

North Africa's Performing Women:

Notes from the Field

Laura Chakravarty Box

Introduction

The post-independence years have been turbulent and fruitful for North African women in the performing arts: theater, cinema, dance, music, and art performance. In Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia, the forces shaping the status of women are dynamic, unstable, productive, and in some cases, violent. They take place within larger, and equally volatile, discourses about the socio-political future of the three nation-states. This atmosphere has a profound effect on the women artists who must operate within it, or from its diaspora, as they agitate to have a voice in the future of the region. When we consider their work from a remove, it is easy to forget that, in addition to facing themselves the social and political issues about which they write, film, and perform, they, like artists everywhere, grapple with the petty politics of publishing, publicity, funding, public taste, and bureaucratic policy.

This article is a continuation of an earlier study, conducted in the years 1997-2000, that identified some of these artists and their works for the first time in English. It returns to the region, specifically Morocco, to pick up the threads of the discourse in recent work by the artists of the study, and by artists who have emerged since its completion. For example, it considers the cases of two young Moroccan artists who have had tremendous impact in the last year: Laïla Marrakchi, who made the controversial film, *MaRock*, and Samia Akariou who, with the almost entirely female troupe, *Takoon*, created *Bnat Lalla Mennana*, a brilliant feminist adaptation of Lorca's *La Casa de Bernarda Alba*.

Like any post-colonized region, the part of North Africa formerly occupied by France and its proxies defies neat categories and scholarly comfort zones. Its taxonomy is culturally, religiously, and linguistically messy, residing in several places at once: Mediterranean Studies, MENA Studies, African Studies – and these are just the geographically-constructed categories. At various times, the region is considered to be a part of the Arab world, the Islamic world, the Maghreb, and the francophonie. It manifests itself in the Western imagination in such disparate places as the discourse of the *hijab* (i.e. Islamic headscarf), the fad for all things “Moroccan” in interior design, the criminal trial of Zacarias Moussaoui, endless appropriations (both respectful and not) of *raqs sharqi* – what is popularly termed “belly dance” in the West – and the entirely fictionalized setting of the classic American film, *Casablanca*. Despite the West's new hunger for information about the MENA, attention to North Africa's realities remains almost entirely absent from

popular and scholarly consciousness in the anglosphere. North Africa does not, after all, contain Iraq, Iran, or Palestine, the three MENA areas upon which our attention is currently focused.

In this respect, not much has changed since I began my (2005) examination of North African women's dramatic literature in the mid-1990s. If francophone North Africa is a blip on the radar screen when it comes to Western scholarship written in English on the so-called Arabo-Islamic¹ arts, then North African performance arts are an even tinier mote, and women's production of same is almost invisible. Oscar Brockett (1995), an American giant in the field of theater history, took the positive step of adding a brief section on the region, in a general chapter on Africa, to the seventh edition of his tome, *The History of the Theater*. It made no mention of women artists whatsoever. The volume now has a second author, Franklin Hildy (2003), and is in its ninth edition, but the section on North Africa has remained silent on the subject of women's literature and performance. Brockett has fallen into the twin traps that plague theater scholars who attempt to include the MENA in their considerations. Western scholars tend to assume either that the Islamic ban on representational art is universal – a notion that is put to the test by the Moghul miniature, the Egyptian *hadj* painting, the Iranian *ta'ziyeh* and other artistic forms too numerous to mention here – or that the condition (for which one must read “oppression”) of women in the Arab world precludes their participation in the theatrical arts. So deeply held are these twin mythologies that even the giants fall prey to them. Furthermore, due to the history of colonization in the past two centuries, the misapprehensions occasioned by these two glaring errors have come to be reflected even in the work done by MENA scholars writing the histories of their own theaters.

In the manner of a self-fulfilling prophesy, this scholarly confusion is one of the conditions that has made it very difficult for women in the performing arts in francophone North Africa to gain attention and respect for their work, both at home or abroad. When they do receive notice, they are usually pressed into a framework of Western feminism that celebrates their existence by reifying stereotypes of their supposed oppression. This is a particularly insidious cycle.

