes"; it has a critical vocation—to make use of irony and ambiguity to destroy the norm (28). See also Antoine Compagnon's *La Second Main*, "I.10. Réécriture" (34-6).

⁵⁴ It is interesting to speculate on this type of comment, and the vulgarity it implies, found in a sophisticated women's magazine where Tunisian men generally want to protect Tunisian women. Did supposedly segregated Tunisian women understand such references? As I have pointed out, the majority of women were connected to a women's community in which information circulated, so it is probable that they did.

coffee, and safran, “dont les arabes font une si grande consommation” (33). She implies that a consumer of hot, spicy food is a hot, spicy person. Understandably, a Tunisian male writer would be upset. Ridiculing this woman writer, using sarcasm and irony in a condescending manner, playing games with words and bordering on the vulgar, Khaled refuses to take this text seriously, that is, to give it a thoughtful critique. When he reacts to the gender of the writer and to her orientalist tone, he misses the essential.

Khaled’s final sentence bristles: “Permettez-nous, en guise d’encouragement à l’oeuvre de vulgarisation à laquelle vous prétendez vous être attelée, de vous prier de ne plus recommencer.” The use of quotation marks is a distancing mechanism that separates Khaled, the nationalist, from Margueritte, the feminist who represents the colonizer as well. Khaled maintains a separation that reinforces the binary oppositions required in the nationalist confrontation with colonialism. He refuses to see Margueritte as an innocent (and feminized) traveler in the pursuit of knowledge, which Mary Louis Pratt describes as a project of “anti-conquest” that ultimately serves the colonial project (84). Thus, Khaled fails to recognize a middle terrain of entente that Margueritte attempts to establish.

This literary debate shows that two different approaches to understanding the Tunisian woman emerge within a double conflict, one of gender, between the sexes, and a political one, between colonizer and colonized. Khaled, who voices anti-colonial views in a literary critique, would have all Tunisian doors closed to Margueritte, cutting off contact of Tunisian women with a French woman. He wants to silence Margueritte, forcing her into the subaltern position of any woman. At the end of the article Khaled addresses not only Margueritte, but all her female colleagues. He seeks to disrupt the genealogy of French women investigating the private sphere of Tunisian women,

however, without confronting the French male branch. In fact, Khaled fails to attack the representation of the Arab/Muslim woman created by colonial feminist discourse with a logical argument, unlike Marlène Daisy who carefully constructs her arguments. Instead, he violently attacks the writer who wields the authority of the genealogy that creates the representation.

This show of force is for the benefit of Tunisians. Ultimately, Khaled discourages women from reading *Tunisiennes*—an attempt to prevent them from seeing the possibility of a middle terrain of woman-to-woman relations that might bypass national politics. Margueritte’s efforts to reach out to Tunisian women and record their opinions causes anxiety for men, as can be seen by Khaled’s reaction to her text. He fails to hear dialogue and attacks the author’s authority on a personal and sexual level. Margueritte appears unaware of the repercussions of her book. In 1951, she and her sister comment on their visit to Tunisia: “Les journaux firent un aimable accueil aux deux sœurs. Causeries à deux voix dans les théâtres à Tunis, Bizerte, Sousse et Sfax. Le public, fin et courtois, apprécia nos anecdotes, bien que la politique soit le thème qui le passionne entre tous” (207). Nonetheless, Margueritte recognizes the political debates within which women’s emancipation is located. As noted above, the French women writers tended to criticize colonialism...what if Tunisian women criticized nationalism as well?

Conclusion: Rewriting the Café Scene

Despite attacks on colonial feminist discourse, traces of it persist throughout *Leïla* because it is anchored in a patriarchal hierarchy that nationalists themselves do not reject. Scenes in a café, the male social space that excludes women, show the rubbing of the private and public spheres and the location of the public forum within a patriarchal

structure. I propose that in a *Leïla* article, “Le dialogue des Jeunes ou la femme et l’éducation première: pièce en 1 scène” (Jan. 1938, 5-7), Hamouda Damergi rewrites and re-appropriates (whether consciously or not) the café scene in Pellegrin’s *Fille d’Islam* (*Tunis Socialiste*, 23 July 1924), thus connecting the branches of the genealogy examined in this chapter.

Pellegrin specifies a “café maure” where two men meet, one a Tunisian-born French artist, Pascal Gaulier, and the other a younger Tunisian, Hafid Mosly, whose French education makes dialogue possible. Their friendship reflects the colonizer/colonized relationship, as a Frenchman does not need to learn the language of the majority (Arabic), the older age of the Frenchman allows him to be paternal, and his status as a colonizer allows him to penetrate a Tunisian social space.

Pascal introduces the subject of Tunisian women by asking Hafid his views, and controls the conversation. Hafid maintains that Muslim women are respected at home, free to have visitors, and to go visit friends and family. He argues that women do not complain, and Tunisian men are discussing changes in their roles. On the other hand, Pascal holds up the European woman as a model because she influences “la vie publique,” the arts, and personal relationships. He has the final word, in which he attacks the veil:

... le voile qui couvre le visage de vos femmes est un signe de servitude.
Arrachez-le et la face de l’Islam sera changée... Si j’avais une femme musulmane
je lui dirais : ôte ton voile justement parce que ton visage est beau, et qu’il doit
être une joie pour tous.

In fact, Hafid’s point of view carries little weight and only serves to better present Pascal’s opinion, which passes as truth. Here a Frenchman dictates conduct to a Tunisian

and shows no understanding about Tunisian views on privacy or the colonized woman's position. The attack on the veil contains a critique of Islam. He imposes his views on a hypothetical Muslim wife who represents Muslim women in general, ordering her to unveil without asking her opinion. Elements of the colonial feminist discourse in Pellegrin's café scene—a strong paternal view, a European model, a critique of Islam, and focus on the veil as a sign of colonized women's segregation or invisibility—resurfaces thirteen years later in Damergi's café scene...with some variations.

The discussion in Damergi's café scene takes place between two young men on a basis of equality: both are educated city elites of the same age. Despite their different educational backgrounds—one represents the French system of education while the other represents Zitouna University—they find a common ground of understanding over the issue of Tunisian women's education. The general tone is respect for the other's views. The protagonists avoid the subject of the veil, focusing on the most important problem for women's emancipation, education. What Damergi has in common, however, with Pellegrin is that men conduct the debate about changes for Tunisian women and they make decisions without consulting women, recalling the constructed representation of the silent Arab/Muslim woman that the colonial feminist discourse has reinforced through the genealogy of texts discussed above. Yet, there is a small difference in Damergi's café scene: an issue of *Leïla* on a table whispers of women's presence, as if they are listening at the windows and doors. Nevertheless, all men concerned in these two texts reify the Arab/Muslim woman, maintaining a patriarchal status quo that suggests the infiltration of colonial feminist discourse.

However, although colonial feminist discourse influenced views on women's emancipation in the border zone, *Leïla* writers practiced border thinking and disrupted this discourse in order to reconstruct a new representation of the Muslim woman with a new role in the New Nation. As Reina Lewis notes: "The West was never the sole arbiter and owner of meanings about the Orient" (*Rethinking Orientalism 2*). Indeed, *Leïla* writers, both women and men, re-appropriate the right to define themselves as part of the process of national independence, rejecting French representations, although opinions on goals and how to achieve them may vary among writers. In Chapter 4, I examine how the *Leïla* team and contributors created the New Muslim Woman and the New Tunisian Woman for the New Nation.

Chapter 4
*The Construction of the New Muslim Woman for the New Nation:
 A National Feminism in the Making*

Introduction: The New Muslim Woman Unveiled

The artwork in *Leïla* contributes to its sophistication and style and reinforces ideas expressed in articles, but frequently it goes beyond those ideas. I propose that *Leïla* articles, artwork, and photographs constructed a new representation of the female body that subverted French representations of the Arab/Muslim woman, and that emphasized dignity, health, and education. However, an examination of *Leïla* reveals the difficulty of formulating a fixed identity for Tunisian women. While nationalist lawyers express a

Fig. 4.1



patriarchal vision of a new role for the Tunisian woman, the use of

images in particular calls into existence a New Muslim Woman who pushes boundaries between traditional and modern, between male and female, between private and public, and between East and West. Thus, alongside a patriarchal version of the New Muslim Woman, there exists an expanded version difficult to pin down. I argue, then, that *Leïla* opens upon

a border zone where Tunisian men and women test established boundaries and expand on models of a New Muslim Woman and ultimately a New Tunisian Woman, showing border thinking.

The August and September 1940 covers of *Leïla* show the black silhouette of a slim, physically-fit woman dancing that represents the New Muslim Woman (Fig. 4.1), which the *Leïla* team promotes in the first series. With arms extended in a pose that suggests flight, the figure is aerial, and as a symbol of freedom she becomes a metonymy for the New Nation. The silhouette dances around the letters that spell out *Leïla*, suggesting that the periodical has helped to free women, and, by implication, Tunisians in general. Like the name “Leïla” that calls forth both a man and a woman,¹ the emancipated woman implies an emancipated man, not only emancipated from the colonial situation, but also a “New Man” to accompany the “New Woman”. Thus, the colonized woman takes on symbolic meaning: women’s progress becomes a measure of the distance covered in the march toward the independent nation.

Behind the silhouette, the drawing of a veiled woman with only eyes showing, encumbered and earth-bound, represents what must be changed according to *Leïla* contributors (veiling and marriage customs, women’s mobility and education, etc.). The large figure of the veiled woman in the background emphasizes the focus of the debate on the veil and the importance of unveiling as a step towards “modernity” or change. The veiled woman remains anchored to the background, unable to come to the foreground or move into the future. Larger than the silhouette, she is passive and requires protection, a victim of domination. She is consequently a hindrance in the march toward the New

¹For a discussion on the name “Leïla,” see Chapter 1 (26-27).

Nation. Like the silhouette, the veiled woman represents the Muslim Woman, however, she is an “old” Muslim Woman that serves as a metonymy for Tunisia, a veiled country caught in tradition under the colonial yoke.² At the same time, the physically-fit figure carries a message of “modernity”—to contribute to the Nation, one must be healthy. However, the norm for the canon of beauty in Tunisia was not necessarily slim and physically fit. The idea of physical fitness reflects, rather, currents of ideas from Europe and was found in Vichy propaganda, which crept into *Leïla*, especially in the second series.

This depiction of the Tunisian woman’s body contributes to the attack by *Leïla* writers on negative French representations of the Arab/Muslim woman that focused on the veil and segregation discussed in Chapter 3. French writers’ fascination with the writing of the Oriental woman’s body appears in descriptions of bodily hair and *épilation* (caramelized sugar method of hair removal). By emphasizing a common practice of personal hygiene among married women, French writers describe the Oriental woman’s body as a readily available sex object. Thus, texts containing colonial feminist representations contribute to the penetration of barriers of privacy and intimacy. Male writers bluntly draw attention to the removal of pubic hair (for example, Pellegrin in *Fille d’Islam, Tunis Socialiste*, 10 Aug. 1924) while female writers are more discreet, but nonetheless fascinated, using synecdoche and metaphor. Claire Géniaux describes Tijania’s face, which is smooth and *épilé* (*Le Cyprès* 8), and Harry mentions the *pâtes épilatoires* used at the *hammam* (public baths) (*Tunis la Blanche* 112), suggesting

² George Mosse proposes that within nationalist ideologies women are assigned a passive role as mothers and symbols of the nation. See Mosse’s *Nationalism and Sexuality: Respectability and Abnormal Sexuality in Modern Europe*, especially Chapter 5: “What Kind of Woman?”

intimate personal hygiene practices judged different and bizarre. Thus, part of the construction of the Tunisian woman's new identity required a rewriting of the female body by *Leïla* contributors that demonstrates she is healthy and "normal."³ I argue that this new representation emphasizes education and especially dignity to counteract French representations of the Arab/Muslim woman.

This chapter focuses on the construction of the New Muslim Woman in *Leïla*. The notion of the "New Woman" was found in the West as well as to the east of Tunisia, in the Levant, Egypt, and Turkey. In Egypt, Qasim Amin's second book was titled *The New Woman* (1900); in the Levant of the early 1920s, Julia Dimashqiya's magazine *The New Woman* appeared (Thompson 143).⁴ *Leïla* contributors refer to but do not name directly the "New Muslim Woman." Instead they use terms such as *la femme tunisienne*, *la femme musulmane*, *la Tunisienne*, *la Musulmane*, and multiples thereof. I propose that this women's periodical created a space in the print culture for Tunisians, both men and women, to speak for themselves and to define themselves with their own words. Nonetheless, I argue that elite efforts to redefine the role of Tunisian women in the home and society resulted in an artificial construction that served nationalist objectives, just as colonial feminist discourse created a representation of *la femme musulmane* that reflected Western stereotypes and misconceptions that served colonial objectives.

³ George Mosse argues that respectability and nationalism worked together in Europe, and that a racism against outsiders developed based on a perceived abnormal sexuality outside the norms of respectability: "Lack of control over their passions characterized all outsiders..." (134). Thus, the colonized needed to establish their own respectability.

⁴For studies on the "New Woman" in the East, see Lila Abu-Lughod's *Remaking Women: Feminism and Modernity in the Middle East* (1998); Ellen L. Fleischmann's *The Nation and Its "New" Women: The Palestinian women's Movement, 1920-1948* (2003); Mona Russell's *Creating the New Egyptian Woman: Consumerism, Education, and National Identity, 1863-1922* (2004).

The construction of the New Muslim Woman remained anchored in rhetoric about the family. “Nationalists everywhere have used an array of family metaphors, resulting in a rhetoric that provides a key to understanding the emotive power of nationalism,” states Beth Baron in *Egypt as a Woman* (4). She notes that nationalists used these metaphors to unify a population of different classes and ethnicities by creating a sense of belonging and loyalty that was part of the family structure. The nation was a family with nationalist elites at the head. This type of metaphor included mothers as actors and as mothers of the nation. According to Baron, women filled a role of biologically and culturally reproducing the nation in nationalist discourses (5). A similar rhetoric surfaces in *Leila* where the New Woman is a necessary element of both the family and the New Nation, and represents a redefining of the New Nation that is more inclusive of Tunisian women. At the same time the New Muslim Woman represents changes in the Tunisian family, which was moving from an extended family structure to the nuclear family, reflected in *Leila* by an emphasis on changes in housing from the multi-family Arab house to the one-family house or apartment outside the Medina.

Although national feminist discourse and colonial feminist discourse are situated on opposite ends of the political spectrum, the New Muslim Woman appears in the middle terrain, on the borders, where definitions are not fixed, but shifting, thanks to *Leila*'s team and the forum they encouraged. Here the ambivalence of narratives of the nation emerges, and cultural authority is unstable because it is “in the act of ‘composing’ its powerful image” (Bhabha 1990, 3). Male writers, particularly well-known nationalist lawyers Tahar Sfar and Mohamed Nomane, lay down the guidelines for Tunisian women’s new role in Tunisian society anchored in the family and the ideology of

motherhood, keeping women in the home. Nonetheless, the magazine expands on their concepts, proposing heroic models from history and contemporary models of Tunisian women circulating in the public sphere and in the workplace that go beyond a tentative national feminism.

The “Old Muslim Woman”

The notion of the “New Muslim Woman” suggests that another type of woman preceded her. The first editorial of the first issue insists that its mission is to attack “les vieilles traditions injustifiables,” that is, customs viewed as detrimental to women’s emancipation (Dec. 1936, 1) such as arranged marriages, lack of education, and polygamy. Tahar Sfar’s new *femme libre* is no longer a “femme claustrée, opprimée et recluse, ... dominée et esclave, instrument de plaisir et objet d’apparat ...” (“Le rôle de la femme dans la famille,” Oct. 1939, 3). This description of the “Old Muslim Woman” reflects not only Sfar’s discontent with certain facets of Tunisian life, but an infiltration of colonial feminist discourse as well, for Sfar describes the Tunisian woman as a victim and sexual object, and attacks Tunisian customs and ways of life. For another *Leïla* writer, tradition remains the problem, and the mother-in-law, in her traditional role as the matriarchal policing voice of younger women, represents the “old” version of the Tunisian woman, weighted down by custom.

The mother-in-law appears in “Les Enfants tristes” (anon., Aug. 1939, 6). This article focuses on the controlling forces of the Tunisian man influenced by tradition and his mother who represents the shackled Tunisian woman who precedes emancipation and who hinders the development of the New Muslim Woman. The writer comments that few Tunisian women take their children to the beach. To play at the beach is a healthy

activity: “Bonne journée pour ces enfants; ils se sont amusés, ils ont donné libre cours à leur vitalité et leur santé en a profité.” The fact that Tunisian children do not spend time at the beach results in sad and sick children. The concern for health reinforces notions of the Nation. The Nation will become stronger with healthier children. This article blames Tunisian men—for even if they had the money to take their families to the beach, would they? The writer thinks not: “...il y a tant de difficultés qui se présentent à lui qu’il n’y pense même pas et, en définitive prend le train tout seul ou avec des amis se contentant le soir de rapporter à son épouse un bouquet de jasmins qu’il a acheté à La Marsa.” They are unwilling to take care of their small children, and in addition, the husband’s mother prevents change because she serves as the policing matriarchal voice of “tradition.” The wife is: “surveillée par sa belle-mère qui la chaperonne avec tout son zèle de vieille conservatrice des traditions, de chaperon et de belle-mère.” In order to have healthy children for a healthy nation, the New Muslim Woman must be a new type of mother, responsible for the health and education of her children and capable of taking her children to the beach, preferably with her husband, without the weight of tradition (her mother-in-law) upon her. The system of control transfers from the mother-in-law to the husband while the New Muslim Woman assumes responsibility for her children—so that the Nation will be fruitful.

Education and the New Muslim Woman

Not only must the New Muslim Woman produce healthy children for the New Nation, but she must be schooled in order to educate her children. Injustices in the colonial educational system made it necessary to supplement children’s learning. Farouk, in “L’éducation familiale” (June 1937, 8), notes:

... l'enseignement donné à l'école est loin d'être en rapport avec les véritables besoins de l'enfant musulman. Il [l'enseignement] méconnaît ingénument le milieu tunisien et ne fait, ... , qu'achever de désorienter et d'en faire un être pâlot, dénué de toute personnalité. L'éducation de la race, son adaptation aux besoins pressants de la vie moderne exigent l'éducation préalable de la femme.

Here is an example of demands placed on the reader to read between the lines. The reference to “les véritables besoins” hides a Tunisian national identity, also indicated by the terms *le milieu tunisien*, *personnalité*, and *la race*. A French education produces children without a concept of their own Nation. Farouk turns the role of the educated mother into a patriotic duty, for she must educate her children, especially her male children who will join the anti-colonial struggle. Colonial feminist discourse infiltrates Farouk's arguments, which can be seen in the notion that women must change for society to evolve. He argues that women's education is necessary for other projects to succeed, that is, women must move the modern nation forward: “Méconnu ou insuffisamment pris en consideration, il [le problème de la femme] risquerait fort d'être la pierre d'achoppement contre laquelle viendront les tentatives les plus généreuses.” It is the responsibility of the New Muslim Woman to fill in the gaps for her children, and to provide them with a national orientation and identity.

Insisting upon the need for education, the editorial stance of the periodical is expressed in “Femmes, l'avenir est à vous” (Aug. 1938, 2) signed by “Leïla” (the editorial “team”). Linking the reform of civilization and renewal of Islam, and pointing to Turkey, Egypt, Irak, and Syria as examples of reform, the editor makes “la femme musulmane” an integral part of change, however, this remains a patriarchal construct. The New Muslim Woman's first concern must be biological reproduction to serve the nation (*votre peuple*):

La terre non labourée n'a jamais donné grain parfait. Comprenez, femmes, votre devoir, votre unique devoir sacré et urgent. Instruisez et perfectionnez votre esprit pour vous trouver prêtes et à la hauteur de votre propre destin qui est celui de tout votre peuple.

Thus, the metaphor of land and earth (*la terre*) stands for the New Muslim Woman and represents at the same time the Nation. This patriarchal construct aids men in the march to independence, for the New Muslim Woman looks to her patriotic duty and seeks education in order to be a better mother, the mother of the Nation.

Opinions vary on the form that education should take, however, indicating male anxiety. In "Femme musulmane et enseignement" (Feb. 1937, 8), Hakim (a pseudonym) contextualizes the debate about education for women within the wider context of colonization, referred to as *une civilisation moderne*: "... cette querelle est lourde de signification; elle est symptomatique d'un malaise évident, d'un désarroi incontestable, face à la transformation rapide qui s'opère dans les moeurs au contact d'une civilisation moderne de jour en jour plus envahissante" (8). Although he views European culture as invasive, Hakim argues for education in both Arabic and French for women, criticizing those who defend tradition and propose a Muslim instruction in Arabic only. He argues that women will then be isolated from any influences that are foreign or non-Muslim. He points out that the larger question is the education of all Tunisians, and that influences from the exterior, such as the radio, will break down the barriers despite efforts to block change. This writer takes a pragmatic stand, suggesting that it is necessary to make the best of the changes under colonization.

On the other hand, Hamouda Damergi shows uneasiness over French education. In "La Femme tunisienne et l'instruction" (Sept. 1937, 7), he points out that Islam

encourages the instruction of all, including women. This reference serves to remind Tunisians that they have a civilization that makes them equal to any other civilization in accomplishments, and to remind the French that they too are indebted to Arab civilization. Citing historical examples, Damergi argues that education for women must be adapted to their special needs, “tout en tenant compte de ses facultés innées, de ses instincts et de ses aptitudes dominants.” A critique of women in the contemporary situation voiced among certain male contributors to *Leïla* appears in Damergi’s study. He constructs three categories of women, those that are ignorant, those that seek an education while respecting the Islamic precepts, and

... en face de ces deux catégories il s’élabore une troisième catégorie pire que la première, en ce qu’elle aggrave l’état de la jeune fille sans y apporter aucun fruit quant à son évolution intellectuelle et sociale. Beaucoup de jeunes filles confondent éducation et instruction avec snobisme et préciosité, ce qui est tout à fait différent (8).

The fear of a predisposition to “vice” due to a European education reflects the fear that it will westernize women, making them favorable to French culture and available to the Western male: “Nous savons que l’ignorance prédispose aux vices, mais la fausse instruction les renferme déjà” (8). Ignorance and what is considered a miss-directed education, that is a European education, are nearly equivalent for this writer. This is an attack on the French civilizing mission, and its corrupting influence perceived as spreading through French education. Despite a well-intentioned effort to improve the condition of women by supporting an educational program for them, this article defines the Tunisian woman as the Other with its classifications, criticisms, and definitions of her problems without consulting her.

Ultimately, however, the New Muslim Woman requires an education because she has a new role in the home as household manager. Euphemistically called “L’ange du foyer,” (Yasmina “L’ange du foyer: La mère de famille,” Sept.1937,13), a new series of tasks are set before her based on a new knowledge in “Conseils aux jeunes filles” (Oct. 1939, 15). This includes not only infant and child care, but money management as well: “Etre économes sans tomber dans l’avarice: savoir dépenser pour les besoins utiles et éviter les gaspillages absurdes fréquents dans les milieux tunisiens ...” The New Muslim Woman has become a shopper, a role previously filled by the husband. Reflecting changing consumer habits and tastes, the New Muslim Woman is responsible for a new look in a home where spaces are organized differently:

Rendez votre foyer agréable en en écartant les mauvais meubles et la ferraille inutile. Exigez des meubles modernes et supprimez les matelas qui traînent un peu partout sous des prétextes de confort. Il y a des sièges qui sont bien plus confortables et, en outre, évitent aux intérieurs l’aspect délaissé et désordonné que leur donnent les choses habituelles.

Here, orderliness and “modernity” go hand in hand.⁵ The comfort and peace created in the home by the New Muslim Woman serve to create a haven for her husband: “Soyez camarades de votre époux, facilitez-lui l’existence en en lui faisant oublier les difficultés.” Generally, then, *Leïla* writers emphasize the ideology of motherhood—in part because the majority are men—which coincides with nationalist discourse. The New Muslim Woman is a household manager who is a thrifty shopper, an interior decorator,

⁵Leïla Temime notes that in a traditional house, rooms served multiple functions, consequently, items that were easily moved and multi-functional, such as mattresses, pillows, and sheep skins, were more useful than European-style furniture (157-160). *Leïla* articles such as Claire-Charles Geniaux’s “Chez les dévoilées de Tunisie” (Feb. 1937, 22) and Marlène Daisy’s “En marge du 14e Salon des Arts Ménagers” (Mar. 1937, 20) suggest that Tunisian women are interested in changes in homes and furnishings.

an educator of children, and a companion to her husband, thus she creates a haven from which (male) family members will go out to form the New Nation.

Nationalists Define the New Muslim Woman

New roles for Tunisian women appear in well-known nationalists' articles as well. Traces of a heated debate on women's emancipation in nationalist circles (that exclude women) can be found in the pages of *Leïla*. In "Réflexions sur quelques principes de l'éducation des filles" (M-A. A, probably M'hamed-Ali Al-Annabi, Feb. 1937, 18), the author discusses a debate at a meeting of the "Association des Anciens de Sadiki," a known (male) nationalist hotbed.⁶ In some ways, the first series of *Leïla* contributes to the patriarchal constructs of the New Muslim Woman through the presence of well-known nationalist lawyers. In particular, Tahar Sfar and Mohamed Nomane write on the subject of women's emancipation and openly sign their names to articles.⁷ These two nationalists dominate by their fame and numerous articles. Five of Sfar's sixteen articles and six of Noman's eleven articles serve to define the New Muslim Woman. An examination of their articles about the role of Tunisian women reveals the patriarchal structure that contains the New Muslim Woman, but also the slippery middle terrain or border zone where it becomes difficult to draw boundaries.

In a first article, and reflecting his professional formation, Tahar Sfar examines the legal aspects of the debate. In "Le droit musulman et le mouvement féministe moderne" (Mar. 1937, 2), he insists that Muslim law provides the necessary guidelines

⁶ For information on the role of Sadiki College and its graduates in the nationalist movement, see, Nouredine Sraïeb's *Le Collège Sadiki de Tunis, 1875-1956: Enseignement et nationalisme*.

⁷ Other renowned nationalist contributors include Bahri Guiga and Tahar Lakdhar. See the Index of Authors in the Appendices for titles of articles by these men.

for change in women's status. According to him, Muslim law is between the extremes of religious conservatism and radical feminism:

Le Droit musulman tel qu'il a été, tel qu'il se trouve développé dans un certain nombre d'ouvrages juridiques, permet un relèvement sensible dans la condition sociale et intellectuelle de la femme musulmane d'aujourd'hui, par la suppression de coutumes directes et de traditions millénaires mais n'autorise pas les excès que d'aucuns recherchent en se basant sur des absolus métaphysiques bien plus que sur les réalités de la vie.

Here, Sfar labels the New Muslim Woman "la femme musulmane d'aujourd'hui," suggesting a new beginning in the present that will be governed by Islamic law. Keeping to a middle ground, he links women's status to economic factors in "La Condition de la Femme dans l'histoire de l'humanité" (Mar. 1938, 2). He views industrialization as a liberation for women. At the same time, he considers it destructive for the family unit because it favors the individual. Cautiously proposing superficial changes for Tunisian women while favoring the family unit, he states: "La femme peut et doit être libre; mais elle n'a pas besoin pour cela de briser tous liens avec son mari, ses enfants, de "vivre sa vie" pleinement, sans se soucier de la fonction essentielle qui lui est dévolue comme mère, d'abord, comme épouse, ensuite..." (Mar. 1938, 2). Sfar promotes a double standard: he considers that "vivre sa vie" will interfere with parenting for women, whose essential and defining function is mother, however, this does not pose a problem for men who parent and have professional and social lives simultaneously.

Two years after his first cautious article, Sfar publishes his most important article on Tunisian women, "Le Rôle de la femme dans la famille," (Oct. 1939, 2). More daring, Sfar defines *la femme libre*, however, he emphasizes her biological role and her central place in the family as *la gardienne du foyer*. Allusions to the womb and its functioning

reinforce his arguments: "...n'est-elle pas en effet celle qui périodiquement sacrifie sa propre vie, pour créer la vie autour d'elle, donna sa santé, sa substance à ses enfants avec lesquels elle finit par confondre sa propre existence; toujours victime dans sa chair, éternelle sacrifiée, elle supporte vaillamment les multiples douleurs inhérentes à son état..." (2). The woman as victim "dans sa chair" who tolerates pain resembles the land that is a victim of colonization, thus she is a metaphor for the Nation, serving the national movement.

Sfar sees changes around him that he attributes to new scientific discoveries and industrialization, and that contribute to comfort in the home. Proposing that women left home at first to be out in the world with their newly found freedom, he notes that women are now returning home:

... la femme ... tend à reprendre le chemin de son foyer par le bien-être qu'elle y trouve, le confort accru que lui procurent les découvertes scientifiques récentes qui ont donné naissance à cet instrument merveilleux, la radio, aux appareils de chauffage et d'éclairage, aux mille petites choses qui composent l'agencement d'un intérieur moderne, à tous ces divertissements et à toutes ces commodités qui font d'une maison un monde, un univers où la famille peut rencontrer dans un espace restreint, tout ce qu'il faut pour l'instruire et la divertir d'une manière saine et efficace. (3)

Sfar's enthusiasm for new inventions and new standards of housekeeping, cleanliness, and hygiene, which reflect changes in taste and home furnishings in Tunisia, suggests that *la femme libre*'s task of household manager has become easier when in fact women readers of *Leïla* were generally well-to-do and had servants. Sfar considers the new *femme libre* to be part of the public sphere, with a balanced life between exterior and interior: "... elle entend désormais partager son temps entre ses occupations du dehors et les joies que peut lui procurer son séjour au sein de la famille; elle entend apporter à sa

famille les fruits de l'expérience qu'elle a acquise par son contact avec l'extérieur ...”

(3). Despite this new independence described by Sfar, *la femme libre* remains firmly anchored in patriarchy, serving “la race tunisienne” (an expression for a disguised national identity) as “l’usine de vie, la fabrique d’existences.” Thus, Sfar takes a cautious position when laying down foundations that serve to define an unnamed national feminism. He situates change within Islam, promoting an ideology of motherhood, and viewing education as a necessity for an improved mother, housewife, and companion to man and whose patriotic duty is to provide healthy members of the New Nation. Briefly put, the advancement of the *femme libre* or New Muslim Woman serves the Nation in a patriarchal view of the world according to Sfar.

Mohamed Nomane promotes similar views as one of the most vocal writers about women’s status and emancipation. He insists less on the biological aspect, but maintains constraints on Tunisian women’s role in society, refusing French ideas of *laïcité* for them, which is a 180° shift from his previous articles in *Tunis-Socialist*.⁸ Nomane’s definition of *laïcité* becomes elastic when he speaks for the Tunisian woman in “Un mot sur ce que doit être la femme musulmane” (Dec. 1936, 2), reflecting male anxiety over the possibility of Europeanization of Tunisian women, which would sabotage the national movement by dividing the ranks. He writes: “Elle [la femme musulmane] ne conçoit pas la *laïcité* sous le même angle que la société chrétienne” (2). He is against an education in French, insisting that it must be in Arabic and accompanied by “une éducation morale

⁸Nomane’s articles in *Tunis Socialiste* include: “Autour d’une conférence” (16 July 1924), “La femme musulmane et le travail” (11 Feb. 1929), and “Dans la volière” (13 Feb. 1929). As a Socialist, Nomane criticized the nationalist newspaper *L’Etendard Tunisien* and its director, Chadly Khairallah. In “Marius Nomane et les rénégats” (8 Apr. 1929), Nomane defends Charles Géniaux’s *Les Musulmanes*, and attacks Chadly Khairallah’s criticism of the novel.

d'après les principes de sa religion..." (2). Like Tahar Sfar, he addresses economic issues. In "La femme musulmane et le travail" (Feb. 1937, 5), Nomane puts constraints on the Tunisian woman's employment: "Obligée de porter le voile certains travaux lui sont encore interdits. Ce sont les travaux qui la mettent en contact avec le sexe masculin. Elle ne peut être ni vendeuse de magasin, ni repasseuse, ni caissière, ni boutiquière." Of course, rural women worked outdoors on farms, however, he proposes that city women should work at home, producing rugs, embroidery or lace, if only a market would be developed for their handiwork. Nomane especially emphasizes the Tunisian woman's role in...the kitchen. She should learn European techniques to improve her culinary skills: "Ce n'est pas lui demander de se transformer en cuisinière européenne et de troquer les mets de son pays contre des plats exotiques. Mais d'améliorer ses propres plats ou de les transformer de façon à les rendre plus appétissants..." (Feb. 1937, 5). Like Sfar, Nomane pressures women to improve their performance of household tasks to become a better companion to husbands of the educated elites. He fears an alienation (*francisation*) of women who might dilute Tunisian culture within the family.

Changing consumer trends that made women into shoppers appears to put pressure on men, creating friction around the subject of fiscal responsibility. Stating that it has become necessary for women to work, that is, to generate income, Nomane reveals a misogynous view of women: "Il importe que la femme cesse peu à peu d'être une charge pour l'homme" (5). According to Nomane, then, Tunisian women are a burden and a responsibility for Tunisian men, reflecting his views on elite women (*Leïla's* readers) who have high expectations and expect to have servants. Spatially contingent definitions remain in place—woman's work space remains in the home. Women cannot

do certain jobs that men do and male and female spheres of activity are kept separate. In addition, Nomane fails to recognize women's work in the home.⁹ Nomane's suggestion that women create problems for men and that they should add an activity to their day that brings in income demonstrates insensitivity and the problem of the breach between the male and female spheres. Although he considers the veil to be a hindrance for women's participation in political activities and the workplace, he believes that this problem will be resolved eventually, with time: "Ce qui la [la Tunisienne] retient encore aujourd'hui c'est la question du voile qui sera résolue d'elle-même et sans intervention inopportune" ("La Femme et la vie politique," Jan. 1938, 8). His attitude recalls a colonial feminist discourse that focuses on the veil, which concerns a small minority of city women. Whereas Sfar throws open the door of the public sphere to women with his notion of *la femme libre* who participates in the construction of the New Nation, albeit especially through reproduction, Nomane opens it only a crack.

The weight of their renown in professional and nationalist activities makes these lawyers the arbiters of the forum on new roles for Tunisian women. These men of law establish the boundaries for women—however, does their word pass as law? Certain articles and images provide a different version of the New Muslim Woman, making the formulation of a fixed identity difficult. Here is the border zone where Tunisians, both men and women, demonstrate border thinking, expanding on the models set down by the voices of the Law.

⁹ For an idea of the extent of women's domestic work in Tunisia, see Leïla Blili Temime's *Histoire de familles: Mariages, répudiations et vie quotidienne à Tunis. 1875-1930* (1998), Chapter II, "L'Espace domestique" (157-171).

Biographies of Exemplary Women

Although the New Muslim Woman turns a resolute eye to the future, nevertheless, her feet are planted firmly in a glorious Arab past. Historic examples of exceptional, heroic women serve several purposes. First, certain women are part of a (glorious) Tunisian history. This contributes to the narrating of the Nation. Tunisians have an established written history of their country that precedes colonization, and these examples reinforce this idea, putting into question colonial definitions of the Protectorate that refuse the Nation. Women in this category include Aziza Othmana in the 17th century (Mohamed Nomane, "Une belle figure de l'histoire de la Tunisie: Aziza Othmana," Sept. 1937, 12), Princess Atf, wife of the sultan, Abou Zakaria Yahia, in the 15th century, (H.H. Abdulwahab, "La Princesse Atf," Aug. 1939, 10), and Aïcha El Manoubia in the 12th century (anon., "Aïcha El Manoubia," Aug. 1939, 14). The title for the article about Aziza Othmana, "Une belle figure de l'histoire de la Tunisie," explicitly refers to Tunisian history. Thus, Tunisians claim this history as their own.

Secondly, certain examples remind readers of a glorious Arab history, thus defending an Arab identity that transcends borders established by French colonialism. These examples include Chohdah in 11th century Baghdad (anon., "Chohdah la belle Savante," June 1937, 5), Kahena in the 8th century (anon., "La Kahena," June 1938, 13), and Princess Oum El-Oulou in the 11th century (anon., "La Princesse Oum El-Oulou," Nov. 1939, 6). The last two examples question borders and look to a wider Maghreb.

Kahena defended her people in Tunisia and Algeria, and Princess Oum El-Oulou was the daughter of a ruler of Tunis who married a ruler in Morocco.¹⁰

Certain exceptional characteristics are emphasized, especially education. However, little is said about marital status or family life and responsibilities, which would reduce these figures to the mundane. Chohdah was a scholar and professor who gave conferences to both men and women, and who analyzed difficult texts. Aziza Othmana, Princess Atf, and Aïcha El Manoubia are recalled for their education, piety, generosity, and their charitable works. Articles emphasize independent social action undertaken by concerned women for the betterment of society—without the aid of fathers or husbands. *Leïla* editors encourage Tunisian women to enter the public sphere through social action from the first issue, thus these examples create precedents and legitimize the New Muslim Women's social action. On the other hand, Kahena's intelligence combined with power and patriotism, make her a model for political action and resistance. As World War II makes itself felt, articles appear about strong women who are able to negotiate crises or who are warriors. In the 14th century, the wife of a viceroy of the Maghreb, Djlaloyal, served as a counselor to her son and advised conciliatory actions for the good of the country after war ("Pardonner," May 1940, 3). In "Un peu d'histoire: Femmes Arabes Guerrières" (Dr. Perron, Aug. 1940, 35), six examples of women who fought and were wounded or died on the battlefield emphasize the qualities of courage, intelligence, patriotism, and dedication.

Reflecting the closing of the forum and the disappearance of women in the second series, a one hundred-word article on Aziza Othmana ("Aziza Othmana," 1 Jan. 1941, 2)

¹⁰ Other articles include "La Belle Légende de Majnoun Leïla" (Dec. 1936, 17) and "Les Femmes savantes" (Dec. 1939, 11).

focuses on the identification of her father and her husband, chaining her to a patriarchal structure. Models for strong women disappear in the second series, along with women editors and contributors.

Contemporary Women in the Public Sphere

If these historic examples were the only models provided for the New Muslim Women, they would not disturb patriarchy because they are distanced in the past and exceptional. However, within the pages of *Leïla*, the reader finds contemporary examples of women circulating in the public sphere, thus challenging proposed patriarchal models while new identities are explored. The cemetery, seen in a positive light, is described as a place where women meet and find a quiet space (Kalsoum, "Au Jardin des morts," Mar. 1937, 14). Zeineb writes about her enjoyment of the streets of Tunis in "La rue" (June 1937, 9), and at the same time demonstrates the New Muslim Woman's changing consumer habits. She has become a shopper for herself and for her family, and circulates anonymously in street crowds: "Comme j'aime m'intégrer dans cette foule où s'entrecroisent mille regards curieux ou méditatifs." Zeineb expresses the idea of the gaze, to see and to be seen, a gaze that includes women. She describes the large store windows in the European part of Tunis, signs of a new type of store, different from the small shops in the Medina: "Il me semble que je ne me laisserai jamais d'admirer ces merveilles de la mode qui s'offrent à la joie de vos yeux dans les vitrines somptueusement parées... C'est grâce aux vitrines que les rues de nos cités modernes brillent d'un éclat incomparable." The new consumerism is available to all, including women, or it is at least visually available to the general public because of large store

windows that signify “modernity.” This article is one of several that express women’s desire to circulate freely in public and their view that this is as an important right.

However, some men feel women are invading the public sphere when women take advantage of new technologies, reflecting fears of losing power and a masculinity under attack by colonization. Khaled, whose article “Encore Un” is discussed in the previous chapter, considers women’s presence at the cinema disturbing. His article confirms that women attend in large enough numbers to cause anxiety among men (“Soirée de Première,” June 1937, 7). Khaled criticizes young Tunisian men in one sentence: “... l’occupation maîtresse d’une bonne partie de l’élément mâle de cette génération tunisienne éclosée depuis 1930 est la belote et le poker ...” Then he attacks “La Jeune Tunisienne” for the entire article, focusing on her dress, superficial behavior and topics of conversation, and her language that combines both Arabic and French (and sometimes Italian) rendering her inarticulate. Here is a critique of “civilization” reflecting the undesirable aspects of Western culture that have been absorbed into Tunisian culture. Through sarcasm and irony, Khaled establishes explicit negative guidelines: he describes what the New Muslim Woman should not be—superficial and uneducated, wasting time at the movies and at the seamstress’s shop.

On the other hand, women in the public sphere of education are lauded. General consensus supports women’s education, making it a neutral topic, however, articles and announcements demonstrate a pushing of limits. The question is no longer whether or not women should attend school or what kind of education they should have. Rather emphasis is placed on the obtaining of diplomas. Tewhida Ben Cheikh leads the way, when she becomes the first woman medical doctor in the Maghreb, announced in “Une



Fig. 4.2

Doctoresse Tunisienne” (Mar. 1937, 18). “Succès féminins aux examens” names Mlles. Bahri and Tlatli, and announces that they passed the baccalauréat exams in July 1940 (Aug. 1940, 26). Looking to the East, the July 1939 cover is a photograph of nine Egyptian women law students in Western dress. Abdul-Méjid Chabby draws the reader’s attention to two Egyptian women who have completed university degrees, in “L’instruction et l’Egyptienne” (Aug. 1940, 24-26). Photos of Bahia Faragallah, graduating from the American University of Cairo, and Souhayr Kalmaoui (Fig. 4.2), graduating from the Arab University of Cairo, show them standing proudly in their graduation gowns and caps. The Arab University was itself a symbol of nationalism as it had been a nationalist project at the beginning of the 20th c. that the British

colonial authorities refused to finance, fearing the development of a center for nationalist thought and activities. Kalmaoui’s university diploma represents feminist achievements as well, for Egyptian women were not admitted at first to the Arab University (Badran 53-54).

Traces appear of women organizing in order to contribute to the national struggle preceding World War II. Particularly Béchira Ben M’rad is mentioned as “présidente du

comité féminin de secours aux étudiants” (“A la fête féminine des Etudiants,” Dec.

1936, 13). In 1938, Zarrouk addresses Béchira Ben M’rad directly, in his article “Autour d’une fête” (Mar. 1938, 17). After congratulating her for a successful fund-raiser, he suggests:

Seulement, nous profitons de cette circonstance, en notre qualité de directeur-fondateur d’un organe féministe, pour rappeler à Madame Béchira Ben M’rad qui n’a pas hésité à fouler les vieux principes consacrant l’immobilité pérenne de la femme musulmane, que sa précieuse activité devrait être orientée vers l’évolution de la femme Tunisienne. Nous pensons—et personne ne pourra nous contredire—que la femme, qui délibérément se mêle à la vie publique et à l’amélioration sociale, se doit de consacrer son activité aux œuvres féminines, à l’éducation, à l’évolution de la femme ... Madame Ben M’rad se doit d’en prendre la charge.

Zarrouk proposes that the creation of an orphanage for girls, a project promoted by *Leïla*, would be an appropriate goal for Tunisian women. While Zarrouk declares *Leïla* a feminist publication, he uses this to dictate terms to Ben M’Rad. Trouble in the border zone surfaces: should a man, Zarrouk in this case, impose terms for women’s actions? In addition, should women be limited to social action for women? Who sets priorities in the anti-colonial struggle? Zarrouk insists: “La solidarité des femmes doit s’exercer au profit des femmes, d’abord.” Zarrouk pushes the New Muslim Woman back into a woman’s zone separated from the male public sphere of action.

However, several months later, as French repression increased, women forcefully pushed the door of the public sphere open.¹¹ This change can be seen in the pages of *Leïla*, which at first promotes the participation of women in the social domain, calling for charitable projects that aid the poor, such as Zarrouk’s proposals to Ben M’rad. However,

¹¹The increase in repression is reflected in headlines for *L’Action Tunisienne*, the only Tunisian-run political newspaper in French at the time: “Est-ce le retour à la dictature? Poursuites contre L’Action Tunisienne, Resurrection des décrets scélérats sur la presse,” (22 July 1937), “Le Peuple tunisien manifesterà... pour la solidarité avec nos frères Algériens et Marocains victimes de la répression ‘front populaire’ ”(19 Nov. 1937), “La Repression ‘Front Populaire’ continue...” (7 Feb. 1938).

by the end of 1938, women do not wait to be told what to do. Instead, articles in *Leïla* report their actions. Here, the historical moment affects textual practice and boundaries are crossed, as this women's magazine turns to current events that raise national consciousness. In "La femme tunisienne à l'action" (Dec. 1938, 15), Zarrouk relates the arrival of a new Resident General, Eirik Labonne, on 22 Nov. 1938, and how four Tunisian secondary school women students, Zakia and Jamila Fourati, Saïda Bouzguerrou (Habib Bourguiba's niece), and Chadlia (Bouzguerrou) Nôomane, offer flowers, pronounce a speech, and then proclaim: "Vive S.A. Ahmed Pacha Bey! Vive Eirik Labonne! Vive le Destour! Vive Habib Bourguiba! A bas les privilèges!"—all of this broadcast on Radio Tunis-P.T.T., the state-run radio station. Zarrouk emphasizes the importance of education that has allowed these four young women to articulate a nationalist message clearly to the public. The article was possibly published before Zarrouk knew about the four students' arrest, for it is not mentioned.

In the following issue, Tahar Lakhdar, a noted nationalist lawyer, emphasizes the arrest in the title of his article "Leïla, tes sœurs étaient en prison" (Mar. 1939, 2), and describes the 28 Dec. 1938 court audience and acquittal of the four students mentioned above, although he does not identify them. However, their names appear on the next page, in "La femme tunisienne et la vie publique" (3). This second article describes how women organized and participated in demonstrations during the January 1939 visit of Edouard Daladier, president of the French *Conseil*. Twelve women were arrested and condemned to fifteen to thirty days of prison. The article reports that upon their liberation they were greeted by crowds: "Une jeune fille prononça, rue El-Monastiri à Tunis, le premier discours politique féminin qui fut accueilli par des applaudissements

frénétiques. Il ressort de ces manifestations que la participation de la femme tunisienne dans la vie publique du pays est désormais effective.” The writer draws attention to the articulate (and thus educated) woman who could deliver a nationalist message to the public. A third article in the March 1939 issue, “La Femme dans les arts et dans la politique” (4), confirms the opening of the political domain to Tunisian women: “La femme sort de sa situation sociale quand l’ambiance politique penche vers l’anormalité. L’inquiétude est un stimulant et là où un minimum de garanties fait défaut l’agitation, même chez la femme, prend naissance.” This writer suggests that women feel they must take action in the face of an “abnormal” situation, that is, the colonial situation, which has introduced arbitrary violence into Tunisian society.

These articles are important because they do not appear elsewhere in the Tunisian-run, French-language press.¹² For today’s reader, they open a window on women’s political activities in public—in the street demonstrating, in the courtroom, and in prison, all for the nationalist cause. The articles, by their laudatory descriptions, confirm a positive view of these women in a feminist narrative that gives them agency, and the circulation of the magazine takes their example, not to be forgotten, into the homes of Tunisian elites. Zarrouk’s Dec. 1938 article and the three March 1939 articles show that this was indeed a heady moment for those promoting women’s emancipation, as words were finally translated into action, that is, patriotic action, thus demonstrating the New Muslim Woman’s participation in the building of the New Nation. Articles focusing on women’s political action mark a high point in *Leila*’s production, but signal trouble on the horizon as action in the street inevitably led to increased French

¹² The only Tunisian-run French-language political newspaper, *L’Action Tunisienne*, had been censored out of business in April 1938.

repression, a closing of dialogue, and hard times for the Tunisian press, and for *Leïla* as well.

Professional Women

Combined with this exhilarating moment where women enter the political domain, contemporary examples of professional women add a new dimension to representations of the New Muslim Woman that test boundaries and cause anxiety. In these examples, women's role in the home as household manager, educator of children, and companion to spouse is forgotten. Examples of women from Egypt or Turkey were favored, as noted above, and one reason was because articles could be combined with pictures, adding impact. The first picture of a professional Arab woman in *Leïla* is a model borrowed from Egyptian print culture. She is Souhayr Kalmaoui, an Egyptian writer, whose picture appears later when she obtains her university diplomas (Aug. 1940, 24-26). Abdul-Méjid Chabby describes Kalmaoui as intelligent, emphasizing her knowledge of Arab culture and her patriotism, for she produced "pages débordantes d'un patriotisme bien senti," ("Les Lettres Arabes: *Les Propos de ma grand-mère* de Souhayr Kalmaoui," Feb. 1937, 15). Education and patriotism go hand in hand. Another article reveals the names of Turkish women artists, enumerating their many professional accomplishments ("Les Beaux-Arts et la femme turque," June 1937, 10). The ubiquitous Oum-Kalsoum is evoked for her films ("Les films d'Oum-Kalsoum," Dec. 1936, 18).

The "Carnet Rose," which may appear banal for its recognition of special occasions (engagements, marriages, births) for Tunisian elites, nevertheless reveals at least two working women. Ouassila (or Wassila) Ben Salem's engagement is announced to Ali Ben Aldjia, accompanied by the mention of her participation in *Leïla* (Mar. 1938,

17). The announcement of Sophie Ferchiou's death states that she was a professor at the French boarding school of Radès (Nov. 1939, 17). Other Tunisian examples include Dr. Tewhida Ben Cheikh, mentioned above, and the famous singer, Chafia Rochdi ("Une charmante dictatrice," Dec. 1936, 17), whose musical talent and knowledge are emphasized. Oussila Sabry is encouraged for her organization of a theatrical group of professional actors and actresses ("La troupe d'Oussila Sabry," Dec. 1936, 18). In March 1938, Salah Ridha Lahmar makes it clear that *la femme tunisienne* includes Jewish women as well as Muslim women. Promoting women's entry into Tunisian theater as actresses and writers in "La femme tunisienne et l'art dramatique" (12), he mentions Jewish actresses, especially Habiba Messika, who was well-known. Consequently, two representations exist side by side and mingle in *Leïla*—a New Muslim Woman and a New Tunisian Woman. The *Leïla* forum not only allows multiple voices to be heard, but demonstrates an effort to include both Muslim and Jewish communities in the New Nation. Whispers of an anti-colonial subtext hide behind the debate on women's emancipation, veiling the hidden transcript of the colonized who attempted to unify these two communities which the French did their best to split apart, as Albert Memmi notes (17-18).

The comparison of a short story, "Les neuf confidences" (Aug. 1940, 21) with an accompanying anonymous article about the writer, Arbia Zaouche, shows the unstable construction of the New Muslim Woman. This short story, about nine friends who discuss what is most important in their lives (literature, music, dance, cinema), proposes the idea that love and marriage are a young woman's ultimate goal. This reinforces the ideology of domesticity and motherhood proposed by nationalist contributors such as

Tahar Sfar and Mohamed Nomane. However, the article about Arbia Zaouche that precedes her short story, describes a professional woman, without the mention of marital status or family. This description introduces a slippery terrain where identities are tested. “In Memoriam: Une douce voix s’est tue...” (Aug. 1940, 20) spotlights an individual, Arbia Zaouche, in order to elaborate on the recognition of Tunisian women’s identities in



La requête Mlle Arbia ZAOUCHE qui fut la première oratrice nord-africaine de langue arabe, au micro de Radio-Carthage.

Fig. 4.3

the public sphere. Because of *Leila’s* policy of discretion in naming women contributors, Zaouche’s identity is not revealed until after her death. The first woman radio announcer (*speakerine*) at the state-run Radio Tunis, Zaouche is an example of women who exploit new technologies that open professional possibilities, although the accompanying photo (Fig. 4.3), which shows her in front of a microphone wearing a *sefsari* with only eyes showing, indicates women’s hesitation in the public sphere. The article emphasizes Zaouche’s persistence, courage, and groundbreaking work: “... la première causerie qu’elle fit devant le micro, provoqua une énorme sensation dans les milieux tunisiens.” In addition, she was articulate in standard Arabic, and intelligent, curious, and an accomplished musician with a knowledge of poetry.

the public sphere. Because of *Leila’s* policy of discretion in naming women contributors, Zaouche’s identity is not revealed until after her death. The first woman radio announcer (*speakerine*) at the state-run Radio Tunis, Zaouche is an example of women who exploit new technologies that open professional possibilities,

This article points to Zaouche's dedication to women's emancipation and education: "Connaissant le prestige de la radio dans les milieux féminins, elle s'était assignée la lourde tâche d'éduquer et d'éclairer ses sœurs par le truchement des ondes." Important for women's enlightenment for which Zaouche worked, the themes of identity and recognition are repeated: "Si nous soulevons aujourd'hui avec tristesse le voile funèbre de son anonymat, c'est pour rendre hommage à sa véritable et forte personnalité digne de notre souvenir admiratif." Women must be recognized for their work, which requires recognition of their identity. The article reveals that Zaouche worked at the radio station under the pseudonym of Selma and contributed an article to *Leïla* ("Chronique mondaine: Plaisirs d'été," Sept. 1937, 18) under the name of Assia. However, her short story, "Les neuf confidences," is published under Arbia Zaouche, a gesture that is a symbolic will bequeathing recognition to Tunisian women in the public sphere of the periodical and the workplace. Reflecting this theme of recognition of identity and work, the editors publish a partial list of women who have contributed to *Leïla* ("Quelques unes de nos collaboratrices," 34), consequently bringing more names of Tunisian women into the public sphere as writers.¹³ The partial list reveals a testing of boundaries and caution in revealing identities in the colonial situation. Changes do not occur abruptly, but shifts in the border zone appeared in *Leïla's* forum.

Other tensions surface in this border zone where identity boundaries are in flux. In "La femme et la guerre" (Aug. 1940, 9), Chafika recalls the Turkish pilote, Sahiba Getchken (whose photo first appears in the Jan. 1938 issue (7)), however, this symbol of the Kemalist model is problematized. Chafika complains: "... la présence de Sahiba

¹³ This list includes: Wassila Ben Salem, Essayda Foudhayli, Madeliene Fouilly, Claire Géniaux, Jamila Malki, Aïda Mamlouk, Rosette Pax, Saïda Sahly, Zaynouba Tahar.

Getchken, la grande aviatrice turque, dans les rangs des officiers de l'armée de l'air ottomane, n'a que la valeur d'un symbole affirmant des droits trop longtemps méconnus." Chafika aims a scolding critique at the Atatürk model, and also puts her finger on the problem of famous women as symbols who do not disturb patriarchal order, implying that all women should have the chance to become pilots—or practice any other profession. Male anxiety provoked by the idea of professional women appears in "Le Trousseau de la mariée" (May 1940, 8), where problems in the workplace are attributed to the entry of women into the public sphere. This article focuses on skilled women working at home and the threat felt by male artisans: "...les ouvriers hommes, vu la lutte de plus en plus âpre pour l'existence n'acceptent pas de gaieté de cœur la concurrence féminine et déclarent que la femme, n'ayant pas charge de famille à quelques exceptions près, pourrait accepter un salaire plus faible et contribuer de la sorte à augmenter le chômage." The sentiment that Tunisian men face employment difficulties as times become harder suggests the beginning of a closing of the forum opened by Zarrouk and his editors in *Leila*. The threat of a worsening economic climate due to World War II puts pressure on gains made by women in the public sphere, which men view covetously.

Advertising and the New Muslim Woman

A month after the first issue of *Leila* was published in December 1936, an ad for Valda Pastilles (Fig. 4.4)

Fig. 4.4



appeared in the only Tunisian-run French-language political newspaper, *L'Action*

Tunisienne (21 Jan. 1937). In this drawing a woman wearing a European-style outfit, with a transparent face veil and uncovered arms, holds up the Valda logo. Overdressed for the home (women would not require a face veil in the home) and too scantily dressed

Fig. 4.5



for the street with uncovered arms, this model demonstrates the difficulty of producing a satisfactory visual image of the New Woman acceptable to the general public.¹⁴ *Leïla* advertisers did not even test the waters. Only an ad for Primagaz shows a woman doing housework (Fig. 4.5). Below the drawing of a plump European woman bent over her stove with a little girl looking on, the ad announces that “Une meilleure Cuisine” may be achieved with the

use of bottled natural gas, which will provide greater comfort in cooking, “un confort plus grand, grâce à Primagaz” (Dec. 1938, 21). This ad exhorts women to improve their cooking skills, to perform better within the home for their families, while proposing a new technology, bottled natural gas. This type of advertisement suggests that foreign companies attempted to change consumer habits through advertising, which in this case, would be conspicuous consumption, as few Tunisians possessed a gas stove to which the

¹⁴I borrow Mona Russell’s ideas here. She found a similar model for the Egyptian “New Woman” in a Kodak ad of 1922 (69).

bottles could be hooked up. Even in such apparently banal details, the woman's body and mind are a space of conflict where companies attempted to reach Tunisian men through their women as they acquired more fiscal responsibility in the home.

Consequently, through advertising, companies, both foreign and local, attempted to influence Tunisians, emphasizing the quality of the product and its reasonable price, and implying that it would improve their living conditions or was good for health reasons.

Emphasis on "modernity" targeted a middle- to upper-class clientele of both men and women interested in dressing stylishly. The advent of ready-made clothing made variety and quantity available to Tunisian consumers. Advertisers proposed a "coupe moderne" and "haute couture." One ad proclaims: "L'homme élégant se distingue par sa chemise et sa cravate achetées Chez Benani" (Dec. 1936, 2), another: "Par sa coupe impeccable, Par le choix de ses tissus/ Chaâbane est le tailleur de l'homme de goût," and a third addresses women: "Maximum d'Elégence—La femme chic s'habille chez Germaine" (Jan. 1938, 15). A perfume maker proclaims "Benmussa, parfumeur préféré de la jeunesse élégante tunisienne" (Dec. 1936, 12), addressing both men and women, and identifying a city youth interested in appearances. Frequent terms such as *moderne*, *chic*, *élégant*, and *de goût* suggest that this is a border zone where new definitions of taste are being tested and legitimized by their persuasive value in advertising and commerce. *Leïla* serves as a sort of laboratory. New tastes in home furnishings accompany new tastes in dress. Advertisements for rugs, furniture, and other home furnishings suggest that a new look is required for new uses of space in homes, rather than making do with inherited furnishings or mattresses and pillows used in multi-functional spaces in the

Arab home. Capitalism and the colonial project extended into the most trivial things, making colonial ideology all the more dangerous because it was nearly invisible.

The advertisers in *Leïla* sold new technologies to the public, and unconsciously introduced new ways of thinking and living. Thus, the reader finds ads for electrical installation and fixtures, phonographs and records, radios, motorcycles, and automobile accessories, which encourage Tunisians to adopt new activities and try these new technologies—and consequently a new life by changing their ways. Here, then is another border zone where boundaries are being tested and expanded. These ads may appear to target men, however, women are included as well: an ad exhorts women to buy a television for their home: “Mesdames!!! Achetez le meilleur poste de T.S.P., Téléfunken” (Dec. 1936, 7). When advertisers address women, they reinforce the notion of the New Woman as the new household manager who has a role in family expenditures. In addition, *Leïla*'s advertising presented new products that would theoretically improve the home environment, such as a hazardous and potent insecticide: “ShellTox n'endort pas/Il tue/Insecticide puissant, sain, agréable.”

Advertisements reflect the rise of Tunisian professionals, such as Dr. Habib Thameur who advertised his office hours (July 1939, 18), a Tunisian dentist, Dr. Meddeb trained in Bordeaux (Sept. 1940, 20), and a budding publicity agency sector. On the other hand, Tunisian women appear to be invisible in the working world. Services for women such as beauty institutes and hair dressers are offered by foreign women: Guty Meery, Isabelle, Carlotta, Mme Moritz, Blulette. Although not part of the colonized population, nonetheless, this brings the names of women into the public sphere of the periodical, and makes their services available to Tunisian women.

Then, in the May 1940 issue—a revolution! To the best of my knowledge, *Leïla* contains a first in the history of the French-language Tunisian press. A Tunisian woman, Mlle. Raouia, advertises her own business and offers her professional services



Fig. 4.6

(Fig. 4.6).

The insistence upon the fact that this is the only Tunisian-run beauty business, with home

service, indicates that there are still women desiring services in the privacy of the home. At the same time, “La seule Maison Tunisienne” has a nationalist ring to it, suggesting pride (9). Here public and private spheres blur as Mlle Raouia becomes an example of the New Woman in the professional world, challenging boundaries and making border thinking possible.

Make Way for the New Tunisian Woman: Colonized Women Speak Out

As we have seen, while certain *Leïla* writers attacked negative colonial feminist representations of the Tunisian woman, the *Leïla* team worked to include articles that defined a New Muslim Woman who contributed to the building of the New Nation, formulating a national feminism. Characterized by her education, she was articulate and patriotic. This representation gradually expanded to a New Tunisian Woman that included Tunisian Jewish women. However, the New Muslim Woman and the New Tunisian Woman are unstable constructions. At first, Tunisian women were encouraged

to participate in projects of social improvement. With the passage of time and an increase in French repression, Tunisian women forcefully entered the political domain, a circumstance exploited by *Leïla* editors, thus expanding the role of the New Woman. The promotion of the New Tunisian Woman as a professional woman demonstrates border thinking on the part of *Leïla* team and contributors, but also places this constructed identity in a middle terrain where women tested boundaries. It is in this slippery border zone that the voices of women emerge, challenging patriarchal hierarchy, criticizing male behavior, and renegotiating their status within Tunisian society.

It is in the border zone that the New Tunisian Woman materializes in the flesh and blood, for she is represented by *Leïla*'s women editors and writers. Despite the fact that prestigious Tunisian nationalists such as Tahar Sfar, Bahri Guiga, Mohamed Nomane, and Tahar Lakhdar pontificate on the Tunisian woman's emancipation and her role in society, women are not silenced. The editors make a space for women in the public sphere of the periodical, inviting them to make their presence concrete by writing articles. This permits women to contribute to the imagined community formed by the periodical, its contributors, and its readers, all working patriotically for the unnamed Nation. Women contributors themselves served as role models, for they were educated, articulate, and participated in the debate on women's emancipation. However, identities remained unstable as few women were identified by first and last name.

And what did Tunisian women say about themselves and the society around them? As might be expected in a forum, women express varied views. Generally, education is a central issue. In "L'Instruction de la Jeune Fille Musulmane" (Jan. 1938,

17), Saïda Sahly points out that women must be educated as well as men in Islam.

Her criticism of the French schools for Muslim girls as inappropriate is clear:

L'enseignement primaire leur est donné dans une école [Ecole Louise René Millet, also called Ecole de la rue du Pacha], une seule, apparemment faite pour jeunes Musulmanes, mais où, en réalité, on ne tient nullement compte de la personnalité tunisienne. Les maîtresses y sont pour la plupart Françaises...

