

**MODERNIZATION AND WOMEN IN TUNISIA:
AN ANALYSIS THROUGH SELECTED FILMS**

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ABSTRACT

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This study analyzes the representation of women and modernization in Tunisian society by looking at Tunisian films produced in Tunisia after 1980. Study aims to develop a new concept to understand modernization process of women in a non-western, Muslim, and North African society through representations in films.

Women's modernization process has been analyzed through the qualitative analyses of five Tunisian films by focusing on conceptualization of women issue as one of the main elements of Tunisian modernization. More presicely, the study

examines stages of women's modernization on the one side, and representation of this process in films on the other.

In conclusion, I argue that examining written literature alone is not enough to understand women's modernization process in a non-western society. Expansion of modernization is not rapid and equal in the Tunisian society. If taking place in the public sphere, having a paid job and having education are taken as the indicators of women's modernization, it is seen that lower class women face with problems in every stage of Tunisian modernization. At that point, attending to visual sources like cinema which has the ability to reflect the society can give us convenient information about this process.

KEY WORDS: Modernization, women, Tunisia, cinema, films, representation, public sphere, paid job, education, private sphere

ÖZ

TUNUS'TA MODERNLEŞME VE KADINLAR: SEÇİLMİŞ FİMLER YOLUYLA BİR ANALİZ

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Bu çalışma Tunus toplumunda kadınların modernleşmesini Tunus'ta 1980'den sonra çekilen filmlere bakarak analiz etmektedir. Çalışma batılı olmayan, Müslüman ve Kuzey Afrikalı bir toplumda kadınların modernleşme süreçlerini anlayabilmek için filmlerdeki temsiller yoluyla yeni bir görüş geliştirmeyi amaçlamaktadır.

Kadınların modernleşme süreci kadın konusunun Tunus modernleşmesinin temel unsurlarından biri olarak kavramsallaştırılmasına odaklanılarak filmlerin nitel çözümlenmesi ile analiz edilmiştir. Daha kesin olarak, çalışma bir taraftan

kadınların modernleşmesinin aşamalarını incelerken, öbür taraftan bu sürecin filmlerdeki temsilini incelemektedir.

Sonuç olarak, batılı olmayan bir toplumda sadece yazılı edebiyatı incelemenin kadınların modernleşme sürecini anlamak için yeterli olmadığını savunuyorum. Tunus toplumunda modernleşmenin yayılması hızlı ve eşit değildir. Kamusal alanda yer almak, ücretli bir işe sahip olmak ve eğitim almak modernleşmenin göstergeleri olarak düşünülürse, alt sınıf kadınların Tunus modernleşmesinin her aşamasında sorunlarla karşılaştıkları görülür. Bu noktada, sinema gibi toplumu yansıtırma becerisine sahip olan görsel kaynaklara bakmak bize bu süreç hakkında işe yarar bilgi sağlayabilir.

ANAHTAR KELİMELEER: Modernleşme, kadınlar, Tunus, sinema, filmler, temsil, kamusal alan, ücretli iş, eğitim, özel alan

To my sister İpek

I wish I was somebody like you...

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this study is to analyze Tunisian women's modernization by looking at Tunisian cinema films produced in Tunisia after 1980s. Study quests to develop a new concept to understand modernization process of women of a non-western, Muslim, and North African society through representations in films. More precisely, the study follows Tunisian women's modernization process from a historical manner on the one side, from representations in films by taking the tendency of Tunisian cinema towards woman issue after 1980s into consideration, on the other.

My goal for choosing Tunisia to examine women's modernization is the successful advent and consolidation of modernization process in Tunisia. As a young and independent Maghribi country, Tunisia has a different stand about women issue since its independence. Women's emancipation and participation to public sphere has always been on the agenda of governors. As a result, Tunisia has a fertile ground to examine women's modernization unlike the rest of the Middle East and North Africa (except Turkey).

On the other hand, my goal for choosing the method to analyze women's modernization through films is cinema's capability of consisting simulations of reality, reflecting society and persuading people to its stories. Thus, cinema has

the ability to reflect, change, and affect people's lives. With this ability, cinema gives us the opportunity to follow and analyze people, societies and countries.

Examination of modernization and women has many ways. When I chose films as the main source of my analysis, a collective analysis containing both the modernization process and development of Tunisian cinema is required.

When I started to examine the subject, I see that modernization and women has a relationship one within the other in Tunisia. Tunisian women perceived a change in their role after independence when the rights and freedoms were granted by the Code of Personal Status. Actually, studies about women issue started in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century with the articles written by men. Early Tunisian reformers Ahmed Ibn Abi al-Diyaf wrote his *Risalah* (Epistle) on women in 1856 and al-Tahir al-Haddad wrote his *Imra'atuna fi al-sharia wa al-mujtama* (Our Woman in Islamic Law and Society) in 1930. Abi al-Diyaf's and al-Haddad's views played a very important role for the establishment of a basis about Tunisian women's position in the society. During the French occupation, Europeans played an important role in bringing the idea of women's rights and education into the agenda of Tunisians. With the establishment of a Franco-Arab educational system, Muslim girls also were sent to school. "These factors are seen as important in facilitating the development of awareness among Muslim men and women of the subservient position of Tunisian women." (Jarrow, 1999: 2)

During the nationalist opposition period, abolition of veil was discussed among the Tunisian intellectuals. The advance of nationalist movement, Habib

Bourguiba's rise to power with the Neo-Destour Party, women's participation to independence struggle and establishment of women organizations are breaking points which led to emancipation of women. Changes brought with independence in 1956 including the Code of Personal Status and other regulations led Tunisian women's change of role and entrance to public sphere.

During the 1980s, with the advent of second wave feminism¹ in the Middle East and North Africa, state feminism changed its guise and women tried to establish a more free discussion environment. The first group of educated women who grew up under the Code of Personal Status started to discuss about women issue. Therefore, period starting with 1980s is a very important landmark for Tunisian women's start of searching their identities and individualities. This period of change continued in 1990s with new laws and regulations.

To explore women's modernization process in Tunisia oriented my study to look at women from lower classes. They can't take the advantages of modernization at first hand and suffer during the process. To see the frame as whole, an examination of these women is also necessary. One of the best ways

¹ Second wave feminism is a new period in the feminist collective political activism which started in the late 1960s. Whereas the first wave of feminism lobbied for women's enfranchisement via the vote and access to the professions as well as the right to own property, the second wave feminists talked in terms of 'liberation' from the oppressiveness of a patriarchally defined society (Pilcher and Whelehan, 2004: 144). Besides, second wave feminism tried to develop a common female identity in which all women could reach to political solidarity. Reflections of this wave of feminism in popular culture and arts were seen in 1970s and 1980s. In cinema, a woman image searching her identity and fighting against patriarchal society emerged. Effects of this wave of feminism were started to be seen in the Middle East and North Africa in 1980s.

of such an examination is films since Tunisia has a successful advent and consolidation of cinema.

Before detailing how I analyzed films which I selected for the present study, Tunisian cinema's approach to woman issue needs clarification as an introduction to following chapters. Advent of feminism as a matter of thought led to a fresh discourse to traditional modes of discourses in the early 1970s all over the world. "Cinema also had its share of feminism and into such a situation, at the start of 1970s, entered a feminist cinema" (Rich, 1994: 28). "From the start, its link to an evolving political movement gave feminist cinema a power and direction entirely unprecedented in independent filmmaking, bringing traditional issues as theory / practice, aesthetics / meaning, process / representation into focus." (Rich, 1994: 28) This wave in world cinema was reflected also in the Middle Eastern and North African cinema.

Tunisian filmmakers have been interested in women issue since the beginning of national cinema and representation of women characters has always been an important matter for them. Because of the opinion about a country's modernization level is understood from women's status in the society, women's emancipation has been one of the most important branches of Tunisian modernization project. With the advent of a new wave of feminism to the Middle East and North Africa in 1980s, Tunisian cinema also took its share and women representations changed. At that period, also "auteur cinema"² advented

² In the late 1950s and early 1960s a movement called auteurism came to dominate film criticism and theory...Novelist and filmmaker Alexandre Astruc prepared the way for auteurism with his 1948 essay "Birth of a New Avant-Garde: The Camera-Pen"...The *camera-pen* formula valorized the act of filmmaking; the director was no longer merely the servant of a pre-existing text (novel, screenplay) but a creative artist in his/her own right (Stam,2000). According to this, director uses his/her camera as a pen and writes the film as an author through this way. François

and consolidated in Tunisian cinema. When the effect of feminism and auteur cinema united, a sound and effective language of cinema emerged. Filmmakers who belong to this wave focused on representations of uneducated and suffering women coming from lower classes on a number of films. Thus, a bilateral (hi)story³ of modernization of women emerged. On the one hand, there is a literature about the history of modernization from above⁴. On the other hand, there are representations in films which arise from cinema's ability of creating a new reality by using reflections from the society.

This bilateral (hi)story requires an examination from different points of views. For that reason, I will develop my examination over three main chapters related with stages of women modernization, Arab cinema including the Tunisian cinema and analyses of five Tunisian films.

Truffaut also played an important role with his articles. *Cahiers du Cinéma* journal became a key organ for the propagation of auteurism (Stam, 2000). André Bazin, co-founder of the *Cahiers du Cinéma*, stated that films should reflect the director's point of view and style. Auteur theory claims that directors have a distinctive style and/or consistent theme in their films to express their presence and influence in the body of their work.

³ This usage of the word is because formal stages of modernization are perceived as "history" and cinematic expression as "story", by the writer.

⁴ Writer used "modernization from above" concept after reading relevant literature even if there is no direct usage of the concept: "In Tunisia, women rarely have played a major role in the governmental decision-making process, particularly in attempts to modernize the economic, political, or social spheres of the society. Certainly, the nature of the role of women was debated in various sectors, predominantly by the men who established which roles were acceptable for women" (Jarrow, 1999: 90). "The promulgation of the CPS was a political decision of Bourguiba, to accelerate the progress of the newly independent state. The aim was to restructure the social system of the Tunisian society, and Bourguiba's main idea was that, women's playing a more prominent role in the modernization of society and the country is essential for restructuring the social system" (Jarrow, 1992: 112). "The socialists in Tunisia (*he means Destouriens*) were strong supporters of women's emancipation, thinking that it is a necessary step toward effective modernization" (Moore, 1964: 50). "Mobilizing and emancipating women served a further purpose of generating support for the regime from a previously largely passive section of the population" (Murphy, 2003: 173). Thus, usage of "modernization from above" refers to ideas in this literature.

In my second chapter, I will examine formal history of Tunisian women's modernization starting from the early reformers. Then, I will focus on developments in the colonial period and national opposition period. After examining pre-independence period, I will analyze independence period under two sub-titles: Habib Bourguiba period from 1956 to 1987 and Ben 'Ali period from 1987 to present. While examining Habib Bourguiba period, I will focus on the developments brought by the Code of Personal Status and changes in feminism in the 1980s. While examining Ben 'Ali period, I will focus on developments of 1990s with the new laws and regulations. In this chapter, my goal is understanding the stages of women's modernization. Since this is a modernization process from above which became successful and brought Tunisia to a different place among the Middle Eastern and North African countries about women's emancipation, an examination about of this process seems necessary.

Third chapter is surveys of Arab cinema, Maghribi cinema inside the Arab cinema, and Tunisian cinema inside the Maghribi cinema. With such a deduction, I aim to explore bases of the Arab and Maghribi cinema which effect the formation of Tunisian cinema. Besides, I will examine women image and development of this image in Tunisian cinema. I will also discuss the period of change in 1980s and its reflection on women image.

My fourth chapter is about representation of women's modernization in Tunisian films. In this chapter, I aim to analyze five Tunisian cinema films which I selected for the present study. At this point, it will be relevant to state methodology of the fourth chapter.

Methodology

This study is an attempt to analyze Tunisian women's modernization process by looking at Tunisian films. To examine the representations in films, I selected five Tunisian films which were produced between 1980 and 2002. My reason of selecting these films produced between 1980-2002 is the period of change starting in the 1980s since there has been an orientation towards auteur films and development of a woman image searching her own identity and individuality. On the other hand, I selected these films according to their stories since each of them refers to a different stage of Tunisian modernization.

"The Silences of the Palace" is a Moufida Tlatli film produced in 1994. Story of the film passes in 1956, in the year of Tunisian independence. "Halfaouine: The Boy of the Terraces" is a Ferid Boughedir film produced in 1990. Story of the film passes in 1960s, in almost a decade after the independence of Tunisia. "Aziza" is an Abdellatif Ben Ammar film. "Aziza" does not tell a historical story. It passes in the year 1980, which can be marked as the turning point of change in women's modernization process. "Clay Dolls" is a Nouri Bouzid film produced in 2002. "Be My Friend" is a Naceur Ktari film produced in 2000. Stories of the two films pass at the end of 1990s or beginning of 2000s. In other words, in the present day's Tunisia.

Thus, these five films make possible a survey of women's modernization in Tunisia beginning from 1956 on the one hand; and to examine changes in the discourse towards women issue after 1980s on the other.

To make a brief reading of these films and collect the useful data for the film analysis, I prepared a “data collection schedule”⁵ and selected scenes from the five films according to this schedule⁶. Data collection schedule contents “Taking Place in the Public Sphere”, “Paid Work”, “Education”, “Traditional Roles in the Private Sphere”, “Unpaid Work/ Housework”, “Relations with Men”, “Marriage and Romantic Love”, “Sexuality” and “Relations with Other Women” titles. I will also make my analysis under these titles in the fourth chapter.⁷

To determine these titles required a detailed look to both women’s modernization process and development of Tunisian cinema after watching selected films.

When women’s modernization process is in question, it seems that Tunisia still depends on classical definitions of gender and feminisms:

Responses to the question “what is feminism?” or “are you a feminist?” commonly draw upon liberal versions of feminist thought. It is certainly the ‘moderate’ or ‘mainstream’ face of the feminism. In this approach the explanation for women’s position in society is seen in terms of “unequal rights” or artificial barriers to women’s participation in the public world, beyond the family and household. Thus in liberal feminist thought there is a focus on the “public sphere”, on legal, political and institutional struggles for the rights of “individuals” to complete in the public marketplace. In liberal feminism there is also a critical concern with the value of individual ‘autonomy’ and ‘freedom’ from supposedly unwarranted restrictions by others...Public citizenship and the attainment of “equality with men” in the public arena is central to liberal feminism (Beasley, 1999: 51-52).

It will not be wrong to say that women issue in Tunisia refers directly to this point. Hence, making an analysis of the subject requires a data

⁵ Please look at Appendix A

⁶ Please look at Appendix B

⁷ Titles of the data collection schedule are modified from Cindoğlu, 1991

collection schedule which contains titles related with the classical extent of feminism. Thus, I determined concepts referring women's basic rights such as taking place in the public sphere, taking education and having a paid work as the main titles of fourth chapter and data collection schedule.

Analyzing women's taking place in the public sphere in films is not enough to complete the picture. Since a woman's main duty is seen as doing house works and women are perceived as mothers and wives mostly also in modernizing societies, women's positions in the private sphere are very important signs of modernization. Hence, I determined traditional roles in the private sphere such as housework and relations with men, and other concepts related with the private sphere such as marriage and love, sexuality and relations with other women as the other titles of the data collection file.

I selected scenes from the five films by taking the data collection file into consideration. In my analysis of these films, I look at women's modernization in Tunisia from a different point of view than the formal history expounded. I examined the modernization of uneducated women coming from lower classes. Thus a complete picture of the subject is constituted with three chapters of the study.

To make a systematic analysis and reading of the study, it seems necessary to me to summarize the introduction:

Problem:

The main problem in this analysis is to examine Tunisian women's modernization process by focusing on the representations of women in films.

Sample:

The main source of this study is selected Tunisian films which were produced between 1980 and 2002.

Data Collection Procedure:⁸

There are two analytic techniques I use to collect my data from the films:

1) *Textual or Verbal Analysis:* At that point I focus on the analysis of “the story” and “the characters”, I examined the dynamics that make the story as well as the resolutions of the study. Besides I focus on key moments in the scenes I selected.

2) *Visual Analysis:* At that point, I look at visual objects of the film such as “scene arrangements” and “decor”. Besides “the story” and “characters” of the film, “scene arrangements” and “decor” also supply a fertile ground for data collection. Finally, I look at the “non-verbal” scenes which tell the story only with actions of the characters.

⁸ Analytic techniques are modified from Cindoğlu, 1991

CHAPTER 2

STAGES OF WOMEN'S MODERNIZATION

This chapter examines women's emancipation process through the modernization process of Tunisia. Although women's emancipation exactly started with the independence of the country, there is a background of this modernization and emancipation process. From this point on, it is necessary to examine the early modernization attempts in the nineteenth century's pre-colonial Tunisia. After the examination of the approaches to women's situation during this period, women issue in the colonial period will be discussed. Finally, main focusing point of this chapter, women's emancipation after the independence will be examined.

Tunisia, which had an effective modernization process considering other Middle Eastern and North African countries, also had a noteworthy process about women's emancipation. The Progress of women rights in Tunisia presents a parallel improvement with the country's modernization period.

From this point on, women and modernization in Tunisia can be examined in three steps: pre-colonial period, colonial period and independence period.

2.1. PRE-COLONIAL TUNISIA

The Arab world of the nineteenth century was in the middle of the clashes between the Ottoman Empire and European states. As things stood, they

were strongly influenced by European modernization ideas. Social, political and economic reform attempts also affected Tunisia as everywhere in the region.

When we look at women's situation during the period, it is seen that while the rulers were in reform attempts, daily life of people had been same since ages. At the turn of the nineteenth century, women's situation in Tunisia was not different from the rest of the region. Main tasks of Tunisian women were to marry, raise their children and work for the comfort of their husbands. They were living in private sphere, making house work and coping with domestic problems such as divorce and polygamy. But, also as everywhere in the region, "there were working women in Tunisia as midwives, bath attendants, hair dressers, and some specifically Middle Eastern occupations such as belly dancing and wailing women." (Raccagni, 1982: 31) But as it is mentioned, majority of the female population was engaged in domestic work. Weaving the woolen blankets and manufacturing fes can also be mentioned among these domestic works. As it will be examined, changes brought by the reforms slowly spread to all levels of society and affected daily lives of both men and women.

The Ahmed Bey period can be taken as a starting point of those changes brought by the reforms. As the ruler of Tunisia from 1837 to 1855, Ahmed Bey was aware of the need for strong modernization. To this end, he initiated military and economic reform programs in order to create a modern military system. Besides, his European style-officers' school at the palatial headquarters at Bardo opened in 1840 with French, Italian, Arabic, mathematics, geography and history lectures.

Two important names of the period were Khayr al-Din Pasha (1810-1889) and Ibn Abi al-Diyaf (1802/3-1874).

“Khayr al-Din Pasha, as a protégé of Ahmed Bey, received both a modern and religious education in French and Arabic, and was sent by the Bey to Paris to settle a financial problem.” (Jarrow, 1999:15) “He remained in Paris for four years (1852-1856), during which time he was exposed to the republican ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity, or nationality of the French revolution.” (Jarrow, 1999: 15) When he returned to Tunisia, he was full of reform ideas for the Tunisian political system. During his ministry in the government of Muhammad Bey, he collaborated with Ibn Abi al-Diyaf on the arrangement of Tunisian reform Constitution of 1861. He was the most prominent minister of the 19th century Tunisia.

Khayr al-Din Pasha was also effective in developing the reformist doctrine that the *sharia*, although divine in origin, was not a fixed code, but one that could be modified by the *ulama* and men of affairs, as the circumstances and needs of society changed (Hourani, 1962: 92). He is seen as the founding father of the Tunisian modernization ideals. Even if he was not interested in woman issue specifically, he has a very important place as the initiator of Tunisian modernization and as being the point of departure for the successors who perceived the need of women’s emancipation.

The name to be stated as the one interested in women question is Ibn Abi al-Diyaf, the outstanding officer of the 19th century Tunisia.

Ibn Abi al-Diyaf, was the chancellery secretary of beys from Ahmed Bey to Muhammad Sadiq Bey between 1826 and 1864 (Jarrow, 1999: 17). By

the effect of his family's ascendance, he rapidly became successful in his career. He was sent on mission to Istanbul in 1830 and in 1842, and went to Paris in 1846 with Ahmed Bey. He contributed to the preparation of the Fundamental Pact of 1860, and collaborated with Khayr al-Din on the arrangement of Tunisian reform constitution of 1861 (Raccagni, 1983: 38).

Al-Diyaf had important works during his career. His well-known work is an eight volume historical chronicle of Tunisia, *Ithaf ahl al-zaman bi akhbar muluk Tunis wa-ahd al-aman*⁹, which was written in more than ten years. Besides, he wrote poetry and his *Risalah*¹⁰, or epistle on women; one of the most important subjects of the present study.

Al-Diyaf wrote his *Risalah* in 1856 as a response to a list of questions about Muslim women by Léon Roches, French Consul General in Tunis from 1853 to 1863. Roches' behaviour can be seen as a consequence of a European curiosity about women's situation in a Muslim country attempting modernization. Al-Diyaf's responses to Roches clarifies various aspects of the legal attitude toward women's rights and duties in family and conjugal life, marriage, divorce, polygamy, and their lack of education, as well as their social position (i.e., veiling, seclusion, segregation, and repudiation) (Jarrow, 1999:17,18).

⁹ Ahmad Ibn Abi al-Diyaf, *Ithaf ahl al-zaman bi akhbar muluk Tunis wa-ahd al-aman* (Tunis: Matba'at al-Rasmiya lil-Jumhuriya al-Tunisiya, 1966 as cited in Jarrow, 1999:17). Since these works were written in Arabic and first translations were in French, I had to use third hand sources while examining this early period.

¹⁰ "*Risala fi al-mar'a*" was translated into modern Arabic and analyzed by Munsif al-Shanufi in "*Risalat Ahmad Abi al-Diyaf fi al-mar'a*" in *Hawliyat al-Jamia al-Tunisiya* (1968): 49-109; and it was also translated into French and analyzed by Bechir Tlili in "*A l'aube du Mouvement de Reformes a Tunis: Un Important Document de Ahmad Ibn Abi al-Diyaf sur le Féminisme* (1856)" in *Ethnies* (1973): 167-230 as cited in Jarrow, 1999: 17 and Raccagni, 1983: 39

The epistle is a short work of some thirty hand-written pages which answers twenty three questions, mentioning the Qur'an as the only source of reference (Raccagni, 1983: 43). The importance of this document is that it is unique, and the first known document about women, and the author was a prominent figure of Tunisia with his reform attempts. Besides, this work is perhaps the most informative work available on the everyday life of the Muslim woman and on the Tunisian family structure in the 19th century (Jarrow, 1999: 18). It is essential here to state that, the document also specifies the backward and depressed position of Muslim women, as a first hand source.

In the present study, al-Diyaf's major responses to Roches will be abbreviated:

Roches' first question is about the reason why the Muslim men cheer at the birth of a male child but not of a female child. "Al-Diyaf does not deny that despite the Qur'anic injunction, parents are more pleased to have a son because of the importance of men as producers, warriors and leaders, while daughters leave their families upon marriage" (Raccagni, 1983: 43).

When answering Roches' second question about the general ignorance of Muslim women's education, al-Diyaf supports a woman's religious and moral education, but cites that this type of education should be given together with house works such as cooking and sewing. He does not see a necessity for change, and thinks that further education of women would damage traditional family structure (Raccagni, 1983: 44). He thinks it is enough for a woman to know about the unity of God, the fast, prayers, and the rights of her husband, but unlike him, she needs not know laws concerning justice, war, imamate and

the like, since she rules only in her house and the veil prevents her from sitting in male assemblies (al-Shanufi, 1968:70 as cited in Raccagni, 1983: 44).

At Roches' third and fourth questions about girls' marriage before maturity and girls' rarely meeting with their husbands before the marriage, al-Diyaf also has a very conservative point of view. Although he mentions that "both partners should give their consent to the union, be of compatible ages, and have the opportunity to meet several times before the marriage" (al-Shanufi, 1968:74 as cited in Raccagni, 1983: 47), "he did not condone frequent meetings, however, as that could possibly have evil results" (Tlili, 1973:201, 202 as cited in Jarrow, 1999: 22).

Al-Diyaf answers Roches fifth question about dowry or purchase price for a bride as "the dowry was not an expression of degradation of women in Islam, but a form of security for women who were at risk of being repudiated without recourse, since the dowry is returned to a woman if her husband repudiates her" (Tlili, 1973: 202, 203 as cited in Jarrow, 1999: 22). Al-Diyaf offers a lengthy defense of polygamy against the objections of Roches, and he sees the number of children as "an effect of the divine will and he estimates that man should not be deprived of the possibility of begetting children in his old age, hence the justification of polygamy when the first wife is no longer apt to bear children" (al-Shanufi, 1968: 73,76-77 as cited in Raccagni, 1983: 49). Besides, he reminds the Qur'anic rule that a husband should treat equally each wife, against the possibility of rivalry and jealousy among wives (Raccagni, 1983: 49).

When it comes to Roches' seventh question about beating of women, al-Diyaf determines woman's obligation of obeying the rules of marriage. He explains that beating was the third level of chastening the wife. "First, she should be reprimanded; second, she should be sent to her room, and relatives should be sent to counsel her; then, and unless first two solutions serve, the husband could resort to physical punishment. Al-Diyaf reminds that the Qur'an counseled men to be just, not brutal" (Jarrow, 1999: 23).

He is also clear about Roches' eighth question about the heavy chores and domestic working of women. He emphasizes the natural division of labour as men work outside, and women work at home for their domestic tasks (Raccagni, 1983: 52). Al-Diyaf points out that, "Muslim women are busy spinning and weaving wool, and sewing and embroidering besides ordinary housework. Even the richest among them sew their clothing and that worn by their family" (al-Shanufi, 1968: 84 as cited in Raccagni, 1983: 52).

Women from upper class may have servants, but it was still expected from them to manage house works, servants and other chores. That was an accepted situation. Because of the period's social structure; woman who were not interested in house works were blamed by their surrounding. Besides, that would be a reason for a beating by their husbands.

When it comes to Roches' question about the veil, al-Diyaf explains that the veil was adapted both for ethical and religious reasons. He exemplifies these reasons as preventing indiscreet appearance that could excite covets of men; protect a woman's modesty, and reinforce morality. Besides, he states that

Bedouin woman were not veiled, since their nature barred them from immorality and unethical attitude (Jarrow, 1999: 27).

Al Diyaf bases his answer on the verses of the Qur'an about Roches eleventh and twelfth questions about divorce. He mentions the legality of *talaq* (a type of divorce that is stated in the Qur'an), determines advantages of this institution both for men and women and notes that *talaq* was permitted if circumstances ascend in the marriage that makes the continuation of the marriage impossible for the couple (Jarrow, 1999: 29).

Finally, al-Diyaf agrees on the rights of women to go out to perform their devotions at a mosque, in his answer to Roches' question about women's praying at a mosque. But, he finds it "preferable for discreet women to pray at home rather than go out often" (al-Shanufi, 1968: 97 as cited in Raccagni, 1983: 53).

As it can easily be understood, al-Diyaf's views about Muslim women are highly conservative. It would be unfair to reproach al-Diyaf for his dry rebuttal of Roches, his is the through the sieve of his mind to express their gist to a lay spirit (Raccagni, 1983: 56).