Cause for cautious optimism, however, comes from the discipline of film. Rebecca Hillauer (2005) has given us the first truly authoritative work on Arab women's cinema in English, the *Encyclopedia of Arab Women Filmmakers*. In it, she has included a wealth of information about, and interviews of, North African filmmakers, some of whom are also playwrights. In 2002, Wellesley College sponsored a North African women's film festival that hosted luminaries Moufida Tlatli and Djamila Sahraoui. Such germinal works as Farida Benlyazid's (1989) *A Door to the Sky*, and Tlatli's (1994) *The Silences of the Palace*, as well as more recent offerings like Raja Amari's (2002) *Satin Rouge*, and Yamina Bachir's (2002) *Rachida*, are available for sale on the internet, and films by North African women routinely make the rounds of international film festivals.

1. The term “Arabo-Islamic” is problematic when applied to North Africa, where there are prominent non-Muslim and non-Arab populations.

For a time, it seemed as if francophone plays by North African women authors had a champion in Françoise Kourilsky and her Ubu Repertory Theater translators. Ubu published a number of English translations of plays by Algerians Fatima Gallaire, Leïla Sebbar, and Denise Bonal, as well as their fellow countryman, Kateb Yacine. While sometimes of questionable quality, particularly in the case of Gallaire's plays (Box, 2005,

pp. 118-121), and with the exception of the translated oeuvre of Hélène Cixous, these were, and continue to be, the only published translations of North African women's plays available in English (Box, 2005, pp. 205-206). This lack could be excused by the general disinterest in francophone works evidenced by the anglosphere, but in fact the question of publication and dissemination of plays by North African women authors is more complex. North African women who write in French can and do find a limited market for their work in France and in the French-language bookstores of the urban elites in their own countries. They tend to receive little recognition, however. The bibliography of a recent dossier on Morocco in *Quantara*, the publication of L'Institut du Monde Arabe in Paris, has listed only one playwright, a man (Ksikes, 2006, p. 54). Women who write plays in Arabic, if my recent observations on Morocco can be extrapolated to apply to the entire region, do not make it into print. Tamazight (Berber language) plays are beginning to gain official recognition in Morocco, where King Mohammed VI's new policies of openness to Morocco's Amazigh heritage are creating something of an Amazigh renaissance, but I have not encountered any plays by Amazigh Moroccan women, published or otherwise. Tamazight arts in Algeria have some momentum, but have been impeded by long-standing tensions between Arab Algerians and their Amazigh compatriots in Kabylia. The Amazigh presence in Tunisia is so marginalized and muted that it has had no chance to develop its own body of post-independence literature.

Training in the performing arts continues to be available and governmentally sanctioned in the three countries of francophone North Africa. Each has a training school, attached to the requisite Ministry of Culture. There is no shortage of women actors and cultural animators these days, although employment for them is by no means steady, and the threat of a religiously or socially-motivated backlash against "public" women, that is to say those who perform in public, continues to be a problem. Women directors are more in evidence in Morocco today than they were ten years ago, and some of them are also writers. Contributions in the areas of design and technical operation by women used to be limited to the areas of makeup and costumes, but I saw some evidence in Morocco that this barrier is being broken for set design, as well as for light operation.

The general openness of Morocco's new regime to foreign and minority arts, the tourist economy and sweeping changes in the *moudawana* (i.e. the Moroccan family code) have contributed to a dynamic artistic atmosphere, yielding what Driss Ksikes (2006) has described as "moments of internal culture shock" (p. 45). This, in turn, has prompted a conservative backlash that, ironically, finds high-art elites from the political left making the same arguments as Islamic fundamentalists on the political right. While the latter are concerned with morality, and the former with cultural purity, their call for an artistic standard that is authentically Moroccan is the same. Arts that do not conform to this standard, like Laïla Marrakchi's (2005) film, *MaRock*, are said to be subject to "foreign manipulation," a charge that invokes the specter of creeping neo-colonialism (Ksikes, 2006, pp. 44-45).

The women who participate in the arts often pay a heavy price for what I have characterized elsewhere as their socially "outrageous behavior" (Box, 2006). My Moroccan friend and mentor, Fatima Chebchoub, who was both a practitioner of the traditional *halqa*² and a participant in the contemporary theatrical arts, was never able

2. The *halqa* [lit. "circle"] is a highly codified form of traditional North African performance that takes place in a circle or semi-circle of spectators. *Halqa* comes in many forms, and may involve musical, theatrical, acrobatic, and oratory performances. It is often political and/or satirical. Central to its ethos is the notion that the spectator is the boundary by which the *halqa* constitutes itself, and a lively exchange between performer and spectator is considered necessary to the *halqa*'s existence (Chebchoub, F., personal communication, October 14-17, 1997; Box, 2005, p. 46).

