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Screening Gender and Popular Culture in Moroccan Cinema

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Abstract:

This paper tries to analyze the construction of gender in modern Moroccan cinema. By considering some Moroccan postcolonial films, this paper is an attempt to question the notion of cinematic representation of gender and popular culture in Moroccan contemporary cinema. Indeed, much academic research and scholarship have been written on Moroccan cinema, but the research on gender representation is still in its infancy. The present article attends to the problematic of gender agency as represented by contemporary Moroccan cinema especially in the following films: Trix Layalat (2007) (Deux Femmes Sur la Route), Mille Mois (2003), Youm w Lila (2013) (Day and Night), Rock the Casbah (2013). These films have been chosen in order to shed light on the controversial (mis)-representation of gender in modern Moroccan cinema. In this way, this paper aims to foreground the complex ambivalent formation of female identities and temporalities. Thus, this work examines the politics of women's recognition as represented in Moroccan cinema. The portrayal of the women in Moroccan cinema, oftentimes contradictory, reveals the dominant patriarchal attitudes towards gender in Morocco, and continues to provide insight into shifting social roles in the period after Moroccan independence. The films selected by this paper highlight the grounds behind the abrogation of women, their alienation and loss in a society that is imbedded in patriarchal discourse. Ipso facto, in this paper attends to the problematic of transmitting a culture that is de-alienated by discursive conditions related both to women and men, without each one blaming the other to be the cause of his or her everyday shock and loss.

Keywords: Gender, gender agency, Moroccan postcolonial cinema, popular culture, alienation

1. Introduction

We would like to begin by analyzing the concept of the popular from the viewpoint of an influential media scholar whose works proved seminal in understanding popular culture. John Fiske makes it clear that the struggle of popular culture is a struggle for the production of cultural meanings that are relevant to everyday life first and for most. As Fiske writes,

The aim of this productivity is, therefore, to produce meanings that are relevant to everyday life. Relevance is central to popular culture, for it minimizes the difference between text and life, between the aesthetic and the everyday that is so central to a process- and practice-based culture (such as the popular) rather than a text- or performance-based one (such as the bourgeois, highbrow one) (Reading the Popular 6).

So here the struggle for the semiotic production of cultural meanings of self and of social relations is between the centripetal hegemonic forces of homogeneity and the centrifugal resistances and evasions of heterogeneity. But the resistances that occur at the micro-level of the everyday should not be considered as merely safety valves that perpetuate the dominant ideology 'by providing licensed, contained, controlled means of expressing resentment' (Reading the Popular, 9). If the scope of resistance of the everyday and the popular is limited and hardly subversive or insurrectional, the culture of the carnival or the festival that is embedded in popular culture nonetheless creates a plebeian sphere where "hierarchical relations are temporarily suspended and participants take part in the festivities on equal terms" (Communication and Everyday Performance 30). But again, this is not the kind of the popular that Fiske had in mind when writing Understanding Popular Culture or Reading Culture, because for him popular culture is culture commodity of capitalist societies after all.

In an essay entitled "Popular Culture and National Culture", Ahmed Boukous discussed the issue of the fragmentation of the Amazigh agrarian and rural society and the marginalization and alienation of the popular culture by national culture. Boukous defines Amazigh local and popular culture as the sum of all the cultural products made and used by creators and artists in real life and in mythology. This culture is called popular because these organic artists belong to the subaltern and marginalized classes such as the peasants or the working class and speak Tamazight as their language of communication and creation. What we would like to note here is that the movement from the rural into the urban space drastically affected Moroccan popular culture. Such a de-territorializing movement also undoubtedly acted upon the festive and the subversive aspects of Moroccan popular culture. This process of distortion and expropriation of the

popular in Morocco was determinedly precipitated by Moroccan officialdom immediately after the independence. Once we turn our back on the problematic of distorting popular culture, understanding the concept of the popular in Morocco is held to ransom.