In sum, as the point of destination is more important; al-Diyaf's *Risalah* is an appropriate starting point for the modernization process of women in Tunisia since it treats women issue. Although it does not offer a change in the women's status, it is an important document since it notes down the women's situation.

2.2 COLONIAL PERIOD

Reformers of Tunisia were attempting to perform military and economic modernization at the turn of the 19th century.

But the prodigality of reforms started with Ahmed Bey and continued with his successors led to bankruptcy, to the creation of a financial commission in 1868 which virtually made of Tunisia a protectorate of Britain, France and Italy, and finally to the establishment of the French Protectorate in 1881 once the British gave France *carte blanche* in Tunisia (Moore, 1970: 26).

In 1881, colonial period of France over Tunisia started.

During the colonial period, the Arab world was in an intellectual and cultural renaissance. When western ideas and life style came so closer with the French settlers, ideas of nationalism and modernization accelerated among Arab countries as an unexpected consequence of the colonization.

In Tunisia, besides other issues, women issue turned to a matter of discussion. Women's education was discussed in press by the reformers; and first two decades of colonialism ended with the opening of first formal school for girls at the beginning of 1900s in Tunisia.

Under the light of these, colonial period until the establishment of the Neo-Destour Party and women issue after the establishment of Neo-Destour Party will be evaluated.

2.2.1 Colonial Period until the Establishment of Neo-Destour Party

2.2.1.1 Establishment of French Protectorate

Foreign occupation of Tunisia took place at a time when a process of construction of new educational facilities after the analyzing of Western models had started. But, these initial institutions were too young and inadequate to reach to the aim of building up a nation against the foreign domination.

At the beginning of the colonial period, nationalists of Tunisia were aware of the situation that they should adopt the material knowledge of the Western culture to cope with the West itself. They tried to change and advance the level of general instruction. But, public educational system was inadequate and citizens interested in the subject had to meet to form their own private schools.

Educational ideas in Tunisia were influenced by Egyptian progress in education. In Egypt, the association of “*al-Urwah wa al-Wuthqa*” was founded by Shayk Muhammad ‘Abduh in 1884 (Raccagni, 1983: 109). The association took a certain stand on behalf of education of both boys and girls. Mohammed ‘Abduh, who had reformist ideas about women issue, mentioned that learning was not limited to religious matters and thought that what women need to know changes by time, place, and circumstances (Raccagni, 1983: 109).

Shayk Muhammad ‘Abduh made visits to Tunisia. His defense of education both for men and women, and his stand against polygamy affected Tunisian intellectuals of the period. In August 1888, four of the intellectuals who met with Muhammad Abduh had founded the first non-official Tunisian newspaper in Arabic, *al-Hadira*, to inform the public in matters of religion, politics, history and literature (Raccagni, 1983: 110-111). Following the foundation of the newspaper, brain-trust of *al-Hadira*, ‘Ali Abu-Shushah, al-Bashir Sfar, Muhammad Ibn al-Khujah and Muhammad al-Sanusi, had received authorization from Resident General of Tunisia, René Millet, to found the “*Khalduniyah*” (named after the famous Arab social philosopher Ibn Khaldoun, born in Tunis in 1332) society in order to widen the general culture of the

Zaytunah students (Raccagni, 1983: 111). Shortly after, the *Khalduniyah* society became an important cultural center all over the Maghrib. Members of the *Khalduniyah* society didn't discourse on the women's issue. But, foundation of this society was an important landmark for the issue since it was the first Tunisian attempt for the establishment of a civil society concerning the modernization idea (Raccagni, 1983: 111). It became possible to speak about women's emancipation just after such improvements.

It is important here to mention two Tunisian intellectuals of the period whose names could be counted as the contributors to the progress the idea of emancipation of women: Hamzah Fath Allah and Muhammad al-Sanusi, who were affected from Muhammad Abduh's ideas and was among the brain trust of al-Hadirah.

Hamzah Fath Allah (1851-1918) was Egyptian by birth. In his "*Bakurat al-Kalam 'ala huquq al-nisa' fi al-Islam*", he quotes the sources relevant to a specific topic on family matters, then the 'hadith' and traditions connected with it, without giving much of his personal opinion" (Fath Allah, 1308 (i.e. 1891) as cited in Raccagni, 1983: 69). "The interesting point in Fath Allah is the obligation of the husband to be just toward his wives, or else to marry only one" (Fath Allah, 1308 (i.e. 1891) as cited in Raccagni: 70).

Muhammad al-Sanusi also touched on this subject. In 1897 he wrote *Epanouissement de la fleur ou étude sur la femme dans l'Islam* (Breaking the Chains Over Women's Rights in Islam), which was a letter in which he urges a husband to feed and clothe his wife, and to provide her servants to spare her the

burden of doing housework and breast feeding her children (Ben-Youssef, 2002: 128-129).

He explains that “his reason for making the study was to answer questions put to him by prominent people about the rights of women in the Muslim religion” (al-Sanusi, 1897: 11 as cited in Jarrow, 1999: 35). He writes that, women are flowers that had to be protected. He also makes explanations about the polygamy and the veil. He accepts the possibility of polygamy if the man has valid reasons and can be just towards each woman . When it comes to veil, similar to al-Diyaf, he writes that an honest woman coming from a good family should veil herself in order to prevent jealousy (Jarrow, 1999: 36). In sum, he comes to same point with al-Diyaf, and states that the main duty of a woman is good care of her family and house.

But, al-Sanusi’s description of Tunisian women is a point of change in women’s issue. Because, different from al-Diyaf, he mentions the importance and advantage of women’s education. He regarded education “as an advantage for girls as long as they were properly supervised” (al-Sanusi, 1897:34 as cited in Jarrow, 1999: 36). He also states that “an educated woman could help her husband and hold a profession, with the reservation that she should share her salary with him” (Raccagni, 1983: 72).

So, it is possible to state that after that period, women’s education came on agenda and started to be discussed. This discussion will intensify during the nationalist opposition period and will result with the women’s emancipation idea. From this point on, it is necessary to examine women’s situation within the Tunisian education system, especially in the colonial period.

2.2.1.2 Women's Education

French presence in Tunisia also affected education system besides other areas. When a general overview of Tunisian education system is made, it is seen that the education system was based on two institutions in the early 19th century.

Primary education was given in the *Kuttab*; and secondary and higher education was given in the *Zaytunah*. The *Zaytunah*, founded in 1283 as an education unit under the Zaytunah Mosque, was the most important school for Tunisian intellectuals (Natsis, 1998: 67). Besides these two institutions, by the effect of reform policies, the Polytechnical School of Bardo was created by Ahmed Bey in 1838 (Natsis, 1998: 67). Apart from the Tunisian schools, there were the European and Jewish settler's schools. Italian and French Schools were the most important because of the influence of the two countries in Tunisia (Sraieb, 1995 as cited in Natsis, 1998: 68). These schools were for European students.

When the colonial period started, the *Direction Générale de l'Enseignement* (General Office of Instruction) was established by the French. It was in charge of all matters concerning education in Tunisia (Natsis, 1998: 68). During the colonial period, various types of schools were established and the traditional system continued to be untouched. Besides these, schools based on French education system in which Tunisians also had access were set up (Natsis, 1998: 69). So, a Franco-Arab school structure, in which a mixed education based on Arabic and French was given, took shape.

In sum, during the colonial period, there were three types of schools: Traditional Arab schools, French schools and Franco-Arab schools.

Actually, the first European based school was opened in 1831 by Popeo Suleman, an Italian emigré, with twenty five students. In 1845, Ahmed Bey's boarding school was turned to St. Louis College and received subsidies both from the king of France, and bey of Tunisia (Jarrow, 1999: 95).

In 1875 Khayr al-Din Pasha founded Sadiki College. Sadiki College soon turned to the most important educational institution of the country. Its establishment was an answer to the Western culture's effect over the country. Khayr al-Din Pasha had intended Sadiki College to be a modern secondary school, disseminating a bilingual culture with the new sciences, as well as Arabic studies (Natsis, 1998: 70-71). The idea succeeded beyond Khayr al-Din Pasha's dreams, for the Franco-Arab education of Sadiki provided the beginnings of cultural synthesis for the new nation that the Neo-Destour Party to represent (Moore, 1965: 23). While a modern education was given in the Sadiki College, the *Zaytunah* was the center of traditional Islamic education and still was a center for many Tunisian intellectuals until First World War (Natsis, 1998: 71-72).

After First World War, with the French language becoming more important, many people started looking towards more modernist ways. "The *Zaytunah*'s importance diminished, as most of its students were of impoverished (largely rural) parentage or were not qualified to enter the better modern schools. They constituted an intellectual subproletariat that political parties could use" (Moore, 1965: 23)

Those changes in the education affected women issue from different points. First of all, women's education in a modern system became a current

discussion issue. Secondly, students graduated from those schools, Habib Bourguiba being one of them, played major roles in women's emancipation during the nationalist opposition and then independence periods.

In such a case, since the important changes happened differently from the pre-colonial period, it is appropriate here to examine women's education during the colonial period:

The French presence in Tunisia increased both Tunisian men's and women's awareness of the vast differences between the freedom and opportunities given to French women and those available to the Tunisian women. One of the key factors of change and the promotion of these ideas was the establishment of the European Franco-Arab schools throughout the country, along with the influx of French colons to all parts of Tunisia (Jarrow, 1999: 92).

In the pre-colonial period, there was very limited education for Muslim girls in the public sphere. There were local schools (*mu'allima*) for Tunisian girls from the middle or lower class families where they were taught about primary household skills and raising children (Jarrow, 1999: 92). Curriculum of these schools was changing from region to region.

Jarrow (1999: 92) writes that, upper-class families had several options on the other hand: they could send their daughters to Italian teachers to learn European embroidery or lace making; to French or English instructors for a more sophisticated education; or they could hire a local *mu'addib* to come home to teach the Qur'an to their daughters.

According to Moore, (1970) the French set up numerous *lycées* to educate the French-speaking population following the establishment of colonial rule. As it is mentioned above, Tunisians were also allowed to attend. But, all courses were taught in French, with only secondary classes available in Arabic

and Italian (Jarrow, 1999: 93). During this first phase of colonialism, 31 Muslim girls and 3782 Muslim boys were attending these French primary schools according to Micaud's citation of 1899 statistics (Micaud, 1964: 14).

The first private school for girls was created by the sisters of *St. Joseph de l'Apparition*. The school, *the Lycée Jules Ferry*, was founded mainly for European girls (Jarrow, 1999: 96). After the beginning of French protectorate similar schools were opened all over the country.

In 1900, as one of the first attempts of young Tunisian Muslim girls' education, *l'Ecole des Jeunes Filles Musulmanes de la Rue du Pacha* (Rue du Pacha School for Young Muslim Girls), the first European based school for Muslim girls, was founded by Mme. Louise-René Millet, wife of the French Resident-General (Natsis, 1998: 72)¹¹. It was difficult to recruit young Muslim girls at first. Many parents were apprehensive about their daughters receiving a Europeanized education. There were only twelve students in the beginning. In 1940, this number reached about 500 (Natsis, 1998: 72). In general, students were French more than Tunisians. According to Jarrow (1999: 98), there were two possible reasons of this low number of Tunisian students: "First one is that, Tunisian families might have preferred to educate their girls at home under the tutelage of a religious leader. Secondly, many Tunisian families might have believed that since education was free, it was not only inferior in quality, but could be harmful to their daughters."

¹¹ According to Jarrow's citation from Bakalti's "*L'enseignement féminin*", school took its name in 1912, when moved into a new building in *Rue du Pacha* (a place in Tunisia) (Jarrow, 1999: 102).

Instructions were not very detailed and extended at the Rue Du Pacha School. Actually, it was preparing well educated wives who will be better enabled to raise and educate their children. But on the other hand, it should be stated that the school introduced the West to these girls. They had been taught French language, and so had an idea about culture, society and ideas of the Western world. Thus, this school can be seen as one of the first steps towards opening of other schools and modernization of women (Jarrow, 1999: 100).

In 1908-1909, three schools specifically for Muslim girls were opened at Nabeul, Sousse and Kairowan (Jarrow, 1999: 101). As a requirement of the French government program, in accordance with the structure of traditional Qur'anic schools for boys, schools for girls were also founded. In 1924 these schools under the Director of Public Education, offered courses for girls in literary Arabic, the Qur'an, and French. The aim of the establishment of these schools was to remove the differences between the traditional Qur'anic schools and the Franco-Arab schools (Jarrow, 1999: 102).

During the same period, "nationalist Young Tunisians (1898-1912) was formed by a group of educated young men. They demanded from French that they could be loyal to the regime only if they have a better position in it" (Le Tunisien, 30 May 1907 as cited in Jarrow, 1999: 36). Responses to this demand came from Victor de Carnières in his article "*Jeunes Tunisiens*" in *Le Colon Français*. Carnières was criticizing them about women issue. At the same time, he was addressing the point of departure to start modernization by criticizing this issue. He wrote that:

At the risk of offending you, we are forced to declare that
you are not our equals; perhaps you will become so later, in three

or four centuries...On one hand you men adopt western dress, while you impose the laws of the harem on your women. What relations, what intimacy, what ties can possibly be established between two societies when one treats its women as slaves while in the other the women reign supreme? (Victor de Carnières, 'Jeunes Tunisiens', *Le Colon Français* (5 January 1905) as cited in Jarrou, 1999: 36-37).

Education of young women was an important subject for Young Tunisians since they thought that better educated women could raise better children. But, they did not focus on women's emancipation¹² issue. About the education, they stated that a young Muslim woman should take an education in Arabic and learn literature, moral principles and the history of Islam.

As it can be seen, women's education was not an "easy" subject in Tunisia. There were objections from various groups. Some objections to women's education came from conservatives. They stated their suspicions on whether it was possible to trust women with knowledge that can be misused by them (Raccagni, 1983: 172). Another problem complicated the education issue in Tunisia was French efforts to impose their own culture. Raccagni (1983: 173) states that "French were zealously multiplying their schools in an effort to assimilate the important foreign minorities in Tunisia: Italians, Maltese, Spaniards and others, who were to be granted French citizenship". According to this, foreigners (except the Italians), had no choice but to send their children to these French schools; and "the natives, Muslims and Jews, who were graciously allowed the use of these educational facilities too, should make their material and intellectual conditions enable them to attend the same" (Raccagni, 1983: 173-174).

¹² "Emancipation" is used here as: Being equal with men in front of laws and regulations, having equal rights with men and having equal access to public services.

However, it is required to underline that those French policies led to improvement of Tunisian nationalists' thoughts about women's education and led to a fertile ground to discussions during the nationalist opposition period.

2.2.1.3 Women Issue during the Nationalist Opposition Period

After the failure of the Young Tunisians, a new political formation emerged in Tunisia in 1920s. Within the aftermath of the First World War, young activists of Tunisia established the Destour (means 'constitution' in Arabic) Party in 1920. The importance of Destour Party was their open discourse about independence.

The Destour achieved neither independence nor a constitution (Anderson, 1986: 164). As Anderson (1986:165-166) writes, unlike their Jeunes Tunisiens predecessors, however, "they had seen advantages in broad-based organization, and although they themselves proved unable to utilize it, the Destour leaders laid the grand work for a mass movement in opposition to the Protectorate". They left their place to the neo-Destour party within a short time.

The Destour Party did not touch directly on the women's issue. But, it was that period in which women's education, abolition of the veil and women's involvement in public life were deeply and feverishly discussed.

Following the establishment of Destour Party in 1920, women issue took a new course. While women's education was being discussed, abolition of the veil was added to this subject as a main discussion matter.

Since 1920, in various newspapers, but especially in "*La Tunisie Martyre*", the Arabic newspaper "*al-Hadira*", and in "*Tunis Socialiste*", the

official newspaper of the French socialists, various articles about women's education and abolition of the veil were published (Jarrow, 1999).

The first unofficial newspaper in Arabic, *al-Hadira* was founded in 1888, as already mentioned. Attitude of the newspaper was giving information and educating the public about modernization. *Al-Hadira* played an important role for the emancipation of women with the articles touching the need of education for women. Brown (1964: 20) evaluates "*al-Hadira* as the newspaper might be deemed the first steps toward female emancipation in Tunisia."

Jarrow (1999: 38-39) writes that, "beginning in early 1920s, articles began to appear in *Tunis Socialiste* concerning the need for education of the Muslim women and pointing out how women's liberation was closely connected to the progress of the country."

Articles expressing ideas about women's education and abolition of the veil were not the only developments of the period. There were discussions at the public meetings. At the first meeting of the *Tribune Libre de l'Essor* in January 1929, discussion topic was "For or Against the Veil". One of the speakers, Mme. Habibah al-Munshari came to the meeting unveiled (Jarrow, 1999: 45). That was a courageous action for the period and caused a big debate among the participants. Mme. Habibah al-Munshari made a speech about the difficulties for Muslim women and against the veil. According to her:

Islam has awakened to a modern day of life; in Turkey, in Egypt, tyrannical and archaic customs have crumbled which have kept Muslim women in an interior state. It is time that North African women began to let in fresh air. The women must free herself from centuries of passiveness. She must be free from the veil, which neither protects her nor gains respect for her.

Women must take their just and harmonious place in the home, that of loyal spouse, or a mother sufficiently educated so as to assure that she will be able to provide her children with their moral and physical needs ('*A la Tribune de l'Essor: La femme Musulmane de demain, pour ou le contre le voile?*' *La dépêche Tunisienne* (10 January 1929) as cited in Jarrow, 1999: 45).

There were lots of participants coming from different areas at the meeting. Habib Bourguiba, a young lawyer and journalist, spoke at the meeting and stated that veil was a sign of Tunisian individuality and if that important sign would be abolished, this situation will cause to damage of Tunisian personality (Raccagni, 1983). Another speaker was Joachim Durel, Secretary General of the Socialist Union (CGT). He made a speech determining that there was not a Tunisian individuality. Bourguiba answered him that there was a Tunisian individuality; it had social and ethnic bases, and veil was one of these bases (Raccagni, 1983).

A few days later, Mohammed Nomane, wrote an article in *Tunis Socialiste* discussing all those speeches. He stood against Bourguiba's ideas and supported the abolition of the veil.

Bourguiba also wrote an article titled "*Le Voile*" in *l'Etendard Tunisien*, a newspaper founded by a Destourian (Jarrow, 1999: 48). He criticized Nomane's 'secular' ideas. Also he formulated a hypothesis. As Raccagni (1983: 188-189) states; Bourguiba determined that the veil would experience the same fate as the male Arab costume in his formulation: "that is to say, it would slowly be phased out in favor of European dress. He even dared to predict that the veil will eventually disappear when Tunisian women will not feel embarrassed."

This article caused a series of debating articles between Bourguiba and Nomane. In an article, Bourguiba declared that veiling was a part and sign of

Tunisian identity since ages. Nomane wrote another article against Bourguiba's ideas and stated that:

Abolition of the veil was not a question of Europeanization, Frenchification, or forgetting one's ancestor's, but a question of individual liberation. Nomane stated that, supporters of the veil had no confidence in women and had no respect for the liberty of the individual (Muhammad Nomane, "*Lettre Ouverte a Mademoiselle*", *Tunis Socialiste* (25 January 1929), as cited in Jarrow, 1999: 50).

This debate continued with various articles of the sides. The articles were published in Arabic and French newspapers; in *al-Nahda*, *al-Sawab*, *al-Nadim*, *Lisan al-Shab* and *L'Etendard Tunisien* (Jarrow, 1999).

When Bourguiba's policies after the independence are taken into consideration, his discourse in favor of the veil during the pre-independence period can be explained as his effort for the organization of a Tunisian nationalist identity against the foreign domination. According to him, "abolition of the veil" issue emerged under the foreigners' effect, and it was not an issue really supported and accepted by Tunisian women (Raccagni, 1983). Also he did not state the veiling issue as a religious obligation. His discourse can be evaluated as political more than religious. After the independence, once the French domination over the country was removed, one of the first actions of Bourguiba became the abolition of the veil.

In 1930, al-Tahar al-Haddad¹³ wrote his book *Imra'atuna fi al-Sharia wa al-mujtama* (Our Women in Islamic Law and Society). With this book, the issue took a new direction. It will not be wrong to state that al-Haddad's work became the turning point for the women's modernization process.

¹³ Sometimes written as "al-Tahir al-Haddad" in English.

2.2.1.4 A Turning Point: al-Tahar al-Haddad

Born in 1899 in Tunis into a conservative family, al-Tahar al-Haddad was sent to *Zaytunah*. After his graduation in 1920, he worked as secretary of the *Société de Bienfaisance Indigène* (Native Benevolent Association) (Raccagni, 1983: 192). He was occupied with trade in a perfume market at the time.

During the days in which French policies and dominance over Tunisia increased dramatically, he joined the Destour Party. When the *Union Générale des Travailleurs Tunisiens* (UGTT) (The General Confederation of Tunisian Workers) was founded by Muhammad Ali, the Union activist, al-Haddad joined to the organization and started working at its propaganda and organization committee (Jarrow, 1999: 57). But, UGTT could not be successful since their activities were disturbing French protectorate policies. Muhammad Ali was sent to a ten-year exile and al-Haddad started to investigating the reasons behind their failure (Raccagni, 1983: 193).

He wrote a book about the subject: *al-'Umal al-Tunisiyun wa-zuhur al-harakah al-niqabiyah* (The Tunisian Workers and the Surge of the Union Movement) (Raccagni, 1983: 193). Haddad explained the reasons of their failure as ignorance and lack of education of workers because of their poverty¹⁴. While investigating the reasons of ignorance and poverty of the workers in the Tunisian society, he realized that female part of the society was in a deep

¹⁴ However, the UGTT could survive during the nationalist opposition period and remained as a major organization after the establishment of independence. As Moore (1964: 86-87) states, in the ten years prior to independence, the UGTT developed into an effective representative of workers' interests and was to a certain extent respected as such by the colonial authorities. Tunisian women also worked in the UGTT as active members in the following years of its establishment.

ignorance and was not able to defend their rights (Raccagni, 1983). Since then, he wrote articles, stood against the veiling, and defended women's education.

But, the real addition of al-Haddad to women's emancipation is his book *Imra'atuna fi al-Sharia wa al-mujtama* (Our women in Islamic Law and Society) which was completed in 1929 (Raccagni, 1983). Al-Haddad's work was composed of two parts. In the first part of the book, al-Haddad examines the rights of women in Islam and argues that Islam gives noteworthy rights to women (Jarrow, 1999: 60). In the second part of his book, he makes a sociological evaluation of women's situation in modernizing Tunisian society, their lack of education and supports abolition of veil. Besides, he discusses obligations surrounding women's life (Jarrow, 1999: 60).

Al-Haddad called for changes in women's status and improvements in women's education as a way of making women better citizens, better wives, and better mothers. "The point was not primarily to emancipate women for their own sake, but to make them able to contribute more to the stability of families and able to educate better the future generations of Tunisians" (Charrad, 2001: 216).

Furthermore, as Jarrow cites from al-Haddad's book, he asserted that the traditions surrounding polygamy, repudiation, and marriage were not religiously motivated, but were pre-Islamic customs merely permitted by Islam (Jarrow, 1999: 59). He also wrote that the Prophet had emphasized that education both for males and females was obligatory. Moreover, he stated that veil has no religious justification, it was an obstacle for the improvement of women, and it should be abolished (Jarrow, 1999: 59).

All those ideas were too much progressive for the period and became intolerable for the conservatives. Al-Haddad was faced with a strong opposition:

The High Council of *Zaytunah* forbade the book and then, al-Haddad has been named as a heretic and nonbeliever. Besides, lots of criticisms against al-Haddad were written in different newspapers. For instance, Shaykh ‘Umar Ibn Ibrahim al Ibrahim al-Birri al-Madani, who came from Medina and was a member of the *Zaytunah* council, pointed out that a woman was not equal to men, and women had no public role that they were needed to be unveiled (Jarrow, 1999: 81). He stated that, al-Haddad was at fault when he wrote that the Qur’an suggested women’s equality with men.

Another one who was against al-Haddad’s ideas was Muhammad al-Salah Ibn Murad, a teacher at *Zaytunah*. He wrote a book against al-Haddad’s book after al-Haddad’s book was banned. Ibn Murad thought that al-Haddad’s aim was not to defend women but to damage tenets of Islam and to pull Muslims closer to Christianity (Jarrow, 1999: 82).

When it is looked to Bourguiba’s manner about the subject, it is seen that Bourguiba himself did not make any comments about the issue even he stood against the abolition of the veil. Besides, he acted his followers free to support al-Haddad’s ideas if they wanted.

Even a large number of people were against al-Haddad’s ideas; there were also supporters to him. For instance, Mahmud Zarruq and Dr. Cohen-Hadria wrote articles supporting al-Haddad’s book (Jarrow, 1999).

Al-Haddad touched on the women’s emancipation issue at a time when French and Western based reforms were being seen as detrimental to Tunisian

individuality. Al-Haddad died in 1935, shortly after these developments, at a time when Tunisian nationalist opposition accelerated. It is necessary to state that, he became able to affect the ideas of the founders of the independent Tunisia about women's emancipation.

2.3 ESTABLISHMENT OF THE NEO-DESTOUR PARTY¹⁵

In the late 1920s, a new generation of Tunisian elites emerged after Sadiqi College had started to educate successful boys from poor families. Those successful students were coming from the country yard of Tunisia and were taking education at the Sadiki College. After their graduation, they formed the new elite generation. Habib Bourguiba and other founders of independent Tunisia were among these elites.

“The Young Tunisians had been from the old ruling Mamluk aristocracy, the Destour leadership was predominantly from the bourgeoisie of the capital” (Anderson, 1986: 167). It became the Neo-Destour Party elites who achieved the goal of independence.

The son of a retired lieutenant in the Beylical Guard, Habib Bourguiba was born in 1903 at Monastir, one of the Sahel's most ancient cities. He went to Sadiqi College's elementary-school annex, then to Sadiqi College and the *Lycée Carnot* (Moore, 1964: 74). He joined the Destour Party in 1922, and went to Paris to study law two years later. He returned to Tunisia in 1927 as a lawyer with his French wife and son.

¹⁵ In October 1964, Destourian Socialism was approved as the party's official ideology. In keeping with this new image, the party was renamed as the Destourian Socialist Party (*Parti Socialiste Destourien*) (Anderson, 1986).

When he returned to Tunisia, he became an active contributor to nationalist newspapers, and in 1932, with the small circle of fellow university graduates who were to become the nucleus of the Neo-Destour Party, he formed his own newspaper, *L'Action Tunisienne* (Moore, 1964: 75).

In 1933 Bourguiba and his followers were elected to Executive Committee of the Destour Party; and they resigned in the same year to establish a new political formation. A party congress was held on 2 March 1934 in Ksar Hellal, a Sahil (shore) town. The new party took the name Neo-Destour, since their claim was that they were true Destouriens (Anderson, 1986: 172). The Neo-Destour was the first political organization to be truly open to Tunisians of all regions and classes (Moore, 1964: 83). Because of this approach, the Neo-Destour could find support from all over the country. This support, their strong and fast organization, and their policies for the independence disturbed French authorities. By September 1934, the Neo-Destour Political Bureau members were arrested and sent into internal exile in the southern military regions of the country (Anderson, 1986: 173). Since that date, a period of exiles and imprisonments started for Bourguiba. He spent ten of the following twenty years in French prisons (1934-36, 1938-43, 1952-54) (Moore, 1964: 75).