to balance her work with a family life, and she always maintained that this was because of her work as a public performer. The family histories of other Moroccan female artists to whom I have talked support this notion. Chebchoub died in a swimming accident at Skhirat, near Rabat, on August 9, 2006. Her death represents a great loss for Morocco's theater culture, although she was the subject of much controversy throughout her life. Such was her knowledge of the Moroccan arts that upon hearing of her passing, Driss Ajbali (2006) wrote, "It is a library that has drowned" (¶ 3). Chebchouba, as she was known in the *halqa*, was an actor, director, filmmaker, television personality, cultural animator, comedian, musician, poet, academic, and, sadly, athlete. She was physically and intellectually fearless, and this is what led to her untimely death at the age of 53.

Chebchoub (1998 & 2002), whose one-woman *halqa*, *The Keeper of the Secret*, toured conferences and university venues internationally, is joined by professional theater artists Touria Jabrane (*Quatre heures à Chatila or Four Hours at Shatila*, 2006) and Khedija Assad (*State of the Nation*, 1997); comedian and television personality Hanane Fadili (*Such is Hanane*, 1997); feature filmmaker Farida Benlyazid (*Women's Wiles*, 1999); documentarists Izza Genini (*Cyberstories*, 2001) and Fatima Jebli Ouazzani (*In My Father's House*, 1997); playwrights Leïla Houari (*The Lower Rooms*, 1993) and Amina Lhassani (*Nour, or the Call of God*, 1994); and her longtime friend and collaborator, performance artist Latifa Toujani (*Haïk Salam or Peace Veil*, 1995), at the vanguard of contemporary performing arts by Moroccan women. Growing up during the time when the country was gaining its independence, these women were and are the pioneers (Hillauer, 2005, pp. 337-354; Box, 2005, pp. 199-209). Most have, until recently, toiled in relative obscurity, but some are now receiving the accolades they deserve. Jabrane and her theater company, *Masrah el-Youm* (i.e. theater of today) were honored at the thirteenth Festival of Theater Arts in Damascus in November of 2006 for their adaptation of Jean Genet's *Four Hours at Shatila*; Benlyazid was feted at the Oriental Film Festival in Geneva in April 2007, and the Moroccan National Conference of Short Films at Azrou gave Chebchoub a posthumous tribute in July 2007 (Yahia, 2007; "Hommage", 2006; "Le Festival du Film", 2007).

Arriving in the wake of the pioneers are a host of young talents who do not suffer as many of the restraints and obstacles their predecessors did. Success and accolades are coming much more quickly to them than they did to artists of Chebchoub's generation. Theatrical director Naïma Zitan, for example, was a recent graduate of Morocco's Institut Supérieur d'Art Dramatique et d'Animation Culturel (ISADAC) when I first met her in 1997. She expressed the fear to me then that she would languish in a bureaucratic ministry job forever, for want of backing for her artistic projects (Zitan, N., personal communication, October 9, 1997). By 2006, she had become an auteur, and her *Rouge+Bleu=Violet*, a play about domestic violence, was touring the nation. Frustratingly, like so many plays in Morocco, it had one or two-day runs in most places, and never stayed in one venue long enough for me to see it. Film, a durable medium, is easier to find. The experimental work of Anissa and Yasmina Bouziane, sisters of Moroccan and French descent now based in New York, appeared at *Cinemayaat* 1999 (the San Francisco Arab Film Festival), and the North African Women's Film Festival held at Wellesley in 2002. Laïla Marrakchi's (2000) short film, *Lost Horizon (L'horizon perdu)* also screened at the Wellesley festival, although it gave no indication of the furor her feature film, *MaRock*, would cause.