Sahly repeats her critique of the inappropriateness of French education for Tunisians in the French secondary schools, where Muslim girls must go if they want to continue their education. Thus, Tunisian girls do not learn their social role in their own society in school. Sahly proposes that Tunisian girls' schools be created that are equivalent to the Coranic schools "...où la jeune Musulmane recevrait un enseignement national capable de faire d'elle une égale de ses soeurs civilisées des autres pays, mais dans le cadre même du sien." Sahly links education to the nation: however, while waiting for the creation of Tunisian schools, she calls upon parents to send their daughters to the existing schools and to use private tutors to round out their education. Her use of such expressions as "personnalité tunisienne," "un enseignement national," and "une instruction conforme à notre idéal" while insisting upon a Muslim framework indicates that Sahly sees the debate on education as part of the wider debate on the Nation and the nationalist movement. She contributes to the defining of the New Muslim Woman and nationalist voices, however she avoids a discussion of profound change in women's status as this might be divisive for the nationalist movement. The New Nation is the primary and unifying goal.

Women do not show fear of a French education, although they may criticize its shortcomings and suggest additional education in Arabic (Sahly, Jan. 1938, 17;

“L’Evolution de la femme tunisienne,” *Essaïda Foudhaily*, Dec. 1939, 4). However, education may not be the most urgent problem. Some believe the freedom to circulate to be even more important. For example, Aïcha Ghomry, a university student in London, links the general *infériorité sociale* of Tunisian society to the status of the Tunisian woman, and proposes changes that reinforce the idea of the New Muslim Woman in “Pour La Femme” (June 1937, 19). She considers the freedom to circulate and “l’expérience de la vie” to be the means for a woman to educate herself. She criticizes the tyranny of men, implying that a New Man is needed, and she points out that the Qur’an guarantees rights for women. Not forgetting the Nation, she states that women must be able to dedicate their lives “au service de la nation, d’apprendre la douceur du sacrifice de ses satisfactions personnelles pour le bonheur de son peuple” (19). Ghomry’s New Muslim Woman is free to circulate, educated, patriotic, and capable of contributing to the Nation. Her use of the term “nation” is notable and unusual, possibly due to a freedom experienced while living in London.

Like Aïcha Ghomry, other women writers openly criticize Tunisian men. *Essaïda Foudhaily* in “L’Evolution de la femme Tunisienne” (Dec. 1939, 4), points out that women’s emancipation has been debated in the press, but without results, and she accuses the inaction of men and their exclusion of women from the debate. She notes that even if all Tunisian women stopped wearing a veil, they would still be ill-equipped to face society because of their lack of education, according to her. Although there has been some improvement in schools, it has been negligible. Therefore, the problem is not the veil, but an inadequate educational system, and a public forum that excludes women.

Women are persistent about their demands for education and their critique of existing conditions.

Criticism of predatory males (*les suiveurs, les petits Don Juans, les amoureux*), who hinder women's mobility and put them on the defensive, occurs often. In "La Rue," (June 1937, 9), Zeineb describes the pleasures of being able to circulate in the streets of Tunis, despite the inconveniences (predatory males): "J'aime la rue parce qu'elle est l'image même de la vie." Malika, in "Cœurs en chômage" (Sept. 1940,16), criticizes what she calls "les amoureux" who offer their hearts like a door-to-door salesman and speak of "amour" without "sentiment" or emotion. In a series of articles ("Propos d'une jeune fille en fleur"), "Mlle Radhia" is one of the most openly critical. She discusses the difficulty of circulating because women are bothered in the street, noting that: "Depuis quelque temps, la ville de Tunis est infestée d'une catégorie de mammifère mâles dont le moins qu'on puisse dire, c'est qu'ils sont plus obstinés que les ânes et plus agaçants que les moucherons" (Dec. 1936, 3). She implies that men jeopardize women's freedom constantly. For this writer, the subject of the Muslim Woman is much discussed—by men, and thus nothing changes. Radhia asserts that change must start at home: "Pour beaucoup de gens, l'évolution de la femme musulmane, c'est surtout l'évolution des femmes des autres. Occupez-vous un peu moins de la Femme Musulmane et un peu plus de vos femmes, de vos sœurs et de vos filles" (Feb. 1937, 3). Her critique is scathing: "Vous n'avez pas encore compris grand'-chose à la femme musulmane. Alors attendez que vous la compreniez pour en parler" (3). She labels men *tyranneaux, seigneurs*, and *maîtres* and repeats the criticism that men discuss the problem of education for women, without producing concrete results (Mar. 1937, 3).

“Mlle Radhia” also discusses the marriage crisis, in which a woman may ruin her husband by spending wildly on clothing and jewelry, etc. She argues that women marry as young as possible, while men marry as late as possible in order to enjoy life:

Ce n'est que lorsqu'il est fatigué de ses aventures sans lendemain, de ses saouleries avilissantes, que 'Monsieur' veut bien avoir la condescendance de choisir une épouse qui soignera son estomac fatigué, et lui raccommodera ses chaussettes. (June 1937, 3)

And once married, a woman's role is “femme de ménage, cuisinière, nourrice.” Here is another border zone where the boundaries of marriage are tested. Women make it clear that they are unhappy with the situation as well as with men and they justify themselves. Women's critiques of men suggest that a New Man is required if marriage problems are to be resolved. The problem is not just women.

Jamila's tone is ironic as well when she announces that she has recently learned that women are *des grandes enfants* in her article, “Les Hommes ne sont pas des Dieux !” (Mar. 1937, 11): “Et c'est, voyez-vous, la raison pour laquelle les hommes veillent sur nous avec tant de sollicitude... Nous ne saurions assez leur prouver notre gratitude. Ils daignent nous ordonner d'être ceci ou cela, de faire ceci ou cela...” The critique of men who must define women's behavior is accompanied by the suggestion that men need to accept women as they are. A man cannot find a wife that will be perfectly adapted to his personality. They both need freedom: “Encore faut-il que le mari ne s'arroge pas à lui seul, le droit de cette liberté qui doit être bien comprise et bien répartie” (11). An effort on both sides is necessary and responsibility for the functioning of a marriage must be fairly distributed.

Saïda Sahly's views are nuanced. Although she views the woman's role as wife and mother, she insists that women must educate their children with change in mind. Her call for action in the political sphere alongside Tunisian men reflects shifting definitions of women's role in society after arrests in November 1938 ("La Jeune Fille tunisienne et la politique," July 1939, 14). While defending Islam and an Arab culture ("En Rêvant," Sept. 38, 4), she also accepts certain aspects of French culture: "Nous, jeunes filles tunisiennes, qui avons le privilège de pouvoir jouir d'une double culture, arabe et française, nous devons puiser dans chacune d'elles tous les éléments répondant à nos aspirations profondes vers la justice, l'égalité, en un mot vers l'amour" (July 1939, 14). This writer frames her arguments for women's rights within a nationalist discourse, making it more acceptable to Tunisian men, but demonstrates border thinking in her ability to accept and reject from all sides.

The subjects that women writers discuss frequently are mobility, education, and marriage and family, which contribute to an expansion of the construction of the New Tunisian Woman. Their concerns reflect changes required for the New Tunisian Woman to be able to contribute to the New Nation. The debate around the veil appears to be secondary, as it is seen as a problem that will be resolved with time as women gain mobility and education. Women's texts demonstrate a desire to participate fully in life of the community, however, they do not question separate education or the spatially contingent definitions of masculine/feminine worlds. On the other hand, these texts are not solely about education (which is emphasized by men), but shake the social structure as a change in status is sought. And yet, these women seek change within Tunisian society without jeopardizing the nationalist cause. Instead, they outline the shadow of a

New Man that matches the New Tunisian Woman serving the Nation. For the men writing in *Leïla*, this periodical is generally about controlling the changes happening to Tunisian women, but for the women, it is about changing men, thus demonstrating a testing of boundaries that will allow women and men to move forward and construct the New Nation. This New Man is not only educated and patriotic, but also a feminist who supports women's emancipation and entrance into the public sphere.

A Model for the New Tunisian Man?

Women's texts are generally directed at men in order to make them aware of women's complaints and demands. Criticism of men can be blistering, as seen in "Mlle Radhia's" articles. Women's critiques suggest the desire for a New Tunisian Man to accompany the emancipated Tunisian woman. He must be educated, polite in public, seek a consensual marriage rather than an arranged marriage, and must not only give lip service to women's emancipation, but recognize and encourage women's rights in the home as well, and promote women's education. In short, the New Tunisian Man must be a feminist who listens to women and what they have to say about themselves and their roles in the home and in society.

However, do male writers suggest the outlines of a New Tunisian Man? Possibly, but certainly not as clearly as they define the New Muslim Woman. In Damergi's play, "Le dialogue des Jeunes ou la femme et l'éducation première: pièce en 1 scène" (Jan. 1938, 5-7), a negotiating process takes place that suggests a model for men. Setting up a discussion of women's education in an "oriental" café between two young Tunisian men, Damergi locates the debate on women's education, as in a play, in the public sphere,

centering it in the Muslim male culture of the café, a social space that excludes women.¹⁵ In the café, the anxiety over the possibility of women coming into the public sphere can be seen in the intrusion of the Tunisian woman represented by a copy of *Leïla* on the table. Here the *Leïla* magazine signifies the New Muslim Woman, and the debates and changes around her.

The two protagonists, one in European dress with a fez and representative of a Western education (Zouhaïr) and the other in Tunisian dress (Omar) representative of Zitouna University, begin by discussing the role of the periodical without mentioning the female name. Omar asks if the periodical contains unexamined theory, which cannot help “notre société féminine.” Zouhaïr defends the periodical: “Les théories dont vous me parliez sont simplement inexécutables parce qu’on ne veut pas prendre la peine de les écouter.” Thus, through statements by Zouhaïr, the author complains that the intentions motivating the editors of *Leïla* cannot be carried out because they fall on deaf ears. Damergi describes the periodical’s role as one of enlightening the public, especially the male public, thus contributing to the formulation of a New Tunisian Man. A copy on the table in a café suggests that this periodical is read by men, as well as women, serving as an open forum on the debate concerning women’s education, while proposing a model for the New Tunisian Man.

¹⁵ Férid Ghazi points to the café as a meeting place for men and a lieu of culture, and suggests there was a shift in the 1930s from cafés surrounding the Zitouna Mosque/University in the center of the Medina, to other neighborhoods. Especially well-known was the Café *Taht Es-Sour* (Under the Wall), whose literary group inspired intellectual life in Tunis from 1933 to 1939 (21-22). The café appears in at least one anonymous short story *Tounis toughani* (*Tunis chante*) in an Arabic periodical (*Sardouk* 7 Apr. 1937, 8; cited by Ghazi 27). In addition, the café served as a public forum, which included the illiterate, where newspapers were shared and discussed. Just one issue of a periodical could pass from table to table during a morning (Dabbab, 1990, 51).

Consequently, despite this lop-sided debate within patriarchy, Damergi's dialogue is interesting in its effort to change male mentality. He demonstrates that there exists a middle ground of entente where educated men meet, working against the limitations of binary oppositions ("traditional/religious" vs. "modern/western"). Not forgetting the necessary comments about Islam promoting instruction for women with historical references to reinforce them, Damergi's Zitounien character, Omar, supports education for women to re-establish their equality: "Par l'instruction de la femme on fait un acte de justice en rétablissant l'égalité des deux êtres appelés à travailler pour la continuité de la race..." This is an attempt to face the issues with logic and to explain them in a rational manner in order to convince the (male) reader. It is also an attempt to reassure men that the new role for Tunisian women remains in the home as the household manager, mother, and educator of children.

The New Tunisian Man is patriotic as can be seen by the anti-colonial subtext in this play. First of all, Damergi writes about a closing of the ranks in order to oppose the French colonial policy of assimilation and efforts to divide the educated elites (French-educated vs. Zitouniens). The French-educated Zouhaïr comments with surprise: "J'avoue que je ne m'attendais pas du tout à d'aussi larges points de vue et d'esprit de rénovation de la part d'un Musulman, élevé et instruit dans des milieux où les traditions priment tout" (8). Thus, Damergi's efforts to seek out a middle ground to counteract the oppositional extremes serves to unify male Tunisian elites and propose discreetly a New Tunisian Man. Promoting change for the Tunisian woman through an Islamic-oriented education in Arabic, while defining her role as mother and keeper of the home, Damergi's ideas of the New Muslim Woman draw women away from the French sphere

of influence and back into Tunisian culture and society, under the umbrella of the national movement. At the same time, the presence of a “Leïla” in that male bastion, the café, shows the Tunisian woman seemingly reduced to a symbolic object. Thus, although Damergi’s unnamed New Tunisian Man is educated, a nationalist, open to debate, and concerned about women’s education and emancipation, nevertheless, he lacks an essential element that women consider important—the ability to listen to women and include them in the discussion, which would give women agency in the formation of the New Nation.

Ventriloquism, or Men’s Voices Disguised

As noted above, it is in the August 1940 issue that editors seek to rectify the invisibility of women contributors when they identify women writers, recognizing their presence in the workplace. Until then, however, discretion is practiced by the editors. This can be seen in an intriguing comment in the editorial of the third issue. The curiosity of readers to know the identities of *Leïla*’s writers is criticized for being harmful to the project: “Qu’importe aux lectrices et lecteurs si l’article est signé d’Y... ou Z...; une seule chose doit compter, une seule chose doit être prise en considération, c’est l’idée contenue dans l’article et seule cette idée doit être mise en discussion” (Mar. 1937, 1). This insistence that the means justifies the end, that the debate in the public forum is important and not individual contributors, further complicates the problem of identity, and opens the door to the possibility of men posing as women and writing under pseudonyms.¹⁶ Robert Montagne brings up the question of the authenticity of women

¹⁶ I propose that this happened in 1929, when a “Nejma Ettounsia” signed two articles in the *Etendard Tunisien*, “La question du ‘hijab’” (18 Jan. 1929) and “Pour la Tunisienne de demain” (12 Apr. 1929),

writers in the magazine. He notes that women express their views freely, but quips: “... si du moins leurs déclarations ne sont pas modifiées par les soins d’un rédacteur masculin” (98). Montagne’s colonial (superior) point of view allows him to insinuate the interference of Tunisian male editors without examples or proof, in a vague accusation. The fact that Zarrouk attempts to recruit women onto the editorial team (Tewhida Ben Cheikh and Radhia Daly, Sept. 1937, 23) and requests women readers’ participation (“Notre programme: A nos chères lectrices,” Dec. 1936, 1) demonstrates an effort to include authentic women’s voices in the debate. However, a series of articles signed with the pseudonym “Aïda” appears suspicious. It is likely that four out of the five articles in this series are written by a man. I must emphasize that women’s writing in *Leïla* tends to be different from men’s writing because of cultural considerations and a gap in educational levels, not because of any inherent sexual differences. Women, for example, often use the inclusive third person plural *nous*, while men may be more pedantic, preaching to women.

Among the titles of the articles written by women, the title of the five articles by Aïda, “Femmes, entre nous soit dit” (July 1939, 5; Oct. 1939, 6; Nov. 1939, 5) or “Femmes, entre nous” (Aug. 1939, 9; May 1940, 4), is the only one that expresses a message that directly targets women with the use of “entre nous,” consequently excluding men. Other titles demonstrate a will to include male readers in order to be heard by men. Except for the fourth article of the series, the tone in Aïda’s articles is dogmatic, bordering on preaching, partially because of the use of “vous” within the text, which

which did not go unnoticed. *Tunis Socialiste* accused “Nejma” of having a mustache, to which *Etendard Tunisien* was forced to reply in “Echos” (25 Jan. 1929).

distances the author from the reader rather than the inclusive third person “nous” found in the title.

In the four articles, gender identity remains spatially defined, based on a separation of the sexes, with the woman as core of the family and an emphasis on the biological aspect. Instruction (separate and different from instruction for boys) is necessary for the Tunisian woman in order to be a better companion to her husband (Aug. 1939, 9), but especially to construct a personality for nationalist reasons: to “servir la destinée de votre peuple. J’ai dit, peuple, mais j’aurais dû plutôt parler de race musulmane, parce que celle-ci forme un seul bloc homogène” (July 1939, 5). Here, the colonized majority is defined by religion, making it a closed group. Instruction must also contribute to the development of “le sens critique” so that the Muslim woman may avoid the danger of ‘excess,’ which male writers often complain about. The ability to critique will allow the formation of a *mentalité nouvelle* within Aïda’s *projet d’amélioration* (Aug. 1939, 9).

It is in the third and fifth articles, however, that the nationalist discourse is particularly pronounced. Emphasizing a social evolution rather than a political one for the woman, the writer subordinates the social to the political: the sphere where women contribute is subordinated to the sphere of male action. Echoes of the Islamic Ummah appear as this writer claims that it is thanks to the social evolution of women that Egypt and Turkey have freed themselves from foreign *tutelle*:

Où est la nation musulmane qui peut aujourd’hui élever sa voix dans le concert des puissances, frapper sur la table et parler d’égale à égale et non de vassale à suzeraine ? Seule la Turquie a atteint ce stade grâce à la force morale de ses femmes sans quoi la force physique des hommes ne serait pas ce qu’elle est. (Oct. 1939, 6)

This is not a discussion about the equality of men and women, but about the political equality of the citizens of the nation. Condemning a sectarianism that has impeded change, Aïda makes “la patrie” the center of the discussion, not women’s status:

“Pleure—pauvre patrie—pleure ton sort misérable, car dans le cœur de tes fils la pitié filiale et l’amour du sublime ont été supplantés par la lâcheté et la crainte!” (May 40, 4).

Repeated use of such terms as *l’homme*, *les hommes*, and *tes fils* locates this debate in patriarchy. Other vocabulary used, such as *l’évolution*, *combattre*, *lutter*, *notre race*, *passé glorieux*, *l’orgueil*, *l’honneur*, *l’affranchissement*, *les martyrs*, *sacrifier*, and *le sang de héros* leaves no doubt as to the nationalist orientation of this article, which ends with: “Sage est l’homme qui continuellement se retrouve après chaque lutte, après chaque combat conscient de sa propre force et de sa douleur féconde” (May 1940, 4). It would be difficult to argue that this article was written with a female readership in mind or by a woman because of its lopsided vocabulary that erases women.

The fourth article is the exception that confirms the rule. I suggest that it is written by another person, possibly a woman. The author uses the third person “nous” form and addresses the subject of ... flowers—as a decorative element in the Tunisian home. Gone are the strident language and the dogmatic tone:

Fleurs de jardin, fleurs des champs... Une gerbe aux longues tiges et aux corolles ouvertes. Apprenez à disposer ceci dans un vase et vous entendrez comme une musique faite de très beaux accords. Elle traduira vos gestes, votre pensée, et vous apportera comme des bouffées de joie et de calme. (Nov. 1939, 5)

Harmony and aesthetics dictate the poetic tone. The central idea of this article is that something as simple as a bouquet of flowers is an indication of the good taste of a

cultivated person. It is difficult to believe that this is the same author of the four other articles in the series.

In the other four articles, an ideological construction of the New Muslim Woman emerges. Aïda speaks specifically to women and has no critique of men, whereas ‘she’ criticizes women for the frequent male complaint of “excess” in dress and entertainment. ‘She’ defines women as companion to men with a role limited to wife and mother that requires a separate education, while participation is encouraged in the social sphere. The tone of authority is pronounced and a nationalist discourse that promotes the subordination of women to the Nation through sacrifice is ever present. For these reasons, these texts are similar to male contributors and the prominent nationalists, and reinforce notions of a national feminism that keeps women in the role of mothers of the nation, suggesting the presence of a male ventriloquist.

A New Appearance for the New Muslim Woman and the New Tunisian Woman: A Picture Is Worth A Thousand Words

As discussed at the beginning of this chapter, *Leïla* proposes a new physical appearance for the New Muslim Woman. In the tug of war over the “Muslim Woman,” the French focused on women’s dressing customs, particularly the veil. Thus, the Muslim woman became a veiled woman. Certain contributors to *Leïla* draw the reader’s attention to this negative construction. Khaled, whose article “Encore Un” criticizes the writings of French women discussed in the previous chapter, attacks colonial feminist representations that focus on the veil in a second article, “N’en Jetez Plus” (Dec. 1938, 2):

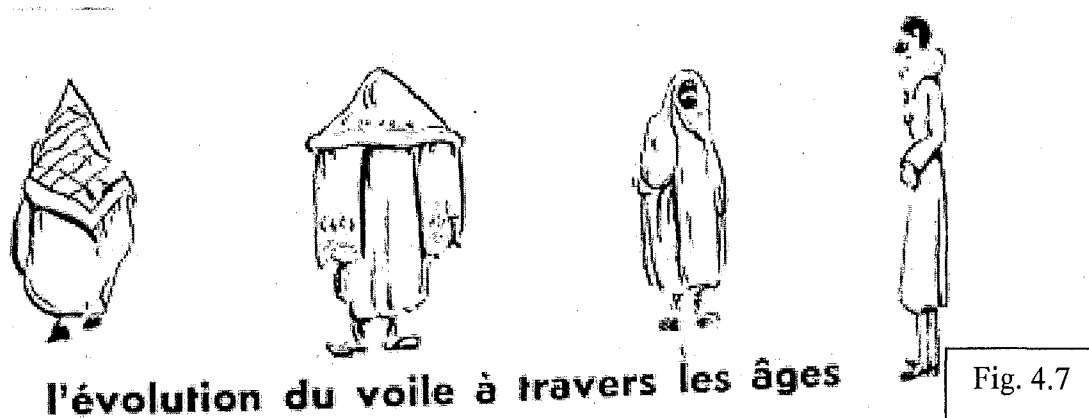
Depuis les Croisade, depuis Pierre l'Ermite jusqu'à Myriam Harry, et meme ... jusqu'à Madame Lucie nièce de M. Paul Margueritte, la Femme Musulmane c'est le Hijab, et le Hijab-Voile, c'est la Femme Musulmane ... Je trouve que résumer, condenser, amalgamer un être humain—et le plus charmant de ces êtres, croyez-le bien—en un simple adventice vestimentaire cela est vraiment outrancier.

Khaled attacks the simplistic reduction of Veil = Muslim Woman. Considering the presence of colonial feminist discourse in the background, then, it is not surprising that the *Leila* forum contains a variety of opinions on the subject ranging from a defense of the veil, such as in Khaled's article, to M. Zmerli's attack on it when he emotionally proclaims: "Il faut mener la guerre contre le voile assassin qui a permis à tant d'écrivains d'Europe de dire tant de mal de nous" ("Tribune Libre: Une Opinion sur le voile," Dec. 1936, 16). Zmerli places blame entirely upon a woman's article of clothing, refusing to admit the wider implications of colonial and Orientalist discourses.

The word "veil" appears to be a straightforward term, yet, is in fact a variable item of dress, depending on location and date. In the first issue of *Leila* (Dec. 1936), a drawing by the French artist, G-L. Le Monnier makes the point that Tunisian women have grown, here represented by height, as their clothing becomes less restrictive and they acquire freedom of dress (15, Fig. 4.7). However, this drawing is a caricature that conveys a negative view of veiled Tunisian women. A brief survey of the fourteen articles in the first series that mention the veil shows that only two defend its use, making Le Monnier's negative view representative of the majority.

Le Monnier's caricature shows changes in women's dress. Aristocratic women in Tunis wore a double veil (the figure on the far left), the *'Ajar*, which included a piece of fabric that covered the entire body and a second decorated fabric that went from the top

of the head to the waist. Women who wore the '*Ajar* required a guide to accompany them because they could not see through the layers of fabric. Women of the middle and lower classes wore lighter fabrics over the face with one or both eyes showing which gave them mobility in the street (Ben Miled 243). The French women writers discussed in Chapter 3 described veiled women. In 1910, Myriam Harry described women in the street with the *sefsari* (the third figure from the left), as did Claire Géniaux in 1934.



The figure on the far right of Le Monnier's drawing shows a woman in European dress and hat with a sort of light handkerchief that veils the lower face, a style that the *Leila* team promoted. Because colonial power attempted to extend itself to the most intimate place of the colonized body, the woman's body, the veil signified resistance, a sort of armor. From a French point of view, what could not be seen could not be controlled.¹⁷

Indeed, the veil represented a stronghold of resistance against colonialism. Frantz Fanon

¹⁷ Michel Foucault describes "panoptisme" to illustrate his ideas on visibility in his *technologie politique du corps*. In the structure of the Panopticon, the central authority can see all, but cannot be seen, and the subject can always be seen around the periphery. This, of course, requires a docile subject that obeys: "Le moment historique des disciplines, c'est le moment où naît un art du corps humain, qui ne vise pas seulement la croissance de ses habiletés, ni non plus l'alourdissement de sa sujétion, mais la formation d'un rapport qui dans le même mécanisme le rend d'autant plus obéissant qu'il est plus utile, et inversement" (139). Thus, visibility of the body becomes important in Europe during the late 18th and early 19th centuries. See: *Surveiller et Punir* (1974), especially "Chapitre 3, Le panoptisme," (197-229).

records this resistance, describing the strategic subversive use of the veil and Western dress by FLN women during the Algerian revolution (1954-1962), when they first unveiled to circulate freely, then, once French authorities caught on, veiled again to carry weapons and bombs (*L'An V* 37-47).

I propose that the debate on the veil, including Fanon's observations, and women's segregation is blown out of all proportion, indicating its propaganda value for the French that required the colonized to reply. According to Emna Ben Miled, veiled women constituted only a small minority of Tunisian society. She emphasizes a limited use of the veil in Tunisia found only among city dwellers and documented from the 16th century.¹⁸ She notes:

Ainsi, exception faite des minces îlots citadins, les tunisiennes sont restées, sur près de 3000 ans, majoritairement dévoilées. Ce qui rompt avec un préjugé courant. On pense par ignorance, que dans leur histoire, les tunisiennes furent majoritairement voilées et enfermées au foyer... Dans le monde paysan, à l'absence du voile du corps s'est ajouté l'absence de la claustration au foyer. L'absence du voile s'est accompagnée de mixité et de déplacements perpétuels à l'extérieur du foyer liés au monde du travail et à une production économique incessante à l'intérieur des trois grandes économies traditionnelles du Maghreb: artisanale, pastorale et agricole. (229-230)

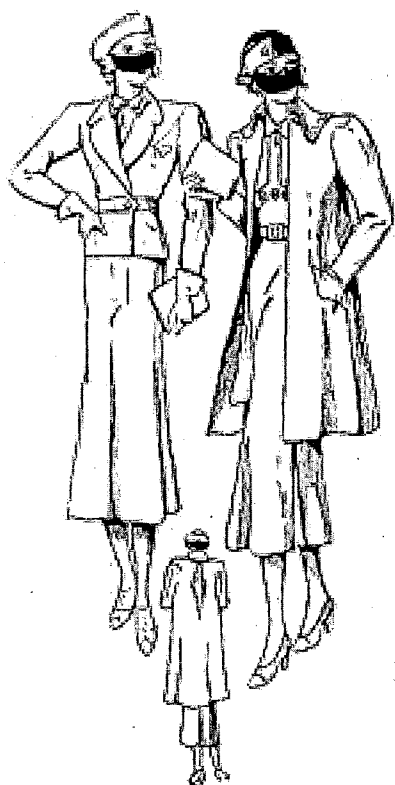
Ben Milad argues for an economic factor linked to women's mobility, which affects dress. Only the well-to-do could afford to stay at home. In the cities, a small minority of women of the upper classes were segregated, while women from the middle and lower classes moved freely outside the home, less encumbered by heavy veiling

¹⁸ Emna Ben Miled argues that practices of veiling and segregation of women developed across the Mediterranean region unrelated to religion. She traces these practices back to ancient Greece and finds them on both sides of the Mediterranean through the Middle Ages and into the 19th century (233-235). See *Les Tunisiennes ont-elle une histoire?* Chapter 7, "Les Dévoilées." For a thoughtful anthropological view of the veil and *hijab* as dressing customs, see Fadwa El Guindi's *Veil: Privacy and Resistance*. Fatima Mernissi's *The Veil and the Male Elite* provides a Muslim feminist's account of the origins of the *hijab*. See Chapter 5, "The Hijab, the Veil."

(231-233).¹⁹

Given the emphasis on women's mobility in *Leila*, the editors of the first series promote a new look for the New Muslim Woman that will facilitate her entry into the public sphere, whereas the second series contains no images, reflecting a closing of the public forum and the public sphere of the periodical to women. Although the "La Mode" column appears only six times from Dec. 1936 to Aug. 1939, its drawings attract the reader's eye and propose street clothing, seen here in the Mar. 1937 column (21).

European styles are encouraged, however, the arms are covered, a hat covers most of the hair, and a small, light-weight face veil covers the nose and mouth—but not the chin (Fig.



4.8). The length of the skirt follows European styles as well and is mid-calf.

Did *Leila* influence clothing styles in Tunis? It is difficult to say, however, these drawings had another function. According to W.J.T. Mitchell:

Images are not just a particular kind of sign, but something like an actor on the historical stage, a presence or character endowed with legendary status, a history that parallels and participates in the stories we tell ourselves about our own evolution from creatures "made in the image" of a creator, to creatures who make themselves and their world in their own image. (9)

Fig. 4.8

¹⁹ Judith E. Butler comes to a similar conclusion in her article "The Arab Family in History." She asserts that although upper class women in Nablus, Palestine, and Cairo, Egypt frequently entered into arranged marriages to cousins at a young age to guarantee family property and honor, lower class women had much more mobility in society and say in matters of their own marriage and property. Polygamy and seclusion were less of a problem for lower class women as well.

Although Mitchell's notion is based on the Christian concept that links man's image to God's, which would not be applicable to Islam, nevertheless Mitchell's notion of human beings' use of images to define themselves explains photographs and artwork in *Leïla*. I propose that editors and contributors created representations about their notions of the New Muslim Woman and the New Tunisian Woman through the written word and through the use of images. The "La Mode" drawings create a visual image of the New Muslim Woman that is acceptable to *Leïla*'s readership and the public. The drawings bring into existence the New Muslim Woman and give permission to Tunisian women to try new styles. Consequently, the drawings reinforce notions of the New Muslim Woman that are expressed throughout the periodical's articles. The "La Mode" column may be about fashion, but more importantly, it gives readers an idea of what the New Muslim Woman should look like. She is elegant, well-dressed, but, at the same time, modest. In addition, she embodies new understandings of "taste."

The notion of taste as a necessary characteristic of the New Muslim Woman can be seen in the reply to a reader's letter. The reader suggests that changing styles in Tunis should be shown for those readers living outside of Tunis: "Pourquoi ne nous entretiens-tu jamais de la mode tunisienne ... Tu pourrais aussi créer une rubrique mondaine où tu nous mettrais au courant de l'évolution de nos coutumes et tu nous apprendrais à recevoir, à organiser un mariage, une circoncision, etc. ..." ("Le coin des lectrices," Sept. 1937, 15). Frida's reply is glacial:

... pourquoi 'Beya' veut-elle s'habiller avec le goût ou le conseil d'une autre? Si elle n'a pas elle-même le goût de la toilette, personnellement, je ne saurais lui conseiller quelque chose de bien chic, ou de très élégant, parce qu'elle serait incapable de suivre mes conseils. La femme doit avoir l'intuition de ce qui convient à son sex-appeal..." ("Colifichet de mes pensées," June 1938, 17).

According to Frida, taste is innate. If this were the case, then why show any fashion styles at all? However, taste is linked to education and the upper classes of the city. Frida reveals a double standard that divides Tunis women from “provincial” women. The editors of *Leïla* never act upon the suggestion to include Tunisian styles in the fashion section, which confirms a class malaise and suggests that it would be considered a step backwards in the promotion of the New Tunisian Woman and her entry into the public sphere.

To move from drawings of anonymous-looking women to photographs of Tunisian women in European clothing proved to be nearly impossible, given the discretion about identity found in the first series. However, this did not deter the *Leïla* team from making use of images and photographs to expand on notions of the New Tunisian Woman, to make her present in the public sphere of the periodical, and to gradually achieve a number of “firsts” for women, pushing limits and crossing boundaries of the acceptable. Of the nearly two hundred images in the first series, which include drawings, paintings, and photographs, 34% are of women while only 9% are of men. If mixed groups are included, women are represented in 42% of *Leïla* images. As noted above, to portray women in photographs presented problems. Other imagery concerns more neutral subjects such as animals, or cityscapes and landscapes. Over the four-and-a-half-year publication of the first series, eight photographs of European women, four of Egyptian women, two of Algerian women, one of Japanese women, one of a Turkish woman, and only three of Tunisian women appear. However, despite difficulties, a progression can be traced in the use of images.

Certain photographs



Fig. 4.9

only, suggesting cautiousness on the part of the *Leïla* team as well.

Reflecting attempts to

disrupt negative

representations of colonial feminist

discourse, photographs of Western

women may be linked to a critical

text of them, as in the case of

“Après le tournoi de beauté,” (Dec.

1936, 10), which criticizes the Miss

Europe beauty pageant held in Tunis. In “La Femme et la guerre,” (Aug. 1940, 9-11) a

photograph of American women in bathing suits at the beach posing as soldiers has a

sarcastic caption “Tandis que ces jeunes Américaines s’amusent à parodier la guerre sur

une plage de Californie” (10, Fig. 4.9) and is juxtaposed to a photo of Japanese women

students captioned: “...Ces jeunes Japonaises s’adonnent sérieusement à la préparation

militaire dans un Collège de Tokio” (11, Fig. 4.10). Here the Western woman, in a

Fig. 4.10



bathing suit, is the symbol of a flippant nonchalance that makes her a brainless sexual object in service of entertainment.

On the other hand, women from Turkey and Egypt are portrayed with respect, emphasizing a construction of the New Muslim Woman that stresses dignity. The second issue contains a photograph of the first professional Arab woman shown in *Leïla*, the Egyptian writer, Souhayr Kalmaoui (Feb. 1937, 15). As noted above, the photographs of two graduating Egyptian women, Bahïa Faragallah and Sahir El Kalamoui (or Souhayr

Fig. 4.11



Kalmaoui) appear in August 1940, emphasizing the importance of education and the acquisition of diplomas.

The slippery terrain of identity in the border zone makes it difficult to draw iron-clad conclusions, however. Surprisingly, on the cover of the August 1939 issue seven sexy Western women in bathing suits smile at the reader, with a caption: “Un

Groupe de Girls (Paramount) Rit au Soleil,” illustrating the theme of summer sun and fun at the beach (Fig. 4.11). A month earlier, the July 1939 cover portrays a similar theme with a photograph captioned: “Ebats de la jeunesse au bord de la mer,” which shows a

mass of Western women in bathing suits playing on a beach. It is curious, though, that when readers open the magazine to the first page, they find a second cover with a photograph of nine Egyptian women students in Western dress proudly posing for the camera, with the caption: “L’Evolution de la Femme Egyptienne: Des étudiantes Egyptiennes reçues à leur dernière année de droit.” The caption suggests to the reader how to interpret the photograph and implies that these women have not been playing on the beach, but have been working diligently. Like the photographs of women “soldiers,” the juxtaposition of the two cover photographs, going from the frivolous to the serious, suggests a turning of the tables in the construction of a reverse Orientalist representation and a counter-hegemonic discourse. The Western woman replaces the Oriental woman as the exotic other, sexually available and ignorant—while the Arab woman has moved forward by acquiring education and diplomas to serve the Nation, indicated by the word “évolution.” Whereas the August 1939 cover labels the bathing suit beauties “girls,” rendering them minors and irresponsible, the pictures of Egyptian women, referred to as *femme*, suggest dignity, pride, and responsibility.

The unstable representation of the New Muslim Woman can be seen in the three photographs of Tunisian women. One is of an anonymous woman in a *sefsari*, which illustrates an article by Mahmoud Zarrouk who expresses negative views about women wearing *sefsaris* at the beach (“Fantômes en vacances,” Aug. 1940, 33). Because of its anonymity and the critical text that accompanies it, this photograph represents what needs to be changed—the “old” Muslim woman. However, the photograph of Arbia Zaouche, (Aug. 1940, 20). first *speakerine* of Tunis-Radio and a contributor to *Leïla*, is, to the best of my knowledge, the first picture of a professional Tunisian Muslim woman in the

Tunisian press, and consequently, very important. Although only her eyes show because she wears a sefsari (shown above), nevertheless her identity is revealed and the article recognizes her work, both in *Leïla* and at Radio-Tunis. This article proposes a tentative model for the New Muslim Woman, although still veiled. The title “Une douce voix s’est tue...” emphasizes the voice, the ability to express oneself, to make demands for change.

The third photograph, and most daring for the period, is a publicity photograph for the Tunisian singer, Weddad. In this portrait, she wears an evening dress with her face



Fig. 4.12

and hair uncovered. The caption reads:

“La jeune et belle artiste tunisienne Weddad fort appréciée du public tunisien” (Aug. 1939, 21, Fig. 4.12).

This Tunisian woman, then, is a professional artist

working in the public sphere, and an example of the New Muslim Woman.

Or is she? Once again instability in this border zone renders the absolute

construction of a fixed identity for the

New Muslim Woman impossible—for

Weddad is a Tunisian Jew. Similar to “La femme tunisienne et les arts dramatiques” in March 1938, this photograph suggests that, although this identity excludes European Christians, it includes Jewish women as well as Muslim women. Consequently, *Leïla*

articles outline two representations, a New Muslim Woman and a New Tunisian Woman, whose boundaries are fuzzy. With time, definitions broaden in this border zone.

Another important photograph is that of Sabiha Gektchen, the first Turkish woman pilot (Jan. 1938, 7, Fig. 4.13). In the 1930s, flying as a metaphor for liberation (for both sexes) appeared. The *Leila* photograph shows Gektchen dressed for flight and reverently kissing the hand of Mustapha Kemal Attaturk. The caption reads: “La 1ère aviatrice de la Turquie Sabiha Gektchen faisant ses adieux avant son grand raid au Ministre Président Ataturk.” In her study of French women aviatrices, Reynolds notes that such publicity around a small minority of women made false promises, and long-



Fig. 4.13

term success was illusory. The visual image of the woman's body in the media undercut women's attempts to work on the same level as men:

Most women pilots remained loners, ..., strange glamorous figures whose relationship with the rest of the world was conducted through the media. As a result they actually reinforced images of femininity more than they challenged

them. It is true that photos of women in flying suits make them look active and emancipated, by contrast with those who were conventionally dressed. But women aviators were under considerable media pressure to look good. There are a surprising number of references to appearance in the anecdotal and biographical accounts. (78)

At work here is the male gaze, that of the photographer, that emphasizes woman's physical appearance, reducing her to a passive role as the object of the gaze and not the maker of meaning. An important element for the *Leila* editors is the fact that Sabiha Gektchen is not veiled, although the aviator's cap covers her hair and only her face and hands show. The caption proclaims Sabiha Gektchen's professional activity, however, the photograph chosen to represent her portrays a gesture of deference to male authority, the kissing of the hand. The nationalist subtext intrudes into the feminist text, as Tunisians looked to Ataturk as a symbol of nationalism who was at the head of an independent Muslim nation. Nonetheless, this photograph represents an effort to change the relationship between men and women, to show that women function in the work place alongside of men, as well as in the home. Combined with other references to professional women, this photo builds on the idea of the New Muslim Woman as a professional woman serving the Nation. The emphasis on education, and especially on dignity, moves away from the intimate writing of the female body as sexual object by writers expressing colonial feminist discourse.

The New Tunisian Woman Disappears as the Forum Closes

As French repression increased with the approach of World War II and the space for dialogue decreased, the forum that flowered in *Leila* died away as well in the second series. The testing of boundaries and the variety of possibilities for women that the first series of *Leila* proposes to Tunisian women and men disappears as the message of a

national consciousness and the nationalist movement becomes ever more difficult to express, even in a disguised form. As discussed in Chapter 1, the first issue of the second series sends women back to the private sphere, making them household managers, educators of children, and companions to their husbands. The outlines of a national feminist discourse harden. The title of a two-part article about women's emancipation warns the reader of a change for the worse. Ezzeddine Bouhlila's "Le Problème de la Femme" (8 Feb. 1941, 2; 24 Feb. 1941, 2) is classified under the heading of "Un Peu de Tout," suggesting that women's emancipation is no longer the primary focus of the *Leïla* project, but an aside, or an afterthought. Compared to the economic and social problems of the period that are emphasized in the second series, and the disappearance of civil liberties, women's emancipation is viewed as a minor "problem."

Bouhlila reiterates that the *évolution* of the country requires the emancipation of the Tunisian woman, which is expressed in an interview of Mohamed Ramadane Dankir. This Egyptian reinforces the notion of a controlled emancipation that serves nationalism: "L'émancipation de la femme égyptienne, me dit-il, a été une des causes, un des moyens de notre évolution nationale" (24 Feb. 1941, 2). Emphasis is placed on nationalists' role in educating and liberating women to serve as companions, taking away their agency and erasing their contributions:

Les jeunes filles étant appelées à être nos consolatrices, notre raison de vivre, notre soutien moral, nous avons pensé qu'il fallait les réveiller de leur indolence, les éduquer pour qu'elles soient capables d'être à nos côtés pour nous aider dans cette croisade de l'humanité à la poursuite du bonheur.

As the *maîtresse de maison*, this companion requires an education in Arabic and the Qu'ran, household management skills, sewing, history, and the major Arab writers.

Consequently, she has enough knowledge of Arab culture to transmit a sense of national identity to her children. Here, definitions of the New Muslim Woman reinforce the outlines set out by Tahar Sfar and Mohamed Nomane five years earlier in the first issue of the first series, but without the opening of the public sphere to women found in the magazine.

A three-part article, “Les Berceuses Tunisiennes” (16 Apr. 1941, 4; 24 Apr. 1941, 4; 2 May 1941, 8), questions women’s emancipation and demonstrates to what extent women’s voices have been reduced. Khadija, the author, insists that a woman’s primary role is that of mother, and preferably mother of many sons. She criticizes the emancipated Tunisian woman who attempts to escape the home:

Elle néglige des travaux domestiques, puis le dédaigne [le foyer]. Ses enfants deviennent un fardeau combien indispensable pourtant à sa stabilité conjugale. Voilà, à mon sens, la fausse situation dans laquelle se trouvent la plupart de nos sœurs musulmanes en face du problème de l’évolution moderne.
(16 Apr. 1941, 4)

For this writer, lullabies express the voices of mothers. And what do these lullabies say about women? That they are afraid—afraid of the “mauvais oeil” of jealous women, and afraid of losing their small children (2 May 1941, 8). Unmentioned, but ever-present in the background, the fear of the horrors of war invades the most intimate recesses of the Tunisian family. Women are once again called upon to protect the inner sanctum of the home against the evils of the period. The discussion on women in the second series focuses on women’s role as mothers who defend the home and thus contribute to and defend the Nation, reducing national feminism to the least problematic formula.

Conclusion: A Literary Figure as a Model of the New Woman

Nationalist lawyers laid the groundwork for the construction of the New Muslim Woman as the new manager of the home. Within the *Leïla* forum and through the use of imagery this model grew to become a professional woman with diplomas who circulated and worked in the public sphere. In addition, the New Muslim Woman expanded into a New Tunisian Woman that included Jewish women. However, can a final and polished model of this New Woman be found in *Leïla*?

As we have seen in the preceding chapter, Khaled's early article, "Encore Un," (Mar. 1938), through intertextuality, calls forth and attacks French women writers and a genealogy of their texts that create negative representations of Tunisian women. Late in *Leïla*'s production, one of the editors, Abdul-Méjid Chabby, contributes an article that parallels Khaled's article through his use of intertextuality. Chabby calls forth texts that define the New Woman, creating a genealogy with its own truths that offsets the colonial feminist genealogy. As much as Khaled tears apart a group of foreign women (French), Chabby idealizes a group of foreign women (Egyptian), looking to the East for a model of the New Woman.

And who is this ideal New Woman? She is first and foremost a writer. Chabby proposes: "S'il est une femme qui mérite d'être donnée en exemple à nos jeunes Tunisiennes pour sa grande culture et son labeur incessants, c'est bien May," that is, Mayy Ziyadah (1886-1941), whom he characterizes by "la carrière féconde et l'activité prodigieuse" ("Une Femme de lettres arabe: May," Aug. 1940, 14-15). Chabby gives brief biographical information: she is a Christian Lebanese writer living in Cairo. She is multi-lingual, speaking and writing "l'arabe d'abord," plus French, German, Italian, and

English. Chabby points to her support of other women, and to her professional success as a writer and especially as a journalist for the “grandes revues égyptiennes—*Al Moktatal, Al Hilal, Ar-Rissala, Al Ahram*” (14). She has a literary salon in Cairo where she receives literati, journalists, critics, and Egyptian, Syrian and foreign poets.²⁰ Chabby’s description leans toward a feminist narrative that gives Ziyadah agency: her own persistence is underlined, not success due to a liberal family or a mentor. He emphasizes her intelligence, vast knowledge, hard work, wisdom, and openness to the study of European subjects while grounded in Arabic.

Echoes of other Egyptian women writers around Ziyadah can be heard through intertextuality. Chabby mentions Ziyadah’s biography of Malak Nasif.²¹ Ziyadah, Nasif, Huda Sha’rawi (1879-1947), and Nabawiyah Musa, were active together in two intellectual organizations, *al-Ittihad al-Nisa’i al-Tahdhibi* (Women’s Refinement Union) and the *Jam’iyat al-Nahdah al-Nisa’iyah* (Society of the Women’s Awakening), created in 1916 (Badran 55). Ziyadah also wrote ‘A’isah Taymur’s biography (Hatem 73-74).

The choice of the ideal New Woman demonstrates fluctuating identities in the border zone where *Leila* writers tested boundaries. The instability of the representation of the New Woman created by *Leila*’s editors and contributors can be seen in this model. Although the New Woman has a new role in the home as household manager and educator of children, Mayy’s marital status and family are not mentioned, and emphasis

²⁰ Badran notes that Ziyadah began her literary salon in 1914, and it was the first salon in Cairo that included both women and men. Badran suggests that being a Levantine Christian allowed Ziyadah more freedom than Egyptian women (56). She also contributed to *L’Egyptienne* (Cairo, 1933-1937), a women’s periodical in French (104). She served as editor of the women’s page in *al-Siyasah al-Ushbu’iyah* (185).

²¹ Nasif, a primary school teacher, gave conferences for women under the Women’s Section at the Arab University in Cairo and at the offices of the newspaper *al-Jaridah*. She published a collection of her lectures and articles in *Nisa’iyat* (Feminist Pieces, 1909) that became an important text in Egyptian feminist history, using the pseudonym Bahithat al-Badiyah. (Badran 54)

is placed on her professional activities of writer and journalist, reinforcing other exemplary models of professional women discussed above. Although *Leila* articles emphasize the New Muslim Woman, Mayy is Christian, and while Tunisian male writers insist upon an education in Arabic for women, Mayy has a multi-lingual education. Whereas some male writers (Nomane) want to keep men and women separate, Mayy organizes the first literary salon welcoming both men and women, Egyptians and foreigners, and she participates in the public sphere through her activities, conferences, articles in newspapers, and books (Badran 185).

And finally, the choice of a literary figure as model of the New Woman suggests the importance of literature in this women's periodical. The New Woman, as a well-educated writer, contributes to the improvement of women's status, bringing women into the public sphere of print culture and the work place. In addition, she contributes to the writing of the New Nation, making her an active partner capable of transmitting the message of national consciousness. The New Woman, then, is contained within wider nationalist imperatives that include the writing of a national literature and culture to create the New Nation, which Chapter Five explores.

Chapter 5
Writing a National Culture:
Whirlwinds in the Border Zone

Introduction: Power Struggles over Cultural Production

whirlwind, n.

1. A whirling or rotating wind; an atmospheric eddy or vortex; a body of air moving rapidly in a circular or upward spiral course around a vertical or slightly inclined axis which has also a progressive motion over the surface of land or water.

2. *transf.* and *fig.* Something rushing impetuously like a whirlwind; a violent or destructive agency; a confused and tumultuous process or condition.

—Oxford English Dictionary

In *Leïla*'s first series, which appears as a magazine from Dec. 1936 to November 1940, a forum developed that encouraged border thinking. The *Leïla* team and contributors tested identities and transgressed boundaries in the border zone, where gradual shifts took place. In December 1940, *Leïla*'s transformation into a weekly newspaper signals an abrupt change. In the first series, anxiety is expressed about changes in roles for Tunisian women *and* men while creative solutions are found that include the consideration, adaptation, adoption, or rejection of ideas from all sides—in short, border thinking emerges. However, the border zone becomes turbulent in the weekly newspaper as what I label “whirlwinds” take shape. I propose that as French oppression under the Vichy government increased at the political level, thus eliminating dialogue, the forum faded forcing the *Leïla* team to focus on permissible cultural activities and develop a cultural criticism as editors jettisoned the themes of women's emancipation and the New Tunisian Woman. This cultural criticism defended Tunisian national identity and theorized a national culture, thus contributing to national

consciousness.¹ At the same time, while attempting to sidestep French censorship, *Leïla* critics were confronted with power struggles in the cultural domain over questions of control concerning cultural production, and it was at these sites that “whirlwinds” or turbulence developed.

Leïla provides a window upon the border zone in which the strategic use of literature and culture to resist colonialism during extremely difficult times appears, begun in the first series and developed in the second series. Indeed, *Leïla* contains a rich middle terrain situated between French colonial and Tunisian nationalist discourses that reveals the hidden transcripts of the colonized. For example, *Leïla* stands in contrast to Mohammed el-Fadhel Ben Achour’s *Le Mouvement littéraire et intellectuel en Tunisie au XIVe s. de l’Hégire – XIXe-XXe (al-haraka al-adabiyya wa’l-fidriyya fi Tunis)*, first published in Arabic in 1955 at the end of the colonial period in Tunisia. Ben Achour (1909-1970), a Zitouna professor and nationalist, attempted to fill a gap in the writing of Tunisia’s intellectual history left by Albert Canal’s *La Littérature et la presse tunisiennes de l’occupation à 1900* (circa 1924) and Yves Chatelain’s *La Vie Littéraire et Intellectuelle en Tunisie de 1900 à 1937* (1937), both written from a colonial perspective. Ben Achour writes a homogenous nationalist account of intellectual history that mentions subjects appearing in *Leïla*, but glosses over internal controversies and cultural battles. Consequently, he presents a glorious narration of the Nation.

While articles discussed in this chapter, such as “Les Yeux noirs de Leïla” (May 1940, 15), “Le Théâtre,” (1 Dec. 1936, 4), and “La Musique: Les Sources Modernes de la

¹See Chapter 1 (61-62) for a discussion of reasons for this change in format. For further information on the writing of the nation see, for example, Said’s introduction to *Culture and Imperialism, The Empire Writes Back* (Ashcroft et al.), or Homi Bhabha’s introduction to *Nation and Narration*.

Musique en Tunisie,” (2 May 1941, 5), demonstrate that the *Leïla* project includes the writing of a Tunisian intellectual history, its cultural criticism articles also reveal the interstices and cracks in the smooth surfaces of colonial and nationalist discourses and the struggle for control of cultural production. Ben Achour, as an active contributor to the national movement in the 1930s, a jury member for the *Prix de la Poésie Arabe* organized by *Leïla*,² and a theorist of a Tunisian national literature, provides an important text that serves as a counterpoint to *Leïla* articles. I juxtapose these texts to show how *Leïla*’s contributors’ fight at the cultural level and how their writing of intellectual history is overtaken by nationalist discourse in the post-*Leïla* history that Ben Achour creates, reducing the *Leïla* project to oblivion.

Benedict Anderson proposes that the Nation requires a chronological time in order to construct its history. Anchored in chronological time, Ben Achour’s account of the establishment of a national culture is an example of Anderson’s “homogeneous, empty time.” On the other hand, *Leïla*’s pages reveal a complex story containing dissension and friction, with a more circular movement of events that prevents Tunisians from looking to the Independent Nation. This would confirm Anderson’s idea that the writing of a national history requires chronological time, for *Leïla* critics must pull out from the circular movement to forge ahead to the Independent Nation. In *Leïla*, cultural history is formulated in a choppy, uneven process, paralleling the development of the Nation, while Ben Achour’s account, written when the Nation was imminent, reflects the end product of the process. Thus, *Leïla* opens the door to a turbulent border zone that

² Ben Achour’s name appears in *Leïla* in a list of jury members (“Le Premier Voeu de *Leïla* est réalisé,” 1 Feb. 1941, 3).

reveals forgotten moments of Tunisia's national history, as opposed to its nationalist history.

In fact, Tunisians' struggle for control of cultural production and to theorize a national culture proved to be complicated to analyze. I found I had greater difficulty in tracing a subject from issue to issue, and my head spun as I tried to sort out each critic, their commentaries, and events in the cultural domain. Critics' haranguing on what appeared to be insignificant points week after week seemed to increase confusion. The word that first came to mind was *tourbillon* as I became aware of critics' frustrations in their attempts to affect change in cultural production and lay the foundations for a national culture. The image of the "whirlwind" seemed suited to this messy situation. Therefore, I propose the "whirlwind" as a metaphor to explain the sites of contention in the cultural domain, particularly concerning cultural production, and to explain how Tunisian elites engaged with cultural criticism to move the Independent Nation forward—despite the colonial yoke. Using the figurative sense of the word, as defined by the Oxford English Dictionary quoted above, I argue that it is at these sites of contention that tumultuous and confused situations, or "whirlwinds," developed around specific problems or scandals, which absorbed the writing and promotion of a national culture for the Independent Nation. The metaphor of the whirlwind allows for a different view of time, suggesting bumps in the road of chronological time that must be dealt with.

In addition, a number of characteristics of the natural phenomenon of the whirlwind are appropriate as a metaphor for the struggle over cultural production that *Leila* critics addressed in the second series: 1) A whirlwind tends to be small and is defined as "a small-diameter vortex of rapidly swirling air . . . , it is commonly restricted

to atmospheric systems that are smaller than tornadoes but larger than eddies of microscale turbulence.” 2) Whirlwinds can be made up of a variety of elements, including dust, sand, fire, smoke, or snow. 3) Whirlwinds form in an unstable layer of atmosphere near the ground and multiple vortices may cluster together in the unstable layer. Because unstable atmospheric conditions are beyond human control, humans can only move out of the way. 4) Although not necessarily destructive, a whirlwind’s uncontrolled direction is chaotic due to the instability of atmospheric conditions. In the center, confusion reigns as particles are inadvertently caught up in its swirl and jumbled together at wind speeds of up to 25 miles per hour in a moderately strong vortex.

(Encyclopædia Britannica Online)

In this chapter, then, a whirlwind serves as a metaphor for a controversy around a specific problem or scandal in the cultural domain, which is directly connected to the colonial administration. The instability of the colonial situation in which the French attempted to maintain their power and privileges while Tunisians sought to disrupt and re-appropriate power parallels the unstable atmospheric conditions required for a whirlwind. In the unstable colonial situation, the vortex, centered on only one problem or scandal, has a small diameter making the whirlwind a chaotic phenomenon, but not life threatening. Similar to the natural phenomenon of whirlwinds, colonial whirlwinds may be made up of different elements, in the case of this study, literature, theater, and music, while multiple vortices may occur and cluster together in each domain.

As noted above, humans must step out of the way of a whirlwind or suffer its chaotic winds. In the second series, *Leïla*’s critics are swept into the whirlwinds swirling around cultural production, which are beyond their control. The whirlwind serves the

colonizer because it impedes the colonized from looking to the future and effectively formulating a national culture to serve the New Nation. *Leila* critics must focus on hopelessly embroiled scandals in the present moment. They at first believe they can confront the scandal at the vortex by bringing it to the public's attention, critiquing it, and proposing solutions. Here, the metaphor of the whirlwind is useful not only because it demonstrates a focus on concrete problems, but also because it suggests a particular direction. The whirlwind turns upon itself in a circular movement, and does not move forward in a controlled manner. In a similar way, *Leila* critics appear to circle round and round a scandal at the vortex in a frustrating and confused manner, unable to accomplish objectives.

Does this description do justice to *Leila*'s critics? No, for they created opportunity out of confusion. Colonial whirlwinds, although centered on specific problems, contained other elements that were caught up in the confusion of the swirling winds, such as language issues, or French actions and views. *Leila* critics made use of the confusion around scandals to advance their formulation of a national culture while they *appeared* to focus on the vortex. The critical comments and constructive solutions for a specific problem were generalized and applied to the broader domains of literature, theater, and music. Therefore, the chaotic swirling of the whirlwinds helped mask the critics' political intentions of writing the New Nation through the creation of a national culture.

While attempting to make sense of this chaos, I found myself caught up in the whirlwinds as well, and I realized that I needed to distance myself in order to understand the hidden transcripts of the colonized. Then I noticed that across all three domains this is exactly what the critics themselves did. Suddenly, exhibiting colossal strength, critics

pulled free from the whirlwinds, planted their feet solidly upon Tunisian ground, and looked to the future. They made a conscious decision to turn from the problems and chaos created by the whirlwinds of the colonial situation, and laid the groundwork for a national culture in the border zone.

This chapter focuses on the whirlwinds found in the cultural domain, and on the development of a cultural criticism, begun in the women's magazine and honed in the weekly newspaper. I suggest that cultural criticism developed to shape a national literature, theater, and music in opposition to French colonial culture and cultural criticism. On the French side, Marius and Ary Leblond demanded a critique of colonial literature in their 1926 theoretical work, *Après l'exotisme de Loti: Le roman colonial*: "... nous sollicitons qu'un critique s'attache à illustrer le vaste front des Français outre-mer !" (8) This quote demonstrates the necessity of a criticism to define a literature and to keep it relevant for contemporary readers. Thus, an important aspect of the strategic use of literature and culture in *Leïla* concerns a criticism where critics step out of the ivory tower to theorize a Tunisian national literature and culture in response to French domination in the cultural domain.³ The editorial team clearly states this and stands behind critics in "Leïla vous parle" (24 Jan. 1941, 2):

Nos excellents collaborateurs qui participent à la rédaction des pages des "Divertissements divers", mènent le bon combat en vue de l'épuration de notre musique et de l'assainissement de notre théâtre. Musique et Théâtre doivent, en effet avoir le cachet du pays. Et cela est d'autant plus indispensable qu'ils constituent la manifestation réelle de notre vitalité.

³ In *The Function of Criticism: From The Spectator to Post-Structuralism* (1984), Timothy Eagleton argues that the literary critic has not always hidden in academe, but had an important role in British journalism in the 17th and 18th centuries, thus contributing to debates in the public sphere. See Chapter 1 (9-43).

Editors insist on a Tunisian music and theater, claimed for the community through the terms *notre musique* and *notre théâtre*. Use of terms such as *combat*, *épuration*, and *assainissement* indicate an anti-colonial subtext and a search for an authentic Tunisian culture that will usher in the New Nation. The editorial team demonstrates coherent and long-term objectives that defend and contribute to a national identity (*le cachet du pays* and *notre vitalité*) through a cultural criticism that defines the New Nation.

Furthermore, I argue that this national culture took shape in a dialogic situation. In the literary domain, for example, the French of Tunisia willed a *Littérature Nord-Africaine* into existence in 1920, which was institutionalized by the *Société des Ecrivains de l'Afrique du Nord* (SEAN) and its publication *La Kahéna*. And so, the whirlwinds include French presence and influence, which swirl around the vortex and interweave with Tunisians' efforts. Before studying the formulation of a national culture, however, a whirlwind from the past, which rustles through the pages of *Leïla* and is absorbed by the whirlwinds that challenge *Leïla* critics, must be considered. Brewing at its center is a question about the viability of the Arabic language.

A Whirlwind Around Language: The Defense of Arabic

Although the Egyptian writer Mayy Ziyada, Abdul-Méjid Chabby's favored model for the New Woman, is multilingual, the *Leïla* editor emphasizes her use of Arabic as her primary language, linking it to patriotic sentiments: "Il semble que May ait voulu dans sa production littéraire, faire de l'arabe une langue de combat et réserver son talent poétique à la langue française." The notion of Arabic as a language of combat confirms *Leïla*'s role in the defense of Tunisian identity that includes a defense of Arabic found throughout both series. The need to persistently and aggressively defend Arabic, called

notre langue nationale by Manoubi Snoussi (June 1938, 10), suggests the presence of what Louis-Jean Calvet terms a “language war.”⁴ In fact, the whirlwind swirling around the question of language included an attack on Arabic by the French that began in 1909, which escalated into an attack on literatures and cultures.

An organized debate over whether or not Arabic was a “dead” language took place during meetings of the Institute of Carthage, followed by presentations published in two issues of the *Revue Tunisienne*.⁵ In “L’Arabe est-il une langue vivante?” Charles Noël compares the relationship of the Arabic of the Qu’ran and *arabe vulgaire* (spoken Arabic in the Protectorate) to the relationship of Latin and French. A discussion of French syntax, morphology, and grammar serves as his model for the definition of a living language. He promotes the separation of literary and “vulgar” Arabic, insisting that few Arabs in the Protectorate use literary Arabic because it has become out-of-date and carries with it “une mentalité vieille de treize siècles” (188). He highlights the divide between elites and the illiterate masses and he attacks Arab literature: “Le lettré lui-même, outré qu’il perd le contact de la foule, pourra difficilement donner un accent personnel à une langue artificiellement apprise sur les bancs de l’école. C’est là qu’il faut chercher la cause de la stagnation actuelle de la littérature arabe” (188). In response to the accusation that Arab literature is outdated (that is, not “modern”) and incomprehensible to contemporary readers, a Tunisian states that writers such as Corneille are also

⁴ In *Language Wars and Linguistic Politics*, Calvet states that the linguistic terms of “living” and “dead” languages simply indicate changes in language: “These changes ... are the linguistic translation of deeper social movements. This is the case with the expansion of Latin in Europe and of Arabic in the Maghreb ...” (xiii). Thus, the 1909 debate is symptomatic of social change in Tunisian society provoked by colonization.

⁵ The *Institut de Carthage* (*l’Association tunisienne des lettres, sciences et arts*), a French-run scholarly group that included geographers, historians, archeologists, etc., published the *Revue Tunisienne* (1894-1948). Although the organization included a few Tunisian elites such as Ali Bach Hamba and “Si” Khairallah, the *Revue* expressed dominant colonial views

impenetrable to the French masses, causing the debate on language to escalate into an emotional battle over literature (Lafforgue 304). At the heart of this battle is a defense of knowledges and cultures, colonial culture posing as superior, while the colonized maintain an equality of knowledge, that is sustainable knowledge, and culture that disrupts the idea of the French civilizing mission.⁶

The *Revue Tunisienne* set out to show that the colonized did not contest the superiority of the dominant colonial language. An article by Ali Bach Hamba (reprinted from the Tunisian-run newspaper *Le Tunisien*) follows Noël's article in an appendice (*Revue Tunisienne*, May 1909, 190-1) and appears to confirm Noël's views: "Tout d'abord nous sommes obligés de reconnaître que la langue arabe, en l'état actuel, est encore loin de s'adapter aux idées scientifiques" (190). In fact, Bach Hamba's original article, excerpted and out of context in the *Revue Tunisienne*, does not support Noël's views, but causes the spark that lights the fire of this debate. Bach Hamba wrote a series of articles under the title of "Ecole Franco-Arabe ou Kouttab réformé?" The article appearing on 11 Feb. 1909 contains a critique of the feasibility of the use of Arabic in primary schools under colonization because of the poor level of education offered. Bach Hamba blames the colonial government for reducing primary school education to rudiments at the beginning of the 20th century. He proposes that the program of the French primary schools be taught in *franco-arabe* schools, so that Muslim students may prepare for French exams. Equally important, he insists that a serious level of Arabic be

⁶André Demeerseman notes that Tunisian writers defend literary Arabic and discuss the means to update Arabic in the Arabic-language specialized press: "Leur optimisme sur ce plan linguistique est resté sans faille durant toute la période où la plémique était engage. Il s'appuyait sur le passé culturel et scientifique de la langue arabe, grande langue de civilisation" (20). In addition, Arab literature and literary criticism were important subjects: "Témoins, par exemple, les nombreux articles traitant de l'influence des lettres sur le progrès des nations" (21).

taught alongside French. In the next article, he points out that the *franco-arabe* schools would not be exclusive:

Est-ce à dire que cette école, créée à leur [the colonized population] intention, doit être fermée à l'élément européen ? Nous le pensons encore moins. Celui-ci aura de plus en plus besoin de l'arabe. *Cette langue n'est pas près de disparaître, elle revit et prospère ...* L'école primaire franco-arabe leur est tout indiquée. Elle leur sera largement ouverte. [my italics]
(*Le Tunisien*, 4 Mar. 1909)

Bach Hamba insists emphatically on the importance of Arabic to all residents of Tunisia because it is alive and prospers.