It is difficult to argue today that an access to the positive aspects of popular culture is still possible or that this culture is still a communicable or translatable experience in the world of capitalist modernity. It is insightful to quote Agamben in this context:

Today, however, we know that the destruction of experience no longer necessitates a catastrophe, and that humdrum daily life in any city will suffice. For modern man's average day contains virtually nothing that can still be translated into experience (Infancy and History 13)

Is it not manifest today that it is no longer possible to translate experience into maxims or popular proverbs? The slogan replaced both to become the proverb of the modern and postmodern men and women. It is in this cultural context that Fiske considered the everyday aspects of the popular. Although the resistance of the popular—which occurs in the minutiae of the everyday life—is semiotic, and although it is the material historical conditions which produce revolutionary and radical reforms in a certain society, for Fiske “evasive and semiotic resistances can maintain a popular consciousness that can fertilize the growth of those conditions and can be ready to exploit them when they arise, but they cannot in themselves produce such conditions” (Reading the Popular 11).

2. Problematising Moroccan National Identity and Popular Culture

In what follows, we will attempt to problematize the concept of popular culture as situated in its Moroccan historical context so as not to get distracted by a content that is in a certain sense irrelevant, or at least only of second interest. For this reason, we will base our analysis on the theoretical insights of an astute Moroccan Princeton-trained sociologist who spent much of his life studying Moroccan popular and local culture. In an article entitled “Notes on the Status of Popular Culture in the transformations of contemporary Morocco”, Mohammed Guessous notes that the principal problematic which touches upon everything which is popular is related to the old distinction between the private and the public domain. The homogeneous and centripetal tendency of the authoritative discourse and structure, the omnipotent Makhzen (the word originally meant the sultan's treasury), is manifested in principal in negating the popular and marginalizing what is left of its effectiveness and agency, and sometimes even forbidding it by making it stands out against the interests of the people themselves. For popular culture is a repository of cultural values and beliefs through which different people belonging to different ethnic groups used to express, although in different ways, their opposition and resistance to specific events and situations. It is the splitting up of a common and shared Moroccan culture into high and low which transfigured Moroccan popular culture into a hierarchical culture and a culture of the margin and commodification¹.

This problematic, according to Guessous, is an outcome of several reasons and determinants which I will attempt to sum up here in three points. First, since the end of the 15th or the beginning of the 16th century things changed in Morocco on a large scale². As C. R. Pennell puts it “[t]he sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were times of great political turmoil; civil war always threatened, and in the mid-seventeenth century, one sharifian regime replaced another” (Morocco 79). As an outcome of such political turmoil (Siba) which became manifest especially during the era of the Moroccan dynasty Banu Wattas— which came to power in 1472—, new polities appeared to impose order and unify Morocco. Interestingly, it is on the basis of religion in its Sunni implications that political authority was established and as a result of such theocratic rule, anyone who opposes the Sultan was considered unbeliever. The peasants and their everyday culture were also devalued and derogated because their popular culture was declared to be incommensurable with the orders of Islam. People who rejected to pay taxes imposed on them and disregarded political or military decisions were considered religiously ignorant and infidels who menaced Islamic society. Therefore, Moroccans were inside a new social, economic and political system that took Moroccan popular culture and local heritage for something negative and deviant. This is the first aspect of the problematic which concerns the relation that occurred between Arabic language and Islam, on the one hand, and the centralized authority (the Mekhzen) and the private and the public domain, on the other hand. So, these are old Moroccan structures which have no relation with colonialism, modernity, capitalism or globalization.

The second aspect according to Guessous is colonial occupation which always camouflages itself as mission civilisatrice³ so as to negate and territorialize the culture of the different “other”; people who were unable to acclimatize

¹ This argument against dominant ideologies cannot, however, provide some conceptual purchase without some strictures being made against it. An ideal theory of neutrality is anything except a real solution to the problematics of multiculturalism and cultural diversity. Anthony Kwame Appiah in *Ethics of Identity* explains that the “neutralist ethic” faces daunting problems. Speaking about Will Kymlicka, a Canadian political philosopher known for his influential liberal theory of multiculturalism, Appiah writes:

“Will Kymlicka objects to the notion that the diversity of social forms ought simply to be treated with “benign neglect” by an assiduously impartial state. “In the areas of official languages, political boundaries, and the division of powers, there is no way to avoid supporting this or that societal culture, or deciding which groups will form a majority in political units that control culture-affecting decisions regarding language, education, and immigration,” he points out. As he elsewhere elaborates: “It is quite possible for a state not to have an established church. But the state cannot help but give at least partial establishment to a culture when it decides which language is to be used in public schooling, or in the provision of state services. The state can (and should) replace religious oaths in court with secular oaths, but it cannot replace the use of English in courts with no language.” And, of course, the government—at least in anything resembling an actually existing liberal democracy—is not neutral, cannot be neutral, over a vast range of things” (82).

² For a detailed history of Morocco during this period see Abdellah El Aroui's *The History of the Maghreb: An Interpretive Essay*, Ralph Manheim, trans. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979).

³ In order to actualize its civilizing mission, French colonialism used its Colonial Vulgate which is a composite set of racist stereotypes about North Africa, a ready-made armature of imagined realities about North Africa and its people.

themselves with the developments of life and History. But this “other” is not just imaginative or artificial; it is real. In the wording of Said:

Yet none of this Orient is merely imaginative. The Orient is an integral part of European material civilization and culture. Orientalism expresses and represents that part culturally and even ideologically as a mode of discourse with supporting institutions, vocabulary, scholarship, imagery, doctrines, even colonial bureaucracies and colonial styles (Orientalism 2).

Therefore, a very large mass of writers and academicians have acknowledged the distinction between East and West in order to write their novels, poems, travel accounts, etc. or to elaborate their theories about the orient and its cultures. For those writers and as Marx himself put it in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, the Orientals “cannot represent themselves; they must be represented⁴.” The impact of this aspect is stronger than the first one because colonialism played a great role in the expansion of the capitalist mode of production. The ideology of the French Protectorate was to make use of Moroccan cultural difference and diversity in order to serve its political project and colonial enterprise. The first decree (Berber dahir) to this effect was issued in 1930. Thereafter great efforts were made in studying Amazigh heritage and popular religion so as to demonstrate that Islam in Morocco was distinct from Islam in the Middle East.

The third aspect of the problematic above is associated with the way the new centralized political and authoritative system (the Makhzen) was established in Morocco after independence. It is very important to note in this context that there were a number of problems concerning the transformation of political authority to Moroccan National Movement after independence. There was a real struggle between the king, Mohammed V who had different visions of the state to be established, and the National Movement under the Istiqlal Party. The king was very opposed to the idea of diminishing the role of monarchy in political life, although he was in favour of institutionalizing a “competitive party system”. This problem prepared the way to the centralization of political power under the omnipotent Makhzen and to the homogenization of culture. Thus, the process of building a unified Morocco after the independence led up to the subordination and homogenization of regional and local cultures and ideologies together with their effectiveness in social and political life.

Thus, the problematic of popular culture in Morocco, according to Mohammed Guessous, is associated with the foregoing aspects which belong respectively to different eras in the history of Morocco. The first era is the pre-colonial, the second is the colonial and the third is the postcolonial Morocco. These historical orientations resulted in serious problems and crises in Moroccan society and culture, the most important of which is the structural predominance of a centralized and homogenous political, cultural, intellectual and hierarchical model at the expense of other models which do not accord with it. Second, such a general expansion instigated the denial of cultural difference and social variety because they are looked upon as dangerous parasites which live in the margins, threaten the everlasting Makhzen and play no principal role in the development of society. Such a state of affairs seems to have endowed Moroccan culture with a Manichaeian dualism which still hinders any serious willingness to transfigure and improve everyday life in Morocco.