I do not know if Fatima Chebchoub ever saw *MaRock*. I never got the chance to ask her. It is interesting to imagine what she might have thought of it. She turned a harsh lens on the work of her fellow artists, and was dismissive of most contemporary popular fare. Even the elite art produced by her university and professional colleagues sometimes met with her scorn. She applied the same rigor to her own work. She would, for example, re-write a *halqa* each time she re-cast a role, in order to best showcase the talents of that particular newcomer. It was her opinion that the responsibility of the performer is to hold the interest of the public, and she believed strongly in the educative function of both *halqa* and theater (F. Chebchoub, personal communication, October 14-17, 1997). Social commentary, often in the form of blistering satire, was her *métier*. Despite being herself an innovator of traditional arts, she held strong opinions about the integrity and purity of Moroccan traditions, and thus, would probably have fallen into the camp of the elite artists who protested the inclusion of *MaRock* in the first Festival of Casablanca and the Moroccan Film Festival of Tangiers, both held in 2005 (Boukhari, 2006; Ksikes, 2006, p. 45). In the years just before her death, however, Chebchoub began to work extensively with Jewish artists in the community of the University of Pennsylvania, where she was a doctoral candidate. She had always felt a strong attraction to Moroccan Jewish culture, despite her own Muslim family background, and for this reason alone, I suspect she would have quietly applauded Laïla Marrakchi's bridge-building aspirations, if not her choice of genre and execution.

At its core, *MaRock* is a melodrama, a story of doomed teenage love set in the wealthy enclaves of Casablanca. Its characters, spoiled, wealthy, and Westernized, are representative of a slim minority of Morocco's youth. The girl, Ghita, is a Muslim, but she makes a point of defying her parents' moderate religious practices. The boy, Youri, is a Jew – part of a group of hard-drinking, fast-driving young men with too much time on their hands – but his religious practices are barely treated by the film at all. Rather, “Jewishness” becomes a code for “licentiousness,” in one of the film's most severe absences of self-reflexivity. Ghita's brother, Mao, returns from study abroad and begins to adopt strict, orthodox Muslim habits. His disapprobation of his sister's secular partying lifestyle and his dismay at her disrespect for Islamic custom, explode when her relationship with Youri is discovered. The couple is separated; Youri pulls a stunt reminiscent of James Dean and dies in a fiery auto crash, and Ghita is packed off to study abroad. This is the family's solution for social embarrassment, as it had been with her brother before her. It transpires that Mao is guilty of vehicular manslaughter, and his sojourn out of the country was meant to conceal his crime.

While it is difficult to ascertain what kind of a statement *MaRock* is trying to make – beyond the desire to shock the complacent – its notoriety has propelled Marrakchi onto the international scene. Clips from the film, including controversial moments such as the one when Ghita taunts her brother while he is conducting *salat* (daily prayer), are posted on YouTube (2006), and the debate about the film's Moroccan-ness, or lack thereof, rages on in the blogosphere. For an American viewer, the formula is predictable. The young people are sympathetic, the parents and brother are hypocrites, society does not understand their love, and so on. For Moroccans, it is a different matter. A Moroccan film that shows a young Muslim woman eating insolently during the Ramadan fast and having pre-marital sex with a Jewish man turns the world upside down. Moroccans have seen sex, religious questioning, and interfaith relationships

on film before, but the films containing these depictions were foreign products. This is why the opposition to *MaRock* has chosen to attack its Moroccan credentials, even suggesting that, since the director currently lives in France and is married to a Jewish man herself, the film represents a sinister, foreign effort by a “Zionist lobby” (Boukhari, 2006). If Moroccans are forced to admit that *MaRock* is a Moroccan film, then they must face the rapid changes that are sweeping across Moroccan society. This is Marrakchi’s singular accomplishment.

When viewed in this light, Marrakchi’s audacity is impressive. Boukhari (2006), in a much-cited article for the Moroccan weekly magazine, *TelQuel*, has given a clue to her agenda: the film is set, very precisely, not in the present, but in the late 1990s, during the last years of the reign of Hassan II. He has noted that the film begins with a scene of corruption, in which Ghita is seen in a romantic clinch with a boyfriend (not Youri) in an automobile. They are caught by a police officer, who is persuaded with a bribe to leave them alone. Ghita exclaims, “Shitty country! We don’t have the right to do anything!” If we read the macrocosm in the tiny microcosmic mirror of the domestic melodrama the film portrays, it becomes at once a criticism of the Moroccan government’s hypocrisy under Hassan II, and a celebration of Morocco’s changing political landscape under the more open rule of his son, Mohammed VI, who shows some signs of being the kind of innovative ruler his grandfather was. For a country whose citizens did not dare to openly criticize their ruler nine years ago, this is revolution in a film canister. On the other hand, the fact that *MaRock* is pitched at the teen market is both a strength and a flaw. The film’s intended consumers, who are the age of the protagonists, are the future of the country. It is possible that they will miss Marrakchi’s political message, however, because they were young children when Mohammed IV came to power in 1999. Older audience members, who remember Hassan II and his policies, are unlikely to find the film’s rebellious, in-your-face style congenial. *MaRock*’s revolution may have missed its target.