It is not coincidental that this debate erupts when Tunisians demanded more and better schools with Arabic taught alongside of French. Here, then, is the problem: an *indigène* who defends his own language, criticizes the colonial administration for their educational policies for the colonized, and dares to suggest that the colonizer should learn the local language as a requirement to living in the Protectorate. The French, of course, did not feel the need to learn Arabic as French was the administrative (and thus official) language of the Protectorate. To counter Tunisian insistence upon the importance of Arabic, French linguists emphasized dividing Arabic into secular dialects because the unifying aspect of Arabic as the sacred language of the Qu'ran made Arabic language and Arab culture pre-eminent over French for the colonized Muslim majority.⁷ The whirlwind around the debate about the viability of Arabic effects contemporary textual practice and infiltrates other subjects, such as the theme of women's emancipation found in Charles Géniaux's novel, *Les Musulmanes* (1909), discussed in Chapter 3.

⁷ For a French scholar's viewpoint on Arabic as a sacred language, see Louis-Jean Calvet's *Language Wars and Linguistic Politics*, Chapter 2, "Religions and Language: the Myths of a Single Source and of Superiority." His description of a theory developing in Islam that makes Arabs the chosen people because they speak the language of God is problematic. Who are "Arabs"? Inhabitants of the Gulf or Arabic-speaking people?

The whirlwind continued to turn on the same question of the viability of the Arabic language with the same views of dominant colonial discourse swirling around the vortex.⁸ Tunisians understood the problems, but looked for solutions and continued to defend the Arabic language in the print culture, including in *Leïla*. New technologies provided opportunities and solutions as well. The spread of radios served colonialism because the French controlled the airways and radio stations in Tunisia and could thus block the colonized from using them for their own nationalist purposes. However, the French could not control all aspects of this new technology.⁹ Ben Achour places great importance upon the creation of Arabic radio stations, especially those from Egypt:

Lorsque la station de diffusion radiophonique fut créée en Egypte, ceux qui défendaient ardemment la diffusion de la langue arabe ressentirent un grand soulagement, car la langue arabe pouvait, désormais, disposer d'un moyen de diffusion et d'hégémonie littéraire que les cultures occidentales utilisaient pour dominer la culture arabe." (172)

⁸ In response to the Congress on Arabic Language and Literature held in Tunis in December 1931, a nationalist newspaper, *La Voix du Tunisien*, published a series of articles by the organizer of the Congress, William Marçais, titled "La Diglossie arabe," thus informing Tunisians of Marçais's colonial views. This French-organized conference followed such provocative celebrations of colonialism as the Eucharistic Congress of the Roman Catholic Church held in Tunis in May 1930 and the 50-year anniversary of the Protectorate in 1931. For a viewpoint of the colonized see *La Voix du Tunisien* (10 May 1930) whose front page and part of the second page contain a scalding criticism of the Eucharistic Congress.

Calvet notes that while Marçais is considered *an arabisant honorable*, nonetheless, he promoted a colonial political agenda that was based on racism: "... le racisme et le mépris sont au centre de toute la pensée de l'auteur... ces jugements de valeur ne reposent que sur la péjoration de la langue des autres" (1974, 125). I agree with Calvet and propose that Marçais's arguments are anchored in the history of colonialism, and carry forward arguments of previous generations, for he is caught up in the whirlwind. For example, he separates a literary Arabic, which is not spoken, from spoken dialects (*patois*), which are not written (8 Dec. 1931), thus distancing the sacred language of the Qu'ran from spoken Arabic. He attacks an Arabic literature described as incomprehensible to the majority of Arabs, and questions a developing literature in *arabe moderne*, viewed as unrealistic given the high percentage of illiteracy (22 Dec. 1931). Ultimately, he refuses to see the effect of colonialism on literacy and the state of Arabic. The obvious political ramification of the favoring of a dialectal Arabic over literary Arabic, is that the dialect could not be designated as an official language, and thus, the colonized would be required to negotiate political and social evolution in the language of the colonizer (Corriou, *Les Français* 218).

⁹ For information about the history of radio in Tunisia and its use for propaganda, see Morgan Corriou's *Les Français et la vie culturelle en Tunisie durant la seconde guerre mondiale.*, 232-235.

He promotes Arab culture and sees the radio as a major influence because it brings changes to spoken Arabic. He differentiates *l'arabe littéral* or written Arabic from *la langue dialectale* spoken by Tunisians, especially the illiterate. According to him the radio raised the level of dialectal Arabic by exposing the illiterate to standard literary Arabic (SLA):

Lorsque le discours radiophonique se diffusa dans les milieux illettrés, ceux-ci s'habituaient aux termes et aux constructions en arabe littéral qui parvenaient à leurs oreilles. Les idées psychologiques qu'ils exprimaient s'élevèrent à cause de l'élévation de leur niveau intellectuel. Ils firent appel aux termes qu'il fallait pour les exprimer et qu'ils trouvèrent dans ce qu'ils avaient retenu en écoutant la radio. Ce fut ainsi que les termes dialectaux diminuèrent, que les termes littéraires augmentèrent et que les modes d'expression s'équilibrèrent. La langue dialectale évolua considérablement, ce qui la différencia de la langue de la génération précédente et la fit se rapprocher de la langue littérale au point de réaliser, quasiment, l'idéal que voudraient réaliser les réformistes, celui de rapprocher des dialectes de la langue littérale car cela constituait le soutien le plus efficace à une union arabe totale. (177-8).

Ben Achour notes an improvement in Tunisian Arabic due to the radio. At the same time, the *Leïla* critics continually attacked the poor use of Arabic in the public domain to make the public aware and to improve levels of communication. For example, Mohyeddine comments on a play at the Municipal Theater: "Une remarque pour terminer: Dans les passages où l'on parlait l'arabe régulier il était malheureux d'entendre des erreurs de syntaxe et de morphologie, émanant surtout de personnalités éminentes" ("Au Municipal: La Fin d'un Cocaïnoman," 14 Dec. 1940, 4). Comments about people on the radio are frequent: "A part deux ou trois conférenciers qui parlent rarement, les autres débitent des sujets qui font dormir debout. Ils n'ont pas encore fini de digérer convenablement leur syntaxe et leur morphologie. Ils commettent des fautes de grammaire que ne commettrait pas un élève d'école primaire !" ("La qualité des émissions de Tunis PTT," July 1939,

6). This type of criticism to improve the use of Arabic is integral with the development of the cultural criticism that sought to formulate a national literature, theater, and music.

Tentative Steps Toward a Tunisian Literature

Throughout the first series, literary contributions included creative writing in the form of poetry, short stories, essays, and historical biographies. I propose that *Leïla* opens upon another border zone where editors tentatively included a variety of authors and forms in search of a literature different from the colonial North African Literature, and which *Leïla* critics theorized. In addition, these texts were linked to literature appearing in French-language and Arabic-language periodicals. Generally, creative writing in Arabic dominated, with a will to innovate appearing at the beginning of the 20th century when new genres appeared, such as the short story, novel, and play, according to Fontaine (*Propos* 10). However, poetry was the most important literary expression, dominated in the 1920s by Zitounien-trained writers who wrote of past glory and a decadent present that required rebuilding (12). The poet Abdul-Qasim Chabby (1906-1934) marked a new level of poetic expression.

Meanwhile, the essay developed into a genre that was both literary and political, especially with the publication of Abdelaziz Thaâlbi's *La Tunisie Martyre* (1920)(13). By 1936, *Leïla*'s contributors demonstrate skill in the use of this form. In addition, *Leïla* was not the only periodical to reflect social issues around women's emancipation. In 1930 and 1931, social realism appeared in short stories found in Arabic periodicals, with subjects that included issues about Tunisian women reflecting the ideological debate taking place. A male viewpoint dominates in critiques about forced marriage, women's cloistering or

freedom to circulate, and “Europeanized” women. The social problem of mixed marriages between Tunisian men and European women appears, and the problem of male predators draws attention as well (Ghazi 5-30).

Did the interest in social issues by intellectuals of the period influence the poets who published in *Leïla*? This is not immediately evident in the first series. On the other hand, poetry had a long history both in Arab cultures and in France, making it an important aspect of creative writing in *Leïla*. In the first series, eighteen of the twenty issues contain a total of forty-four poems. The layouts are spacious and illustrated with artwork to draw the reader’s eye, emphasizing the importance of poetry for the *Leïla* team. Affected by economic decline in Tunisia, the second series’ poems are sandwiched between articles that do not necessarily pertain to literature and are squeezed into a column format that causes lines to be cut off and carried over to the next line, destroying the visual aspect of poetry so carefully cultivated in the first series. The scarceness of paper and ink made every centimeter of the newspaper precious.

Commenting on the poetry found in *Leïla*, Abdelaziz Gacem notes: “Les années trente, l’entre-deux-guerres, sont une période charnière. Les poètes de ce côté-ci de la Méditerranée restent profondément imprégnés de romantisme, avec des tendances symbolistes et parnassiennes” (86). Indeed, no whispers of the avant-garde infiltrate to challenge the intellectual climate of the Protectorate, unlike in Martinique where Aimé Césaire, one of the founders of the Negritude movement, and his friends made use of surrealist poetry in their literary periodical, *Tropiques*, to foil Vichy censorship. Instead, a frequent use of alexandrines (58%) appears, and 67% of the poems contain standard rime patterns of ABAB, and less frequently ABBA. The theme of love dominates in over 60%

of the poems in the first series. In addition, the problem of identifying writers in *Leïla* carries over to poetry as well. Identity remains unstable as 66% of the writers use pseudonyms or are anonymous. Two women contribute poems, Marianne Le Gardet and “Raja.” However, the first name “Raja” may be a pseudonym for a woman or a man, making categories difficult to establish. In the first series, Skander (pseudonym for Salah Farhat) accounts for 34% of the poems,¹⁰ while G.-L. Le Monnier, the artistic director from Jan. 1938 to July 1939, contributes 24%.

This may appear to be a dreary analysis...and that is the point. I propose that the mundane nature of the poetry found in *Leïla* aids in masking anti-colonial subtexts or the promotion of national consciousness. First of all, one of Skander’s (Salah Farhat’s) poems, “Fraternité” (Mar. 1937, 12) shows that the French were vigilant for here is the first trace of direct censorship in the first series. The original text, which appeared in Salah Farhat’s collection of poems *Chants de l’Amour* (1978, 71-75), reveals that three lines of dots in *Leïla*, “.....” (which clearly signal to the reader foul play on the part of French censors), replace an entire verse. Although some of Skander’s poems appearing in *Leïla* date from 1919 to 1922, this poem was recent, dating from Feb. 1936.¹¹ The poem is about a French soldier, on guard duty in a desert outpost, who shoots a Tunisian, then regretting, goes to him and hears the Tunisian say:

— Ami, je vais mourir.

¹⁰ See Chapter 1 (43), footnote 10 for Farhat’s biographical information.

¹¹ The following poems by Skander (Salah Farhat) published in *Leïla* appear in *Chants de l’Amour* (1978): “Les Ombres” (*Leïla*, Dec. 1936, 8; *Chants*, 63-65, written Oct. 1934); “Les yeux” (*Leïla*, Feb. 1937, 11; *Chants*, 34, written Jan. 1932); “Fraternité” (*Leïla*, Mar. 1937, 12; *Chants*, 71-75, written Feb. 1936); “A L’absente” (*Leïla*, May 1937, 12; *Chants*, 24-5, written May 1933); “Couleurs du Soir” (*Leïla*, May 1937, 12; *Chants*, 17, written Sept. 1922); “Agonie d’un soir d’été” (*Leïla*, Jan. 1938, 4; *Chants*, 56, written July 1936); “Je t’aime” (*Leïla*, June 1938, 9; *Chants*, 23, written 1933); “Larmes” (*Leïla*, July 1939, 10; *Chants*, 57, written Dec. 1922); “Feuilles mortes” (*Leïla*, Aug. 1938, 11; *Chants*, 27-8, written 1919).

J'ai fait tout mon devoir, vous avez fait le vôtre.
 Qu'importe que je meure ainsi. Beaucoup des nôtres
 Tomberont satisfaits pour leur pays natal.

This strong nationalist message gets by the censor. There follows a questioning of conquest and colonization by the French soldier, from which the most pointed anti-colonial critique is cut:

Et pourquoi sommes-nous venus dans la géhenne?
 C'est pour civiliser, dit-on, chasser la haine,
 L'ignorance sordide et la dissension,
 Faire régner la Paix et l'Ordre et l'Union,
 Installer l'hygiène, abolir l'esclavage,
 Relever, élever un peuple de sauvages!...
 O mensonge infernal! O mensonge abhorré!
 O vérité meurtrie! O cynisme exécré!
 Non! C'est pour accomplir une oeuvre vile, infâme,
 Pour blesser, pour brûler des enfants et des femmes,
 Des homes valeureux défendant leur foyer,
 Pour détruire, pour torturer et pour tuer;
 Voler, déposséder et puis, pour rendre esclave
 Un peuple d'orphélins, un peuple bon et brave,
 Remplir tout un pays de plaints et de pleurs,
 Et sur un piedestal, ériger la DOULEUR! (S. Farhat 74)

In the offending verse, colonial discourses that promote *Paix, Ordre, Union*, and the civilizing mission are attacked and revealed to be lies in service of colonial violence that results in slavery. This poem describes French presence as a disaster for the colonized because of the destruction it unleashes upon the “protected.” Contemporary *Leïla* readers pieced together the anti-colonial subtext from the remaining verses and the three lines of dots, which challenged readers to guess at what had been censored.

Secondly, a defense of Arab poetry and poets through a re-writing of well-known poems emerges. For example, Skander (Salah Farhat) contributes two poems, “Les Yeux” (Feb. 1937, 11), which is inspired by Omar Khayyam and al-Ma’arri, and “Le Captif”

(Mar. 1938, 15), inspired by Abu Firâs al-Himdânî (932-968) (Gacem 86-87).¹² Thus, Arabic language and Arab culture make their presence felt in the background and are called forward to the present to be integrated into the writing of the Independent Nation, in line with the periodical's position to defend the Arab roots of the Tunisian national identity.

Thirdly, the choice of poems suggests an editorial stance that encourages a poetry that is about Tunisia. Thirteen percent of the poems contain poetic images of Tunisia or descriptions of cities or sites in Tunisia, such as Mounir's "Lac Bahira" (June 1937, 12), G.L. Le Monnier's "Cité Sainte: Sidi-Bou-Saïd la Blafarde" (June 1937, 13), and Dr. Er-Razi's "Automne à Carthage" (14 Dec. 1940, 8). This policy of promoting Tunisian themes is stated explicitly in the second series when a Tunisian poet, Karabaka, writes a poem about date palmtrees: "C'est la réalisation partielle du vœu que nous avons formé pour que nos poètes consacrent leur talent à tout ce que notre pays a de beau" ("Les Vœux de 'Leïla'," 1 Feb. 1941, 3). Zarrouk and his team seek to influence literary and cultural production in a direct manner and highlight individual efforts that glorify Tunisia.

Fourthly, *Leïla* editors include poems with social themes that reinforce the social issues discussed in articles. G.-L. Le Monnier's "El Aroussa (La Mariée)" (June 1938, 3) reflects the *Leïla* team's stand against forced marriages.¹³ Two other poems, Le Monnier's "Le Bicot" (Mar. 1938, 8) and Karawan's (pseudonym) "La Petite Mendiante" (24 Mar. 1941, 4) remind readers of the problem of severe poverty and famine attacking

¹² Gacem notes that a verse quoted at the beginning of the poem is incorrectly attributed to Ibn 'Ammâr, rather than Abu Firâs al-Himdânî (87).

¹³ For a list of *Leïla* articles concerning marriage, see the "Index of Subjects" in the Appendices.

Tunisian society. These poems describe not only a physical degradation, but moral distress as well. Le Monnier writes about a Tunisian beggar chased away from the terrace of a chic restaurant:

Et l'homme poursuivi, traqué comme la rage,
 Misérable affamé traité de scélérat,
 Subit de ces roumis l'irréparable outrage,
 En guise des bienfaits de leur protectorat.

The Arabic word *roumis* refers to the French colonizer, and Le Monnier clearly states that the beggar, one of the “protected,” has been subjected to the worst possible treatment and lives in the worst possible conditions. Le Monnier’s undisguised critique of colonialism may pass by censors not only because he is French, but because he does not apparently express pro-nationalist sentiments. That is, he does not call for an end to the Protectorate, but only criticizes it. Three years later, Karawan’s “La Petite Mendiante,” similar to Le Monnier’s poem in its theme, shows the weight of Vichy restrictions, for the French colonizer is not mentioned in the description of a beggar girl’s sad plight:

Mais le flot des passants passait avec dédain.
 “Jusqu’à quand verra-t-on pareille pourriture?”
 S’écria un “goujat” en se frappant la main.

The term “goujat,” a boor, especially to women, only hints at a Frenchman because it is a particularly French word bordering on slang and set apart in quotation marks. Thus from Le Monnier’s poem to Karawan’s, one of the slight shifts in the border zone appears: although an anti-colonial subtext may be found in these poems, with the passage of time it is disguised due to heavy censorship of the Vichy colonial government.

And finally, the influence of the historical moment upon textual practice cannot be overlooked, such as in the examples of Le Monnier’s and Karawan’s poems. From a

practical point of view, publishing became more difficult with shortages of many necessities (paper and ink, for example). In addition, World War II inspired political themes and a growing malaise expressed in images suggesting melancholy, solitude, despair, and death. Only one of the eleven poems in the second series is about love. Marianne Le Gardet's "Pour Toi," (1 Jan. 1941, 5) seems oddly out of place compared to other poems that contain allusions to war or a chasm (*abîme*), or images of nature connected to decline, melancholy, and death.¹⁴ Although the theme of love dominates in the first series, this is deceptive, for an overall analysis reveals that nearly 35% of the poems have Tunisian themes or political or social themes.

This tendency to hide behind the banal appears in short stories found in the first series as well. Of a total of forty short stories, nineteen are published in the first series. As with poetry, the romantic theme of love dominates in 68% of the stories. Once again, this dominant theme is deceptive, for nearly 40% of the love stories address the social problems of marriage or the search for suitable partners in Tunisian society. Indeed, 68% of the stories of the first series take place in the present, and 63% are concerned with social (including marriage problems) and economic problems, which speak to a contemporary readership. An example of the political use of literature appears in the January 1938 issue with a short story by G.-L. Le Monnier.

As seen in his poetry and his caricatures discussed above and in Chapter 3, G.-L. Le Monnier expressed strong, anti-colonial critiques and served as a shield against the colonial censor. In "Daikhana (conte arabe)" (Jan. 1938, 19), a soothsayer living in

¹⁴Examples concerning war or the chasm are: "Déception" by Nox (16 Mar. 1941, 3), "Espoir" by Raja (24 Mar. 1941, 4), and "Poème" by Raja (24 Apr. 1941, 3). Examples concerning nature and decline are: "Les Feuilles," (1 Dec. 1940, 8), "Automne à Carthage" by Dr. Er-Razi (14 Dec. 1940, 8), "Mélancolie d'un soir" by A.B.M. (1 Jan. 1941, 3), and "La Nature consolatrice" by Abedjelil Rachid (2 May 1941, 5).

Southern Tunisia where tribes suffer from famine predicts punishment for evildoers and a better future for the victims of colonization. As in his caricatures and poetry, Le Monnier writes about the physical degradation and moral distress of Tunisians:

Comme l'on chasse une meute de chacals enragés, ils avaient été refoulés dans leur désert ... Encore devaient-ils s'estimer bien heureux de n'avoir pas entendu siffler à leurs oreilles, les balles des mitrailleuses civilisatrices ... Il leur semblait par instants qu'ils étaient étrangers au sol qui les avait vu naître; ils discernaient mal les mobiles pour lesquels ces hommes armés, et cette police brutale les repoussaient avec tant de fureur, au lieu de leur tendre la main ... Et, cependant certains d'entre eux se souvenaient qu'en d'autres temps, on était venu recruter leurs fils qu'ils n'avaient jamais revus. N'avaient-ils pas le droit aujourd'hui de manger un morceau de pain de leur terre natale. Des flots de haine ne débordaient même pas de leur cœur, contre ces hommes d'une autre race, implantés sur leur sol pour en extraire ce qui leur manquait, pour en exploiter les richesses, et pour spéculer sur leurs biens...N'ayant jamais goûté à un brin de bonheur, ils se soumettaient aux rigueurs du triste sort, que leur imposaient leurs protecteurs.

Le Monnier heaps blame upon the French. His irony bites as violent imagery invades the page (*des mitrailleuses civilisatrices, hommes armés, police brutale*), describing the colonizer. This violence stands in contrast to the final word of this quote, *protecteurs* which signifies the French as well. A contradiction arises when Le Monnier insists upon Tunisians' contribution to French victory in World War I, for it is the colonized who aided in protecting the colonizer. Le Monnier points to the colonizer who refuses to recognize Tunisians' blood sacrifice and who reduces the colonized to foreigners in their own land where exploitation and speculation run rampant. The colonized become victims instead of being protected. Tunisians make use of this short story, which represents one of the most blatant anti-colonial critiques to be found in *Leïla*, by publishing it in an apparently nonpolitical arena. The fact that this story was published before the events of 8 and 9 April 1938, when shreds of the Popular Front's influence persisted, partially

explains why Zarrouk and his team passed by colonial censors. In addition, Le Monnier does not overtly demonstrate nationalist sentiments. Instead, he paints the colonized as accepting and impotent, unable to take their destinies into their own hands. Nonetheless, Le Monnier's story represents a high point in the political use of literature by the *Leïla* team. Those following could not allow themselves to be so blunt when political events spun out of control in the Protectorate in 1938.

Short stories after the January 1938 issue lean toward the supposedly banal in order to occasionally transmit anticolonial ideas or messages of national consciousness. For example, the backdrop for the love story in "L'Homme de l'été" (July 1939, 11) by Ginevra (pseudonym) is the forced migration of Bedouin tribes from Southern Tunisia due to severe drought. A story apparently about wedding planning, "Nouvelle: Un Mariage silencieux," (Le Conteur, Dec. 1939, 18), reminds readers of the dire economic problems facing a majority of the Tunisian population. A young couple must convince their parents to forego the usual expensive wedding festivities in order to help charitable organizations and those in need. Despite the necessary currying of favor in which the author supports France in its struggles against Germany and approves French recruitment of Tunisians into the French army as cannon fodder, a strong message of social solidarity and unity comes across. Behind this message is the understanding that Tunisians cannot count on the French and must aid one another:

... plus que jamais, il faut consentir aux sacrifices nécessaires; il faut s'employer à soulager les misères, à diminuer le poids des souffrances autour de soi: notre argent, nous ne devons pas le délapider, le jeter par la fenêtre, mais l'utiliser à ces fins supérieures, dans les oeuvres de charité qui se multiplient, chaque jour, dans le domaine de l'assistance..., la période des prodigalités est close: il faut actuellement se restreindre, faire face aux difficultés de l'heure, en maintenant autant que possible les liens de solidarité qui nous unissent avec nos

concitoyens, et principalement ceux qui, parmi eux, souffrent et luttent vaillamment ... (19)

The imagined community appears with the mention of *concitoyens*, “fellow citizens,” for Tunisians were not citizens of France, but merely subjects of the Empire. This author considers Tunisians to be citizens of something that is projected, but does not yet exist: the Independent Nation. The writer’s insistence upon solidarity and unity reinforces notions of national consciousness important for fueling the nationalist movement. Thus, *Leïla* writers made use of literature for political reasons and to express the hidden transcripts of the colonized. However, was this true for the second series that was published under the Vichy regime?

The short story appears to have an important place in the second series because of the regularity of the column, “Le conte de *Leïla*,” which was published in eighteen of the twenty issues from December 1940 to July 1941. However, as noted in Chapter One with the example of “Les Trois Khibar,” these stories are folkloric and distanced into a pre-Protectorate Arab past where women’s presence is reduced to relative invisibility. Although short stories in the first series written by both women and men have varied subject matter dealing with social issues and even political issues as well as more mundane subjects, “Le conte de *Leïla*” column suggests containment and constraint. Not only are women characters limited to the secondary roles of mother, daughter, or wife (if present at all), but Tunisians can no longer afford the luxury of an experimental realistic literature that addresses the problems of life in the colonial situation, and which would carry anti-colonial subtexts or feed national consciousness while contributing to the building of a national literature. At best, these stories remind readers of Arab culture,

which is defended throughout the publication of *Leïla* as part of Tunisian culture.

Additionally, the authoritative patriarchal male voice of “Le Vieux Conteur” overrides women’s voices, as economic survival takes precedence over women’s emancipation and contribution to the New Nation. With increased French repression under Vichy, the *Leïla* team turned to a different tactic: the encouragement of a literary and cultural critique that theorized a national literature and culture.

Development of Literary Criticism: Formulation of a Tunisian Literature

Only three literary criticism articles appear before August 1939 in a column titled “Chronique Littéraire,” which turns to French literature in a search for models of women created by authoritative French writers. The progression from a passive model in the first article, to a critique of it in the second article, and then to a more positive model in the third article suggests an editor’s guiding hand in the choice of articles of the first three issues for the “Chronique Littéraire” series. In “Chronique Littéraire: Giraudoux et la jeune fille” (Dec. 1936, 7), the editor, Abdul-Méjid Chabby makes a first attempt to propose models for the New Tunisian Woman emphasizing woman’s passive role and sacrifice.¹⁵ In “Chronique Littéraire: André Gide et la Femme,” (Feb. 1937, 10), Tahar Lakhdar proposes that Gide places the woman *bien-aimée* on a pedestal and shows that love is the goal in her life, which is a weakness. According to Lakhdar, Gide demonstrates that her sacrifices are useless. Lakhdar insists that “... à ses yeux [Gide’s] la femme est une sacrifiée ... Et ce qui ajoute au sacrifice de ces femmes je ne sais quelle note lugubre, désespérante, c’est que leur sacrifice est inutile.” Through Gide, Lakhdar discreetly criticizes the model that Chabby proposes in the first issue, and implies that

¹⁵ See Chapter 1 (42-43) for a discussion of Chabby’s article.

women must have other goals than simply *l'amour*, which requires a total sacrifice that makes women weak.¹⁶

Lakhdar emphasizes Gide's *Ecole des femmes* while Marlène Daisy refers to Molière's famous play of the same title in the following article of the series, "Chronique Littéraire: L'Ecole des Femmes," (Mar. 1937, 10). Daisy, using the inclusive first person plural "nous," emphasizes free choice and responsibility for one's own conduct rather than sacrifice: "Aussi nous faut-il, femmes, ayant conscience de nos droits et de nos responsabilités, les tenir fermement, et bâtir à partir de la vie libre qui puisse s'épanouir en toute plénitude." Thus, the use of famous French writers, whose books *Leïla* readers had most certainly read or heard of, serves to develop ideas on the New Muslim Woman. However, the European woman as a model reflects the presence of colonial feminism. Yet, instead of an active European woman described in my Chapter 3, Chabby and Lakhdar describe a passive model who sacrifices herself. Marlène Daisy points to an active woman, but does not create a superior European model, as she seeks similarities with Tunisian women in her writings rather than differences.¹⁷ As seen in Chapter 4, Chabby proposes a more active model in August 1940, the Egyptian writer Mayy Ziyadah, showing a shift in his ideas.

In the August 1939 issue, a turning point in literary criticism takes place. Up to this issue, literary critiques have to do with women, whether concerning a formulation of the

¹⁶ Although Gide frequently visited Tunisia, his works are not classified in colonial literature. Yet Jean-Marc Moura finds that he must be acknowledged as a travel writer (150). Jacqueline Arnaud sees Gide's work as being sensual, describing forms, colors, and odors, but reducing the Other to an object of desire (27). If his works focus on personal metamorphosis, Arnaud and Moura point out that his method allows him to avoid posing uncomfortable questions to his readers, such as the legitimacy of the French presence in the colonies (Arnaud 27-28; Moura 2005, 150). In 1939, Aimé Dupuy published an anthology of texts about Tunisia in which he included excerpts by Gide, confirming the influence of Gide's texts.

¹⁷ See Chapter 3 (175-179) for a discussion of Marlène Daisy's articles.

New Muslim Woman (as in the “Chronique littéraire” series) or a discussion of women’s participation in the print culture and intellectual and cultural groups of the Protectorate. For example, Salah Lahmar, in “La femme tunisienne et l’art dramatique” (Mar. 1938, 12), defends Tunisian theater and encourages women to write, citing Chafia Rochdi who “écrit même des comedies.” In the following issue, Mahmoud Aslan¹⁸ contributed one article, “La Femme tunisienne et la vie intellectuelle” (June 1938, 7), to *Leïla* in which he praises Zarrouk for re-opening the debate on women’s emancipation. He then reminds readers that in “tous les pays d’Orient,” and especially in Egypt, women write in periodicals and attend cultural and literary events. His main concern is that Tunisian women, particularly Muslim women, need to participate actively in literary and cultural life:

Le jour où les Sociétés littéraires et artistiques tunisiennes compteront quelques adherents actives, un grand pas sera fait pour l’émancipation de la femme tunisienne. J’entends bien déjà quelques murmures, mais rien n’arrêtera la marche du temps et de l’évolution spirituelle et morale d’un peuple.

Aslan recognizes opposition to his ideas (*quelques murmures*), nevertheless, he maintains that women’s participation will contribute to the march toward independence, indicated in the use of the terms *la marche du temps* and *l’évolution*.

However, after August 1939, attention turns to the writing of a national literature and defense and improvement of a national culture, with the exception of Chabby’s

¹⁸ Mahmoud Aslan (1902-1970?) grew up in Jendouba in northern Tunisia; then attended the French Lycée Carnot in Tunis. He worked in Paris as a commercial employee, then returned to Tunis with a French wife, and worked in the Ministry of Justice until his retirement in 1957. He founded two monthly periodicals, *Tunis littéraire et artistique* (1934) and *Le Petit Tunisois* (1934-1957). He was a member of the *Société des Ecrivains de l’Afrique du Nord* under whose wing he published *Scènes de la vie du bled* (1932), *Entre deux mondes* (1933), and *Pages africaines* (1933). He served as president of the *Cenacle littéraire tunisien*, and published *Les Yeux noirs de Leïla* (1940) under its auspices, after it had appeared in serial form in a newspaper, *Tunis Soir*. As a naturalized Frenchman, and with many French friends, he was the most intermediary of Tunisians. (Fontaine, *Histoire*, vol. 2, 237).

August 1940 article about Mayy Ziyadah. This reflects an increase in oppression that muzzled dialogue, and an increase in economic and political difficulties that added to publication hurdles. Consequently, discussions on literature were used to keep national consciousness alive as censorship grew. I suggest that within the pages of *Leila*, the development of a literary criticism that wills into existence a national literature emerges, showing that literary criticism and national literature are integrally connected. That is, the ability to speak for oneself critically contributes to the defining and the writing of the Nation under colonialism. However, because of problems of production, censorship, and the persistent concern over political issues related to colonialism, there would be few texts to examine if the term “literature” were limited to creative writing and the genres of poetry, novel, and theater. Fontaine resolves this problem by including a “littérature intellectuelle” in his study on creative writing: “L’éventail des Tunisiens qui se font remarquer dans le domaine de la littérature d’idées va du juriste-historien traditionnel à l’intellectuel-penseur, en passant par le militant politique et le journaliste engagé” (1999, 184). Tunisians themselves expand the term to include a variety of texts.

The first important article, “Réflexions anodines: Les Lettres tunisiennes” (Aug. 1939, 5) passes under the colonial administration’s radar through the use of the word *anodines*, which suggests that this article is harmless, even trivial. M. Rafik’s notions are anything but trivial, however. He names an active literary culture that is Tunisian and the birth of a national literature, “la naissance d’un mouvement littéraire qui progressait.” He makes it clear that Tunisian literature is unique and different from Egyptian or Middle Eastern literatures that flood the Tunisian market, making it difficult for Tunisian writers to work. Rafik points a finger at the French colonial government for this situation. In fact,

the entry of Egyptian publications was lucrative business for the colonial government due to customs fees. Tahar Essafi confirms the circulation of Egyptian publications in 1937: “Les livres et les journaux égyptiens se lisent encore beaucoup dans la Régence et le montant de ces “postes” d’importation dépasse en douane le chiffre de 200.000 francs chaque année” (14). Essafi’s apparently innocent comment pinpoints the fact that cultural production could be a question of large profits to those in power. Rafik sees the negative effects of French policy: “Mais nous constatons que la diffusion de leurs livres dans notre pays, nuit énormément à notre mouvement des lettres et à nos écrivains.” The repeated use of the word *mouvement* suggests a paralleling to the nationalist movement without mentioning it.

Thus, the critiques found in *Leïla* indicate that the French colonial government sabotaged efforts of Tunisians to define and promote their own culture, and with good reason, for the defense of a Tunisian literature and culture contributed to national consciousness. To counter French sabotage, the acquisition of power in the domain of cultural production became urgent. Rafik argues that: “La création à Tunis d’une maison d’éditions est la seule institution capable de travailler avec un réel succès, à l’essor et à la vulgarisation des lettres tunisiennes.”¹⁹ He proposes that a publishing house must be created in the private sector as Tunisians cannot count upon the government, never saying which government he accuses and consequently introducing ambiguity that masks the

¹⁹ To be fair, the French faced the problem of establishing publishing companies in Tunisia as well. Morgan Corriou notes that generally book store owners and printers simply extended their professional activities to editing, in order to fill the gap. During the interwar period, several associations connected to periodicals, developed publishing activities. For example, “Société d’éditions mutuelles des écrivains de l’Afrique du Nord” was connected to *La Kahéna* of the Société des Ecrivains de l’Afrique du Nord. (*Les Français* 117-118)

attack on the French colonial government. Tunisians must count on themselves and take action in the literary and cultural spheres to move the Nation forward.

The May 1940 issue contains another important article, “Les Yeux noirs de Leïla” (15) written by *Leïla*’s founder who steps in to promote a Tunisian literature. Apparently locating a discussion of Mahmoud Aslan’s novel, *Les Yeux noirs de Leïla*, within the debate on women’s emancipation, and thus connecting the theme of the first series with national literature, Zarrouk states:

La question de l’émancipation de la femme tunisienne n’a cessé depuis plusieurs années de faire l’objet de la plupart de nos articles et de nous préoccuper sérieusement, parce qu’elle est à l’origine de la solution de tous nos problèmes sociaux. Ecrivains et artistes ont abordé sous les angles les plus divers cette question. Et c’est parce que notre confrère et ami Mahmoud Aslan s’en est à son tour ému que nous avons pris le plaisir et la liberté de lire attentivement son livre *Les Yeux Noirs de Leïla* et de le commenter.

According to Zarrouk, Aslan’s book is of interest because one of the main characters, Leïla, is a Tunisois woman who goes through a series of changes, leaving “traditional” ways behind.²⁰ The story itself brings to the forefront the mixing of the public and private spheres in the colonial situation. Here is an example of what Homi Bhabha terms “unhomeliness,” where domestic space becomes a site for history’s invasions, a bridging between the home and the world in which the home exists as a place to work out issues in the conflict of cultures (*Location of Culture*, 13-15). Aslan’s novel thus brings to Tunisian literature issues about the colonial situation, and changes for elites and for women trying to find a middle terrain. It coincides as well with women participating in

²⁰ The label of Tunisois refers to residents of Tunis with an established culture closed to those from other cities or rural areas. All those not born into the well-known Tunisois families were considered provincial. This appellation included the elites, but Tunisois were not necessarily defined by wealth.

the public sphere of print culture in *Leïla*, showing a border zone where border thinking takes place.

At the same time, Aslan's book serves as an excuse for defining and encouraging a Tunisian national literature. Although Aslan considered himself French (he was naturalized, although he did not apparently renounce his Tunisian roots), Tunisians claimed him, and his book is hailed as the "premier roman tunisien" by Zarrouk. In a brief summary, Zarrouk emphasizes the main female character's (Leïla) second husband, minimizing her first husband who marries a French woman and finds himself caught between two cultures. Zarrouk calls the first husband "un vaincu" despite the fact that he returns to Tunis with his French wife to be with his (and Leïla's) son. For Zarrouk, the theme of the Tunisian woman's emancipation is not the most important aspect of Aslan's novel, but:

... il souligne que le drame de notre jeunesse vient précisément de notre hésitation entre deux mondes: l'Orient et l'Occident. C'est à nous qu'il appartiendra de savoir tracer à la femme et à l'homme de demain le chemin qu'ils devront suivre pour faire le bonheur et la prospérité de ce pays.

The confrontation between the colonizer and the colonized dominates questions of the future of the *pays*. Zarrouk points to the need to inform Europeans about Tunisians and their demands and about "les beautés de notre littérature et les secrets de notre âme et de notre coeur." Thus he refers to the hidden transcript of the colonized, which is disguised, yet present, in literature.

Zarrouk encourages Tunisians to follow Aslan's example to create a Tunisian literature in French. In so doing, he responds to French literary criticism that theorizes colonial literature, especially found in the Leblonds' *Après l'exotisme de Loti: Le roman*

colonial, which highlights Algeria and Tunisia. Zarrouk proposes a summary of texts dating from 1904, beginning with Béchir Sfar's "La Géographie chez les Arabes" and ending with authors from the 1930s that include noted nationalists such as Mohamed Nomane, M'hammed Ali El Annabi, and Chedly Khairallah who wrote on economic, political, and historical subjects. The importance of naming authors and texts should not be underestimated. The identification of a body of works that is connected demonstrates the existence of a literature, which is the technique that Marius and Ary Leblond use to reinforce the existence of colonial literature and the colonial novel. The Leblond brothers establish a hierarchy of *les aînés*, *les maîtres du genre*, and young writers (8). Zarrouk establishes a hierarchy as well, between *les aînés* and the young generation of the 1930s. He understands the importance of his article and the construction of a Tunisian literature, for he writes: "Cela servira peut-être aux historiens à venir." Indeed, his article in particular and *Leïla* articles in general allow us to trace the will to define and defend a Tunisian literature, thus writing the New Nation. If there should be doubt about the veritable subject of Zarrouk's article, Aslan reprinted it in 1941 in *L'oeuvre du Cénacle Littéraire Tunisien* (8-10) changing the title to "Le Mouvement Littéraire en Tunisie." Once again, terms such as *mouvement* take on multiple meanings in the colonial situation, and suggest the march toward independence.

The weekly newspaper carries articles that propose a critique of cultural activities and concrete steps, to improve culture in the Protectorate, such as the creation of an Arabic-language poetry award. This is a border zone where the defense of a national literature—referred to as *les belles lettres arabes*, *la poésie arabe*—takes place, but with discretion.

A Whirlwind Around Literary Awards: Whose Literature?

As the *Leïla* forum contracted and disappeared, I suggest that friction between a well-institutionalized colonial North African literature and a Tunisian national literature became apparent over the question of literary awards and their funding and selection processes. I argue that within the border zone a testing of the boundaries of literatures took place and a whirlwind formed around the question of literary awards and who received those awards. Swirling around the vortex centered on literary awards, *Leïla* writers attempted to make space for a Tunisian national literature dominated by an established colonial literature. Fourteen of the twenty issues in the second series contain articles or announcements about literary awards. It all began with a question put to the French colonial Department of Education (*Direction de l'Instruction Publique*), which sponsored the *Prix de Carthage*: “Comme ce Prix est attribué aux seuls écrivains d’expression française, est-ce qu’il ne serait pas possible de créer aussi un Prix pour les écrivains de langue arabe?” (“Le Prix de Carthage,” 14 Dec. 1940, 2).²¹ The term *d’expression française* is deceptive and introduces ambiguity, for in fact, no Tunisians ever received the award. This demonstrates that Zarrouk and *Leïla* contributors paid lip service to a dominant discourse, but meant something else. No mention of nationality or Tunisian literature appears, however, the following week a second brief article points out that “à côté des Lettres Françaises, vivent les Lettres Arabes, qui méritent aussi que le

²¹ Created by the *Conseil Consultatif* after being proposed by Arthur Pellegrin in 1921, the *Prix de Carthage* was open to residents of North Africa (Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco), and accepted literary works in French. In 1938, the award was set at 10,000 francs and three of the nine jury members represented the SEAN (Corriou, *Les Français* 92-94). Guy Dugas also notes the influence of French colonial governments on literary awards in Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco during the colonial period (6). For a study on the similarities of the Prix de Carthage, the Grand Prix littéraire d’Algérie, and the Prix du Maroc, see Dugas’ article, “Petite réflexion critique sur les prix littéraires au Maghreb en période coloniale et postcoloniale.”

Gouvernement s'intéresse à leur épanouissement" ("Autour du prix de Carthage," 21 Dec. 1940, 4). A Tunisian national literature appears in disguise as *Lettres Arabes*. This short comment makes it clear that the French colonial government supported only French and French colonial literature.

A third article demonstrates the necessity of currying favor and appearing neutral (with no hint of nationalism or anti-colonial critique) when requesting improvements from the colonial government. M. Rafik describes a speech by the Vichy-named General Resident at a charitable event (*Secours National d'Hiver*) in saccharine terms: "M. l'Amiral Esteva a prononcé devant le micro un très beau discours où, en termes éloquents, il a dit tout le bien qu'il pense de la Littérature Arabe et de tous ceux qui travaillent à en rehausser le niveau" ("M. l'Amiral Esteva et les lettres arabes," 1 Jan. 1941, 2). Rafik couches a demand for the improved status of Arabic, with the recognition of an official award, in laudatory terms. Such sugar-coating allows him to make two points:

Cette marque d'estime a été beaucoup appréciée par les Tunisiens qui s'attachent à leur langue et dont le désir inné est de lui assurer un avenir meilleur. ... Le discours radiodiffusé doit être considéré comme le prélude d'une ère nouvelle qui s'ouvre pour les Lettres Arabes qui doivent avoir une place nettement marquée en Tunisie.

Rafik makes it clear that Tunisians will defend Arabic, and not abandon it for French, and that Tunisians expect improvements from the colonial government. This type of nudging, however, is ineffective, for when *Leïla* announces the creation of the *Prix de la Poésie arabe*, credit must be given to an anonymous "généreux mécène," not to Admiral Esteva or the Department of Education ("Le Premier Vœu de *Leïla* est réalisé," 1 Feb. 1941, 3). Nonetheless, messages continue to be sent to the colonial government: "Nous souhaitons

que de son côté, le Gouvernement songe à décerner, à l'instar du Prix de Carthage, un Prix pour les Lettres Arabes."²² Despite the lack of success of this technique, the *Leïla* newspaper managed to inspire a reader to come forward to endow this award, demonstrating that efforts to effect change in Tunisian society and create community were not in vain.

The results of the competition for the award appear in "L'activité de nos poètes" (1 Mar. 41, 3). M. Rafik criticizes a stagnating poetry of the past whose theme is a description of the "bien-aimée." He exalts a new orientation that uses Tunisia as its source, connecting a literature to notions of the nation, emphasizing the natural riches and local production of the country. Rafik vaunts the role of *Leïla*: "Comme on le voit, *Leïla* peut être fière du succès qu'elle rencontre auprès de ceux qui n'ont d'autre but que celui de travailler au relèvement intellectuel du pays." A thinly-veiled national orientation is reflected in such terms as *relèvement intellectuel du pays* and the repeated use of *la Tunisie, les productions tunisiennes, le pays, la poésie et la musique tunisiennes*. Encouraging a national consciousness in artists, Rafik extols: "Les poètes doivent être au service de l'Art Tunisien," consequently attaching them to the nation. In contrast to a colonial North African Art, a Tunisian Art is defended and promoted. Although previous articles speak of an Arabic literature, the ultimate goal is to create a Tunisian literature and art.

In the *Leïla* articles, irritation surfaces in a controversy about the *Prix de Carthage* that was at the vortex of the whirlwind, for the award was linked to the General

²² Reminders addressed to the colonial government occur again in "Le Prix des Lettres Arabes," (16 Mar. 1941: 2), "Leïla vous parle" (24 Mar. 1941, 2), and "Après le Prix de Carthage" (24 Mar. 1941, 2).

Residence and funded with a 10,000 franc prize from the colonial government (to which Tunisians paid taxes) (Corriou 2005, 125), while the *Prix de la Poésie arabe* was only 5,000 francs and privately funded and organized, as the *Leïla* articles attest. Who was behind the *Prix de Carthage*? None other than Arthur Pellegrin and the *Société des Ecrivains de l'Afrique du Nord*. This organization came into existence when Pellegrin published *La Littérature Nord-africaine* (1920) based on a questionnaire he had sent to friends. He noted an improvement in living standards, education, and intellectual culture accompanied by a growth in ideas and feelings unique to the inhabitants of North Africa. He approved of the use of French because it was the administrative language, and literary Arabic was understood by only a minority of the Arab population. Thus, Pellegrin defined North African literature within a European/ French context, attaching it to the center while creating its autonomy and emphasizing its uniqueness, and while ignoring existing literature pre-dating the arrival of the French colonizer. To promote the development of this literature, the exoticism and taste of metropolitan writers was rejected in favor of a more “true” writing based on observation of local life (Chatelain, 40). Pellegrin’s book generated enough interest that the *Société d’Ecrivains de l’Afrique du nord* (SEAN) was created in 1920.

The SEAN was a profoundly colonial organization that encouraged a literature in French exalting the French civilizing mission in the Empire, labeled *Littérature Nord-Africaine*. This literature was based on geography (including Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, and Syria and Lebanon) rather than quality.²³ The political aspect of the SEAN and *La*

²³ For further information on the SEAN and *La Kahéna*, see Morgan Corriou’s thesis, *Les Français et la vie culturelle en Tunisie durant la seconde guerre mondiale* (2005) and “La Kahéna et Quatre Vents: Deux

Kahéna cannot be overlooked, for as Morgan Corriou notes: "... toute manifestation culturelle était avant tout une manifestation politique. C'est ainsi que, de manière paradoxale, les artistes et intellectuels de droite se montrent presque plus engagés en Tunisie qu'en métropole" (2005, 121). In fact, the SEAN, funded by the French colonial government, received the largest amount accorded to associations or public interest organizations (Bendana, "Revue française" 351). Members of the SEAN attended the Congress of Literature held in conjunction with the Paris Colonial Exposition of 1931. This was a strategic move to affirm the existence of their organization and of the literature they promoted. They came away discontented because so little attention was given to colonial literature (Chatelain, 42). Its magazine, *La Kahéna*, appeared in 1929 under Arthur Pellegrin's direction. With the approach of World War II, ideologies expressed in the *La Kahéna* veered to the right, although, contributors avoided the racism and xenophobia of Vichy propaganda in an effort to include all communities of the mosaic in the rebuilding of France and its Empire.

North African Literature did not exist in a vacuum, but grew in a dialogic situation with an Arabic literature that discreetly, but persistently, developed into a Tunisian national literature. The year that the SEAN was founded was also the year that the Destour Party came into existence and published a literary periodical, *al-Badr*, for elites writing in Arabic. The literary periodical connected to a political party suggests the importance of the anti-colonial battle on the cultural front. *La Kahéna* and *Al-Badr* grew side by side and reflected the will to create a literature, one North African and the other

revues 'tunisiennes' sous Vichy, deux visages de l'intellectualité française dans le protectorat durant la guerre" (2006).

Arab that eventually came to be termed “Tunisian.” Two other literary reviews in Arabic are important, in part due to their longevity. *‘Alam al-Adabî* (*Le Monde Littéraire*) was published from 1930 to 1936, and *al-Mabâhith* (*Les Recherches*) appeared from 1938 to 1947 (Fontaine, 1999, 136). Fontaine maintains that the literature of these reviews was generally mediocre, as defense of Tunisian identity and questions of “modernity” or reform and change under the colonial system preoccupied writers, rather than purely artistic concerns (137). More importantly, however, these periodicals brought together writers testing literary boundaries. A group formed around *‘Alam al-Adabî* (*Le Monde Littéraire*) that met in the literary *salon* held by the founder, Zine al-Abidîn al-Sanoussî,²⁴ in his printing shop. Creating a border zone, Sanoussi widened the scope of his periodical to include the Magreb, avoiding the constraints of a narrow nationalism (204). A second group was known as the *Taht al-Sour* (*Sous les ramparts*) after the café in Bab Souika in Tunis where they met. This group formed around *al-Mabâhith* (*Les Recherches*) founded by Mohamed Bachrouch²⁵ and was an example of the mingling and dialogue between elites writing in French and Arabic, as many of them were bilingual and able to make use of the dominant discourse of French/European culture in their work (183). From 1944 to 1947, Mahmoud al-Mas’adî directed the review and recruited a new

²⁴ Zine al-Abidîn al-Sanoussî (1898-1965). Born in Sidi-Bou-Saïd (now a Tunis suburb) and educated at the Zitouna University, Sanoussi opened the “al-Arab” print shop, and through it encouraged Tunisian literature. From 1927-1928, he wrote a famous anthology of Tunisian literature (*al-Adab al-tounousî fi l-qarn al-râbi achar—La littérature Tunisienne au XIVe siècle (de l’Hégire)*) that included contemporary writers. Known for his writing on the history of literature, his literary criticism is considered to have been influential as well. Literary activities were viewed with suspicion during the period, however. When the Germans left Tunisia in 1943, he was taken to Italy, freed by the Allies, then arrested by the French, and put under surveillance for two years. (Fontaine, 1999, 203-6).

²⁵ Mohamed Bachrouch (1911-1944) was a primary school teacher of French and Arabic, and first had a critical article published in *Ezzamen* (an Arabic language periodical) in 1933. He participated in *‘Alam al-Adabi*, contributing short stories. He translated several Tunisian writers from Arabic to French in *Afrique Littéraire* between 1941 and 1943, and wrote a textbook, *Les Grands chez les Arabes et l’Islam*. A defender of Tunisian identity through the promotion of Arabic literature, he wrote an important article, “La littérature tunisienne moderne,” published in *Afrique Littéraire* in 1944. (Boudhina, 322-23).

generation that was well-educated and action-oriented, producing high-quality work according to Fontaine (206).

In the background of the *Leïla* project, then, there existed a Tunisian literature in Arabic that required a defense against French assimilation and the more adequately funded SEAN, which promoted North African Literature. As noted above, the *Prix de la Poésie arabe* was announced in the 1 Feb. 1941 issue. A week later, Zarrouk himself signed a front-page article, “Le Prix d’Honneur de la Poésie Arabe” (8 Feb. 41), repeating that a “Généreux Mécène” funded it and not the government.²⁶ Here is a point of contact between North African literature and Tunisian literature as the *Prix de Carthage* gave impetus for the creation of an award for Arabic poetry. Notably, Tunisian elites promoted Arabic poetry because the *Prix de Carthage* jury gave preference to the novel, which served as an instrument of colonial propaganda and had a wider readership than other genres (Dugas, *Petite réflexion* 9).

Zarrouk’s article shows the influence of *Leïla* in the creation of the imagined community as Zarrouk congratulates *Leïla* for having done its duty (*devoir*) by bringing this problem to the attention of the Tunisian public and thus generating awareness of the importance of Arabic literature for Tunisian identity:

C’est que le Prix d’Honneur de la Poésie Arabe est d’une importance capitale pour la vie des Lettres qui vont enfin sortir de leur torpeur et connaître un brillant avenir... [Ce prix] permettrait aux Lettres Arabes de reprendre dignement leur place en Tunisie.”

²⁶ A month later, March 1941, *Afrique Littéraire* announces the *Prix de la Poésie arabe*, with reference to *Leïla* as its source (5). This suggests that *Leïla*’s campaign for an award for creative writing in Arabic has drawn attention and been effective. *Afrique Littéraire*’s mention of *Leïla* indicates that the Tunisian periodical is circulating in the Protectorate and being read by the French as well.

This is an admission that Arabic Letters have been subalternized, but also shows that Tunisians are actively defending their literary history and traditions and seek to move them forward, promoting Arabic Letters as sustainable knowledge, that is, as equally valid compared to the dominant French writing. Zarrouk proclaims: “La Tunisie, hier pôle d’attraction des Belles Lettres, se doit de reconquérir sa place et de rivaliser de talent avec les autres pays ...” He attaches creative writing (*Belles Lettres*) directly to the geographical space of Tunisia (*le pays*), which serves as the source for literature.

The controversy around the *Prix de Carthage* provoked a critique of North African Literature as well, in which Tunisians distanced their own literature from it. The attack on French representations of the colonized, whether in exotic or North African literature,²⁷ parallels efforts in the first series to disrupt and dismantle colonial feminist representations of the Arab/Muslim woman.²⁸ In an early article in the second series, “Rêve et Réalité” (21 Dec. 1940: 3), M. Rafik critiques Orientalist and exotic writing:

Venus en Orient pour rêver, ils rêvent et écrivent en rêvant ... Au lieu de nous entretenir de ce qui les agite, des sensations personnelles qu’ils éprouvent, ils mêlent à leurs rêves tous les Orientaux dont ils font des êtres ramollis, traînant partout leurs pattes de désœuvrés, de fainéants ... Sincèrement résignés et fatalistes, ce qu’ils passent en revue dans leurs écrits, ce ne sont pas les Orientaux, mais bien leurs personnes.

Preceding Said’s *Orientalism* by thirty-eight years, Rafik demonstrates that the negative stereotypes of exotic literature are constructions unrelated to the daily reality of the colonized. Exotic writing reflects rather a vision in the minds of their authors. Toward the end of his article, Rafik shifts his focus and criticizes “imitation” literature written by

²⁷ For further information on exotic literature and its extension, colonial literature, see Jean-Marc Mourra’s *La Littérature des lointains: Histoire de l’exotisme européen au XXe siècle*, especially Chapter 3: “L’Exotisme de l’Entre-deux-guerres.”

²⁸ See Chapter 3 (170-185) for an analysis of how *Leïla* contributors attacked colonial feminism.

certaines 'émancipés' (French-educated Tunisians): “C’est vers les choses réelles que doivent tendre nos efforts.” He argues that Tunisians should not adopt an exotic form of writing because it was fully explored by Europeans. Thus, without mentioning a Tunisian national literature, Rafik sets out guidelines for it that include a rejection of Orientalist and exotic writing, and an orientation toward a realism that describes more accurately the life of the colonized, which would implicitly contribute to national consciousness.

In March 1941, the vortex of the whirlwind narrowed to focus on the *Prix de Carthage* when it was awarded to Casimir Longobardi for *Aux Marches de l’Empire*. The French jury chose Longobardi’s novel over Jean Amrouche’s *La mort d’Akhil* in a vote of 6 to 4.²⁹ Besides being a member of the *comité d’action* and having texts published in *La Kahéna* beforehand, Longobardi produced a work that, as the title suggests, served the colonial project and the building of the French Empire. In fact, he was the only writer awarded the *Prix de Carthage* under the Vichy government. Morgan Corriou comments on the book review that appeared in *La Kahéna* (5 (Mar.-Apr. 1941): 89):

Difficile de concentrer davantage de clichés coloniaux en si peu de lignes ... Il s’agit d’un véritable retour en arrière, ou plutôt d’un retrait sur des lignes depuis longtemps fermement défendues par l’infanterie de la SEAN, qui accueille, avec soulagement, le renfort de l’artillerie lourde vichyste ... c’est bien le roman colonial le plus traditionnel et surtout le plus désuet qui est récompensé ... Tout y est: le sauvage “aventurier tripolitain” au regard torve, “les bandes fanatisées” qui agitent leurs sabres, la courageuse colonne de soldats français, sanglés dans leurs uniformes, et ceci, bien sûr, dans un désert en carton-pâte, sous une “journée torride” et “un ciel de feu”... On peut tout juste regretter l’absence d’un harem, ou tout au moins d’une “Orientale”, qui aurait pu être du plus bel effet et constituer une splendide apothéose à ce feu d’artifice littéraire colonial. (391-2)

²⁹ The jury included M. Leconte (from the Department of Education), Jean-Claude Winckler (for the General Resident), Dr. Burnet, Admiral Rivet, Jacques Eyquem (president of the *Alliance Française*), Marcel Tournier (bookstore owner), and three members of the *comité d’action* of the SEAN: Eugène Crouzet, Antoine Guillemot, and Edmond Martin. Although Amrouche was a member of the SEAN, a practicing Catholic, a professor of French at the French Lycée Carnot in Tunis, the model of the perfectly integrated “indigène,” and had published poems in *La Kahéna*, he had little chance of winning an award sponsored by a colonial government under Vichy. (Corriou 2005, 390-392).

The historical moment of Vichy intrudes on literature, when, as Corriou notes, Orientalist and colonial stereotypes and imagery dominate.³⁰ This was enough to cause Rafik, in “A Propos du Prix de Carthage: Littérature Nord-Africaine,” (16 Mar. 1941, 1), to launch into an angry critique of North African Literature promoted by the SEAN. The article’s position on the front page with the title in a large, bold font indicates its importance...and suggests the anger of Tunisians.

Rafik begins his article by stating that Longobardi received the *Prix de Carthage*, however, he neglects to offer a customary congratulatory message.³¹ He briefly includes an apparent approval of the “institution” of the *Prix de Carthage*, noting that such an event encourages “les Lettres en Tunisie.” Having said something positive, he quickly turns to his critique: “Mais faut-il, ..., que les écrivains d’expression française soient pénétrés de l’âme des Nord-Africains, de leurs us et coutumes, de tout ce qui fait en un mot, leurs valeurs distinctives.” Here the term *Nord-Africains* refers to the colonized population of the Maghreb, particularly Tunisia. Rafik considers that writers in French, that is Europeans represented by Longobardi, have no idea about Tunisian customs and standards of behavior and the daily reality of the colonized...or refuse to write about it. Rafik attacks Europeans’ attempt to define Tunisian *moeurs* (customs, standards of behavior), saying their efforts are *regrettables*.

³⁰ Moura notes that although theorists of colonial literature rejected exotic literature of the center, their work often shared many of its characteristics: “Le réalisme qui prétend en rendre compte est parfois obligé de recourir à une thématique et surtout à un ton qui le séparent difficilement de cet exotisme racoleur auquel elle prétend s’opposer ... L’écriture réaliste de l’altérité recourt ainsi à un ton hyperbolique la séparant mal de la fantaisie exotique honnie” (134-5).

³¹ This is rectified in a terse manner the following week in the “Leïla vous parle” column (24 Mar. 1941, 2). The French award served as an excuse to remind the colonial government about an award for Arabic writing.

Rafik defends a Tunisian national identity by attacking a literature that deforms it: “Ce n’est pas sous le fallacieux prétexte de faire de la littérature nord-africaine qu’on peut se permettre de pareilles fautes ... les mœurs tunisiennes ne doivent pas être dénaturées.” He attacks the right of the colonizer to define the colonized with clichés, because, as he points out, North African Literature is written for a French audience in the metropolitan center and must create entente:

Elle [la Littérature Nord-Africaine] doit tendre à éclairer les Français sur la civilisation véritable des habitants, sur leur genre de vie dépourvu de tous ces vieux clichés à remiser aux magasins aux accessoires. Elle doit constituer un facteur de force persuasive et un élément de concorde et d’entente.

Through a general critique of North African Literature, Rafik condemns Longobardi’s novel as well, which is filled with well-established negative stereotypes. This demonstrates the constraints placed on Tunisians, for Rafik avoids directly confronting the colonial institutions that the choice of Longobardi’s novel represents. Rafik cannot say “This book insults Tunisians,” however, his discussion on literature serves to promote the Nation in a thinly disguised nationalist statement:

La Tunisie ... est un pays de vieille civilisation où le spirituel prime le temporel. Ses traditions, elle tient à les conserver précieusement, parce que conformes au tempérament de ses habitants. Si les Tunisiens professent un grand respect pour les traditions d’autrui, ils demandent qu’ils soient payés en conséquence. Et cela ne s’appelle pas trop demander.

Rafik defends a national identity by naming the nation, Tunisia, and locating Tunisians in it as its inhabitants, from which he separates Europeans, referred to as “autrui.” The fact that he must demand respect indicates that mutual respect lacks under the Vichy government, and that he is insulted by French intellectual institutions as well as by colonization. In the background, ironically, Vichy propaganda includes much talk about

“collaboration,” which is required to rebuild the French Empire. Thus, with little conviction Rafik explains to the French that they have a strategic interest in creating good-will among the colonized.

This rejection of North African Literature combined with the creation of the *Prix de la Poésie arabe* shows that *Leïla* critics took action, depended on Tunisian resources rather than the colonial government, and stepped out of the whirlwind that the colonial situation provoked, looking to the future and a New Nation.

A Whirlwind Around the Municipal Theater: Formulation of a National Theater

The lines between literary and cultural criticism blurred as articles about theater referred to performances and to the writing of plays. An examination of articles about theater shows the shifts that took place as the political climate became ever more repressive consequently rendering a message of national consciousness urgent. I propose that *Leïla* opens onto yet another border zone where definitions of a national theater, concerning both creative texts and theatrical groups, were tested. Here is another point of contact between the colonizer and the colonized, for beginning in 1938, a whirlwind develops focusing on a scandal of corruption in the directing committee of the *El Ittihad El Mesrahi*. This theatrical group worked at the Municipal Theater,³² received all of the funding for theater from the municipal government, and was attacked mercilessly in numerous *Leïla* articles for poor choice of repertoire, poor acting, vulgarity, and idiocy.³³

³² The Municipal Theater, located in the heart of Tunis on the Ave. H. Bourguiba (66 Ave. Jules Ferry before independence), is in proximity of the French Embassy and the Cathedral. It was inaugurated in 1902 and could contain one thousand two hundred spectators. Corriou notes: “La construction du Théâtre Municipal correspond bien à la mise en place des infrastructures culturelles françaises qui suivent plus tardivement l’organisation administrative et politique du protectorat.” French and European theater and music dominated programming in the interwar period (Corriou, *Les Français* 103-106)

³³ “Au Municipal: Omar Ibnou Abdel Aziz,” (1 Dec. 1940: 7); “Le Théâtre” (7 Dec. 1940, 4); “Potins de la Scène” (14 Dec. 1940, 4); “Potins de la Scène” (21 Dec. 1940, 4); “Le Contenant et le contenu” (8 Jan.