Due to the above cultural predicaments, local culture transmogrifies into four special objects. It is first transfigured, according to Guessous, into extensions. At this stage, local culture still possesses its local expressions but its principal function changes in order to be convenient for the dominant culture of the center. Its function as an extension is to simplify the discourses and ideologies of the dominant apparatuses and propagate and extend them from the center to the periphery. Second, parts of popular culture become commodified cultural objects that are being manipulated and exploited for propagative consumption or for touristic, folkloristic and exhibitionistic objectives. For local culture is considered here as a kind of ethnographic living museum comprising exoticized cultural products to be excavated and valued by the Western world and academia. Third, other elements of popular culture turn into footnotes which exist within the dominant system but still away from its sources of decision-making and regulation and fall short of any power within that system. In essence, a large part of Moroccan popular culture is placed at the margins, and as a result degenerates into unavailing, marginalized and sublated cultural objects which do not belong at all to the centralized and dominant system.

3. Screening Gender in Morocco: Reel the Popular

The representation of Moroccan women in national cinema reflects the position and status of women in the actual Moroccan society. It echoes how they are perceived and treated by both female and male film makers and how their identities can be constructed through national cinema. Hence in dealing with cultural embodiment of the Moroccan culture, gender might be decisive in the manner male or female film makers address issues like love, marriage, traditions or the concepts of Hchouma, Aar, and Haram.⁵ The present paper investigates Moroccan film's representation of women in movies like: *Trik Layalat Deux Femmes Sur la Route* (2007), *Mille Mois* (2003), *Youm w Lila* (2013), *Rock the Casbah* (2013), among others. Thus, the selected cinematography has a central thematic focus on both gender issues and gender relationships laying out the cultural mechanisms which construct the identity of Moroccan women.

In effect, the important role Moroccan women play in cinema is undeniable, however it seems that cinematic cultural productions in Morocco have been restricted to men for a long time. Also, even though Morocco gained its independence from colonial rule in 1956, the economic and cultural productions not only articulated the voice of colonialism but more importantly it permitted the persistence of colonial legacy after independence. This made Moroccans always in search for decolonization and nation-building in all forms of cultural production be it written or visual. However, confined by both norms of colonialism and patriarchy, Moroccan women have been left outside the building of their own

⁴ Qtd in Said, 293.

⁵ The word Haram means forbidden in Islamic religion.

nation. It is not until recent years that Moroccan women asserted their participation in the struggle of the country and in the building of a gendered Moroccan society namely through cinema.

In this respect film is a fertile ground where Moroccan women express their artistic and national engagement and help in the building of the identity of the Moroccan woman. The selected cinematography for this essay all places women at the center of the movie plot and deals with culturalist issues related to the female mainly love, marriage, tradition and modernity. Farida Belyazi's *Deux Femmes sur la Route-Trik laayalat* (2013) for instance perfectly sheds light on dichotomies between tradition and modernity through the personalities of the two protagonists Amina and Rahma. Throughout the movie, the viewers are introduced to two examples of Moroccan women; Amina (Mona Fettou) a somehow liberated young and rich woman and Rahma (Aicha Mahmah) who plays the role of a somehow traditional poor and old woman. After their encounter the two protagonists seem to live in two different worlds and this is foregrounded since the beginning of the movie. Thus, in the scene where Mona enters the souk⁶ everyone starts staring at her because her clothes, her hair and her attitude are different, and have nothing to do with the women of the region. In this movie the title itself is telling since it reflects the Moroccan expression (trik laayalat) or women's route. This expression connotes the unreliability of the choices, decisions and the way Moroccan women do everything. It also affirms that men should not follow the route of women or trust their judgment because they are untrustworthy and can never reach men's level of judgment. The route is significant here since the two protagonists, even if they are nothing alike, they decide to travel together in order to look for the son of Rahma and bribe the judge to liberate Amina's husband.

Although, Amina seems to be a strong, moderate and powerful woman, as the storyline goes on she becomes more like Rahma, a poor victim of life and men, who was treated unfairly both by her husband and her family. She married a married man who has children and she is trying to collect money to save him from prison. This conclusion is made by Amina herself towards the end of the movie in a scene where she returns drunk to the hotel she falls into Rahma's arms crying: "you and me we are alike... we have no one." This statement confirms that in Morocco women are the same whether educated, modern or traditional and illiterate; they are all subjected to patriarchy. Amina confesses that she was lied to since she didn't know that her husband is a married man and Rahma states that prostitutes may have more rights than wives claiming that at least they get paid. This shows that Moroccan women are often manipulated by their men. They take advantage of their love and in marriage relationships they are treacherous and dishonest since they often lie and mistreat women who love them.