Remarkably, the charge that *MaRock* does not authentically address the issues current in Moroccan society has also been leveled at a very different work, namely, *Bnat Lalla Mennana* (*The Daughters of Lalla Mennana*), a piece created by the almost entirely female theater company, *Takoon*. Initiated in 1993 by a group of graduating ISADAC students as a final project, it was revived in 2003, when *Takoon* re-invented itself as a professional company. The work toured Tunisia in 2005, where it was reviewed by Zohra Abid (2005), who opined that its message was old news for Morocco. Perhaps this analysis is true for Tunisian viewers, whose regime is every bit as politically stifling, but more attentive to gender issues than Morocco’s was prior to the turn of the millennium, but I must take exception to Abid’s (2005) dismissive assertion that *Takoon* is guilty of mounting an outdated theme with “a flagrant lack of research” (¶ 1). When I saw the play in 2006 at the National Theater Mohammed V in Rabat, the warmth of its reception by the almost entirely Moroccan audience was conspicuous. Of course, ISADAC is in the same district as the National, so *Takoon* was on its home turf, but this fact does not entirely account for the joy that greeted the play that night, nor does it explain the prizes the production received at the National Theater Festival in Meknes in 2003 (“Program of”, 2005).

Bnat Lalla Mennana is a free adaptation of Federico García Lorca’s (1955) play, *The House of Bernarda Alba* (*La casa de Bernarda Alba*). It pares down the original

and simplifies the plot, but more importantly, it turns Lorca's pessimistic vision of gender relations and intergenerational cruelty on its head. Relying on Morocco's intense historical ties with al-Andalus (Andalusian Spain) for its soundscape and choreography, this Moorish Bernarda Alba honors Lorca's passion for the flamenco in its depiction of moments of inner turmoil. The setting of this production, however, has the feel of a stately home in Fès. The actual house of Lalla Mennana is a tomb in Larache, a city once occupied by Spain, that holds the remains of the city's patron Sufi saint, who lived in the eighteenth century. Lalla Mennana al-Masbahiya, daughter of another saint, Sidi Jilali ben Abd Allah al-Masbahi,³ died on the eve of her wedding at her father's *zawiyya* (i.e. sufi lodge). According to legend, when her intended husband entered the room where she had died, he found a white dove in her place (Anidjar, 2007; "Tombeau de", 2007). Bernarda Alba's final plea in Lorca's (1955) original text is that her youngest daughter, who has just committed suicide in the mistaken belief that her mother has killed her lover, must be buried as a virgin in order to save her house's reputation (p. 211). Thus, the densely metaphoric title of the adaptation has a satisfying resonance, particularly for Moroccans.

Lalla Mennana retains the claustrophobic feel of Bernarda Alba, but uses it to comic effect. One does not usually attend a play by Lorca in order to laugh, although any production of the original text would benefit from a recognition of its comic moments, if for no other reason than to increase the dramatic tension. In this production, however, the ratio of laughter to tears is reversed. Since the dominant mode for social commentary in MENA arts is satire, this is an excellent choice for Moroccan audiences, and one that holds up well for the foreign viewer also. The bickering of the sexually and romantically frustrated sisters is touchingly familiar as sibling rivalry, and the moment when they hang out of the house's upper windows in an attempt to attract the attention of passing male workers is a bit of physical comedy worthy of Lucille Ball. The pattern of cruelty that has brought the six women of the play⁴ to this pass is clearly delineated as the widow Lalla Mennana tries to impose the pattern of sequestration, to which she herself was subjected as a young woman, on her daughters. As their rebellion pushes the play toward tragedy, we watch with a surprising amount of sympathy as she tries to hold the house together. She and her daughters have no male protector. For Moroccans, whose legal system did not abandon the *sharia* (i.e. Islamic law) custom of the *wali* (i.e. guardian) until 2004, this makes immediate sense. The idea of women living without legal autonomy is not as distant a history for Moroccan Muslims as it is for Spanish Christians, or even for Tunisian Muslims.

3. Lalla and *Sidi* are titles of respect in Moroccan colloquial Arabic. They mean honored lady and honored sir, respectively.

4. *Bnat Lalla Mennana* eliminates several important characters from Lorca's original: one of the middle daughters, one of the servants, the neighbour, and Bernarda Alba's mother.