The reader may wonder if this is a tempest in a teapot. By 1955, Mohammed el-Fadhel Ben Achour glosses over the problems of corruption and gives a glorified version of *El Ittihad El Mesrahi*:

... Mustafa Sfar ... s'employa à rassembler les sociétés théâtrales en une seule dénommée al-Ittihad al-masrahi en 1355/1936. Il l'assura de son goût et de sa réputation, ce qui aida la troupe dans son activité et permit son succès. Elle se mit à donner des représentations en langue dialectale et activa la création de pièces théâtres en cette langue sans négliger pour autant la création de pièces théâtrales en arabe littéral. (161)

Ben Achour incorporates *El Ittihad El Mesrahi* into a smooth recounting of a Tunisian intellectual history intertwined with nationalist history. When Mustafa Sfar, commended for his creation of *El Ittihad El Mesrahi* by Ben Achour, was replaced by General Saâdallah, *Leïla*'s "Le Théâtre" column reports this change: "Le Général Saâdallah ... a reçu les associations théâtrales qui lui ont exprimé leurs vives félicitations et ont manifesté leur joie de le voir succéder au Général Sfar. Nous savons que le Général Saâdallah est un grand ami de l'art théâtral ..." (24 Apr. 1941, 3). An audible sigh of relief from the critic can be heard for he barely mentions Sfar.³⁴ I argue that through an examination of the cultural criticism contained in *Leïla*, border thinking exists where both dialogue and resistance take place in the whirlwinds that form around specific problems such as corruption in the *El Ittihad El Mesrahi*. Here the hidden transcripts of the

1941, 5); "Le Théâtre: Le Karakouz d'El Ittihad: Chems-Es-Sabah (Le soleil du matin)" (16 Jan. 1941, 5); "La Troupe Mohyeddine" (24 Jan. 1941: 3); "Potins de la Scène" (1 Feb. 1941, 2).

³⁴ In a letter to the *Directeur de l'Administration Générale et Communale*, Charles Saumagne, Mustapha Sfar comments on attempts to form theatrical groups outside the *El Ittihad El Mesrahi*: "...d'ailleurs tous ces jeunes gens ne semblent avoir aucune disposition spéciale pour diriger une entreprise théâtrale ou pour être, eux-mêmes, acteurs. Il est, par ailleurs à craindre que, pour faire concurrence à la Société existante, ils ne cherchent à gagner la sympathie du public en faisant interpreter des pieces à tendance politique et susceptible de flatter les instincts de la foule" (quoted by Corriou, *Les Français* 210). It is not surprising, then, that *Leïla* critics were wary of Sfar.

colonized and the controversies of the colonial situation materialize, whereas a nationalist writing, such as Ben Achour's, erases them.

In addition, I propose that the *Leïla* team published articles on the theater with a consistent policy in mind to encourage a national theater in the second series. In "Les Voeux de Leïla" (8 Jan. 1940, 2), the first "wish" or objective is the creation of an award for Arabic letters, and the second goal is: "une rénovation de l'esprit théâtral dans le sens indiqué par *Leïla!*" *Leïla* becomes an arbiter in the public domain and its writers consciously develop a literary and cultural critique in order to theorize a national theater. A second set of goals "Nous suggérons..." states: "—A nos auteurs dramatiques de nous présenter de l'*inédit* et non de s'en tenir aux sentier déjà battus" (24 Jan. 1941, 2). This demonstrates an effort on the part of the *Leïla* team to influence literary production and to push boundaries by encouraging the innovative.

At the beginning of *Leïla*'s publication, a column in the first three issues of the first series, "Haut les rideaux," informed readers about plays put on by the French theatrical group, *Essor*, with only minor criticism, and effusive thanks for an agreeable evening.³⁵ Then, articles concerning theater disappear until the December 1938 issue, when a more militant tone creeps into the magazine. The article's title proclaims: "Sauvons notre Théâtre tunisien" (Dec. 1938, 14) and is next to Mahmoud Zarrouk's emotional article, "La femme tunisienne à l'action," which discusses four young Tunisian women who greeted the new General Resident in November 1938 and proclaimed a nationalist message.³⁶ The writer remains anonymous, as the article addresses corruption in the directing committee of the *El Ittihad El Mesrahi*, and notes: "Point n'est besoin

³⁵ Dec. 1936, 18; Feb. 1937, 21; Mar. 1937, 22.

³⁶ See Chapter 4 (211-213) for a discussion on "La femme tunisienne à l'action."

d'affirmer que toutes les fonctions que remplissent les membres dirigeants d'une oeuvre sociale quelconque sont non rétribuées ...” The article names the members (Tunisians, especially the president, Mohammed Ouertani) who vote themselves indemnities from the organization's funds—and the sums of money. It confirms that several members withdrew to protest, including Salah Lahmar, a contributor to *Leïla* who signed the next theater article in the last issue of the first series in Nov. 1940.

It is possible that Lahmar was the author of the Dec. 1938 article as well, because of the inside information it contains and because he writes about corruption nearly two years later, when he calls for a new Arabic-language Tunisian theater, implying a national theater for the New Nation. The title of his Nov. 1940 article, “L'autre face du décor” (7-8), suggests that the author will discuss what is behind the theater curtain, however, it also hints at the hidden transcript of the colonized, that which is not apparent in the public transcript of the Protectorate. Lahmar makes several suggestions. First of all, this new theater has an active role in Tunisian society through a pedagogical and social function: “Le théâtre nouveau doit prendre sa part dans la vaste lutte pour le redressement des moeurs, la formation de l'homme de demain.” Here the hidden transcript of the colonized surfaces in the term *lutte*, which calls forth the *lutte anti-coloniale* and the *lutte nationale*. In addition, *l'homme de demain* signifies the citizen of an independent Tunisia.

Secondly, the defining of a new Tunisian theater serves to generate a national consciousness and to defend Tunisian culture: “Il faut que le théâtre tunisien se préoccupe d'être véritablement tunisien, de puiser son inspiration dans les belles choses qui abondent dans notre magnifique histoire, de servir les belles idées morales, les saines pensées, la belle littérature arabe et le peuple tunisien dans son irrésistible élan vers la

vie, l'art et la grandeur." Lahmar connects the theater to literature, however, he excludes European literatures and languages and emphasizes pre-colonial culture—referred to by *notre magnifique histoire*—and Arabic.

Thirdly, the theater must be cleaned up and raised to a new level: "Finies toutes ces pièces pornographiques ou commerciales qui n'ont eu qu'un seul souci: ridiculiser nos plus belles traditions, nous ravalent au bas degré de l'échelle humaine." Lahmar implies that cultural activities (especially the theater), which have been degraded under colonization, give ammunition to the colonizer to justify colonialism. The French use of culture in the discourse on the French civilizing mission must be met and challenged. Literary criticism serves to improve Tunisian culture and allows it to change in a constructive manner—which will ultimately serve the New Nation. However, to meet the challenge, the new theater requires new participants. Lahmar demands that those who have polluted the theater (mentioned in the Dec. 1938 article) step down: "Quelques-uns des nôtres qui n'ont cru dans l'art dramatique que prétexte pour faire de fructueuses spéculations ... doivent faire leur mea culpa et disparaître de la scène de l'Art." Insisting upon the corruption of the theater milieu, Lahmar calls for a *prise de conscience* and points to the new educated elites with hope: "Des hommes nouveaux, jeunes, doivent reprendre le flambeau et entreprendre la rénovation du théâtre tunisien." This call for cultural reform is judged essential for improvement in Tunisian society to take place.

Lahmar expresses an opinion on the type of plays needed for this national theater. He proposes that plays inspired from "les époques héroïques" must be sought (implying from across the Arab world) and adapted for Tunisian audiences. At the same time, directors must: "... par une propagande persuasive et intelligente réveiller les plumes

assoupies, fouetter les volontés en poussant nos jeunes auteurs à fournir leurs plumes et à écrire.” Lahmar puts aside the colonial period within which any heroic efforts that serve Tunisians would necessarily be anti-colonial and draw censorship. Distancing theatrical plays into a glorious past serves to mask contemporary protests while spreading national consciousness. In addition, Lahmar turns to the problem of the quality of actors and actresses and proposes that scholarships should be created so that the best could study in Europe or Egypt. Finally, he argues that the Tunisian public must be educated. In order to do this, Lahmar turns to the press and insists:

Une magnifique mission est d’orès et déjà dévolue à notre presse qui consciente de l’importance du rôle du théâtre dans l’évolution de la Société saura, par une propagande bien comprise et une saine critique, diriger les premiers pas, nécessairement trébuchants, du nouveau théâtre tunisien et débayer le terrain devant lui, terrain épineux, plein d’embûches et d’obstacles.

Lahmar tells the reader, indirectly, of the importance of periodicals in the formation of the imagined community when he emphasizes their role in the creation of the new national theater. Mention of *l’évolution de la Société* serves as a disguise for the march toward independence, as previously noted.

At the end of his article, Lahmar makes his most important point—that Tunisian theater has been driven down because Tunisians have no control over theaters: “Une ultime réforme s’impose. Elle est capitale. Le Théâtre d’expression arabe a longtemps végété à l’ombre des théâtres d’autres expressions. Il n’a jamais pu avoir un théâtre ayant une création originale indépendante.” Terms such as *s’imposer* and *capitale* suggest urgency while *d’autres expressions* refers to the French colonizer without naming him. Lahmar labels French domination of theater an *anomalie*, adding to the anti-colonial subtext of his article. He calls for a Tunisian theater under independent Tunisian direction

“si l’on veut avoir un théâtre viable, jeune et vigoureux.” Without this independence, a new theater—a national theater—is doomed to failure.

Reflecting an increasingly difficult political situation and the closing of dialogue under the Vichy government, this is the last article to openly defend a Tunisian literature, however, it gives us a key to understanding articles on entertainment in the weekly newspaper of the second series, for every issue contains articles about the theater. *Leïla* includes in its unspoken goals the mission to promote a national theater. Tunisians made use of all that was permissible under the Vichy government: an increase in cultural activities during World War II by French inhabitants and exiles in Tunis struggling to recreate the lost metropolitan center provided Tunisians with an umbrella. Nevertheless, the French kept a sharp eye on Tunisian cultural organizations and theatrical groups (which required authorization from the colonial government) and worried about their increase (Corriou 2006, 215). This indicates the narrow margin for error within which Zarrouk managed to publish *Leïla*.

As noted in Chapter 1, the first article on theater in the first issue of the second series describes a unique history of *Théâtre Tunisien* which is separate from colonial theater (“Le Théâtre,” 1 Dec. 1936, 4). Dating the history of a national theater from 1908 when Zitounien students and government clerks worked to present performances of the “meilleur théâtre classique” and of contemporary authors. S. Ridha calls the period from 1908 to about 1930 *la période héroïque*. He emphasizes dedication to work and less interest in the pecuniary:

Une seule discipline régnait: le travail. Une seule ambition: la perfection. Les gains n'étaient pas aussi avidement ni âprement recherchés. Le Théâtre de cette époque brillante fit des prodiges. Ses acteurs furent puissants. Ses metteurs

en scène firent de magnifiques réalisations. Il fut toujours moral, éducateur.

The best theater, a Tunisian national theater, then, must be educational while it entertains. It must contribute to the improvement of Tunisian culture and society.

The theater became so popular that ten groups existed in Tunis. Success was its downfall, for “affairistes” infiltrated organizational committees, according to Ridha. In 1934, young actors formed the *El Mesrah* (The Theater) group, creating a resurgence of interest, but the “parasites” took action: “Ils se démènèrent comme de beaux diables et manoeuvrèrent pour obtenir la fusion des sociétés dramatiques existantes.” The lack of mention of the hand of the colonial government demonstrates the limits of critique. The fusion of three Tunisian theatrical groups in 1936 (*El Mesrah*, *L’Avenir*, and *Le Théâtre Arabe*) under a central committee at the Municipal Theater indicates the interest that colonial authorities had in controlling these groups. Because of this fusion, a corrupt voluntary committee at the Municipal Theater is denounced in the Dec. 1938 article discussed above and attacked again by Ridha. He insists at the end of his article: “Le Théâtre Tunisien mort, doit ressusciter. Il faut, pour le faire ressusciter organiser une battue, détruire la vermine, procéder à une désinfection énergique et tout refaire et rebâtir.” For Ridha, a national theater exists and he describes its solid historical roots, however, he expresses a desire to destroy a contaminated theater, and a will to create a national theater according to the needs of the Tunisian people, which serves the New Nation.

Two weeks later, Ridha discusses guidelines for a national theater in “Le Rôle du théâtre” (14 Dec. 1940: 4). Not only an entertainment, the theater must “... exercer une influence morale, élever l’esprit, enrichir l’âme ...” It’s educational role serves to improve

society by helping all individuals of the community to “tracer leur dur chemin dans la vie ...” The use of *dur chemin* recalls other terms such as *évolution* and implicitly indicates the march toward independence. In the following paragraph Ridha speaks of taking control, slipping in a nationalist message:

Au tournant de notre histoire et au moment où l’on parle beaucoup de tout diriger, dans tous les domaines il n’est, peut-être, pas trop hardi de parler du théâtre dirigé. Un certain esprit nouveau doit être infusé au public, une certaine discipline doit lui être inculquée. Pourquoi ne se sert-on pas à cet effet du théâtre? L’amour de la Patrie, de ses institutions vitales, les grandes idées seules capables de créer cet élan généreux des fertiles sentiments, cette mystique qui transforme, telle une baguette magique, tout ce qu’elle touche et qui forge les volontés et ravive les ardeurs, tout cela peut être professé du haut de la scène.

The reference to *la Patrie* calls forth patriotic duty to the New Nation—Tunisia—and certainly does not refer to France. Ridha speaks of the importance of the national consciousness by disguising it as “cette mystique qui transforme tout.” Thus, the national theater must serve the Nation by inspiring national consciousness and patriotic duty in spectators. If there should be any doubt about Ridha’s intentions, the following paragraph mentions the *nation* directly: “Tout doit être mobilisé pour l’oeuvre de résurrection d’une nation, surtout ses institutions spirituelles. Celles-là touchent au coeur même de la nation.” Within the term *institutions spirituelles*, Ridha includes the Tunisian national theater, which has an important role in the formation of the Nation.

Ridha distributes the necessary compliments to the French authorities, but clearly separates French theatrical activities, represented by the *Essor*, from the Tunisian theater and proposes General Sfar to head reform. As a model for theatrical groups, Ridha designates the *El Mesrah* group mentioned in his previous article: “Le Comité d’El Mesrah, soutenu par une invincible foi dans les destinées du Théâtre Tunisien, est

parvenu à force de courage et de ténacité, à faire triompher des formules d'art originales, en accord avec notre époque, notre tempérament et notre discipline morale.”

Ridha emphasizes perseverance and dedication to principles, which implicitly include a national Tunisian identity. Original dramatic art that forms a base for the national theater, which contributes to this identity, is disguised in “notre tempérament et notre discipline morale.” In addition, Ridha once again attacks the fusion of the three theatrical groups under the Municipal Theater committee. Indicating the sensitivity of this subject around which a whirlwind forms, a paragraph is censored and the reader finds an empty space of five lines. This censorship suggests that behind the corrupt Tunisian committee members denounced by *Leïla* articles stands the colonial government. An unsigned article two weeks later attacks the corrupt organizational committee again and demands an investigation by colonial authorities on the use of funds (“Le Théâtre,” 1 Jan. 1941, 4), and the following week, the heavily sarcastic title of an article, “Le Théâtre: Propos vaudevillesques ou megalomanie présidentielle” (8 Jan. 1941, 4) suggests growing irritation on the part of Tunisians interested in the theater. This anonymous article mocks the president of the committee pitilessly...and is heavily censored. However, two weeks later the *Leïla* team must defend their right to formulate a critique and the veracity of that critique, for it becomes apparent that they are under attack themselves. The anonymous “Le Théâtre” article (24 Jan. 1941, 5) states:

Les écrits que nous consacrons aux agissements du président théâtral, émanent de certaines personnes dont l'honnêteté et la probité sont indiscutables, ... Mais il s'agit d'une œuvre publique qui doit la vie aux deniers de l'Etat. C'est à ce titre que nous avons un droit de regard sur elle. C'est à ce titre qu'il est de notre devoir de demander des comptes à son président. Il est en effet de notre devoir de savoir la destination que prend l'argent de la collectivité mis à sa disposition, de savoir si le résultat obtenu dans le domaine théâtral est satisfaisant, si monsieur le

Président [Mohammed Ouertani], contrairement à ce qui se passe Normalement dans les Associations similaires, a droit à une rétribution quelconque.

This article targets Mohammed Ouertani directly while civic duty is emphasized, which includes serving the interests of the (French colonial) State by stopping the mismanagement of public funds. Despite several censored sentences, shadows of a national theater remain present for the author declares that the theater is not for individual profit but: “Le Théâtre doit être encouragé. C’est l’Ecole du Peuple.” More importantly however, a critique of the Municipal Theater program is directed at the municipal government. Squeezed in at the end, the writer suggests:

Elle [la Municipalité] aurait dû exiger que les pièces données au Théâtre Municipal soient confectionnées par des auteurs tunisiens et non par de vulgaires plagiaires qui déshonorent l’Art. Elle ne devrait pas se contenter de dire que le programme prévoit des présentations en langue arabe. C’est une appellation très vague, car tout ce qui est écrit en arabe n’est pas nécessairement tunisien.

The writer differentiates Tunisian Arabic writing from others, consequently defending a unique Tunisian literature.

The *Leïla* critics decide to pull out of the whirlwind centering on the Municipal Theater. In setting out guidelines for a national theater, critics insist that the solution to the problems of the unified theatrical organization is the creation of new theatrical groups: “...la concurrence mène au progrès. Mais sans aucun concurrent, l’Ittihad végète depuis quatre ans et est en décadence progressive” (“La Troupe Moyheddine,” 24 Jan. 1941, 3). Finally, because of the repetitive nature of the critiques that appear to have no effect on the *El Ittihad El Mesrahi*, “M.R.” (probably M. Ridha) declares that critics will no longer discuss theatrical performances in the “Le Théâtre” column unless they meet the standards established by *Leïla*, that is, *l’Art pour l’Art* (24 Feb. 1941, 3). *Leïla*’s

editorial stance to promote a national theater that serves the Nation is thinly disguised: "... *Leïla* poursuivra la réalisation de son programme théâtral qui rallie les suffrages de tous ceux qui saisissent la nécessité de l'épanouissement d'une scène imprégnée de la personnalité tunisienne." Here again the expression *la personnalité tunisienne* signifies a Tunisian national identity. What cannot be said directly, but is implicit in many articles, is that the *El Ittihad El Mesrahi* is destructive to national identity because the French have allowed the organizational committee to be corrupted.

The arrival of a new group organized by Moyheddine Mourad is announced with hope: "... nous espérons qu'elle [la Troupe de Moyheddine] va remédier à un tas de choses" ("La Troupe Moyheddine," 24 Jan. 1941, 3). In fact, for the *Leïla* critics, this group becomes the model for the new national theater, as Mayy Ziyadah serves as a model for the New Woman in the first series. In the 24 Mar. 1941 issue, the critic first clearly explains what theatrical groups should not undertake. Announcing the creation of a new group in another city, the writer criticizes its plan to present Egyptian plays. This is considered counter-productive for the national theater: "Quand finira-t-on par comprendre que le Théâtre Tunisien ne saurait exister sans la composition d'œuvres tunisiennes?" ("Le Théâtre," 3). The defense of a Tunisian national theater includes the encouragement of Tunisian writers to produce texts that contribute to a national literature and the writing of the Nation. In stark contrast, an article titled "La Troupe Moyheddine" demonstrates the correct course of action. This group includes young actors, suggesting they have the energy and courage to challenge the current system, and it presents Tunisian plays: "Cette troupe qui comprend des éléments jeunes, actifs et faisant l'art pour l'art, est en train d'apporter sa contribution au relèvement du niveau de la scène

tunisienne.” Not only does this critic emphasize the group’s efforts to improve the national theater, but commends its innovative work as well, announcing the production of a review of nine tableaux written by Moyheddine Mourad: “C’est à notre connaissance, la première fois que les spectateurs vont assister à une revue tunisienne.” Thus, in addition to being young and active, producing Tunisian works of quality, and being dedicated to the principle of the dramatic arts (*l’Art pour l’art*), the model theatrical group attempts the innovative as well.

The whirlwind in the border zone created by the corruption scandal at the Municipal Theater does not stop border thinking, despite the anger the scandal provokes. Throughout the first and second series, *Leïla* critics describe another model, that of the French-run *Essor*, as a theatrical organization that does creative and innovative work, despite its voluntary status: “L’*Essor* entre dans sa 36e année. C’est déjà une belle et longue existence consacrée au service des lettres et du théâtre. Elle aura été pour nos jeunes sociétés théâtrales un exemple à suivre” (“A l’*Essor*,” 14 Dec. 1941, 4). An unspoken parallel implies that Tunisian groups will serve Tunisian theater and literature as the *Essor* serves French theater and literature. More importantly, the French organization has lasted due to the *désintéressement* of its president, “l’infatigable Fichet.” This comment targets Mohammed Ouertani, the corrupt and incompetent president of *El Ittihad El Misrahi*. Critiques about the ideological aspect of French theater are absent, as the concern is not about a national theater, but only about theater as pleasurable entertainment for which good technical work is required, reflected in such comments as “La mise en scène était impeccable, les costumes et les décors bien appropriés,

l'éclairage distribué avec goût" (14 Dec. 1941, 4) or "C'est dans une ambiance tout à fait sympathique que l'Essor a donné ... un véritable bouquet ..." (24 Mar. 1941, 3). Consequently, recognizing the competent technical work of the French, *Leila* critics add another proposal to suggestions for the national theater, demonstrating border thinking by resuscitating a shelved French proposal to fund Tunisians to study theatrical production in France (1 Mar. 1941, 3).

A Whirlwind Around the Radio: Formulation of a National Music

Illustrated with a drawing by Jallel Ben Abdallah that draws the reader's

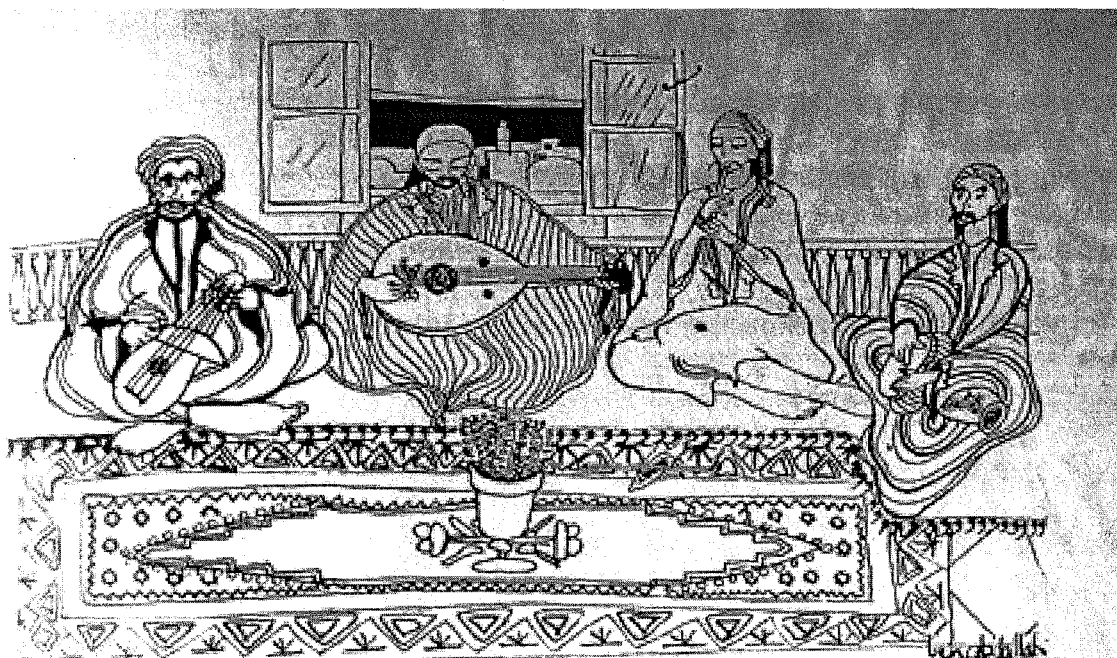


Fig. 5.1

tion (Fig. 5.1), a first article that theorizes a national music appears in the first series. In "De l'état actuel de la musique arabe" (June 1938, 10-11),

Manoubi Snoussi defines Arab music as an art "... ayant ses qualités propres, sa grammaire et sa critique, basées sur tout un système de règles bien définies ..." (10).

Thus, a national music is rooted in an Arab music that is defined by established rules.

However, a national music requires changes: "Pour rénover notre musique, il nous

faudrait procéder tout comme nous le ferions pour notre littérature: c'est-à-dire respecter les particularités de notre langue nationale et nous efforcer à rechercher de nouvelles formes littéraires, un nouveau style, et traiter de nouveaux sujets” (10). The emphasis on the “new” signifies turning attention to sources within Tunisian society and Tunisia as a country. Snoussi’s reference to literature suggests efforts in other domains to theorize a national culture with consideration of *notre langue nationale*, which refers to Arabic rather than French, and the emphasis on new subjects indicates a focus on Tunisian society and countryside.

In order to achieve a national music, Snoussi turns to the Rachidia, the musical group specialized in Tunisian music and founded by General Mustapha Sfar in 1935. Snoussi’s suggestions include: 1) a documentation of *la musique classique tunisienne*, especially the *ma'luf*, instead of depending on oral tradition; 2) an educational program or a school for professional and amateur musicians to learn a minimum of music theory taught by an Arab musician from another country; 3) the formation of Tunisian musicologists who would attend a French music school in Tunis and then be sent to Paris for further training. This last point indicates border thinking, however, assimilation of Tunisian students to European music would be counter-productive.³⁷ Assuming musicologists resist the temptations of assimilation and achieve the necessary knowledge, they fill an important role in the New Nation, for they will: “... faire revivre notre musique sur des bases scientifiques et de la doter de manuels d’enseignement qui

³⁷ Steps must be taken to counter the risk of assimilation: “Pour éviter l’écueil de le [the student musicologist] voir s’assimiler complètement la culture musicale européenne au point de mépriser sa musique nationale, comme cela est arrivé à plus d’un musicien oriental, le Cheikh Ali [music professor] l’initiera, au cours de ses études à l’école de Tunis, aux particularités de la musique arabe et lui en inculquera le goût.” (Manoubi Snoussi, “De l’état actuel de la musique arabe,” June 1938, 11).

respecteront son caractère propre et ses qualités distinctives.” Thus Snoussi insists upon a recuperation of the past, innovation in the present, and transmission of knowledge as the basis for a national music. He considers the Rachidia to be the most appropriate institution to organize this work.

In the second series, “L’Amateur” agrees with Snoussi about the importance of the Rachidia, although, he is less worried about pedagogy and musicology, and seeks more concrete solutions to specific problems. He asserts that the Rachidia is responsible for a renaissance of Tunisian music, in “La Musique” (7 Dec. 1940, 5). However, two problems challenge the popularity of a Tunisian national music, according to him. First of all, Egyptian music has flooded the market since World War I due to the invention of the record: “Evidemment, cela faisait bien l’affaire de l’Egypte, qui, à un moment donné, écoulait en Tunisie presque autant de disques que chez elle”—while the French reaped tidy profits from customs fees, a detail the author does not mention.³⁸ This complaint parallels the problem discussed above of Egyptian publications that flooded the Tunisian market, thus impeding the development of a national literature. Secondly, the effect of the popularity of Egyptian music on Tunisian composers is disastrous: “Et ce qui a encore aggravé cette situation, c’est que nos musiciens se sont contentés de plagier ces airs.” This critique surfaces frequently, and the music produced is soon labeled “l’Egypto-tunisien” for which critics are merciless throughout the second series.³⁹

³⁸In “Les Emissions musicales” (1 Jan. 1941, 4), an anonymous critic attacks the use of Egyptian records played at the state-run radio station: “Est-ce que Tunis-National ne pourrait pas avoir un cachet propre, distinct de la station du Caire ? Les disques tunisiens ne manquent pas. Pourquoi ne pas les radiodiffuser ? Oui, pourquoi ?” As we have seen, behind this judicious question lie substantial economic interests.

³⁹Attacks on imitative music, often labeled “L’Egypto-tunisien,” appear in: “La Radio” (7 Dec. 1940, 4), “La Musique,” (L’Amateur, 14 Dec. 1940, 5; 1 Feb. 1941: 2), “La Radio: La Radio-Nationale.”(14 Dec. 1940, 5), “La Radio-Nationale” (L’Auditeur, 21 Dec. 1940, 4),. “Musique et Lieux Communs” (1 Jan.

And finally, parallels can be drawn between the theorizing of a national literature and a national music. For example, similar to Zarrouk's identification of Tunisian authors in "Les Yeux noirs de Leila" (May 1940, 15) discussed above, L'Amateur names Tunisian poets (Karabaka, Laâbidi, Laribi, Doagi) and composers (Triki, Ternane, Fehmi, Srarfi) who contribute to Tunisian music, thus reinforcing the existence of a unique music ("La Musique," 7 Dec. 1940, 5). Later, L'Amateur distances Oriental music from Western music in the same manner that Rafik criticizes colonial literature in "A Propos du Prix de Carthage: Littérature Nord-Africaine," (16 Mar. 1941, 1). L'Amateur proposes a comparison: "Comparez un "daour" égyptien à un morceau de musique chantée d'Occident, vous ne tarderez pas à tirer des conclusions favorables à l'Orient" ("La Musique," 21 Dec. 1940). Here the critic insists upon differences to show the superiority of Oriental music to Western music for Tunisians.

The Rachidia is at the heart of a Tunisian national music, and its influence increased with its radio performances. In fact, the formation of a national music was integrally connected to the introduction of new technologies in Tunis, which included records, record players, and the radio. Articles written by two regular critics, L'Amateur and L'Auditeur, frequently appear side by side. Comments about radio programs appear in L'Amateur's music articles, and L'Auditeur regularly critiques music in articles about radio programming. In fact, the radio drew attention as a whirlwind developed around the French government-run radio station, *Tunis National*, with a vortex that centered on

1941, 3), "La Radio: aux écoutes" (L'Auditeur, 1 Jan. 1941: 4), "Les Emissions musicales" (1 Jan. 1941, 4), "La Musique: Les Airs synthétiques de l'Égypto-Tunisien," (L'Amateur, 8 Jan. 1941, 4), "La Radio" (L'Auditeur, 8 Jan. 1941, 4; 16 Jan. 1941, 4; 24 Jan. 1941, 4), "Le Contrôle des Airs" (1 Feb. 1941, 2), "Autour des émissions musicales" (8 Feb. 1941, 2), "Historiettes musicales" (16 Feb. 1941, 2), "Nos Jeunes et la musique" (16 Feb. 1941, 2).

problems of favoritism and control of programming by a *Comité musical*. This committee had the power to choose music for programs in Arabic, which influenced the production of Tunisian music. The committee drew frequent criticism. *L'Amateur* addresses a message to it in his "La Musique" column (14 Dec. 1940, 5): "Rappelons gentiment à ce Comité, sans aucune arrière-pensée et dans l'intérêt même de l'émission que la parodie de l'Art n'est pas l'Art, que les airs égyptiens ne sont pas à la portée de ces blanc-becs sans talent et qu'enfin la réputation de Radio Tunis-National perd énormément par suite d'un laisser-aller imputable à l'ignorance." This critic bluntly accuses the committee of ignorance in matters of music while underlining the mediocrity of musicians chosen who are unable to master Egyptian music, which is played too frequently. As in the case of the Municipal Theater, *Leïla* articles reveal corruption: "C'est en cachette que se fait le recrutement. La priorité est donnée aux amis de la maison, sans qu'il soit tenu compte ni de la valeur radiophonique de l' 'élu', ni de sa compétence, ni de sa réputation sociale. Il doit avoir sa petite part du fromage. Et c'est tout" (July 1939, 6). The focus on such problems results in the formulation of a national music obscured in the whirlwind, allowing critiques to pass by censors. Friction over language issues is contained within the whirlwind as well, for a certain number of programs were in Arabic. Ben Achour commented on the role of the radio, asserting that programs in Arabic had an effect on literary production because writers and composers adapted their creations to the format of radio (174).⁴⁰

⁴⁰ Ben Achour argues that after the demonstrations of 9 April 1938, which turned violent, French repression plus Tunisians' concern over the political situation brought intellectual, literary, and cultural activities to a standstill. According to him, Arabic-language radio, especially from Egypt, resuscitated intellectual activity and stimulated radio sales until radios could be found in many cafés as well as in Tunisian homes (172). Ben Achour notes interference:

Ben Achour's account of Tunisian participation at *Tunis National* resembles his writings on the theater, for he persists in constructing a positive homogenous nationalist narrative. On the other hand, it is within the pages of *Leïla* that a middle terrain exists where border thinking takes place, which can be seen when the *Leïla* team develops an innovative cultural criticism that integrates the radio into the theoretical structure of a national culture. This critique begins late in the first series, in "La qualité des émissions de Tunis PTT" (July 1939, 6):

Les auditeurs Tunisiens ... commencent à se faire à l'idée que la station d'Etat se moque d'eux. Elle leur présente des programmes où les noms de certaines incompétences ont étalées en toutes lettres et où le manque de goût le dispute à la pauvreté des sujets...ce ne sont la plupart du temps que des mesquineries ânomiées devant le micro.

The desire to make use of this new technology demonstrates border thinking. However, the political problems that concern the radio station's control and choice of programs and language require consideration.

The repetition of specific points confirms a coherent group effort in the theorizing of a national music that the *Leïla* team stands behind. First of all, critics assert that a national music exists, referred to as an *Art national*, which is *d'inspiration tunisienne*

Mais les difficultés techniques qui empêchaient d'écouter nettement et clairement la station radiophonique du Caire, à cause de la présence d'autres stations occidentales sur la même fréquence, laissaient ceux qui étaient passionnés pour la radio arabe exaspérés par cette coïncidence choquante. Ils étaient révoltés contre le temps qui continuait de procurer à l'Occident et à ses cultures les moyens de la victoire, volontairement ou involontairement. (172-173)

Writing in the colonial situation, Ben Achour mentions Western hegemony at the cultural level and records French anxiety over Italian political programs in Arabic that targeted Tunisians: "Cela poussait instinctivement les Tunisiens à préférer l'ennemi [the Italians] de leur ennemi direct [the French], sans compter la supériorité artistique et technique des émissions italiennes." Consequently, because of competition from Cairo and Italy, the French inaugurated a private station in Tunis in 1937, and then a station run by the colonial government, *Tunis P.T.T* which became *Tunis National* under Vichy. The irony of the name *Tunis National*, which was particular to Vichy propaganda as in the notion of *la Révolution nationale*, was not lost on Tunisians and indeed they exploited the term *national* for their own national agenda, maneuvering in a slippery terrain of ambiguity where the hidden transcripts of the colonized were expressed. Writing under a pseudonym, "L'Amateur" asserts that there exists an *Art national* (implying Tunisian) in his article "La Musique" (1 Feb. 1941, 2). French censors noticed and made at least one cut.

(“La Musique,” *L’Amateur*, 1 Feb. 1941, 2). Connected to the notion of a national music, patriotic duty makes its presence felt when a critic advises a singer: “... il est de son devoir de chanter tunisien, de rompre avec tout ce qui n’est pas musique nationale” (*L’Amateur*, “La Musique,” 1 Feb. 1941, 2). Thus, to sing Tunisian music is to sing the Nation and to transmit a message of national consciousness.

Secondly, musicians must turn their backs on music that is not a national music and thus does not serve the Nation. According to *L’Amateur*, creative genius is rooted in one’s country. As noted, critics reject imitative music that they label *l’Égypto-tunisien*, although they do not reject Egyptian music itself:

Pourriez-vous vous figurer un seul instant qu’un orchestre égyptien s’amuse à se consacrer à notre musique et à renier la sienne ? Les Égyptiens sont trop fiers de tout ce que leur inspire leur pays et nous ne leur donnons pas tort...rénier notre musique qui a bercé notre enfance, c’est une volte-face indigne.
(*L’Amateur*, “La Musique: Quelques Réflexions,” 16 Jan. 1941, 4)

Tunisians may appreciate Egyptian music, but not at the expense of a Tunisian music that represents a national identity and *leur pays*. Critics moan over the mediocrity of a music that parodies Egyptian music and find it insulting for listeners, calling it “la tarte à la crème de l’Égypto-tunisien” (*L’Auditeur*, “La Radio-Nationale,” 21 Dec. 1940, 4).

Thirdly, to counter *l’Égypto-tunisien*, critics encourage a return to “authentic” music and insist upon the existence of a classical Tunisian music that includes the *ma’luf* and the *soulamya* musical genres. In search of the authentic, critics do not tolerate experimentation in classical forms. A writer firmly criticizes a one-hour weekly program of *Soulamya* by a religious group:

Convenez ya Si Ech Cheikh [Cheikh Ben Mahoud, director of the group] que ce que vous servez là n’est pas de la *Soulamya*. Nous attendons de vous autre chose. Restez dans la voie du Saint. Ne cherchez pas à concurrencer les orchestres.

Evitez les parodies qui ne cadrent point avec l'atmosphère de la Soulamya."
 ("Les Auditions de la Soulamya," 24 Jan. 1941, 3)

Such comments serve as guideposts for musicians, indicating an approved path to follow that will lead to the formation of a national music.

Finally, *Leila* critics propose that Tunisian national music has a pedagogical role and that music presented on the radio must be suitable for Tunisian youths:

Nous ne prétendons pas imposer aux artistes des lieux communs. Nous attirons cependant leur attention sur la valeur éducative que nous sommes en droit d'attendre des émissions destinées à notre jeunesse. De la vigilance, Comité de notre Radio! Assainissez notre musique chantée et rappelez-vous que vos enfants et les autres que nous ne voulons à aucun prix priver de ce divertissement sont aux écoutes. (L'Auditeur, "La Radio-Nationale," 21 Dec. 1940, 4)

This quote demonstrates the desire to *assainir*, that is, to clean up in order to pave the way for a respectful music that serves the Nation.⁴¹ In another article, the critic rejects the erotic by "censuring" a song in the name of *bonnes moeurs* ("La Radio: La Radio-Nationale" 21 Dec. 1940, 4). The question of morality connects to contemporary social issues providing material for an *Art national*, which serves pedagogical objectives as well. The emphasis on moral and social issues in music parallels the writing of a national literature and a national theater, discussed above. L'Auditeur congratulates a singer for an appropriate song that corresponds to Tunisian society: "Hadi entonne: 'J'ai voulu me marier', traitant du mariage et des difficultés multiples que font surgir les pères des jeunes filles à marier, d'une portée sociale incontestable. Bravo, Hadi, pour ce choix judicieux!" The critic adds: "Attaque-toi à la Société, Hadi, tes auditeurs ne seront pas nombreux, mais tu auras l'élite aux écoutes. Et ce sont ceux-là qui modifieront les

⁴¹ This recalls George Mosse's notions concerning the link between respectability and nationalism. See Chapter 7: "Race and Sexuality: The Role of the Outsider" (133-152) in *Nationalism and Sexuality: Respectability and Abnormal Sexuality in Modern Europe*.

Sociétés” (“La Radio,” 8 Jan. 1941, 4). The call to critique society extends the role of critic to the musician, thus permitting artists to contribute to the definition of a Tunisian culture and society in the New Nation.

Leïla writers provide models for their objectives. For example, Mayy Ziayadah serves as Abdul-Méjid Chabby’s model for the New Woman and the *Troupe Mohyeddine* is the model for the ideal theatrical group that promotes a national theater. In a similar manner, *Leïla* critics suggest the Rachidia as a model for a musical group promoting a national music. The proposal of a Tunisian orchestra at *Tunis-National* appears once and is never repeated (“L’Orchestre Tunisien de ‘Tunis-National’,” 24 Jan. 1941, 5). According to the critic, a Tunisian radio orchestra would tandem with the Rachidia to improve the quality of music produced. However, apparently obstacles were too numerous in dealing with the colonial bureaucrats who ran the station, proven by the fact that comments addressed to the programming committee generally go unheard. On the other hand, Rachidia members appear to pay attention to *Leïla*’s critics. Although critics frequently criticize the Rachidia, their comments are constructive, and they hand out compliments that encourage musicians as well. In March 1941, attention is given to the history of the Rachidia. *L’Amateur* describes an institution that is anchored in the community, for its directing committee contains seventy-five members chosen from writers, musicians, and amateurs of music (“La Musique, La Rachidia,” 16 Mar. 1941, 3).

In May 1941, Zarrouk himself contributes an article, “La Musique: Les Sources Modernes de la Musique en Tunisie” (2 May 1941, 5), that summarizes the problems of developing a national music in the interwar period. He specifically points to the flooding of the Tunisian market with Egyptian music and the resulting imitative music produced

by Tunisian composers. Zarrouk hails the founding of the Rachidia as the major musical event that turned the tide thanks to a concerted effort by its members:

Cet avènement [the founding of the Rachidia] doit être interprété comme un premier triomphe de la musique tunisienne. 'Leïla' entra en lice avec un programme de rénovation musicale. Grâce à la persévérance de ses dirigeants et aux appels incessants lancés par 'L'Auditeur' la Musique tunisienne se remit en question. Triki a, selon nous, mérité de l'Art.

The word *triomphe* suggests a successful confrontation with colonial cultural domination, and movement toward the Independent Nation through the promotion of a national music. Zarrouk emphasizes the importance of *Leïla's* contribution in the formation of a critique that has contributed to a national music and points to the dedicated perseverance of all concerned. Indeed, Zarrouk's article and those of *Leïla* critics describe a struggle in the fight for Independence often overlooked in the writing of nationalist history.

As in the whirlwinds focusing on scandals in literature and theater, multiple vortexes develop around skirmishes concerning production of a national music until the critics decide to step out of the whirlwind and plant their feet firmly on Tunisian ground. Thus they free themselves in order to encourage those who deserve their attention by contributing to the construction of a national music. By the fourth issue of the weekly newspaper, *L'Auditeur* recognizes a problem that forbodes ill:

Je suis en lutte contre la première grippe de l'hiver. Je l'ai vaincue. Et tout en sueur, elle m'a soufflé à l'oreille de laisser tomber musique et musiciens de 'Tunis-National' que la critique objective, loin de les améliorer les incite au contraire par 'pique' à persévérer dans la voie tordue et tortueuse où ils se sont embourbés. ("La Radio-Nationale," 21 Dec. 1940, 4)

Insisting on the objectivity of criticism found in *Leïla* and its disinterestedness,

L'Auditeur admits the futility of his efforts and the perversity of entrenched bureaucrats

and musicians benefiting from favoritism. A month later, he shows exasperation when he puts his foot down:

Nous avons pris, vis-à-vis de Tunis-National et des lecteurs de *Leïla* l'engagement d'honneur de critiquer les émissions avec l'objectivité la plus complète. Si nous avons accepté cette pénible charge, c'est parce que nous ne connaissons que de nom et uniquement par le micro lui-même ce défilé interminable de soi-disant artistes qui feraient mieux de rechercher ailleurs l'exercice de leur talent. Gaspillage de temps pour les auditeurs qui résisteraient à la tentation de se mettre sur une autre station que la nôtre. Si nous n'y étions obligé, il y a belle lurette que nous aurions abandonné l'écoute du poste dont nous sommes fier à plus d'un titre. Des morceaux succèdent aux morceaux. Nous n'en relevons ni le contenu ni la musique. Nous n'en disons qu'un mot: c'est écoeurant. De telles pratiques nous font supposer que l'organisation des émissions laisse à désirer. Puisque ces troubadours profanent les micros nous prenons le parti de ne plus en parler sous cette rubrique.

Here a struggle over the power to choose, to define, and to designate value materializes.

The radio programming committee at the vortex of the whirlwind has the power to choose what is broadcast. However, *L'Auditeur* re-appropriates the right to choose by refusing to acknowledge the mediocrity imposed by others, that is, by the colonizer. He empowers himself by commenting only on music and musicians that he deems worthy, those who contribute to a Tunisian national music. A month later, *L'Auditeur* reconfirms this position in an article that appears on the same page as M.R.'s "Le Théâtre" article (24 Feb. 1941, 3), discussed above, in which he also pulls out of the whirlwind created by the colonial situation. This solidarity indicates organized objectives on the part of the *Leïla* team and critics. In fact, *L'Auditeur* announces a general policy change:

A l'avenir, seules les critiques de fond auront l'honneur des colonnes de '*Leïla*'. Par cette critique, nous montrons la preuve de notre désir ardent de voir s'améliorer les émissions musicales à l'intention des auditeurs d'ici et d'ailleurs. C'est une forme de collaboration bénévole que nous offrons avec la conviction de participer volontairement à l'évolution artistique de Tunisie. Elle nous est dictée par notre amour de l'Art tunisien ... La critique n'est-elle pas la condition essentielle du progrès? ("*La Radio*," 24 Feb. 1941, 3)

L'Auditeur speaks in the name of all the *Leïla* critics with the use of the first person plural "nous." In fact, I suggest that this article is an undeclared manifesto for the *Leïla* critics. L'Auditeur affirms that they are motivated by principle and love for Tunisian culture rather than by economic interests, for they volunteer their aid (*collaboration bénévole*). They desire to improve culture through an impersonal criticism without pity, differentiating their efforts from black mail or defamation. Use of the words *évolution* and *progrès* and the naming of Tunisia signal to the reader that these people are nationalists communicating a message of national consciousness and patriotism. Criticism is necessary for "progress" and thus an objective criticism serves the good of all and the New Nation.

Conclusion

Caught in the whirlwinds of the colonial situation that diverted energies away from the march to independence, *Leïla* critics pulled free of the swirling motion and looked to the future Independent Nation. Within *Leïla's* pages the groundwork for a carefully theorized national culture takes shape. Critics consistently underline major points of this national culture that are similar across domains. First of all, critics point to the existence of an *Art National* that requires a documentation of authentic Tunisian texts, theater, and music, and a refusal of imitative writing, theatrical performance, and music composition. Secondly, art must have an educational function that serves to guide Tunisians toward the New Nation and to teach them to contribute to its creation. Thirdly, social realism is encouraged because it addresses problems of Tunisian society under the colonial regime, thus it appears in poetry, theater, and even music, and is included in

cultural criticism. Fourthly, cultural creation must be based only on the notion of *L'Art pour l'art*, that is, artistic integrity must override economic interests. And finally, Tunisians make demands for the sharing of power in the cultural domain. They emphasize that Tunisians must obtain the means of cultural production, such as publishing houses (*maisons d'édition*), independent theater buildings and organizations, and control over programming in Arabic at the government-run radio station, *Tunis National*. In fact, the whirlwinds form precisely at the sites of these crucial points.

However, the intense activity that characterizes *Leïla*'s "Divertissement Divers" pages tapers off in the spring as energies and resources are sapped by the economic situation of the Protectorate. For example, at the beginning of the second series, analytical skills come into focus in the third issue of the second series ("La Radio: la Radio-Nationale," 14 Dec. 1941), when the radio critic, L'Auditeur, changes the format of his column. He organizes his commentaries by date and time of radio programs. His attention to detail, with the naming of specific musicians and programs, a careful consideration of musicians' work, and thoughtful analyses demonstrate his commitment to the objectives of Zarrouk and the *Leïla* team. He continues in such a manner until the 16 Apr. 1941 issue when dates and times disappear, replaced by short paragraphs of general comments about a limited number of musicians and orchestras. This change, with its loss of sharpness of critique, suggests that difficulties are mounting for the *Leïla* team as economic conditions worsen in the Protectorate during World War II. Not only do critics run out of steam, but they express frustration at a stagnating situation:

Rien de nouveau sous le soleil. Les mêmes raisons nous feraient redire les mêmes paroles et retracer les même points de vue sur la nature de la pâture musicale servie aux auditeurs. (L'Auditeur, "La Radio," 2 May 1941, 4).

Although they have done their best, they feel that their efforts to create a cultural criticism that improves cultural production and lays the groundwork for a national culture have had a limited effect. Only two more 4-page issues of the newspaper appeared, with increasing delays in publication (27 May 1941, 8 July 1941). The 2 May 1941 issue contained the last “Divertissements Divers” pages, signaling the disappearance of the intense cultural criticism that contributed to border thinking and the writing of the New Nation.

Conclusion

The publication of *Leïla* ceased abruptly with the 8 July 1941 issue. An article in that issue, “L’Exposition artistique de l’Afrique Française” (3), closes with “à suivre,” indicating that Zarrouk and his team intended to continue. Nonetheless, we may assume that with increased delays between each issue they understood *Leïla*’s precarious situation and expected the end—sooner or later. And so *Leïla* fell into oblivion and the door that opened onto a border zone permitting border thinking slammed shut. I pried this treasure chest open gleefully while adapting the theoretical concepts of Walter Mignolo’s border thinking, Benedict Anderson’s imagined communities, and James C. Scott’s hidden transcripts. The wide variety of material that I found made me wonder about the silence that shrouds this periodical, its publication, and its participants. This brings to mind Déjeux’s observation, mentioned in my introduction, about the silence surrounding pre-independence writers. Ultimately, the theme of silence, connected to oppression, censorship, and social constraints, is the hidden current that runs through my dissertation. Just as the *Leïla* project served to break the silence imposed upon women and upon colonized elites, I seek to break the silence around *Leïla*, and bring this exciting periodical to scholars’ attention.

When I first approached the study of *Leïla*, I hypothesized that *Leïla* served as the transmitter of a national culture while keeping alive the debate on women’s emancipation. It appeared that *Leïla* connected early Tunisian articles in cultural and political periodicals¹ to at least two later attempts that theorize a national literature:

¹A few of these early periodicals are: *La Renaissance Nord-Africaine* (1905), *Le Minaret* (1907-1909), *Le Tunisien* (1909-1911), *La Tunisie nouvelle: organe hebdomadaire politique et littéraire pour l’union de Musulmans et des Israélites* (1920-21), and *Tunis Littéraire et Artistique* (1934).

Mahmoud Aslan's "Panorama de la littérature tunisienne," found in the *Encyclopédie coloniale et maritime* (1942, 1944, 1947), and Mohamed Bachrouh's "La littérature tunisienne moderne," appearing in *Afrique Littéraire* (Feb. 1944, 1, 6). Aslan describes a *patrimoine littéraire* in which poetry represents *l'âme d'une nation*. He classifies Tunisian Arabic literature into five periods, from the eighth century to the 1940s. Thus, he attaches a Tunisian national literature to a long and glorious literary history of the region, but only in Arabic.

Similar to Aslan, Bachrouh describes an Arabic literature of Tunisia in his March 1941 article "Bref aperçu de littérature africaine" (*Afrique Littéraire* 8).² However, as early as 1930, he called for the formulation of a national literature in "Da'wa 'Ila Takwin Adab Qawmi" ("Appel à la formation d'une littérature nationale," *An-Nahdha*, 1 Aug. 1930, 27 Sept. 1930) (Hassan 516-517). While Zarrouk published *Leila*, Bachrouh founded *al-Mabâhith* (*Les Recherches*) in 1938, a literary periodical that grouped young writers looking to the future. Although only two issues appeared, Bachrouh revived his periodical in 1944, and at that time he published his article, "La littérature tunisienne moderne," in *Afrique Littéraire* (Feb. 1944, 1), which defines a contemporary national literature as well. Bachrouh's article is foundational because: 1) he defends Tunisian and Arab literary traditions while applauding renewal since the beginning of the Protectorate; 2) he turns to the East while nodding to the West; 3) he

² Fontaine notes the importance of Bachrouh's critique: "[Il] invite à développer une littérature nationale tunisienne, quitte à se rapprocher quelque peu de la littérature populaire. Pour juger les poètes de son époque, il n'utilise pas les critères traditionnels de la rhétorique, mais plutôt le recours à la sincérité et à l'enracinement dans la vie. Sa conception même du plagiat et du pastiche se rapproche de l'intertextualité. S'attachant à la crise du livre en Tunisie, il insiste sur la nécessité d'encourager cette production. Enfin son intérêt ne se limite pas aux Tunisiens anciens et modernes écrivant en arabe, mais il met aussi en valeur la littérature tunisienne avant l'islam, ainsi qu'un contemporain tel que Marius Scalési" (*Histoire*, v. 2, 221-222)

defends Islam's liberal, progressive thought while avoiding all discussion of Christianity or the Western tradition of humanism; 4) he refers to the national movement, especially by naming Abdellaziz Thaâlbi's text, *La Tunisie Martyre*, and 5) he includes both French and Arabic texts by Tunisians. This last point echoes Mahmoud Zarrouk's call for a Tunisian literature made up of French and Arabic texts four years earlier in "Les Yeux noirs de Leïla" (May 1940, 15).

My original hypothesis of *Leïla* as a transmitter now appears inadequate to me. For, if I have labeled Bachrouch's article foundational, I must also admit that the *Leïla* project is foundational and thus equally important. Zarrouk and his team accomplished what Bachrouch did, and in addition, they concretely laid out the groundwork for a national culture that slowly took shape in the first series and was made explicit in the second series, thus creating new models for the Independent Nation. However, the development of a foundational cultural criticism that defined and promoted a national culture occurred for the most part in the twenty issues of the second series, which survived for only seven months. Although the situation in which critics found themselves was so intense that I was obliged to use the metaphor of "whirlwinds" in my analysis, the short duration of *Leïla* criticism may explain why it has gone unnoticed. The fact that the twenty issues of the first series were published over a four and a half year period makes the first series appear more solidly grounded, allowing for the representation of the New Tunisian Woman to mature and then to crystallize in the Aug. 1940 issue. Indeed, the first series, with its sophisticated and elegant artwork and layouts, has received more attention in scholarly studies and in the press. Yet, after examination of the cultural criticism found in the second series newspaper, I must conclude that it contains material

as remarkable as that found in the first series women's magazine. It is in the second series that we find traces of *Leïla's* effect upon cultural production in Tunis. The *Prix de la Poésie arabe* is organized as a result of *Leïla's* campaign for its creation and critics' attack upon the *Prix de Carthage*. *Leïla's* critics encourage a writing of Tunisian subjects in literature, music, and theater, which is celebrated when concrete examples appear, such as when the poet Karabaka writes a poem about date palmtrees to be set to music ("Les Voeux de Leïla," 1 Feb. 1941, 3).

The question remains: did *Leïla* affect women's emancipation in Tunisia? Lazreg notes that in Algeria "... the majority of women could neither read nor write Arabic and/or French, and therefore had no access to what was said about them. Furthermore, their material life circumstances—the stuff that makes change in gender relations possible—were not only left unaddressed, but also prevented them from being receptive to debates on women's roles" (98). This was true in Tunisia as well, and, as discussed in Chapter 2, *Leïla's* female readership was a minority of elite women who had received some form of education in French, either with tutors at home or in girls' schools in Tunis. On the negative side, it is true that during *Leïla's* publication, no legal changes occurred in women's status, and despite the insistence upon the importance of education for women, schools for girls remained few. The general definition of the New Muslim Woman necessary for the New Nation, the major editorial stance of the first series, maintained the ideology of motherhood. Tunisian women needed to be better educated (in Arabic) to fulfill their roles as companions to men and educators of children, while contributing to social projects in the New Nation.

On the positive side, the first series of *Leïla* set out to shatter taboos by questioning *les vieilles traditions*, as stated in the first editorial. The re-opening of a discussion broke the silence around the subject of women and broke elite women's silence as well. *Leïla's* publication marks the opening of the public sphere of the Tunisian print culture to women. In part due to this opening, public opinion begins to change, which can be seen in the dialogue between contributors and readers in *Leïla*: many are enthusiastic and receptive to new ideas. As noted in Chapter 4, this periodical brought a new image of the Muslim woman to the public's attention, and this image expanded to promote the professional woman. Although the professional woman served society (the Nation) in a nurturing role, contributing to social improvement, this is possibly the first appearance in writing of Muslim women functioning in the public sphere outside the home. Mention of women who were doctors, lawyers, teachers, a pilot, a radio announcer, and singers shows that women were advancing steadily, if slowly, on a new level. Compared to the debate at the beginning of the 20th century, which was limited to whether or not women should be educated, discussions in *Leïla* show that elite Tunisian women desired to renegotiate their status and contribute to the New Nation.

To interpret *Leïla's* role as limited and purely symbolic would overlook the changes taking place in Tunisian urban society. As we have seen in Chapter 3, the Tunisian woman was assigned a passive role as the symbol of a Tunisian national identity in the 1929 debate provoked by French Socialists about the veil. However, *Leïla's* appearance in 1936 demonstrates that shifts had taken place. The *Leïla* team of the first series worked to influence Tunisian men to accept women's emancipation. Women's voices heard in *Leïla* shake the patriarchal status quo with a heavy critique of men's

public behavior, as they demand improvements. This is a first in journalism, as up to the time of *Leïla*, European men and women or Tunisian men (or men posing as women) wrote articles *about* Tunisian women. The *Leïla* project allowed Tunisian women to talk about themselves, to define themselves, and to create information about Tunisian women, such as when the first woman medical doctor, Tewhida Ben Cheikh, returned to Tunisia after completing her studies in Paris. In addition, identification of individual women appears, although with discretion, as women's contributions to the workplace are recognized, reaching a high point in August 1940 with a tribute to Arbia Zaouche, the first woman radio announcer, and with a partial list of women contributing to *Leïla*.

And surprisingly, *Leïla* contributors record the participation of women in political activities for the first time and take steps toward making space for women in the political sphere of men. Besides announcements of seemingly banal fund-raising events organized by women that carry hidden nationalist transcripts, *Leïla* articles inform readers of women's political protests and the arrest of girls and women, and encourage women's entry into political activism—including in the street. *Leïla*'s contributors go beyond the recording of symbolic events, for here we find a national *and* a feminist history in the making. Siân Reynolds, in examining French women's participation in politics during the interwar period, points out that if researchers do not examine the historical record in new ways, with a broader vision, women will appear to make no progress: "To see their role as 'merely symbolic' is both to miss the potential for destabilizing the *symbolic order* that they embodied, and to overlook their experimental position as forerunners of later generations of women nominees, ..." (Reynold's original emphasis, 162). My study of a women's periodical appearing during the colonial period reveals women's activities, and

the ideas and debates accompanying those activities. *Leïla*'s pages record a new and experimental position for women, in which they are the forerunners of the generations following World War II and independence in 1956.

Today, fifty years after independence, what role can we attribute to *Leïla* in Tunisia's feminist and national histories? At independence, the Tunisian government, and particularly Bourguiba, moved to change women's legal status immediately. Here is an official account written only four years later in 1960:

Dans les temps passés, la Tunisienne était maintenue dans la condition d'une esclave recluse: Mariée d'autorité sans connaître son mari, soumise à la tyrannie de celui-ci qui pouvait la répudier à sa fantaisie et conserver ses enfants. Cloîtrée et voilée, elle était retranchée de la société ... La révolution féminine, on peut le dire, est l'œuvre de Bourguiba. Lui seul a osé la mener jusqu'au bout. Mais les Tunisiennes le méritaient bien à tous les titres, et par leur participation; discrète mais efficace, à la résistance tunisienne et à la lutte pour l'indépendance ... Pour faire tomber le voile et mettre fin à la claustration, Bourguiba n'a pas eu à légiférer; il lui a suffi de stigmatiser cette coutume; qui n'avait rien de religieux. Ainsi les Tunisiennes peuvent désormais aller librement à l'école et s'instruire ... et surtout accéder à des emplois, gagner leur vie.
(*La Tunisie au travail*, 70)

In this account we find the infiltration of a colonial feminist discourse, discussed in Chapter 3, that reduces women to the passive role of victim, *cloîtrée et voilée*. This description, intentionally brought forward from the colonial period, serves a nationalist discourse that maintains women's impotence—their participation in the national struggle was secondary, *discrète*.

True, the *Code du Statut Personnel* (CSP) included universal suffrage, the abolition of polygamy, and making divorce subject to judicial review. However, these changes were made to undermine religious authority, to consolidate control over social

and political activities, and to acquire women's passive support (Brand 178). Laurie

Brand argues:

Indeed, the issuance of the CSP had less (if anything) to do with feminism than with the president's desire to eliminate traditions and practices that he felt obstructed his modernizing program. In other words, Tunisian women were to be educated and capable of controlling their family size but not as part of a project that would undermine their primary role in the home as homemakers and mothers. (180)

Rather than shaking the status quo, Bourguiba's policies concerning women served to stabilize patriarchal hierarchy, and put him at the center of power. Thus, women served the Nation as mothers and became pawns in the general political picture at independence.³ Women's rights, then, are described as gifts—from Bourguiba. This rhetorical strategy deprives the event of historical significance and erases the debates and participation of activists, both women and men. I argue that this is precisely why *Leïla* is important: because the study of this periodical, both in its women's magazine format and its weekly cultural newspaper format, returns historical significance to feminist and national histories and returns agency to Tunisians. I suggest that one of the reasons for the silence⁴ that shrouds *Leïla* is because this periodical does not coincide with official nationalist discourse and nationalist historiography, which proclaim Bourguiba as the central mover of Tunisian national history, thus erasing the agency of the Tunisian people. The examination of *Leïla* reveals resistance to colonialism and efforts to promote the Independent Nation outside the arenas of nationalist parties and newspapers. In fact, credit cannot be attributed to Bourguiba for the writing of a New Nation that included the

³ Ultimately, Bourguiba replaced the Zitouna with a faculty of theology attached to the University of Tunis, integrating it into the Public Education Ministry, thus eliminating this prestigious university and learning center, and accomplishing what the French failed to (Brand 179).

⁴ I was surprised recently when a professor at a university in Tunis informed me that "all has been said on the subject of *Leïla*," indicating that he considered the periodical of little value.

full participation of a New Tunisian Woman, accompanied by a New Tunisian Man, for such a formulation first appears in *Leïla*. As noted in Chapter 2, Zarrouk and his team brought together the mixed community that could imagine such a Nation.

Members of *Leïla*'s imagined community were reminded by a reader of *Leïla*'s connection to feminist and national histories: "Et même si tu [*Leïla*] tombes sous la cabale de tes nombreux et ignorés ennemis, ton effort ne sera pas vain. Tu seras bénie par les générations futures à qui tu auras défriché et tracé le sentier" ("Le coin des lecteurs," Sept. 1937, 15). *Leïla* was considered ground-breaking not only in the present moment, but for future generations. Today, this periodical reveals an obscured fragment of Tunisian history. *Leïla* opens onto a border zone where women and men actively tested boundaries in search of new identities and a national culture, where border thinking burgeoned giving rise to new solutions to complex problems in the colonial situation, where new roles for women took shape in the formulation of the "New Tunisian Woman," and where a vision of the Independent Nation was always present.