Through the movie, Amina looks very attractive to all sorts of men who try to approach her, be with her and even rape her. This idea suggests how weak and powerless the Moroccan woman is since even those who claim to be educated and sophisticated cannot be placed outside the confines of men's desire. She is and always will be a sexual symbol whose ultimate fate is to satisfy men's fantasies. Furthermore, the movie stresses that misconceptions of gender roles and the rightfulness of patriarchy are embedded in the Moroccan society to the point that these misconceptions became the norm and the natural course and definition of what a woman and a man are.

The image of the patriarchal society as well as the dichotomies of traditional and modern women expressed in trik laayalat are also predominant in other Moroccan films like *Youm w Lila* (2013). This film tells the story of Izza, a woman who decides to go to the big city of Casablanca to look for her husband and buy medication for their sick daughter. Izza (touriya Alaoui) then meets Aziza (Majdouline Idrissi) who rescues her from the hands of a thief. Again, the two protagonists seem too different from each other, but both seem to face the hardships of life and both are victims of patriarchy. This situation echoes Fatima Mernissi argument in *Doing Daily Battle*, where she states that there is a tradition that restraints women freedom to male decisions and aims, either in the family, society, government or religion⁷. This is the case in *youm wa lila* where the husband decides to live in his parents' house; where she is mistreated by his mother who doesn't allow her even to speak with her husband on the phone. It has become a tradition for men to go to the city for work leaving behind their wives to serve the manipulative mothers. In this vein, Fatima Mernissi argues that there is a strong relationship between traditional conceptions of male honor which give him the whole control over the resources and the new situation where political power and economic changes reject male control of the resources. This traditional concept fits perfectly to *Youm w Lila* where the husband controls the resources and places Izza in the position of a passive recipient of whatever he decides to send her. This situation is critical because even when the husband unwillingly forgets to send medication for his sick daughter, Izza faces difficult time in order to go to the city by her own and get the medication mainly because she has been passive and relying on her husband.

Once in Casablanca, Izza is lost in the big city to the point that she seems to be coming from another era, she can't use the phone or stop a taxi. In effect, this film maps out in a great deal women's societal and individual struggle between the modern and the traditional in the sense that Izza and Aziza both represent two different categories of women and manifest the struggle of each category within the Moroccan society and within the family. Indeed, Tradition is still so strong in Morocco especially in the rural areas to the point that women and girls who act according to European styled morality are rejected, avoided and criticized most of the time except when they belong to rich families⁸. In this sense the average or lower income woman would be referred to as lacking honour or considered outright a prostitute. This is the case in *Youm w Lila*, where Izza who comes from a very preservative traditional milieu considers that all women in Casablanca lack morality. She keeps repeating words like (Imsekh, Kelet l Aarad⁹) Also, in a scene where Aziza asks her to take off her jelaba and veil and have fun at the party, she replies with a great discontentment: "I am my husband's wife, I

⁶ A traditional Moroccan Market

⁷ Fatima Mernissi. *Doing Daily Battle: Interviews with Moroccan Women*. New Brunswick NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1989,1984.

⁸ This is the case of Laila Marrakechi's *Marock* (2005) and *Rock the Casbah* (2013)

⁹ The two Moroccan expression: Imsekh and Kelet l Aarad mean shame and lack of morality, respectively

am not a prostitute like all of you". Prior to this she expresses her surprise to Aziza wondering how women can be so immoral and take off their veil and show their legs, arms and breasts since these acts are still considered "hchouma" (shame) in her traditional village and in other conservative places and families. Moreover, Moroccan traditions have established a strong link between a woman's shame and the family pride and have placed the burden of dignity exclusively on women's behaviour. This burden made even the difference between hchouma (shame) and haram (forbidden by Islam) blur in the sense that some act even is not haram are forbidden to women because they are hchouma. In the same time, some acts which are initially haram for both men and women are made hchouma for women but acceptable for men. In this sense, women should carry both the burdens of hchouma and haram and can eventually either honour or dishonour their families whereas the men are liberated from such judgements.