After the establishment of the Neo-Destour Party, actual armed nationalist opposition against French protectorate started. Tunisia was rebelling against France and bloody conflicts were happening in capital city Tunis and all over the country.

Under these conditions, no improvements could be achieved in social, educational and cultural areas. But, women issue remained as an important

subject. Women played important roles during the nationalist opposition period. For instance, when Bourguiba and his associates were arrested, women participated to demonstrations against these arrests. Besides, they took place in the women organizations. Women organizations of Tunisia plays an important role in the women's emancipation issue during both pre and post independence periods.

2.3.1 Women's Participation to Nationalist Opposition and Women Organizations

By the end of Second World War, many Tunisian families started to see the education of their daughters' as important for their marriage life. Even if it happened because of this approach, an educated class of women formed. They were these women who took active roles in the political organizations during the nationalist opposition and during the establishment of young independent Tunisia.

At that period, some women did individual attempts for women's emancipation. For instance, Radhiyah Haddad, chief of the first Muslim summer camp for girls, went to the camp unveiled and even showed herself in a bathing-suit at the Tunis seashore, although her father insisted adamantly that she retain her veil when going out into the street (Raccagni, 1983: 261).

Besides these, when hostilities between France and Tunisia emerged, women suffered as both active nationalists and as passive victims. For instance, as active nationalists, "Asma Ibn al-Khujah, Shadhiliyah Buzgaru Khadijah Ibn Ibrahim and Asiya Ghallab were condemned to one year in prison because of participation in the public manifestation of January 1952" (Racagni, 1983: 263).

There was even a princess among the arrested Tunisian women. Princess Zakiyah, wife of former health minister, was arrested because of the funds devoted to the purchase of guns by the Neo-Destour Party (Raccagni, 1983: 263).

It is important here to state that, few women joined directly to armed national struggle. In spite of this, most women supporting nationalist opposition joined to women's organizations and the UGTT.

When we look at major women organizations of the pre-independence period we see that, *The Union Musulmane des Femmes de Tunisie* (UMFT- Union of Tunisian Muslim Women) was established in 1936 and interested in women's education as Tunisia's first women organization. Its members, although of a religious orientation, shared many of the ideas of al-Tahar al-Haddad (Brand, 1998: 202).

The next major women's organization to emerge was the *Union des Femmes de Tunisie* (UFT- Union of Tunisian Women) founded by women from the Tunisian Communist Party (PCT) (Brand, 1998: 203). There were also French women inside the PCT group. But as time changed, PCT turned to a nationalist organization. As a result, UFT's members became mostly Tunisian (Brand, 1998: 203). They were mostly interested in social issues and organizing labor.

Nationalist struggle against France ended with France's acceptance of Tunisia's independence on March 20, 1956. Independence was as much a turning point in the Tunisian women's history as it was for Tunisian history.

2.4 WOMEN'S EMANCIPATION IN THE INDEPENDENT TUNISIA

With the promulgation of Independence, an accelerated modernization process started in Tunisia. Country was still a monarchy until 1957, the Bey was Mohammed Lamine Pacha, and the prime minister was Habib Bourguiba. In 1957, Tunisia was made a republic, and Bourguiba became the President.

But, Bourguiba did not wait until the establishment of republic for starting his modernization project. He chose women's emancipation¹⁶ as the starting point. Bourguiba was already deeply committed to improving the status and rights of women since he had witnessed first hand the humiliation and impoverishment of his divorced grandmother, and had seen the burden that his own birth placed on his mother, who was forty when he was born (Murphy, 2003: 172)

On August 13, 1956, five months after the independence, Tunisian Code of Personal Status (CPS) came into force (Charrad, 2001).

In this section, women's emancipation will be examined. For this aim, Code of Personal Status, development of the UNFT, new laws and regulations, changes and developments in the 1960s and 1980s will be analyzed. Then, the following Ben Ali period and Tunisian women in the 1990s will be discussed.

Since the study's main concern is to analyze women and modernization in Tunisia through selected Tunisian films, main points leading to the selection of scenes from the films will be detailed in this section and will be mentioned once again in the fourth chapter.

¹⁶ Women's emancipation exactly started with the independence period. Developments during the pre-independence period were steps towards women's emancipation.

2.4.1 WOMEN'S EMANCIPATION IN BOURGUIBA PERIOD

2.4.1.1 Promulgation of the Code of Personal Status

On August 13th, 1956, Tunisian Code of Personal Status (CPS) (*Majalla* in Arabic, *Code du Statut Personnel* in French) was promulgated. Following the promulgation of the CPS, 13th of August started to be celebrated as “Women’s Day” in the republic.

“The rapidity with which the new leadership under Bourguiba moved on the reform of family law after independence was not a surprise to most Tunisians involved in politics” (Charrad, 2001: 218-219). As examined above, women’s emancipation through abolition of the veil, education and modernization had long been discussed among Tunisian intellectuals.

The CPS was expressed as the part of a new period in Islamic thought. Initiators of it stated the continuing loyalty to the Islamic heritage. Charrad (2001: 222) states that, the CPS can be interpreted either way, as an Islamic body of legislation inspired by secular norms, or a secular body of legislation inspired by Islam.

The CPS was faced with opposition from different people at the beginning. The strongest oppositions came from Ben-Youssef, the leader of the defeated conservative faction; and from the *Zaytunah* (Charrad, 2001). But, opposition to government was not strong enough after the promulgation of the independence. As a result, the CPS came into force and was accepted by a wide number of societies.

An examination of the CPS and women’s emancipation process started with the promulgation of the CPS show that, the subject can be evaluated from

different points. Berry and Rinehart (1988: 106) state that, “the CPS struck directly at the patriarchal family system and sought to strengthen the nuclear family by outlawing polygny and by bringing divorce into the courts.” According to this, promulgation of the CPS led to the change of status of women in Tunisia. Brand (1998: 211) also states that, “Tunisian women have been fortunate to live under a set of legal codes that have promoted a number of rights that women elsewhere in the Arab and Islamic world still do not enjoy.”

The promulgation of the CPS was a political decision of Bourguiba, to accelerate the progress of the newly independent state. According to Jarrow (1992: 112), the aim was to restructure the social system of the Tunisian society, and Bourguiba’s main idea was that, women’s playing a more prominent role in the modernization of society and the country is essential for restructuring the social system. Moore (1964: 50) also comes to a similar conclusion with Jarrow. He underlines that, the socialists in Tunisia (he means Destouriens) were strong supporters of women’s emancipation, thinking that it is a necessary step toward effective modernization. Besides, Murphy (2003: 173) evaluates this policy as “mobilizing and emancipating women served a further purpose of generating support for the regime from a previously largely passive section of the population.”

Charrad touches a different side of the subject. She states that the CPS dropped the image of the family as an effective kinship group built on strong ties crisscrossing a community of male relatives (Charrad, 2001: 219). “It replaced it with the vision of a conjugal unit in which ties between spouses and between parents and children occupy a prominent place” (Charrad, 2001: 219).

In other words, the CPS - and other laws and regulations for the emancipation of women- decreased the privileges of kinship in family matters. Murphy (2003: 175) also touches on the same subject and states that, through the Code and through the subsequent legislation, the state transferred the balance of weight from the tribal or kin-based unit to the smaller unit of immediate family.

In sum, the CPS was not a response to a demand coming from below by a women's movement. Actually, it was a reform from above which was formed by the urban reformist elites, at the time of the independence and in the need of women's modernization. Nevertheless, it would be appropriate and necessary to see the important positive effects of the CPS to women's emancipation in Tunisia, a development which has not been seen elsewhere in the Middle East and North Africa (except Turkey).

The CPS brought new regulations to lots of subjects related with women, such as procedure of marriage, divorce, rights of women in the marriage, care of children and household, custody and adoption, polygamy and inheritance.

At that point, making a general overview of the CPS would not be wrong. Considering the marriage issue, the CPS sets twenty for men and seventeen for women as the minimum marriage ages. For the marriage below these ages, special authorization from the court was made necessary (Charrad, 2001: 225). Besides, marriage of a woman without her consent became impossible with the CPS. Divorce is another subject regulated in the CSP. According to this, divorce was made a matter to be controlled by the courts. Women were given equal rights with men in this matter (Charrad, 2001: 225). The CPS also gave women full legal capacity in the realm of contracts,

something they had not had before. Two of the CPS' articles were in contradiction with other laws. Article 803 forbids a married woman's engage her services without her husband's permission; and article 1481 restricts a woman's disposition of her belongings (Brand, 1998: 208). The CPS has a conservative tone about the rights of women in the marriage. The CPS determines woman's obedience to her husband. But on the other hand, the CPS gives women the responsibility for contributing to expenses of the household, if she has an income (Charrad, 2001: 226). The CPS made the mother and father equally responsible for the care of their children, if they were not divorced. In the case of divorce, the CPS initially stipulated that the son would remain with the mother until the age of seven, and the daughter until the age of nine, at which point the father could request the custody of his children (Charrad, 2001: 226). When it came to custody and adoption, the CPS made the well-being of the child as the determining factor for the custody. It abolished the passing of child to the father because of the nature of the kinship and besides, adoption was legalized with the CPS (Charrad, 2001: 226). Prohibition of polygamy is another important regulation of the CPS. Charrad (2001: 227) states that, "whether the law stated that polygamy was forbidden and punished, it did not declare a second marriage null and void. Presumably, someone could choose to incur the penalties and still marry more than one wife." A new law was promulgated in 1964 to regulate this uncertainty. According to this, second marriage of a man is null and void. The CPS brought important changes also about the inheritance. It modified the rules on inheritance so as to favor the spouse and female descendants over several agnatic relatives and it provided

clearly formulated legal documents that facilitated the work of the judicial and administrative systems (Charrad, 2001: 231).

CPS was a part of national goals. After its promulgation, conferences, seminars and meetings were held to clarify people's minds about it. The most important role in these developments was belong to a new women's organization, *Union Nationale des Femmes de Tunisie* (UNFT- National Union of Tunisian Women), which was established in entirely in 1958 through a fusion of the women's cells of Bourguiba's Neo-Destour party and the UMFT (Brand, 1998: 203). After the establishment of the UNFT, members of the UMFT and the UNF were faced with the dilemma of whether to associate with the UNFT or to stand against it. After a series of problems between the sides, the subject ended with the cease of the UMFT and the UNF. Shortly after the independence, the UNFT turned to a place where government's policies for women would be held and turned to the major women's organization of the country which would be the speaker of the government.

Actually, activities of the UNFT were directed from above. A small group of women loyal to the government and to party have controlled the UNFT. The organization's major role was following the state policy. Even bearing in mind the negative aspects of this kind of state feminism one should not underestimate the importance of the reforms Bourguiba introduced (Brand, 1998: 205). Since its establishment, the UNFT continues its activities as the major women's organization of Tunisia.

When we look at the following stages of modernization, it is seen that various laws and regulations for the emancipation of women were promulgated in the period starts from the independence and continues until the mid-seventies.

One of the most important developments referring to women's modernization is declaration of Tunisian women's suffrage on May 5, 1957 (Brand, 1998). They voted for the municipal elections at that date as the first women voting in an election in the Middle East and North Africa (except Turkey).

The other one is family planning project. Birth control measures were legalized in 1961, and in 1964 the government started family planning studies with the assistance of several foreign agencies; and Tunisia became the first Arab or African country -and the fifth nation in the world- adopting an official policy of birth control as a means of spurring socio-economic development (Berry and Rinehart, 1988: 111-112). With the Laws of July 6, 1965, and of September 26, 1973, abortion was made totally legal. That was a very radical change for the whole Middle East and North Africa.

Besides these, with the Law of November 4, 1958, the educational system was nationalized and the right of education for children of both sexes from every race, religion, or society was guaranteed (Jarrow, 1999: 124).

In terms of health and reproductive rights, women were given the right to health and in particular reproductive health with the 1959 Constitution; and the Law of January 9, 1961, authorized the import and sale of contraceptives (Jarrow, 1999: 122). Women were also considered to be equal to men in penal law of May 22, 1962. International conventions such as 1959 Convention on

Combating Discrimination in the Workplace and 1967 Convention on the Political Rights of Women were also ratified at that period (Murphy, 2003: 174).

Another area of concern for government was education of girls. As already mentioned, there was a mixed system of education in Tunisia with Qur'anic, French and Franco-Arab schools in the pre-independence period. After the nationalization of education in 1958, three levels of education were established with primary education level and different two levels of secondary education.

Education was seen by the government and the Neo-Destour Party as the key to women's participation in the work force and their contribution to the economic development of the country (Jarrow, 1999: 128). As a result of these policies, number of educated girls increased rapidly from one year to the next.

During this period, by the effect of policies for change, a social transformation started. One of the most important parts of this transformation was urbanization. Population of cities increased with quickly after independence. People immigrating to big cities met with new ideas and improved new life styles (Tessler, 1978: 144). Traditions, values and life styles changed. All these changes affected women greatly. Many women found employment opportunities and acquired a measure of financial independence previously unknown (Tessler, 1978: 144).

By the mid-1960s, this social transformation accelerated and a psychological and cultural revolution had been set in motion. "Studies show that exposure to these agents of change was associated with increased willingness to

reexamine traditional values and to adopt non-indigenous social codes, including ones pertaining to women” (Tessler, 1978: 145). Educational and employment opportunities for women increased rapidly, women joined to public life with an increasing public acceptance and started to work together with men.

This period of change continued until the seventies. In the 1970s, Tunisia’s success in planned transformation and change slowed down. This situation can be evaluated by the effects of increasing political crises, Bourguiba’s recurring illnesses, rivalry between his subordinates, and conflicts for the control of the PSD (*Parti Socialiste Destour* - Socialist Destour Party) (Tessler, 1978). These conflicts continued until Bourguiba’s recovery in the mid-seventies. But this period of chaos led to a change in country’s political culture. After the mid-seventies, the government had conservative economic policies and far less concern for planned social change. According to Tessler (1978: 146), Bourguiba and Prime Minister Hedi Nouira, former director of the National Bank, comparatively did not interested in restructuring traditional society. As a result of this, public support for the women’s emancipation, participation to public life and employment decreased to some degree in this period (Tessler, 1978).

For these reasons, period begins with the declaration of independence and continues to the mid-seventies, can be evaluated as the first important stage for women’s emancipation in the independent Tunisia. All these developments and promulgated laws in that period mark this first period. Second period starts with the mid-1970s and continues in the 1980s with new developments in Bourguiba’s modernization program.

2.4.1.2 Changes of the 1980s

Eventhough there was a change in the public opinion towards women's emancipation because of political confusion in the first half of 1970s, it seems that women's emancipation in the modernization project was not injured much. Period starting from the end of 1970s and continuing to the 1980s brought new changes in the laws and regulations, and developments in Tunisian society's structure.

First of all, the CPS was revised in February 1981. With the new changes, the CPS gave divorced women to compensation, improved custody and inheritance rights (Brand, 1998: 211-212). There were different views about the reasons behind this revision of the CPS. It was mentioned that, the CPS was revised when Bourguiba learned the difficult financial conditions of divorced and widowed women. Another one claims that, the CPS was revised to block the effect of increasing Islamist challenge in the country (Brand, 1998: 228). Actually, whatever the reason was, even if these new changes could not solve women's problems sufficiently, women's gaining new rights had positive effects to their modernization and participation to public life.

Other important laws and regulations of the period were 1985 Convention on Eradication of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and 1985 regulation which makes rape a punishable crime and offers hard penalties for this crime (Brand, 1998 and Murphy, 2003).

Besides the unquestionable effects of these laws and regulations, the most important development of the 1980s was the changing shape of state feminism (Brand, 1998: 220-246).

In the late 1970s, Bourguiba's CPS had been in effect since almost twenty years. During this time, women's education, employment and participation to public life increased in noteworthy numbers. When the 1980s started, the first generation of women grown under the effect of CPS had reached to maturity and started to seek new ways for the women's improvement.

In 1978, a group of educated, independent women came together around a study group for discussing women rights. They established the *Club d'Etudes de la Condition des Femmes* (CECF- Study Club for the Condition of Women), which will be seen as a challenge to the control of the UNFT.

Among its goals, the club sought to make Tunisian women aware of their continuing oppression despite the formal rights they enjoyed, to aid them in recognizing their intellectual capacities and the role they could therefore play in the country's economic and cultural development, and to demonstrate that the women's struggle needed to be situated, not vis-à-vis men, but vis-à-vis the social structures that permitted the concentration and the maintenance of power in men's hand (Brand, 1998: 221).

From October 1979, they began to hold regular meetings for their discussions. In these meetings, they decided to establish sub committees to examine and improve different issues concerning women (Brand, 1998: 222). Besides these, "they held debates, showed films, and sponsored exhibitions of paintings, books, and posters in addition to their closed club discussions" (Brand, 1998: 222). After a time, conflicts among the group members increased about determining the objectives of the group. Some participants supported the idea of preserving the group's present structure, while others endorsed the idea of widening the group and starting political activities (Brand, 1998: 222).

Besides, men started to react against their activities. The CECF meetings continued until 1982, but the club had lost its vitality (Brand, 1998: 222).

Even the CECF could not survive, when the control of the UNFT over the country's women movements was taken into consideration, requirement of such a new grouping for further and independent women movement would be better understood.

Further women organizations followed the CECF. In 1982, by the effect of the idea of formation a woman's labor union, *Commission Syndicale d'Etudes de la Condition de la Femme Travailleur* (CSE) was established as a branch of the UGTT (Brand, 1998: 223). Actually, even if the CSE held seminars and organizations for women workers, it was seen as a challenge by the UNFT. Following the closure of the UGTT¹⁷ in 1985, the activities of the CSE were ended.

Another women group emerged at that period was *Femmes Democrat*es (FD - Democrat Women). Although they first organized in 1982, they started to come together regularly in 1983. They criticized the government during 1984 bread riots, and started to publish a journal, *Nissa*, in the same year. From the first issue the women faced the dilemma of how to position themselves vis-à-vis the CPS (Brand, 1998: 224). Besides the financial problems, they disagreed over which questions they could or should address, in what way, and how to make such decisions (Brand, 1998: 224). Another problem was the lack of government support. Under these conditions, activities of the FD and

¹⁷ The UGTT was started to be seen as a challenge and competitor by the government in the 1980s. The result of these developments became the closure of the UGTT (Brand, 1998).

publication of *Nissa* could not survive for long. Last issue of the *Nissa* was published in 1987 (Brand, 1998: 224).

Eventhough these independent women groupings as a challenge to the control of the UNFT could not last, they played an important role in making women more conscious and contributed to country's political culture. All these developments led to a general loss of control of the UNFT, though it has remained as the major women's organization of the country.

When we look at Tunisian society's life in the 1980s under the light of these political developments, important changes are seen. First of all, nuclear family structure was accepted in Tunisia. "Surveys in the 1980s showed that the ideal family size was six among one half or more of the urban and rural respondents" (Berry and Rinehart, 1988: 105). But on the other hand, this change in family structure could not change every tradition and value.

Marriage between close relatives continued to enjoy high esteem, especially in rural areas, although the number of such marriages was decreasing. Besides, urban working-class neighborhoods were traditionally organized on the basis of kinship, and recent urban migrants have sought to preserve this pattern (Berry and Rinehart, 1988: 105).

Moreover, though women have the responsibility of the household with the CPS regulations, men's situation as household heads has been continuing in practice.

On the other hand, the CPS' positive effects started to show its results in 1980s. At that period, number of women employed outside the house increased. "According to a 1982 survey, some 244,700 women were engaged in full-time paid employment. This represented 7 % of the total working population and a gain of 76 % over similar labor statistics in 1977" (Berry and Rinehart, 1988:

110). “Between 1975 and 1988, 40% of all new jobs in Tunisia were filled with women. Most of the women employed in the public sector were professionals, administrators, and clericals in the government sector” (Moghadam, 1998: 56).

The reason behind this increase undermines positive evaluations. Many of these jobs would perhaps not have been filled by men because of their expectation of a higher wage, or because of the type of work involved, so the net displacement effect remains an open question (Stevenson and Van Adams, 1992: 14). Besides, there was a growth in women’s unemployment rates 1980s. Unemployment in Tunisia’s urban formal sector grew from 12.1 % of the labor force in 1984 to 15.6 % in 1989, according to government statistics (Moghadam, 1998: 57). Female urban unemployment was higher 21.9 %, compared with 13.8 % male urban unemployment (Moghadam, 1998: 57). In sum, there is not a contradiction between women’s employment and unemployment. It can be said that, while women’s participation to labor force and to public sector rose in some areas, women unemployment rose in other areas. There are various reasons behind the situation such as, high birth rates, traditional obstacles to women’s employment, and inconsistencies in education systems, and increasing labor force in various areas (Moghadam, 1998).

When it comes to family planning in 1980s, it is seen that, family planning project which has been in effect since nearly thirty years bore its fruit and fertility rates decreased. But, still there were problems. First of all, women using family planning centers and services live in cities (Brand, 1998). This means that, women in rural areas could not reach these sources effectively. Furthermore, men still could not totally accept women’s new location outside

the home, and wanted to see them as wives and mothers (Brand, 1998). This means, lots of women were alone in the family planning issue and even if they wanted, they could not apply family planning sources because of their husband's opposition. The positive and important thing was government's strong insist once on the family planning issue. Because of this reason, family planning projects could continue.

In sum, when we make a general overview, 1980s were the golden age of feminism with various women groupings as a challenge to state feminism (Brand, 1998: 225). Modernization's effect over women's lives became clearer in this period. But on the other hand, this period also left behind lots of problems to be solved and revision needs about the women rights. At that point, it would not be wrong to say that, Tunisia met end of the 1980s with a chaotic situation in the political system. There was a growing Islamist challenge to the CPS and modernization aims. Besides, women were suffering because of declining economic program. But more importantly, Tunisia lived a presidential change in 1987 and Zine Abidine el-Ben Ali overthrew Bourguiba with a constitutional coup. As a result, the one who must solve all these problems became Ben Ali.

2.4.2 BEN ALI PERIOD AND WOMEN IN THE 1990s

According to Murphy, the replacement of Bourguiba by Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali in 1987 brought both economic and political change¹⁸. At the political level, Ben Ali promised liberalization and democratization. But, the threat of

¹⁸ After the 1989 elections *Parti Socialiste Destour* (PSD) renamed as "*Rassemblement Constitutionnel Démocratique*" (RCD) (Murphy, 2003).

rapidly increasing Islamist challenge to the regime gave President both incentive and the excuse to convert any meaningful liberalization (Murphy, 2003: 169).

Murphy (2003: 170) states that, “women have been on the front line in the debate between the regime and Islamists.” According to her, both sides claimed to have something to offer women: “the regime offered tolerance and secular empowerment, the Islamists offered the reassurance of cultural authenticity and traditionally-defined gender roles” (Murphy, 2003: 170). Also, Brand (1998: 231) states that, the economic crisis of the 1980s led increasing numbers of people into social declines. All problems were laid at the feet of a purported excessive liberation of women. According to her, the solutions were familiar: “returning women home (from labor market), reinstating polygamy, and making a divorce more difficult” (Brand, 1998: 231). Although Islamist challenge was strong and economic problems were high, differently from other Middle Eastern and North African countries in that period, Tunisians did not respond to Islamism in the long run.

It is noteworthy to state that, Ben Ali government’s approach to Islamists was affecting the government policy towards women. Beginning with an ambivalent attitude toward women’s interests as it Islamized state discourse, the state gradually started to see women as a natural first defense line against the Islamists (Brand, 1998: 235). As a result of Islamist challenge on the one hand, and Ben Ali’s liberalization promises on the other, 1990s became a period in which lots of new women organizations were established and new laws were promulgated.

First of all, in November 1988 a National Pact was drafted. The pact stated that; “the principle of equality is no less important than the principle of liberty: that is equality among citizens, without discrimination between men and women” (Tunisia Online, 2006). Moreover, new women’s organizations were established, lots of them again with the government support and control. Most important ones of these organizations are:

National Chamber of Women Heads of Businesses which was established on June 29, 1990, National Federation of Women Farmers which was established on December 21, 1990; and other organizations established for women’s social and cultural progress, such as Association of Tunisian Women for Research and Development (AFTURD), the Commission on Women and Work, and finally Center for Studies, Documentation, and Information on Women (CREDIF) (Murphy, 1993: 180-182 and Brand, 1998: 225, 242).

Needless to say, the UNFT preserves its position as the major women organization of the country. But it is noteworthy to mention an important establishment in which UNFT also joined. In 1990s, nine women NGO’s, the UNFT was among them, came together around a network named *Rihana*, to prepare the international women’s conference (Brand, 1998: 243). This event is important since it shows the increased participation of other women’s organizations to projects and policies about women besides the UNFT.

The year 1993 brought a new revision in the CPS. Although the president signaled no possible changes in the CPS during his first years in the office, situation changed in 1993. Process began in 1992 when Ben Ali assembled a commission for investigating women’s legal status. With the 1993 revision of the CPS, existing clauses that insisted a woman should respect and obey her husband were replaced with a provision making husbands equally

responsible for household management (Brand, 1998: 213-215). Besides, “domestic violence became punishable, others were given the right to veto marriages of daughters still considered minors, and a fund was established to provide alimony for divorced women and their children” (*Ministère de la Femme et de la Famille*, 1993 as cited in Murphy, 2003: 179).

Finally, to increase participation of women, six women were appointed to top-level ministries in August 1992.

Given that women had lined up behind the state as it cracked down on the Islamists, as the assault was ending in late 1991 and 1992.” Ben Ali “rewarded” the women with a series of gestures of support, both symbolic and concrete, but all in the framework of reinforcing domestic stability, Tunisia’s image of progress and pluralism, and women’s dependence upon the state (Brand, 1998: 243).

One can view the fragmentation of the representation of women’s interests as having still maintained the relationship between the state and interest groups, because these new associations are created not to challenge government policies but to contribute to it by institutional structures. (Murphy, 2003: 178).

When we look at women’s participation to working force in 1990s’ Tunisia, we see that, among Arab countries Tunisia is notable for its relatively high female labor-force participation, and it is distinguished by the high participation of women in manufacturing (Moghadam, 1998: 56). When a general evaluation is made, it can be said that, beginning from 1970s, there was an increase in the female labor force. But on the other hand, increase in the unemployment of women which came into being in 1980s, continued in 1990s (Moghadam, 1998).

During Ben Ali's power, poverty fell in both urban and rural areas, but inequality was higher in urban areas in the 1990s. A high percentage of poor households were in urban areas (Moghadam, 1998: 62).

Tunisian women have a 43.1 % and 33.1 % share of health and education sectors, with especially a high percentage among doctors (33 %), dental surgeons (57 %), pharmacists (63 %), and paramedics (52 %) (Moghadam, 1998: 64 and UNFT, 2006). Besides, 22 % of university professors, nearly 30 % of the employees of finance, insurance, real estate, and business services sectors were women in 1990s (UNFT, 2006)

Another important development of the 1990s was the national campaign to eradicate illiteracy, which was launched in 1993-94, targeted a population of 67,000 girls and women between the ages of 15 and 29 (Tunisia Online, 2006). This campaign brought the 1994 UNESCO prize for literacy to the UNFT.