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Appendices

Table of Contents: First Series

No. 1, 10 December 1936, *Leila: revue illustrée de la femme*

Director: M. Zarrouk; editors: A. Chabby, Mlle Radhia; 4 frs; annual subscription: 50 frs; unnumbered pages; administration: Colisée-Escalier C, first floor, Tunis; cover design: Ali Ben Salem.

“Notre Programme: A Nos Chères Lectrices,” ‘Leïla’.....	1
“Un Mot sur ce que doit être la femme musulmane,” Mohamed Nomane.....	2
“Propos d’une jeune fille en fleur !..” Mlle Radhia.....	3
“Lettre d’un jeune homme à marier,” Rached.....	3
Drawing, Aly Ben Salem.....	3
“Lettre de Paris...”.....	4
“Notre Ami Me Bahri Guiga nous écrit...,” Bahri Guiga.....	5
“Conseils d’une mère à sa fille,” tr. Mlle Y. Labab, (from <i>la Voix des Humbles</i>).....	5
“Nos Petits Enfants,,” Mlle Meriem.....	6
“Chronique littéraire: Giraudoux et la jeune fille,” A. Chabby.....	7
“Les Ombres” (poem), Skander.....	8
Drawing, A. Roubtsoff.....	8
Drawing, G. L. Lemonnier.....	9
“Après le tournoi de beauté: Réflexions...,” Leïla.....	10
“Un Abîme à combler,” Raouf.....	11
“Mode,” ‘Leïla’.....	12
“Mondanités: A la Fête féminine des étudiants”.....	13
“Le Costume”.....	13
“Carnet Rose”.....	13
“Le Mariage mixte”.....	13
“A la Presse,” Le Directeur.....	13
“Chronique du disque”.....	13
“L’Islam libérateur de la femme,” Raouf.....	14
“Le Ramadan,” Leïla.....	14
“Le Veilleur de nuit en Ramadan” (painting), A. Ghrairi.....	14
“Tribune libre: Une Opinion sur le voile,” Mohamed Zmerli.....	15
“L’Evolution du voile à travers les âges” (drawing).....	15
“La Femme musulmane,” Aly Ben Salem.....	16
“La Belle Légende de Majnoun Leïla,” tr. from Arabic.....	17
“Une Charmante Dictatrice”.....	17
“Il se retirait dans des solitudes, restait nu et ne parlait à personne...” (drawing), Aly Ben Salem.....	17
“Haut les rideaux,” Fauteuil 47.....	18
“Le Chant, la danse,” Le Mélomane.....	19
“Une Détresse à secourir”.....	19
“Leïla répond”.....	19
“Un Livre sur Sidi-Bou-Saïd,” Mahmoud Zarrouk.....	20
Drawing, G.L.L.....	20

No. 2, February 1937, *Leila: revue illustrée de la femme: Périodique Social – Littéraire – Artistique*

Director-founder: Mahmoud Zarrouk (Rue Hadi Zarrouk, Sidi Bou Saïd); editors: A. Chabby, Mlle Radhia; 2fr50; administration: Colisée, Escalier C, 2^e étage, Tunis; unnumbered pages; advertising: UPIT Galerie du Colisée; printings: 1000; cover design: J. Ben Abdallah.

“Leïla Vous Parle: La Critique est aisée,” Mahmoud Zarrouk.....	1
“Caractères de la famille musulmane,” Tahar Sfar.....	2
“Propos d’une jeune fille en fleur !” Mlle Radhia.....	3
“Lettre d’un jeune homme à marier: Emancipation et non dévergondage !” Rached.....	4
“SOS,” Bahri Guiga.....	5
“La Femme musulmane et le travail,” Mohamed Nomane.....	5
“Nos Petits Enfants,” Mlle Meriem.....	6

“Jeunes Filles d’aujourd’hui : Je vous présente Ferida,” Abdul-Mejid Chabby.....	7
“Etendue sur un divan...” (drawing), Ali Ben Salem.....	7
“Femme musulmane et enseignement,” Hakim.....	8
“Confidences pré-nuptiales : Je vais me marier !... ,” Mlle Zeineb.....	9
“Accessoires de mariage arabe ou la ruine des familles tunisiennes” (drawing/caricature), A. G. üy.....	9
“Chronique Littéraire : André Gide et la Femme,” Tahar Lakhdar.....	10
“Les Yeux” (poem), Skander.....	11
Drawing woman at cemetery, Roubtsoff.....	11
“Lettre à Madeleine,” Mlle Wassila.....	12
“Cliché Italiens di Tunisia” (drawing), Carlo Capuano.....	12
“Le Mariage mixte : Sirènes d’outre-mer...,” Mlle Jamila.....	13
“Sidi-Bou-Saïd,” Mlle Leïla.....	14
Drawing of Sidi-Bou-Saïd, G.L. Le Monnier.....	14
“Une Rêverie douce s’empara de moi...” (drawing), Grairi.....	14
“Les Lettres arabes : Les Propos de ma grand-mère de Souhayr Kalmaoui,” Abdul-Mejid Chabby.....	15
“Chronique artistique : L’Influence de l’art décadent italien sur les industries artisanales et les arts tunisiens ,” Aly Ben Salem.....	16
“Cahouet-el-Nadhour,” Khaled ; drawing de phare, C. de Multedo.....	18
Drawing of mosque.....	19
“La Mode,” Leïla.....	20
“La Beauté,” Guty Meery.....	20
“Haut les Rideaux: Le Théâtre, L’Ecran,” Fauteuil 47.....	21
“Chez les dévoilées de Tunisie,” extrait de “Femme de France,” Claire-Charles Géniaux.....	22
“A Travers l’histoire musulmane,” G.L. Le Monnier.....	23
“Leïla répond”.....	24
“Mise au point,” Les Amis de ‘Leïla’.....	24
<u>No. 3, March 1937, Leïla: revue illustrée de la femme: Périodique Social – Littéraire – Artistique</u>	
Director-founder: Mahmoud Zarrouk; editors: A. Chabby, Mlle Radhia; 2fr50; annual subscription: 50 francs; office: Sidi-Bou-Saïd; publicité: UPIT Galeries du Colisée; cover design: Grairi.	
“Leïla vous parle : Des Noms ou des idées ?... ,” ‘Leïla’.....	1
“Le Droit musulman et le mouvement féministe moderne,” Tahar Sfar.....	2
“Propos d’une jeune fille en fleur !” Radhia.....	3
“Lettre d’un jeune homme à marier: Les Joies du mariage,” Rached.....	4
“Les Féministes françaises et le projet de Loi Violette,” Claire-Charles Géniaux.....	5
“Nos Petits Enfants,” Meriem.....	6
“4 du Harem : Salha, Néjia, Zobeïda, Mounira,” Khaled.....	7
“Chronique littéraire : L’Ecole des femmes,” Marlène Daisy.....	10
“Les Hommes ne sont pas des Dieux !...” Jamila.....	11
Drawing of lion, A. Bélaïd.....	11
“Fraternité” (poem), Skander.....	12
“Au Jardin des Morts” ,” Kalsoum.....	14
Drawing of women at cemetery.....	14
“Le Mariage mixte,” Farouk.....	15
“Ce qu’écrivent nos sœurs d’Egypte: Splendeur de l’amour,” Nahed Fahmy, tr. Abdul-Mejid Chabby.....	15
“Rôle de la Femme,” Mohamed Nomane.....	16
“Aux Riches,” G.-L. Le Monnier.....	17
“La Caravane des Protégés” (drawing/caricature), G.L. Le Monnier.....	17
“Réflexions sur quelques principes de l’éducation des filles,” M.-A. A.....	18
“Une Doctoresse tunisienne (Mlle Tewhida Ben Cheikh),” ‘Leïla’.....	18
“Lettre de Paris : Mardi Gras,” Marlène Daisy.....	19
Drawing, A. Bélaïd.....	19
“Mondanités”.....	20
“La Mode,” Une Parisienne.....	21
“La Beauté,” Guty Meery.....	21

“Haut les Rideaux : Le Théâtre, L’Ecran,” Fauteuil 47.....	22
“La Femme et la spiritualité,” Marie, Reine de Roumanie.....	23
“Leïla répond”.....	24

No. 4 special issue, printed May 1937, probably distributed June 1937,

Leïla: revue illustrée de la femme: Périodique Social – Littéraire – Artistique

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Monnier.

“Leïla vous parle: Joyeux Printemps ! ” “Leïla’.....	1
“Lettre d’un jeune homme à marier,” Rached.....	2
“Propos d’une jeune fille en Fleur ! ...,” Radhia.....	3
Drawing of couple, Ali Ben Salem.....	3
“La Condition de la Femme Arabe dans la période anté-Islamique,” Tahar Sfar.....	4
“Chohdah la belle savante” ; photo de la Grande Mosquée.....	5
“Légendes d’oiseaux,” Kalsoum.....	6
“Soirée de première,” Khaled ; drawing of women.....	7
“Carnet Rose”.....	8
“L’Education familiale,” Farouk.....	8
“La Rue,” Zeineb.....	9
“La Loterie des mariages tunisiens” (caricature), unsigned.....	9
“Notre Page littéraire : Une Idylle à Istamboul,” Yakub Kadri.....	10
“Voile Protecteur, Voile complice...,” Protée.....	11
“Les Poèmes de Leïla: ‘A L’absente’, ‘Couleurs du Soir’,” Skander.....	12
“Les Poèmes de Leïla: ‘Lac Bahira’,” Mounir.....	12
“Les Poèmes de Leïla: ‘Cité Sainte’, ‘Sidi-Bou-Saïd la Blafarde’,” G.L. Lemonnier.....	13
“La Bédouine et ses misères,” Mohammed Nomane.....	14
“Rabiya yanoub” (drawing), G.-L. Le Monnier.....	14
“Nos Petits Enfants,” Meriem.....	15
Drawing of boy with donkey, unsigned.....	16
“La Doctoresse vous parle”.....	17
“Le Calife ‘Omar’ dans la Mine,” Pierre Hubac.....	18
“Pour la femme,” Aïcha Ghomry, tr. Abdul-Mejid Chabby.....	19
“Chronique Artistique: Les Beaux-Arts et la Femme turque,” Mouidé Essad.....	20
“A Propos des Sirènes d’Outre-Mer,” reply to Jamila, from Mme Agnès Z.....	21
“Lettre à Wassila...,” Madeleine.....	22
“La Mode,” Frida.....	23
“La Beauté”.....	23
“V’là le printemps,” ‘Leïla’.....	24
“Leïla répond”.....	24

No. 5, September 1937, *Leïla: revue illustrée de la femme: Périodique Social – Littéraire – Artistique*

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frs; pages numbered; administration: Colisée, Tunis; cover design: Brandt.

“Leïla vous parle : Leïla reparait !... ,” ‘Leïla’.....	1
“Lettre d’un Jeune Homme à marier : L’Amour impersonnel et la jeune fille musulmane,” Rached.....	2
“Propos d’une jeune fille en fleur !... : Don Juan n’est pas mort !... ,” Radhia.....	3
Drawing de couple, Ali Ben Salem.....	3
“L’Ordre,” Nour-el-Houda.....	4
“Une Grande Beinfaitrice: Madame Armand Guillon,” Abdul-Mejid Chabby.....	5
“Carnet Rose”.....	6
“La Femme tunisienne et l’instruction,” Hamouda Damergi.....	7
“A Batons rompus,” Khelil Mamlouk.....	9
“Préjugés criminels,” Protée.....	10
“Reflets” (poem), G.-L. Le Monnier.....	10
“Suite aux Sirènes d’outre-mer : Réponse à Jamila,” Mme Andrée A.....	11

“Une Belle Figure de l’histoire de la Tunisie : Aziza Othmana,” Mohamed Nomane.....	12
“L’Ange du foyer : La Mère de famille,” Yasmina.....	13
“Le Harem en révolte” (drawing/caricature), Brandt.....	13
“Leila à l’Exposition,” Mahmoud Zarrouk.....	14
“Un Exemple à suivre,” (from <i>Das Illustrierte Blatt</i>).....	14
“Le Coin des Lectrices”.....	15
“Les Paroles ne s’envolent pas,” Es-Sabra.....	15
“Réflexions d’une jeune française: Autour de l’évolution de la femme musulmane,” Marlène Daisy.....	16
“Beauté” from <i>Kölnische Illustrierte Zeitung</i> , tr. Mme Abdelaziz Slama.....	17
“Chronique Mondaine: Plaisirs d’été,” Assia.....	18
“Evolution de la bourgeoisie tunisienne” (drawing/caricature), G.L. Le Monnier.....	19
“Nos Petits Enfants,” Mlle Meriem.....	20
“Les Orphelins de Metlaoui,” G.L. Le Monnier.....	21
“Une Belle Œuvre à réaliser : Pour les orphelines,” Mahmoud Zarrouk.....	22
“Au Dar El-Bey”.....	22
“Du Nouveau à ‘Leila’”.....	23
“Perplexité: Ciel ! Que me réserves-tu ?” (drawing/caricature), G.L. Le Monnier.....	23
“‘Leïla’ répond”.....	24
<u>No. 6, January 1938, <i>Leila: revue illustrée de la femme: Périodique Social – Littéraire – Artistique</i></u>	
Director-founder: Mahmoud Zarrouk; editor: Mlle Radhia (Daly); 4 fr.; annual subscription: 50 fr.; pages numbered; office: Colisée, Tunis; artistic director: G. L. Le Monnier; cover without drawing.	
“Leïla vous parle,” Leïla.....	1
“Parler de la Femme,” Chihab.....	2
“Une Rosette bien méritée”.....	2
“Lettre d’un jeune homme à marier : Azyade 38,” Rached.....	3
Drawing de couple, Ali Ben Salem.....	3
“Les poèmes de Leïla ,” painting (unsigned).....	4
“Agonie d’un soir d’été,” Skander.....	4
“Loin de Toi ,” G.L. Le Monnier.....	4
“Le Dialogue des Jeunes ou la femme et l’éducation première : pièce en 1 scène,” H. Damergi.....	5
“La 1 ^{er} Aviatrice de la Turquie Sabiha Gektchen” (photo).....	7
“Des Femmes... Des Hommes...,” Khaled.....	8
“La Femme et la vie politique,” Mohammed Nomane.....	9
“Utilité d’un orphelinat de jeunes filles musulmanes,” Zeynoubah Tahar.....	9
“Nue” (poem), Benmami.....	10
“Méfions-nous du faux modernisme,” Férid Bourguiba.....	11
“Amour, devoir et mariage,” Protée.....	12
“Carnet Rose”.....	14
“Album d’Amour,” Kussaye.....	15
Drawing, G.-L. Le Monnier.....	15
“Le Coin des Lectrices : L’Instruction de la jeune fille musulmane,” Saïda Sahly.....	17
“Musulmans, vos femmes aussi sont des être humains,” Lucienne Jean-Darrouy.....	18
“Le Mariage,” from “La Maison”.....	18
“Daikhana (conte arabe),” G.-L. Le Monnier.....	19
Drawing of woman, G.-L. Le Monnier.....	20
“L’Entremetteuse,” Mahmoud Zarrouk.....	22
Drawing of building.....	22
“‘Leïla’ répond”.....	24
<u>No. 7, March 1938, <i>Leila: revue illustrée de la femme: Périodique Social – Littéraire – Artistique</i></u>	
Director-founder: Mahmoud Zarrouk; editor: Mlle Radhia (Daly); artistic director: G. L. Le Monnier; 4 fr; annual subscription: 50 fr; pages numbered; office: Colisée, Tunis; cover design unsigned;	
“Leïla vous parle,” Leïla.....	1
“La Condition de la femme dans l’histoire de l’humanité,” Tahar Sfar.....	2
“Solution pratique,” Jamila Malki.....	4

“L’Oeuvre de protection de l’enfance en Tunisie,” ‘Leïla’	5
“Encore Un,” Khaled	6
“Le Bicot” (poem), G.-L. Le Monnier	8
Drawing of bird, A. Belaïd	8
“Tribune libre: L’Orientale et l’Occidentale,” Mohamed Nomane	9
“La Ménagerie de Leïla”(drawing)	11
“La Leçon : Mon Maître” (poem), G.-L. Le Monnier	11
“La Femme tunisienne et l’art Dramatique”	12
“Les Expositions de peinture,” G.-L. Le Monnier	13
“A Batons Rompus,” Khaled Mamlouk	14
“Poèmes de Leïla : ‘Amertume’, ‘Le Captif’,” Skander	15
“Propos perdus: Le Soir à la chandelle...,” Mansour Rachik	16
“Carnet Rose”	17
“Autour d’une fête,” Mahmoud Zarrouk	17
“Veillons à notre personnalité,” T. Lakhdar	18
“Aujourd’hui chez autrefois” (drawing), Brandt	18
“Les Yeux ,” J.B. Abdallah	19

no. 8, June 1938, *Leïla: revue illustrée de la femme: Périodique Social – Littéraire – Artistique*

Director-founder: Mahmoud Zarrouk; editor: Mlle Radhia (Daly); artistic director: G. L. Le Monnier; 4 fr; annual subscription: 50 fr; pages numbered; office: Colisée, Tunis;

“Leïla vous parle,” ‘Leïla’	1
“En Flanant,” Saïda Sahly	2
“El Aroussa (La Mariée)” (poem), G.-L. Le Monnier	3
“Le Rôle de la femme dans la société moderne,” Rached	4
“Les Recettes de Leïla: Gateau de five o’clock”	5
“La Mer ,” Haute Feuille; drawings, R.P.	6
“Bulletin médical,” Leïla	7
“La Femme tunisienne et la vie intellectuelle,” Mahmoud Aslan	7
“A Propos du voile: Celles qui ne se voilent pas !” Le Monnier	8
Drawing, Max Moreau	8
“Poèmes de Leïla : ‘Je t’aime’, ‘Consolation’,” Skander	9
“De l’Etat actuel de la musique arabe,” Manoubi Snoussi	10
“Mauvais Goût,” Mahmoud Zarrouk	12
“La Kahena”	13
“Misère de la Paysanne,” M.N.	15
“La Femme tunisienne et l’art dramatique,” S.R. Lahmar	16
“Colifichet de mes pensées,” Frida	17
“Artisanat tunisien et industrie française”	18
“Une Légende amoureuse,” Hachemi Baccouche	19

no. 9, September 1938, *Leïla: Revue illustrée de la femme: Périodique Social – Littéraire – Artistique*

Director-founder: Mahmoud Zarrouk; artistic director: G.-L. Le Monnier; editor: Mlle Radhia; 4 frs.; annual subscription: 50 fr ; pages numbered; office: Colisée, Tunis; cover design: Jossot.

“Sommaire”	1
“Une Journée de vacances de Son Altesse le Bey,” Mahmoud Zarrouk	2
“La Coutume et la loi,” M.N.	3
“En Rêvant,” Saïda Sahly	4
“Carnet Rose”	5
“Hommage à l’hypocrisie,” Chihab	6
“Le Salon d’Eté au Bar Dixi du Kram,” G.-L. Le Monnier	7
“L’Histoire de Tunis au Théâtre,” (from <i>la Revue Tunisienne</i>), Henri de Curzon	8
“Plages et voile,” Protée	9
“La Société de Bienfaisance Musulmane,” ‘Leïla’	10
“Nos Echos”	11
“Ce qu’il faut écrire”	11

“Taktouka Rast” (song)	12
“Amour quand tu nous tiens”	14
“Réflexions anodines: Les Vieux et les jeunes,” M. Rafik	15
“Le Paysannat Tunisien,” ‘Leïla’	16
“Maximes Chinoises,” (from “Maximes Chinoises”) Henry Frichet	17
“Jeunesse et Société,” S.R. Lahmar	18
“Les Pigeons de la Cathédrale,” Jacques Dénis	19
“Emancipation de la femme en Egypte,” Kassem Amin-Bey, tr. Eusèbe Vassel	20
“Nécrologie”	21
“Oùèche, oùèche,” Mahmoud Zarrouk	22
“Mariage de princes musulmans”	23
“La Mode,” Germaine	24
Drawing, A. Belaïd	24

No. 10, December 1938. *Leïla: Revue illustrée de la femme: Périodique Social – Littéraire – Artistique*

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“Leïla vous parle,” ‘Leïla’	1
“N’en jetez plus,” Khaled	2
“L’Oiseau bleu” (poem), Jacques Dénis	3
“Ramadan,” Rached	4
“Maisons claires,” Zeynouba Tahar	5
“Aid Mabrouk”	6
“Au Grand Conseil”	6
“Nos Joies”	6
“Ezzarda en Kroumirie,” le Caïd Ismaël Ben Hafsia	7
“La Mariée,” Jamila Alaily	8
“Leïla et la presse”	9
“Définition d’une Tunisienne,” Dr. Salem Es-Schadly	10
“Madame reçoit,” M.N.	11
“A Batons rompus,” Khelil Mamlouk	12
“Superpatriote de Burgos” (drawing), “Les Quatre de Munich” (poem), Le Monnier	13
“Sauvons notre théâtre tunisien”	14
“La Femme tunisienne à l’action,” Mahmoud Zarrouk	15
“Réflexions anodines: Rationalisme et Empirisme,” M. Rafik	16
“Déclin” (poem), G.-L. Le Monnier; drawing, Brandt	17
“Le Congrès musulman des femmes d’orient,” Hanifa Khouri	18
“Histoires d’Actualité”	19
“Le Musée de la Pensée,” Paul Chrétien Audruger	20
“Manifestations anti-fascistes,” L’œil de Tunis	21
“Kémal Attaturk,” A. Melnikov	22
“Un Grand Policier,” d’après <i>Mes Romans</i>	22
“Chronique artistique: Adolfe le barbouilleur,” Le Monnier	24
Drawing of birds, Belaïd	24

No. 1, March 1939. *Leïla: Périodique Social – Littéraire – Artistique*

Director-founder: Mahmoud Zarrouk; artistic director: G.-L. Le Monnier; 5 frs; annual subscription: 50 frs; office: Colisée, Tunis.

“Le Nouveau Bey du camp: Son Altesse Sidi Tahar”	1
“Leïla, tes sœurs étaient en prison,” TaharLakhdar	2
“La Femme tunisienne et la vie publique”	3
“La Femme dans les arts et dans la politique”	4
“Le Conteur arabe,” (drawing) Brandt	4
“Favoritisme,” Mahmoud Zarrouk	5
“Un Protecteur en mal de protection,” Khelil Mamlouk	6
“Le Mariage mixte,” M.N.	8

“Les Arts : La Rupture d’El Ittihad El Mesrahi”	9
“Chronique Artistique”	9
“A Batons rompus ... ,” Khelil Mamlouk	10
“Et l’Oeuvre du paysannat ? ”	11
“Collaboration franco-arabe,” ‘L’œil de Tunis’	11
“Cimetières arabes,” G.-L. Le Monnier	12
“Décès (Mahmoud El Adel Bey) ”	12
“Au Seuil de la 3 ^{ème} année”	13
“Décès (El Habib El Allam, Garde des Sceaux) ”	13
“Réflexions anodines : Le ridicule ne tue pas...,” M. Rafik	14
“Emancipation,” Jossot	15
“Aux Habous”	15
“La Maternité de l’Hôpital Sadiki”	16
“Hygiène dentaire”	16
“Le Sens d’une visite,” Mahmoud Zarrouk	17
“Vive l’amour ,” Moncef	18
“L’Embellissement de la Hara et les Musulmans”	19
“Histoire et légende,” L.C. Feraud	20

No. 2, July 1939 (numbering error), *Leïla: Périodique Social – Littéraire – Artistique*

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Photo: “Ebats de la jeunesse au bord de la mer”	1
“Emancipation,” Khaled	2
“Mariage Mixte”	3
“Il Faut retourner la Bédouine chez elle”	4
Photo: “Mosquée sur les bords du Nil”	4
“Femmes entre nous soit dit,” Aida	5
“La Qualité des émissions de Tunis PTT”	6
“Chez les Ouled Naïl,” G.-L. Le Monnier	7
“Les Tares Sociales: La Mendicité,” Essaida Foudhayli	9
Announcement of students’ success	9
“Les poèmes de Leïla: ‘Larmes’, ‘Volupté Suprême’,” Skander	10
“L’Homme de l’été,” Ginevra	11
“A la Recherche d’une épouse”	13
“La Jeune Fille tunisienne et la politique,” Saïda Sahly	14
“La Page de la femme: Pour être belle”	15
“Réponse à Maisons Claires,” Hassen	16
“Les Belles Histoires d’Amour : Dounia la Barmécide et Noureddine le Joaillier”	17

No. 4, August 1939, *Leïla: Périodique Social – Littéraire – Artistique*

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“Fantômes à vendre”	1
“Femmes, l’avenir est à vous,” ‘Leïla’	2
“L’Ecole : Première Etape de l’émancipation”	3
“Hantises” (poem), Marianne Le Gardet	3
“Sous les fiscus”	4
“Réflexions anodines: Les Lettres tunisiennes,” M. Rafik	5
“Les Enfants tristes”	6
Drawing of beach	6
“La Femme au début de l’Islam”	7
“La Raison du plus fort”	8
“Femmes, entre nous,” Aida	9
“La Princesse Atf,” H.H. Abdulwahab	10
“Feuilles mortes,” “Vengeances” (poems), Skander	11

Drawing, G.-L. Le Monnier.....	11
“Polygamie,” Tahar Lakdhar.....	12
“Un Nouveau Musée à Tunis”.....	12
“Voile des illusions”.....	13
“Aïcha El Manoubia”.....	14
“Silhouette blanche”.....	15
“La Femme musulmane et la vie économique”.....	15
“A Batons rompus,” Khelil Mamlouk.....	16
“Petits Conseils pour une grande beauté”.....	17
“Un Nouveau Zoo”.....	18
“Présence”(poem).....	19
Drawing, A. Belaïd.....	19
“La Mode”.....	20

No. 5, Octobre 1939, Leïla: Périodique Social – Littéraire – Artistique

Director-founder: Mahmoud Zarrouk; editor: Mlle M. Aïda; 5 frs.; annual subscription: 50 frs.; office: Colisée, Tunis; printings: 700.

“Editorial,” ‘Leïla’.....	1
“Le Rôle de la femme dans la famille,” Tahar Sfar.....	2
“Note,” L’Auteur (Tahar Sfar).....	4
“Carnet Rose”.....	4
“Croquis: Le Village blanc”.....	5
“Femmes, entre nous soit dit,” Aïda.....	6
“La Crise de mariage”.....	7
“La Guerre,” Tahar Lakdhar.....	8
“Les Minutes précieuses”.....	9
“Au Secours de l’Enfance tunisienne,” ‘Leïla’.....	10
“Aide-toi, le ciel t’aidera,” Mahmoud Zarrouk.....	11
“Excès de pudeur”.....	12
“Défense passive”.....	13
“A Quoi rêve Jamila !... ”.....	14
“Conseils aux jeunes filles”.....	15
“L’Immonde Satyre”.....	16
“A Batons rompus,” Khelil Mamlouk.....	17
“L’Iran musulman contre le voile”.....	18
“A Travers le Médina”.....	19
“Au Départ,” Marianne Le Gardet.....	19
“Les Lectrices de Leïla”.....	20

No. 6, November 1939, Leïla: Périodique Social – Littéraire – Artistique

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“Sommaire”.....	1
“La Guerre et la Femme,” Tahar Sfar.....	2
“Jeuner...non...faire Ramadan...oui,” Saïda Sahly.....	4
“Femmes, entre nous soit dit,” Aïda.....	5
“La Princesse Oum El-Oulou”.....	6
“Réflexions anodines: Anticipation ou déchéance ? ” M. Rafik.....	7
“A Batons Rompus,” Khélil Mamlouk.....	8
“Pudeur et fausse pudeur,” Mahmoud Zarrouk.....	9
“Musée de la Pensée”.....	10
“A Kairouan au 4 ^e siècle de l’Hégire”.....	12
“Des Usages de la bourgeoisie décadente”.....	13
“Dangereuses colères”.....	14
“L’Inspirée” (poem), Mahjoub Ben Milad.....	14
“Bab El-Benat”.....	15

“Non, Décidément l’homme ne descend pas du singe”.....	16
“Nécrologie,” “Carnet Rose,” “Dans la Légion d’Honneur”.....	17
“Le Rôle de la femme dans la famille,” reader’s letter, Tahar Sfar’s reply.....	19
“Petits Conseils pour une grande beauté,” Zohra.....	20

No. 7, December 1939 *Leïla: Périodique Social – Littéraire – Artistique*

Director-founder: Mahmoud Zarrouk; editor: Mlle M. Aida; 5 frs; subscription: 50 frs; office: Colisée, Tunis; cover design: Jossot; printings: 700.

“Leïla a quatre ans”.....	1
“Les Conceptions racistes d’Hitler et la famille germanique,” Tahar Sfar.....	2
“L’Evolution de la femme tunisienne,” Essaïda Fondhaily.....	4
“Les Contes de <i>Leïla</i> : La Surprise”.....	5
“La Mort de Khelil Mamlouk” ; “Carnet Rose”.....	6
“L’Homme au foyer,” M. Rafik.....	7
“Le Soir à la chandelle,” MansourRachik.....	9
“Les Femmes ‘savantes’”.....	11
“Fleurs du désert (<i>Leïla</i> , la Pure),” M.-A. Chakir.....	13
“Réflexion anodines: Considérations sur la beauté féminine et le maquillage,” ‘Leïla’.....	15
“Le Théâtre arabe : La Municipalité et les décors orientaux”.....	17
“Leïla et les parasites !”.....	17
“Nouvelle: Un Mariage silencieux,” Le Conteur.....	18

No. 8, May 1940, *Leïla: Périodique Social – Littéraire – Artistique*

Director-founder: Mahmoud Zarrouk; editor: Mlle M. Aida; 5 frs; subscription: 50 francs; office: Colisée, Tunis; cover design: G.L. Le Monnier.

“Leïla vous parle”.....	1
“A la Recherche de la félicité conjugale,” M. Rafik.....	2
“Pardonner”.....	3
“Femmes, entre nous,” Aida.....	4
“A Celle qui va se marier,” “Abdication” (poems).....	5
“Ne Vous fâchez pas,” Leïla.....	6
“Je vous envoie ces fleurs” (poem), G-L. Le Monnier.....	7
“Le Trousseau de la mariée”.....	8
“Une Jeune Fille écrit: Rêveries du printemps”.....	9
“Anecdotes historiques”.....	10
“Portrait” (poem), Prothée.....	11
“Musulmans et esclavage”.....	11
“Khélil Mamlouk,” Leïla.....	12
“Remords,” Gacem.....	13
“Les Yeux noirs de Leïla,” Mahmoud Zarrouk.....	15
“Carnet Rose”.....	16
“Conte philosophique: La Morte,” le Conteur.....	17

no. 9, August 1940, *Leïla: Périodique Social – Littéraire – Artistique, Revue mensuelle illustrée pour l’évolution et l’émancipation de la femme musulmane nord-africaine*

Director-founder: Mahmoud Zarrouk; chief editor: Abdul-Méjid Chabby; 5 frs; subscription: 50 francs; office: Colisée, Tunis.

“Sommaire”.....	0
“Avis à nos lecteurs et abonnés”.....	0
“Eté 1940,” Mahmoud Zarrouk.....	1
“Acta est fabula,” Abdul-Méjid Chabby.....	2
“Lettre d’un jeune homme à marier: Amour et mariage,” Rached.....	4
“Propos d’une jeune fille en fleur,” Radhia.....	6
“La femme et la guerre,” Chafika.....	9
“L’Amour,” Zakia L., tr. Abdel-Méjid Chabby.....	12
“Femmes de lettres arabes : May,” Abdul-Méjid Chabby.....	14
“Deux Pages choisies de May: Tristesse,” May.....	16

“Deux Pages choisies de May: Méditations,” May.....	17
“La Jeune Fille tunisienne et la politique,” Saïda Sahly.....	18
“Carnet Rose,” “Succès féminins aux examens,” “Nécrologie”.....	19
“In Memoriam: Une Douce Voix s’est tue”.....	20
“Post mortem: Les Neuf Confidances,” Arbia Zaouche.....	21
“L’Egyptienne et l’instruction,” Abdul-Méjid Chabby.....	24
“Silhouettes tunisiennes: Chmâa l’usurier”.....	27
“Voix d’outre-tombe: Dialogue de Rousseau et Platon sur l’instruction de la jeune fille”.....	28
“Mode et Beauté”.....	31
“Un Poème inédit de A. Chabby : Les Etreintes dénouées,” Abdul-Méjid Chabby.....	32
“Fantômes en vacances,” Mahmoud Zarrouk.....	33
“Quelques-unes de nos collaboratrices”.....	34
“Un Peu d’histoire : Femmes arabes guerrières,” Dr. Perron.....	35

No. 10, September 1940, *Leïla: Périodique Social – Littéraire – Artistique, Revue mensuelle illustrée pour l’évolution et l’émancipation de la femme musulmane nord-africaine*

Director-founder: Mahmoud Zarrouk; rédacteur en chef: Abdul-Méjid Chabby; 5 frs; subscription: 50 francs; office: Colisée, Tunis; printings: 700.

“On réclame un programme,” Mahmoud Zarrouk.....	1
“ <i>Leïla</i> vous parle : Agriculture et Industrie,” Tahar Sfar.....	2
“Lettre d’un Jeune Homme à marier: L’Impossible Union,” Rached.....	5
“Propos d’une jeune fille en fleur...,” Radhia.....	8
“Un Poème en prose de Kussaye: Veillée d’âme...,” Kussaye.....	11
“Les Beaux-Arts,” Jamila Alayli, tr. Abdul-Méjid Chabby.....	12
“Nuances,” Kussaye.....	14
“Cœurs en chômage,” Malika.....	16
“Poésie et expression,” S. Tlatli.....	18
“Conceptions diverses de la poésie,” M.A. El Annabi.....	19
“Actualité et rétrospective: Une Page d’Anatole France sur la guerre et la paix”.....	22
“Les Belles Histoires d’Amour: Fatale Méprise”.....	23

No. 11, November 1940, *Leïla: Périodique Social – Littéraire – Artistique, Revue mensuelle illustrée pour l’évolution et l’émancipation de la femme musulmane nord-africaine*

Director-founder: Mahmoud Zarrouk; chief editor: Abdul-Méjid Chabby; 5 frs; subscription: 50 francs; office: Colisée, Tunis.

“ <i>Leïla</i> vous parle”.....	1
“Les Possibilités d’expression de la poésie,” Tahar Sfar.....	2
“Considérations...,” Khaled.....	5
“L’Autre Face du décor,” M.S.R. Lahmar.....	7
“L’Aveu” (poem).....	9
“Feux-Follets” (poem).....	10
“Le Jeûne,” Le Critique.....	11
“A Quoi rêvent...elles,” M. Rafik.....	13
“La Femme et les alertes”.....	15
“Cinéma,” Hatim El Mekki.....	16
“La Ville et ses Echos”.....	19
“Féerie,” G.-L. Le Monnier.....	20
“A Titre Posthume,” Khélil Mamlouk.....	21
“Sadok,” Amina Ben Hassine.....	22

Table of Contents: Second Series

No. 1, 1 December 1940, *Leïla: Hebdomadaire Tunisien Indépendant*

Manager: Mahmoud Zarrouk; 1 fr; subscription: 50 francs; advertising: Félix Chiche, 12, Rue d'Italie, Tunis.

"Leïla vous parle..."	1
"Leïla crée pour ses lecteurs"	1
"A l'Aube d'une vie nouvelle," Mahmoud Zarrouk	1
"L'Egypte et la guerre," T. Lakhdar	1
"La Chaussure"	1
"Le Retour à la terre"	2
"Ceux de la terre"	2
"La Bédouine dans l'économie du pays"	2
"Sans Titre"	3
"De l'Economie nouvelle: Le Travail à la tâche"	3
"Reflexions anodines: Civilités"	3
"Le Théâtre," S. Ridha	4
"Mots," Mohammed El-Achkar	4
"Radio: Aux Ecoutes," L'Auditeur	4
"A la Gloire de Pasteur"	5
"Leïla et les sports: Notre Point de vue"	5
"Les Vers à soie"	5
"Les Fleurs"	5
"Le Jeune: Sa Valeur éducatrice," Le Critique	6
"Si Nous parlions un peu de Scoutisme," Cerf	6
"Au Municipal: Omar Ibnou Abdel Azez," Mohyeddine	7
"Paysannat et hydraulique"	7
"Echos sportifs"	7
"La Musique: Modernsions les instruments," L'Amateur	7
"Les Feuilles," (poem)	8
"La Crise de la lingerie"	8
"De la Décence"	8
"Mode ou pas mode"	8
"Les Chaouachs"	8

No. 2, 7 December 1940, *Leïla: Hebdomadaire Tunisien Indépendant*

Manager: Mahmoud Zarrouk; 1 fr; subscriptions: 51, Rue Sidi-Ben-Arous, Tunis, 50 francs; Advertising: 12, Rue d'Italie.

"Leïla vous parle," 'Leïla'	1
"A la Recherche d'un équilibre," Mhamed-Ali El Annabi	1
"La Fabrique de draps d'El Battan"	1
"Le Jeune"	2
UN PEU DE TOUT	2
"Utilisation des compétences"	2
"Articles sacrifiés"	2
"Les Elites"	2
"Les Consommateurs y sont pour quelque chose"	2
"L'Economie dirigée"	2
"Economie fermée"	2
"A l'Alliance Française"	2
"Les Conférences de l'Essor"	2
"A l'Aube d'une vie nouvelle, II," Mahmoud Zarrouk	3
"Sans Titre," A.F.	3
DIVERTISSEMENTS DIVERS	4
"Le Théâtre," M.R.	4

“La Radio”.....	4
“Le Cinéma ”.....	4
“A l’Essor”.....	4
“La Musique”.....	5
“Mode ou pas mode,” Jamila.....	5
“Les Berceaux”.....	5
“Les Jeux de l’esprit”.....	5
LEILA SPORTIVE.....	6
“Football”.....	6
“Cyclisme”.....	6
“Scoutisme”.....	6
“Une Poignée d’échos”.....	6
“Le Conte de ‘Leïla’: La Condition tripartite”.....	7
“L’Oeuvre du Maréchal Pétain”.....	7
“Le Retour à la Terre : L’Agriculture tunisienne,” Rachid.....	8
<u>No. 3, 14 Decembre 1940, Leïla: Hebdomadaire Tunisien Indépendant</u>	
1 fr; subscriptions: 50 frs: 51, Rue Sidi-Ben-Arous, Tunis; advertising: 12, Rue d’Italie.	
“Leïla vous parle”.....	1
“Ce que l’on attend du nouveau système économique”.....	1
“Regards sur la Turquie,” Tahar Lakhdar.....	1
UN PEU DE TOUT.....	2
“Un Fait Divers”.....	2
“ ‘Mehr’ et ‘Dot’ ”.....	2
“Le Droit musulman ”.....	2
“Achetez donc Tunisien”.....	2
“Par Terre... ”.....	2
“La Civilisation”.....	2
“Au Barreau”.....	2
“Dans les Familles”.....	2
“Ammi el Hadj”.....	2
“Et la Boukha ? ”.....	2
“Les Peintres tunisiens”.....	2
“Le Prix de Carthage”.....	2
“A La Conquête de l’Eternité,” Tahar Sfar.....	3
“Les Jeux de l’Esprit”.....	3
DIVERTISSEMENTS DIVERS.....	4
“Le Rôle du théâtre,” M.S. Ridha.....	4
“Potins de la Scène”.....	4
“La Fin d’un Cocaïnomane,” Mohyeddine.....	4
“La Radio : La Radio-Nationale”.....	5
“Le Cinéma : Du Film nouveau,” Mourad.....	5
“La Musique ,” l’Amateur.....	5
LEILA SPORTIVE.....	6
“Football”.....	6
“Le Lawn-Tennis, sport-roi,” Ali Ben Mahmoud.....	6
“Scoutisme,” Cerf.....	6
“Une Poignée d’échos”.....	6
“Mode ou pas mode,” Jamila.....	7
“Le Retour à la Terre : L’Agriculture tunisienne,” Rachid.....	7
“La Vie chère à Sidi-Bou-Saïd”.....	7
“Le Conte de Leïla: L’Epée enchantée”.....	8
“Automne à Carthage” (poem), Dr. Er-Razi.....	8

No. 4, 21 December 1940, *Leïla: Hebdomadaire Tunisien Indépendant*

1 fr; subscriptions: 50 frs; manager: Mahmoud Zarrouk; subscriptions: 51, Rue Sidi-Ben-Arous, Tunis; advertising: 12, Rue d'Italie.

"L'Organisation de l'Agriculture," 'Leïla'	1
"Critique Posthume: La Franc-Maçonnerie ou refuge des évadés"	1
UN PEU DE TOUT	2
"Leïla vous parle"	2
"Retour à la Terre"	2
"Sans Titre," A.F.	2
"L'Organe des Juifs de Tunisie"	2
"Nous lui tirerons les oreilles"	2
"Un Tour au Marché"	2
"Rêve et Réalité," M. Rafik	3
"Economie nouvelle: La fin des trusts," H. B-S.	3
"Lettre, à Y.D." Kussaye	3
DIVERTISSEMENTS DIVERS	4
"La Radio: La Radio-Nationale," L'Auditeur	4
"Potins de la scène"	4
"La Musique," L'Amateur	4
"Autour du Prix de Carthage"	4
"Le Cinéma," M.R.	5
"Distinction honorifique"	5
"Bienvenue"	5
"Nécrologie"	5
"Mode ou pas mode," Jamila	5
"A l'Essor," H. Moncef	5
"Les Jeux de l'esprit"	5
"Le Mois de Ramadan: Son Aspect artistique," Le Critique	6
"Facilitons le Mariage: Si j'étais célibataire..." 'Un-qui-n'est-pas-célibataire'	6
LEILA SPORTIVE	7
"Football"	7
"Une Poignée d'échos"	7
"Le 'Golf': Notre 'Agfa' Nationale," Ali Ben Mahmoud	7
"Le Conte de 'Leïla': Les Aventures des Souliers de 'Baba Kacem'," Le Vieux Conteur	8
"Le Retour à la Terre: Problème du Jour," Rachid	8

No. 5, 1 janvier 1941, *Leïla: Hebdomadaire Tunisien Indépendant*

1 fr; subscriptions: 50 frs; director-manager: Mahmoud Zarrouk; subscriptions: 51, Rue Sidi-Ben-Arous, Tunis; advertising: 12, Rue d'Italie.

"Le Problème Rural," Leïla	1
"La Franc-maçonnerie ou refuge des évadés"	1
"Science et Religion," Mhamed-Ali El Annabi	1
"Leïla vous parle"	1
UN PEU DE TOUT	2
"M. l'Amiral Esteva et les lettres arabes," M. Rafik	2
"Les Elections"	2
"AzizaOthmana"	2
"Si Toutes en faisaient autant!"	2
"Les Arabes en Espagne"	2
"Les Petits Domestiques"	2
"L'Exposition Yahia"	2
"Musique et Lieux Communs"	3
"Renouveau journalistique," M.Z.	3
"Divertissements divers"	4
"La Radio: Aux Ecoutes," L'Auditeur	4
"La Musique: L'Inspiration musicale," L'Amateur	4

“Le Théâtre”.....	4
“Le Cinéma,” M.R.....	4
“A L’Essor”.....	5
“Mode ou pas mode,” Jamila.....	5
“Pour Toi” (poem), Marianne Legardet.....	5
“Les Jeux de l’esprit”.....	5
LEILA SPORTIVE.....	6
“Bulletin sportif: La Natation, sport ‘idéal’ ,” Ali Ben Mahmoud.....	6
“Football : Nos Vedettes sportives:Laroussi ”.....	6
“Scoutisme: ‘Etre prêt’”.....	6
“Le Dimanche sportif: Natation;Rugby”.....	6
“Les Plats Nationaux,” M.Rafik.....	7
“Dans les Arts : Exposition Yahia,” A. Fichet.....	7
“Le Triomphe de la Mort,” K.C.....	7
“Le Conte de Leïla: Mendiante ‘fille de mendiant’ ,” Le Vieux Conteur.....	8

No. 6, 8 January 1941, Leïla: Hebdomadaire Tunisien Indépendant

1 fr; subscriptions: 50 frs; director-manager: Mahmoud Zarrouk; subscriptions: 51, Rue Sidi-Ben-Arous, Tunis; advertising: 12, Rue d’Italie.

“Culture et Technique,” T. Sahar.....	1
“L’Orientation professionnelle de la Jeunesse”.....	1
“Leïla vous parle,” ‘Leïla’.....	2
“Anniversaire de Leïla”.....	2
UN PEU DE TOUT.....	2
“Veille de fêtes”.....	2
“Vœux de Leïla”.....	2
“Le Fromage Testouri”.....	2
“Les Marchands de vin”.....	2
“Cartes d’alimentation et bons de réapprovisionnement”.....	3
“La Tunisie, centre d’attraction des Belles Lettres,” M.Rafik.....	3
DIVERTISSEMENTS DIVERS.....	4
“La Radio,” L’Auditeur.....	4
“La Musique : Les Airs synthétiques de l’Egypto-Tunisien,” L’Amateur.....	4
“Le Théâtre : Propos vaudevillesques ou mégalomanie présidentielle”.....	4
“Le Festival des corporations sur le vif,” Le Spectateur.....	5
“Le Contenant et le contenu”.....	5
“Les Jeux de l’esprit”.....	5
LEILA SPORTIVE.....	6
“Bulletin sportif : L’Equitation sport à la mode,” Ali Ben Mahmoud.....	6
“Naccache remporte la coupe du Tennis-club”.....	6
“Football”.....	6
“Nos Vedette sportives”.....	6
“Hedi Ben Ammar”.....	6
“Au Profit du secours national”.....	6
“Athlétisme”.....	6
“Chronique médicale : Les Engelures ou Erythèmes terio,” Mohamed Touhami Sassi.....	7
“Curiosités scientifiques : Le sixième sens,” B.G.....	7
“Le Conte de Leïla : Le Mouton de l’Aïd ou du ‘pater familias’ ,” Le Vieux Conteur.....	8

No. 7, 16 January 1941, Leïla: Hebdomadaire Tunisien Indépendant

1 fr; subscriptions annuels: 50 frs; directeur-manager: Mahmoud Zarrouk; subscriptions: 51, Rue Sidi-Ben-Arous, Tunis; Advertising: 12, Rue d’Italie.

“Le Message du général Weygand aux musulmans de l’Afrique du Nord”.....	1
“L’Orientation professionnelle: Tendances et vocations”.....	1
“Leïla vous parle,” ‘Leïla’.....	2
“Nous Suggérons”.....	2

“Pourquoi pas ?”.....	2
UN PEU DE TOUT.....	2
“L’Amiral Esteva visite l’école de la rue du Pacha”.....	2
“Chez les médecins de colonisation”.....	2
“La Spéculation”.....	2
“Un Point de droit”.....	2
“Fiançailles”.....	2
“De Retour”.....	2
“Rue Sidi Ben Ziad”.....	2
“Histoire”.....	2
“Ammi El Hadj”.....	2
“Mariage”.....	2
“La Franc-maçonnerie : Confrérie d’attrape nigauds”.....	3
“Qu’est-ce qu’une civilisation ? ,” Tahar Sfar.....	3
DIVERTISSEMENTS DIVERS.....	4
“La Radio,” L’Auditeur.....	4
“Le Théâtre: Le Karakouz d’ ‘El Ittihad’, Chems-Es-Sabah (Le soleil du matin)”.....	5
“La Musique: Quelques Réflexions,” L’Amateur.....	5
“Une Heure de musique tunisienne”.....	5
“Mode ou pas mode,” Jamila.....	5
“Les Jeux de l’esprit”.....	5
LEILA SPORTIVE.....	6
“Bulletin sportif: L’aviron, sport méconnu chez nous”.....	6
“Football: Nos vedettes sportives”.....	6
“Le Criterium officiel”.....	6
“Athlétisme”.....	6
“L’Aid El Kebir sportif”.....	6
“Aux Sociétés sportives”.....	6
“Ceux qui s’en vont: Sheyes n’est plus !” Pauvre Alain.....	6
“...Pour Nous aussi,” Ibn-El-Aouam.....	6
“L’Aid El Kebir ou la Fête du Sacrifice,” Le Critique.....	7
“Considérations sur l’Intérêt,” Radhia Daly.....	7
“Sans Titre,” A.F.....	7
“Le Conte de Leïla: Jours Fastes et Néfastes,” Le Vieux Conteur.....	8
<u>No.8, 24 January 1941, Leïla: Hebdomadaire Tunisien Indépendant</u>	
1 fr; subscriptions: 50 frs; directeur-manager: Mahmoud Zarrouk; subscriptions: 51, Rue Sidi-Ben-Arous, Tunis; advertising: 12, Rue d’Italie.	
“L’Artisanat”.....	1
“Réflexions anodines: l’Utilisation des compétences,” M. Rafik.....	1
“Leïla vous parle,” ‘Leïla’.....	2
“Patagons et Patagonettes”.....	2
“La Réalisation des vœux de ‘Leïla’”.....	2
UN PEU DE TOUT.....	2
“Nous suggérons...”.....	2
“Distinction honorifique”.....	2
“Un Genre de spéculation”.....	2
“Les Expositions”.....	2
“Les Livres ”.....	2
“Les Mendiants”.....	2
“La Suppression de la mendicité”.....	2
“Sanction méritée”.....	2
“Théâtre : La Troupe Mohyeddine”.....	3
“La Jeunesse sfaxienne,” El Habib El Masmoudi.....	3
“Les Auditions de la Soulamya”.....	3

DIVERTISSEMENTS DIVERS.....	4
“La Radio,” L’Auditeur.....	4
“La Musique: Deux Auditions différentes engendrent deux états d’âme différents,” L’Amateur.....	4
“Le Théâtre”.....	5
“A l’Essor: La Conférence du Docteur Bouquet”.....	5
“L’Orchestre tunisien de ‘Tunis-National’”.....	5
“Mode ou pas mode,” Jamila.....	5
“Les Jeux de l’esprit”.....	5
LEILA SPORTIVE.....	6
“Bulletin sportif: Le Base-ball, sport national des Etats-Unis”.....	6
“Football: Nos Vedettes sportives”.....	6
“Une Grande Manifestation sportive !”.....	6
“Savez-vous que... ”.....	6
“Le Criterium de la L.T.F.A.”.....	6
“La Franc-maçonnerie : Confrérie d’attrape nigauds”.....	7
“La Franc-maçonnerie : Aux Enchères publiques,” ‘Tunisie Française’.....	7
“Curiosités scientifiques: Bulles de Savon,” B.G.....	7
“Le Hammam,” A.F.....	7
“Le Conte de Leïla : Les Deux Resquilleurs,” Le Vieux Conteur.....	8
<u>No. 9, 1 February 1941, Leïla: Hebdomadaire Tunisien Indépendant</u>	
1 fr; subscriptions: 50 frs; director-manager: Mahmoud Zarrouk.	
“La Production Agricole et la Terre”.....	1
“Dieu”.....	1
DIVERTISSEMENTS DIVERS.....	2
“La Radio”.....	2
“La Musique,” L’Amateur.....	2
“Les Propos de Jamila,” Jamila.....	2
“Le Théâtre: Potins de la Scène”.....	2
“Le Contrôle des airs”.....	2
“Leïla vous parle,” ‘Leïla’.....	3
“Le Premier Vœu de ‘Leïla’ est réalisé”.....	3
“Les Vœux de ‘Leïla’”.....	3
“Les Souks”.....	3
“La Laine tunisienne”.....	3
“La Conférence du Général Saadallah”.....	3
“L’Avenir des sports en Tunisie,” H. Mejdoub.....	3
“Intermèdes de chants”.....	3
“Bilan radiophonique de la semaine,” ‘Leïla’.....	3
“A la Municipalité”.....	3
“Plus de Bigoudis”.....	3
“Le Conte de Leïla : La Bague magique,” Le Vieux Conteur.....	4
“A l’Alliance Française,” H.B.S.....	4
<u>No. 10, 8 February 1941, Leïla: Hebdomadaire Tunisien Indépendant</u>	
1 fr; subscriptions: 50 frs; director-manager: Mahmoud Zarrouk.	
“Des Asiles pour les mendiants,” M. Rafik.....	1
“Habitations à bon marché”.....	1
“L’Orientation professionnelle”.....	1
“Le Prix d’Honneur de la Poésie Arabe,” M.Z.....	1
“Leïla vous parle,” ‘Leïla’.....	2
“Les Vœux de ‘Leïla’”.....	2
“A la Municipalité”.....	2
“Mariage”.....	2
“Naissance”.....	2
UN PEU DE TOUT.....	2

"Les Propos de Jamila," Jamila.....	2
"Cours d'orientation professionnelle".....	2
"Les Dernier des Almohades".....	2
"Autour des Emissions musicales".....	2
"Le Coin des jeunes: Le Problème de la femme," Ezzeddine Bouhlila.....	2
DIVERTISSEMENTS DIVERS.....	3
"La Radio," L'Auditeur.....	3
"La Musique".....	3
"Le Théâtre: Au Municipal : L'Ingrat".....	3
"Baromètre radiophonique de la semaine".....	3
"Le Conte de Leïla: La Danse des Godets," Le Vieux Conteur.....	4
"Les Livres : Hammamet fleur d'amour par Claude Benady," M.R.....	4
"Vive le Sport," Le jeune sportif.....	4
"Conférences: 'L'Alchimie et la synthèse de l'or' par Monsieur Debiesse," Béchir Goucha.....	4
No. 11, Sixième Année, Nouvelle Série, 16 février 1941, <i>Leïla : Hebdomadaire Tunisien Indépendant</i>	
"Paraissant le 1 ^{er} , le 8, le 16 et le 24 de chaque mois"; 1 fr; subscriptions: 50 frs; director-manager: Mahmoud Zarrouk.	
"L'Achoura," T.S. (Tahar Sfar ?).....	1
"Appel à la population tunisienne," 'Leïla'.....	1
"Hier et aujourd'hui: La Vie intellectuelle," M.Rafik.....	1
"Notre Programme," Mohammed Saadallah.....	1
"A Nos Lecteurs": correspondance à Mahmoud Zarrouk.....	1
"Leïla vous parle," 'Leïla'.....	2
"Une Bienfaitrice: Mme Hafsia Lakoudia".....	2
"Un Cœur généreux".....	2
UN PEU DE TOUT.....	2
"Une Ecole des beaux-arts à Sfax".....	2
"Exposition de Mme Goyer-Autray (Hall du 'Petit Matin')".....	2
"Historiettes musicales".....	2
"Exposition A. Fichet" (Alexandre Fichet).....	2
"Les Prochaines Conférences de l'Essor".....	2
"En Glanant: Le Secret d'Alexandre Dumas," Le Glaneur.....	2
"Nos Jeunes et la musique".....	2
DIVERTISSEMENTS DIVERS.....	3
"La Radio," L'Auditeur.....	3
"La Musique : Chanter," L'Amateur.....	3
"Les Propos de Jamila," Jamila.....	3
"Football et culture physique".....	3
"Le Prix de la Poésie Arabe".....	3
"La Jeunesse théâtrale".....	3
"Le Conte de Leïla: On ne peut contenter tout le monde et son père," Le Vieux Conteur.....	4
"Conférences: La Chimie moderne par Monsieur Debiesse," Béchir Goucha.....	4
"Chronique hygiénique: Soins de la Peau et du Corps," Le Médecin pratique.....	4
No. 12, 24 February 1941, <i>Leïla: Hebdomadaire Tunisien Indépendant</i>	
"Paraissant le 1 ^{er} , le 8, le 16 et le 24 de chaque mois"; 1 fr; subscriptions: 50 frs; director-manager: Mahmoud Zarrouk.	
"Sur les grand'routes de la compréhension franco-tunisienne," 'Leïla'.....	1
"Les Mendiants," A.F.....	1
"Le 12 ^e Anniversaire du règne de son Altesse Sidi Ahmed Pacha Bey de Tunisie," 'Leïla'.....	1
"Le Mariage," Dr Ben Sassi.....	1
UN PEU DE TOUT.....	2
"Le Coin des jeunes: Le Problème de la Femme," Ezzeddine Bouhlila.....	2
"Appel à la Jeunesse tunisienne," Bacha Azzeddine.....	2
"La Conférence du R.P.Demeerseman".....	2

“Rien ne sert de courir... ”	2
“Leïla vous parle,” ‘Leïla’	2
“Les Vœux de ‘Leïla’”	2
“Nécrologie”	2
“Le Prix de la Poésie Arabe”	2
DIVERTISSEMENTS DIVERS	3
“La Radio,” L’Auditeur	3
“Thés-Causeries ”	3
“La Musique: Les Vœux de ‘Leïla’ dans le domaine de la musique: ‘Labidi à l’honneur’,” L’Auditeur	3
“Les Propos de Jamila,” Jamila	3
“Le Théâtre: L’Art pour l’art,” M.R.	3
“Baromètre radiophonique de la semaine”	3
“Le Conte de Leïla: Un Solliciteur ingénieux,” Le Vieux Conteur (from “Majani El Adab”)	4
“A l’Alliance française : La Conférence du Général Saâdallah”	4
“Les Livres: Chaâr, par Henri E. Vallet”	4
“L’Anté-Islam,” Mohcen Ben Hamida	4
No. 13, 1 March 1941, <i>Leïla: Hebdomadaire Tunisien Indépendant</i>	
“Paraissant le 1 ^{er} , le 8, le 16 et le 24 de chaque mois”; 1 fr ; subscriptions annuels : 50 frs ; directeur-manager : Mahmoud Zarrouk.	
“Le Maréchal Pétain et l’école de demain ,” ‘Leïla’	1
“Pour la Protection du Fellah,” Tahar Sfar	1
“Leïla vous parle,” ‘Leïla’	2
“ ‘Leïla’ vous dit : Merci”	2
“Ressemblance non garantie”	2
UN PEU DE TOUT	2
“Le Coin des jeunes: Attention au déboisement en Tunisie,” Bacha Azzeddine	2
“Par l’Effet... !,” Ezzeddine Bouhlila	2
“Chez M. Béchir Maâouia”	2
“De Asiles pour les mendiants,” D.T.	2
“En Glanant : Rétrospective : Je veux être député,” Le Glaneur	2
“Deux Journaux, la même nouvelle... ”	2
“A l’Essor”	2
DIVERTISSEMENTS DIVERS	3
“La Radio,” L’Auditeur	3
“La Musique,” L’Amateur	3
“Les Propos de Jamila,” Jamila	3
“L’Activité de nos poètes,” M. Rafik	3
“Le Théâtre”	3
“Les Livres : <i>L’Orient dans la Littérature française</i> par Chedly Khariallah”	3
“Le Conte de Leïla : Métamorphose,” Le Vieux Conteur	4
“Chronique hygiénique,” Le Médecin Pratique	4
“L’Anté-Islam,” Mohcen Ben Hamida	4
“La Compréhensions franco-tunisienne,” R.P. Demeerseman	4
No. 14, 16 March 1941, <i>Leïla : Hebdomadaire Tunisien Indépendant</i>	
“Paraissant le 1 ^{er} , le 8, le 16 et le 24 de chaque mois”; 1 fr; subscriptions: 50 frs; director-manager: Mahmoud Zarrouk.	
“A Propos du Prix de Carthage: Littérature Nord-Africaine,” M. Rafik	1
“Les Périls sociaux,” Dr M. Ben Sassi	1
“La Mort du Prince Tahar Bey ”	1
“Leïla vous parle,” ‘Leïla’	2
UN PEU DE TOUT	2
“La Mort du Général Mostefa Sfar”	2
“Stockomanie... ,” <i>Tunisie française</i>	2
“Le Prix des Lettres Arabes,” ‘Leïla’	2

“Un Livre sur la Tunisie”.....	2
DIVERTISSEMENTS DIVERS.....	3
“La Radio,” L’Auditeur.....	3
“Déception” (poem), Nox.....	3
“La Musique, La Rachidia,” L’Amateur.....	3
“Le Théâtre: Les Amis du théâtre,” El Mourad.....	3
“Variétés: Bacchus Vous Parle,” H.M.....	3
“Les Propos de Jamila,” Jamila.....	3
“Curiosités scientifiques : Mimétisme,” Béchir Goucha.....	4
“L’Anté-Islam,” Mohcen Ben Hamida.....	4
<u>No15, 24 March 1941, Leïla: Hebdomadaire Tunisien Indépendant</u>	
1 fr ; “Paraissant le 1 ^{er} , le 8, le 16 et le 24 de chaque mois”; director-manager: Mahmoud Zarrouk	
“L’Oeuvre du Maréchal Pétain”.....	1
“Le Serment des légionnaires de Tunisie”.....	1
“Mot d’ordre de la Légion: Union ”.....	1
“Leïla vous parle,” ‘Leïla’.....	2
“M. l’Amiral Esteva à Vichy”.....	2
“A la Section d’Etat”.....	2
“Le Drame du Jerid”.....	2
UN PEU DE TOUT.....	2
“Darmouni et de Saint-Julien sont expulsés de Tunisie”.....	2
“Après le Prix de Carthage”.....	2
“ S.A. le Prince Sidi El Béchir Bey”.....	2
“Votre Beauté, Madame”.....	2
“Civilité”.....	2
“Le Prix de la Poésie Arabe”.....	2
“Afrique Littéraire”.....	2
DIVERTISSEMENTS DIVERS.....	3
“La Radio,” L’Auditeur.....	3
“Allô ! Ici Tunis National”.....	3
“La Musique: Le Mouvement intérieur et la parole,” L’Amateur.....	3
“Le Théâtre”.....	3
“Les Propos de Jamila,” Jamila.....	3
“A la Rachidia”.....	3
“Le Conte de Leïla : Mazhoud le gaffeur,” Le Vieux Conteur.....	4
“L’Anté-Islam,” Mohcen Ben Hamida.....	4
“Deux Poèmes”: “La Petite Mendiante,” Karawan ; “Espoir,” Raja.....	4
<u>No. 16, 16 April 1941, Leïla: Hebdomadaire Tunisien Indépendant</u>	
“Paraissant le 1 ^{er} , le 8, le 16 et le 24 de chaque mois”; 1 fr; subscriptions: 50 frs; director-manager: Mahmoud Zarrouk.	
“Les Rapports franco-tunisiens: Le Bilinguisme,” M. Rafik.....	1
“Collaboration,” T. Sfar.....	1
“L’Amiral Esteva Déclare”.....	1
“Leïla vous Parle”.....	2
“La Grande Semaine de l’enfance”.....	2
“A la Direction de l’Enseignement”.....	2
UN PEU DE TOUT.....	2
“Le Nouveau Cheikh El-Médina: Le Général Saâdallah”.....	2
“Orientation professionnelle au Maroc”.....	2
“Décès”.....	2
“Le Commissariat des juifs : M. Xavier Vallat déclare ”.....	2
“Augmentation des salaires agricoles en Algérie”.....	2
“Trafiquants et fauteurs de vie chère”.....	2
DIVERTISSEMENTS DIVERS.....	3