In the end, Lalla Mennana makes a different choice than Bernarda Alba. Realizing her youngest daughter is on a course of self-destruction, she throws down the keys to her house, which in this production weigh down the train of her lavish *kaftan* (i.e. traditional garment), and says, "No. Not my daughter." She refuses, in the end, to perpetuate the cycle, and sets her daughters free to leave the house. The flamenco, which has punctuated the play with intense passages of danced inner monologue and angry, competitive duologue, becomes a *komos*, a wild, celebratory dance like the ones that provided the conclusion to ancient Greek comedies. All the women survive, and Lalla Mennana herself joins the dance at the end of the play. This is a different kind of revolution than we see in *MaRock*, because it plays across generations, and allows the possibility for the protagonists to escape and take their audiences with them.

Samia Akariou, the director of this innovative interpretation and the actor who plays the youngest daughter, is familiar to Western audiences as the clever protagonist of Farida Benlyazid's (1999) *Women's Wiles*. Her colleagues in the cast, Noura Skali (who also developed the text adaptation), Saadia Ladib, Nadia el-Alami, Saadia Azgoun, and Hind Saadidi, while not as well-known in the West, are every bit as skilled. Their commitment to the physicality of the piece is extraordinary, and Akariou's direction is spare, rigorous, and masterful. They are supported by a female design team, the two exceptions being the lighting designer, Hassen Benjeddi, and Younes Megri, an acting star in his own right, who composed the music. Since the production has toured extensively, Rafika Benmaimoun's set and Noura Elqasbi's décor are models of economy. A few modular pieces provide multiple interior spaces with varied levels, as well as a *hammam* (bath house) and the house's exterior. Despite the efficiency of the mise-en-scène, it manages to convey a sense of stifling luxury that is supported by Saida Rkiek's engaging costumes.

This product of concentrated artistic collaboration by women is, I am certain, not a fluke. Morocco is on the cusp of a new artistic period, one in which women and minorities will have the chance to participate in. *Bnat Lalla Mennana*, created under the rule of Hassan II, before the change in the Family Code, found its voice in the time of his son, and *MaRock*, unimaginable in the former period, is now free to comment upon it.

If *Bnat Lalla Mennana* is the most rewarding piece of live theater I saw during my six months in Morocco last year, *MaRock* is the most disappointing film. Yet both works remind us that young female artists are serving as the agents for, and barometers of, change in Moroccan society. The possibilities that are opening up for women artists in Morocco are astounding. If the country's leaders are paying attention to the messages these young women are sending, they will provide Moroccan girls at all social levels with opportunities to learn the traditional and contemporary performing arts, and offer women safe spaces in which to consume and create performance works. Soon, women will be among the leaders of Morocco in every field. Chebchouba's legacy lives, and the doors of Lalla Mennana's house are open wide at last.

Laura Chakravarty Box is assistant professor of Theater at Colby College in Waterville, Maine, USA, where she teaches performance history, directing, and acting.
Email: lchakrav@colby.edu

REFERENCES

- Abid, Z.** (n.d.). B'nett Lella Mannana: Un bouillon réchauffé. *Tunisia Today*. Retrieved August 29, 2007 from <http://www.tunisia-today.com/archives/22343>.
- Ajbali, D.** (2006, August 9). Label marocanité: En hommage à Chebchoub. *Aujourd'hui le Maroc*. Retrieved August 23, 2007, from <http://www.aujourd'hui.ma/chroniques-details48951.html>.
- Akariou, S.** (Director). (2006, May 25). *Bnat Lalla Mennana* [Les filles de Lalla Mennana/The daughters of Lalla Mennana]. [Live performance]. Théâtre National Mohamed V, Rabat, Morocco.
- Amari, R.** (2002). *Satin Rouge*. [Motion picture]. Tunisia/France.
- Anidjar, S.** (2007, January 23). Lalla Menana la sainte patronne de Larache. *Maroc Amitie*. Retrieved August 29, 2007, from <http://solyanidjar.superforum.fr/tragedies-et-histoires-marocianes-c1/histoires-vraies-vecues-au-maroc-f21/lalla-menana-la-sainte-patronne-de-larache-t774.htm>
- Assad, K.** (Author), & **Saad Ellah, A.** (Director). (1997, October 26). *The state of the nation* [Costa y watan]. [Live theater performance]. Théâtre National Mohamed V, Rabat, Morocco.