When the 2000s came, the percentage of women in the working population has risen from 6% in 1966 to 25% in 2003. School enrollment of girls at the age of 6 has reached more than 99.1 % in 2003-2004 (Tunisia Online, 2006). When it is looked to 2004 statistics, it is seen that there were 34% women magistrates, 31 % women lawyers, 34.4 % women journalists, 40.4% women university professors, 32% women working in agriculture sector (Tunisia Online, 2006).

Besides, currently there are seven women members of government. They include: The Minister of Equipment, Housing and Land Development, The Minister of Women, Family, Children and the Elderly Affairs, the Secretary of State to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Secretary of State to the Minister of Women, Family, Children and the Elderly Affairs, in charge of children, Secretary of State to the Minister of Social Affairs and Solidarity, in charge of Social Promotion, the Secretary of

state to the Minister of Public health, in charge of public hospitals and the Secretary of State to the Minister of Communication Technologies, in charge of Information Technology, Internet and Free Software (Tunisia Online, 2006).

Murphy criticizes this situation. She states that, while individuals have gained status in the Ministry of Women's and Family Affairs, women do not have high positions in more traditionally male-dominated ministries, such as the Ministries of the State and Interior, Justice, National Economy, Finance, or Foreign Affairs (Murphy, 2003: 181).

A last point to consider about Tunisia's positive policies for women during modernization process is family planning. In family planning, which was evaluated above, Tunisia continued its progress and advanced women's interest. Besides, capital city Tunis is the headquarters of the International Planned Parenthood Federation.

Differently from positive developments, there are continuing problems for women in the 1990s and 2000s' Tunisia. Women are still excluded from some areas of public social life. Cafes are still predominantly an exclusively male environment and women face an unnerving degree of both verbal and physical harassment when they walk or use public transport (Murphy, 2003: 183). Besides, in the arts, women are still subject to prejudice against females performing in public, and the professions of acting and singing still carry social stigma (Murphy, 2003: 183). Furthermore, it is still very difficult to live alone, separate from their families, for women. Also, they cannot live with a male partner if they are not married. If they did so, they face with the risk of verbal and physical abuse (Murphy, 2003: 183). According to a survey in 1993, in 79%

of the households, women were still taking sole responsibility for domestic tasks (Murphy, 2003: 182-183).

There is another point noteworthy to determine: Moghadam (1998: 72) writes that, women's unemployment rates are high and their employment status is frequently that of a non-salaried worker, especially among women manufacturing workers in Tunisia, many of whom are home-based workers or are otherwise working informally. This situation emerges more clearly in rural areas where education and public policies cannot reach directly and enough.

In sum, during that period, improvements in women's legal status continued. But on the other hand, some women, especially coming from the rural and lower classes of society has been continuing to suffer because of socio-economic problems.

When a general evaluation of the ongoing Ben Ali period is made, it can be said that Tunisia has been taking positive steps towards women's emancipation as an Arab and Muslim state. Tunisia's major policy of taking women's emancipation as the main objective in the modernization process makes it unique in the Middle East and North Africa (except Turkey).

CHAPTER 3

ARAB CINEMA AND WOMAN IMAGE IN TUNISIAN CINEMA

20th century was the age of culture, and so is the 21st century. Development of visual tools, like photography and cinema, caused visual images' entrance into people's daily lives in an unusual manner. Horizon of people's experiences extended indirectly on a great level. On the other hand this indirect experience process gained an individualistic existence: A new reality started to come into being (Shick, 1989: 57). Consistence of a new reality showed itself furthest in cinema films. But, even the narrations and fictions taking place in films are simulations of the reality; they reflect society like a mirror and, they persuade people. Persuasion is the key point of cinema's impression. In this way, cinema has the ability to reflect, change, and affect people's lives. With this ability, cinema gives the opportunity to follow and analyze people, societies and countries.

This reflection is clearer in the Middle Eastern and North African cinema. Since the advent of national cinema could only be possible with their independences, Arab countries' cinema explicitly reflects the independence struggles and modernization processes. When an analysis of this cinema is attempted, one of the main images to come across is women. As Sarah Graham-Brown examines in her book "Images of Women: the Portrayal of Women in Photography of the Middle East, 1860- 1950", image of Middle Easterner

woman is used sometimes as a sexuality object, sometimes as a metaphor for the whole “Orient”, and sometimes as a national liberation and modernization symbol (Shick, 1989: 57). Consequently, one of the best ways to understand and analyze a Middle Eastern and North African country’s modernization process is to analyze its women’s image in cinema. As for Tunisia, in which a majority of women films have been shot differently from the rest of the Arab world, liberation and modernization process’ reflection can be truly seen in films. As the main aim of the present study is to make an analysis of modernization and women in Tunisia through selected films, image of women in Tunisian cinema will be evaluated in this chapter. In this context, firstly a general overview of Arab cinema (Egypt and Maghribi cinema particularly) will be made; secondly, Tunisian cinema during the independence will be examined; and finally, women image in Tunisian cinema will be evaluated.

3.1 ARAB CINEMA

Invention of cinema gave the opportunity of expressing themselves to countries and cultures. Arab world’s meeting with cinema did not take up much time. In 1896, a few months after the debut of cinema in the European countries, films of the L’umière brothers were shown in Egypt and Algeria. In Tunisia, the Tunisian Albert Shemama (also known as Shemama Chickly) organized a similar screening in Tunis (Shafik, 1998: 10) with first ten minute showings of the early Lumière films (Malkmus and Armes, 1991: 4). Screenings were made in Morocco in the same year and in Jerusalem in 1900.

Malkmus and Armes (1991: 5) state that those who imported cinematograph were businessmen who also introduced other Western

innovations. For instance Shemama Chickly who brought cinematograph to Tunisia also brought the bicycle, still photography and the radio. Malkmus and Armes (1991: 7) also write that “the film industry has generally continued to be open to market forces, and it is instructive to compare its introduction and development with the history, in Africa and the Arab world, of the press, the gramophone and broadcasting.”

Actually, advent of cinema to the Middle East and North Africa happened in a period of rising cultural developments and beginnings of modernization. As the whole social, political and cultural elements of the Arab countries during their post- independence periods were affected and shaped by the developments in the colonial period, main elements, structure and style of their cinema were also affected by the colonial period. Thus, it would be appropriate to begin from the examination of Arab cinema during the colonial period.

3.1.1 Arab cinema in the Colonial Period

It is not surprising to find a strong connection between the development of Arab cinema and the existence of European colonial structure. Establishment of the colonial system in the Arab world and the invention of cinema in Europe happened nearly at the same time. Spread of cinema to the Arab world through the European powers was an inevitable consequence.

Starting of regular screenings in the Arab world did not take long. Cinema halls were opened in various cities of the Middle East and North Africa. However, spread of cinema was not the same in everywhere. In Saudi Arabia for instance, cinema was not accepted until 1960s, while it spread and was

accepted readily in Egypt. Thus, Egypt was first to have a cinema industry. This rapid spread of cinema brought Egypt the domination of cinema in the whole Arab world with its fertile production of mass audience films. There were 80 cinemas in 1917 in Egypt. In 1925, the first national attempt for the investment in cinema and creating a national industry was made by Talaat Harb, the founder and director of Misr Bank (Shafik, 2001: 24). He established the *Sharikat Misr li-l-sinema wa al-tamthil* (Egyptian Company for Cinema and Performance), which was put in charge of producing advertising and information films (Shafik, 2001: 24).

Another reason behind the Egyptian cinema's domination over the Arab world is its success of the establishment of an 'Egyptian' cinema long before other countries. The first "Egyptian" film is considered as *Leila*¹⁹ which was produced in 1927 under the directorship of Turkish director Wedad Orfi and starring of Aziza Amir, the famous theatre actress of the period. After a conflict, Amir wanted to change the director and Stephan Rosti completed the film. On the other hand, Shafik states that *Leila* is not the first Egyptian film. According to her, for a long time the appearance of *Leila* was considered the birth of Egyptian cinema, not least because the existence of Victor Rosito's full-length *Fi Bilad Tut 'Ankh Amun* fell into oblivion until the 1980s (Shafik, 2001: 24).

But Egypt's cinema really took off with the introduction of sound during the 1930s. Unused to Egyptian Arabic, the public in other countries (where often slightly different dialects are spoken) went to the cinema to see their

¹⁹ Other spellings of the word are: "Layla" and "Leyla".

favorite stars singing – ‘Umm Kalthoum, Mohamed Abd el Wahab, Leila Mourad reigned supreme to the end of the 1940s (Al-bab, 2003).

The Misr Bank financed production and sent technicians abroad for training and setting up the Misr Studio in 1935. Besides, advent of other studios and settlement of genres such as melodrama, musical and comedy, increased the production rapidly in the 1940s. New directors, mostly native Egyptians, appeared in that period. The star system, as well as a variety of film genres- musical, then melodrama, farce and comedy, and the historical and the Bedouin films- emerged in colonial Egypt (Shafik, 2001: 26). In sum, period under colonialism composes the construction and heyday phase of the Egyptian cinema. After the independence, a new period started and new genres emerged in the Egyptian cinema.

When we approach to the Maghribi cinema of the period, a different development is seen. A national Maghribi cinema cannot be mentioned for the period. Unlike Egypt, rest of the Middle East and North African countries could develop national cinemas only after their national independences.

During the colonial period, there was a European domination over film making and distribution. Even if Egypt could establish bases of a national cinema in film making and to some degree film distribution, the real control was vested in the hands of the colonial power in the whole Arab world.

There was an important amount of European filming and recording in the Arab world and in Africa (Malkmus and Armes, 1991: 12). The new media (such as radio and photography), and particularly the cinema, were also used to create representations of African and Arab life for Western informational and

entertainment purposes, as elements of European academic study and as expressions of colonial superiority (Malkmus and Armes, 1991: 12). Edward Said states in his famous book 'Orientalism', that

The Orient is not only adjacent to Europe; it is also the place of Europe's greatest and richest and oldest colonies, the source of its civilizations and languages, its cultural contestant, and one of its deepest and most recurring images of the Other (Said, 1979: 44).

Amount of films shot in the Arab and African world by Europeans during the colonial period signed this situation, since most of these works was not produced for Arab or African audiences. Rather, "the supposed objectivity manifested by the still or movie camera was consciously used, in Europe and elsewhere, to support the colonial cause" (Malkmus and Armes, 1991: 12).

Even an equivocal overlook to the films produced in the Arab world shows that, filming and film distribution in the whole region not only spread to almost every corner, but also was used for and caused to expression various Western prejudices about the region and its people and the generation of new prejudices.

Hennebelle also states that cinematic production in the Arab world has been held back by the effects of colonialism. According to him, one of the most lasting and pernicious results of colonialism was a rejection of Arab culture by the intellectuals (Hennebelle, 1976: 4). They became convinced that only an imitation of the culture of the colonizers would overcome national decline and backwardness (Hennebelle, 1976: 4).

Since the context of the present study is Tunisia, it would be consistent to evaluate French policies about the film production and distribution in the

Maghreb. Also this evaluation would be fruitful, since France followed a different policy about cinema than the other European countries after the independences of Maghribi countries²⁰.

Diawara (1992: 21) claims that, one would have to determine the role played by the French government and individuals in furthering film production in their former colonies in a manner that has not interested other ex-colonial powers such as England and Belgium. Different from Britain and Belgium's colonial African film units, France did not develop a policy for film production that was aimed for their subjects in Africa. They declared only a decision about filming in the colonies: *Le Décret Laval* in 1934. The purpose was to control the content of films and to reduce imaginative roles played by Africans; and the decree gave the right to check scripts and the people working in the production to Laval's ministry (Diawara, 1992: 22). Although historians of African film agree that Laval's decree was rarely applied against filmmakers, they also believe that it had the effect of postponing the birth of Francophone African film (Diawara, 1992: 22). Diawara adds that a look at the few times the Laval decree came into action against filmmakers will show France's determination in colonial times to keep cinema from playing a revolutionary and/ or evolutionary role in Africa (Diawara, 1992: 22). Thus, one can say that, as British and Belgian policies against filmmaking in the colonies failed because of racism and paternalism vis-à-vis the Africans, French had a unique position since they opposed to an African cinema (Diawara, 1992).

²⁰ As Maghribi countries were in the North Africa, and France had other colonies in Africa, "Africa" term will be used in this part referring to whole Africa and also to the North Africa.

But, after the independences of the region countries, France followed a different policy, and created a neocolonialist aspect. Diawara (1992: 24) states that it was interesting that France had begun its production of African film after most of the countries assumed their independence. France gave financial and technical support to various African films after the end of the colonial period. There are Tunisian films among those which took French support. Especially after 1960s, France improved this neocolonialist policy towards its old colonies. In the post independence era, France's first cinematic action in Africa began in 1961 with the creation in *Paris of the Consortium Audiovisuel International* (C.A.I) (Diawara, 1992: 24). The aim of the C.A.I. was to help the newly independent African countries in the field of cinema and other communication areas.

In 1963, French Ministry of Coopération started technical and financial support to North African films. Ousmane Sembène's film *Borom Sarret* became the start of Francophone African Film with the support of Coopération (Diawara, 1992: 25). In 1963, the French Coopération made a second and more important move in African film production. Jean-René Débrix, former adjunct general director of the IDHEC, was appointed as director of the newly founded *Bureau du Cinéma at the Coopération* (Diawara, 1992: 25).

Whereas the C.A.I was created toward helping African countries' produce newsreels and documentaries, the aim of *Bureau du Cinéma* was to provide independent African filmmakers with opportunity to create (Diawara, 1992: 25).

In the following period, France tried to develop policies about the subject. After 1980s, this new policy became mature and was thought that it must be globalist for economic reasons. “The idea was to go beyond the old regime’s policy of confining African films to academic circles, cinémathèques, and festivals, and to exhibit them in commercial French movie theatres and airing them on French television” (Diawara, 1992: 29).

But on the other hand, there were some critiques against the French aid because they entailed a neocolonialist dimension. There are two ways of identifying neocolonialism in French African film production:

One of them happened through tracing the extent to which the French have tried to assimilate African filmmakers and films, thus making it difficult for them to stand on their own. The other is the Coopération’s monopoly of the tools of work by centering them in Paris (Diawara, 1992: 33).

But in some, as a general evaluation, the French hindered development of filmmaking in Africa at the beginning. But then, after most African countries gained their independences, French helped African film making. In other words, Francophone African film making was shaped mostly by France’s aids in the international area.

3.1.2 Arab Cinema in the Independence Period

Arab cinema developed after independences of the region countries. During the pre-independence period, there was European filmmaking as it is mentioned above, and domination of Egyptian cinema. During the independence period, national cinemas started to team under the effect of political developments in the countries. Thus, it will not be wrong to say that development of Arab cinema is always affiliated with the political developments

of the period. Cinema was affected by nationalism and modernization attempts of the young states. It can also be said that, Arab cinema in the independence period follows a development and change line affiliated with the modernization processes of the countries. Same situation is valid for the Maghribi countries.

Boughedir names Arab cinema as “the Young Cinema” since the real beginnings of this young cinema start with the independence of Egypt, and other Arab countries. After their independences “it would be more appropriate to invest in cinema” (Boughedir, 1987) for the governments since they discovered cinema’s effect over masses. Boughedir says that, with the consecutively independences of Arab states, “this new Arab cinema led commercial one became minority, and gave the way to the auteur cinema” (Boughedir, 1987). According to Boughedir, “finally liberated third world would generate a new style” (Boughedir, 1987). Tunisia has been one of the most successful countries which generated a peculiar language of cinema more differently than the rest of Arab world, as it will be analyzed below.

The defeat at 1967 Six Days War brought a big quake to the Arab unity and Arab nationalism ideals. But on the other hand, it became a turning point for the Arab cinema. Almost all films shot in that period emphasized the 1967 defeat, Arab unity and nationalism. For instance, famous Egyptian director Youssef Chahine shot “The Sparrow”, one of the most famous films touching on the subject.

After the defeat of 1967, a new period opened in Arab cinema. Shafik (1998: 37) writes that, “despite various economic and political restrictions, an artistically ambitious and individualist tendency has emerged in Arab cinema

since the 1970s.” According to Shafik, this new Arab cinema “range from observant portrayals of social conditions to autobiographical stories and avant-garde art movies.” (Shafik, 1998: 37).

Shafik also emphasizes the change after the 1967 Six Days War:

This change of direction in Arab cinema resulted in part from an intellectual reorientation following Egypt, Jordan, and Syria’s defeat in the 1967 Six Days War. The Gradual disillusionment with and subsequent renunciation of nationalist and Pan-Arab ideology led to the alienation of many intellectuals from the national political leadership, whose inefficiency was exposed. Accusations were made of totalitarianism and state paternalism...Even so, some films made in the new spirit were produced by state enterprises²¹...However, artistically ambitious individualist directors were not always able to work within the framework of the public...In order to escape economic and political constraints, and they adopted various strategies. In some cases they returned to a pre-industrial production mode, avoiding as much as possible the division of labor. (Shafik, 1998: 37-38)

Thus, filmmakers turned to executives of different occupations in the sector at the same time as an obligation. They became directors, scriptwriters, editors and actors. It may be this obligation which led to development of auteur cinema in the Arab world.

Development of this new cinema continued in 1980s. 1980s were also a change and development period of feminism in the whole world and so in the Middle East and North Africa. It was a product of the combination of these two factors that led to increase of women films and development of women image in cinema.

²¹ *Omar Gatlato* (‘Umar Qatlatu al-Rudjla, 1976), *Adventures of a Hero* (Mughamarat batal, 1976) by Algerian director Merzak Allouache; *The Sparrow* by Egyptian director Youssef Chahine, *The Half-Meter Incident* (Hadithat al-nisf mitr, 1981) by Syrian director Samir Zikra are some examples of this period (Shafik, 1998: 39)

At that point, it is possible to make an analysis of Tunisian cinema focusing on development of women image, especially after 1980s. Since the beginnings and main characteristics of the Maghribi cinema are effective for Tunisian cinema, some general evaluations comprising Tunisian cinema will be made.

3.2 TUNISIAN CINEMA

3.2.1 Characteristics of Maghribi Cinema

According to Hafez (1995: 39);

The Arabic cinema of the countries of the Maghrib - Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco, and to a lesser extent Mauritania- is the cinema most concerned with form and aesthetics, not merely out of formalistic concern, or because of its conscious awareness of European cinema and particularly the French new wave, but also because its quest for narrative codes capable of expressing a constantly shifting reality and an elusive and complex identity led it to sire a new language.

Also Bakrim says that:

The North African cinema adopts the original configuration of the Maghreb ("Land of the setting Sun" according to Arabic etymology). If this definition invokes five countries in the political sense (Mauritania, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, and Libya), then in the sense of cinema we really only find a group of three (Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia). These are three countries which, since their independence, have had a relationship with cinema marked by breaks and continuity. Since the sixties and seventies, like a swing, each of these three countries has occupied the position of leader in its turn. If global opinion says today that Algerian cinema is making a comeback (four or five feature films each year for the past several years) after a difficult period, that Tunisian cinema is holding its own (Five or six films per year), and that Moroccan cinema is seeing a great flowering (twelve to fourteen films per year), then this is the result of a real game of alternation. (Bakrim, 2006).

In Maghribi countries, directors work collectively in different projects.

As a result, a director can be scriptwriter or editor in another director's film.

This point takes us to the claim mentioned above about the development of auteur cinema in the Arab world. It may be this collective work that brought a different filmic language to Maghribi cinema. Hafez (1995: 39) states that Maghribi cinema's filmic language may have common certain traits with that of the Egyptian cinema, from the relative size of frame, lighting techniques, camera movement and close-up on human gaze, to narrative flow and other salient features of the canonical format; but their montage, syntax and rules of codification are different. Development of this different language and technique stems from filmmakers awareness about the importance of post-colonial ideology. Conscious about the importance of creating a national cinema, Maghribi countries' filmmakers worked on a different and independent filmic language referring to their nation's individuality and identity (Hafez, 1995: 40). According to Hafez (1995: 40), "many of the filmmakers of the Maghrib countries are sensitive to the nature of image-based history." Boughedir (2005 [1]) also says that "Right from the beginning, it was never a case of mimicking the unique, "old" Arab cinema (commercial Egyptian cinema), a great provider of melodramas and musical films out of which a few auteur were striving to make themselves known". Boughedir also says that "Egyptian cinema is based on the voice, like radio. Sometimes you can close your eyes and continue understanding the action. Maghribi cinema gives priority to the image" (Simarski, 1992).

3.2.2 Beginnings of Tunisian Cinema

Tunisian cinema has a specific place in the Maghribi cinema, not only because of its beginning from cinema clubs, but also because of its approach heeding to women issue.

There was amateur filmmaking in whole Maghreb during colonial period. But, professional film making could not find a fertile ground firstly because of the competition of European and then Egyptian films. Amateur film making continued during independence period in which a state controlled cinema sector was initiated. “But amateur film making was strongest and most influential in Tunisia, where the *Association des Jeunes Cinéastes Tunisiens* (AJCT- Association of Young Tunisian Filmmakers) was set up in 1961 to promote amateur film and to provide a focus for the flourishing Tunisian amateur film-making movement, which had clubs throughout Tunisia: Hamman-Lif, Kairouan, Tunis, Sousse, Jemmal, Le Kef, Bardo, Monastir, Sfax, Ksar Hellel, Rades, Hammanmet, El-Menzah and Kelibia.” (Armes, 2001: 420). But, before the independence and foundation of AJCT, Tunisia was one of the countries in the Arab world and Africa which had the highest number of cinema clubs already.

The AJCT played an important role for the improvement of cinema in Tunisia. In 1968, it turned to *Fédération Tunisienne des Cinéastes Amateurs* (FTCA- Tunisian Federation of Amateur Filmmakers) and led to making of first feature films of various filmmakers in Tunisia. Boughedir also says that “Tunisian cinema was born in cinema clubs that spread all over the country. This situation created different structure of Tunisian cinema” (Boughedir, 2005

[1]). *Anonyme Tunisienne de Production et d'Expansion Cinématographique* (SATPEC) and *The Secrétariat d'Etat aux Affaires Culturelles et de l'Information* (SEACI) are also important cinema organizations that played a role in the development of filmmaking and cinema culture. But, the main reason behind their important roles stems from their state-owned and supported origins. SATPEC was a state owned company founded in 1957 to lead production, import, distribution and exhibition of films (Armes, 2001: 440). It survived for more than thirty years and attempted to encounter multinational distribution companies. SATPEC was closed in 1994 after a bankruptcy. SEACI was a government organization founded for supervising culture and information, and was the cinema division of which was led by Tahar Cheeria from 1961 to 1969 (Armes, 2001: 440). In 1966, with the support of all these organizations, Carthage Film Festival was founded. The festival turned to an international activity shortly after its foundation.

“Different from its neighbours in Maghreb where “epic” and “populist” films were made, such categories do not exist in Tunisian cinema in which auteur films constitute a majority in an almost individualistic manner” (Boughedir, 2005- [1]).

Boughedir also states freedom of choice of Tunisian film makers and censorship.

Such freedom of choice was made possible because Tunisia also has a kind of film censorship (different from TV censorship) which is undoubtedly one of the most lenient in the Arab world: scenes that are forbidden in other Arab countries (and edited out from Tunisian films screened there), revealing the celebration of female nudity ("Halfaouine"), homosexuality ("Man of Ashes"), political repression ("Golden Horseshoes"), sex tourism ("Bezness"), the destitution of poor areas ("Essaida"), women's right to sexual

enlightenment ("Fatma", "Red Satin"), were eventually approved by Tunisian censorship as long as they were expressed by artists and necessary to the coherence of their work (Boughedir, 2005 [1]).

But on the other hand, Boughedir does not mention the effect of European support to this issue. In other words, as it is examined above, France's support to film-making in its ex-colonies as a post-colonial policy of controlling and affecting cinema sector has a big effect over making of films including scenes approved by Tunisian censorship. Shafik (1998: 35) also states that, these films exist as a result of Western co-production. The European market offers film makers alternative financial and spiritual sources, which support them in facing the pressure of domestic censorship. Shafik gives as an example Boughedir's film *Halfaouine: The Boy of the Terraces* (*Halfaouine: 'Asfur al-sath-* 1989) as an example which contains scenes from a Turkish bath with naked women bathing. Boughedir's film had a freedom of forcing out the censorship (Shafik, 1998: 35). Needless to say, Boughedir's film was a co-production supported by France.

Lack of wide distribution to other countries is the main problem for Tunisian as well as the Maghribi cinema. Even among the Maghreb countries, cinema sector is dominated by foreign films and there is a very restricted outlet for local products. Thus, French and European support to co-productions remains insufficient when distribution is discussed.

Moreover, it was not only financial, technical and distribution problems that created problems in founding national film industries, but also the lack of technically qualified professionals (Shafik, 1998: 22). For the development of national cinemas, most of the states obtained cinema experts from abroad. But

this situation did not improve national cinemas as it was aimed. Besides, most Arab filmmakers took their education in foreign countries since there has not been sufficient domestic schooling. As Tunisian cinema also struggles with same problems, most of its filmmakers took their cinema education in foreign countries. For instance, Tunisian filmmakers Mahmoud Ben Mahmoud, Nouri Bouzid, Nejia Ben Mabrouk studied in Brussels, Ferid Boughedir and Moufida Tlatli studied in France. Today, there is a lack of domestic education structure and lack of enough educated personnel in the whole Arab world (except Egypt to some degree) (Shafik, 1998).

But, existence of censorship and state control over filmmaking and lack of wide distribution to foreign markets do not change the fundamental difference and more libertarian structure of cinema in Tunisia when it is compared to rest of the Arab world (Shafik, 1998).

Tunisian cinema can be better understood when main themes are examined. When it comes to main genres, it is seen that by the effect of domination of Egyptian cinema for years, and the effect of Arab culture, there is a noticeable weight of melodramas. Musicals and comedy follow them. But, difference and specific characteristics of Tunisian cinema do not depend on genres common in the whole Arab world. Its specificity depends on the point of view to the subjects within these genres.

Cabral states that;

History allows us to know the nature and extent of the imbalances and conflicts (economic, political and social) which characterize the evolution of a society; culture allows us to know the dynamic syntheses which have been developed and established by social conscience to resolve these conflicts at each

stage of evolution, in the search for survival and progress (Cabral, 1970).

When it comes to Tunisian (and to Maghribi) cinema, Hafez (1995: 43) states that cinema in the Maghreb emphasizes the role of popular forces and relations inherent in the persisting mode of production, and pays a considerable attention to the structures of the social totality in which culture functions.

Pursuing Cabral's and Hafez's ideas, cinema's watch over and mirror-like structure of Maghribi culture is a natural consequence since this cinema grew up over an independence, national identity and modernization based culture. As a result, Tunisian filmmakers touch on the most critical and important subjects for them.

In this context, main themes of Tunisian cinema can be count as: national identity, independence, migration from rural to urban areas, tradition, modernity and gender. It is important here to mention that, when a general overview of all these themes are made, it is seen that in almost all films there is a touch, albeit to different degrees, to women question in the women's suffering, identity, modernization and emancipation manners (Armes, 2001).

It can be said that, gender issue and woman image are among the main characteristics of Tunisian cinema. That's the point that gives its specificity to Tunisian cinema within the whole Arab world.