“La Radio,” L’Auditeur.....	3
“Le Prix de la Poésie Arabe”.....	3
“Le Théâtre,” Le Souffleur.....	3
“Nos Jeunes et le Théâtre”.....	3
“Les Propos de Jamila,” Jamila.....	3
“Etoile filante...”.....	3
“Lexique hebdomadaire”.....	3
“Les Berceuses Tunisiennes,” Khadija.....	4
“La Chanson tunisienne”.....	4
“Islam et culture physique”.....	4
“Autour d’une conférence,” Dr. Mohamed Ben Sassi.....	4
<u>No. 17, 24 April 1941, Leïla: Hebdomadaire Tunisien Indépendant</u>	
“Paraissant le 1 ^{er} , le 8, le 16 et le 24 de chaque mois”; « Paraissant le 1 ^{er} , le 8, le 16 et le 24 de chaque mois » ; 1 fr ; subscriptions annuels : 50 frs ; directeur-manager : Mahmoud Zarrouk.	
“La Lutte contre la spéculation,” ‘Leïla’.....	1
“Hydraulique et paysannat,” Rachid.....	1
“A la Municipalité”.....	1
“La Première Mosquée au Canada”.....	1
“Vers un Nouveau Rivage”.....	1
“Leïla vous parle”.....	1
“Les Recettes de Leïla”.....	2
UN PEU DE TOUT.....	2
“Chronique hygiénique,” Le Médecin pratique.....	2
“Maquillage,” M.Rafik.....	2
“Du Choix d’un ami”.....	2
DIVERTISSEMENTS DIVERS.....	3
“La Radio,” L’Auditeur.....	3
“Le Théâtre,” Le Souffleur.....	3
“En Glanant: Un Mot de Marconi ; Mot d’enfant”.....	3
“La Soirée du 10 avril,” Un Soussien.....	3
“Poème,” Raja.....	3
“Les Propos de Jamila,” Jamila.....	3
“Le Conte de Leïla: Le Mulet enchanté,” Le Vieux Conteur.....	4
“Les Berceuses tunisiennes, II”.....	4
“Un Moyen inattendu de se protéger contre les moustiques,” Béchir Goucha.....	4
<u>No. 18, 2 May 1941, Leïla: Hebdomadaire Tunisien Indépendant</u>	
“Rénovation de l’Artisanat,” M.A. El Annabi.....	1
“L’Art médico pharmaceutique: Chez les Arabes,” Dr. Mohamed Ben Sassi.....	1
“Leïla vous parle ,” ‘Leïla’.....	2
“Résurrection de notre économie”.....	2
“Le Sucre en Algérie”.....	2
UN PEU DE TOUT.....	2
“A la Jamaïaa des Habous”.....	2
“Semaine de l’enfance”.....	2
“Que de Coquilles”.....	2
“Nécrologie”.....	2
“Et les Nègresses ?...”.....	2
“Le Coin des Jeunes: A l’Occasion de l’arrivée de M. Borotra : Fête de la Jeunesse”.....	2
“Sus aux fraudeurs ! ”.....	2
“Radès : Station climatique de pied de montagne”.....	2
“Réflexions anodines: Moralisons la cité,” M. Rafik.....	3
“La Positino de la Turquie”.....	3
“Vocabulaire de Guerre”.....	3
“Emancipation manquée”.....	3

DIVERTISSEMENTS DIVERS.....	4
“La Radio”.....	4
“Tour d’horizon hebdomadaire,” L’Auditeur.....	4
“Déception à la suite d’une émission,” Le suppléant à l’Auditeur.....	4
“Les Débuts d’un accoucheur...,” Raouf.....	4
“Le Théâtre,” Le Souffleur.....	4
“Lexique hebdomadaire”.....	4
“L’Exposition Farhat,” B.O.....	4
“Le Monde comme il va...”.....	5
“Petites Nouvelles...”.....	5
“Les Propos de Jamila,” Jamila.....	5
“La Musique : Les Sources modernes de la musique en Tunisie,” Mahmoud Zarrouk.....	5
“Le Dormeur”.....	5
“La Nature consolatrice,” Abedjelil Rachid.....	5
“Chronique scientifique: Où en est la Télévision ?” Béchir Gaucha.....	6
“Chronique médicale: Les Vitamines”.....	6
“Les Métiers Kairouan: Leur Passé, leur présent, leur avenir”.....	6
“Les Journées Borotra,” manifestations sportives (advertising).....	7
“Le Conte de Leïla: La Clémence de Dieu,” Le Vieux Conteur.....	8
“Les Berceuses tunisiennes, III”.....	8
<u>No. 19, Sixième Année, Nouvelle Série, le 27 mai 1941, Leïla : Hebdomadaire Tunisien Indépendant</u>	
1 fr; subscriptions annuels: 50 frs; director-manager: Mahmoud Zarrouk; printings: 2000.	
“A Propos des Fêtes de l’Enfance,” M. Rafik.....	1
“Lexique hebdomadaire”.....	1
“Vocabulaire de guerre, II”.....	1
“Les Propos de Jamila,” Jamila.....	2
UN PEU DE TOUT.....	2
“Contre la spéculation”.....	2
“Après l’Espagne le Portugal”.....	2
“Les Négresses se maquillent-elles ?”.....	2
“La Radio,” L’Auditeur.....	2
“La Musique ,” L’Amateur.....	2
“Nouvelles Mesures contre les Juifs en zone occupée”.....	3
“Le Canal de Suez”.....	3
“L’Age des épicuriens est révolu !... ,” M.B.....	3
“Leïla vous parle...”.....	3
“Le Conte de Leïla: Quiproquo,” Le Vieux Conteur.....	4
“Mariage exemplaire,” M.S.....	4
“Le Théâtre: L’Etoile des environs,” Le Reporter.....	4
“La Mort de M. Naji Saiadi”.....	4
<u>No.20, 8 July 1941, Leïla: Hebdomadaire Tunisien Indépendant</u>	
“Paraissant le 1 ^{er} , le 8, le 16 et le 24 de chaque mois”; 1 fr; director-manager: Mahmoud Zarrouk.	
“L’Oeuvre d’Avicenne,” Mounir.....	1
“L’Orientation des Jeunes”.....	1
“L’Art à Sousse”.....	1
“A la Guerre comme à la guerre”.....	2
“Halfaouine”.....	2
UN PEU DE TOUT.....	2
“Lexique de Leïla”.....	2
“Les Propos de Jamila,” Jamila.....	2
“Le Transfert du Souk-El-Asr”.....	2
“Autour du décret sur le mariage,” M.S.....	2
“De Quoi rire un peu...”.....	2
“Chronique médicale: Régime de l’obésité”.....	3

“Leïla et le mariage”.....	3
“L’Exposition artistique de l’Afrique Française”.....	3
“Si Hamdoun à Kairouan”.....	3
“Les Femmes et le Sport,” Mounir.....	4
“Théâtre et Cinéma,” M.R.....	4
“Le Conte de Leïla: L’Histoire de Bachi Bou-Zouck,” Le Vieux Conteur.....	4

Index of Advertisers

- Abdelaziz, Sellam. *Tout pour l'électricité*. 116, place Bab-Souika, Tunis.
- Abou En-Nasr, Mohamed. 9, Souk Serairia, Tunis. (fez)
- Ain el Garci*. 13, rue de Grèce, Tunis. (bottled water)
- Aloulou, Mohamed. 9, rue El Hafsia, Tunis.
- Annabi. 114, rue de la Kasbah, Tunis. (Tailor)
- Amar. *Grand Café de la Source*, 5, rue d'Essaix, Tunis.
- Ammar. *Eau de la Source*. (bottled water)
- Aouidj, Salah. 34, Boulevard Bab-Djedid, Tunis. Tél: 38.85. (dentist)
- Arab, Mongi. *Fatma – Rugs*. Souk El-Leffa/Direction et dépôts : 10-12-14, Souk El Bransia, Tunis. Tel: 08.56. Succursale à Paris: 14, Rue Gaillon, Tél: Opéra-31.01. (Rugs)
- Aux 100.000 coupons*. 4, Rue Amilcar, Tunis. Tél: 41.17. (fabric)
- Ayari, Habib and Mohamed Zouaoui. 154, rue Bab-Souika, Tunis.
- Bahri, Mohamed. *La Sultane*, 9 bis, Marché des Huiles/150, rue Bab-Souika, Tunis. (olive oil)
- Bakri. 86, rue de l'Eglise, Tunis.
- Banque Nationale Tunisienne*.
- Baprix. 2, Rue de l'Eglise, Tunis. (stockings)
- Bébé Rose*. 7, Rue de l'Eglise, Tunis. (layette, knitwear)
- Béchir, Mahmoud. 101, rue de la Kasbah, Tunis. 52, Souk des Rugs, Kairouan. (rug production)
- Bel Hadj. *Restaurant El-Monchia*. 3, Place Bab-Souika, Tunis.
- Bel Hassine, Famille. Colisée, Tunis. Kairouan. (rugs)
- Ben Aba, Tahar. 53-55, Marché Central, Tunis. (fruits)
- Ben Abdallah, H.&M. Salah. *La Broderie Artistique*. 65 et 46, Souk Sekajine, Tunis.
- Ben Abdallah, Hassen. 3 bis, Rue Al-Djazira, Tunis. Tél: 32.45. (dentist)
- Ben Abderrazak, Abdel Majid. 55, Souk-El-Attarine, Tunis. (rugs, blankets, jewelry, perfumes)
- Ben Ammar Frères. Rue sidi Ben Arous, à coté du Kasbah, Tunis. (tailor)
- Ben Amor, Tahar. 7, avenue Bab-Djedid, Tunis. (restaurant)
- Benani, Azouz. Rue de Naples, Tunis. (shirts, ties)
- Ben Brahim, Sadok. *Radio Lorenz*. 33, Souk-El-Berka, Tunis.
- Ben Chadli, Abdel Hamid. 71, avenue Bab-Djedid, Tunis. (jeweler, glasses, clocks)
- Ben Mansour, Belhassen. *Les Magasins Ben Mansour*. 35, Souk el Attarine, Tunis. (knitwear, fabric)
- Ben Milad, A. 22-24, Souk-el-Attarine, Tunis. (oriental articles)
- Ben M'louka, Khemaïs. *Les Grands Magasins*, 65-76, rue Sidi Mahrez, Tunis (notions store, knitwear, fabric)
- Benmoussa, Jacques. *O'Kay Tailor-Drapier*. 12, rue des Maltais, Tunis.
- Benmussa. 6, rue de Constantine, Tunis. (perfume maker)
- Benmussa, Victor. 6, Rue de Constantine, Tunis. (lingerie)
- Ben Naji, Taieb. *Stamboul Ameublements*. 42, Rue des Maltais; Warehouse: Rue du Miel; Factory: Souk El-Ouzar, Tunis. (home furnishings and furniture)
- Ben Saci, Amor. 77, Marché central, Tunis. (fresh eggs, butter, honey, cheese)
- Ben Yedder. *Les Cafés Ben Yedder*. 17, rue Al-Djazira, Tunis. Tél: 50-76. (coffee)
- Blaïch, Tahar. Rue Sidi Ben Arous, Tunis.
- Bluette*. 6, rue de Bône, Tunis. Tél. 22.39. (women's hair dresser)
- Bob*. 17, avenue de France, Tunis. (men's clothing)
- Boîte à Perfumes*. Colisée, Tunis. (perfume)
- Boubaker, Tahar. 45, rue Bab-Saadoun, Tunis. (tailor)
- Boublil. 32, Rue des Maltais, Tunis. (draperies, fabric)
- Bouchiba Ameublement*. 145, rue de la Kasbah, Tunis. (home furnishings and furniture)
- Bouchiba, Hamida. *Rugessier royal*. 10, rue Saïda Adjoula, Tunis.
- Bouchoucha, M. Galeries du 'Colisée,' Tunis. (Téléfunken televisions)
- Bouchrara, Mohamed. 123, rue des Teinturiers, Tunis. (dyers, cleaners)
- Bou Jedra, Hassen. *Transport*. 16 bd Bab-Saadoun, Tunis; *Grand café d'Alger*. 7, place Bab-Souika, Tunis.
- Boussen, Salah. Rue Lagha, Tunis. (Publicist)

- Bouzeiane, Mohamed. 178, rue des Teinturiers, Tunis. (oil, soap, sugar, coffee)
Cafés Tropic. 24, Rue d'Italie, Tunis. Tel: 64.83.
 Calvert, Lola. 24, rue de la Kasbah, Tunis. (seer, clairvoyante)
 Carlotta. Chez Carlotta, Salon de Coiffure pour Dames. 37, Rue de Naples, Tunis (corner, rue de Marseille).
 Chaâbane. 3, rue d'Epemay, Tunis. (tailor)
 Chahed, A. *Pharmacie de la Kasbah*. 187bis, Rue de la Kasbah, Tunis.
 Chahmi, Tahar. *Etablissements Tahar Chahmi*. 115-117, rue Bab-Souika, Tunis. Tel:39.97. (automobile accessories)
Chancellor. 9, Rue d'Alger, Tunis. (tailor)
Chaussures Bata. 5, Rue d'Italie, Tunis. (shoes)
Chaussures Lux, Les. 9, Ave de France, Tunis. (shoes)
 Chebil, Mahmoud. 12, rue El Medersa, Slimania. (boot maker)
 Chemla et Gandus. *Compagnies « L'Abeille »*. 88, Rue de Serbie, Tunis.
 Chicche. *Deux Magots*. 11, rue de l'Eglise, Tunis. (shirts)
 Clark Gable. (tailor-couturier)
 Cohen, Georges. 42, Rue des Maltais, Tunis. (draperies)
 Danouni, Tahar. *La Providence*. 16, Rue d'Angleterre, Tunis. (insurance)
 Dar Khaznadar. Sainte-Monique (Carthage). (café-restaurant)
 Dar Zarrouk. Sidi-Bou-Saïd. (café-Restaurant)
 De D. Cohen, A & M. 57 bis, Rue des Maltais, Tunis. Tél: 13.38. (bathrooms, plumbing)
Défense du Piéton, La. 5, Rue Saïda-Ajoula (par la rue de la Kasbah), Tunis. Tel: 63.94. (lawyers)
 Denis, France. 36, Avenue de Paris – 1^{er} Etage, Tunis. (haute couture)
 Djemâa, Hamadi. 62bis, Rue de l'Eglise, Tunis.
 Djemâa, Salah. *Palais des vêtements*. 23, rue Al-Djazira, Tunis. Tel: 64.23.
 Edith. *Académie de beauté*. 29, Avenue Jules Ferry, Tunis. (beauty salon)
 Escano, Robert. 6, Rue Amilcar, Tunis. (dentist)
 Fehmi, Béchir. *La Rose Blanche*. 117, rue de la Kasbah, Tunis. (records, phonographs)
 El Fetni, Mohamed. 7, rue Sidi Rassas. Tel: 72.52/64. Rue des Teinturiers. Tél: 40.40/6. Rue Sidi El Aloui, Tunis. (Hammams)
 El Hadj, Zouai. 33, Rue de la Lyre, Alger. Administration and factory: 17, 19, Rue de Picardie, Alger. Tel: 34.38. Warehouses: Médine (Hidjaz), Bab-Sellam/Tunis; 68, Rue de l'Eglise, Paris: Passage Geoffroy. (perfume and soap production)
 El Haj trip by cruise ship.
 El Khemiri, M. Rue de la Kasbah, Tunis. (Schneider brothers radios)
 El Kooli, Hassen. *Les Ateliers de Tissage*. 14, Rue du Tribunal, Tunis. (fabric repair).
 Engerer, Paul et Ch. H. Représentants du Comité des Assureurs maritimes de Marseille. 11, Rue Al-Djazira, Tunis. Tel: 17.88. (maritime insurance)
Ever. (stockings)
 Farah, Brahim. 30, rue de l'Eglise, Tunis. (shoe repairman)
Fashionable. 14, Rue des Maltais, Tunis. (tailor)
 Fellah, M. *Académie des Beaux Arts de Musique*. 106, Rue Sidi Mahrez, Tunis.
Foncier, Le. 170, Rue Bab-Souika, Tunis. (real estate)
 Fourati, Azouz. *Fourati & Cie*. 6, rue El Monastiri, Tunis.
Francine Notions store. 6, Rue Es-Sadikia, Tunis.
 Germaine. *Magasin La Parisienne*. Colisée, Tunis. Tel: 71.49.
 Ghattas, Hadi. 75, rue Sidi Mahrez, Tunis. (Knitwear)
Hammam Dar el Djeld. 14, Rue Dar El Djeld, Tunis.
 Hassine. *Boulangerie-Pâtisserie du Soleil*. 20, avenue Bab-Djedid; 20, avenue Bab-Djedid; 6, Souk El Asser; 24, place Bab-Souika, Tunis. (bakery)
Homme Chic, L'. 4, Avenue de Carthage, Tunis. (tailor)
Hôtel Transatlantique. Tunis.
Imprimerie Hadida. Rue des Tanneurs (Impasse no.1). Tel: 16.25. (printer)
 Isabelle. *Nouvelle Maison Française*. 50, av. de Paris (2^e étage), Tunis. (hair stylist)
 Izel, Madame. 63, Faubourg Poissonnière, Paris (IXe) ; De Passage à Tunis, Colisée (Escalier D (2^e étage). (astrologue, clairvoyante)

- Kabadou. Rendez-vous des sportifs. 57bis, Rue de l'Eglise, Tunis.
- Karaborni, Chedli. *L'Etoile Nationale Electrique*. 7, Souk El-AAssar, Tunis. (sale and repair of electrical appliances)
- Kchouk, Najib. 29, Souk El Dziria, Tunis. (jeweler)
- Kilani. 39, rue Zarkoun, Tunis. (furniture)
- Kochbati, M'Hammed. Sidi-Bou-Said. (Oriental art carpentry)
- Korbous, *Station Thermale de*. Renseignements : 5, Av. de Paris, Tunis. Tél.16.45.
- Korte, Othman & Frère. 189, Rue de la Kasbah, Tunis. (jeweler)
- Longchamp. 5, Rue de Rome, Tunis. Tél.29.72. (woolens, silks, fashion)
- Maâouia, N. *Parfumeur oriental*. 57, Souk-el-Attarine, Tunis. (perfume)
- Maison Dorée Hôtel et son Restaurant l'Auberge*. 6, Rue de Hollande, Tunis. (hotel/restaurant)
- Meddeb, S. 1, Rue de Bône (angle Avenue de France), Tunis. (dentist)
- Meery, Guty. *Guty Meery Studio*. 16, Avenue de Paris (3^e étage), Tunis. (beauty and physical fitness institute)
- Mondial, Le*. (movie theater)
- Mont Blanc*. 4, Rue de Constantine, Tunis. (market)
- Moualhi & Alaoui. *Grand Restaurant Tunisien*. 106 et 108, Place Bab-Souika, Tunis.
- Nataf, E. & Frères. 51, Rue de l'Eglise, Tunis. (jewelers)
- Néo et Tip-Top*. Av. Jules-Ferry, Galeries du Colisée, Tunis. (jewelry)
- Pacha, Mustapha. 10 bis, rue Saïda Adjoula, Tunis. (court appraiser)
- Paprika. *La Maison Paprika*. 11, Avenue Roustan, Tunis. (clothing)
- Paris-Sport*. 23, Rue Es-Sadikia, Tunis. (clothing for men)
- Petit Paradis*. 7, Rue de Constantine, Tunis. (silks, woolens)
- Philips, Société Anonyme*. 11, Avenue Roustan, Tunis. (radios, lighting)
- Primagaz*. (bottled natural gas)
- Rahal, Tahar. *Salon de la Jeunesse Tunisienne*. 24, rue Sidi Ben Arous, Tunis.
- Raouia, Mlle. *Salon des étoiles*. 49, Avenue Bab-Djedid (en face arrêt du Tram), Tunis. (beauty salon)
- Rasgallah, Chadli. 61-41, Marché Central-Tunis. (poultry, fresh eggs)
- Rassa. *Maison Rassa*. 36, Rue des Libraires, Tunis.
- Restaurant de Monastir*. 8, rue des Charcutiers, Tunis.
- Ricano*. 5, rue de Hollande, Tunis. ("le kanoun moderne")
- Le Roi du couscous, Restaurant Tunisien*. 55, rue des Maltais, Tunis.
- Roll's*. 11, Rue d'Alger, Tunis. (tailor, men and women)
- Rotisserie Soudanaise*. 2, rue de Marseille, Tunis.
- Rsaïssi, Béchir et Triki. 166, Rue de la Kasbah, Tunis. (records, radios, phonographs)
- Saada & Chemla. 53, Avenue de Londres, Tunis. (radio and electricity technicians)
- Sanchou, Tahar. 70, Rue de l'Eglise. (shoes)
- Sanit-Elect*. 43, avenue de Paris, Tunis. Tél : 17.41. (heating, plumbing electricity)
- Scholl. *La Maison Scholl*. 7, Rue d'Alger, Tunis. (shoes, pedicures, foot care)
- Seghir, Tahar. 189, rue Bab-Souka ; 1, rue Auguste Conte, Tunis. (accessories for bicycles)
- Shirley. *Académie de Coiffure*. 5, Av. de Carthage, Tunis. Tél: 40.26. (beauty institute)
- Sidoumou, Mohamed. *Bijouterie royale*. 139, rue Sidi Mahrez, Tunis. (jewelry)
- Shell*. (oil and lubricants)
- Shelltox*. (insecticide)
- Slama, A. 187, Rue de la Kasbah, Tunis. (hats, chechias, kalbaks)
- Smida Hamadi. *Palais des essences des fleurs*. 77, Souk El Attarine, Tunis. (perfume)
- Snoussi, Azzi. 192, rue de la Kasbah, Tunis. (Shirts, articles, ties, perfume)
- Snoussi, Chadli, héritiers. *Magasin de la Jeunesse*, 185, rue de la Kasbah, Tunis. (clothing)
- Sohlobji, M. *La Coupole*. (café-restaurant)
- Sultan Maroquinerie*. 8, Rue Es-Sadikia, Tunis. (leather goods)
- Thameur, Habib Dr. 148, rue Bab-Souika, Tunis. (medical doctor)
- Tout Nouveau*. 3, rue de Constantine, Tunis.
- Trechic*. 3, Rue de Bône, Tunis. (men's clothing)
- Triki, M. 91, rue de la Kasbah, Tunis. (radio)
- Triki, Otman. 9, rue de la Verrerie; 29, rue Sidi Mahrez, Tunis.

Turki. Boulevard Bab-Benat, Tunis. (tailor)

Union Tunisienne, L' 30 et 11, rue des Tamis, Tunis. (furniture)

Union Tunisienne, L' 115, rue Sidi Mahrez, Tunis. (knitwear and clothing)

Zouaoui, Moktar. *Bijouterie d'art moderne*. 33, Souk Djedid, Tunis. (jewelry)

Zouaoui, Salah. *Restaurant Andalous*. 4, bd Bab-Saadoun, Tunis.

*Index of Composers and Musicians
(In Second Series)*

- Banaouas, Cheikh.** "La Radio," 8 Feb. 1941, 3.
- Ben Abdesselam.** "La Radio," 16 Feb. 1941, 3.
- Ben Mahmoud, Cheikh.** "Les Auditions de la Soulamya," 24 Jan. 1941, 3.
--"La Radio," 1 Mar. 1941, 3; 16 Apr. 1941, 3.
--"La Musique: La Rachidia," 16 Mar. 1941, 3.
- Borhane, Elia.** "Le festival des corporation sur le vif," 8 Jan. 1941, 5.
--"Barommètre radiophonique de la semaine, 24 Feb. 1941, 3.
--"La Radio," 2 May 1941, 3.
- Chatta, Saïd.** "La Radio: aux écoutes," 1 Jan. 1941, 4.
--"Allô! Ici Tunis National," 24 Mar. 1941, 3.
- Djabbouzi.** "La Radio," 8 Jan. 1941, 4.
--"Le festival des corporation sur le vif," 8 Jan. 1941, 5.
- Djemail, Abdelaziz.** "La Radio-Nationale," 14 Dec. 1940, 5.
--"La Radio," 16 Jan. 1941, 4; 16 Feb. 1941, 3.
- Djennet.** "La Radio," 8 Jan. 1941, 4.
- Djouini (Jouini), Hadi (Hédi).** "La Radio," 8 Jan. 1941, 4; 16 Jan. 1941, 4; 24 Mar. 1941, 3; 16 Apr. 1941, 3.
--"Le festival des corporation sur le vif," 8 Jan. 1941, 5.
--"Allô! Ici Tunis National," 24 Mar. 1941, 3.
- El Amri.** "La Radio," 24 Jan. 1941, 4.
- El Mahdi (Mahdi), Abderrahman.** "La Radio-Nationale," 14 Dec. 1940, 5.
--"Le festival des corporation sur le vif," 8 Jan. 1941, 5.
--"Barommètre radiophonique de la semaine, 24 Feb. 1941, 3.
--"La Radio," 2 May 1941, 3.
- En-Nabli (Nabli).** "La Radio," 8 Jan. 1941, 4; 1 Feb. 1941, 2; 16 Feb. 1941, 3.
- Et-Tounsia, Levla.** "La Radio," 24 Jan. 1941, 4.
- Et-Tounsia, Louisa.** "La Radio," 1 Mar. 1941, 3; 16 Apr. 1941, 3.
- Fehmi, Béchir.** "La Musique," 7 Dec. 1940, 5.
- Ganouna.** "La Radio-Nationale" 21 Dec. 1941, 4.
- Guella.** "La Radio: aux écoutes," 1 Jan. 1941, 4.
--"La Radio, 16 Jan. 1941, 4.
- Hassini, Bachraf.** "La Radio," 8 Feb. 1941, 3
- Kadri.** "Le festival des corporation sur le vif," 8 Jan. 1941, 5.
--"La Radio," 16 Jan. 1941, 4; 24 Jan. 1941, 4; 8 Feb. 1941, 3; 16 Feb. 1941, 3; 1 Mar. 1941, 3.
- Khaïri, Fathia.** "La Radio: aux écoutes," 1 Jan. 1941, 4.
--"Le festival des corporation sur le vif," 8 Jan. 1941, 5.
--"La Radio," 24 Apr. 1941, 3; 27 May 1941, 2.
- Khitmi, Fadila (Fadhila).** "La Radio-Nationale," 14 Dec. 1940, 5; 21 Dec. 1941, 4.
--"La Radio," 8 Jan. 1941, 4; 24 Jan. 1941, 4; 16 Feb. 1941, 3; 16 Apr. 1941, 3; 27 May 1941, 2.
--"Le festival des corporation sur le vif," 8 Jan. 1941, 5.
--"Barommètre radiophonique de la semaine," 24 Feb. 1941, 3.
--"La Musique: La Rachidia," 16 Mar. 1941, 3.
--"Déception à la suite d'une émission," 2 May 1941, 4.
- Nouri.** "La Radio," 24 Jan. 1941, 4; 16 Feb. 1941, 3.
--"La Musique," 1 Mar. 1941, 3.
- Rachidi.** "La Radio," 8 Feb. 1941, 3.
- Rachidia, La.**
--"Aux Ecoutes," 1 Dec. 1940, 4.
--"La Radio," 7 Dec. 1940, 4; 16 Jan. 1941, 4; 1 Feb. 1941, 2; 1 Mar. 1941, 3; 16 Apr. 1941, 3; 24 Apr. 1941, 3; 2 May 1941, 3; 27 May 1941, 2.
--"La Radio: aux écoutes," 1 Jan. 1941, 4.

- "Nous suggérons," 24 Jan. 1941, 2.
- "Baromètre radiophonique de la semaine," 8 Feb. 1941, 3; 24 Feb. 1941, 3.
- "La Musique: La Rachidia," 16 Mar. 1941, 3.
- "Lexique hebdomadaire," 16 Apr. 1941, 3.
- Riahi, Ali.** "La Radio-Nationale," 21 Dec. 1940, 4.
- "La Radio," 16 Jan. 1941, 4; 1 Feb. 1941, 2; 8 Feb. 1941, 3; 16 Feb. 1941, 3; 16 Apr. 1941, 3; 27 May 1941, 2.
- "Nous Suggérons...", 24 Jan. 1941, 2.
- "Baromètre radiophonique de la semaine," 8 Feb. 1941, 3; 24 Feb. 1941, 3.
- "Déception à la suite d'une émission," 2 May 1941, 4.
- Rochdi, Chafia.** "Le Contenant et le contenu," 8 Jan. 1941, 5.
- "La Radio," 16 Jan. 1941, 4; 1 Feb. 1941, 2; 1 Mar. 1941, 3; 2 May 1941, 3.
- "La Musique: La Rachidia," 16 Mar. 1941, 3.
- "Lexique hebdomadaire," 16 Apr. 1941, 3.
- "Emancipation manqué," 2 May 1941, 3.
- Rochdi, Hassiba.** "La Radio-Nationale," 14 Dec. 1940, 5.
- "La Radio: aux écoutes," 1 Jan. 1941, 4.
- "Le festival des corporation sur le vif," 8 Jan. 1941, 5.
- "La Radio," 8 Feb. 1941, 3; 16 Feb. 1941, 3; 1 Mar. 1941, 3; 16 Mar. 1941, 3; 16 Apr. 1941, 3; 27 May 1941, 2.
- "Baromètre radiophonique de la semaine," 24 Feb. 1941, 3.
- "Déception à la suite d'une émission," 2 May 1941, 4.
- Sakina (Soukaina).** "La Radio-Nationale" 14 Dec. 1940, 5.
- Salah, Ibrahim.** "La Radio-Nationale," 14 Dec. 1940, 5.
- "La Radio," 8 Feb. 1941, 3.
- Saliha.** "La Radio," 24 Apr. 1941, 3; 2 May 1941, 3; 27 May 1941, 2.
- Srarfi (Es-Srarfi), Kaddour.** "La Musique," 7 Dec. 1940, 5.
- "La Radio-Nationale," 14 Dec. 1940, 5
- "La Radio," 8 Jan. 1941, 4; 16 Jan. 1941, 4; 24 Jan. 1941, 4; 1 Mar. 1941, 3.
- Sriti, Ali.** "La Radio-Nationale" 21 Dec. 1940, 4
- "La Radio," 8 Jan. 1941, 4; 24 Jan. 1941, 4; 8 Feb. 1941, 3.
- "Baromètre radiophonique de la semaine," 8 Feb. 1941, 3; 24 Feb. 1941, 3.
- Talianiya, Dalila.** "La Radio: aux écoutes," 1 Jan. 1941, 4
- "La Radio," 16 Jan. 1941, 4; 1 Feb. 1941, 2; 24 Apr. 1941, 3; 2 May 1941, 3; 27 May 1941, 2.
- Tarnane (Ternane), Kmais.** "La Musique" 7 Dec. 1940, 5.
- "La Radio: aux écoutes," 1 Jan. 1941, 4.
- "La Radio," 1 Feb. 1941, 2; 16 Apr. 1941, 3.
- "Baromètre radiophonique de la semaine," 24 Feb. 1941, 3.
- Thraïa, Sadok.** "La Radio," 24 Jan. 1941, 4.
- "Baromètre radiophonique de la semaine," 24 Feb. 1941, 3.
- Tmimi, Youssef.** "Le festival des corporation sur le vif," 8 Jan. 1941, 5.
- Triki, Mohamed.** "Aux Ecoutes," 1 Dec. 1940, 4.
- "La Musique" 7 Dec. 1940, 5; 27 May 1941, 2.
- "La Radio-Nationale," 14 Dec. 1940, 5.
- "La Radio: aux écoutes," 1 Jan. 1941, 4.
- "Le festival des corporation sur le vif," 8 Jan. 1941, 5.
- "La Radio," 16 Jan. 1941, 4; 1 Feb. 1941, 2; 1 Mar. 1941, 3; 16 Apr. 1941, 3; 24 Apr. 1941, 3; 27 May 1941, 2.
- "Baromètre radiophonique de la semaine," 24 Feb. 1941, 3.
- Wafia, El or La.** "Baromètre radiophonique de la semaine," 8 Feb. 1941, 3; 24 Feb. 1941, 3.
- "La Radio," 16 Feb. 1941, 3; 16 Mar. 1941, 3; 16 Apr. 1941, 3; 2 May 1941, 3.
- "Allô! Ici Tunis National," 24 Mar. 1941, 3.
- Wajdi (Ouajki), Wahida (Ouahida).** "Le festival des corporation sur le vif," 8 Jan. 1941, 5.
- "La Radio," 24 Jan. 1941, 4; 8 Feb. 1941, 3; 16 Feb. 1941, 3; 16 Apr. 1941, 3; 2 May 1941, 3.
- "Baromètre radiophonique de la semaine," 8 Feb. 1941, 3; 24 Feb. 1941, 3.

Index of Images

COUPLES

Drawings

Kneeling man in front with woman beside in servile position, nudes, Ali Ben Salem.

Illustrates: "Lettre d'un jeune homme à marier" (Dec. 1936, 3).

Dressed kneeling woman in front with man beside, unsigned (Ali Ben Salem).

Illustrates: "Propos d'une jeune fille en fleur!" unsigned (Feb. 1937, 2); signed (Mar. 1937, 3); unsigned (June 1937, 3).

Unsigned. Illustrates: "Don Juan n'est pas mort..." (Sept. 1937, 3).

Unsigned. Illustrates: "Lettre d'un Jeune Homme à marier: Azyade 38" (Jan. 1938, 3).

Unsigned. Illustrates: "Lettre d'un Jeune Homme à marier: Amour et Mariage" (Aug. 1940, 4).

Caricature, "La Loterie des Mariages Tunisiens," two mismatched couples, anon.

Illustrates: "La Rue," (June 1937, 9).

"Séduction," Pharaonic man serving food to pharaonic woman who is pulling off his clothes, Brandt.

Illustrates: nothing, stands alone at bottom of page.

Woman reading newspaper with man in fez looking over her shoulder.

Illustrates: "Lettre d'un Jeune Homme à marier: Le Ramadan" (Dec. 1938, 4).

Illustrates: "Femmes, l'avenir est à vous..." (Aug. 1939, 2)

Heads of "modern" bride (unveiled) and groom. Heads of "traditional" (veiled) bride and groom. Illustrates: "A la recherche d'une épouse" (July 1937, 13).

Photographs

Old man married to young woman. Cliché Eclair, Tunis.

Illustrates: "Amour quand tu nous tiens" (Sept. 1938, 14).

Princess Faouzia (sister of Farouk I of Egypt) and Emir Schah Bour Mohamed Ridha

(Iran), anon. Illustrates: "Mariage de princes musulmans" (Sept. 1938, 23).

Portraits of Princess Faouzia of Egypt and Emir Schah Bour Mohamed Ridha, "Fiançailles de Princes Musulmans" (Mar. 1939, cover).

WOMEN

Drawings

Two heads, Aly Ben Salem (Dec. 1936, cover)

Four women flying, nudes, Alexandre Roubtsoff.

Illustrates: poem "Les Ombres," in middle of page (Dec. 1936, 8)

Woman in Western street clothes and lower face covered, anon.

Illustrates: "La Mode," (Dec. 1936, 12).

Woman in evening dress, anon. Illustrates: "La Mode," (Dec. 1936, 12).

"L'évolution du voile à travers les âges," anon., (Le Monnier ?).

Illustrates: "Une opinion sur le voile" (Dec. 1936, 15).

Two women, one playing flute, J. Ben Abdallah (Feb. 1937, cover). "Etendue sur un divan..." woman reading book.

Illustrates: "Jeunes fille d'aujourd'hui: Je vous présente Férida" (Feb. 1937, 7).

Woman wearing *sefsari* at cemetery, A. Roubtsoff.

Illustrates: poem, "Les Yeux," (Feb. 1937, 11)

"Une rêverie douce s'empara de moi..." Woman standing, back, Grairy.

Illustrates: "Sidi-Bou-Saïd," (Feb. 1937, 14).

Woman's head, decorated, Aly Ben Salem.

Illustrates: "Chronique artistique: L'Influence de l'Art Décadent Italien sur les Industries artisanales et les Arts tunisiens," (Feb. 1937, 16).

Woman's hand, decorated, Aly Ben Salem.

Illustrates: "Chronique artistique: L'Influence de l'Art Décadent Italien sur les Industries artisanales et les Arts tunisiens," (Feb. 1937, 17).

Woman in Western dress, woman in Western street dress with lower face covered, anon.

- Illustrates: "La Mode," (Feb. 1937, 20).
 Woman's head, anon. Illustrates: "La Beauté" (Feb. 1937, 20).
 Three women in cemetery, anon. Illustrates: "Au Jardin des morts," (Mar. 1937, 14).
 Two women in Western street dress, lower faces covered, anon.
 Illustrates: "La Mode," (Mar. 1937, 21).
 Woman in sefsari, face visible, with flowers, G.L. Le Monnier (June 1937; cover, May 1940, cover).
 Five women at the cinema, anon. Illustrates: "Soirée de première," (June 1937, 7)
 Illustrates: "Cinéma" (Nov. 1940, 17).
 Caricature: Skeletal bedouine with dead skeletal child in lap, skeletal child beside. G.L. Le Monnier.
 Illustrates: "La Bédouine et ses misères," (June 1937, 14).
 Woman in long evening dress. A. Grairy. Illustrates: "La Mode," (June 1937, 23).
 Woman carried by black servant on platter. Brandt (in Arabic), (Sept. 1937, cover).
 Woman's head, flowers, open book. G.L. LeMonnier.
 Illustrates: "Album d'amour" (Jan. 1938, 15).
 Illustrates: "Feuilles mortes" (Aug. 1939, 11).
 Illustrates: "A celle qui va se marier" (May 1940, 5).
 Daikhana, skeletal tribe in background, G.L. LeMonnier. Illustrates: "Daikhana" (Jan. 1938, 20).
 Backs of 3 women in evening dress, short hair, unsigned (Mar. 1938, cover).
 Woman's head (unveiled) with 2 gazelles, anon. Illustrates: "Les Yeux" (Mar. 1938, 19).
 Illustrates: "Propos d'une Jeune Fille en Fleur" (Aug. 1940, 7).
 Hideous unveiled woman's face, Max Moreau. Illustrates: "A Propos du voile" (June 1938, 6).
 Two women in Western dresses, two children in Western summer clothes.
 Illustrates: "La Mode" (Sept. 1938, 24).
 Young woman sitting on ground, dot-to-dot drawing of cat (Dec. 1938, back inside cover).
 Two women in evening dress, one in daytime dress, anon. Illustrates: "Mode" (Aug. 1939, 20).
 Aerial woman with veiled woman in background, unreadable signature (Aug. 1940, cover; Sept. 1940, cover).
 Woman's head, "Coiffure de plage à la martiniquaise," anon. Illustrates: "Mode et beauté" (Aug. 1940, 31).
 Five women at the cinema, two women in sefsaris, 3 women in Western dress with face veil, anon.
 Illustrates: "Cinéma" (Nov. 1940, 16).
- Paintings**
 Woman's head, Grairi. (Mar. 1937, cover).
- Photographs**
 Miss Europe and six princesses, by "Photo Maggio, Cliché *Italiens di Tunisie*."
 Illustrates: "Après le tournoi de beauté," (Dec. 1936, 10).
 Miss France, with "Photo Maggio, Cliché *Italiens di Tunisie*."
 Illustrates: "Après le tournoi de beauté," (Dec. 1936, 10).
 Miss Europe, by "Photo Maggio, Cliché *Italiens di Tunisie*"
 Illustrates: "Après le tournoi de beauté," (Dec. 1936, 11).
 Portrait of Souhayr Kalmaoui. Illustrates: "Les Lettres arabes: *Les Propos de ma grand'mère* de Souhayr Kalmaoui," (Feb. 1937, 15).
 Blond woman with fan.
 Illustrates: "Notre page littéraire: Une Idylle à Istamboul" (June 1937, 10; Nov. 1940, cover).
 Mme Armand Guillon (wife of Resident General), Photo Brami.
 Illustrates: "Une Grande Bienfaitrice: Madame Armand Guillon," (Sept. 1937, 5).
 European woman steaming her face, anon. Illustrates: "Beauté," (Sept. 1937, 17).
 Woman with elaborate headdress, face unveiled, makeup, looking down (June 1938, cover).
 "L'Evolution de la Femme Egyptienne: Des étudiantes Egyptiennes reçues à leur dernière année de droit,"
 9 Egyptian women students in Western dress (July 1939, cover).
 "Un Groupe de Girls (Paramount) Rit au Soleil," seven women in bathing suits (Aug. 1939, cover).
 "...Ces jeunes Japonaises s'adonnent sérieusement à la préparation militaire dans un Collège de Tokio,"
 five women lined up with bayonets. Illustrates: "La Femme et la guerre" (Aug. 1940, 11).
 Tunisian woman in sefsari, Arbia Zaouche, anon. Illustrates: "Une douce voix s'est tué..." (Aug. 1940, 20).
 Bahia Faragallah, Egyptian woman graduate of "l'Université Américain d'Egypt" anon.

- Illustrates: "L'Égyptienne et l'éducation" (Aug. 1940, 24).
 Sahir El Kalamaoui, "Magister es-lettres" de l'Université Arabe du Caire, anon.
 Illustrates: "L'Égyptienne et l'éducation" (Aug. 1940, 25).
 "Woman in sefsari (shoulder's up, face uncovered), anon.
 Illustrates: "Fantômes en vacances" (Aug. 1940, 33).
 Women soldiers: "Tandis que ces jeunes Américaines s'amuse à parodier la guerre sur une plage de Californie" (line-up of 9 white women in bathing suits with rifles) (10);
 "... Ces jeunes Japonaises s'adonnent sérieusement à la préparation militaire dans un Collège de Tokio" (four girls in line with rifles wearing school uniform) (11).
 Illustrates: "La Femme et la guerre" (Aug. 1940, 9).

MEN

Drawings

- Horse rider brandishing rifle, small, anon.
 Illustrates: "Un mot sur ce que doit être la femme musulmane" (Dec. 1936, 2).
 "Il se retirait dans des solitudes, restait nu et ne parlait à personne..." Aly Ben Salem.
 Illustrates: "La Légende de Majnoun Leïla" (Dec. 1936, 17).
 Sitting man playing flute, anon. Illustrates: "Le Chant, la danse," (Dec. 1936, 19).
 Man with rifle on camel, M.V. Illustrates: poem, "Fraternité," (Mar. 1937, 13).
 Three clowns for carnival, A. Belaïd. Illustrates: "Lettre de Paris," (Mar. 1937, 19).
 Man filling from well water containers carried by donkey, signed in Arabic
 Illustrates: "Nos Petits Enfants," (June 1937, 16).
 Caricature: "Perplexité: Ciel que me réserves-tu?" Tha'albi standing in front of two crowns—royal or funerary? G.L. Le Monnier. Illustrates: nothing, stands on own at bottom of page (Sept. 1937, 23).
 Four musicians seated on floor in front of open window, Ben Abdallah.
 Illustrates: "De l'Etat actuel de la musique arabe" (June 1938, 11).
 Man in patched clothes watching spiders and mice come out of window, Brandt.
 Illustrates: "Déclin" (Dec. 1938, 17).
 Chmâa (ugly man), J. Ben Abdallah. Illustrates: "Silhouettes tunisiennes: Chmâa l'usurier" (Aug. 1940, 27)

Paintings

- "Le veilleur de nuit en Ramadan," two men, A. Ghraïri. Illustrates: "Le Ramadan" (Dec. 1936, 14).
 3 men in Tunisian clothing sleeping against wall, elaborate border, Jossot. (Sept. 1938, cover; Dec. 1939, cover).

Photographs

- Portrait of S.A. Sidi Ahmed Pacha-Bey, anon.
 Illustrates: "Une Journée de vacances de Son Altesse Le Bey" (Sept. 1938, 2).
 Portrait of S.A. Sidi Tahar, Cliché Éclair, Tunis.
 Illustrates: "Le Nouveau Bey du Camp: Son Altesse Sidi Tahar" (Mar. 1939, 1).

GROUPS OF PEOPLE

Drawings

- Caricature: "Le Harem en révolte," sultan + 4 women, each more changed, Brandt.
 Illustrates: nothing, bottom of page, stands alone (Sept. 1937, 13).
 Caricature: "Le Caravane des protégés," G.L. Lemonnier. Illustrates: "Aux Riches," (Mar. 1937, 18).
 Caricature: "Evolution de la bourgeoisie Tunisienne à travers un demi siècle," G.L. LeMonnier.
 Illustrates: nothing, stands alone at bottom of page (Sept. 1937, 19).
 Caricature: "Aujourd'hui chez autrefois," sultan, black servant, woman dancing in Western dress, veiled women seated in back, Brandt. Beside: "Veillons à notre personnalité" (Mar. 1938, 18).
 "Le Conteur arabe," Brandt. Stands alone (Mar. 1939, 4).
 "La Tunisie Pittoresque," Brandt (in Arabic).
 Imbedded in: "La Maternité de l'Hôpital Sadiki," (Mar. 1939, 16).
 Fat mother with child in dark, beach scene in background, anon.
 Illustrates: "Les Enfants tristes" (Aug. 1939, 6).

Paintings

- Seated on rug: woman with baby, woman embroidering, and man reading while servant brings tea, anon.

Illustrates: "Conseils d'une mère à sa fille" (Dec. 1936, 5).

Photographs

German children in classroom, anon. Illustrates: "Un Exemple à suivre" (Sept. 1937, 14).

25 garçons, 6 filles + instituteur de Metlaoui, M. Haddad, anon.

Illustrates: "Les Orphelins de Metlaoui." (Sept. 1937, 21).

Sabiha Gektchen, aviatrice, kisses Kamel Ataturk's hand, anon.

Beside: "Le dialogue des Jeunes" (Jan. 1938, 7).

Caravan of nomads, Photo Lehnert. Illustrates: "Le Paysannat Tunisien" (Sept. 1938, 16).

15 people sitting/lying on sand, palm trees in background, anon.

Illustrates: "Ezzarda en Kroumirie" (Dec. 1938, 7).

Two women in colorful Tunisian dress, unveiled, one standing provocatively, one sitting on ground, back of one man in bourmous and chechia, sitting on ground. Illustrates: "Chez les Ouled Nail" (July 1939, 7).

Four musiciens, one female dancer (unveiled), several male spectators, anon.

Illustrates: "Chez les Ouled Nail" (July 1939, 8).

ANIMALS

Drawings

Bird, small, anon. Illustrates: "Un mot sur ce que doit être la femme musulmane" (Dec. 1936, 2).

Lion, A. Belaïd. Illustrates: "Les Hommes ne sont pas des dieux !..." (Mar. 1937, 11).

Swallows in flight, A. Belaïd. Illustrates "Légendes d'oiseaux" (June 1937, 6).

Illustrates: nothing, at bottom of page, filler (Mar. 1938, 8; Dec. 1938, 24).

Six birds flying in the clouds, signature unreadable.

Illustrates: "Les Poèmes de Leïla: Lac Bahira" (June 1937, 13).

Illustrates: "La Condition de la Femme dans l'histoire de l'humanité" (Mar. 1938, 3).

Fish to serve, anon. Illustrates: "Chronique Mondaine: Plaisirs d'été" (Sept. 1937, 18).

"La Ménagerie de "Leïla": L'Ane." G.L. Le Monnier.

Illustrates: nothing, stands alone at bottom of page (Sept. 1937, 24).

"La Ménagerie de "Leïla": La Leçon," adult monkey with 7 young monkeys, G.L. Le Monnier.

Illustrates: poem "Mon Maître" (Mar. 1938, 11).

Two seahorses, R.P. Illustrates: "La Mer..." (June 1938, 6).

Donkey and cart, find the driver (Dec. 1938, inside front cover).

Caricature: "Le Superpatriote de Burgos," giant toad with German helmet eating/squashing people, airplanes in background. Illustrates: "Les quatre de Munich" (Dec. 1938, 13).

Rooster, anon. Illustrates: "Histoire d'actualité" (Dec. 1938, 19).

CITYSCAPES/LANDSCAPES

Drawings

Minaret framed by fig branches, G.-L. Le Monnier. Illustrates: "Les Ombres" (Dec. 1936, 9).

House in Landscape, G.L.L. Illustrates: "Un livre sur Sidi-Bou-Saïd," (Dec. 1936, 20).

Streets in Medina, Carla Capasso, "Cliché Italianni di Tunisia."

Illustrates: "Lettre à Madeleine," (Feb. 1937, 12).

Café des Nattes, Sidi-Bou-Saïd, G.L. Le Monnier. Illustrates: "Sidi-Bou-Saïd," (Feb. 1937, 14).

Lighthouse, C. de Multedo. Illustrates: "Cahouet-el-Nadhour," (Feb. 1937, 18).

Mosque, anon. Illustrates: "Cahouet-el-Nadhour," (Feb. 1937, 19).

Sidi-Bou-Saïd, person looking at Bay of Tunis.

Illustrates: poem "Les Poèmes de Leïla: Cite Sainte: Sidi-Bou-Saïd la Blafarde" by

G.L. Le Monnier (June 1937, 13).

Café des Nattes, Sidi-Bou-Saïd, Brandt (in Arabic). Illustrates: "En Flanant" (June 1938, 2).

Sunrise over mountains, A. Roubtsoff (1921).

Illustrates: "Les Poèmes de Leïla" (poems by Skander) (June 1938, 9).

View of the Lake of Tunis from a terrace, G.L. Le Monnier. Illustrates: "En Rêvant" (Sept. 1938, 4).

"Cimetière du Djellaz," G.L. Le Monnier. Illustrates: "Cimetières arabes" (Mar. 1939, 12).

Illustrates: "Acta est fabula" (Aug. 1940, 3).

Cimetière in Sidi-Bou-Saïd, G.L. Le Monnier.

Illustrates: "Cimetières arabes" (Mar. 1939, 13). Illustrates: "Acta est fabula" (Aug. 1940, 2).

Paintings

Sidi-Bou-Saïd street and minaret, anon.

Illustrates: "Les Poèmes de Leïla: Agonie d'un soir d'été," Skander (Jan. 1938, 4).
Residential buildings with vegetation, anon. Illustrates: "L'Entremetteuse" (Jan. 1938, 23).
Street of houses and mosque, illegible signature. Illustrates: "Sous les Ficus" (Aug. 1939, 4).

Photographs

The Great Mosque. Illustrates: "Chohdah la belle Savante," (June 1937, 5).

Oasis. Illustrates: "Les Poèmes de Leïla: L'Absente" (June 1937, 12).

Illustrates: poem, "Nue" (Jan. 1938, 10).

Coastal Rock Formations anon. Illustrates: "La Kahena" (June 1938, 13).

Roman ruins, anon. . Illustrates: "La Kahena" (June 1938, 14).

Early photograph of one of the doors of Tunis. Illustrates: "Histoire de Tunis au théâtre" (Sept. 1938, 8).

Le Val-Fleuri, a large house, anon. Illustrates: "Maisons Claires..." (Dec. 1938, 5).

"Une Mosquée sur les bords du Nil," anon.

Illustrates: "Il faut faire retourner la Bédouine chez elle" (July 1939, 4).

Mosque in oasis, donkey, two men, crouching adult, and child, anon.

Illustrates: "L'Homme de l'été" (July 1939, 11).

Interior of mosque, anon. Illustrates: "La Princesse Atf" (Aug. 1939, 10).

MISC.**Drawings**

"Accessoires de mariage arabe ou la ruine des familles tunisiennes," A. Graïry.

Illustrates: "Confidences pré-nuptiales: Je vais me marier!..." (Feb. 1937, 9).

Floral design, Aly Ben Salem.

Illustrates: "Chronique artistique: L'Influence de l'Art Décadent Italien sur les Industries artisanales et les Arts tunisiens," (Feb. 1937, 16).

Triangular calligraphic design. Illustrates: "Don Juan n'est pas mort..." and/or "L'Ordre" (Sept. 1937, 4).

Illustrates: "Une Rosette bien méritée," (Jan. 1938, 2).

Steamship, signature unreadable. Illustrates: "Chronique Mondaine: Plaisirs d'été," (Sept. 1937, 18).

Triangular calligraphic design. Illustrates: "Album d'Amour" (Jan. 1938, 16).

Flowers on branch, anon. Illustrates: "Les Poèmes de Leïla: Amertume" (Mar. 1938, 15).

Floral design to frame, anon. Illustrates: "Plages et voile" (Sept. 1938, 9).

Music to song: "taktouka rast" (Sept. 1938, 12-13).

Inkpot, quill, mask, sheet of music = the arts. Illustrates: "Ouèche, ouèche" (Sept. 1938, 22).

Vertical geometric design, A. Belaïd. Illustrates: "La Mode" (Sept. 1938, 24).

Illustrates: "Présence" (poem) (Aug. 1939, 19).

Illustrates: "Le Jeûne" (Nov. 1940, 11)

"Rebus," white designs on black background, riddle (Dec. 1938, 9).

Three flowers with small woman's silhouette, anon.

Illustrates: "Deux pages choisies de May: Tristesse" (Aug. 1940, 16).

ADVERTISING**Drawings**

Man killing fly with Shell Tox, I. Villaret, (Sept. 1937, inside front cover; Jan. 1938, front inside cover).

Can of car oil, Shell (June 1937, front inside cover).

Radio, Philips (June 1937, back inside cover).

Man spraying fly, with flower border, Shelltox, Publicité Générale (Sept. 1937, front inside cover; Jan. 1938, front inside cover).

Triangular flower design, anon, Chemises Aziz Snoussi (Dec. 1936, front inside cover; Feb. 1937, front inside cover; Jan. 1938, back inside cover; Mar. 1937, front inside cover; Sept. 1937, back inside cover; Mar. 1938, back inside cover; June 1938, back inside cover).

Flower border, anon, Banque Nationale Tunisienne (Mar. 1938, front inside cover). La Coupole (June 1938, front inside cover; Sept. 1938, front inside cover).

Mother cooking while girl watches, Primagaz (Dec. 1938, 21; Mar. 1939, inside front cover; July 1939,

inside back cover; Aug. 1939, inside front cover; Oct. 1939, inside front cover; Nov. 1939, 18—
repeated, back inside cover).

Stick figure with saw, Meubles Bouchiba (Aug. 1940, back cover)

Paintings

Two servers smelling coffee, Cafés Tropic, Climora (Jan. 1938, 21; Mar. 1938, 4).

Photographs

Cruise ship, for pilgrimage to Mecca, Climora, Tunis (Jan. 1938, 23).

Index of People in "Carnet Rose"
 ("Mondanités," in Mar. 1937, "Nos Joies" in Dec. 1938)

- Abassi, Abderrehmane. Death of father, Amor Abassi. Aug. 1940, 19.
 Abassi, Amor. Deceased. Aug. 1940, 19.
 Abassi, Béchir. Death of father, Amor Abassi. Aug. 1940, 19.
 Abassi, Chedli Mohamed. Death of father, Amor Abassi. Aug. 1940, 19.
 Abassi, Mlle. Fiancée of Mohamed Snadli, director of *Zohra*. Mar. 1938, 17.
 Abassi, Mlle. Bride of Aziz Djemâa. Oct. 1939, 4.
 Abitbol, Jacques. Fiancé of Suzanne Bouboul. Jan. 1938, 14.
 Aouda, M. Father of the fiancée (Mlle Aouda), litigation lawyer. June 1937, 8.
 Aouda, Mlle. Fiancée of Hamadi Ben Chaabne, daughter of M. Aouda (litigation lawyer). June 1937, 8.
 Azedine, Mlle. Bride of Khemis El Mouaffek. Mar. 1937, 20.
 Bach-Hamba, Kmar. Bride of DR. Mohamed Haddad. Sept. 1937, 6.
 Bach-Hamba, Mlle. Fiancée of Aziz Ben Abdallah, farmer at Souk-El-Khemis. May 1940, 16.
 Bahri, Amed (El). Father of the bride, Souad Bahri. Mar. 1938, 17.
 Bahri, Mlle. Passed Baccalauréat exams in July 1940. Aug. 1940, 19.
 Bahri, Souad. Fiancée of Hamadi ben Abdallah, daughter of Ahmed (El) Bahri. Mar. 1938, 17.
 Barboucha, Mlle. Bride of Ahmed El Gharbi. Mar. 1937.
 Barket, Béchir. Married to Fatma Moâti. June 1937, 8.
 Bechir, Docteur. Marriage to Mlle Melaouah. Jan. 1938, 14.
 Belhassen, Mlle M. Bride of Ali Seghaïr, head nurse. Mar. 1938, 17.
 Belhouane, Ezzedine. Aide de camp of the Tunisian Prime Minister, fiancé of Mlle Djemmal, daughter of Salah Djemmal, merchant. Oct. 1939, 4.
 Belahouane, Mohammed. Deceased. Aug. 1940, 19.
 Belhouane, Mohamed. Fiancé of Cherifa Bouhajeb. Sept. 1937, 6.
 Bel Khodja, Ahmed. Secretary in the Ministry of Justice, birth of son, Mohamed En-Najak. Mar. 1938, 17.
 Bel Khodja, Amor Farouk. Interpreter in the Department of Economic Affairs, married to Sayda Nefti. Dec. 1938, 6. Birth of son, Kemal. Nov. 1939, 17.
 Bel Khodja, Kemal. Born to Amor Farouk Bel Khodja. Nov. 1939, 17.
 Bel Khodja, Mohamed En-Najak. Born to Ahmed Bel Khodja. Mar. 1938, 17.
 Ben Abdallah, Aziz. Farmer at Souk-El-Khemis, fiancé of Mlle Bach-Hamba. May 1940, 16.
 Ben Abdallah, Belhassen. Born to Hamadi Ben Abdallah. May 1940, 16.
 Ben Abdallah, Hamadi. Fiancé of Souad Bahri, daughter of Ahmed El Bahri. Mar. 1938, 17. Birth of son, Belhassen. May 1940, 16.
 Ben Achour, Fadhel. Professor at Zitouna Mosque/University, married to Mlle Djaït. Mar. 1938, 17.
 Ben Aldjia, Ali. Fiancé of Ouassila Ben Salem, contributor to *Leïla*. Mar. 1938, 17.
 Ben Amara, Mohsen. Interpreter at the Department of Habous. Married to Mlle Ghanem. Dec. 1936, 13.
 Ben Ammar, Mlle. Bride of Hamouda El Haddad. May 1940, 16.
 Ben Ammar, Saïda. Fiancée of Abdul-Hamid Ben Lamine. June 1937, 8. Marriage. Sept. 1938, 5.
 Ben Ammar, Wassila (future wife of Habib Bourguiba). Fiancée of Ali Ben Chedli. Sept. 1937, 6.
 Ben Ammeur, Mlle. Bride of Nejib Kchouk, jeweler. Jan. 1938, 14.
 Ben Aouda, Mlle. Bride of Hamadi Chaâbane, tailor. Sept. 1938, 5.
 Ben Attya, Mlle Lakhdar. Bride of Tijani Khomsi. Sept. 1937, 6.
 Ben Chaabane, Hamadi. Fiancé of Mlle Aouda. June 1937, 8.
 Ben Chadli, Khedija. Fiancée of Hamadi Djemâa. Dec. 1939, 6.
 Ben Chedli, Ali. Married to Wassila Ben Ammar (future wife of Habib Bourguiba). Sept. 1937, 6.
 Ben Dhiaf, Béchir. Lawyer, fiancé of Mlle Chouika. Sept. 1938, 5.
 Ben Fadhel, Habib. Married to Mlle Daoulatli. Sept. 1938, 5.
 Ben Ismaïl, Mlle. Bride of Chedli Kaddour. Sept. 1937, 6.
 Ben Lamine, Abdul-Hamid. Fiancé of Saïda Ben Ammar. June 1937, 8. Marriage. Sept. 1938, 5.
 Ben Mami, Ahmed. Grand Conseiller. Birth of daughter, Leïla, named after *Leïla*. Sept. 1937, 6.
 Ben Mami, Leïla. Born to Ahmed Ben Mami, named after *Leïla*. Sept. 1937, 6.
 Ben Mami, Mlle. Bride of Abdul-Hamid Turki. Jan. 1938, 14.

- Ben Raïs, Azouz. Painter, married. Parents: Henani and Hamida ben Raïs, Minister in Tunisian government. Mar. 1938, 17.
- Ben Romdane, Dr. Chedli. Married to Chafika Guellaty. Sept. 1937, 6.
- Ben Saïdan, Moktar. Awarded Officer of Nicham Iftikhar. May 1940, 16.
- Ben Salem, Aly. Birth of son Elias. Aug. 1940, 19.
- Ben Salem, Elias. Born to Aly Ben Salem. Aug. 1940, 19.
- Ben Salem, Ouassila. Contributor to *Leïla*, fiancée of Ali Ben Aldjia. Mar. 1938, 17.
- Ben Zakour, Mlle. Fiancée of Chedli Masmoudi. May 1940, 16.
- Bey, Mohamed Djelal Eddine. Born to Tayeb Bey, son of Sidi Ahmed Pacha Bey. Sept. 1938, 5.
- Bey, Tayeb. Son of Sidi Ahmed Pacha Bey, birth of son, Mohamed Djelal Eddine. Sept. 1938, 5.
- Beyrem, Mlle. Bride of Béchir Lasram. Mar. 1937, 20.
- Bongelabia, Chedly. Birth of a son. Dec. 1939, 6.
- Bouchiba, Amar. Born to Tahar Bouchiba. June 1937, 8.
- Bouchiba, Tahar. Birth of son, Amor. June 1937, 8.
- Bougelabia, Chedly. Birth of son. Dec. 1939, 6.
- Bouhajeb, Cherifa. Fiancée of Mohamed Belhouane. Sept. 1937, 6.
- Boukhris, Béchir. Deceased, son of Hédi Boukhris, principal interpreter at the Tunisian Court of City Property. Nov. 1939, 17.
- Boukhris, Hédi. Principal interpreter at the Tunisian Court of City Property, death of son, Béchir. Nov. 1939, 17.
- Boukhris, Mlle. Bride of Sadok Zouaï, son of Zouaï El Hadj. Dec. 1939, 6.
- Bournaze, Mohamed. Deceased. Nov. 1939, 17.
- Boutboul, Suzanne. Fiancée of Jacques Abitbol. Jan. 1938, 14.
- Chabaane, Hamadi. Tailor, married to Mlle Ben Aouda. Sept. 1938, 5.
- Chabby, Hamadi and his wife (née Ben Zeineb). Birth of daughter, Najat. Aug. 1940, 19.
- Chabby, Najat. Born to Hamadi Chabby and his wife (née Ben Zeineb). Aug. 1940, 19.
- Chahmi, Tahar. Awarded Officer of Nicham-Iftikhar. Dec. 1939, 6.
- Cherif, Abdelaziz. Born to Azedine Cherif. Mar. 1938, 17.
- Cherif, Azedine. Lawyer, married to Mlle Lakhouat. Mar. 1937, 20. Birth of son, Abdelaziz. Mar. 1938, 17.
- Chouika, Mlle. Fiancée of Béchir Ben Dhiaf, lawyer. Sept. 1938, 5.
- Chtioui, M. Court clerk at the Tunisian Tribunal (*Driba*), married to Mlle Ghattas. Sept. 1937, 6.
- Daly, Mohamed. Death of daughter, Sophie Ferchiou, professor at the French boarding school (Internat) of Radès. Nov. 1939, 17.
- Daoulatli, Mlle. Bride of Habib Ben Fadhel. Sept. 1938, 5.
- Dimassi, Abdelhamid. Fiancé of Kmar Kaouadji. Mar. 1938, 17.
- Djaït, Mlle. Bride of Fadhel Ben Achour, professor at Zitouna Mosque/University. Mar. 1938, 17.
- Djaziri, Mohamed Zein El Abdine. Born to Slim Djaziri. Nov. 1939, 17.
- Djaziri, Slim. Birth of second son, Mohamed Zein El Abdine. Nov. 1939, 17.
- Djellouli, Mlle. Daughter of Caïd in Tunis suburbs, bride of Cheikh Mustapha Mohsen. Sept. 1938, 5.
- Djemmal, Mlle. Fiancée of Ezzedine Belhouane, aide de camp to Tunisian Prime Minister. Oct. 1939, 4.
- Djemâa, Aziz. Married to Mlle Abassi. Oct. 1939, 4.
- Djemâa, Hamadi. Fiancé of Khedija Ben Chadli. Dec. 1939, 6.
- Djemmal, Salah. Merchant, father of the fiancée, Mlle Djemmal. Oct. 1939, 4.
- Djerbi, Mlle. Bride of Mohamed Salah Sayadi, daughter of the head of personnel and notary services in the Ministry of Justice, Taïeb Djerbi (?). Dec. 1936, 13.
- Djerbi, Taïeb. Father (?) of the bride (Mlle Djerbi). Dec. 1936, 13.
- El Bahi, Férida. Fiancée of Férid Guellaty. Sept. 1938, 5.
- El Falah, Amor. Born to Mohiédine El Falah. Aug. 1940, 19.
- El Falah, Mohiédine. Birth of son, Amor. Aug. 1940, 19.
- El Gacemi, Ali. Deceased. Dec. 1939, 6.
- El Gacemi, Saïd. Death of son, Ali. Dec. 1939, 6.
- El Gharbi, Ahmed. Married to Mlle. Barboucha. Mar. 1937, 20.
- El Haddad, Dr. Birth of daughter, Zohra. Sept. 1938, 5.
- El Haddad, Hamouda. Married to Mlle Ben Ammar. May 1940, 16.
- El Haddad, Zohra. Born to Dr. El Haddad. Sept. 1938, 5.