- Bachir, Y.** (Director). (2002). *Rachida*. 2002. [Motion picture]. Algeria/France.
- Benlyazid, F.** (Director). (1989). *A Door to the Sky*. [The Gate of Heaven is Open/Bab al-Samaa Maftouh]. [Motion Picture]. Morocco.
- Benlyazid, F.** (Director). (1999). *Women's Wives* [Rayd Insa/Ruses de femmes]. [Motion picture]. Morocco/France/Switzerland/Tunisia.
- Boukhari, K.** (2006, April 29-May 5). *MaRock: Le film de tous les tabous*. *TelQuel* 223. Retrieved August 25, 2007, from http://www.telquel-online.com/223/couverture_223_1.shtml.
- Box, L.C.** (2006). *Outrageous behavior: Women's public performance in North Africa*. *Meridians: feminism, race, transnationalism* 6(2), 78-92.
- Box, L.C.** (2005). *Strategies of resistance in the dramatic texts of North African women: A body of words*. New York: Routledge.
- Brockett, O.G.** (1995). North Africa. In *The history of the theatre*. Seventh ed. (665-667). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Brockett, O.G. & Hildy, F.** (2003). North Africa. In *The history of the theatre*. Ninth ed. (609-610). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Chebchoub, F.** (2002, April). *The keeper of the secret*. [Tamawayt]. [Live solo performances]. Colby College, Waterville, Maine.
- Chebchoub, F.** (1998, April). *The keeper of the secret* [Moulat sserr]. [Live solo performances]. State University of New York, Binghamton.
- Dossier: *Le Maroc demain*. (2006). *Qantara* 59, 25-54.
- Fadili, H.** (1997, July 17). *Such is Hanane* [Telle est Hanane]. [Live solo performance]. Théâtre National Mohamed V, Rabat, Morocco.
- Le festival du film oriental de Genève rend hommage à Farida Benlyazid.** (2007, March 23). Retrieved August 25, 2007, from <http://www.maghrebarts.ma/cinenews/070311.html>.
- Hillauer, R.** (2005). *Encyclopedia of Arab women filmmakers*. Cairo: American University in Cairo Press.
- Hommage à Touria Jebrane à Damas.** (2006, October 20). Retrieved August 25, 2007, from <http://www.maghrebarts.ma/theatre/theatrenews/061104.html>.
- Houari, L.** (1993). *The lower rooms* [Les cases basses]. Paris: Éditions l'Harmattan.
- Ksikes, D.** (2006). *La culture: Prisonnière de ses réseaux*. *Qantara* 59, 44-46.
- Lhassani, A.** (1994). *Nour, or The Call of God* [Nour ou l'appel de Dieu]. Rabat: Éditions la Porte.
- Lorca, F.G.** (1955). *The house of Bernarda Alba* [La casa de Bernarda Alba]. In *Lorca: Three tragedies* (155-211). (J. Graham-Luján & R.L. O'Connell, Trans.). New York: New Directions Books. (Original work published 1936).
- Marrakchi, L.** (2005). *MaRock*. [Motion picture]. Morocco/France.
- Marrakchi, L.** (2000). *Lost Horizon* [L'horizon perdu]. 2000. [Short motion picture]. Morocco/France.
- Ouzzani, F.J.** (Director). (1997). *In my father's house* [Fi bayt abi In het huis van mijn vader]. [Documentary]. Netherlands.
- Program of the Douzièmes Journées Théâtrales de Carthage.** (2005). Retrieved August 30, 2007, from <http://www.jtc2005.com/presence.htm>. Rouge+ vert [sic] = violet. (2006[?]). Retrieved August 25, 2007, from <http://www.maghrebarts.ma/theatre/spec/060225>.
- Tlatli, M.** (Director). (1994). *The silences of the palace* [Samt al-qasr, Les silences du palais]. [Motion picture]. Tunisia/France.
- Tombeau de Lalla Mennana al-Masbahiya.** (2007). *Tourisme de Tanger-Tétouan*. Retrieved August 29, 2007, from http://www.tourismetangertetouan.com/general_cultura_mostrar.asp?donde=c&codmonu=841.
- Yahia, S.** (2007, July 27). *Culture. Al Bayane*. Retrieved August 25, 2007, from http://partenaires.casane.net.ma/albayane/Detail.asp?article_id=65570.
- YouTube.** (2006). *Clip from MaRock*. Retrieved August 30, 2007, from <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9hqtXGQTOQQ>.