In Fact, cinema can be considered a powerful tool in constructing the Moroccan womanhood and allowing official and unofficial visions of women and their possible means of marginalization and liberation at the same time. It is also a means to vehicle the deeply rooted beliefs of the Moroccan society vis a vis the status of women and gender roles' attributions. The status and position women occupy in Moroccan families is highlighted in a number of movies like the previously discussed *Trik Laayalat*. In this film, Amina's small family is a reflection of the degrading image attributed to the young Moroccan woman not only by society but even by her own family.

As the storyline goes on, the spectators learn that Amina's family is not as modern as she looks like. Her mother is a materialist woman and only cares about the money Amina provides. She even confesses to Rahma that she was the reason she got married to her corrupted husband and that she visited a sorcerer to make this marriage happen. Here marriage becomes a way for girls to fulfil their materialist dreams, a lot of girls think that the husband should solve all their money problems and should fulfil all their material dreams. Also, this strong belief in witchcraft, sorcery and evil spirits is another topic which strongly links women to senseless and unreasonable practices and puts them in very degrading positions. In all the studied cinematography, it is women who belief in witchcraft practices and spirits whereas the men often embody the voice of wisdom and reason. In *Mille Mois* (2003) de Faouzi Bensaid, Amina (Nezha Rahil) asks her father in law to put a Khmisa¹⁰ on the door so that it will repel evil and bad spirits. The father in law (Mohamed Majd) seems very skeptical and although he agrees to do as Amina says, he clearly states that this belief is non-sense.

The fact is the theme of magic is not new to Moroccan cinema since it has been perpetuated in a lot of old movies like *A la Recherche du Mari de la Femme* (1995), *Femmes... et Femmes* (1998), *Ruses des Femmes* (1998), and *Destin de femme* (1999). This idea of women's magic and cunning is repeatedly developed by both Moroccan male and female film makers as an assertion of women's inferiority and wickedness. Women cannot be trusted and most importantly all facets of patriarchy are legitimized since men should always control women.

As it has been argued, both *Trik Laayalat* and *Yum W Lila* juxtapose two categories of Moroccan women and demonstrate the misfortunes traditional and modern women face. Laila Marrakchi's films however take another turn since they represent exclusively the life of rich, modern and educated women. *Rock the Casbah* (2013) for instance revolves around topics like love, sex and marriage. Women's sexuality although much perpetuated in Laila Marrakchi's *Rock the Casbah* (2013) is not a new topic to Laila Marrakechi's films since her sexually charged film *Marock* (2005) has become a media event and was received in Morocco with a high degree of critical acclaim.

Marrakchi's films revived discussion on the limitations of women's sexual freedom in Morocco where women's sexual activity outside the confines of marriage have been recurrent subjects since Morocco's independence. Although *Marock* liberally deals with women's sexual desire before marriage, the fact is Moroccan society and traditions have limited and repressed any sexual desire to men exclusively. Yet, even if Islam doesn't differentiate between men and women and sanctions both men and women for sexuality outside marriage, tradition seems to open all doors of sexual pleasures for men and close them on women. Thus, even if it is forbidden both to men and women to have sexual relations outside marriage, the movie projects that the Moroccan society grants the Muslim men in the movie this right and forbids it to women. This is the case of Sofia, who finds herself pregnant and obliged to wed in order to hide her shame. In this sense, marriage and sex become more related to honour than love since marriage provides a respectable structure for childrearing and sexual desire. The Moroccan sociologist Soumaya Naamane-Guessous reflects on this subject in her work *Au-delà de toute pudeur*, where she affirms that sexuality in Islam is actively encouraged as long as "it is within a licit framework"¹¹ (203). Deriving her arguments from reliable Islamic sources like Al Boukhari, she contends that it is rather tradition not religion which represses Moroccan women's natural sexual desires even after marriage and encourages men's sexual desires even before marriage.