- El Hadj, Zouai. Opening of perfume store at 68, rue de l'Eglise. Jan. 1938, 14. Father of the groom, Sadok Zouaï. Dec. 1939, 6.
- El Masmondi, Habib. Birth of son, Mohamed Chedly. Sept. 1938, 5.
- El Masmondi, Mohamed Chedly. Born to Habib El Masmondi. Sept. 1938, 5.
- El Mehrezi, Hamadi. Birth of daughter. Sept. 1938, 5.
- El Menakebi, Allala. Deceased. Dec. 1939, 6.
- El Menakbi, Mohamed. Farmer in Béja, married to Mlle Zaouche. Sept. 1938, 5.
- El Mouaffek, Khemis. Married to Mlle Azedine. Mar. 1937, 20.
- Ennifar, Mlle. Fiancée of Ahmed Khammar. June 1937, 8. Marriage, Sept. 1937, 6.
- Essais, Mohamed. Court clerk au Charaâ. Birth of son, Mohamed Lanouar. Sept. 1937, 6.
- Essais, Mohamed Lanouar. Born to Mohamed Essais. Sept. 1937, 6.
- Ferchiou, Sophie. Deceased, professor at the French boarding school (Internat) of Radès. Nov. 1939, 17.
- Gabison, Gaston. Fiancé of Ida Saada; parents M. and Mme Isaac Saada. Dec. 1938, 6.
- Ghanem, Mlle. Bride of Mohsen Ben Amara. Dec. 1936, 13.
- Ghattas, Mlle. Bride of M. Chtioui. Sept. 1937, 6.
- Ghattas, Mlle. Fiancée of Moheïdine Kaddour, daughter of Caïd of Djerba. Jan. 1938, 14.
- Guellaty, Chafika. Bride of Dr. Chedli Ben Romdane. Sept. 1937, 6.
- Guellaty, Férid. Fiancé of Férida El Bahi. Sept. 1938, 5.
- Haddad, Dr. Mohamed. Married to Kmar Bach-Hamba. Sept. 1937, 6. Birth of daughter, Zohra. Sept. 1938, 5.
- Haddad, Zohra. Born to Dr. Mohamed Haddad. Sept. 1938, 5.
- Hadjem, Mlle. Bride of Aziz Snoussi. Sept. 1938, 5.
- Hadjoudj, Ahmed. Death of sister, Zohra Menchari (née Hadjoudj). Aug. 1940, 19.
- Hadjoudj, Dr. Hamadi. Death of sister, Zohra Menchari (née Hadjoudj). Aug. 1940, 19.
- Hadjoudj, Younès. Father of Zohra Menchari (née Hadjoudj). Aug. 1940, 19.
- Hechaïchi, Mlle. Bride of Béchir Komiha, director of the "Parfumerie Zouaï El Hadj." Dec. 1939, 6.
- Kaouadji, Kmar. Fiancée of Abdelhamid Dimassi. Mar. 1938, 17.
- Kaddour, Abderraouf. Born to Moheïdine Kaddour. May 1940, 16.
- Kaddour, Chedli. Married to Mlle Ben Ismaïl. Sept. 1937, 6.
- Kaddour, Hassan. Father of the groom (Chedli Kaddour). Sept. 1937, 6.
- Kaddour, Moheïdine. Fiancé of Mlle Ghattas, daughter of Caïd of Djerba. Jan. 1938, 14.
Birth of son, Abderraouf. May 1940, 16.
- Kamoun, Ali. Deputy public prosecutor at court (*la Driba*), birth of son, M'hamed Ali. Dec. 1939, 6.
- Kamoun, M'hamed Ali. Born to Ali Kamoun, deputy public prosecutor at court (*la Driba*). Dec. 1939, 6.
- Kastalli, Chedli. Director of *Nadha*, father of the bride, Mlle Kastalli. Jan. 1938, 14.
- Kastalli, Mlle. Bride of Chedli Neïfer. Chedli Kastalli, father, director of *Nadha*. Double wedding. Jan. 1938, 14.
- Kchouk, Nejib. Jeweler. Married to Mlle Ben Ammeur. Jan. 1938, 14.
- Khalsi, Mlle. Bride of Ahmed Neïfar. Double wedding. Jan. 1938, 14.
- Khammar, Ahmed. Fiancé of Mlle Ennifar. Head of litigation at the Tunisien Cooperative. June 1937, 8. Marriage, Sept. 1937, 6.
- Khiari, Lilia. Daughter of Mohamed (El) Khiari (Caïd of Tunis), fiancée of Mohamed Saïd, farmer in Béja. Mar. 1938, 17.
- Khiari, Mohamed (El). Caïd of Tunis, father of the fiancée, Lilia Khiari. Mar. 1938, 17.
- Khomsî, Tijani. Agriculteur, married to Mlle Lakhdar Ben Attya. Sept. 1937, 6.
- Komiha, Béchir. Director of the "Parfumerie Zouaï El Hadj," married to Mlle Hechaïchi. Dec. 1939, 6.
- Ladjimi, Chems-Eddine. Married to Mlle Ben Romdan, lawyer. Dec. 1936, 13. Birth of son, Farouk. June 1937, 8.
- Ladjimi, Farouk. Born to Chems-Eddine Ladjimi. June 1937, 8.
- Lakoua, Mlle. Bride of Tahar Snadly. May 1940, 16.
- Lakhoua, Abdelaziz. Birth of a daughter. Jan. 1938, 14.
- Lakhoua, Mohamed Mahmoud. Born to Zein Lakhoua. Jan. 1938, 14.
- Lakhoua, Zein. Birth of son, Mohamed Mahmoud. Jan. 1938, 14.
- Lakhouat, Gen. Aziz. Married to his cousin, Mlle Lakhouat. Father: Sidi El Hadi Lakhouat (Premier Ministre du Gouvernement tunisien). Dec. 1936, 13.

- Lakhouat, El Hadi. Father of the groom (Gen. Aziz Lakhouat). Premier Ministre du Gouvernement tunisien. Dec. 1936, 13.
- Lakhouat, Mlle. Bride and cousin of Gen. Aziz Lakhouat. Dec. 1936, 13.
- Lakhouat, Mlle. Bride of Azedine Cherif, lawyer. Mar. 1937, 20.
- Lasram, Béchir. Married to Mlle Beyrem. Mar. 1937, 20.
- Maâouia, Mlle. Bride of Mongi Maâouia, daughter of Béchir Maâouia, President of the Court of Appeals. Dec. 1939, 6.
- Maâouia, Mongi. Married to his cousin Mlle Maâouia, daughter of Béchir Maâouia, President of the Court of Appeals. Dec. 1939, 6.
- Mamlouk, Ali. Lawyer (*oukil*) in Kef, birth of daughter. Mar. 1938, 17.
- Mamlouk, Khelil. Deceased. Dec. 1939, 6.
- Masmoudi, Chedli. Fiancé of Mlle Ben Zakour. May 1940, 16.
- Mehirsi, Hedi. Deputy public prosecutor at the Regional Court of Béja. Birth of a daughter, Zeineb. Sept. 1937, 6.
- Mehirsi, Zeineb. Born to Hedi Mehirsi. Sept. 1937, 6.
- Menchari, Agdelaziz. Caïd of Monastir, death of wife, Zohra (née Hadjouj). Aug. 1940, 19.
- Menchari, Zohra (née Hadjouj). Deceased, wife of Abdelaziz Menchari, Caïd of Monastir. Aug. 1940, 19.
- Moâti, Fatma. Bride of Béchir Barket. June 1937, 8.
- Mohsen, Cheikh Mustapha. Married to Mlle Djellouli, daughter of Caïd in Tunis suburbs. Sept. 1938, 5.
- Mongi, Mlle. Bride of her cousin, Mongi Maâouia, daughter of Béchir Maâouia, President of the Court of Appeals. Dec. 1939, 6.
- Nefti, Sayda. Bride of Amor Farouk Bel Khodja, interpreter in the Department of Economic Affairs. Dec. 1938, 6.
- Neïfer, Ahmed. Married to Mlle Khalsi. Double wedding with brother Chedli. Sadok Neïfer, father, former malekite cadhi. Jan. 1938, 14.
- Neïfer, Chedli. Married to Mlle Chedli Kastali, father director of *Nadha*. Double wedding with brother Ahmed. Sadok Neïfer, father, former malekite cadhi. Jan. 1938, 14.
- Neïfer, Sadok. Former malekite cadhi, father of Ahmed and Chedli Neïfer. Jan. 1938, 14.
- Saada, Ida. Daughter of Mme and M. Isaac Saada, fiancée of Gaston Gabison. Dec. 1938, 6.
- Saada, M. and Mme Isaac. Parents of the fiancée, Ida Saada. Dec. 1938, 6.
- Saïd, Mohamed. Farmer in Béja, fiancé of Lilia Khiari, daughter of Mohamed (El) Khiari, Caïd of Tunis. Mar. 1938, 17.
- Sayadi, Mohamed Salah. Entrepreneur in Public Works. Groom of Mlle Djerbi (daughter of Head of personnel and notary services at Ministry of Justice). Naji Sayadi, brother of groom and M. Taïeb Djerbi, father (?) of the bride. Dec. 1936, 13.
- Sayadi, Naji. Brother of the groom (Mohamed Salah Sayadi). Dec. 1936, 13.
- Séfi, Ali. Fiancé of his cousin, Mlle Séfi. Mar. 1938, 17.
- Séfi, Mlle. Fiancée of her cousin, Ali Séfi. Mar. 1938, 17.
- Seghaïr, Ali. Head nurse, married to Mlle M. Belhassen. Mar. 1938, 17.
- Smida, Hamadi. Awarded Legion d'Honneur. "Le seul parfumeur qui reçoit les hautes personnalités visitant la Régence." Nov. 1939, 17.
- Snadli, Mohamed. Director of *Zohra*, fiancé of Mlle Abassi. Mar. 1938, 17.
- Snadly, Tahar. Married to Mlle Lakoua. May 1940, 16.
- Snoussi, Aziz. Married to Mlle Hadjem. Sept. 1938, 5.
- Taj, Naceur. Birth of son. Nov. 1939, 17.
- Tlatli, Mlle. Passed Baccalauréat exams in July 1940. Aug. 1940, 19.
- Turki, Hamid. Married to Mlle Ben Mami. Jan. 1938, 14.
- Zaouche, Mlle. Bride of Mohamed El Menakbi, farmer in Béja. Sept. 1938, 5.
- Zarrouk, Abdallah. Birth of son, Mohsen. May 1940, 16.
- Zarrouk, Abdelaziz. Born to Zein Zarrouk. Jan. 1938, 14.
- Zarrouk, Chérif. Born to Zein Zarrouk. May 1940, 16.
- Zarrouk, Mohamed. Interpreter at Economic Services, awarded Officer of Nicham-Iftikhar. Dec. 1939, 6.
- Zarrouk, Mohsen. Born to Abdallah Zarrouk. May 1940, 16.
- Zarrouk, Zein. Birth of son, Abdelaziz. Jan. 1938, 14. Birth of son, Chérif. May 1940, 16.
- Zouaï, Sadok. Married to Mlle Boukhris, son of Zouaï El Hadj. Dec. 1939, 6.

Index of Subjects

* = second series

Art, articles

- Feb. 1937: 16. "Chronique artistique: L'Influence de l'Art Décadent Italien sur les Industries artisanales et les Arts tunisiens," Aly Ben Salem, 3 Drawings.
- June 1937: 20. "Chronique Artistique : Les Beaux-Arts et la Femme Turque," Mouidé Essad.
- Jan. 1938: 14. "Leïla à l'Exposition," Mahmoud Zarrouk.
- Mar. 1938: 13. "Les Expositions de peinture," G.-L. Le Monnier.
- Sept. 1938: 7. "Le Salon d'Été au Bar Dixi du Kram," G.-L. Le Monnier.
- Dec. 1938: 24. "Chronique artistique: Adolfe le barbouilleur," G.-L. Le Monnier
- Mar. 1939: 9. "Les Arts : La rupture d'El Ittihad El Mesrahi."
- Mar. 1939: 9. "Chronique Artistique."
- Aug. 1939: 12. "Un Nouveau Musée à Tunis."
- Sept. 1940: 12. "Les Beaux-Arts," Jamila Alayli, from *Apollo* [Cairo]. Tr. Abdul-Méjid Chabby.
- *14 Dec. 1940: 2. "Les Peintres tunisiens."
- *1 Jan. 1941: 2. "L'Exposition Yahia."
- *1 Jan. 1941: 7. "Dans les arts: Exposition Yahia," A. Fichet.
- *24 Jan. 1941: 2. "Les Expositions."
- *16 Feb. 1941: 2. "Une école des beaux-arts à Sfax."
- *16 Feb. 1941: 2. "Exposition A. Fichet."
- *16 Feb. 1941: 2. "Exposition de Mme Goyer-Autray (Hall du *Petit Matin*)."
- *2 May 1941: 4. "L'exposition Farhat," B.O.
- *8 July 1941: 1. "L'Art à Sousse."
- *8 July 1941: 3. "L'exposition artistique de l'Afrique Française."

Artwork

- Dec. 1936. Cover drawing, Ali Ben Salem.
- Dec. 1936: 3. Drawing, Aly Ben Salem.
- Dec. 1936: 8. Drawing, A. Roubtsoff.
- Dec. 1936: 9. Drawing, G.-L. Le Monnier.
- Dec. 1936: 14. Painting, "Le Veilleur de nuit en Ramadan," A. Ghrairi.
- Dec. 1936: 15. Drawing, "L'évolution du voile à travers les âges," G.-L. Le Monnier.
- Dec. 1936: 17. Drawing "Il se retirait dans des solitudes, restait nu et ne parlait à personne....," Aly Ben Salem.
- Dec. 1936: 20. Drawing, Sidi-Bou-Saïd, G.L.L.
- Feb. 1937. Cover drawing, Jalel Ben Abdallah.
- Feb. 1937: 6. Drawing, "Étendue sur un divan....," Aly Ben Salem.
- Feb. 1937: 9. Caricature, "Accessoires de mariage arabe ou la ruine des familles tunisiennes."
- Feb. 1937: 11. Drawing, woman in sefsari in cemetery, A. Roubtsoff.
- Feb. 1937: 12. Drawing, Carlo Capuano.
- Feb. 1937: 14. Drawing, Sidi-Bou-Saïd, G.-L. Le Monnier.
- Feb. 1937: 14. Drawing, "Une rêverie douce s'empara de moi....," Grairi.
- Feb. 1937: 18. Drawing, lighthouse, C. de Multedo.
- Feb. 1937: 19. Drawing, mosque.
- Mar. 1937. Cover drawing, woman's head, Grairi.
- Mar. 1937: 11. Drawing, lion, A. Bélaïd.
- Mar. 1937: 14. Drawing, women in cemetery, G.L. Lemonier ?—unsigned.
- Mar. 1937: 17. Caricature, G.-L. Le Monnier, "La Caravane des Protégés."
- Mar. 1937: 19. Drawing, A. Bélaïd
- June 1937. Cover Drawing, avec fleurs et femme en sefsari, G.L. Le Monnier.
- June 1937: 3. Drawing, a couple, Ali Ben Salem.
- June 1937: 5. Photo, Great Mosque.

- June 1937: 7. Drawing, women.
 June 1937: 9. Caricature: "La Loterie des Mariages Tunisiens," unsigned.
 June 1937: 14. Drawing, "Rabiya yanoub," G.-L. Le Monnier.
 June 1937: 16. Drawing, boy with donkey, unsigned.
 Sept. 1937. Cover drawing, woman on tray carried by genie, Brandt.
 Sept. 1937: 3. Drawing, couple, Ali Ben Salem.
 Sept. 1937: 4. Drawing, triangle.
 Sept. 1937: 13. Caricature: "Le Harem en révolte," Brandt.
 Sept. 1937: 23. Caricature, "Perplexité: Ciel ! que me réserves-tu?" G.L. Le Monnier.
 Sept. 1937: 19. Caricature, "Evolution de la bourgeoisie Tunisienne à travers un demi siècle."
 G.L. Le Monnier.
 Jan. 1938: 2. Drawing, triangle.
 Jan. 1938: 3. Drawing, couple, Ali Ben Salem.
 Jan. 1938: 7. Photo, "La 1^{er} aviatrice de la Turquie Sabiha Gektchen faisant ses adieux avant son grand raid, au Ministre Président Ataturk."
 Jan. 1938: 20. Drawing, woman, G.-L. Le Monnier.
 Jan. 1938: 22. Drawing, building.
 Jan. 1938: 15. Drawing, G.-L. Le Monnier.
 Jan. 1938: 16. Drawing, triangle.
 Mar. 1938. Cover drawing, 3 women in evening dresses, unsigned.
 Mar. 1938: 8. Drawing, bird, A. Belaïd.
 Mar. 1938: 11. Drawing, "La ménagerie de Leila."
 Mar. 1938: 18. Drawing, "Aujourd'hui chez autrefois," Brandt.
 June 1938: 6. Drawings, R.P.
 June 1938: 8. Drawing, Max Moreau.
 Sept. 1938: 24. Drawing, A. Belaïd
 Dec. 1938: 13. Drawing, "Superpatriote de Burgos."
 Dec. 1938: 24. Drawing, bird, Belaïd.
 Dec. 1938: 17. Drawing, Brandt.
 Mar. 1939: 2. Drawing, Brandt.
 July 1939: 1. Photo, "Ebats de la jeunesse au bord de la mer."
 July 1939: 4. Photo, "Mosquée sur les bords du Nil."
 Aug. 1939: 6. Drawing, beach.
 Aug. 1939: 11. Drawing, G.-L. Le Monnier.
 Aug. 1939: 19. Drawing, A. Belaïd.

Beauty, Fashion

- Dec. 1936: 12. "Mode," Leila.
 Feb. 1937: 20. "La Mode," Leila.
 Feb. 1937: 20. "La Beauté," Guty Meery.
 Mar. 1937: 15. "Ce qu'écrivent nos sœurs d'Egypte: Splendeur de l'amour," Nahed Fahmy,
 tr. Abdul-Méjid Chabby.
 Mar. 1937: 21. "La Mode," Une Parisienne.
 Mar. 1937: 21. "La Beauté," Guty Meery.
 June 1937: 23. "La Mode," Frida.
 June 1937: 23. "La Beauté."
 Sept. 1937: 17. "Beauté," from *Kölnische Illustrierte Zeitung*; tr. Mme Abdelaziz Slama.
 June 1938: 17. "Colifichet de mes pensées," Frida.
 Sept. 1938: 24. "La Mode," Germaine.
 July 1939: 15. "La Page de la femme: Pour être belle."
 Aug. 1939: 17. "Petits conseils pour une grande beauté."
 Aug. 1939: 20. "La Mode."
 Nov. 1939: 20. "Petits Conseils pour une grande beauté," Zohra.
 Dec. 1939: 15. "Réflexion anodines: Considérations sur la beauté féminine et le maquillage," 'Leila'
 Aug. 1940: 31. "Mode et Beauté."

- *7 Dec. 1940: 5; *1 Dec. 1940: 8; *14 Dec. 1940: 7; *21 Dec. 1940: 5; *1 Jan. 1941: 5;
 *16 Jan. 1941: 5; *24 Jan. 1941: 5. "Mode ou pas mode," Jamila.
 *24 Feb. 1941: 3; *1 Mar. 1941: 3; *24 Mar. 1941: 3; *24 Apr. 1941: 3. *8 July 1941: 2.
 "Les Propos de Jamila," Jamila.
 *24 Mar. 1941: 2. "Votre Beauté, madame."
 *24 Apr. 1941: 2. "Maquillage," M.Rafik.
 *2 May 1941: 2. "Et les négresses ?..."
 *2 May 1941: 3. "Réflexions anodines: Moralisons la cité," M. Rafik
 *27 May 1941: 2. "Les négresses se maquillent-elles?"
 *27 May 1941: 2. "Après l'Espagne le Portugal."
 *27 May 1941: 3. "L'âge des épicuriens est révolu !..." M.B.

Correspondance

- Dec. 1936: 19; Feb. 1937: 24; Mar. 1937: 24; June 1937: 24; Sept. 1937: 24; Jan. 1938: 24. "Leïla répond."
 *16 Feb. 1941: 1. "A Nos Lecteurs."
 *21 May 1941: 5. "Les Propos de Jamila," Jamila.

East

- June 1937: 10. "Notre page littéraire: Une Idylle à Istamboul "; from *La Nuit du Jugement*, Yakub Kadri.
 Dec. 1936: 13. "Le Costume."
 June 1937: 20. "Chronique Artistique: Les Beaux-Arts et la Femme Turque " Mouidé Essad.
 Sept. 1938: 20. "Emancipation de la femme en Egypte," Kassem Amin-Bey. Tr. Eusèbe Vassel.
 Dec. 1938: 16. "Réflexions anodines: rationalisme et Empirisme," M. Rafik.
 Dec. 1938: 18. "Le Congrès musulman des femmes d'orient," Hanifa Khouri.
 Dec. 1938: 22. "Kémal Attaturk," A. Melnikov.
 Aug. 1939: 2. "Femmes, l'avenir est à vous," Leïla.
 Oct. 1939: 6. "Femmes, entre nous soit dit," Aida.
 Oct. 1939: 18. "L'Iran musulman contre le voile."
 Aug. 1940: 24. "L'Egyptienne et l'instruction," Abdul-Méjid Chabby.
 *14 Dec. 1940: 1. "Regards sur la Turquie," Tahar Lakhdar.
 *8 Feb. 1941: 2. "Le Coin des jeunes: Le problème de la femme," Ezzeddine Bouhlila.

Editorials

- Dec. 1936: 1. "Notre Programme: A nos chères lectrices," Leïla.
 Feb. 1937: 1. "Leïla vous parle: La critique est aisée..." Mahmoud Zarrouk.
 Mar. 1937: 1. "Leïla vous parle: Des noms ou des idées ?..." Leïla.
 June 1937: 1. "Leïla Vous Parle : Joyeux Printemps !" Leïla.
 Sept. 1937: 1. "Leïla vous parle: Leïla reparait !..." Leïla.
 Jan. 1938: 1. "Leïla vous parle," Leïla; Mar. 1938: 1; June 1938: 1; Dec. 1938: 1; May 1940: 1; Nov. 1940:
 1; *7 Dec. 1940: 1; *24 Jan. 1941: 2; *1 Feb. 1941: 3; *8 Feb. 1941: 2; *16 Feb. 1941: 2; *24 Feb.
 1941: 2; *1 Mar. 1941: 2; *16 Mar. 1941: 2; *24 Mar. 1941: 2; *16 Apr. 1941: 2; *2 May 1941: 2;
 *27 May 1941: 3.
 Oct. 1939: 1. "Editorial," Leïla.
 Dec. 1939: 1. "Leïla a quatre ans."
 Aug. 1940: 1. "Eté 1940," Mahmoud Zarrouk.

Education

- Feb. 1937: 8. "Femme musulmane et enseignement," Hakim.
 Mar. 1937: 18. "Réflexions sur quelques principes de l'éducation des filles," M.-A. A.
 Mar. 1937: 18. "Une Doctoresse tunisienne (Mlle Tewhida Ben Cheikh)," Leïla.
 June 1937: 8. "L'Education familiale," Farouk.
 Sept. 1937: 7. "La Femme tunisienne et l'instruction," Hamouda Damergi.
 Sept. 1937: 14. "Un Exemple à suivre," from *Das Illustrierte Blatt*.
 Jan. 1938: 5. "Le dialogue des Jeunes ou la femme et l'éducation première: pièce en 1 scène," H. Damergi.
 Jan. 1938: 17. "Le Coin des LECTRICES: L'Instruction de la Jeune Fille Musulmane," Saïda Sahly.

- July 1939: 5. "Femmes entre nous soit dit," Aida.
 July 1939: 9. Annoncements, exams passed.
 Aug. 1939: 3. "L'Ecole: première étape de l'émancipation."
 Oct. 1939: 13. "Défense passive"
 Oct. 1939: 19. "A Travers le Médina," profession
 Dec. 1939: 11. "Les Femmes 'savantes'"
 Aug. 1940: 19. "Succès féminins aux examens."
 Aug. 1940: 24. "L'Egyptienne et l'instruction," Abdul-Méjid Chabby.
 Aug. 1940: 28. "Voix d'outre-tombe: dialogue de Rousseau et Platon sur l'instruction de la jeune fille."
 *16 Jan. 1941: 2. "L'Amiral Esteva visite l'école de la rue du Pacha."
 *8 Jan. 1941: 1. "L'Orientation Professionnelle de la Jeunesse."
 *16 Jan. 1941: 1. "L'Orientation Professionnelle: tendances et vocations."
 *16 Jan. 1941: 2. "Ammi El Hadj."
 *8 Feb. 1941: 1. "L'Orientation Professionnelle."
 *8 Feb. 1941: 2. "Cours d'orientation professionnelle."
 *16 Feb. 1941: 2. "Une école des beaux-arts à Sfax."
 *1 Mar. 1941: 1. "Le Maréchal Pétain et l'Ecole de Demain," 'Leila.'
 *16 Apr. 1941: 2. "A la Direction de l'Enseignement."
 *16 Apr. 1941: 2. "Orientation professionnelle au Maroc."
 *24 Apr. 1941: 3. "La Soirée du 10 avril," Un Soussien.
 *2 May 1941: 2. "Le Coin des Jeunes: A l'occasion de l'arrivée de M. Borotra: Fête de la Jeunesse."
 *27 May 1941: 3. "Leïla vous parle..."
 *8 July 1941: 1. "L'Orientation des Jeunes."

Entertainment: Cinema

- Dec. 1936: 18. "Haut les Rideaux: L'Ecran," Fauteuil 47.
 Feb. 1937: 21. "Haut les Rideaux: L'Ecran: Anna Karenne," Fauteuil 47.
 Mar. 1937: 22. "Haut les Rideaux: L'Ecran," Fauteuil 47.
 June 1937: 7. "Soirée de Première," Khaled.
 Nov. 1940: 16. "Cinéma," Hatim El Mekki.
 *7 Dec. 1940: 4. "Le Cinéma."
 14 Dec. 1940: 5. "Le cinéma: du film nouveau," Mourad
 *21 Dec. 1940: 5. "Le Cinéma," M.R.
 *1 Jan. 1941: 5. "Le Cinéma," M.R.
 *24 Mar. 1941: 2. "Le Drame du Jerid."
 *8 July 1941: 4. "Théâtre et Cinéma," M.R.

Entertainment: Music

- Dec. 1936: 13. "Chronique du disque."
 Dec. 1936: 17. "Une charmante dictatrice."
 Dec. 1936: 19. "Le chant, la danse," Le Mélomane.
 June 1938: 10. "De l'état actuel de la musique arabe," Manoubi Snoussi
 Sept. 1938: 12. "Taktouka Rast."
 Mar. 1939: 10. "A Batons rompus ...," Khélil Mamlouk.
 Mar. 1939: 18. "Vive l'amour," Moncef.
 Oct. 1939: 9. "Les Minutes précieuses."
 *1 Dec. 1940: 7. "La Musique: Modernisons les Instruments," L'Amateur.
 *7 Dec. 1940: 5. "La Musique."
 *14 Dec. 1940: 5. "La Musique," l'Amateur.
 *21 Dec. 1940: 4. "La Musique," L'Amateur.
 *1 Jan. 1941: 3. "Musique et Lieux Communs."
 *1 Jan. 1941: 4. "La Musique: L'inspiration musicale," L'Amateur.
 *8 Jan. 1941: 4. "La Musique: Les Airs synthétiques de l'Egypto-Tunisien," L'Amateur;
 *8 Jan. 1941: 5. "Le festival des corporations sur le vif," Le Spectateur.
 *8 Jan. 1941: 5. "Le Contenant et le contenu."

- *16 Jan. 1941: 4. "La Musique: Quelques Réflexions," L'Amateur;
- *16 Jan. 1941: 4. "Une heure de musique Tunisienne."
- *24 Jan. 1941: 2. "Leïla vous parle," 'Leïla.'
- *24 Jan. 1941: 4. "La Musique: Deux auditions différentes engendrent deux états d'âme différents,"
L'Amateur.
- *24 Jan. 1941: 5. "L'Orchestre Tunisien de 'Tunis-National'."
- *24 Jan. 1941: 3. "Les Auditions de la Soulamya."
- *1 Feb. 1941: 2. "La Musique," L'Amateur.
- *1 Feb. 1941: 3. "Intermèdes de Chants."
- *8 Feb. 1941: 2. "Les Vœux de 'Leïla'."
- *8 Feb. 1941: 3. "La Musique."
- *16 Feb. 1941: 3. "La Musique: Chanter," L'Amateur.
- *16 Feb. 1941: 2. "Historiettes musicales."
- *16 Feb. 1941: 2. "Nos Jeunes et la musique."
- *24 Feb. 1941: 3. "La Musique: Les vœux de 'Leïla' dans le domaine de la musique: Labidi à l'honneur,"
L'Auditeur.
- *1 Mar. 1941: 3. "La Musique," L'Amateur.
- *16 Mar. 1941: 3. "La Musique, La Rachidia," L'Amateur.
- *24 Mar. 1941: 3. "La Musique: Le mouvement intérieur et la parole," L'Amateur.
- *24 Mar. 1941: 3. "A la Rachidia."
- *16 Apr. 1941: 4. "La Chanson tunisienne."
- *24 Apr. 1941: 3. "Mot d'enfant."
- *2 May 1941: 4. "Tour d'horizon hebdomadaire", L'Auditeur.
- *2 May 1941: 4. "Déception à la suite d'une émission," 'Le suppléant à l'Auditeur'.
- *2 May 1941: 5. "La Musique: Les Sources Modernes de la Musique en Tunisie," Mahmoud Zarrouk.
- *2 May 1941: 5. "Petites Nouvelles..."
- *27 May 1941: 2. "La Musique," L'Amateur.
- *8 July 1941: 3. "Si Hamdoun à Kairouan."

Entertainment: Radio

- July 1939: 6. "La qualité des émissions de Tunis PTT."
- *1 Dec. 1940: 4. "Radio: Aux écoutes," L'Auditeur.
- *7 Dec. 1940: 4. "La Radio."
- *14 Dec. 1940: 5. "La Radio: La Radio-Nationale."
- *21 Dec. 1940: 4. "La Radio-Nationale," L'Auditeur
- *1 Jan. 1941: 4. "La Radio: aux écoutes," L'Auditeur.
- *8 Jan. 1941: 4. "La Radio," L'Auditeur
- *16 Jan. 1941: 4. "La Radio," L'Auditeur.
- *24 Jan. 1941: 4. "La Radio," L'Auditeur.
- *1 Feb. 1941: 3. "Bilan radiophonique de la semaine," 'Leïla.'
- *1 Feb. 1941: 2. "La Radio."
- *1 Feb. 1941: 2. "Le Contrôle des Airs."
- *8 Feb. 1941: 2. "Autour des émissions musicales."
- *8 Feb. 1941: 3. "Baromètre radiophonique de la semaine."
- *8 Feb. 1941: 3. "La Radio," L'Auditeur
- *16 Feb. 1941: 3. "La Radio," L'Auditeur.
- *24 Feb. 1941: 3. "Baromètre radiophonique de la semaine."
- *24 Feb. 1941: 3. "La Radio," L'Auditeur.
- *1 Mar. 1941: 3. "La Radio," L'Auditeur.
- *16 Mar. 1941: 3. "La Radio," L'Auditeur.
- *24 Mar. 1941: 3. "La Radio," L'Auditeur;
- *24 Mar. 1941: 3. "Allô ! Ici Tunis National."
- *16 Apr. 1941: 3. "La Radio," L'Auditeur.
- *24 Apr. 1941: 3. "La Radio," L'Auditeur
- *24 Apr. 1941: 3. "En Glanant: Un mot de Marconi."

- *2 May 1941: 4. "La Radio."
 *27 May 1941: 2. "La Radio," L'Auditeur.

Entertainment: Theatre

- Dec. 1936: 18. "Haut les rideaux," Fauteuil 47.
 Feb. 1937: 21. "Haut les Rideaux: Le Théâtre," Fauteuil 47.
 Mar. 1937: 22. "Haut les Rideaux: Le Théâtre," Fauteuil 47.
 Dec. 1938: 14. "Sauvons notre théâtre tunisien."
 Dec. 1939: 17. "Le Théâtre Arabe: La Municipalité et les décors orientaux."
 Nov. 1940: 7. "L'autre face du décor," M.S.R. Lahmar.
 *1 Dec. 1940: 4. "Le Théâtre," S. Ridha.
 *1 Dec. 1940: 7. "Au Municipal: Omar Ibnou Abdel Aziz," Mohyeddine.
 *7 Dec. 1940: 1. "Les Conférences de l'Essor."
 *7 Dec. 1940: 4. "Le Théâtre," M.R.
 *7 Dec. 1940: 4. "A l'Essor."
 *14 Dec. 1940: 4. "Le Rôle du théâtre," M.S. Ridha.
 *14 Dec. 1940: 4. "La Fin d'un Cocaïnomanie," Mohyeddine.
 *14 Dec. 1940: 4. "Potins de la Scène."
 *21 Dec. 1940: 4. "Potins de la Scène."
 *21 Dec. 1940: 5. "A l'Essor," H. Moncef.
 *1 Jan. 1941: 4. "Le Théâtre."
 *1 Jan. 1941: 5. "A l'Essor."
 *8 Jan. 1941: 4. "Le Théâtre: Propos vaudevillesques ou megalomanie présidentielle."
 *8 Jan. 1941: 5. "Le Contenant et le contenu."
 *16 Jan. 1941: 4. "Chems-Es-Sabah (Le soleil du matin)."
 *16 Jan. 1941: 5. "Le Théâtre: Le Karakouz d' 'El Ittihad."
 *24 Jan. 1941: 2. "Leïla vous parle," 'Leïla.'
 *24 Jan. 1941: 3. "La Troupe Mohyeddine."
 *24 Jan. 1941: 5. "Le Théâtre."
 *24 Jan. 1941: 5. "A l'Essor: La Conférence du Docteur Bouquet."
 *1 Feb. 1941: 2. "Le Théâtre: Potins de la Scène."
 *8 Feb. 1941: 2. "Les Vœux de 'Leïla'."
 *8 Feb. 1941: 3. "Le Théâtre: au Municipal: L'Ingrat."
 *16 Feb. 1941: 2. "Les Prochaines Conférences de l'Essor."
 *16 Feb. 1941: 3. "La jeunesse théâtrale."
 *24 Feb. 1941: 3. "Le Théâtre: L'Art pour l'art," M.R.
 *1 Mar. 1941: 2. "A l'Essor."
 *1 Mar. 1941: 3. "Le Théâtre."
 *16 Mar. 1941: 3. "Le Théâtre: Les Amis du théâtre," "El Mourad."
 *16 Mar. 1941: 3. "Variétés: Bacchus Vous Parle," H.M.
 *24 Mar. 1941: 3. "Le Théâtre."
 *16 Apr. 1941: 3. "Le Théâtre," Le Souffleur.
 *16 Apr. 1941: 3. "Nos Jeunes et le Théâtre."
 *24 Apr. 1941: 3. "La Soirée du 10 avril," Un Soussien.
 *24 Apr. 1941: 3. "Le Théâtre," Le Souffleur.
 *2 May 1941: 4. "Le Théâtre," Le Souffleur.
 *27 May 1941: 4. "Le Théâtre: L'Etoile des environs," Le Reporter.
 *8 July 1941: 4. "Théâtre et Cinéma," M.R.

Family and Children

- Dec. 1936: 6; Feb.1937: 6; Mar.1937: 6; June 1937: 15; Sept.1937: 20. "Nos petits Enfants," Mlle Meriem.
 Feb. 1937: 2. "Caractères de la famille musulmane," Tahar Sfar.
 Feb. 1937: 7. Drawing d'une femme "Etendue sur un divan..." Ali Ben Salem.
 June 1937: 8. "L'Education familiale," Farouk.
 Sept. 1937: 13. "L'ange du foyer : La mère de famille," Yasmina.

- Aug. 1939: 6. "Les Enfants tristes."
 Aug. 1939: 8. "La Raison du plus fort."
 Aug. 1939: 16. "A Batons rompus," Khelil Mamlouk.
 Oct. 1939: 2. "Le Rôle de la femme dans la famille," Tahar Sfar.
 Oct. 1939: 4. "Note," L'Auteur (Tahar Sfar).
 Nov. 1939: 19. "Le rôle de la femme dans la famille," reader's letter, Tahar Sfar's response.
 *16 Apr. 1941: 4. "Les Berceuses Tunisiennes," Khadija.
 *24 Apr. 1941: 4. "Les Berceuses Tunisiennes, II."
 *2 May 1941: 8. "Les Berceuses Tunisiennes, III."

Fascism, Vichy, War, Collaboration

- Dec. 1938: 21. "Manifestations anti-fascistes," *L'œil de Tunis*.
 Dec. 1938: 24. "Chronique artistique: Adolfe le barbouilleur," G.-L. Le Monnier.
 Mar. 1939: 6. "Un protecteur en mal de protection," Khélil Mamlouk.
 Oct. 1939: 4. "Note," L'Auteur (Tahar Sfar).
 Oct. 1939: 13. "Défense passive."
 Nov. 1939: 2. "La Guerre et la Femme," Tahar Sfar.
 Dec. 1939: 2. "Les Conceptions racistes d'Hitler et la famille germanique," Tahar Sfar
 Aug. 1940: 2. "Acta est fabula », Abdul-Méjid Chabby.
 Aug. 1940: 9. "La femme et la guerre," Chafika.
 Sept. 1940: 8. "Propos d'une jeune fille en fleur...", Radhia.
 Nov. 1940: 5. "Considérations...", Khaled.
 Nov. 1940: 15. "La Femme et les alertes."
 *1 Dec. 1940: 1. "L'Egypte et la Guerre," T. Lakhdar.
 *1 Dec. 1940: 1. "La Chaussure."
 *7 Dec. 1940: 3. "A l'Aube d'une vie nouvelle, II," Mahmoud Zarrouk.
 *7 Dec. 1940: 7. "L'œuvre du Maréchal Pétain."
 *14 Dec. 1940: 2. "Et la Boukha?"
 *1 Jan. 1941: 2. "Les Elections."
 *1 Jan. 1941: 2. "Si toutes en faisaient autant! "
 *1 Jan. 1941: 3. "Renouveau Journalistique," M.Z.
 *16 Jan. 1941: 1. "Le message du général Weygand aux musulmans de l'Afrique du Nord."
 *16 Jan. 1941: 2. "L'Amiral Esteva visite l'école de la rue du Pacha."
 *16 Jan. 1941: 2. "De Retour."
 *1 Mar. 1941: 1. "Le Maréchal Pétain et l'Ecole de Demain," 'Leila.'
 *1 Mar. 1941: 4. "La Compréhension Franco-Tunisienne," R.P. Demeerseman.
 *24 Mar. 1941: 1. "L'oeuvre du Maréchal Pétain."
 *24 Mar. 1941: 1. "Le Serment des légionnaires de Tunisie."
 *24 Mar. 1941: 1. "Mot d'ordre de la Légion: Union."
 *24 Mar. 1941: 2. "M l'Amiral Esteva à Vichy."
 *16 Apr. 1941: 1. "L'Amiral Esteva Déclare."
 *27 May 1941: 3. "Nouvelles mesures contres les Juifs en zone occupée."
 *8 July 1941: 2. "A la guerre comme à la guerre."
 *16 Apr. 1941: 1. "Collaboration," T. Sfar.
 *16 Apr. 1941: 2. "Leïla vous Parle."
 *16 Apr. 1941: 2. "Le Commissariat des juifs: M. Xavier Vallat déclare "
 *16 Apr. 1941: 3. "Etoile filante..."
 *2 May 1941: 3. "La Positino de la Turquie."
 *3 May 1941: 3. "Vocabulaire de Guerre."
 *27 May 1941: 1. "Vocabulaire de guerre, II."
 *27 May 1941: 3. "Le Canal de Suez."
 *27 May 1941: 3. "Leïla vous parle..."

Freemasons

- *21 Dec. 1940: 1. "Critique Posthume: La Franc-Maçonnerie ou refuge des évadés."

- *1 Jan. 1941: 1. "La franc-maçonnerie ou refuge des évadés."
- *16 Jan. 1941: 3. "La Franc-maçonnerie: Confrérie d'Attrape Nigauds."
- *24 Jan. 1941: 7. "La Franc-maçonnerie: Confrérie d'Attrape Nigauds."
- *24 Jan. 1941: 7. "La Franc-Maçonnerie: aux enchères publiques," *Tunisie Française*.

Government

- Sept. 1937: 22. "Au Dar El-Bey."
- Jan. 1938: 2. "Une Rosette bien méritée."
- Sept. 1938: 2. "Une Journée de Vacances de Son Altesse le Bey," Mahmoud Zarrouk.
- Sept. 1938: 11. "Nos Echos."
- Sept. 1938: 11. "Ce qu'il faut écrire."
- Sept. 1938: 22. "Ouèche, ouèche," Mahmoud Zarrouk.
- Dec. 1938: 1. "Leïla vous parle."
- Mar. 1939: 1. "Le nouveau bey du camp: Son Altesse Sidi Tahar"
- Oct. 1939: 1. "Editorial."
- Dec. 1938: 6. "Aid Mabrouk," "Au Grand Conseil."
- Mar. 1939: 5. "Favoritisme "Mahmoud Zarrouk.
- Mar. 1939: 9. "Les Arts: La rupture d'El Ittihad El Mesrahi."
- Mar. 1939: 11. "Collaboration Franco-Arabe," *L'œil de Tunis*.
- Mar. 1939: 15. "Aux Habous."
- *1 Dec. 1940: 7. "Au Municipal : Omar Ibnou Abdel Azez," Mohyeddine.
- *24 Jan. 1941: 2. "Distinction honorifique."
- *1 Feb. 1941: 3. "A la Municipalité."
- *8 Feb. 1941: 2. "A la municipalité."
- *24 Feb. 1941: 1. "Le 12^e anniversaire du règne de son Altesse Sidi Ahmed Pacha Bey de Tunisie," 'Leïla.'
- *24 Feb. 1941: 4. "A l'Alliance française : La conférence du Général Saâdallah."
- *16 Mar. 1941: 1. "La mort du Prince Tahar Bey."
- *16 Mar. 1941: 2. "La Mort du Général Mostefa Sfar."
- *24 Mar. 1941: 2. "S.A. le Prince Sidi El Béchir Bey."
- *24 Mar. 1941: 2. "A la Section d'Etat."
- *16 Apr. 1941: 2. "Le nouveau Cheikh El-Médina: Le Général Saâdallah."
- *24 Apr. 1941: 1. "A la municipalité."
- *2 May 1941: 2. "A la Jama'aa des Habous."
- *7 Dec. 1940: 2. "Les élites."

Health and Science

- June 1937: 17. "La Doctoresse vous parle."
- June 1938: 7. "Bulletin médical," Leïla
- Mar. 1939: 16. "La Maternité de l'Hôpital Sadiki," "Hygiène dentaire."
- Oct. 1939: 12. "Excès de pudeur."
- *1 Dec. 1940: 5. "A la gloire de Pasteur," Prof. A. Sartory.
- *1 Dec. 1940: 5. "Les Fleurs."
- *14 Dec. 1940: 2. "Et la Boukha ?"
- *8 Jan. 1941: 7. "Chronique médicale: Les engelures ou Erythèmes terio," Mohamed Touhami Sassi.
- *8 Jan. 1941: 7. "Curiosités scientifiques: Le sixième sens," B.G. (Béchir Goucha).
- *16 Jan. 1941: 2. "Chez les médecins de colonisation."
- *24 Jan. 1941: 2. "Patagons et Patagonettes."
- *24 Jan. 1941: 7. "Curiosités Scientifiques: Bulles de Savon," B.G. (Béchir Goucha)
- *24 Jan. 1941: 7. "Le Hammam," A.F.
- *8 Feb. 1941: 4. "Conférences: 'L'Alchimie et la Synthèse de l'or' par Monsieur Debiesse,"
Béchir Goucha.
- *16 Feb. 1941: 4. "Conférences: La chimie moderne par Monsieur Debiesse," Béchir Goucha.
- *16 Feb. 1941: 4. "Chronique hygiénique: Soins de la Peau et du Corps," Le Médecin pratique.
- *1 Mar. 1941: 4. "Chronique Hygiénique," Le Médecin pratique.
- *16 Mar. 1941: 4. "Curiosités scientifiques: Mimétisme," Béchir Goucha.

- *24 Apr. 1941: 2. "Chronique Hygiénique," Le Médecin pratique.
- *24 Apr. 1941: 4. "Un moyen inattendu de se protéger contre les moustiques," Béchir Goucha
- *2 May 1941: 1. "L'Art Médico Pharmaceutique: Chez les Arabes," Dr. Mohamed Ben Sassi.
- *2 May 1941: 2. "Radès: station climatique de pied de montagne."
- *2 May 1941: 4. "Les Débuts d'un Accoucheur...," Raouf.
- *2 May 1941: 6. "Chronique Scientifique: Où en est la Télévision ?" Béchir Gaucha.
- *2 May 1941: 6. "Chronique Médicale: Les Vitamines."
- *8 July 1941: 1. "L'œuvre d'Avicenne," Mounir.
- *8 July 1941: 3. "Chronique Médicale: Régime de l'obésité."

History

- Feb. 1937: 23. "A travers l'histoire musulmane," G.L. Le Monnier.
- June 1937: 4. "La Condition de la Femme Arabe dans la période anté-Islamique," Tahar Sfar.
- June 1937: 18. "Le Calife 'Omar' dans la Mine," Pierre Hubac.
- June 1937: 5. "Chohdah la belle Savante."
- Sept. 1937: 12. "Une belle figure de l'histoire de la Tunisie: Aziza Othmana," Mohamed Nomane.
- Mar. 1938: 2. "La Condition de la Femme dans l'histoire de l'humanité," Tahar Sfar.
- June 1938: 13. "La Kahena."
- Sept. 1938: 8. "L'Histoire de Tunis au Théâtre," from *la Revue Tunisienne*, Henri de Curzon.
- Mar. 1939: 20. "Histoire et Légende," L.C. Feraud.
- Aug. 1939: 4. "Sous les fiscus."
- Aug. 1939: 10. "La Princesse Atf," H.H. Abdulwahab.
- Aug. 1939: 14. "Aicha El Manoubia."
- Nov. 1939: 6. "La Princesse Oum El-Oulou."
- Nov. 1939: 12. "A Kairouan au 4^e siècle de l'Hégire."
- Nov. 1939: 15. "Bab El-Benat."
- Dec. 1939: 11. "Les Femmes 'savantes'."
- Dec. 1939: 13. "Fleurs du Désert (Leïla, la Pure)," M.-A. Chakir.
- Aug. 1940: 35. "Un peu d'histoire: Femmes Arabes Guerrières," Dr. Perron.
- May 1940: 3. "Pardonnez."
- May 1940: 10. "Anecdotes historiques."
- May 1940: 11. "Musulmans et esclavage."
- *1 Jan. 1941: 2. "Les Arabes en Espagne."
- *1 Jan. 1941: 2. "Aziza Othmana."
- *16 Jan. 1941: 2. "Rue Sidi Ben Ziad," Abdoul Hassen Ali Ibnou Ziad.
- *16 Jan. 1941: 2. "Histoire."
- *1 Feb. 1941: 4. "A l'Alliance Française," H.B.S.
- *8 Feb. 1941: 2. "Les Dernier des Almohades."
- *24 Feb. 1941: 4. "L'Anté-Islam," Mohcen Ben Hamida.
- *1 Mar. 1941: 4. "L'Anté-Islam," Mohcen Ben Hamida.
- *16 Mar. 1941: 4. "L'Anté-Islam," Mohcen Ben Hamida.
- *24 Mar. 1941: 4. "L'Anté-Islam," Mohcen Ben Hamida.
- *2 May 1941: 6. "Les Métiers Kairouan: Leur passé, leur présent, leur avenir."
- *8 July 1941: 1. "L'œuvre d'Avicenne," Mounir.

Humor

- Dec. 1938: 19. "Histoires d'Actualité."
- *1 Mar. 1941: 2. "Ressemblance non garantie."
- *16 Apr. 1941: 3. "Lexique hebdomadaire."
- *2 May 1941: 3. "Vocabulaire de Guerre."
- *2 May 1941: 4. "Les Débuts d'un Accoucheur...," Raouf.
- *2 May 1941: 4. "Lexique hebdomadaire."
- *2 May 1941: 5. "Le Dormeur," Chakroun.
- *27 May 1941: 1. "Lexique hebdomadaire."
- *27 May 1941: 1. "Vocabulaire de guerre, II."

- *8 July 1941: 2. "Lexique de Leïla."
 *8 July 1941: 2. "De quoi rire un peu..." Abou Nawas.

Intertext

- Dec. 1936: 20. "Un livre sur Sidi-Bou-Saïd," Mahmoud Zarrouk.
 Mar. 1937: 2. "Le droit musulman et le mouvement féministe moderne," Tahar Sfar.
 June 1937: 10. "Notre page littéraire: Une Idylle à Istamboul," from *La Nuit du Jugement*," Yakub Kadri.
 Sept. 1937: 15. "Le Coin des Lectrices."
 Mar. 1938: 6. "Encore un," Khaled.
 Sept. 1940: 12. "Les Beaux-Arts," Jamila Alayli, from *Apollo*, tr. Abdul-Méjid Chabby.
 *21 Dec. 1940: 2. "L'Organe des Juifs de Tunisie."
 *24 Jan. 1941: 2. "Les Livres."
 *1 Feb. 1941: 3. "La Conférence du Général Saadallah."
 *8 Feb. 1941: 4. "Les Livres: Hammamet fleur d'amour par Claude Benady," M.R.
 *8 Feb. 1941: 4. "Conférences: 'L'Alchimie et la Synthèse de l'or' par Monsieur Debiesse,"
 Béchir Goucha.
 *24 Feb. 1941: 1. "*Sur les grand'routes de la compréhension Franco-Tunisienne*," Leïla.
 *24 Feb. 1941: 2. "La Conférence du R.P.Demeerseman."
 *1 Mar. 1941: 3. "Les Livres: *L'Orient dans la Littérature française* par Chedly Khariallah."
 *16 Mar. 1941: 2. "Un livre sur la Tunisie."
 *24 Mar. 1941: 2. "Afrique Littéraire."
 *7 Dec. 1940: 2. "Articles sacrifiés."
 *24 Mar. 1941: 2. "Leïla vous parle," 'Leïla.'

Islam

- Dec. 1936: 14. "L'Islam libérateur de la femme," Raouf.
 Feb. 1937: 2. "Caractères de la famille musulmane," Tahar Sfar.
 Feb. 1937: 5. "La femme musulmane et le travail," Mohamed Nomane.
 Feb. 1937: 23. "A travers l'histoire musulmane," G.L. Le Monnier.
 Mar. 1937: 2. "Le droit musulman et le mouvement féministe moderne," Tahar Sfar.
 Déc. 1936: 14. "Le Ramadan," Leïla.
 Dec. 1938: 4. "Ramadan," Rached.
 Aug. 1939: 7. "La Femme au début de l'Islam."
 Oct. 1939: 11. "Aide-toi, le ciel t'aidera," Mahmoud Zarrouk.
 Nov. 1939: 4. "Jeuner...non...faire Ramadan...oui," Saïda Sahly.
 Nov. 1940: 11. "Le Jeûne," Le Critique.
 *7 Dec. 1940: 1. "A la Recherche d'un Equilibre," Mhamed-Ali El Annabi.
 *1 Dec. 1940: 6. "Le Jeune : sa valeur éducatrice," Le Critique.
 *14 Dec. 1940: 2. "Le Droit musulman."
 *14 Dec. 1940: 2. "'Mehr' et 'Dot'."
 *14 Dec. 1940: 3. "A La Conquête de l'Eternité," Tahar Sfar.
 *14 Dec. 1940: 2. "La Civilisation."
 *21 Dec. 1940: 6. "Le Mois de Ramadan: Son Aspect Artistique," Le Critique.
 *1 Jan. 1941: 1. "Science et Religion," Mhamed-Ali El Annabi.
 *8 Jan. 1941: 2. "Veille de fêtes."
 *16 Jan. 1941: 2. "Un point de droit."
 *16 Jan. 1941: 7. "L'Aïd El Kebir ou la Fête du Sacrifice," Le Critique.
 *1 Feb. 1941: 1. "Dieu."
 *24 Apr. 1941: 1. "La Première Mosquée au Canada."

Language

- June 1937: 7. "Soirée de Première," Khaled.
 *16 Mar. 1941: 2. "Leïla vous parle," 'Leïla.'
 *24 Mar. 1941: 2. "Civilité?"
 *16 Apr. 1941: 1. "Les rapports franco-tunisiens: Le Bilinguisme," M. Rafik.

- *16 Apr. 1941: 2. "A la Direction de l'Enseignement."
- *16 Apr. 1941: 3. "Lexique hebdomadaire."
- *2 May 1941: 3. "Vocabulaire de Guerre."
- *2 May 1941: 4. "Lexique hebdomadaire."
- *27 May 1941: 1. "Lexique hebdomadaire."
- *27 May 1941: 1. "Vocabulaire de guerre, II."
- *8 July 1941: 2. "Lexique de Leïla."

Literature: Literary Criticism

- Dec. 1936: 7. "Chronique Littéraire: Giraudoux et la jeune fille," A. Chabby.
- Feb. 1937: 10. "Chronique Littéraire: André Gide et la Femme," Tahar Lakhdar.
- Mar. 1937: 10. "Chronique Littéraire: L'Ecole des Femmes," Marlène Daisy.
- June 1938: 7. "La Femme tunisienne et la vie intellectuelle," Mahmoud Aslan.
- Aug. 1939: 5. "Réflexions anodines: Les Lettres tunisiennes," M. Rafik.
- May 1940: 15. "Les Yeux noirs de Leïla," Mahmoud Zarrouk.
- Aug. 1940: 14. "Femmes de lettres arabes: May," Abdul-Méjid Chabby.
- Sept. 1940: 18. "Poésie et expression," S. Tlatli.
- Sept. 1940: 19. "Conceptions diverses de la poésie," M.A.El Annabi.
- Sept. 1940: 22. "Actualité et Retrospective: Une Page d'Anatole France sur la Guerre et la Paix,"
from *Mannequin d'Osier*.
- Nov. 1940: 2. "Les Possibilités d'expression de la poésie," Tahar Sfar.
- *14 Dec. 1940: 2. "Le Prix de Carthage."
- *21 Dec. 1940: 3. "Rêve et Réalité," M. Rafik.
- *21 Dec. 1940: 4. "Autour du Prix de Carthage."
- *1 Jan. 1941: 2. "M. l'Amiral Esteva et les lettres arabes," M. Rafik.
- *8 Jan. 1941: 3. "La Tunisie, Centre d'attraction des Belles Lettres," M.Rafik.
- *8 Jan. 1941: 2. "Leïla vous parle," Leïla.
- *8 Jan. 1941: 1. "Culture et Technique," T. Sahar.
- *16 Jan. 1941: 3. "Qu'est-ce qu'une civilisation?" Tahar Sfar.
- *16 Jan. 1941: 2. "Pourquoi pas?" Ammi Bel Hadj (le vieux bédouin).
- *1 Feb. 1941: 3. "Le Premier vœu de 'Leïla' est réalisé, Prix de poésie."
- *8 Feb. 1941: 1. "Le Prix d'Honneur de la Poésie Arabe," M.Z.
- *8 Feb. 1941: 4. "Les Livres: Hammamet fleur d'amour par Claude Benady," M.R.
- *16 Feb. 1941: 2. "En Glanant: Le Secret d'Alexandre Dumas," Le Glaneur.
- *16 Feb. 1941: 3. "Le Prix de la poésie arabe."
- *24 Feb. 1941: 2. "Le Prix de la poésie arabe."
- *24 Feb. 1941: 4. "Les Livres: Chaâr, par Henri E. Vallet."
- *1 Mar. 1941: 3. "L'activité de nos poètes," M. Rafik.
- *1 Mar. 1941: 3. "Les Livres: *L'Orient dans la Littérature française* par Chedly Khairallah."
- *16 Mar. 1941: 1. "A Propos du Prix de Carthage: Littérature Nord-Africaine," M. Rafik.
- *16 Mar. 1941: 2. "Le Prix des Lettres Arabes," 'Leïla.'
- *24 Mar. 1941: 2. "Leïla vous parle," 'Leïla.'
- *24 Mar. 1941: 2. "Après le Prix de Carthage."
- *24 Mar. 1941: 2. "Le Prix de la Poésie arabe."
- *16 Apr. 1941: 3. "Le Prix de la poésie arabe."
- *16 Apr. 1941: 2. "A la Direction de l'Enseignement."

Literature: Poetry

- Dec. 1936: 8. "Les Ombres," Skander.
- Feb. 1937: 11. "Les yeux," Skander.
- Mar. 1937: 12. "Fraternité," Skander
- June 1937: 12. "Les Poèmes de Leïla"; "A L'absente," "Couleurs du Soir," Skander; "Lac Bahira," Mounir.
- June 1937: 13. "Les poèmes de Leïla: Cité Sainte : Sidi-Bou-Saïd la Blafarde," G.L. Le Monnier.
- Sept. 1937: 10. "Refllets," G.-L. Le Monnier.
- Jan. 1938: 4. "Les poèmes de Leïla"; "Agonie d'un soir d'été" Skander; "Loin de Toi," G.L. Le Monnier.

- Jan. 1938: 10. "Nue," Benmami.
 Jan. 1938: 15. "Album d'Amour," Kussaye.
 Mar. 1938: 8. "Le Bicot," G.-L. Le Monnier.
 Mar. 1938: 11. "La Leçon: Mon Maître," G.-L. Le Monnier.
 Mar. 1938: 15. "Poèmes de Leïla", Skander; "Amertume," "Le Captif."
 June 1938: 3. "El Aroussa (La Mariée)," G.-L. Le Monnier.
 June 1938: 9. "Poèmes de Leïla": "Je t'aime"; "Consolation," Skander.
 Sept. 1938: 19. "Les Pigeons de la Cathédrale," Jacques Denis.
 Dec. 1938: 13. "Les quatre de Munich," G.-L. Le Monnier.
 Dec. 1938: 17. "Déclin" G.-L. Le Monnier
 Dec. 1938: 3. poème : "L'Oiseau bleu," Jacques Denis
 July 1939: 10. "Les poèmes de Leïla : 'Larmes', 'Volupté Suprême'," Skander
 Aug. 1939: 3. "Hantises," Marianne Le Gardet.
 Aug. 1939: 11. "Feuilles mortes," "Vengeances," Skander.
 Aug. 1939: 19. "Présence."
 Oct. 1939: 19. "Au départ," Marianne Le Gardet.
 Nov. 1939: 14. "L'Inspirée," Mahjoub Ben Milad.
 May 1940: 11. "Portrait," Prothée
 May 1940: 5. "A celle qui va se marier," "Abdication."
 May 1940: 7. "Je vous envoie ces fleurs," G.-L. Le Monnier.
 Aug. 1940: 3. "Un poème inédit de A. Chabby: Les étreintes dénouées," Abdul-Méjid Chabby.
 Sept. 1940: 11. "Un poème en prose de Kussaye: Veillée d'âme..." Kussaye.
 Nov. 1940: 9. "L'Aveu."
 Nov. 1940: 10. "Feux-Follets."
 Nov. 1940: 20. "Féerie," G.-L. Le Monnier.
 Nov. 1940: 21. "A Titre Posthume," Khélil Mamlouk.
 *1 Dec. 1940: 8. "Les Feuilles."
 *7 Dec. 1940: 5. "Les Berceaux."
 *14 Dec. 1940: 8. "Automne à Carthage," Dr. Er-Razi.
 *1 Jan. 1941: 3. "Le Berger"; "Mélancolie d'un soir," A.B.M.
 *1 Jan. 1941: 5. "Pour Toi," Marianne Legardet.
 *1 Feb. 1941: 3. "Les Vœux de 'Leïla'."
 *1 Feb. 1941: 4. "A l'Alliance Française," H.B.S.
 *16 Mar. 1941: 3. "Déception," Nox.
 *24 Mar. 1941: 4. "Deux Poèmes": "La Petite Mendicante," Karawan; "Espoir," Raja.
 *24 Apr. 1941: 1. "Vers un Nouveau Rivage."
 *24 Apr. 1941: 3. "Poème," Raja.
 *2 May 1941: 5. "La Nature consolatrice," Abedjelil Rachid.