3.2.3 Image of Women in Tunisian Cinema

By the effect of change in 1970s, which was evaluated above, new cinema currents emerged in Arab countries. At that period there was an orientation towards auteur cinema within the context of New Arab Cinema. This orientation towards art cinema changed areas of interest and filmmakers

started to focus on social problems and subjects. Feminization of Arab cinema started at this period under the effect of the development of auteur cinema. Before examining women image in Tunisian cinema, it will also be beneficial to evaluate feminization of Arab cinema and female auteurs.

3.2.3.1 Feminization of Arab Cinema and Female Auteurs

Women are underrepresented in Arab cinema in general. Female problems and circumstances remain marginalized (Shafik, 1998: 203). Many male directors, however, expressed in their films the need for female emancipation but often simply as a means to achieve national goals, such as technical and cultural progress, and political independence (Shafik, 1998: 201). Women are represented largely as mothers and suffering people for the sake of nationalism. It was only in the late 1970s that a differentiated and more emancipated image of women started to be represented in cinema. Especially in 1980s, also by the effect of increasing feminism all over the world, female auteurs joined to arena.

Today, a considerable number of women write screenplays and/or realize documentaries: the documentarists Attiat El-Abnoudi, Nabih Lotfi, and Firyal Kamil in Egypt, and Selma Beccar in Tunisia (Shafik, 1998: 203). On the other hand, women are still particularly underrepresented in feature film production (Shafik, 1998: 203). However, they have more chance for film making after 1980s. The important point to mention about women directors' films is that, they finance their projects sometimes themselves or sometimes with the financial support of Western producers (Shafik, 1998: 203). For instance, Tunisian directors Nejia Ben Mabrouk, Moufida Tlatli and Selma

Beccar directed their full-length feature films as coproductions. Actually, their work scarcely differs from the products of their male colleagues. One of the various reasons why few women join the film industry is certainly moral (Shafik, 1998: 204). According to this, women's film making is seen as equivalent with immorality in the Arab societies. Furthermore, women can hardly find a place in cinema sector. For instance, some women directors like Assia Djebar, Farida Ben Lyazid and Nejia Ben Mabrouk have accessed cinema sector through writing (Shafik, 1998: 204). They could find an opportunity to direct a film years later. Also Moufida Tlatli, another female filmmaker of Tunisia, started her career as an editor after her study at IDHEC. Although she took a good education at IDHEC, she could not start as a director and could direct her first full-length feature film when she was 47.

Actually, female directors' approach to woman question and emancipation is always more critical and to the point than male directors. But in contrast to this, Armes (2001: 444) claims that, although all have produced films in which women's issues are central, "this in itself does not distinguish them from their male counterparts who have also shown a distinct predilection for making women's role and status in Islamic society a central focus of their films."

In sum, it can be said that female directors in the Arab world can make their films in difficult conditions and mostly by the support of Western producers. Besides, it is seen that, female directors' number increased after 1980s and some of them reached international audience.

3.2.3.2 Image of Women

Women, taken as cinematographic figures, evoke multiple images of a cultural and social discourse and draw attention to gender and family relations in a broader sense in a specific society (Bouzid-Discacciati, 2000). Tunisian society in this case. Therefore, it would be appropriate to examine image of women in Tunisian cinema.

As a young cinema started after the independence, women representations have an important place in Tunisian cinema since the beginning. We can state two types of representation until 1980s: Mother and wife. These representations of women roles were based on the need to create a national identity. The family acted, for example as a microcosm of the whole social system (Bouzid-Discacciati, 2000). As a result, women were represented in the private sphere with their relationships with male characters.

In 1960s, women image is represented as an effective and confident “mother” who has a big effect and power of decision making in the family in a number of films (Bouzid-Discacciati, 2000). Since the public sphere belongs to male characters, private sphere is women’s area of sovereignty and since the creation of a nation is needed, women characters are described as the protectors of the family and mothers of sons who will appreciate the nation.

Another image created for women characters in the 1960s and 1970s is the “wife”, a suitable role to sustain the formation and modernization of the nation. Hyenas’ Sun (*Shams al-diba*) by Behi in 1977 and Shadow of the Earth (*Dhil al-Ardh*) by Louhichi in 1982 represent ideal wives caring their husbands and children to create an ideal family image (Bouzid-Discacciati, 2000) .

With the end of 1970s another woman image emerged: Woman oriented towards Western-style “modernity”, who fights for her rights (Bouzid-Discacciati, 2000). Abdellatif Ben Ammar’s “Aziza” (1980), which is also selected for the present study, is a good example of this period. In these films it is represented that, a woman’s emancipation will be possible when they started to work outside the home environment and earn their own money. This also represents an active participation to the development of national economy.

Another woman image is the “daughter” image which represents the new generation. The main characteristic of the daughter is her controversial relationship with her father, her desire for freedom and an adequate education (Bouzid-Discacciati, 2000) and consequently, to emancipation. We see this daughter image who struggles with her father, with the patriarchal system symbolical, in Moufida Tlatli’s *Season of Men (La Saison des Hommes)*-2000) and Mahmoud Ben Mahmoud’s *Les Siestes Grenadines* (1999). This image is represented as a positive situation because of the opinion about economic development needs educated and emancipated women.

This period of change which started with the 1980s and continued in 1990s led to a noteworthy change in filmmakers’ approaches to film production because of the emergence and consolidation of auteur cinema. The search for a new identity and a personal - individual and no longer collective – dimension which has characterized auteur films from the Maghreb since its beginnings, also affected representation of women in films (Bouzid-Discacciati, 2000). Women are represented as searching for their identities and individualities and struggling for standing on their feet. At that period, female characters are not

“idealistic or theoretical constructs” (Bouzid, 1995: 249) to create a mother or wife image caring their children and husbands for the sake of nation. These women are more relevant with themselves and looking for means to express their identities and individualities in the society. The main determination about this concept is, female characters who are represented as uneducated and from lower classes suffer in this process. On the other hand, female characters who come from upper classes and have the opportunity to take education, in other words from strong and/or intellectual families, are the first ones meet with the advantages of modernization. As a result, they are represented as not suffering as much as their female counterparts.

Films for the present study are selected according to new approaches in Tunisian cinema. All films are produced after 1980, (“Aziza” is produced in 1980) and four of them (except “Be My Friend”) represent uneducated lower class female characters who suffer because of changes in the society and in their search of identity. Besides, each of these five films refers to a different stage of Tunisian modernization.

CHAPTER 4

REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN'S MODERNIZATION IN TUNISIAN FILMS

In this chapter, representation of women's modernization process in Tunisian films will be analyzed by referring second and third chapters. Thus, women's modernization process in real and as represented through films can be compared, and development of Tunisian cinema within Tunisia's modernization process can be evaluated.

As I told in my methodology (pages 5-8) in the introduction chapter, data collection schedule and selected scenes²² will be used to make a brief analysis and understand Tunisian cinema's approach towards women.

4.1 Taking Place in the Public Sphere

The rhetoric of women's modernization has promoted the issue of women's taking place in the public sphere since the independence of Tunisia. Women's education process started during the colonial period, writings of al-Tahar al-Haddad, women organizations which were founded after the establishment of Neo-Destour Party, and promulgation of the Code of Personal Status (CPS) and other laws and regulations are all indicators of this approach. Similarly in films, women's taking place in the public sphere is depicted in such a style when an effective reading is made.

²² Please look at appendix 1 and 2

When we look into **“the Silences of the Palace”**, we see that film has the atmosphere of 1950s in the flashback scenes. Women (both servants and ladies of the palace) are closed in the palace, cannot go out easily and their life pass behind the locked doors. They do not have so many rights in the house.

We see that taking place in the public sphere is almost an impossible subject for the film’s characters. For instance in scene 3, guard clearly warns Alia and Serra about not to going out. Since they are girls, they can not go out easily. Also in scene 8, women learn what happens outside the palace from Hossein who can go out since he is a man, and from radio. There are armed conflicts, a historical change in the country happens, and women learn all these developments which will also affect their life, from second hands.

When we look to historical atmosphere of the period, it is seen that all women were not distant from the public sphere; some of them took active roles at women’s organizations and national opposition movements (Raccagni, 1983: 263). But these women were well-educated and more importantly, coming from strong families (Raccagni, 1983: 261 and 263). Women from lower classes of the society and who took little or no education could not take place in the public sphere like their educated and strong sisters. Hence, film shows an important situation valid in the 1950s.

Story of **“Halfaouine: The Boy of the Terraces”**²³ passes in a neighbourhood of Tunis in 1960s. There, houses are seperated from streets with high walls and wide backyards. This style of construction also separate women’s life inside the houses from men’s life in the streets. At that period, the

²³ Film’s name will be typed as “Halfaouine” in the following parts of the study.

CPS was about to be accepted by Tunisian people in their daily lives. In “Halfaouine”, women’s taking place in the public sphere is represented as their exit from their houses. Except this situation, there is no emphasis to woman rights given by the CPS and taking place in the public sphere with a paid work.

In the film, women go out with white veils. Ferid Boughedir says that, “Only urban women wear white veils as a status symbol. Peasant women do not wear veils since this prevent their working in the fields. They start to wear white veils when they immigrate to city to show that they are city-dwellers.” (Interview with Boughedir, March 21st, 2005). Film represents us that, even if women’s veiling issue had been discussed by the intellectuals of the period before the independence and had been abolished with the independence, women continued veiling in 1960s. It can be said that white veils’ traditional using continued for a long time.

Female characters of the film go out with white veils for similar reasons usually: For shopping, taking meal to their husbands, visiting their relatives and neighbours and going to Turkish bath. Actually, film’s focal point is this distinction between public and private spheres. This distinction is represented from an eleven year old child’s point of view.

Produced in 1994, “Halfaouine” constructs 1960s atmosphere. When the period’s policies and their spread to society are considered, we can state that film’s story is in correspondence with the 1960s Tunisia about taking place in the public sphere.

“**Aziza**” stands at an important point for the present study since it was produced in 1980, at an important breaking point of women’s modernization in

Tunisia. Tunisia's modernization project on women seems as put on the right track in two decades. New laws and regulations promulgated in 1970s. End of 1970s and beginning of 1980s brought important changes such as revision of the CPS and changing style of state feminism by the effect of new women movements of the period (Brand, 1998: 220). New women organizations were established and positive results of the CPS was started to emerge (Brand, 221-223). Taking place in the public sphere has been considered as a proof of a woman's modernization. But all problems of women such as unemployment in lower classes (Moghadam, 1998: 57), traditional prejudices against working women and inconsistencies in education system could not be solved (Murphy, 2003: 183).

"Aziza" has important scenes related with the subject. First of all, it is the portrait of a young woman who tries to stand on her feet. But as a woman who grew up far away from the outside, uneducated and living inside the home by doing all the housework, Aziza realizes her necessity to be independent when she remains alone in the life. Searching her identity and standing on her feet are seemed impossible for Aziza at the beginning. When Ali expels her from the house, she needs to look after herself and finds a job with Aicha's help. That is a starting point for Aziza for taking place in the public sphere as a worker girl who earns her own money and realizes that she needs anyone to survive.

"Clay Dolls" looks at the subject from a different point of view. Characters of the film are uneducated rural people. Omrane transports little girls on his delivery tricycle from a village to Tunis. These little girls become housemaids and Omrane takes their wages to their families. Going to a big city

and earning money mean taking place in the public sphere for these girls at the beginning. Actually, they have no chance for taking place in the public sphere. They even cannot go out freely from the houses where they are working. Leading female character Rebeh cannot stand this situation anymore and runs away from the house where she was a housemaid. Then, she starts walking in the streets as she is free. She says Omrane that she would not work as a housemaid anymore since she wanted to be free. For that reason, she shouts “No one locks me up. No one imprisons me!” in scene 5, when she realizes that Omrane locked the door.

Produced in 2002, “Clay Dolls” represents story of lower class women in 2000’s Tunisia. Representing twenty years after “Aziza”, “Clay Dolls” makes us think that taking place in the public sphere and a woman’s standing on her feet are still impossible for some women. Even if “Aziza” achieved standing on her feet, this will not be easy for Rebeh.

Produced in the year 2000, female characters of **“Be My Friend”** represent a different image than female characters of four films. First of all, Amel and Aicha do not face with problems about taking place in the public sphere. Amel, an educated and rich businesswoman, has a permanent place in the public sphere in every respect. She governs her own company and also pays expenses of her husband. Aicha is also an educated and free woman who works only for herself. She also does not live problems about taking place in the public sphere. She earns her own money and does whatever she wants. These representations of woman images are in accordance with the woman image which Tunisian modernization’s appliers want to create.

4.1.1 Paid Work

Having a paid work is another important point in women's modernization process in Tunisia. When all the five films are taken into consideration, it can be said that women's having paid work/job increased period by period even if it does not follow a linear growth.

When we look to women's situation before and during the first years of independence: Main tasks of Tunisian women were to marry, raise their children and work for the comfort of their husbands. There were working women as midwives, bath attendants, hair dressers, belly dancers and wailing women (Raccagni, 1983: 31). Besides, there were some women who were teaching at girls' schools. But they were educated and most of them were European (Jarrow, 1999). As it is mentioned in the first chapter, majority of the female population was engaged in domestic work such as weaving the woolen blankets and manufacturing fess (Raccagni, 1983: 31). But, paid work in the public sphere was not possible for many women.

In **“the Silences of the Palace”** there is almost no mention of paid work. Alia was born among the servants even her father is the prince Sid 'Ali. Her mother Khaticah is a servant who came to palace when she was a child and grew up as a servant like the other servant women. They make all the housework, serve to residents and guests of the palace and even get used by the princes for sexual intercourse. But there is no scene representing that these women are paid for serving work. There is only one scene shows that they have money: When Alia gets sick after witnessing Sid 'Ali's brother's rape to Khaticah, Khaticah and Hatti Huda buy her a lute to make her happy. In the

scene, Hatti Huda and Khaticah count their money on a wrap without speaking, and Hatti Huda covers the wrap when she sees that they have enough money to buy the lute. But we cannot claim that they are regularly paid because of the works they do. This situation is harmonious with the women's position in the period, even there were women earning money from traditional jobs mentioned above.

In **“Halfaouine”** there is no scene representing paid work of women. 1960s was a period in which women's education, entrance to public sphere and having paid jobs were accelerated as one of the most important branches of the modernization project. But when this type of modernization from above is taken into consideration, it would be clear that educated women from strong and/or intellectual families became the first ones who take advantages of modernization. As we understand from the film, modernization's effects could not reach women living in neighbourhoods of Tunisia.

Paid work is one of the most important concepts of **“Aziza”**. Having a paid job is always seen as a major element of women's modernization. By having a paid work outside the house, women take place in the public sphere to some degree (Cindoğlu, 1991). Period we mention is also a landmark for women employment. There was a noteworthy increase in women's employment in some areas, but uneducated women from lower classes have faced with still continuing unemployment problem (Moghadam, 1998: 57). For that reason when they find a job, they cannot leave this job even if it has hard conditions and low wages. Besides, they mostly face with traditional prejudices against working women (Murphy, 2003: 182-183). In the film freeze frames

representing Aziza while working in the factory and going home in the evenings tell such a difficult but determined life style.

When we look at selected scenes: In scene 1, when Aicha visits Uncle, Jamila reacts to her and leaves the house. She says that she came from a respectable family and could not stay at the same place with Aicha. In scene 2, Jamila warns Aziza against Aicha and says that she was indecent. Since Aicha is an actress and takes roles in T.V programmes, people at the neighbourhood blame her. Even if Jamila has a prejudice about Aicha because of her job and her opinions are not correct, those attitudes and behaviours disturb Aicha. She cannot mention her job in front of other people as a matter of fact. In scene 3, when Aziza asks her about her job, Aicha sighs and says she would tell her later.

Aziza's having a paid job process is also complicated. First of all, in scene 4 we realize that Ali sees Aziza as a person who has to make housework and can only be his secretary if she has a work besides doing housework. In the scene, Ali gives Aziza a cleaning brush since she has to do cleaning. Then he asks "Have you formed a company?" and adds "Let the boss get by!" since he thinks he is the boss and Aziza has to obey him.

When their friendship improves, Aziza learns that Aicha started working in T.V after she remained alone when her father died and she has to look after her little brother. Aziza's situation would not be different. This situation corrects our argument: Uneducated women from lower classes continue doing jobs which they can find even if these jobs have hard conditions and low wages, since they will not be able to find a better job.

In scene 8 Aziza wakes Aicha up and says “I need a job. I must depend on myself.” This search for having a job and earning money is the starting point of Aziza for taking place in the public sphere as an individual. In scene 9, Aziza answers officer’s questions about herself. Officer says that she shouldn’t loaf and complaint. There is no chance for doing a mistake since there are hundreds of other women who need a job like her. Aziza has to do this job because of having no other chances to find a better job as an uneducated and alone woman. In lots of scenes, Aziza is represented while working in the factory. In sum, having a paid work is represented in the film as a way of a woman’s standing on her feet.

Paid work is a problematic issue also in “**Clay Dolls**”. Period starting with 1990s and 2000s can be evaluated as in which political system has been stabled and modernization process improved with revisions in laws and regulations (Murphy, 2003: 176-182). During Ben ‘Ali period, Tunisian women have constituted an important part of public sectors (Moghadam, 1998: 64).

In cinema, critical approaches towards women issue have continued. Four of five films selected for the present study were produced in 1990s. Female characters are in leading roles in all of them. From this point, we can say that a critical point of view about women issue is settled in Tunisian cinema. Tunisian cinema focuses on women who suffer, try to stand on their feet, search their identities in a pathriarchal system, and try to stand against traditional social structure (Bouزيد-Discacciati, 2000). This representation of women seems not parallel with the government’s representation of modernizing and emancipated women (Tunisia online, 2006). But, choosing and representing extraordinary

and suffering people is something inside the nature of cinema. If filmmakers chose happy women for representing, they would not be able to change anything.

In “Clay Dolls”, female characters work as housemaids in rich families’ houses. Unlike “the Silences of the Palace”s female characters and Leila character of “Halfaouine”, housemaids take their wages in “Clay Dolls”. We understand this when Omrane takes girls’ wages to their families in the village and when Rebeh mention about her savings while she is telling Omrane the guy who took all of them. But having a paid job does not mean taking place in the public sphere since Rebeh and other girls do this job because of having no other chances. Besides, as being locked up in the houses, they are not free to go out and live as they want.

Among the five films selected for the present study, having a paid job is not a problem only for the female characters of “**Be me Friend**”. Amel has her own company which she directs in control as we see in scene 4. She is also partner of the theater with Slah and Brahim. When Slah wants to stage an expensive play, Amel pays all the expenses. In scene 2, when Brahim does not want the stage of the play because of expenses, Amel says “I’ll see the budget if that’s what worries you.” Also Aicha has an independent woman image. She has financial problems since she cannot pay the mortgage payments of her house. But in scene 5, she answers “I enjoy what I do. I spend in the daytime what I earn at night” when Slah asks how she earned her life. This can be read as, Aicha can earn money with the way she wants and does not need anyone to earn money. In the 2000’s Tunisia, representation of such women images in cinema

is the reflection of the degree of women's modernization process reached. We can say that besides women like Rebeh of "Clay Dolls", also there are women like Amel and Aicha at the same period.

4.1.2 Education

Women's education has been one of the most important elements of Tunisian modernization project. Educated women would be symbols of modernizing Tunisia. Actually, women's education was a matter of discussion long time before the independence. During the pre-colonial period, Ibn Abi al-Diyaf and al-Tahar al-Haddad wrote about women's education (Jarrow, 1999 and Raccagni, 1983). In the colonial period, education was among the most important discussion subjects of intellectuals (Jarrow, 1999: 38-39 and 102 and Natsis, 1998: 68-69). There were schools for girls before the independence. But, adoption of these schools for Muslim girls took time. Most of the rich families continued to employ private teachers for their daughters (Jarrow, 1992: 92).

"The Silences of the Palace" has important details about women's education during the period. First of all, when we look at the whole film, we see that taking education is not possible for servants. Also the film corrects the data about rich families' employment of private teachers for their daughters. In scene 3, Serra's private lute teacher Sid el 'Hedi comes to the palace and gives lute lesson to Serra. Alia also joins the lesson, but as a servant's daughter, she has no right to disturb Serra's lessons or to touch her lute. This scene can be read as; Alia has no chance to take education as a girl coming from a lower class. On the other hand, Serra takes education from a private teacher but she has no right to go to school or go out. Besides, when Lotfi comes to palace, we learn that he is

teacher of Serra and Ali, Sid 'Ali's brother's children. The only scene Alia learns how to write her name is scene 9. In the scene Lotfi teaches her writing her name. In general, we say that film has a parallel story with the period's Tunisia.

When we look to almost a decade later's Tunisia as it is represented in **“Halfaouine”**, we see that there is no scene related with women's education. Since the film's structure is shaped with the distinctions between women's and men's world, film uses the private sphere metaphor to represent women's area. There is no mention of education at this inside world. We can come to a conclusion at that point: According to this film, women's education was not a current discussion subject in the neighbourhoods of Tunisia in 1960s.

Also in **“Aziza”**, we only learn in scene 9 that Aziza went to school until the end of second year of secondary school in 1969. She left the school because of family reasons and could not continue her education. It will not be wrong to evaluate this situation as: Modernization and improvements in the education system coming from above could not reach to all levels of society in 1980s as they are represented in **“Aziza”**. In the film, education is represented as a difficult process for women of lower classes and not being able to continue to education is a natural consequence of their life conditions. Her level of education is enough for Aziza to be a factory worker. But we cannot make an evaluation of whether she would find a better job if she had a higher level of education.

“Clay Dolls” passes in an important period for women's education. In Ben 'Ali's period, education has been seen as one of the most important parts of

women's modernization project. For instance a national campaign to eradicate illiteracy brought "the 1994 UNESCO prize for literacy" to UNFT (Tunisia Online, 2006).

Contrary to these developments, there is no scene emphasizing women's education in the film. When four films analyzed are taken into consideration, we see that there are detailed representations of uneducated women who could find any chances to go to school or continue their educations. That situation corrects our determination about cinema's choosing suffering characters to represent to be effective and change those women's lives.

When it comes to last film selected for the present study, we meet a very different representation of educated women. Even if there is no mention of their education levels, we understand that Amel and Aicha are educated women. They seem as the representation of achievement of Tunisian modernization project's most important branch in cinema: An educated woman who stands on her feet.

4.2 Traditional Roles in the Private Sphere

When representation of women's modernization process in the films is taken into consideration as a whole, it is seen that traditional roles in the private sphere does not change so much, though taking place in the private sphere and having a paid job outside the house increased as the modernization process continued. Having a general overview about this point is possible by looking at the related scenes in the five films.

In "**the Silences of the Palace**", servant women do all the traditional roles of women like cooking, cleaning, serving meal, child caring and laundry. Even

if they do all these works as they are servants and their situation is different from a housewife's since this is their job, we can still count them as they play the traditional roles of women because there is no scene in the film that shows they're paid for their work.

Since traditional roles of a woman is one of the most resistant subjects against change, **“Halfaouine”**'s representation of traditional roles in the private sphere is necessary to examine. In **“Halfaouine”** houses are represented as places where women are sovereigns. In scene 5, we see this situation clearly. In the scene, neighbour women come to visit Noura's mother before Noura's brother's circumcision. We see that they feel relaxed and free inside the house (they are at the backyard actually) and they joke with one another. In the end of the scene father brings a bag and puts it in front of women. He does not look them and enters into the house as he is embarrassed. In the scene women are represented as free in the private sphere and men are not free in and belong to women's world.

“Aziza” is a successful representation of both taking place in the public sphere and traditional roles in the private sphere of a woman. Aziza grew up in the private sphere by doing all household chores and serving her uncle and cousin. Her role in the society is becoming a housewife. Scene 6 is one of the key scenes of the film referring to traditional roles of a woman and men's opinions about the subject. In the scene when Ali says to Ibrahim that Aicha was an actress, and uncle adds “If you really want to know, all Tunisians are artists.” He shows Aziza and says that she was trained for kitchen roles. Then he

says “Aziza, play your role!” Aziza stands up and goes to kitchen since she can do nothing but playing her traditional female role.

It seems that playing traditional roles which society gives to a woman and doing these as a paid job are mixed to each other in **“Clay Dolls”**. This situation is similar to “the Silences of the Palace” to some degree. But servant characters of “the Silences of the Palace” do not do this work as a paid job since they are unpaid workers. Besides these, there is a very important critique in this film: Child workers. Little girls are brought from the village and work in rich families houses. They are not thought as they are children and all traditional roles of a woman are waited from them. In scene 4 we can see such a situation. Mrs Amina tells Feddha not to play with other kids and stay near her. Then she changes her name as Selma. But Feddha cannot stand this situation for a long time and runs away. When Omrane asks what happened in scene 8, she answers “Walls...walls everywhere. They took my clay.” As a child she wants to be free, go out to streets, and play with her clay and other children. But all houseworks and daily chores, even looking after sick Baba Jafar, are her duties as if she is an adult. As a child worker, Feddha will not have so much chance for having education, having a good job, search her identity and stand on herself when she grow up. This critical structure of the film represents us that, child workers are still an important problem of modernizing societies like Tunisia (Dixon, 1982).

In **“Be My Friend”**, traditional roles of a woman in the private sphere is not represented as much as other four films. Similar to “Aziza”, traditional roles in the private sphere are represented as the opposites of a women’s taking place

in the public sphere. This can be read as, traditional roles and independent woman image are not represented together in Tunisian cinema.

4.2.1 Unpaid Work/ Housework

When traditional roles of women are taken into consideration, one can say doing housework is the prior role of a woman. In all the films selected for the present study, women are seen while they are doing housework. Examining housework as an unpaid work is seen necessary for us because women's taking place in the public sphere and having a paid job increased year by year, but doing housework has remained as one of the major works of a woman in Tunisia.

In **“the Silences of the Palace”**, there are important scenes related with the housework issue. For instance in scene 6, women are at the kitchen of the palace and cooking. In the same scene, Sid 'Ali enters kitchen and wants something to eat for his friends. In that scene, it is clearly understood that that kitchen is the place of women where they can be influential. Also in scene 5, while Khaticah is trying to warn Alia against men she says that Alia's place is in the kitchen, near herself. Alia answers as she hates saucepans. Khaticah gets angry because she thinks that she belongs to world of kitchen and her daughter should be belonging to same world too. Besides these, women are seen while they are serving in various scenes. For instance in scene 7, Khaticah brings tea to Sid 'Ali's room and washes his feet.

By examining all the film, we can make a final statement about the subject: At the period the film passes, and still today, a woman's way of not to being obliged to doing housework is employing another woman as a servant to

do houseworks instead of herself. Ladies of the palace do not do housework since they are rich and have servants.

But, if a woman is not rich enough to have servants, she continues doing housework as one of her prior traditional roles. In **“Halfaouine”** which passes in almost a decade later than “the Silences of the Palace”’s story, housework is the major role of the lady of the house. In “Halfaouine” one can see almost all the traditional roles of a woman in the private sphere such as child caring, cooking, cleaning and serving to their husbands. In scene 3, mother and father talk about Latifa. At that time, mother washes father’s feet. Also, when Leila has been taken to the house as a housemaid, she gets no money for this work. She works only for meal, bed and clothes. We see her while doing housework in various scenes.