Although Laila Marrakechi's representation of Moroccan women in *Rock the Casbah* (2013) cannot be taken as the only reality of Moroccan women, in comparison to the other studied movies, the represented women probably provide a good illustration of the diversified classes, backgrounds and categories of the Moroccan society. The movie opens up with Sofia's returns to Morocco after many years for the funeral of her father. She then faces the old circumstances of the death of her sister who according to her was the victim of an archaic and conservative mindset in which marriage and love were at odds. Her dead sister couldn't marry the man she loved because he is the maid's boy and they didn't belong to the same social class¹². Thus, for laila her family is backward and doesn't value love and women's freedom.

¹⁰ A khmisa takes the form of a hand generally made out of copper and is traditionally believed to chase away bad spirits from the house and protect the family, once stuck on the door.

¹¹ Naamane-Guessous, Soumaya. *Au-delà de Toute Pudeur : La Sexualité Féminine au Maroc* ; Casablanca : Editions le Harmattan, 1981, p15

¹² She found out later that he is in affect her brother and that her father was having an affair with the maid ; here other knew about this and covered for him and this again shows the hypocrite society and the value it gives to tradition over religion

Talking to Zakaria (the maid's son), she complains that in Morocco "we don't have the right to marry the son of a maid, nor a foreigner, we should only marry a good Moroccan man belonging to a good Moroccan family; but whom we will never love." This statement shows that love isn't precisely what Moroccan families look for and if their girls do, they will be objected by their own families and society alike. This connotes Trik Laayalat; where Amina married an old man simply because he is rich. Patriarchy again dominates the Moroccan social relations, according to Sofia, who challenged her father's will and married an American, her sisters are victims of their father's control. She conveys this in the scene where she shouts at her elder sister saying that "you only became professor to please dad". After their argument, the sisters get mad at Sofia and accuse her of denying her origins and identity and becoming somehow an Americanized woman. In this scene, Miriam who was pretty calm in the beginning went outraged and decides to have a beer, kenza then shouts at her saying that it is "Haram" ¹³because it's their father's funeral. But she herself, goes on and drinks and smokes after a while. This shows how schizophrenic their world is and how fake their commitment to religion is. The family in *Rock the Casbah* reflects a typical Frenchified, rich Moroccan family. Even their mother tongue is somehow neglected since they speak mainly French and this is due the educational system they were exposed to. To understand the role of the French colonial system in Morocco and its relation to education power and culture, it is primordial to understand Foucault's argument.

According to Foucault there is an intimate relationship between power and knowledge, he claims that the colonial powers established an integral process to serve their colonial intentions. Hence, for imperialist powers, conquering the lands and the resources was not enough since they needed to control the people as well. In this line of thought, European colonial powers sought to implement their national educational system in the countries they colonized. Therefore, France and Spain applied this principle to their colonies namely Morocco which has known the establishment of a number of French system schools in addition to French and Spanish cultural centres and libraries. Not only did Moroccans welcome these schools but more importantly they were considered as the best educational systems in the country and almost exclusive to the rich families and the elite.

Thus, even after the independence, Moroccans were to learn the history, language and culture of their colonizers especially those of France. In this sense, the implementation of imperialist principles becomes not only possible but also easy since the subjects are already acquainted by the culture of the colonizer and alienated from their own culture. The apparatus of education then permits the colonizer to easily carry out power and control over the colonized subject even when this subject is believed to be detached and independent from the old colonial rule. In Laila Marrakechi's *Marock* (2005) for example the girls and boys do everything according to the French educational system they drink, smoke, don't pray, don't fast, and engage in sexual relations. They don't even speak their own language but are more at ease while speaking French. While the access to French language can be seen as an image of empowerment on the one hand; on the other hand, it could also be a form of linguistic and cultural schizophrenia. Thus, Marrakchi's films although highly criticized by the Arabo-phone Moroccans, were much appreciated by the Franco-phone milieu since the two represent, come from and live on a different Morocco. Besides, their references and lifestyle are not the same if not contradictory. Hence, even the representation of womanhood is relative since what construct a Moroccan woman to a category might be alien to the other category.

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