Literature: Short Stories, Portraits, Fragments

- Dec. 1936: 17. "La Belle Légende de Majnoun Leïla," tr. from Arabic.
 Feb. 1937: 7. "Jeunes Filles d'aujourd'hui: Je Vous Présente Ferida," Abdul-Méjid Chabby.
 Feb. 1937: 15. "Les Lettres Arabes: Les Propos de ma grand-mère de Souhayr Kalmaoui,"
 Abdul-Mejid Chabby.
 Feb. 1937: 18. "Cahouet-el-Nadhour," Khaled.
 Mar. 1937: 7. "4 du Harem: Salha, Néjia, Zobeida, Mounira," Khaled.
 Mar. 1937: 14. "Au Jardin des Morts," Kalsoum.
 June 1937: 10. "Notre page littéraire: Une Idylle à Istamboul" from *La Nuit du Jugement*," Yakub Kadri.
 June 1937: 6. "Légendes d'Oiseaux," Kalsoum.
 Sept. 1937: 15. "Le Coin des Lectrices."
 Jan. 1938: 5. "Le dialogue des Jeunes ou la femme et l'éducation première: pièce en 1 scène," H. Damergi.
 Jan. 1938: 17. "Le Coin des Lectrices: L'Instruction de la Jeune Fille Musulmane," Saïda Sahly.
 Jan. 1938: 19. "Daikhana (conte arabe)," G.-L. Le Monnier.
 Mar. 1938: 14. "A Batons Rompus," Khaled Mamlouk.
 Mar. 1938: 16. "Propos perdus: Le soir à la chandelle...", Mansour Rachik.

- Mar. 1938: 19. "Les Yeux," J.B. Abdallah.
 June 1938: 2. "En Flanant," Saida Sahly.
 June 1938: 19. "Une Légende amoureuse," Hachemi Baccouche.
 Sept. 1938: 4. "En Rêvant," Saïda Sahly.
 Sept. 1938: 6. "Hommage à l'hypocrisie," Chihab.
 Sept. 1938: 17. "Maximes Chinoises," extrait de "Maximes Chinoises," Henry Frichet.
 Sept. 1938: 22. "Ouèche, ouèche," Mahmoud Zarrouk.
 Dec. 1938: 20. "Le Musée de la Pensée," Paul Chrétien Audruger.
 Dec. 1938: 22. "Un Grand Policier," from *Mes Romans*.
 Mar. 1939: 2. "Le conteur arabe."
 Mar. 1939: 12. "Cimetières arabes," G.-L. Le Monnier.
 Mar. 1939: 20. "Histoire et Légende," L.C. Feraud.
 July 1939: 17. "Les Belles Histoires d'Amour: Dounia la Barmécide et Noureddine le Joaillier."
 July 1939: 11. "L'Homme de l'Été," Ginevra.
 Oct. 1939: 5. "Croquis: Le village blanc."
 Nov. 1939: 10. "Musée de la Pensée."
 Dec. 1939: 5. "Les Contes de *Leïla*: La Surprise."
 Dec. 1939: 9. "Le Soir à la chandelle," Mansour Rachik.
 Dec. 1939: 18. "Nouvelle : Un Mariage silencieux," Le Conteur.
 May 1940: 13. "Remords," Gacem.
 May 1940: 17. "Conte philosophique: La Morte," le Conteur.
 Aug. 1940: 16. "Deux pages choisies de May: Tristesse," May.
 Aug. 1940: 17. "Deux pages choisies de May: Méditations," May.
 Aug. 1940: 21. "Post mortem: Les neuf confidences," Arbia Zaouche.
 Aug. 1940: 27. "Silhouettes tunisiennes: Chmâa l'usurier."
 Sept. 1940: 23. "Les Belles Histoire d'Amour: Fatale Méprise."
 Sept. 1940: 14. "Nuances," Kussaye.
 Nov. 1940: 22. "Sadok," Amina Ben Hassine.
 *1 Dec. 1940: 2. "Le Conte de « Leïla » : Les Trois Khibar," Le Vieux Conteur.
 *1 Dec. 1940: 4. "Mots," Mohammed El-Achkar.
 *7 Dec. 1940: 7. "le Conte de « Leïla » : La Condition Tripartite."
 *14 Dec. 1940: 8. "Le Conte de Leïla: L'Épée enchantée."
 *21 Dec. 1940: 3. "Lettre, à Y.D." 23 novembre 1936, C.C : Kussaye.
 *21 Dec. 1940: 8. "Le Conte de 'Leïla': Les Aventures des Souliers de 'Baba Kacem'," Le Vieux Conteur.
 *1 Jan. 1941: 7. "Le Triomphe de la Mort," K.C.
 *1 Jan. 1941: 8. "Le Conte de Leïla: Mendiante 'fille de mendiant'," Le Vieux Conteur.
 *8 Jan. 1941: 8. "Le Conte de Leïla: Le mouton de l'Aïd ou du 'pater' familiais'," Le Vieux Conteur.
 *16 Jan. 1941: 7. p.8 : "Le Conte de Leïla: Jours Fastes et Néfastes," Le Vieux Conteur.
 *24 Jan. 1941: 8. "Le Conte de Leïla: Les Deux Resquilleurs," Le Vieux Conteur.
 *1 Feb. 1941: 4. "Le Conte de Leïla: La Bague Magique," Le Vieux Conteur.
 *8 Feb. 1941: 4. "Le Conte de Leïla: La Danse des Godets " Le Vieux Conteur.
 *16 Feb. 1941: 4. "Le Conte de Leïla: On ne peut contenter tout le monde et son père," Le Vieux Conteur.
 *24 Feb. 1941: 4. "Le Conte de Leïla : Un Solliciteur ingénieux," Le Vieux Conteur, from *Majani El Adab*.
 *1 Mar. 1941: 4. "Le Conte de Leïla: Métamorphose," Le Vieux Conteur.
 *24 Mar. 1941: 2. "Civilité."
 *24 Mar. 1941: 4. "Le Conte de Leïla: Mazhoud Le gaffeur," Le Vieux Conteur.
 *24 Apr. 1941: 4. "Le Conte de Leïla: Le Mulet Enchanté," Le Vieux Conteur.
 *2 May 1941: 5. "Le Dormeur," Chakroun.
 *2 May 1941: 8. "Le Conte de Leïla: La Clémence de Dieu," Le Vieux Conteur.
 *27 May 1941: 4. "Le Conte de Leïla: Quiproquo," Le Vieux Conteur.
 *8 July 1941: 4. "Le Conte de Leïla: L'Histoire de Bachi Bou-Zouck," Le Vieux Conteur.

Marriage

- Dec. 1936: 13. "Le Mariage Mixte."
 Feb. 1937: 13. "Le mariage mixte: Sirènes d'outre-mer...", Mlle Jamila.

- Mar. 1937: 4. "Lettre d'un jeune homme à marier: Les joies du mariage," Rached.
 Mar. 1937: 15. "Le mariage mixte," Farouk.
 June 1937: 21. "A Propos des Sirènes d'Outre-Mer," Mme Agnès Z.
 Sept. 1937: 10. "Préjugés criminels," Protée.
 Sept. 1937: 11. "Suite aux Sirènes d'outre-mer: Réponse à Jamila," Mme Andrée A.
 Jan. 1938: 18. "Le Mariage," from *La Maison*.
 Jan. 1938: 12. "Amour, Devoir et Mariage," Protée.
 Jan. 1938: 22. "L'Entremetteuse" Mahmoud Zarrouk.
 Sept. 1938: 23. "Mariage de princes musulmans."
 July 1939: 13. "A la recherche d'une épouse."
 Aug. 1939: 12. "Polygamie," Tahar Lakdhar.
 Sept. 1938: 14. "Amour quand tu nous tiens."
 Aug. 1939: 1. "Fantômes à vendre."
 Oct. 1939: 7. "La Crise de mariage."
 Oct. 1939: 14. "A quoi rêve Jamila !..."
 Oct. 1939: 15. "Conseils aux jeunes filles."
 Oct. 1939: 16. "L'immonde satyre."
 Oct. 1939: 20. "Les Lectrices de Leila."
 Dec. 1939: 7. "L'Homme au foyer," M. Rafik.
 May 1940: 2. "A la recherche de la félicité conjugale," M. Rafik.
 Aug. 1940: 4. "Lettre d'un jeune homme à marier: Amour et mariage," Rached.
 Sept. 1940: 5. "Lettre d'un Jeune Homme à marier: L'Impossible Union," Rached.
 *14 Dec. 1940: 2. " 'Mehr' et 'Dot'."
 *21 Dec. 1940: 6. "Facilitons le Mariage: Si j'étais célibataire..., " Un-qui-n'est-pas-célibataire."
 *16 Jan. 1941: 2. "Mariage."
 *24 Feb. 1941: 1. "Le Mariage," Dr Ben Sassi.
 *21 May 1941: 2. "Semaine de l'enfance."
 *27 May 1941: 4. "Mariage Exemple," M.S.
 *8 July 1941: 2. "Autour du décret sur le mariage," M.S.
 *8 July 1941: 3. "Leila et le mariage."

Misc.

- Dec. 1936: 13; June 1937: 8; Sept. 1937: 6; Jan. 1938: 14; Mar. 1938: 17; Sept. 1938: 5; Oct. 1939: 4; Nov. 1939: 17; Dec. 1939: 6; May 1940: 16; Aug. 1940: 19; *11 Dec. 1940: 5. "Carnet Rose."
 Mar. 1937: 19. "Lettre de Paris: Mardi Gras," Marlène Daisy.
 Mar. 1937: 20. "Mondanités."
 Sept. 1937: 18. "Chronique Mondaine: Plaisirs d'été," Assia.
 June 1938: 5. "Les recettes de Leila: Gateau de five o'clock."
 June 1937: 22. "Lettre à Wassila..., " Madeleine.
 Sept. 1937: 4. "L'Ordre," Nour-el-Houda.
 Sept. 1937: 15. "Les Paroles ne s'envolent pas," Es-Sabr.
 June 1938: 6. "La Mer," Haute Feuille.
 Sept. 1938: 21. "Nécrologie."
 Dec. 1938: 6. "Nos Joies."
 Dec. 1938: 7. "Ezzarda en Kroumirie," le Caïd Ismaël Ben Hafsia.
 Mar. 1939: 12. "Décès (Mahmoud El Adel Bey)."
 Mar. 1939: 13. "Décès (El Habib El Allam, Garde des Sceaux)."
 Mar. 1939: 14. "Réflexions anodines : Le ridicule ne tue pas..., " M. Rafik.
 Nov. 1939: 5. "Femmes, entre nous soit dit," Aida.
 Nov. 1939: 16. "Non, Décidement l'homme ne descend pas du singe."
 Nov. 1939: 17. "Nécrologie." "Dans la Légion d'Honneur."
 Dec. 1939: 6. "La mort de Khelil Mamlouk."
 Aug. 1940: 19. "Nécrologie."
 Aug. 1940: 20. "In Memoriam: Une douce voix s'est tue."
 Nov. 1940: 13. "A quoi rêvent...elles," M. Rafik.

- Nov. 1940: 19. "La Ville et ses Echos."
 *7 Dec. 1940: 2. "A l'Alliance Française"
 *11 Dec. 1940: 3. "Reflexions anodines: civilités"
 *14 Dec. 1940: 2. "Dans les Familles."
 *14 Dec. 1940: 2. "Ammi el Hadj."
 *21 Dec. 1940: 2. "Nous lui tirerons les oreilles," Jamila.
 *21 Dec. 1940: 2. "Sans Titre." A.F.
 *21 Dec. 1940: 5. "Nécrologie."
 *21 Dec. 1940: 5. "Distinction Honorifique."
 *21 Dec. 1940: 5. "Bienvenue"
 *16 Jan. 1941: 2. "Fiançailles."
 *16 Jan. 1941: 7. "Considérations sur l'Intérêt," Radhia Daly.
 *1 Feb. 1941: 2. "Les Propos de Jamila," Jamila;
 *8 Feb. 1941: 2. "Mariage."
 *8 Feb. 1941: 2. "Naissance."
 *16 Feb. 1941: 3. "Les Propos de Jamila," Jamila.
 *24 Feb. 1941: 2. "Nécrologie"
 *24 Feb. 1941: 3. "Thés-Causeries."
 *24 Apr. 1941: 2. "Les Recettes de Leïla"
 *1 Mar. 1941: 2. "Par l'Effet...!" Ezzeddine Bouhlila.
 *1 Mar. 1941: 2. "En Glanant: Rétrospective: Je veux être député," Le Glaneur.
 *2 May 1941: 2. "Nécrologie."
 *16 Apr. 1941: 2. "Décès."
 *16 Apr. 1941: 3. "Les propos de Jamila," Jamila.
 *24 Apr. 1941: 2. "Du choix d'un ami."
 *2 May 1941: 5. "Le Monde comme il va..."
 *27 May 1941: 2. "Les Propos de Jamila," Jamila.
 *8 July 1941: 2. "Halfaouine."

Nationalism, Anti-colonial Subtext

- Dec. 1936: 5. "Notre ami Me Bahri Guiga nous écrit...," Bahri Guiga.
 Dec. 1936: 10. "Après le tournoi de beauté : Réflexions...," Leïla.
 Dec. 1936: 13. "Mondanités: A la Fête féminine des Etudiants."
 Dec. 1936: 13. "Le Costume."
 Mar. 1938: 18. "Veillons à notre personnalité," T. Lakhdar.
 Feb. 1937: 12. "Lettre à Madeleine," Mlle Wassila.
 Feb. 1937: 14. "Sidi-Bou-Saïd," Mlle Leïla.
 Feb. 1937: 18. "Cahouet-el-Nadhour," Khaled.
 Dec. 1938: 14. "Sauvons notre théâtre tunisien."
 Jan. 1938: 8. "Des Femmes...Des Hommes...," Khaled.
 Jan. 1938: 11. "Méfions-nous du faux modernisme," Férid Bourguiba.
 Mar. 1938: 6. "Encore un," Khaled.
 Dec. 1938: 1. "Leïla vous parle."
 Mar. 1938: 16. "Propos perdus: Le soir à la chandelle...," Mansour Rachik.
 Mar. 1938: 17. "Autour d'une fête," Mahmoud Zarrouk.
 June 1938: 2. "En Flanant," Saïda Sahly.
 Sept. 1938: 4. "En Rêvant," Saïda Sahly.
 Dec. 1938: 6. "Aid Mabrouk."
 Mar. 1939: 2. "Leïla, tes sœurs étaient en prison," Tahar Lakhdar.
 Mar. 1939: 11. "Collaboration Franco-Arabe," *L'œil de Tunis*.
 Aug. 1939: 4. "Sous les fiscus."
 Aug. 1939: 6. "Les Enfants tristes."
 Oct. 1939: 8. "La Guerre," Tahar Lakdhar.
 May 1940: 4. "Femmes, entre nous," Aïda.
 Aug. 1940: 2. "Acta est fabula," Abdul-Méjid Chabby.

- Sept. 1940: 12. "Les Beaux-Arts;" Jamila Alayli, from *Apollo*, tr. Abdul-Méjid Chabby.
- Nov. 1940: 7. "L'autre face du décor," M.S.R. Lahmar.
- *1 Dec. 1940: 4. "Le Théâtre," S. Ridha
- *1 Dec. 1940: 6. "Si nous parlions un peu de Scoutisme," Cerf.
- *7 Dec. 1940: 1. "A la Recherche d'un Equilibre," Mhamed-Ali El Annabi.
- *7 Dec. 1940: 1. "A la Recherche d'un Equilibre," Mhamed-Ali El Annabi.
- *7 Dec. 1940: 2. "Utilisation des Compétences."
- *Dec.141940: 1. "Regards sur la Turquie," Tahar Lakhdar.
- *14 Dec. 1940: 2. "Le Prix de Carthage."
- *14 Dec. 1940: 2. "Au Barreau."
- *14 Dec. 1940: 2. "Un Fait Divers."
- *14 Dec. 1940: 3. "A La Conquête de l'Eternité," Tahar Sfar.
- *21 Dec. 1940: 1. "Critique Posthume: La Franc-Maçonnerie ou refuge des évadés."
- *1 Jan. 1941: 1. "La franc-maçonnerie ou refuge des évadés."
- *1 Jan. 1941: 1. "Science et Religion," Mhamed-Ali El Annabi.
- *1 Jan. 1941: 3. "Renouveau Journalistique," M.Z.
- *1 Jan. 1941: 7. "Les Plats Nationaux," M.Rafik.
- *8 Jan. 1941: 3. "La Tunisie, Centre d'attraction des Belles Lettres," M.Rafik.
- *16 Jan. 1941: 2. "Chez les médecins de colonisation."
- *16 Jan. 1941: 2. "L'Amiral Esteva visite l'école de la rue du Pacha."
- *16 Jan. 1941: 7. "Sans Titre," A.F.
- *8 Jan. 1941: 2. "Vœux de Leïla."
- *16 Jan. 1941: 2; *24 Jan. 1941: 2. "Nous Suggérons."
- *16 Jan. 1941: 2. "Ammi El Hadj "
- *24 Jan. 1941: 1. "Réflexions anodines : l'Utilisation des Compétences," M. Rafik
- *24 Jan. 1941: 2. "Leïla vous parle," 'Leïla.'
- *24 Jan. 1941: 2. "Sanction méritée."
- *24 Jan. 1941: 3. "La Jeunesse Sfaxienne," El Habib El Masmoudi.
- *1 Feb. 1941: 3. "La Conférence du Général Saadallah."
- *8 Feb. 1941: 2. "Les Vœux de 'Leïla'."
- *16 Feb. 1941: 1. "L'Achoura," T.S. (Tahar Sfar).
- *16 Feb. 1941: 1. "Hier et aujourd'hui : La vie intellectuelle," M.Rafik.
- *16 Feb. 1941: 2. "Leïla vous parle," 'Leïla.'
- *16 Feb. 1941: 2. "Une beinefaitrice: Mme Hafsia Lakoudia."
- *16 Feb. 1941: 2. "Historiettes musicales."
- *24 Feb. 1941: 2. "Les Vœux de *Leïla*."
- *24 Feb. 1941: 2. "Appel à la Jeunesse Tunisienne," Bacha Azzeddine.
- *16 Apr. 1941: 4. "Autour d'une conférence ", Dr. Mohamed Ben Sassi.
- *2 May 1941: 1. "L'Art Médico Pharmaceutique: Chez les Arabes," Dr. Mohamed Ben Sassi.

Problems: Agricultural

- June 1938: 15. "Misère de la Paysanne," M.N.
- Sept. 1938: 16. "Le Paysannat Tunisien," 'Leïla.'
- Mar. 1939: 11. "Et l'œuvre du Paysannat ?"
- Sept. 1940: 2. "*Leïla* vous parle: Agriculture et Industrie," Tahar Sfar.
- *1 Dec. 1940: 2. "Le retour à la terre."
- *1 Dec. 1940: 5. "Les vers à soie."
- *7 Dec. 1940: 8. "Le Retour à la Terre : L'Agriculture Tunisienne," Rachid.
- *1 Dec. 1940: 7. "Paysannat et Hydraulique."
- *14 Dec. 1940: 7. "Le Retour à la Terre : L'Agriculture Tunisienne," Rachid.
- *21 Dec. 1940: 1. "L'Organisation de l'Agriculture," Leïla.
- *21 Dec. 1940: 2. "Retour à la Terre."
- *21 Dec. 1940: 8. "Le Retour à la Terre : Problème du Jour," Rachid.
- *1 Jan. 1941: 1. "Le Problème Rural," Leïla.
- *1 Feb. 1941: 1. "La Production Agricole et la Terre."

- *8 Feb. 1941, 2. "Leïla vous parle," 'Leïla.'
- *1 Mar. 1941: 1. "Pour la Protection du Fellah," Tahar Sfar.
- *16 Apr. 1941: 2. "Augmentation des salaires agricoles en Algérie."
- *24 Apr. 1941: 1. "Hydraulique et paysannat," Rachid.
- *1 Mar. 1941: 2. "Le Coin des Jeunes: Attention au Déboisement en Tunisie," Bacha Azzeddine.

Problems: Economic

- Mar. 1938: 4. "Solution Pratique," Jamila Malki.
- Mar. 1938: 17. "Autour d'une fête," Mahmoud Zarrouk.
- June 1938: 12. "Mauvais Goût," Mahmoud Zarrouk.
- June 1938: 18. "Artisanat Tunisien et Industrie Française."
- Sept. 1938: 11. "Ce qu'il faut écrire."
- Mar. 1939: 19. "L'Embellissement de la Hara et les Musulmans."
- July 1939: 4. "Il faut retourner la Bédouine chez elle."
- Oct. 1939: 19. "A Travers le Médina."
- Nov. 1939: 13. "Des usages de la bourgeoisie décadente."
- May 1940: 8. "Le Trousseau de la Mariée."
- Sept. 1940: 2. "Leïla vous parle : Agriculture et Industrie," Tahar Sfar.
- *1 Dec. 1940: 2. "La Bédouine dans l'économie du pays."
- *1 Dec. 1940: 3. "De l'Economie Nouvelle: Le travail à la tâche."
- *1 Dec. 1940: 5. "Leïla et les Sports : Notre point de vue."
- *1 Dec. 1940: 8. "La Crise de la Lingerie."
- *1 Dec. 1940: 8. "Les Chaouachis."
- *7 Dec. 1940: 1. "L'économie dirigée."
- *7 Dec. 1940: 1. "Economie fermée."
- *7 Dec. 1940: 1. "La Fabrique de draps d'El Battan."
- *14 Dec. 1940: 1. "Ce qu'on attend du nouveau système économique."
- *14 Dec. 1940: 2. "Achetez donc Tunisien."
- *14 Dec. 1940: 7. "La Vie Chère à Sidi-Bou-Saïd."
- *21 Dec. 1940: 3. "Economie nouvelle : La fin des trusts," H. B-S.
- *1 Jan. 1941: 2. "Leïla vous parle."
- *8 Jan. 1941: 2. "Le Fromage Testouri."
- *8 Feb. 1941: 2. "Les Propos de Jamila," Jamila.
- *16 Apr. 1941: 2. "Trafiquants et fauteurs de vie chère."
- *24 Apr. 1941: 1. "La Lutte contre la spéculation," 'Leïla.'
- *2 May 1941: 2. "Résurrection de Notre Economie."
- *2 May 1941: 2. "Le sucre en Algérie."
- *7 Dec. 1940: 2. "Les consommateurs y sont pour quelque chose."
- *7 Dec. 1940: 3. "A l'Aube d'une vie nouvelle, II," Mahmoud Zarrouk.
- *7 Dec. 1940: 3. "Sans Titre," A.F.
- *21 Dec. 1940: 2. "Leïla vous parle."
- *21 Dec. 1940: 2. "Un Tour au Marché."
- *1 Jan. 1941: 2. "Si toutes en faisaient autant !"
- *1 Jan. 1941: 2. "A La Marsa."
- *1 Jan. 1941: 7. "Les Plats Nationaux," M. Rafik.
- *8 Jan. 1941: 2. "Les Marchands de vin."
- *8 Jan. 1941: 3. "Cartes d'alimentation et Bons de réapprovisionnement."
- *16 Jan. 1941: 2. "La Spéculation."
- *16 Jan. 1941: 2. "Leïla vous parle," 'Leïla.'
- *16 Jan. 1941: 2. "Nous Suggérons."
- *24 Jan. 1941: 1. "L'Artisanat."
- *24 Jan. 1941: 2. "Un genre de spéculation."
- *1 Feb. 1941: 3. "La Laine Tunisienne."
- *1 Feb. 1941: 3. "Les Souks."

- *16 Feb. 1941: 1. "Appel à la population tunisienne," 'Leïla.'
- *16 Feb. 1941: 2. "Leïla vous parle," 'Leïla.'
- *24 Feb. 1941: 2. "Leïla vous parle," 'Leïla.'
- *24 Feb. 1941: 2. "Rien ne sert de courir..."
- *1 Mar. 1941: 2. "'Leïla' vous dit: merci."
- *1 Mar. 1941: 2. "Deux journaux, la même nouvelle..."
- *16 Mar. 1941: 2. "Stockomanie..." *Tunisie française*.
- *24 Mar. 1941: 2. "Darmouni et de Saint-Julien sont expulsés de Tunisie."
- *24 Mar. 1941: 3. "Les Propos de Jamila," Jamila.
- *16 Apr. 1941: 3. "Lexique hebdomadaire."
- *24 Apr. 1941: 2. "Leïla vous parle."
- *24 Apr. 1941: 3. "La Soirée du 10 avril," Un Soussien.
- *2 May 1941: 1. "Rénovation de l'Artisanat," M.A. El Annabi.
- *2 May 1941: 2. "Sus aux fraudeurs !"
- *2 May 1941: 4. "Lexique hebdomadaire."
- *2 May 1941: 6. "Les Métiers Kairouan: Leur passé, leur présent, leur avenir."
- *27 May 1941: 2. "Contre la spéculation."

Problems: Social

- Dec. 1936: 19. "Une détresse à secourir."
- Feb. 1937: 5. "SOS," Bahri Guiga.
- Mar. 1937: 17. "Aux Riches," G.-L. Le Monnier.
- June 1937: 14. "La Bédouine et ses misères," Mohammed Nomane.
- Sept. 1937: 22. "Une Belle Œuvre à Réaliser: Pour les orphelines," Mahmoud Zarrouk.
- Sept. 1937: 21. "Les Orphelins de Metlaoui," G.L. Le Monnier, avec photo de groupe
- Jan. 1938: 9. "Utilité d'un orphelinat de jeunes filles musulmanes," Zeynouba Tahar.
- Sept. 1937: 5. "Une Grande Beinefaitrice: Madame Armand Guillon," Abdul-Mejid Chabby.
- Mar. 1938: 5. "L'œuvre de protection de l'enfance en Tunisie," 'Leïla.'
- Sept. 1938: 10. "La Société de Bienfaisance Musulmane," 'Leïla.'
- Sept. 1938: 15. "Réflexions anodines: Les vieux et les jeunes," M. Rafik.
- Dec. 1938: 5. "Maisons claires," Zeynouba Tahar.
- Mar. 1939: 3. "La Femme tunisienne et la vie publique."
- Mar. 1939: 4. "La Femme dans les arts et dans la politique."
- Mar. 1939: 19. "L'Embellissement de la Hara et les Musulmans."
- July 1939: 4. "Il faut retourner la Bédouine chez elle."
- July 1939: 7. "Chez les Ouled Naïl," G.-L. Le Monnier.
- July 1939: 9. "Les Tares Sociales: La Mendicité," Essaida Foudhayli
- Oct. 1939: 10. "Au Secours de l'Enfance Tunisienne," 'Leïla.'
- *1 Dec. 1940: 8. "Les Chaouachis."
- *1 Jan. 1941: 2. "Les petits domestiques."
- *24 Jan. 1941: 2. "Les Mendiants."
- *24 Jan. 1941: 2. "La Suppression de la mendicité."
- *8 Feb. 1941: 1. "Des Asiles pour les Mendiants," M. Rafik.
- *8 Feb. 1941: 1. "Habitations à Bon Marché."
- *24 Feb. 1941: 1. "Les Mendiants," A.F.
- *1 Mar. 1941: 2. "Des Asiles pour les mendiants," D.T.
- *16 Mar. 1941: 1. "Les Périls Sociaux," Dr. M. Ben Sassi.
- *1 Feb. 1941: 3. "Leïla vous parle," 'Leïla.'
- *16 Feb. 1941: 2. "Une beinefaitrice: Mme Hafsia Lakoudia."
- *16 Feb. 1941: 2. « Un cœur généreux.»
- *1 Mar. 1941: 2. "Chez M. Béchir Maâouia."
- *16 Mar. 1941: 3. "Les Propos de Jamila," Jamila.
- *16 Apr. 1941: 2. "La Grande Semaine de l'enfance."
- *2 May 1941: 1. "Rénovation de l'Artisanat," M.A. El Annabi.
- *2 May 1941: 2. "Leïla vous parle," 'Leïla.'

- *27 May 1941: 1. "A propos des Fêtes de l'Enfance," M. Rafik.
- *27 May 1941: 4. "La mort de M. Naji Saiadi."
- *8 July 1941: 2. "Le Transfert du Souk-El-Asr."

Programme (Objectives), Production Problems

- Dec. 1936: 1. "Notre Programme: A nos chères lectrices," Leïla.
- Dec. 1936: 5. "Notre ami Me Bahri Guiga nous écrit...", Bahri Guiga.
- Feb. 1937: 1. "Leïla Vous Parle : La critique est aisée," Mahmoud Zarrouk.
- Feb. 1937: 24. "Mise au point," Les Amis de 'Leïla.'
- Mar. 1937: 1. "Leïla Vous Parle: Des noms ou des idées ?...", Leïla.
- Sept. 1937: 1. "Leïla vous parle: Leïla reparait !...", Leïla.
- Sept. 1937: 23. "Du nouveau à 'Leïla'."
- Mar. 1939: 13. "Au Seuil de la 3^{ème} année."
- Dec. 1939: 1. "Leïla a quatre ans."
- Dec. 1939: 17. "Leïla et les parasites!"
- May 1940: 1. "Leïla vous parle."
- Aug. 1940: 1. "Été 1940," Mahmoud Zarrouk.
- Aug. 1940: inside cover. "Avis à nos lecteurs et abonnés."
- Sept. 1940: 1. "On réclame un programme," Mahmoud Zarrouk.
- *1 Dec. 1940: 1. "Leïla vous parle..."
- *1 Dec. 1940: 1. "Leïla crée pour ses lecteurs."
- *1 Dec. 1940: 1. "A l'Aube d'une vie nouvelle," Mahmoud Zarrouk.
- *1 Dec. 1940: 2. "Le retour à la terre."
- *7 Dec. 1940: 1. "Leïla vous parle," 'Leïla.'
- *14 Dec. 1940: 1. "Leïla vous parle."
- *8 Jan. 1941: 2. "Anniversaire de Leïla."
- *24 Jan. 1941: 2. "Leïla vous parle," 'Leïla.'
- *16 Feb. 1941: 1. "Notre programme," Mohammed Saadallah.
- *8 Jan. 1941: 2. "Vœux de Leïla."
- *24 Jan. 1941: 2. "La Réalisation des vœux de 'Leïla'."
- *2 May 1941: 2. "Que de Coquilles."

Sports, Scouting, Word Games

- *1 Dec. 1940: 7. "Echos sportifs."
- *7 Dec. 1940: 5. "Les Jeux de l'Esprit."
- *7 Dec. 1940: 6. LEILA SPORTIVE: "Football," "Cyclisme," "Scoutisme."
- *7 Dec. 1940: 6. "Une poignée d'Echos."
- *14 Dec. 1940: 3. "Les Jeux de l'Esprit."
- *14 Dec. 1940: 6. LEILA SPORTIVE, "Football," "Le Lawn-Tennis, sport-roi," Ali Ben Mahmoud, "Scoutisme," Cerf, "Une Poignée d'Echos."
- *14 Dec. 1940: 2. "Par Terre..."
- *21 Dec. 1940: 5. "Les Jeux de l'Esprit."
- *21 Dec. 1940: 7. LEILA SPORTIVE; "Football"; "Une poignée d'échos"; "Le 'Golf': Notre 'Agfa' Nationale," Ali Ben Mahmoud.
- *1 Jan. 1941: 6. LEILA SPORTIVE; "Bulletin sportif: La Natation, sport 'idéal'" Ali Ben Mahmoud; "Football: Nos vedettes sportives: Laroussi"; "Scoutisme: 'Etre prêt'"; "Le Dimanche sportif: Natation; Rugby."
- *1 Jan. 1941: 5. "Les Jeux de l'esprit."
- *8 Jan. 1941: 5. "Les Jeux de l'Esprit."
- *8 Jan. 1941: 6. LEILA SPORTIVE; Bulletin sportif: "L'équitation sport à la mode" Ali Ben Mahmoud; "Naccache remporte la coupe du Tennis-club"; "Football"; "Nos vedette sportives"; "Hedi Ben Ammar"; "Au Profit du secours national"; "Athlétisme."
- *16 Jan. 1941: 6. LEILA SPORTIVE; "Bulletin sportif: L'aviron, sport méconnu chez nous"; "Football: Nos vedettes sportives"; "Le Criterium officiel"; "Athlétisme"; "L'Aïd El Kebir sportif"; "Aux Sociétés sportives"; "Ceux qui s'en vont: Sheyes n'est plus !; Pauvre Alain"; "... Pour Nous Aussi,"

Ibn-El-Aouam.

- *16 Jan. 1941: 5. "Les Jeux de l'esprit."
- *24 Jan. 1941: 5. "Les Jeux de l'esprit."
- *24 Jan. 1941: 6. LEILA SPORTIVE; "Bulletin sportif: Le Base-ball, sport national des Etats-Unis"; "Football: Nos Vedettes sportives"; "Une Grande Manifestation sportive!"; "Savez-vous qu..."; "Le Criterium de la L.T.F.A."
- *1 Feb. 1941: 3. "L'Avenir des Sports en Tunisie," H. Mejdoub.
- *8 Feb. 1941: 4. "Vive le Sport," Le jeune sportif.
- *16 Feb. 1941: 3. "Football et culture physique."
- *24 Feb. 1941: 2. "Appel à la Jeunesse Tunisienne," Bacha Azzeddine.
- *16 Apr. 1941: 4. "Islam et culture physique."
- *2 May 1941: 7. Ad for "les journées Borotra."
- *8 July 1941: 4. "Les Femmes et le Sport," Mounir.

Women: Complaints by Men, Opinions

- Dec. 1936: 3. "Lettre d'un jeune homme à marier," Rached.
- Feb. 1937: 4. "Lettre d'un jeune homme à marier : Emancipation et non dévergondage!" Rached.
- June 1937: 2. "Lettre d'un jeune homme à marier," Rached.
- Sept. 1937: 2. "Lettre d'un Jeune Homme à marier: L'amour impersonnel et la jeune fille musulmane," Rached.
- Jan. 1938: 3. "Lettre d'un Jeune Homme à marier: Azyade 1938," Rached.
- Jan. 1938: 11. "Méfions-nous du faux modernisme," Férid Bourguiba.
- Mar. 1938: 6. "Encore un," Khaled.
- Mar. 1938: 16. "Propos perdus: Le soir à la chandelle..." Mansour Rachik.
- Dec. 1938: 11. "Madame reçoit," M.N.
- Dec. 1938: 12. "A Batons rompus," Khélil Mamlouk.
- Aug. 1939: 18. "Un Nouveau Zoo."
- Nov. 1939: 7. "Réflexions anodines: anticipation ou déchéance?" M. Rafik.
- Nov. 1939: 13. "Des usages de la bourgeoisie décadente."
- May 1940: 6. "Ne Vous fâchez pas," Leila.
- *1 Dec. 1940: 8. "De la décence."
- *16 Jan. 1941: 2. "L'Amiral Esteva visite l'école de la rue du Pacha."
- *1 Feb. 1941: 3. "Plus de Bigoudis."
- *2 May 1941: 3. "Emancipation manqué."

Women: Complaints by Women

- Feb. 1937: 3. "Propos d'une jeune fille en fleur !" Mlle Radhia.
- Mar. 1937: 3. "Propos d'une jeune fille en fleur !" Radhia.
- Mar. 1937: 11. "Les Hommes ne sont pas des Dieux !...," Jamila.
- June 1937: 3. "Propos d'une jeune fille en Fleur ! ...," Radhia.
- June 1937: 9. "La Rue," Zeineb.
- Sept. 1937: 3. "Propos d'une jeune fille en fleur !...: Don Juan n'est pas mort !...," Radhia
- Sept. 1940: 16. "Cœurs en chômage," Malika.

Women: Definitions, Emancipation, New Role

- Dec. 1936: 2. "Un mot sur ce que doit être la femme musulmane," Mohamed Nomane.
- Dec. 1936: 4. "Lettre de Paris...," Marlène Daisy.
- Dec. 1936: 5. "Notre ami Me Bahri Guiga nous écrit...," Bahri Guiga.
- Dec. 1936: 11. "Un Abîme à combler," Raouf.
- Dec. 1936: 16. "La femme musulmane," Aly Ben Salem.
- Feb. 1937: 5. "La femme musulmane et le travail," Mohamed Nomane.
- Feb. 1937: 7. "Jeunes Filles d'aujourd'hui: Je Vous Présente Ferida," Abdul-Méjid Chabby.
- Mar. 1937: 5. "Les Féministes françaises et le projet de Loi Violette," Claire-Charles Géniaux.
- Mar. 1937: 16. "Rôle de la Femme," Mohamed Nomane.
- June 1937: 4. "La Condition de la Femme Arabe dans la période anté-Islamique," Tahar Sfar.

- June 1937: 19. "Pour La Femme," Aïcha Ghomry, tr. Abdul-Méjid Chabby.
- June 1937: 24. "V'là le printemps," Leila.
- Sept. 1937: 9. "A Batons rompus," Khélib Mamlouk.
- Sept. 1937: 16. "Réflexions d'une jeune française: Autour de l'évolution de la femme musulmane," Marlène Daisy.
- Jan. 1938: 2. "Parler de la Femme," Chihab.
- Jan. 1938: 9. "La Femme et la vie politique," Mohamed Nomane.
- Jan. 1938: 18. "Musulmans, vos femmes aussi sont des être humains," from *La Flèche*, Lucienne Jean-Darrouy.
- Mar. 1938: 2. "La Condition de la Femme dans l'histoire de l'humanité," Tahar Sfar.
- Mar. 1938: 9. "Tribune libre: L'Orientale et l'Occidentale," Mohamed Nomane.
- Mar. 1938: 12. "La Femme tunisienne et l'art Dramatique."
- Mar. 1938: 14. "A Batons Rompus," Khélib Mamlouk.
- June 1938: 4. "Le Rôle de la femme dans la société moderne," Rached.
- June 1938: 7. "La Femme tunisienne et la vie intellectuelle," Mahmoud Aslan.
- June 1938: 16. "L Femme Tunisienne et l'Art Dramatique," S.R. Lahmar.
- Sept. 1938: 3. "La Coutume et la loi," M.N.
- July 1939: 5. "Femmes entre nous soit dit," Aida.
- Aug. 1939: 9. "Femmes, entre nous," Aida.
- Sept. 1938: 18. "Jeunesse et Société," S.R. Lahmar.
- Dec. 1938: 9. "Leila et la presse," Demeerseman.
- Dec. 1938: 10. "Définition d'une Tunisienne," Docteur Salem Es-Schadly.
- Dec. 1938: 11. "Madame reçoit," M.N.
- Dec. 1938: 15. "La Femme tunisienne à l'action," Mahmoud Zarrouk.
- Dec. 1938: 18. "Le Congrès musulman des femmes d'orient," Hanifa Khouri.
- Mar. 1939: 15. "Emancipation," Jossot.
- Mar. 1939: 17. "Le sens d'une visite," Mahmoud Zarrouk.
- July 1939: 2. "Emancipation," Khaled.
- July 1939: 7. "Chez les Ouled Naïl," G.-L. Le Monnier.
- July 1939: 14. "La Jeune Fille tunisienne et la politique," Saïda Sahly.
- July 1939: 16. "Réponse à Maisons Claires," Hassen.
- Aug. 1939: 2. "Femmes, l'avenir est à vous," Leila.
- Aug. 1939: 15. "La femme musulmane et la vie économique."
- Aug. 1939: 8. "La Raison du plus fort."
- Aug. 1939: 9. "Femmes, entre nous," Aida.
- Aug. 1939: 15. "Silhouette blanche."
- Oct. 1939: 2. "Le Rôle de la femme dans la famille," Tahar Sfar.
- Oct. 1939: 6. "Femmes, entre nous soit dit," Aida.
- Oct. 1939: 9. "Les Minutes précieuses."
- Oct. 1939: 17. "A Batons rompus," Khélib Mamlouk.
- Nov. 1939: 7. "Réflexions anodines: anticipation ou déchéance?" M. Rafik.
- Nov. 1939: 19. "Le rôle de la femme dans la famille," reader's letter and Tahar Sfar's reply.
- Dec. 1939: 4. "L'Evolution de la femme tunisienne," Essaïda Fondhaily.
- Dec. 1939: 7. "L'Homme au foyer," M. Rafik.
- May 1940: 8. "Le Trousseau de la Mariée."
- Aug. 1940: 9. "La femme et la guerre," Chafika.
- Aug. 1940: 12. "L'Amour," Zakia L., tr. Abdel-Méjid Chabby.
- Aug. 1940: 18. "La Jeune Fille tunisienne et la politique," Saïda Sahly.
- Aug. 1940: 21. "Post mortem: Les neuf confidences," Arbia Zaouche.
- *1 Dec. 1940: 2. "La Bédouine dans l'économie du pays."
- *1 Dec. 1940: 3. "Sans Titre."
- *7 Dec. 1940: 3. "Sans Titre," A.F.
- *8 Feb. 1941: 2. "Le Coin des jeunes: Le problème de la femme," Ezzeddine Bouhlila.
- *24 Feb. 1941: 2. "Le coin des jeunes: Le problème de la Femme," Ezzeddine Bouhlila.
- *16 Apr. 1941: 2. "Le Commissariat des juifs: M. Xavier Vallat déclare."

*16 Apr. 1941: 4. "Les Berceuses Tunisiennes," Khadija.

*24 Apr. 1941: 4. "Les Berceuses Tunisiennes, II."

*2 May 1941: 8. "Les Berceuses Tunisiennes, III."

Women: Marriage

Dec. 1936: 5. "Conseils d'une mère à sa fille: Conseils de la mère d'Oumm-lyâs à sa fille lorsqu'on voulut la conduire chez son époux Amr Ibnou-Hadjr," tr. Mlle Y. Labab, from *Voix des Humbles*.

Dec. 1936: 13. "Le Mariage Mixte."

Feb. 1937: 9. "Confidences pré-nuptiales: Je vais me marier !...," Mlle Zeineb.

Sept. 1938: 4. "En Rêvant," Saïda Sahly.

Dec. 1938: 8. "La Mariée," Jamila Alaily.

Mar. 1939: 8. "Le Mariage Mixte," M.N.

July 1939: 3. "Mariage Mixte."

Oct. 1939: 15. "Conseils aux jeunes filles."

Oct. 1939: 16. "L'immonde satyre."

Oct. 1939: 20. "Les Lectrices de Leïla."

Nov. 1939: 8. "A Batons Rompus," Khélil Mamlouk.

Nov. 1939: 14. "Dangereuses colères."

May 1940: 9. "Une Jeune Fille écrit: rêveries du printemps "

May 1940: 12. "Khélil Mamlouk parle aux jeunes filles," Leila.

May 1940: 13. "Remords," Gacem.

Aug. 1940: 21. "Post mortem: Les neuf confidences," Arbia Zaouche.

Sept. 1940: 8. "Propos d'une jeune fille en fleur...," Radhia.

Women: Religion, Veil

Dec. 1936: 3. "Propos d'une jeune fille en fleur !...," Mlle Radhia.

Dec. 1936: 14. "L'Islam libérateur de la femme," Raouf.

Dec. 1936: 15. "Tribune libre: Une opinion sur le voile," Mohamed Zmerli.

Feb. 1937: 22. "Chez les dévoilées de Tunisie," Claire-Charles Geniaux, from *Femme de France*.

Mar. 1937: 23. "La femme et la spiritualité," Marie, Reine de Roumanie, from *Evening Bulletin*, Philadelphia.

June 1937: 2. "Lettre d'un jeune homme à marier," Rached.

June 1937: 11. "Voile Protecteur, Voile complice... " Protée.

June 1938: 8. "A Propos du Voile : Celles qui ne se voilent pas !" Le Monnier.

Sept. 1938: 9. "Plages et Voile," Protée.

Dec. 1938: 2. "N'en jetez plus," Khaled.

Aug. 1939: 13. "Voile des Illusions."

Aug. 1939: 15. "Silhouette blanche."

Oct. 1939: 18. "L'Iran musulman contre le voile."

May 1940: 4. "Femmes, entre nous," Aida.

Aug. 1940: 33. "Fantômes en vacances" Mahmoud Zarrouk.

Index of Writers

Note: Because most Tunisians wrote anonymously or used a pseudonym during *Leïla*'s publication, it is difficult to classify contributors. I make educated guesses for many. For example, "L'Amateur" and "L'Auditeur" appear to be Tunisians because their articles pertain to the creation of a Tunisian national culture.

(* = second series, weekly newspaper)

TUNISIANS / ARABS

Aida. (Mamlouk ?) "Femmes entre nous soit dit," July 1939, 5; Oct. 1939, 6; Nov. 1939, 5.

---. "Femmes, entre nous," Aug. 1939, 9; May 1940, 4.

Alaily, Jamila. "La Mariée," Dec. 1938, 8.

---. "Les Beaux-Arts," from *Apollo*, tr. by Abdul-Méjid Chabby, Sept. 1940, 12.

Amateur, L'. "La Musique : Modernisons les Instruments," *1 Dec. 1940, 7.

---. "La Musique," *14 Dec. 1940, 5.

---. "La Musique," *Dec.21/1940, 4.

---. "La Musique : L'Inspiration musicale," *1 Jan. 1941, 4.

---. "La Musique : Les Airs synthétiques de l'Egypto-Tunisien," *8 Jan. 1941, 4.

---. "La Musique : Quelques Réflexions," *16 Jan. 1941, 5.

---. "La Musique : Deux Auditions différentes engendrent deux états d'âme différents (Lapalice)," *24 Jan. 1941, 4.

---. "La Musique : Chanter," *16 Feb. 1941, 3.

---. "La Musique," *1 Feb. 1941, 3; *27 May 1941, 2.

---. "La Musique, La Rachidia," *16 Mar. 1941, 3.

---. "La Musique: Le Mouvement intérieur et la parole," *16 Mar. 1941, 3.

Amin-Bey, Kassem (Qasim). "Emancipation de la femme en Egypte," tr. Eusèbe Vassel, Sept. 1938, 20.

Amis de "Leïla," Les. "Mise au point," Feb. 1937, 24.

Aslan, Mahmoud. "La Femme tunisienne et la vie intellectuelle," June 1938, 7.

Assia. (pseudonym of Arbia Zaouche, identified Aug. 1940, 21) "Chronique mondaine: Plaisirs d'été," Sept. 1937, 18.

Auditeur, L'. "Radio: Aux Ecoutes," *1 Dec. 1940, 4.

---. "La Radio: La Radio-Nationale," *Dec.21/1940, 4.

---. "La Radio : Aux Ecoutes," *1 Jan. 1941, 4.

---. "La Radio," *8 Jan. 1941, 4; *16 Jan. 1941, 4; *24 Jan. 1941, 4; *8 Feb. 1941, 3; *16 Feb. 1941, 3; *24 Feb. 1941, 3; *1 Feb. 1941, 3; *16 Mar. 1941, 3; *16 Apr. 1941, 3; *24 Apr. 1941, 3; *27 May 1941, 2.

---. "La Musique: Les Vœux de 'Leïla' dans le domaine de la musique: 'Labidi à l'honneur'," *24 Feb. 1941, 3.

---. "Tour d'horizon hebdomadaire," *2 May 1941, 4.

---. "Déception à la suite d'une émission," *2 May 1941, 4, signed 'Le suppléant à l'Auditeur.'

Azzeddine, Bacha. "Appel à la jeunesse tunisienne," *24 Feb. 1941, 2.

---. "Le Coin des jeunes: Attention au déboisement en Tunisie," *1 Mar. 1941, 2.

B., M. "L'Age des épicuriens est révolu !...," *27 May 1941, 3.

Belaïd, A. Drawing of lion, Mar. 1937, 11.

---. Drawing, Mar. 1937, 19.

---. Drawing, Mar. 1938, 8.

---. Drawing of bird, Dec. 1938, 24.

---. Drawing, Sept. 1938, 24; Aug. 1939, 19.

Ben Abdallah, Jallel. Cover drawing, Feb. 1937.

---. Cover drawing, Mar. 1938.

---. "Les Yeux," Mar. 1938, 19.

Ben Cheikh, Tewhida. "La Doctresse vous parle," May 1937, 7, unsigned.

Ben Hafsia, le Caïd Ismaël. "Ezzarda en Kroumirie," Dec. 1938, 7.

- Ben Hamida, Mohcen.** "L'Anté-Islam," *24 Feb. 1941, 4; *1 Mar. 1941, 4; *16 Mar. 1941, 4.
- Ben Hassine, Amina.** "Sadok," Nov. 1940, 22.
- Ben Mahmoud, Ali.** "Le Lawn-Tennis, sport-roi," *14 Dec. 1940, 6.
 ---. "Le 'Golf': Notre 'Agfa' Nationale," *21 Dec. 1940, 7.
 ---. "Bulletin sportif: La Natation, sport 'idéal'," *1 Jan. 1941, 6.
 ---. "Bulletin sportif: L'Equitation sport à la mode," *8 Jan. 1941, 6.
- Benmami.** Poem: "Nue," Jan. 1938, 10.
- Ben Milad, Mahjoub.** Poem: "L'Inspirée," Nov. 1939, 14.
- Ben Salem, Ali (Aly).** Cover drawing, Dec. 1936.
 ---. Drawing of couple, Dec. 1936, 3; Feb. 1937, 3; Mar. 1937, 3; May 1937, 3; Sept. 1937, 3; Jan. 1938, 3.
 ---. "La femme musulmane," Dec. 1936, 16.
 ---. Drawing: "Il se retirait dans des solitudes, restait nu et ne parlait à personne..." Dec. 1936, 17.
 ---. Drawing: "Etendue sur un divan..." Feb. 1937, 7.
 ---. "Chronique artistique: L'Influence de l'art décadent italien sur les industries artisanales et les arts tunisiens," Feb. 1937, 16.
- Ben Sassi, Dr.** "Le Mariage," *24 Feb. 1941, 1.
 ---. "Les Périls sociaux," *16 Mar. 1941, 1.
 ---. "Autour d'une conférence," *16 Apr. 1941, 4.
 ---. "L'Art médico pharmaceutique: Chez les Arabes," *2 May 1941, 1.
- B-S, H.** "Economie nouvelle: La Fin des trusts," *21 Dec. 1940, 3.
 ---. "A l'Alliance Française," *1 Feb. 1941, 4.
- Bouhlila, Ezzeddine.** "Le Coin des jeunes: Le Problème de la femme," *8 Feb. 1941, 2; *24 Feb. 1941, 2.
 ---. "Par l'Effet...!" *1 Feb. 1941, 2.
- Bourguiba, Férid.** "Méfions-nous du faux modernisme," Jan. 1938, 11.
- Chabby, Abdul-Méjid.** "Chronique littéraire: Giraudoux et la jeune fille," Dec. 1936, 7.
 ---. "Jeunes Filles d'aujourd'hui: Je vous présente Ferida..." Feb. 1937, 7.
 ---. "Les Lettres arabes: Les Propos de ma grand-mère de Souhayr Kalmaoui," Feb. 1937, 15.
 ---. Fahmy, Nahed. "Ce qu'écrivent nos sœurs d'Egypte: Splendeur de l'amour," tr. Abdul-Mejid Chabby, Mar. 1937, 15.
 ---. Ghomry, Aïcha. "Pour La Femme," tr. Abdul-Mejid Chabby, May 1937, 19.
 ---. "Une Grande Beinfaitrice: Madame Armand Guillon," Sept. 1937, 5.
 ---. "Acta est fabula," Aug. 1940, 2.
 ---. L., Zakia. "L'Amour," tr. Abdel-Méjid Chabby. Aug. 1940, 12.
 ---. "Femmes de lettres arabes: May," Aug. 1940, 14.
 ---. "L'Egyptienne et l'instruction," Aug. 1940, 24.
 ---. "Un poème inédit de A. Chabby: Les étreintes dénouées," Aug. 1940, 32.
- Chafika.** "La Femme et la guerre," Aug. 1940, 9.
- Chakir, M.-A.** "Fleurs du Désert (Leïla, la Pure)," Dec. 1939, 13.
- Chihab.** "Parler de la Femme," Jan. 1938, 2.
 ---. "Hommage à l'hypocrisie," Sept. 1938, 6.
- Conteur, Le.** "Nouvelle: Un Mariage silencieux," Dec. 1939, 18.
 ---. "Conte philosophique: La Morte," May 1940, 17.
- Critique, Le.** "Le Jeûne," Nov. 1940, 11.
 ---. "Le Jeune: Sa Valeur éducatrice," *1 Dec. 1940, 6.
 ---. "Le Mois de Ramadan: Son Aspect artistique," *Dec.21/1940, 6.
 ---. "L'Aïd El Kebir ou la Fête du Sacrifice," *16 Jan. 1941, 7.
- Daly, Radhia.** "Considérations sur l'intérêt," *16 Jan. 1941, 7.
- Damergi, Hamouda.** "La Femme tunisienne et l'instruction," Sept. 1937, 7.
 ---. "Le Dialogue des jeunes ou la femme et l'éducation première: pièce en 1 scène," Jan. 1938, 5.
- El-Achkar, Mohammed.** "Mots," *1 Dec. 1940, 4.
- El Annabi, Mhamed Ali.** "Réflexions sur quelques principes de l'éducation des filles,"
 Mar. 1937, 18.
 ---. "Conceptions diverses de la poésie," Sept. 1940, 19.
 ---. "A la Recherche d'un équilibre," *7 Dec. 1940, 1.
 ---. "Science et religion," *1 Jan. 1941, 1.

- . "Rénovation de l'artisanat," *2 May 1941, 1.
- El-Houda, Nour.** "L'Ordre," Sept. 1937, 4.
- El Masmoudi, El Habib.** "La Jeunesse sfaxienne," *24 Jan. 1941, 3.
- El Mekki, Hatim.** "Cinéma," Nov. 1940, 16.
- El Mekki, Kussaye.** "Album d'Amour," Jan. 1938, 15.
- . "Un poème en prose de Kussaye: Veillée d'âme....," Sept. 1940, 11.
- . "Nuances," Sept. 1940, 14.
- . "Lettre, à Y.D.," *21 Dec. 1940, 3.
- El Mourad.** "Le Théâtre: Les Amis du théâtre," *16 Mar. 1941, 3.
- Er-Razi, Dr.** Poem: "Automne à Carthage," *14 Dec. 1940, 8.
- Es-Sabra.** "Les Paroles ne s'envolent pas," Sept. 1937, 15.
- Es-Schadly, le Docteur Salem.** "Définition d'une Tunisienne," Dec. 1938, 10.
- Essad, Mouldé.** "Chronique artistique: Les Beaux-Arts et la femme turque," May 1937, 20.
- Fahmy, Nahed.** "Ce qu'écrivent nos sœurs d'Egypte: Splendeur de l'amour," tr. Abdul-Mejid Chabby, Mar. 1937, 15.
- Farouk.** "Le Mariage mixte," Mar. 1937, 15.
- . "L'Education familiale," May 1937, 8.
- Foudhayli (Fondaily), Essaida.** "Les Tares sociales: La Mendicité," July 1939, 9.
- . "L'Evolution de la femme tunisienne," Dec. 1939, 4.
- Frida.** "La Mode," May 1937, 23.
- Gacem (Rachid Kacem).** "Remords," May 1940, 13.
- Ghomry, Aïcha.** "Pour La Femme," tr. Abdul-Mejid Chabby, May 1937, 19.
- Goucha, Béchir.** "Conférences: 'L'Alchimie et la synthèse de l'or' par Monsieur Debiesse," *8 Feb. 1941, 4.
- . "Conférences: La Chimie moderne par Monsieur Debiesse," *16 Feb. 1941, 4.
- . "Curiosités scientifiques: Mimétisme," *16 Mar. 1941, 4.
- . "Un Moyen inattendu de se protéger contre les moustiques," *24 Apr. 1941, 4.
- . "Chronique scientifique: Où en est la télévision?," *2 May 1941, 6.
- Grairi (Ghraiiri), A.** Painting: "Le Veilleur de nuit en Ramadan," Dec. 1936, 14.
- . Drawing: "Une Rêverie douce s'empara de moi...," Feb. 1937, 14.
- . Cover drawing, Mar. 1937.
- Guiga, Bahri.** "Notre Ami Me Bahri Guiga nous écrit...," Dec. 1936, 5.
- . "S.O.S.," Feb. 1937, 5.
- Hassen.** "Réponse à Maisons Claires," July 1939, 16.
- Jamila.** "Le Mariage mixte: Sirènes d'outre-mer....," Feb. 1937, 13.
- . "Les Hommes ne sont pas des Dieux!...", Mar. 1937, 11.
- . "Mode ou pas mode," 7 Dec. 1940, 5; *14 Dec. 1940, 7; *21 Dec. 1940, 5; *1 Jan. 1941, 5; *16 Jan. 1941, 5; *24 Jan. 1941, 5.
- . "Les Propos de Jamila," *1 Feb. 1941, 2; *8 Feb. 1941, 2; *16 Feb. 1941, 3; *24 Feb. 1941, 3; *1 Mar. 1941, 3; *16 Mar. 1941, 3; *16 Apr. 1941, 3; *24 Apr. 1941, 3; *2 May 1941, 5; *27 May 1941, 2; *8 June 1941, 2.
- Kadri, Yakub.** "Notre Page littéraire: Une Idylle à Istamboul," extract from *La Nuit du Jugement*, May 1937, 10.
- Kalsoum.** "Au Jardin des Morts," Mar. 1937, 14.
- . "Légendes d'Oiseaux," May 1937, 6.
- Karawan.** Poem: "La Petite Mendiante," *16 Mar. 1941, 4.
- Khadija.** "Les Berceuses tunisiennes," *16 Apr. 1941, 4.
- Khaled.** "Cahouet-el-Nadhour," Feb. 1937, 18.
- . "4 du Harem: Salha, Néjia, Zobeida, Mounira," Mar. 1937, 7.
- . "Soirée de Première," May 1937, 7.
- . "Des Femmes... Des Hommes...," Jan. 1938, 8.
- . "Encore Un," Mar. 1938, 6.
- . "N'en jetez plus," Dec. 1938, 2.
- . "Emancipation," July 1939, 2.
- . "Considérations...," Nov. 1940, 5.

- Khouri, Hanifa.** "Le Congrès musulman des femmes d'orient," Dec. 1938, 18.
- L., Zakia.** "L'Amour," tr. Abdel-Méjid Chabby, Aug. 1940, 12.
- Labab, Y.** "Conseils d'une mère à sa fille: Conseils de la mère d'Oumm-lyâs à sa fille lorsqu'on voulait la conduire chez son époux Amr Ibnou-Hadjr," from *la Voix des Humbles*, Dec. 1936, 5.
- Lahmar, S.R.** "Jeunesse et Société," Sept. 1938, 18.
- . "L'autre face du décor," Nov. 1940, 7.
- Lakhdar, Tahar.** "Chronique littéraire: André Gide et la Femme," Feb. 1937, 10.
- . "Veillons à notre personnalité," Mar. 1938, 18.
- . "Leila, tes sœurs étaient en prison," Mar. 1939, 2.
- . "Polygamie," Aug. 1939, 12.
- . "La Guerre," Oct. 1939, 8.
- . "L'Egypte et la Guerre," *1 Dec. 1940, 1.
- . "Regards sur la Turquie," *14 Dec. 1940, 1.
- Leila.** "Notre Programme: A Nos Chères Lectrices," Dec. 1936, 1.
- . "Après le tournoi de beauté: Réflexions...", Dec. 1936, 10.
- . "Mode," Dec. 1936, 12; Feb. 1937, 20.
- . "Le Ramadan," Dec. 1936, 14.
- . "Leila répond," Dec. 1936, 19; Feb. 1937, 24; Mar. 1937, 24; May 1937, 24; Jan. 1938, 24.
- . "Leila vous parle: Des Noms ou des idées," Mar. 1937, 1.
- . "Une Doctoresse tunisienne," Mar. 1937, 18.
- . "Leila vous parle: Joyeux Printemps !" May 1937, 1
- . "V'là le printemps," May 1937, 24.
- . "Leila vous parle: Leila réparait !...", Sept. 1937, 1.
- . "Leila vous parle," Jan. 1938, 1; Mar. 1938, 1; June 1938, 1; Dec. 1938, 1; May 1940, 1; Nov. 1940, 1; *7 Dec. 1940, 1; *24 Jan. 1941, 2; *1 Feb. 1941, 3; *8 Feb. 1941, 2; *16 Feb. 1941, 2; *24 Feb. 1941, 2; *1 Mar. 1941, 2; *16 Mar. 1941, 2; *24 Mar. 1941, 2; *2 May 1941, 2.
- . "L'Oeuvre de protection de l'enfance en Tunisie," Mar. 1938, 5.
- . "Bulletin médical," June 1938, 7.
- . "La Société de bienfaisance musulmane," Sept. 1938, 10.
- . "Le Paysannat tunisien," Sept. 1938, 16.
- . "Femmes, l'avenir est à vous," Aug. 1939, 2.
- . "Editorial," Oct. 1939, 1.
- . "Au Secours de l'Enfance tunisienne," Oct. 1939, 10.
- . "Leila a quatre ans," Dec. 1939, 1.
- . "Les Contes de *Leila*: La Surprise," Dec. 1939, 5.
- . "Réflexion anodines: Considérations sur la beauté féminine et le maquillage," Dec. 1939, 15.
- . "Ne Vous fâchez pas," May 1940, 6.
- . "Khélil Mamlouk," May 1940, 12
- . "L'Organisation de l'agriculture," *21 Dec. 1940, 1.
- . "Le Problème rural," *1 Jan. 1941, 1.
- . "Bilan radiophonique de la semaine," *1 Feb. 1941, 3.
- . "Appel à la population tunisienne," *16 Feb. 1941, 1.
- . "Sur les grand'routes de la compréhension Franco-Tunisienne," *24 Feb. 1941, 1.
- . "Le 12^e Anniversaire du règne de son Altesse Sidi Ahmed Pacha Bey de Tunisie," *24 Feb. 1941, 1.
- . "Le Maréchal Pétain et l'école de Demain," *1 Mar. 1941, 1.
- . "Le Prix des Lettres Arabes," *16 Mar. 1941, 2.
- . "La Lutte contre la spéculation," *24 Apr. 1941, 1.
- Leïla, Mlle.** "Sidi-Bou-Saïd," Feb. 1937, 14.
- Malika.** "Cœurs en chômage," Sept. 1940, 16.
- Malki, Jamila.** "Solution pratique," Mar. 1938, 4.
- Mamlouk, Khelil.** "A Batons rompus," Sept. 1937, 9; Mar. 1938, 14; Dec. 1938, 12;

- Mar. 1939, 10; Aug. 1939, 16; Oct. 1939, 17; Nov. 1939, 8.
- . "Un Protecteur en mal de protection," Mar. 1939, 6.
- . "La Mort de Khelil Mamlouk," Dec. 1939, 6.
- . "A Titre posthume," Nov. 1940, 21.
- Mejdoub, H.** "L'Avenir des sports en Tunisie," *1 Feb. 1941, 3.
- Meriem.** "Nos Petits Enfants," Dec. 1936, 6; Feb. 1937, 6; Mar. 1937, 6; May 1937, 15; Sept. 1937, 20.
- Mohyeddine.** "Au Municipal: Omar Ibnou Abdel Azez," *1 Dec. 1940, 7.
- . "La Fin d'un Cocaïnoman," *14 Dec. 1940, 4.
- Moncef.** "Vive l'amour," Mar. 1939, 18.
- Moncef, H.** "A l'Essor," *21 Dec. 1940, 5
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