Representation of a woman image working outside the house, searching her identity and standing on her feet can emerge during the end of 1970s and the beginning of 1980s. **“Aziza”** stands at a very important point for the subject. We see Aziza while doing housework from the beginning of the film. In scene 4 Ali gives a cleaning brush to Aziza since he thinks cleaning as Aziza’s duty. That’s why also uncle says Aziza to play her role in scene 5. When uncle was taken into the hospital, Aziza visits her in scene 7. Uncle says “At least you have some respite. You must have gotten sick of...Aziza, give...get...cook, clean up!” Uncle’s words summarize Aziza’s duties and difficulty of them. But uncle’s death is not a respite for Aziza. She has to continue doing all houseworks while also working in the factory.

When we consider “the Silences of the Palace” and “Halfaouine”, we can say that there is no change of housework duties of a woman in Aziza, almost 25 years after the independence. On the other hand, female characters of Aziza stand on their feet and struggle against their destinies, differently from female characters of the first two films.

In “Aziza”, housework is represented as a major role of an uneducated woman. On the other hand, housework is represented as a restrictive concept for such a woman even if she has a paid job outside the house since she still has to do all housework when she comes home in the evenings.

In “**Clay Dolls**” we can find important codes about the subject. First of all, we find relevant data from rich women’s taking little girls as housemaids to correct our argument: A woman can only escape from houseworks if she is rich and has another woman to do these works inspite of her. Besides, housework is represented as one of the main duties of women similar to all other films selected for the present study.

There are few scenes representing female characters of “**Be My Friend**” while doing housework. In one of the scenes, Amel cooks after sending her servant. As the lady of the house, she has servants to do all housework. In another scene Amel and Aicha cook together for the dinner. It seems that film does not focus on a woman’s traditional roles in the private sphere like doing housework. It focuses more on an independent woman image and represents such a woman without housework.

4.2.2 Relations with Men

Women's modernization process in Tunisia is strongly connected with their relations with men. First of all, they were men who discussed, shaped and started women's modernization process. In the present study we examined Ibn 'Abi al-Diyaf's *Risalah* as a starting point to analyze initial stages of women's modernization process in Tunisia (Jarow, 1999: 17-18). Since that time, men played the most important roles in the women's modernization process. It will not be wrong to say that Tunisian women are modernized by men, especially after the independence (Jarow, 1999: 90). That does not mean that women have no share in their modernization. But when the effective state feminism during the independence period, woman organizations working for the Tunisian state and unsuccessful endings of women groups struggling for being "independent" from state policies are considered, men's leading and effective role in the issue can be accepted (Charrad, 2001: 219-222, Jarow, 1999: 112 and Murphy, 2003: 175-176). Furthermore, in today's Tunisia the situation is not so much different. Women policies are one of the most important subjects of President Ben 'Ali's administration.

This situation shows itself also in cinema. Most of the directors are men in the Middle East and North Africa. They were men directors who firstly touched on the women issue. Woman directors have entered to arena in the 1980s and it found 1990s for them to be effective on the subject. Today Moufida Tlatli, Selma Beccar and Nejia Ben Mabrouk are among Tunisia's leading directors (Shafik, 1998: 203 and Bouzid-Discacciati, 2000). But it was difficult for them to come to that point. For instance, Moufida Tlatli could find

the opportunity to direct her first film in 1994 (the Silences of the Palace) after working as an editor for long years.

In general, when Tunisian cinema's "female character dominated" structure is taken into consideration, men directors of these films shows us the importance of relations with men from the cinema side of the subject. In Tunisia, almost all men have somethings to say about woman issue.

From this point on, it seems useful to examine relations with men represented in films. There is a classical relationship among women and men in **"the Silences of the Palace"**. Male characters of the film are clearly dominant over female characters. Film gives important clues about relations between men and women at the period. First of all, servant women do almost all service of the men. Besides daily servings like cooking, cleaning and washing the dishes, they dance for them at the parties and even get used for their sexual needs. In scene 5, Khaticah warns Alia against men and says her to be careful and not to allow anybody to come closer her, since if anything happens nobody could save her. In various scenes Khaticah is seen while she's washing Sid 'Ali's feets or massaging Sid 'Ali's brother and while serving tea and meal to them and other guests. Besides, she does belly dance at a party held at the palace. Even if there are women among the guests at the party, this show seems as done for the men. There are various scenes referring to sexual relationships of men with servant women. For instance, Sid 'Ali's brother kisses a servant. Also he can easily rape Khaticah. Starting point of the film is strongly connected with that issue: Alia is the adulterine child of Sid 'Ali and Khaticah. We can come to relations between ladies of the palace and their husbands from that point. Cenina, Sid 'Ali's wife,

knows the truth about Alia. Even if this was never mentioned in the film, we understand from her behaviours that she knows the truth. For instance in the scene which Alia wears one of Cenina's dresses and tries to belly dance like her mother. Cenina sees her and says she was as ignoble as her mother. This reaction stems since she knows Alia is Sid 'Ali's daughter. But there is any scene in which Cenina says something to Sid 'Ali because of his relationship with Khaticah. It seems that she accepted this situation with silence, since she could not give birth to a child. We can never learn from the film what she would do if she has her own child. But as it can be understood from the general atmosphere of the film, she would do nothing since she is a woman, and would think that a man can have sexual relationship with another woman if he returns home in the end.

In **“Halfaouine”** relations with men show important differences from “the Silences of the Palace”. Female characters of “Halfaouine” are active and talking directly with men. Eventhough they live in the private sphere, they do not care men's words. Representation of a women image in this way stems from the genre of the film. Film is a comedy which is a rare genre in the Maghribi cinema. For that reason, even if life style represented in the film is correspondent with the real world, female characters' correspondence with the real world can be discussed. In scene 1, woman who came to Salih's shop enters shop without any hesitations. In other scenes, mother makes herself listened to father. Actually, the most important character is Latifa, a divorced and extrovert woman. She arouses interest of men since she feels no shyness while speaking with them. She goes out frequently, and walks in the street. Her behaviours

disturbs father and in scene 3, he says he didn't want her at his home. But in scene 4, he embraces Latifa without her permission. Differently from "the Silences of the Palace"'s female characters, Latifa does not submit to this harassment and pushes him.

On the other hand, film represents very important details about the period. First of all, film represents that, in a Muslim society even if it has been modernizing, a divorced woman or a woman who separated from her fiancé do not meet with tolerance in the society. Latifa is a divorced woman who wants to be free. But people around her do not accept her situation directly. In scene 3, father says he didn't want her at his house. When mother says she could not turn out Latifa, father answers "I do not have cousins who say no to rich husbands. I do not want her here. A divorce and penniless too. No way." Besides Latifa's situation, Salouha also faces with same problem. She wants to marry someone. But this is not easy for her since she got engaged once and her fiancé left her.

In sum, relations with men in "Halfaouine" represents differences between men's and women's worlds and traditional pressures over women even if they are free in the private sphere.

In "**Aziza**", relations with men forms one of the basic elements of the film. Produced in a period of change in the women issue, "Aziza" has a critical approach towards relations with men concept. Different from "the Silences of the Palace" and "Halfaouine", representation of relations with men is multi-dimensional in "Aziza". If we start from the beginning, we see that Aziza was raised by her uncle and lives with him and his son. Aziza's relations with these two men are one of the most important parts of the film. Whether in conscious

or not, these two men do not consider Aziza's identity and individuality seriously. In scene 4, Ali sees himself as the boss and Aziza as his secretary since Aziza cannot have an equal position with him as a woman. In scene 6, we see Ali's attitude to Aziza clearly. He threatens and manhandles Aziza. He also despises her and says Ibrahim was better and more dignified than her. Ali's attitude to Aziza is the breaking point of the film. After arguing about hospital documents, Ali expels Aziza from the house. After that event, Aziza goes to Aicha's house and decides to stand on her feet. She realizes that she does not need a man to survive.

Moreover, different from the rest of four selected films, male characters directly state their opinions about women's emancipation and modernization in "Aziza". Ali says that Tunisian women were liberated in scene 5. Ibrahim answers as he heard that Tunisian women were very modern and they played an important role in the society. When Aziza and Aicha laugh, Ali says that women had advanced. Ironically, uncle says that all Tunisians were artists and Aziza was trained for kitchen roles. Then, Aziza goes to kitchen to play her role and serves to quests. This is an important scene since it represents men's thoughts about women's modernization and contains such an irony. Male characters of the film are seen as they are conscious about the importance of the subject. But on the other hand, while speaking about the subject they continue to see women as trained for kitchen roles, not for paid jobs in the public sphere.

One of the main objectives of the film is a woman's standing on her feet. Besides standing on a critical point against the relations with men, "Aziza" also focuses on the idea that a woman does not need a man to survive.

Leading male character Omrane represents a different man portrait in **“Clay Dolls”**. In the film, Salha’s son Riva is a hard and disrespectful character to women. He disturbs Rebeh in every opportunity and wants her to prostitute. On the contrary, Omrane is a docile and tolerant man towards women. Because of this, Rebeh can easily tell him what happened. In scene 2, she tells him her relationship with a man. She says “I know you are a good man.” In scene 6, Rebeh tells him that she was pregnant. Omrane does not say anything and tries to solve the “problem”. He wants Rebeh to marry doorman of the apartment. That becomes the breaking point of their relationship and Omrane understands that he loves Rebeh.

Actually, film has important representations of the influence of the patriarchal system. Even if Omrane is a docile and tolerant man, Rebeh lives in a men’s world and becoming free in the public sphere which belongs to men is not easy. In scene 1, Rebeh enters a pub where only men can enter. One of the men at the pub says “That’s forbidden. Are not you ashamed?” Rebeh’s entrance to the pub is a symbolic entrance to men’s world. With this way, Rebeh enters a forbidden area to woman. When Omrane sees her, he gets anxious and says that she was crazy and men at the pub would smash her face in. This can be read as: A woman who enters a forbidden area like men’s world, is punished in a traditional society.

Similar to **“Clay Dolls”**, leading male character of **“Be My Friend”** is different from the rest of three films. Slah is also a docile man who is under the effect of his wife. In the film, women’s relations with men take shape around the relationship of Amel, Aicha and Slah. Amel’s strong personality affects

Slah's life and his relations with other people. In scene 1, Slah goes to see his friends after a year he spent in the clinique. When he tells his plan about to stage a theater play, his friend Anis mentions Amel and says that she could produce the play. He tells Slah that he was lucky because of his wife.

We clearly see the dominance of female characters in the film. For instance in scene 2, Amel says she would pay the expenses of the play. In scene 6, when Amel visits her family, her father asks why Slah could not find a regular job. Then he says "Our daughter's money, our money is his money." Actually, Slah is represented as under the shadow of Amel. He also says he wanted to divorce since he could not stand being shadow of a woman anymore.

On the other hand, there is an important point to criticize: Amel and Aicha are educated urban women from rich and/or intellectual families. When other four films are taken into consideration, it is seen that in this film women from upper classes of the society are represented as effective and doing whatever they want in their relations with man. Other four film's characters are women of lower classes who suffer in their relations with men.

4.3 Marriage and Romantic Love

In a modernizing society, marriage and romantic love and development of this concept in the society is an important indicator of women's modernization process. Starting from the 1950s, we will examine development of this issue as it is represented in cinema films.

In **"the Silences of the Palace"**, marriage and romantic love is also a problematic subject for its female characters. In scene 7, when Khaticah takes tea to Sid 'Ali's room, Sid 'Ali holds her hands and hugs her. We understand

that Sid 'Ali and Khaticah love each other, but they cannot marry since they belong to different classes. Alia does not want to share same destiny with her mother and runs away with Lutfi in the final of the film. But this escape cannot rescue her. Lutfi does not marry her. In scene 2, Alia says that she was worrying because of neighbours. She lives with Lutfi without marriage, and suspects that neighbours know everything. Besides, she is pregnant and Lutfi wants her to abort the child since they are not yet married. He says "A child needs a name, needs a family and marriage." We cannot learn from the film why he does not marry her. But we can say that Alia sees marriage as a salvation and thinks that she cannot have a normal life without marriage. At that point their impossible marriage turns to a situation destroying their romantic love.

Film represents marriage and romantic love of people from different classes as an unacceptable situation for the period. Besides, marriage is represented as an important element of relations between men and women. According to this, a woman can change her destiny with a good marriage. Moreover, film represents that living together of women and men without marriage is also unacceptable for the society of 1950s and 1960s Tunisia.

Also in "**Halfaouine**" marriage is represented as one of the most important elements of the society. In other words, marriage is represented as a bridge between men's world outside and women's world inside. Because of this, Latifa's divorce or Salouha's separation from her fiancé is not met with tolerance. We can say that, marriage is seen as the only way of a woman's living an honourable life and as suitable to society's structure.

Marriage and romantic love do not constitute an important point of “**Aziza**”. Aziza is represented as a woman searching her identity and individuality and trying to stand on her feet. Marriage and romantic love are represented as opposites of this search. In the film, love cannot be confessed and marriage is something that is not possible. A woman goes together with a man since she has no other chances to save herself. In scene 10, Aicha chooses going with Ibrahim. As an alone woman, she will not have a normal life because of her job. To be in safety and far away from prejudices and disturbances, Aicha thinks going with Ibrahim as a solution. But Aziza does not try such a solution. She tries to stop Aicha. Male characters of the film are also affected from the conditions of their life and developments of the period. Ali never says he loves her. Similarly, we can never learn whether Aziza loves him or not.

In “the Silences of the Palace” and “Halfaouine”, marriage and romantic love are also represented as problem issues. But the issue is not represented as opposite of a woman’s search for her identity and individuality and her struggle to stand on her feet. On the contrary, the concept is represented as a way of salvation and social acceptance for a woman. Under the effect of changes of 1980s, concept seems to be converted as an obstacle to women’s independence.

In “**Clay Dolls**” marriage and romantic love is one of the dilemmas of the story. In scene 3, Rebeh offers Omrane to marry her. Even if the real reason behind this behaviour is to protect herself since she is pregnant, this is a courageous behaviour for Rebeh as a weak female character.

Actually, marriage and love seems not possible for the characters of the film. Rebeh and Omrane cannot confess their love to each other till the end of

the film. We can think that, Rebeh would not offer Omrane to marry her if she was not pregnant. Similar to “the Silences of the Palace” and “Halfaouine”, marriage is represented as a way of salvation for women in “Clay Dolls”. When Omrane learns that Rebeh is pregnant, he rapidly looks for a man to marry Rebeh. He offers this to doorman, because Rebeh would be in safety and problem would be solved with that way.

Similar to “Aziza”, marriage and romantic love is represented as an obstacle to woman’s freedom in **“Be My Friend”**. As we understand from the film, marriage is not an obstacle only if the woman is rich and can stand on her feet. In scene 3, Aicha’s boyfriend Taieb says that he wanted to marry her. Aicha’s answer is “Are you serious? What about my freedom?” On the other hand, Amel and Slah are married. But in their relationship, Amel is the strong and effective one who earns money for the family. She also gives other important decisions about the family. For instance in scene 6, when her mother asks her about having children, she answers as she didn’t want to have children. In sum, marriage cannot restrict Amel’s freedom. It is noteworthy to state that although Amel’s and Aicha’s independent images are in correspondence with the independent woman image that applies of Tunisian modernization want to create, these film character’s point of view against relations with men and marriage seems not relevant with the aims of applies of the modernization. It seems not possible that they want to create a woman image that stands far away from the marriage in a traditional society.

4.4 Sexuality

Sexuality is an important sign of women's modernization. The regulation of sexuality has been an important item in the political agendas of the nationalist states in the Middle East (Jayawardena, 1986). Besides, to build a nationalist state from an Islamic state required a lot of new regulations, not only in the public arena but in the private arena as well (Cindoğlu, 1991: 129). Both Middle Eastern and modern nationalism movements which emerged in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century had an agenda related to the regulation of sexuality and thus had a tremendous effect on the manners and morals of their time (Cindoğlu, 1991: 129). When Tunisian modernization process is taken into consideration, examination of sexuality appears as a necessity.

In **“the Silences of the Palace”** sexuality is represented as an element of daily life and also a problem for the female characters. In scene 4, when Alia menstruates Khaticah tells her that this happens to every girl. She says “But be careful, tell me everything.” In scene 5, Khaticah washes Alia in the bathroom and warns her against men. She says “If anything happens, you'd be ruined. Nobody can save you then.” Sexuality is dangerous for Alia since she is a servant's daughter. Khaticah wants to protect her because she cannot stand against princes' sexual abuse of her. She does not want same thing happen to Alia. She fall pregnant because of Sid 'Ali's brother's rape and dies while she is trying to having a miscarriage secretly.

In the film women not only cannot live their sexuality as they want but also try to protect themselves against men. Besides, if anything happens like falling pregnant, they should solve this problem secretly in silence. This

situation represented in the film is not parallel with the political developments of the period. After the independence lots of rights were given to women with the Code of Personal Status (CPS). But all these rights affected women's role in the public sphere at first. Emergence of regulations' effect in the private sphere took time.

Contrary to "the Silences of the Palace", sexuality is an everyday subject for "**Halfaouine**"s female characters. We can discuss sexuality concept represented in "Halfaouine"s correspondence with the real world as well as "the Silences of the Palace". Film's structure transferring sexuality openly and scenes representing naked women in the Turkish bath are because of France's support to film-making in its ex-colonies as co-productions (Shafik, 1998: 35). By this way, these films can include scenes of sex and nudity. We will see same situation in "Be My Friend".

In scene 1, Salih openly invites the woman to his shop in the middle of the street and woman enters without any anxiety. This type of relationship seems not possible when the period's conditions are taken into consideration. A boy's sexual awakening and relations with women are also represented in the film. Noura watches naked women at the Turkish bath. He is expelled from there because of this reason. Shortly after, housemaid Leila takes his interest. Leila's openness about her sexuality is much more different from "the Silences of the Palace"s female characters.

On the other hand, film has important codes about society's taking side with men. After mother saw Noura and Leila when Leila is naked, she decides to sent Leila from the house. Sheik comes and takes away Leila from the house.

Sheik smiles and says that Noura was a man from now on. Naturally, nothing is done to Noura. This is a general opinion in the society: Noura is thought as “grew up”, but Leila is punished since she is a woman. Moreover, we see a similar situation in scene 4. After saying that he didn’t want Latifa at his home, father embraces Latifa without her permission in scene 4. Besides, film’s general atmosphere represents public sphere as men’s arena. All these point out the sovereignty of patriarchal system in Tunisia. We will see the resistance of patriarchal system to modernization while analyzing other films that represent different stages of modernization.

“**Aziza**” keeps away from sexuality. As in marriage and romantic love concepts, there is almost no stress to this subject in the film. From this point on, we can make a general evaluation: In 1980s, emergence of a woman image struggling for her identity, independence and social acceptance in the private sphere withdrew her image in the public sphere. Hence, representation of a woman’s sexuality was not preferred in cinema films of the period.

Sexuality is represented as a problem issue in “**Clay Dolls**”. A woman’s sexuality is represented as something that causes trouble for herself. Rebeh gets pregnant and cannot tell this to anyone except Omrane, since she knows she will be excluded and blamed by other people. In scene 7, Rebeh dances in front of Omrane. When Omrane stops her, Rebeh says that she was trying to help him. But Omrane does not reply her since he knows that sexuality is something dangerous for people like them and virginity is something so much important in the society, even if Rebeh is not a virgin. From this point on, we can say that

sexuality is represented as an issue that causes trouble for women similar to other films we analyzed.

“Be My Friend” is the most open minded film about sexuality. In the film, a woman’s living her sexuality without any shyness is represented clearly. For instance, differently from female characters of other films, Aicha can directly speak about sexuality in scene 5. In general, sexuality is represented as a natural concept for a modern woman who is conscious about her identity and individuality. Actually, Amel and Aicha are representations of educated urban and modern women; they are not representations of women searching their identities and trying to modernize, like Aziza or Rebeh.

4.5 Relations with Other Women

Relations between women are among the main elements of women history. It is possible to mention woman solidarity in almost every area where women issue is in question.

Relations between women have an important place in women’s modernization process of Tunisia. Besides some women’s individual attempts during the nationalist opposition period like Radhiyah Haddad’s going to Muslim Summer Camp for Girls as unveiled and retaining her veil when going out (Raccagni, 1983: 261), there were collective attempts to conscious women like the UMFT, UFT and then UNFT (Brand, 1998: 202-203). In 1980s some independent organizations like CECF, CSF and FD were founded (Brand,1998: 223-224). Even the UNFT is a state controlled organization and has a big control over the country’s women groups; it is a good example for women solidarity.

Also in cinema, relations between women in women films are one of the most stressed subjects. Arab and Tunisian cinemas' development processes denote that, relations between women is one of the most permanent subjects of the films. There are representations of relations between women and women solidarity almost in all films about women issue. In sum, it is possible for us to say that, even if reasons of their solidarity or quarrel change from period to period, importance of the concept remains unchanged.

In **“the Silences of the Palace”** there are lots of references to woman solidarity. For instance when Alia gets sick, Khaticah and Hatti Huda buy a lute together for her. Besides, when Khaticah understands that she is pregnant because of the rape, she firstly tells to other women. They say that they would help her to miscarry the child.

The most important relationship is the one between Alia and Khaticah. Their keen tie is represented in detail. We understand that they love and bother each other so much. Alia gets upset since her mother do everything that the Beys want, belly dancing and spending the night with them as well. Alia wants to learn who her father is, but Khaticah never says the truth. On the other hand, Khaticah worries for Alia and tries to protect her against men. Their relation remains as an unsolved problem. In sum, relations between women are represented as one of the main elements forming the story.

Relations with other women are also an important feature of **“Halfaouine”**. Woman solidarity is represented clearly in the film. For instance, when father says he didn't want Latifa, mother defends her and convinces father about her stay in scene 3. Besides, scenes representing female characters while

cooking or going to Turkish bath together are good examples of women relations in a traditional society. In scene 5, women of the neighbourhood come together, cook and talk in the “secure” environment of the house. When Latifa comes to house in scene 2, mother and Salouha mess her clothes and Latifa dresses Salouha one of her clothes. At that time Noura also comes home and starts observing them. Noura’s coming home from the outside is a passing from men’s hard world to women’s soft world. Just before Latifa come, Noura watches a fight among the men of the neighbourhood. This is a well representation of the differences between men and women’s relations with fellows.

It is possible for us to examine the subject from two different sides in “**Aziza**”. There is a detailed representation of woman solidarity on the one hand, and there are prejudices of women against another woman on the other hand. First of all, we see a well representation of solidarity between Aziza and Aicha. In scene 3, their friendship starts when Aicha asks Aziza’s name. When Ali expels Aziza from the house, Aziza goes to Aicha’s house. Thus, they start living together. Besides, Aicha helps Aziza to find a job. Also Azia never behaves towards Aicha as other women do. She listens and supports Aicha since the beginning of their friendship. This solidarity between two women is represented as one of the most important elements of the film. We understand that these two women can only depend on themselves by supporting each other. On the other hand, there are prejudices and blames of other women against Aicha. We see dimensions and effects of these attitudes from Jamila’s behaviours against Aicha in scene 1 and scene 2. In sum, it will not be wrong to

say that women also become pitiless against their fellows under the effect of traditional rules.

In “**Clay Dolls**”, relationship between Feddha and Rebeh is one of the most effective elements of the film. Even if Feddha is a little girl, this is not an obstacle to their friendship. When they meet at Omrane’s house, Rebeh teaches Feddha how to stand being locked up and behaving like an adult. Actually, film is constituted from the parallel stories of these two women. Their friendship is represented as a breaking point of the film. Their ways are separated shortly after they met. At that point, we continue to watch the film with a parallel editing. They suffer because of other people and they find the solution as running away. When they can come together, film’s story is also concluded. This friendship is similar to representation of woman solidarity in three films we previously analyzed.

Woman friendship and solidarity are also among the most important elements of “**Be My Friend**”. Even if they cannot get on well with each other at the beginning, Amel and Aicha become friends when Slah gets sick. Amel invites Aicha to her parents’ house. This invitation becomes starting point of their friendship. Two women act with solidarity to cure Slah. Even if they came together for a man, when the film’s story goes forward, we understand that they have a same point of view against the life and that’s why they can understand each other.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS

Women's modernization process in Tunisia, development of Tunisian cinema within the Arab cinema, and women's representations in Tunisian films has been the focus of this study. I have examined stages of women's modernization starting from the early reformers to present in my second chapter. In the third chapter, I discussed development of Arab cinema, Maghribi cinema within the Arab cinema and Tunisian cinema within the Maghribi cinema. Analysis of women representations in the selected films is the focal point of the fourth chapter.

In this chapter, I will discuss the results of my analysis of representations of women image in Tunisian films. The main goal in this chapter is to evaluate the outputs of a third world Muslim country's project to modernize its women by systematically analyzing films. I will discuss the effect and relevance of my outcomes to the concepts of women's positions in the public and private spheres by the subjects I evaluated in the fourth chapter.

But it seems necessary for me to make a general review of second and third chapters by also stating my findings of the study.

Process of women's modernization in Tunisia has not been an easy process. One of the reasons behind my selection of Tunisia as the study area of my thesis was Tunisia's difference in living stages of modernization in a

systematic order without an interruption or crisis. That is almost a unique situation in the Middle East and North Africa (except Turkey).

Women issue was discussed by men at first in the pre-independence period. Early reformers Ibn 'Abi al-Diyaf and al-Tahar al-Haddad discussed woman's position in the Tunisian society. Al Haddad thought that, if a woman took a good education equal to a man's education, there would be no necessity of veiling to protect women from immoral behaviours. Thus, he defended education of women and abolition of veil (Jarrow, 1999: 59). That was a very radical opinion for the period.

Education of women was also in question during the colonial period. The French socialists were interested in women issue in Tunisian society and wrote articles about the subservient situation of women (Jarrow, 1999: 38-39). In 1920s, an active debate about abolition of veil and women's education between Mohammad Nomane and Habib Bourguiba was carried on in the articles (Jarrow, 1999: 59). Nomane was supporting abolition of the veil and women's taking an education equal to men. Since he was thinking veiled image of Muslim women as a mainstay against French colonialism, Bourguiba was defending the opposite (Raccagni, 1983: 188-189). Bourguiba changed his ideas about the issue after independence and worked for emancipation of women. At the end of 1930s, first organizations formed by women were established. After the independence, the *Union National des Femmes de Tunisie* (UNFT-National Union of Tunisian Women) was formed with the support of the Destour Party. Since that date, the UNFT has been the major woman organization of the country and executed state's women policies (Brand, 1998: 203-207).

With the enactment of the Code of Personal Status (CPS) in 1956, women were given important rights and benefits. With the CPS, polygamy and practice of repudiation was abolished, women had equal rights with men about divorce issue and divorces could be obtained only through the courts (Jarrow, 1999 and Brand, 1998). Also, they have equal rights with men in marriage issue. The CPS also brought an end to arguments about education of women and primary education was rendered mandatory both for girls and boys (Jarrow, 1999 and Charrad, 2001). Since then, education of women has been one of the major issues of women's modernization project of Tunisian government.

After the CPS, other laws giving a woman right to use contraceptives and to have an abortion after she had given birth to five living children were enacted. In 1957, suffrage was given to Tunisian women (Brand, 1998). Besides, women were accepted equal before the law, equal in rights and were to be given equal pay for equal work with men. These laws and reforms led women to participate into community life outside the home (Charrad, 2001). But all these developments were elements of Tunisian state's modernization goals. Independent attempts of women were not approved easily by the state (Brand, 1998: 220-246).

In 1981, the CPS was revised and rights to compensation were given to divorced women. The most important development of the period was changing guise of state feminism (Brand, 1999: 220). In 1970s, women took an active role in informing other women about their new rights. During the beginning of 1980s, they published articles in the daily newspapers, established new women organizations and tried to promote issues about women. Woman groups like

Club d'Etudes de la Condition des Femmes and *Femmes Democrat* (Democrat Women) were established by educated women (Brand, 1998: 221-225). But these individual attempts could not be long-lived and lost their vitalities. Even these developments led to a general loss of control of the UNFT, it continued to be the major women's organization of the country (Brand, 1999: 225-226).

1980s were a successful period for feminism coming from below as a challenge to state feminism (Brand, 1998: 225). Educated women who grew up under the effect of the CPS of 1956 started to look for new ways for the women's improvement. Besides, modernization process' positive effects on women's lives became clearer in this period (Berry and Rinehart, 1988: 105 and Moghadam, 1998: 56-57).

After a constitutional coup, Zine Abidine el-Ben Ali overthrew Bourguiba and became president in 1987. In 1990s, there was a rapidly increasing threat of Islamist movement. Women have been on the front line in the debate between the regime and Islamists (Murphy, 2003: 170). Hence, 1990s became a period in which lots of women organizations were established, new laws were promulgated and the CPS was revised (Brand, 1998: 211). Besides, six women were appointed to ministries in 1992 (Brand, 1998: 243). Moreover, the UNFT has preserved its position as the major women organization of the country. Also because of these developments, Islamism could not be a threat in Tunisia.

In 1990s, women's participation to labor force increased both in urban and rural areas (Moghadam, 1998: 56). Besides, women's literacy level increased and family planning attempts succeeded. All these developments are

indicators of the continuity of women's modernization process. On the other hand, there are continuing problems for women in today's Tunisia. First of all, women are still excluded from some areas of public social life such as cafes (Murphy, 2003: 183), as we see in scene 1 of "Clay Dolls". Besides, they still face with prejudice in the professions of acting and singing and other performs in front of the public (Murphy, 2003: 183). Aicha character of "Aziza" faces with such prejudices since she is an actress. Furthermore, it is still difficult for a woman to live alone, separate from her family or with a male partner (Murphy, 2003: 182-183) as we see in "the Silences of the Palace". Alia and Lotfi are living together without getting married. Alia worries because of neighbour's behaviours. Although these scenes of the film pass in 1960s, we can say that there is not a noteworthy change in the situation.

Tunisia's modernization not only affected developments in social, political and economic areas, but also in culture and arts. Development of Tunisian cinema is also parallel with the country's modernization process. In the third chapter I focused on Arab and Tunisian cinema and development of women image in Tunisian cinema.

The advent of national cinemas of the Middle East and North African countries could only be possible with their independences. Thus, Arab countries' cinema explicitly reflects the independence struggles and modernization processes (Bouzid-Discacciati, 2000). Actually, advent of cinema to Arab world was at the same time with the invention of cinematograph in Europe (Sahfik, 1998: 10). This happened in a period of rising cultural developments and beginnings of modernization in the region.

Since the beginning, there was a dominance of Egyptian cinema all over the region since it spread and was accepted readily in Egypt. The star system, and different film genres- musical, then melodrama, farce and comedy, and the historical and the Bedouin films- emerged in colonial Egypt. After the independence, Egyptian cinema continued its control over the region. On the other hand, Maghribi cinema could develop after the region countries' independences. For that reason, their cinema follows a development and change line affiliated with the modernization processes and political developments of the period.

Actually, Tunisian (and also Maghribi) cinema has a more artistic approach far from populist approaches (Hafez, 1995: 39). This style can be mentioned "auteur cinema" which is rare in the Arab world (Boughedir, 1987). But, this style of auteur cinema is still under the affect of national independence struggles and modernization attempts of the countries (Bouzid-Discacciati, 2000). Characters and stories are created with such an approach. We saw this effect clearly especially on female characters.

Image of women in Tunisian cinema in pre-1980s period was mostly represented as "mother" and "wife" because of the need to create a national identity (Bouzid-Discacciati, 2000). Women in the family would be the mothers and wives of Tunisian men. Thus, they were represented in the private sphere with their relationships with male characters. During the end of 1970s, another woman image who fights for her rights, searches her identity and individuality emerged (Bouzid-Discacciati, 2000). Besides, a "daughter" image was created after 1980 as the representation of the new generation. Daughter characters have

a controversial relationship with their fathers and they fight for their freedom, adequate education and emancipation (Bouzid-Discacciati, 2000). This period of change which started with the 1980s and continued in 1990s led to a noteworthy change in filmmakers approaches to film production with the emergence and consolidation of auteur cinema.

Actually, Tunisian cinema has a critical approach towards women issue. First of all, we can see a dominance of female characters in these selected films. Because of the opinion that a country's modernization can be understood from its women's modernization, filmmakers also focus on female characters in Tunisia. This situation can be evaluated as positive for Tunisia when the rest of the Arab world where there is not so much focus on women is considered. Furthermore, in selected films female characters are represented as uneducated, coming from lower classes, and searching their identities and individualities. In other words, these female characters suffer while trying to live in a modernizing society. This representation of women seems not parallel with the government's representation of modernizing women. While the formal expressions of women's modernization are based on successful examples, cinematic expressions represent suffering ones.

Thus, by taking second and third chapters into consideration, I analyzed five films. I made my analysis by comparing second and third chapters with the representations in the films and comparing five films with each other. Here, I will express my findings from the analysis of selected Tunisian films by considering the study as a whole:

First of all, In Tunisia modernization cannot spread to and cannot be accepted equally in all levels of society. Hence, urban women coming from strong and intellectual families live the advantages of modernization by taking good education and having chance for taking place in the public sphere.

Taking place in the public sphere is not easy for women from the lower classes. Actually, in a third world Muslim country, taking place in the public sphere is difficult for almost every woman who is aware of this difficulty. But, this situation is represented as difficult especially for women of lower classes coming from rural or not. Since 1980s are a breaking point of women's search for their identities, the film "Aziza" has an evident critical approach to the subject.

Having a paid job is also difficult for women. Women ratio that has a paid work has increased year by year in Tunisia. This is a distinctive development for Tunisia among the rest of the Middle Eastern and North African countries. When we look to representations in the films, we see that every woman cannot take part in this system and has a paid work. Besides, when an uneducated woman coming from lower classes find a job, she continues doing it even if the job has hard conditions and low price. Moreover, she is obliged to struggle against traditional prejudices and pressures as a woman working outside the home.

Same conditions are seen in education of women concept. Education of women is one of the fundamental elements of Tunisian modernization process. Since pre-independence period, education of women is a discussion matter. In the films, there is not so much direct emphasis to education of women. Actually,

this non-representation of taking education is a critique to the success of Tunisian education system since the uneducated female characters are clearly understood even if there is not any emphasis in the films. This can be read as; education cannot be equally distributed to everywhere and/or every woman.

Traditional roles of a woman in the private sphere are almost a stable matter in the stages of women's modernization. Doing housework as an unpaid job is the main duty of a woman inside the house. A woman can only escape from doing housework by using other women as servants by paying their wages as in "Clay Dolls", or as housemaids in return for food, meal, bed and clothes as in "the Silences of the Palace" and "Halfaouine".

Contrary to housework concepts, relations with men show differences year by year. In other words, as modernization level increases, relations with men turn to a more complex issue for women. There is representation of a traditional dominated man image in the films passing in 1950s and 1960s. In the 1980s, this image of men is represented as an image needs to be broken by women. 1980s is a period in which the results of the CPS and other laws appeared. With the effect of stirring wave of feminism in Tunisia as well as all over the world, 1980s became an important period for women's modernization. They left the collective image of "modernizing women" as a national goal of the state and started to appear as "individuals" to some degree (Bouzig, 1995: 249). Actually, this search for identity and individuality has not deepened so much, and women remained as a national goal of modernization. But this change became effective in cinema and a woman image searching her identity and individuality has been represented in films. When it comes to relations with

men, such a woman is represented as naturally in a struggle with the dominance of men. This representation continues in the 1990s. On the other hand, woman is represented as the sovereign of the house. This is also a stable matter in the stages of women modernization. Private sphere is represented as belonging to women almost in every film.

Representations of marriage and romantic love have a bilateral structure. Firstly, marriage is seen as a way of acceptance in the society and as a way of salvation by women. In three of the five films (“the Silences of the Palace”, “Halfaouine” and “Clay Dolls”), marriage is represented in such a style. Alone and weak female characters need to marry to be in safety. But on the other hand, in two of the films (“Aziza” and “Be My Friend”), representation of marriage and romantic love is different. “Aziza” was produced in 1980, at the breaking point of women’s modernization in Tunisia, and “Be My Friend” was produced in 2000, 46 years after the independence. In these two films, marriage is represented as a restrictive concept for woman’s freedom. The ideological message in these films was that in order to be “emancipated”, a woman must give up some aspects of her womanhood and pattern herself after male versions of work and sexuality (Cindoğlu, 1991: 165).

Earning money and having no children are the main characteristics of these emancipated modern women. On the other hand, these emancipated modern women are “urban”, “educated” and member of an “elite and intellectual” class of the society as it is represented in “Be My Friend”. If a woman is “uneducated”, “rural” and member of a “lower class”, she suffers

during this process of emancipation and has to struggle against social prejudices and traditional rules.

Representation of sexuality is as a problem and a matter which woman should keep away from. In three of the five films (“the Silences of the Palace”, “Halfaouine” and “Clay Dolls”), sexuality is represented in such a way. Female characters of these films face with problems such as to fall pregnant without marriage and social pressures because of this reason. In “Aziza” there is no emphasis on sexuality of a woman. This can be read as, if a woman searches her identity and struggles for taking place in the public sphere, she should stand at a distance to her sexuality. Actually, this is a clear separation of public and private spheres for a woman. If she takes place in one of them, “public sphere” in this case, she has to give up some parts of the other, like marriage, love and sexuality. On the other hand, female characters of “Be My Friend” have opposite images against these statements. They live their sexuality without facing any problems. Besides, Amel character is married and also a rich woman earning her own money. These characters do not face with difficult problems about taking place in the public sphere. But, female characters of this film are urban, educated and intellectual characters contrary to female characters of the other four films.

Relations with other women have a changing structure. Actually, there is woman solidarity every time. But, subjects they act with solidarity changes from period to period. Woman solidarity is represented as one of the main elements of women’s modernization. They help each other to overcome problems and to become adapted to new conditions. Actually, woman solidarity is an effectively

used concept by the Tunisian government in woman organizations. Woman organizations have been the main institutions for the application of policies on women. But, there is no reference to woman organizations in films. In spite of this, there are detailed representations of woman solidarity in every film.

Finally, when I make a general evaluation of stages of women's modernization in Tunisia, I can state that Tunisia is a successful pattern of the women's modernization process among the Middle Eastern and North African countries (except Turkey). However, modernization cannot reach to every sphere of society at the same time and at the same level in Tunisia. Women of lower classes live difficulties when they come across with this type of modernization, because society cannot accept changes easily. Yet, there is not much mention of this dimension of the subject in the literature about women's modernization in Tunisia, as I examined in chapter 2²⁴. Thus, I looked at cinema and examined reflections of women in films. I found that, cinema more focuses on suffering women from the lower classes.

In conclusion, in this thesis I exposed that, the statement of stages of women's modernization in general literature may not be the whole expression of the real circumstances. On the other hand, representation of women characters in the selected films also may not be in correspondence with the reality. From this point on, it is necessary to state outputs of these two conditions. First of all, when general literature on women's modernization is taken into consideration, it is seen that laws and regulations, attempts of improving education, woman

²⁴ For instance, Moghadam, 1999: 51- 74, Murphy, 2003: 169-193 (Murphy's work has a part titled "Discrimination Remains" as a critique to the subject), Raccagni, 1983, Natsis, 1998 and Jarrow, 1999: 15-138.

organizations and social projects are important and required elements of modernization in a non-western, Muslim society in which there is a modernization from above²⁵. Secondly, when it is looked to representations on films by taking these elements into consideration, it is seen that lower class women are represented as facing with problems in stages of Tunisian modernization and cannot take place in the public sphere easily. Thus, one can conclude that expansion of women's modernization is not rapid and equal in the Tunisian society.

When it comes to shortcomings of this study and suggestions for future research; first of all, this study could be done by going to Tunisia and making interviews with Tunisian women. Secondly, a more detailed research of all Tunisian films related with the subject could be done. Finally, Interviews with Tunisian women and men who watched these films could be done.

²⁵ I stated my reason for using “modernization from above” concept in my introduction chapter.

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APPENDICES

a. DATA COLLECTION SCHEDULE

Name of the Film :

Director :

Scriptwriter :

Year :

Duration :

Language :

Cast :

1. List of the Characters and Their Relationships

2. Representation of Modernization and Women in Tunisian Cinema

Films

1) Taking Place in the Public Sphere

1.1 Paid Work

1.2 Education

2) Traditional Roles in the Private Sphere

2.1 Unpaid Work/ Housework

2.2 Relations with Men

3) Marriage and Romantic Love

4) Sexuality

5) Relations with Other Women

b. SELECTED SCENES²⁶

b.1

Name of the Film	: SILENCES OF THE PALACE
Director	: Moufida Tlatli
Scriptwriter	: Moufida Tlatli
Year	: 1994
Duration	: 126 min.
Language	: Arabic with Turkish subtitles
Cast	: Hend Sabri, Ghalia Lacroix, Amel Hedhili, Sami Bouajila, Najia Ouerghi, Kamel Fazaa

Selected Scenes and Summary of the Film

Alia is a 25 - year old singer who sings at ceremonies and parties. She lives with Lutfi, who rejects to marry her. Film begins with Alia's singing a song at a ceremony. After her performance, she goes near to Lutfi, who waits for her in a car outside the building.

²⁶ The subtitles are given with no changes or correction

SCENE 1

Exterior, Night, Alia and Lutfi



Scene 1

Lutfi: You are late. I'm almost asleep. Did they disturb you?

Alia: Chronic disturbances.

L: Do not bother. Everybody knows that you live with me. Did you take your medicine?

SCENE 2

Interior, Night, Alia and Lutfi

Alia lies on the bed. Lutfi comes and turns the light on.

Alia: Turn the light off.

Lutfi: (Means her headache) Is it still aching?

A: I'm worrying.

L: Why?

A: Because of neighbours. They are looking at me. They are watching me everytime. They are looking at me with accusations as they know everything.

L: It's according to you. They know nothing about you. These days will pass. You'll feel better tomorrow.

A: Then everything will start again. Every abortion gives pain. A part of me will leave me. I do not want this abortion.

L: You are crazy. I thought that we finished this discussion. A child needs a name, needs a family and marriage.



Scene 2

A: I do not want you marry me. I'm an unsuccessful singer.

L: It's enough Alia. You are torturing both of us. You know I love you. You are so important for me.

A: You always win. I'll get abortion tomorrow. My head is about to crack.

After this quarrel, Lutfi tells Alia that Hossein came from the palace and said that Sid 'Ali was dead. This event upsets Alia so much, and she goes to palace where she grew up and then left ten years ago at a very bad night. When Alia goes to palace, she sees inhabitants of the palace, and she starts walking

around. While walking around at the palace, she remembers old memories and the story of the film goes to ten years before, to the year 1956, with flashbacks.

Alia is the adulterine child of Prince Sid 'Ali and Khaticah, one of the servants of the palace. Even if everybody in the palace knows this truth, nobody tells it with high voice, since silence is an unchangeable rule in the palace. Alia grew up in the palace among servants and owners of the palace. She's best friend is Serra, daughter of Sid 'Ali's brother.

Another rule in the palace is that there is no permission of women's going out. Beacuse of this, women from the family take private lessons from private tutors. Servants take no education.

SCENE 3

Exterior, Daytime, Alia, Serra, Guard and Sid el Hedi (Lute teacher of Serra)

Alia and Serra try to get out from the opened door of the garden. Guard stops them.

Guard: Alia, Serra, move back. I'll say to your mother if you go out.

Serra: Sid el Hedi came!

(Sid el Hedi is the lute teacher of Serra. Alia also joins lessons near Serra. But she has no right to touch Serra's lute and disturb her lessons.)



Scene 3.1

Sid el Hedi: Hello, sit down. (To Serra) Did you do your homework?
You played so slow last time. Try to play faster this time.

Serra's brother: Serra come here right now!



Scene 3.2

*Alia menstruates. She feels ashamed and hides this from other women.
Khaticah understands this and wants to inform her. But she does this in their
bedroom, not in front of other women.*

SCENE 4

Interior, Daytime, Alia and Khaticah

They are in their bedroom.

Khaticah: This happens to every girl. Henceforth you can join us in Ramadan. But be careful, do not hide anything from me (Tell me everything).

SCENE 5

Interior, Daytime, Alia and Khaticah

They are in the bathroom. Khaticah washes Alia.

Khaticah: You grew up from now on (Sits near Alia). Be careful. Do not allow anybody to come near you. If a man touches you, run atonce. If anything happens, you'll be ruined. Nobody can save you then.

Alia: Even Sid 'Ali?

K: Even Sid 'Ali.



Scene 5

K: Your place is in the kitchen, near me.

A: I hate saucepans.

K: You hate now, is that so? Do not talk with me like that.

A: I'll learn how to play lute.

K: With which lute?

A: I cannot play Serra's. Her mother does not permit.

K: Do not take Serra as a model to yourself.

A: So who will I take as a model?

(Khaticah does not answers.)

A: Who is my father?

K: Shut up, do not mention his name.

A: Can I go to party tonight?

K: No. Party is not for you.

At the party, Khaticah does belly dance in front of palace's princes and quests. Alia watches party with Serra secretly. When she sees her mother's dance, she feels sad and goes to another room of the palace. This room is Sid 'Ali's wife Cenina's room. Alia wears one of Cenina's dresses and tries to make belly dance like her mother. At that time, Cenina comes to her room. When she sees Alia, she gets angry and says Alia is as ignoble as her mother. Alia runs to her and her mother's room. The day after, she borrows Serra's lute, and sings a song while playing it. Sid 'Ali hears her voice, and applauds.

SCENE 6

Interior, Daytime, Khaticah, Alia, Hatti Huda and other servants

They are at the kitchen.

Woman 1: Do not mix into my business. I have been making deserts since 14 years.

Woman 2: I'm tired of so much. Hurry up. The cream is going to sour.

Woman 1: I cannot go faster.

(Alia enters kitchen and goes near Khaticah)

Alia: Will you dance tonight?

Khaticah: Go to your bed.

A: I want to come.

K: There is no party tonight. Go and sleep, do not bother me.

Hatti Huda: Let her go. She is a child yet.

K: Child? What child? Look, now she is as tall as me (She gets out).

H: (To Alia) eat your meal.

(Alia sits at a chair)

A: I'm not hungry.

H: Men do not like skinny women. A woman should be plump. Don't
be anxious, whatever will be, will be.



Scene 6

(Sid Ali comes)

H: Sid Ali!

Sid Ali: (Puts his hand into Alia's shoulder) Is there anything to eat for my friends.

H: There are so much. Have not you got prepared? Everybody is ready.

S: I forgot, send something to eat upstairs.

After the guests left, Khaticah takes tea to Sid 'Ali's room. Alia follows her secretly. There is another servant at Sid 'Ali's room. When Khaticah comes, she gets out without saying anything. She goes to Sid 'Ali's brother's room, and wants new earrings. Sid 'Ali's brother kisses her. At this time, Khaticah serves tea to Sid 'Ali at the other room. Alia listens to them.

SCENE 7

Interior, Night, Khaticah and Sid 'Ali

(Sid Ali sits on the bed. Khaticah washes his feet)

Sid 'Ali: Alia is a jewel. She will be a very beautiful woman.

Khaticah: (Stands up) Do not mention her.

S: You know that I love her so much (Holds Khaticah's hand and hugs her).



Scene 7

Sid 'Ali and Khaticah love each other, but they cannot marry since they belong to different classes. Khaticah is an uneducated servant, but Sid 'Ali is a prince.

At those days, French troops besiege Tunis, since nationalists struggle for Tunisia's independence. Demonstrators are arrested, some of them die. Women in the palace learn all these developments from men who can go out.

While these developments are happening outside of the palace, Sid 'Ali's brother rapes Khaticah in her bedroom. Alia witnesses this event, and gets sick. But she tells nothing to anybody, and does not speak when her mother asks what happened.

SCENE 8

Interior, Daytime, Hatti Huda, Hossein, five servant women.

(They are sitting in the kitchen. Hossein comes)

Hossein: I found Alia's medicine very difficultly.



Scene 8.1

Radio: French soldiers opened fire on nationalists joined to general strike. There are lots of dead and wounded people. A crowded group of protesters started walking to Bey's palace in Tunis.

Hossein: Bey can do anything. Struggle should continue.



Scene 8.2

Hatti Huda: If Bey also goes, country will be ruined.

Women 1: We have nothing to lose.

After Alia gets better, Khaticah and Hatti Huda buy a lute to her. She starts singing at the garden of the palace. Sid 'Ali hears her voice's beauty once again and congratulates her.

Conflict between the French and nationalists continues. Lutfi is Serra and Selim's private teacher and a political activist. When police chased him, he hides to palace, near Hossein. There he meets with Alia and they fall in love shortly after. Lutfi teaches Alia how to read and write.

SCENE 9

Interior, Daytime, Lutfi and Alia

(Alia writes her name.)

Lutfi: You see? It's very easy. Can you write your surname?



Scene 9.1

(Alia does not answer, sits down to a chair. Lutfi also sits near her.)

L: Are you afraid?

A: I'm afraid of you.

L: Do not afraid of me. You also like our country, unstable. One of my words pleases you, the other one frightens you.

(Lutfi puts his hand to Alia's shoulder. Alia does not answer.)



Scene 9.2

L: There are so many things to change here. A new future is waiting for us. You'll be a very famous singer. Your voice will fascinate everybody.

Women voice from outside: Alia, your mother wants you!

Sid 'Ali wants Alia to sing a song to the palace's guests at another party. Khaticah does not want this, but cannot oppose Sid 'Ali. Alia sings at the party, and when the party ends she goes to her mum and hugs her. At that moment Khaticah feels sick and pukes. She is pregnant because of Sid 'Ali's brother's rape.

Khaticah shares her problem with other servant women. They say that they would help Khaticah to have a miscarriage. They all decide to do this after Serra's engagement.

There is Serra's engagement ceremony. Alia sings a song at the ceremony. While Alia is continuing her song, she sees Lutfi. Suddenly she stops and starts to sing Tunisia's independence song. Guests of the ceremony leave the hall when they hear the song. But at that moment, Khaticah miscarry the child and she dies. After her mother's death, Alia leaves the palace with Lutfi.

At the final scene, film's story turns to ten years later. Alia tells (with voiceover) her unhappiness with Lutfi. Lutfi has not married her, she has had various abortions, and she has become an unsuccessful singer. She decides to give birth to her child at the end of the film. She wishes her child to become a girl, and decides to name her "Khaticah".

B.2

Name of the Film	: HALFAOUINE: THE BOY OF THE TERRACES
Director	: Ferid Boughedir
Scriptwriter	: Ferid Boughedir
Year	: 1990
Duration	: 98 min.
Language	: Arabic with English subtitles
Cast	: Selim Boughedir, Mustapha Adouani, Rabia Ben Abdallah, H������ Catzaras, Mohammed Driss, Fatma Ben Saidane, Abdelhamis Gayess

Selected Scenes and Summary of the Film

Noura and his family live in Halfaouine, a neighbourhood of Tunis. The story passes in 1960s. Noura is taken to Turkish bath by his mother since he is a child yet. There, he watches women and then tells what he saw at the Turkish bath to his older friends Moncef and Mounir.

One of Noura's older friends is Salih, the shoemaker, and writer according to his own claim.

SCENE 1

Exterior, Daytime, Noura, Salih and woman

Noura and Salih sit in front of Salih's shop. Noura watches Salih while he is making a shoe. A woman comes to shop.

Salih: (To woman) Welcome my dear customer. Today I've just what you want.

Woman: I wonder.

S: I know your fitting. Come inside. Take all the time you want.

W: I'm hard to please. What makes you so sure your goods will please me?

S: Not everything is on display.



Scene 1.1



Scene 1.2

W: Suppose I'm disappointed?

S: Everything I have made to measure

(They get in the shop, Salih closes the door. Noura remains outside, in front of the shop).

S: (To woman) Trying to be clever, even with Salih? (Woman laughs)

Or are you that difficult?

Noura, old for being a child, but young for being an adult, passes his days between women's world at home and men's world at streets. He feels as he belongs to neither of the worlds. He continues to wander in the streets with Moncef and Mounir. His father gets angry because he is a vagabond and sends him to a barber's shop as an apprentice.

At this time, demonstrations against the regime happen in the streets and police arrests demonstrators. Noura tells these to his mother and aunt who stays at home most of the time.

Noura's mother's cousin Latifa comes. She is a divorced and extrovert woman who arouses interest of men.



Scene a.1: Aunt Latifa comes



Scene a.2: Aunt Latifa comes

When aunt Latifa comes home, Noura also goes home and watches her, his mother and Salouha.

SCENE 2

Interior, Daytime, Mother, Latifa, Salouha, Noura, Noura's brother and Father

Latifa's luggages are open in the middle of the backyard of the house.
Latifa clothes one of her dresses to Salouha.

Latifa: It really suits you Salouha.

Salouha: It's fancy stuff.

L: Good grief, Salouha!



Scene 2

S: Is it all your trousseau? That's a nice red.

L: Red really suits you.

S: You are flattering me. I'm as skinny as a rake. It's too thin. I cannot wear this.

L: Come on, it's the fashion.

Mother makes up with Latifa's toiletry. At this time, father comes. When mother sees him, she erases rouge on her face with her hands. Father looks like angry.

SCENE 3

Interior, Night, Father and Mother

Mother washes father's feet.

Father: (Means Latifa) I do not want her in my house. Try to get rid of her.

Mother: But she's my relative. Would you turn out your own cousin?

F: I do not have cousins who say no to rich husbands. I do not want her here. A divorce and penniless too. No way.

M: She'll calm down. And she'll be a help at the circumcision.

F: Get rid of her.

M: She embroiders beautifully.

F: She embroiders?



Scene 3

Mother shakes her head and continues to wash his feet.

Salouha has a depression. She is still not married, and will not be able to marry someone since her fiancée left her. She says, as a woman who engaged once, nobody would want to marry her.

Shortly after, an orphan girl, Leila, is taken to the house as housemaid. After losing her family and house in a storm, she is alone now. She starts to work as a servant at the house. This is an unpaid job for Leila, in return for food, meal, bed and clothes.

SCENE 4

Exterior, Daytime, Father, Latifa, Noura

Father embraces to Latifa. Latifa shoves him. Noura watches this scene secretly, from the terrace of the house.

Latifa: Hand off! You've chosen the wrong women. I mean it.



Scene 4

Father goes.

Before Noura's brother's circumcision, neighbours come to visit Noura's mother. They talk about women and men.

SCENE 5

Exterior, Daytime, Mother, Latifa, Salouha, Noura, Zakia, Woman 1, Woman 2, Woman 3, Woman 4



Scene 5.1

They sit down in the backyard of the house at the day before Noura's brother's circumcision and cook.

Woman 1: She is so vindictive.

Woman 2: You've said worse.

Latifa: Come off it!

Mother: I'd do it if I wanted. You know me.

Woman 2: You're not exactly a shrinking violet, are you?

(They laugh.)

Zakia: You will not succeed. You have not got what it takes (*Shows herself*).

Woman 4: The things you near!

Noura stands up. Zakiya holds him by arm and sits him to her lap.



Scene 5.2

Zakia: (To Noura) Where are you going? They'll cut your willy off tomorrow (means circumcision).

Noura: Leave me alone Zakiya. I'm already circumcised.

Zakia: That's not the end. Tomorrow they'll cut of the rest.

Woman 2: Give him a break Zakia. (To Noura) Do not worry dear. No one's going to rob you.

Woman 1: You should use his proper name. He's a young man now.

Zakia: A man? (Laughs) What makes him a man? Not that little peanut!

(They laugh.)

Latifa: You're very excited Zakia. Is your husband neglecting you for the shop?

Woman 4: Has your greengrocer husband run out of cucumbers?

(They laugh. Noura tries to stand up.)

Zakia: (To Noura) Stay up!

Noura: Leave me alone!

Zakia: All right, off you go.

She stands up and starts singing and dancing. Women clap and join the song. Father comes with a bag full off cucumbers, peanuts and eggplants. He puts the bag near women, does not look at them as he is embarrassed and enters into the house without saying anything. Women laugh behind of him.

Before his brother's circumcision, his mother takes Noura to Turkish bath. When he is caught while he is watching naked women he is thrown from the Turkish bath. Feeling himself not belonged to neither men's nor women's world, Noura wanders in the terraces of the houses in the neighbourhood. But shortly after housemaid girl Leila takes his interest. Several nights he watches her while sleeping. Because her mother does not take him to Turkish bath anymore, Leila helps him wash his hair. While Leila washes his hair, Noura tries to undress her.



Scene b: Noura's mother see them

But at that time his mother comes and sees them. She says to Leila that she would go away tomorrow. At the same night, Noura enters into Leila's room and finds her awake and naked.

SCENE 6

Exterior, Daytime, Father, Sheikh, Noura, Mother, Leila

They stand in the backyard. Sheikh, who brought Leila to the house, comes to take her back.

Sheikh: (To Father) There is no doubt. That is, your son is grown up now.



Scene 6

Leila smiles at Noura. Then, Sheikh takes her. Father runs after Noura. But he climbs to the terrace and smiles.

B.3

Name of the Film : AZIZA

Director : Abdellatif Ben Ammar

Scriptwriter : Abdellatif Ben Ammar

Year : 1980

Duration : 85 min.

Language : Arabic with English subtitles

Cast : Yasmin Khlat, Raouf Ben Amor, Dalila Rames,
Mohamed Zinet, Mouna Noureddine, Taoufik Jebali

Selected Scenes and Summary of the Film

Aziza was raised by her uncle since her father had left their family when she was five, and her mother had married another man. She lives with her uncle and her cousin. She does not have a paid work; she stays at home and does all the housework. Her cousin Ali dreams of being a rich businessman one day. Her uncle is an old and sick man who sells candles at the bazaar. They move to a neighbourhood of Tunis since Ali wants to open a restaurant there. While Ali tries to open the restaurant, uncle starts to go to bazaar to sell his candles. He has to go there by bus every day and Aziza helps him each day. Besides, she writes letters to Hedi, her boyfriend who goes to university. But their relationship seems hopeless, since they belong to different worlds. Moreover, Ali envies Hedi and depreciates him since he also loves Aziza.

One evening, Ali comes home and shows the car he bought to Aziza and uncle. Then he takes them for a car cruise. They meet with Ibrahim whose car

broke down in the road. Ali helps him and they drive him to his hotel. Ibrahim, from Saudi Arabia, introduces himself as a rich businessman.

Aziza finds new friends in the neighbourhood they moved in. One of them is Jamila, woman who lives at the next house. The other one is Aicha, who works as an actress in Tunisian television. Women living in the neighbourhood blame and exclude Aicha because of her job. According to them, being an actress is something needs to be blamed. Aicha helps uncle's get out off the bus one day. She and Aziza meet then.

SCENE 1

Interior, Daytime, Aziza, Uncle, Jamila and Aicha

Jamila visits uncle and Aziza. Aicha also visits uncle after they met on the bus.

Aziza: Uncle, look who's there.

Uncle: Ah! Welcome my girl!

Aicha: I came to see how you're doing. Feeling better?

Uncle: Yes. (To Jamila) She saved my life. Do you know Miss Aicha?

Jamila: Who does not? A heart of honey!

Aziza: Some coffee?

Uncle: Everyone's acquainted. Here, our neighbour Aicha. And here Jamila. We're all neighbours.



Scene 1

Jamila: Each to his own. She's not my neighbour.

Aicha: What I have done to you?

Jamila: As if you could do something to me!? Enough prattle. I come from a respectable family. Just ask people! How far I am from the likes of...How shameful!

Aicha: Stop it!

Uncle: What are with you two? Calm down girls! Be reasonable Jamila!

Jamila: Tell me to go!

Aicha: Go ahead!

Jamila: I have high blood pressure, I cannot bear squabbles. I could get nasty...I prefer silence. So, have a nice day.

Uncle: Please stay!

Jamila: No, it's late. Good bye.

Jamila gets out. Aziza sees her off.

SCENE 2

They are in front of the house.

Aziza: Good bye.

Jamila: Good bye. Listen! For your father's sake...



Scene 2

Aziza: He's my uncle.

Jamila: Ah your uncle. Do you socialize with her? (means Aicha)
You're still young, but even so. You can tell she is indecent. Everyone here knows it. Do as you like, but beware. Good bye. (She leaves the house)

Aziza helps her uncle when he is going to sell candles. They meet Aicha on the bus.

SCENE 3

Exterior, Daytime, Aziza and Aicha

They are on the bus.

Aicha: I even do not know your name!

Aziza: Aziza. You had an administrative job?



Scene 3

Aicha: Alas, but I quit. I'll tell you more sometime...

The next day, Ali transforms his room into an office.

SCENE 4

Interior, Daytime, Aziza and Ali

They are in Ali's room. Aziza stands near the door.

Aziza: Where are you going to sleep now?

Ali: Where I like. Take this (Gives a cleaning brush). Have you formed a company? (Takes a signboard on which "Aly and Co" writes, and walks towards the door.) Move aside, let the boss get by!

(He gets out, hangs the signboard to the wall.)

Ali: The only missing thing is a telephone.

Aziza: And the restaurant?



Scene 4.1

Ali: What restaurant? I'll be building palaces in a month. You'll be answering the telephones "Hello, I'm Mr.Ali's secretary, he just left."

Aziza: With what money?



Scene 4.2

Ali: From that Emir we picked up (means Ibrahim), you remember?
(Shouts to children playing around the car) Away from the car, little runts!
(Turns to Aziza and shows the car) You like the new color?

Aziza: The color means anything? What's the difference...?

Ali: Listen Aziza, nothing I do pleases you. Some day you'll appreciate me.

Aziza: Explain to your father.

Ali: Pops! He's burning candles at both ends. It's me who saves you from hunger. We'll see what Hedi produces with his degrees! Studying economy!

Aziza: What do you know? He's your prof.? (Gets in)

Ali: My prof.? Go jump in the lake, both of you!

Aziza and Aicha become good friends as time goes on. Aicha tells that she lost her father three years ago, and started working in TV in order to look after her little brother. Since she acts on TV, people living in the neighbourhood labeled her indecent and immoral.

Meantime, Ali invites Ibrahim to dinner to persuade him doing business. He asks Aziza to cook. Aicha helps her.

SCENE 5

Interior, Night, Aziza, Aicha, Uncle, Ali and Ibrahim

They are at the dinner table.



Scene 5.1

Ali: (To Ibrahim) Did you like the meat loaf?

Ibrahim: Delicious! Compliments to the one who cooked it!

Ali: This is Aziza. Best cook in the country.

(Aziza brings deserts to table.)

Aziza: I didn't make it. Aicha did.

Ali: This is Dr. Aicha, talented, an artist in everything.

Aicha: You've promoted me to Dr.?

Ali: That's how they say it.

Uncle: (To Ibrahim) My son tells me you're going to set up a factory together.

Ibrahim: God willing! A factory implies a huge responsibility. Workers, strikes, chaos...a real headache! In my opinion, tourism is easier, and less of a risk.

Uncle: You're an expert on tourism?

Ibrahim: You might call me that; I travel a lot...I make contacts. I profit by the experience of others. This is my year of creativity. It's God's will!

Uncle: May God give you bounty.

Ibrahim: In reality, we've planned a grand project for tourism. In a year he'll do wonders (shows Ali). I have some projects. I'm handling over to him.

Aicha: Do you like the pudding?

Ibrahim: Exquisite! Did you make it?

Aicha: No. This time it's Aziza.

Ibrahim: This evening I'm torn between the meat loaf and the pudding.

(They laugh.)

Ali: (To Ibrahim) Dr. Aicha is an artist.

Ibrahim: Bravo! An artist?

Aicha: I dabble in it.

Uncle: (To Ibrahim) If you really want to know, all Tunisians are artists.

Ali: Tunisian women are liberated. Even in your country, they're beginning...

Ibrahim: Yes, I've noticed here that women are very modern and play an important role in society.

Uncle: You're right! They play...well.

(Aziza and Aicha laugh.)

Ali: (To Aziza and Aicha) Why the laughs? He's right. Women have advanced. Before, could she travel, go uncovered in the street?

Ibrahim: "Uncovered"!? Nude?

Ali: No, without a shawl, without a tchador.

Ibrahim: The veil? Oh, simple enough.

Ali: (To Aicha) Has acting brought you hassles?

Aicha: Yes, the neighbours are witnessess to that!

Ibrahim: Are you an actress in theatre or films?

Aicha: No. There is no film industry in Tunisia...Only radio and TV.

Ibrahim: You play historical rolesor sentimental ones?

Aicha: No, roles of old dearies.



Scene 5.2

Ibrahim: Old dearies! Then everyday you're called "my dear beloved."

Let me act with you.

(Aziza laughs loudly. Ali looks at her in anger.)

Ibrahim: Why do not all of us act?

Aicha: (Shows Aziza) She's trained for kitchen roles. Me, in roles of old men. Heaven only knows what role Ali could play. Aziza, play your role!

(Aziza stands up and goes to kitchen, still laughing.)

Uncle: It's teatime Ali. (Ali also goes to kitchen.)

SCENE 6

Interior, Night, Aziza and Ali

They are in the kitchen. Aziza was squat down. Ali also squats down near her.

Ali: Making a wry face. Trying to sabotage me? If the plan's ruined, I'll poke your eyes out, got it?

Aziza: He's the fool (means Ibrahim).

(Ali manhandles her and grabs her face.)



Scene 6.1

Ali: He's a fool? Better than you. Cleaner, more dignified than you. His fingernail equals a million hags like you.

Aziza: Stop it, you're hurting me.



Scene 6.2

(Ali stands up and goes to living room. Aziza stays there for a while.)

Uncle is taken to the hospital. Officers tell that his son's signature on the documents is necessary for the medical treatment of him. Aziza waits for Ali in the house and they go to the hospital together.

SCENE 7

Interior, Night, Aziza and Uncle

Aziza enters the room. Uncle lies on the bed. Aziza kneels down by the bed.

Aziza: My uncle, it's Aziza. Do not speak, rest.



Scene 7

Uncle: I told you my role was that of aging men.

Aziza: My uncle...

Uncle: My body's done for. At least you have some respite. You must have gotten sick of...Aziza, give...get...cook, clean up!

Aziza: Aziza, be quiet. Aziza, do not laugh. Aziza, hurry up. Aziza, leave her alone. She's fed up, fed up... (She starts crying).

Ali refuses to sign the documents since he found the expenses too much. Thereupon, Aziza says that she would sign and pay. Ali gets angry, and stops her. He says he would sign the documents because he is his son. When they go home, they argue about that subject and Ali blames her for trying to embarrass him. Ali expels Aziza from home. Aziza goes to Aicha's house and starts living with her.

SCENE 8

Interior, Night, Aziza and Aicha

Aicha is asleep. Aziza wakes her up.

Aziza: Aicha, Aicha.

Aicha: Good morning.

Aziza: It's still night.

Aicha: What's wrong?



Scene 8

Aziza: I want a job.

Aicha: You know, you can stay here.

Aziza: Thanks. I need a job. I must depend on myself.

Aicha: What about the guy you write?

Aziza: Who?

Aicha: Who! I saw you wait for the postman often.

Aziza: Hedi? Even he is just like the others.

Aicha: Go to sleep. Ali's made you nuts. We'll see tomorrow.

Aziza: I must find a job.

Aicha: Even so, I bet Hedi loves you.

Aziza: How do you know?

Aicha: I just do.

Aziza: It's late now. Good night.

Aicha helps Aziza to find a job.

SCENE 9

Interior, Daytime, Aziza and the officer

Officer asks about her background.

Aziza: Aziza, daughter of Hamida Jilani.

Officer: Your parents alive?

Aziza: No.

Officer: Guardian?

Aziza: My uncle.

Officer: His name?

Aziza: Bechir Jilani.

Officer: Date of birth?

Aziza: January 1957.

Officer: Level of education?

Aziza: Until the end of second year of secondary school in 1969.

Officer: Failed?

Aziza: No, for family reasons.

Officer: Ever worked before?

Aziza: No.

Officer: Tell Ms. Aicha that I'm doing her a favor. You will not forget?

Aziza: No.



Scene 9

Officer: O.K. You're going to be trained in the zipper section. If you do alright, you're on. I'm warning you, no loafing and no complaints! Tardiness means a cut in pay. Keep mum on professional secrets. Daily security search. Work and hush up. If you make any mistakes, you're out. There are hundreds like you. Understand?

(Aziza nods.)

Officer: Get to work!



Scene a: Aziza starts working in a factory

Aziza starts working in a factory. She starts a new life. She and Aicha work in the daytimes, cook and chat in the evenings. But then, Aicha decides to go with Ibrahim. Even if she is not in love, there is no way out for her but this.

SCENE 10

Ibrahim: Hello, good morning.

Aicha: Welcome, I'm ready.

Ibrahim: Fine, fine.

Aicha: See, there are not many things. Only five suitcases. Aziza, come and see who's here! Where are you?

Aziza: (To Ibrahim) Hello.

Aicha: (To Ibrahim) Cannot you say hello?

Ibrahim: Hello...hello very much.

Aziza: So, you've learned some Tunisian.



Scene 10.1

Aicha: (To Ibrahim) Put this to car. Watch your step.

Ibrahim: With pleasure, bravo, bravo (Gets out).

Aziza: (Means Ibrahim) So that's it?

Aicha: Yes, that's it. He preferred a partnership with me, rather than Ali.

Aziza: Aicha, listen...You're playing with fire.

Aicha: Do not worry. I can handle him.

(Ibrahim gets in.)

Aicha: (To Ibrahim) Wait for me in the car.



Scene 10.2

Aziza: And what you said before?

Aicha: I said I believe in things. You do not.

Aziza: Believe in what?

Aicha: In a wishing star, Aziza!

Aziza: Come of it!

Aicha: See? You do not want to hear. Last Ramadan, I went on the roof and waited...I said to God: I'm one of your flocks. Grant me a wish...I want something practical and beneficial.

Aziza: Well?

Aicha: So that's it.

Aziza: What's it?

Aicha: Come and look at the car, and a castle yet to see!

Aziza: Aicha, you've gone crazy! All this is yours now. So long!

Aziza: Goodbye...

Aicha: (Kisses her) I'll write you!

(Takes the luggages and gets out.)

Uncle dies. Aziza starts living alone. One night, Ali comes and apologizes. She lets him in. We can never find out whether she loves Ali or not.

In the Ramadan, women of the neighbourhood wish good luck from the God as Aicha did. Only Aziza does not wish anything. She does not have any wishes, she would go to work, and survive.

B.4

Name of the Film : CLAY DOLLS

Director : Nouri Bouzid

Scriptwriter : Nouri Bouzid

Year : 2002

Duration : 90 min.

Language : Arabic with English subtitles

Cast : Hend Sabri, Ahmed Hafiane, Oumeyma Ben Afsia,
Lotfi Abdelli

Omrane, a former house servant, acts as a purveyor of housemaids, whom he transports on his delivery tricycle from his home village to place them with families of upstairs living in the posh districts of the Greater Tunis. He comforts their mothers that he will be the guardian of the girls' virtue and makes sure that they receive each month their daughter's salaries.

Rebeh is the most exuberant girl among his recruits, overwhelmed by hard domestic chores, has recently left the house she used to work in.

One of his goings to the village, he takes two little girls to the city. One of the girls is Feddha, whose favourite hobby is making clay dolls. Omrane sends the other girl to the house in which she will be a housemaid. He decides to take Fetha to the house where she will work in the morning. So, he takes her to his own house to spend the night, leaves her alone, and starts looking for Rebeh through the city.

Rebeh, who wants to change her destiny of being a housemaid, has gone to Salha's house, one of the women's immigrated to Tunis from village. After leaving the house she worked in, she starts walking in the streets as she is free now. But Salha's son Riva disturbs her in every opportunity when he sees her alone.



Scene a: Rebeh

Omrane goes to Salha's house to see Rebeh. But Salha does not let him in. When Rebeh learns from Salha that he looks for her, she goes to see Omrane to the pub where he drinks usually.

SCENE 1

Interior, Night, Rebeh, Omrane, Men at the pub

Rebeh enters to pub. All men look at her.

Man 1: (To Rebeh) That's forbidden. Are not you ashamed?

Man 2: What's she doing here?



Scene 1

(Omrane sees Rebeh and takes her out.)

Omrane: You're crazy! They'll smash your face in. Run along!

Man 2: (Means Omrane) He knows her.

Rebeh: (To Omrane) You wanted to see me. I knew I'd find you here.

Omrane takes Rebeh to his house. There, Rebeh tells him that she had a relationship with a man who was working at the next house. She tells that she gave all the money she saved to that guy. When Omrane understands that they had sex, and the guy Rebeh means can be her boss, he gets angry.

SCENE 2

Interior, Night, Rebeh, Omrane

They're at Omrane's house.

Omrane: Keep quiet about it! This musn't get out! People entrust their daughters to me. If it's your boss, I'll rip his eyes out. Did he pay you to say that?



Scene 2

Rebeh: Do not talk to me like that. I'm through with slaving away and not getting paid.

Omrane: You're grown up now! Go tell the police everything.

Rebeh: I do not want a scandal. I'm here to see you. I know you're a good man.

Omrane: Go ask his wife to make things right. You're spoiling yourself, Rebeh.

Rebeh: I pity his wife.

Omrane: Did he get you pregnant?

Rebeh: God forbid!

Rebeh starts crying and says Omrane to keep her staying with him, since she has no place to go.

SCENE 3

Interior, Night, Rebeh, Omrane

Rebeh sits down near Omrane

Rebeh: Omrane, keep me staying with you. I'll look after the house...Marry me...Just for a week. Once we're divorced, I do not care.



Scene 3.1

Omrane: Rebeh...You're unbelievable...

(Stands up and goes to the other room.)

Rebeh: (Follows him) You married Baba Jaafar's maid. Is she better than me?



Scene 3.2

Omrane: Who told you that?

Rebeh: I worked at your master's and learned your secrets!

Omrane: I have neither masters nor secrets!

Rebeh: The old man got her pregnant. It was a paper wedding. He left you this apartment.

(Omrane gets out.)

Rebeh stays at home. There, she meets Feddha. Feddha tells her that she is here to work, but she has missed her mother.

Omrane comes home as drunk and sleeps. In the morning, Omrane locks the door up while Rebeh is sleeping, and takes Feddha to the house in which she'll work. But, the lady of the house found another little housemaid. Feddha starts crying since she has no place to go anymore. At last, Omrane decides to take her to the house where he grew up as a house servant. The owner of the house is Baba Jaafar, an old and sick man now. Story of the film continues with parallel editing, with Feddha's story on the one side, and Rebeh's on the other.

SCENE 4

Interior, Daytime, Omrane, Feddha, Mrs. Amina

Mrs. Amina, the lady of the house, calls Feddha. Feddha does not want to go. Omrane says her to go near Mrs. Amina.

Mrs. Amina: Come near me girl.

Omrane: Go on, do not be scared. Go on.

(Feddha goes near Mrs. Amina.)

Mrs. Amina: Come here. Have you eaten? Go to the hammam with Mensia, clean yourself up and get changed. Do not go play with the kids. Stay near me, I need you. Think of me as your mother. What's your name?



Scene 4

Fedha: Fedha.

Mrs. Amina: That's a peasant name, an old fashioned name. You are in the city now. I'll call you Selma, like the last girl married off.

(Omrane gets out. When Fedha sees him, follows him.)

Mrs. Amina: (To Fedha) Come here...My God.

Fedha: Uncle Omrane, do not leave me all alone.

Omrane: Be reasonable. You're staying here. I'll come and see you.

Fedha: I want to go see Rebeh.

Omrane: That's enough! Remember what your mom said.

(Omrane goes, leaves Fedha there.)

At that time, Rebeh wakes up and cannot open the door. She cleans up Omrane's house and tries to run away from the house.

SCENE 5

Interior, Daytime, Rebeh

Rebeh: (Shouts) No one locks me up. No one imprisons me.



Scene 5

Rebeh left the house where she was a housemaid since her bosses locked her up. She cannot stand being locked up once again, and runs from the window. She goes to Salha's house since she has no place to go.

When Omrane comes home and cannot see Rebeh, starts to look for her throughout the city once again. He goes to every place she can go, even to Salha's house once again, but cannot find Rebeh.

At that time, Feddha starts to work as a housemaid at Baba Jaafar's house. But she feels so unhappy because she is locked up in the house and cries.



Scene b: Feddha cries

Rebeh runs from also Salha's home with the help of her friend Aziza, a belly dancer who dances at the nightclubs. Because, Salha's son Riva wants her to be a prostitute.

In the night, Rebeh comes to see Omrane. Omrane is drunk. Rebeh asks Feddha and gets angry with Omrane because he sent a little child like Feddha to work.

SCENE 6

Interior, Night, Rebeh and Omrane

They sit on the stairs.

Omrane: I was humiliated and mistreated because of you.

Rebeh: I'll be gone in the morning. I must tell you something. I'm pregnant. 4 months pregnant.



Scene 6

(Omrane stands up and goes to other room without saying anything.)

SCENE 7

Interior, Night, Rebeh and Omrane

Rebeh starts belly dancing.

Omrane: That's enough Rebeh.

Rebeh: What's wrong with you?

Omrane: I'm in pain.

Rebeh: You should stop drinking.

Omrane: Mind your own business.

Rebeh: You be a man and drink.



Scene 7

Omrane: You dare to judge men!

Rebeh: I was trying to help you.

Omrane: Rebeh...Protect what you're carrying inside you.

In the morning, while Rebeh is preparing to go, doorman of the apartment comes to ask for his monthly salary. Omran invites him to the house. He offers the doorman to marry Rebeh. He says to Rebeh that they can solve this pregnancy problem with that way, since the doorman, an old and alcoholic man, would not understand that she is not virgin. Rebeh gets angry, because she loves and wants to marry Omrane, and leaves the house. In the evening of the same day, Feddha carries a bucket in front of the door of the house. When she

opens the door, she hears the sound of the street, wants to be free and runs away.



Scene c.1: Feddha opens the door



Scene c.2: Feddha runs

She starts to look for Omrane throughout the city. At the same time, Omrane starts to look for Rebeh once again throughout the city. At the same hours, Rebeh wanders in the streets. Thus, these three people start to look for each other. But, no one can find the other.

Rebeh meets her friend Aziza. While they're walking on the street, two men starts to follow them. Rebeh and Aziza runs, but men catch and rape them. Feddha is luckier than Rebeh. She spends the night in the streets and meets

with a girl in the morning. The girl takes her to Omrane's neighbourhood, so she can find Omrane's house. On the other hand, Omrane cannot find Rebeh even if he looked for her all the night.

When he goes home, he meets Feddha in front of the door.

SCENE 8

Interior, Daytime, Feddha and Omrane

Omrane: What happened?

Feddha: I cannot do a thing. Walls...walls everywhere. They took my clay (starts crying).

Omrane: When I was at your age, they tied me up if I played. I got my share of neatings. I took it all and just cried. But what really scared me was going back home.

Feddha: Where's Rebeh gone?

Omrane: Rebeh is lost. I've lost her...



Scene 8

Feddha: I want to see her!

Omrane takes Feddha to belly dance course where Aziza works, because understands that he loves Rebeh. Rebeh is there, but she does not go with Omrane. Omrane feels so bad and starts drinking. Then he goes to Baba Jaafar's house and asks him why he treat to all of them as they were dogs. Baba Jaafar says that they were nothing but dogs.



Scene d: Baba Jaafar

Omrane leaves the house. But this going is a certain leaving of his old life as a servant. At that time, Rebeh cries as looking down at her belly. Than she goes to Omrane. They hug each other without saying anything.

B.5

Name of the Film : BE MY FRIEND

Director : Naceur Ktari

Scriptwriter : Naceur Ktari

Year : 2000

Duration : 91 min.

Language : Arabic with English subtitles

Cast : Nouredine El Ati, Ines Baili, Sonia El Ati, Lamine Nahdi, Zouheir Bornaz, Jelloul Jelassi, Belkis Cheriaa

Selected Scenes and Story of the Film

Slah is a famous theatre director. He is mentally fragile and perturbed by his past career. He spends one year in a psychiatry clinique because of depression. His wife Amel is a rich and educated business woman. She is in love with Slah passionately. She always pays all expenses of Slah. She hides Slah's depression and says everyone that he went to the United States to work.

In the beginning of the film, Amel takes Slah from the clinique and takes him home. Still confused and feeling depressed, Slah wants to make a tour with his car. He suddenly hits a young woman. Woman's name is Aicha, who lives alone, works in different jobs to earn a living to live without depending on anybody. Slah visits her in the hospital, and tells that he is the one who hit her. Aicha does not get angry with him and they become friends.

Slah goes to see his old friends in the pub after he spent a year in the clinique.

SCENE 1

Interior, Daytime, Slah, Anis, Man 1, Man 2

Slah sits in the pub. His friends are there. Anis gets in.

Anis: Slah! Good to see you again. So, tell us about America.

Slah: It's a different world.



Scene 1

Man 1: Go to the theatre much?

Slah: I mainly worked with a Mexican company. Conditions were not easy.

Man 1: It's though, even in America.

Slah: You're right, it's very hard. How about you, Anis? Still doing sitcoms?

Anis: I do not like theater...

Slah: You're wrong. I'm putting on "The Dam". Come see me- you'll change your mind.

Anis: The Dam? Brahim will never let you do it. Unless your wife produces it. Not everyone's as lucky as you.

Slah: You have not changed. That's why we like you.

Anis: If you do, buy the drinks!

Man 1: Yes, Slah, get the drinks in.

Slah decides to stage the famous theatre play "The Dam" at the theatre that belongs to Slah, Amel and their friend Brahim. But, Brahim who is the manager of the theatre, is against the idea since it will cost too much. Slah gets angry and gets out. Brahim and Amel start talking.

SCENE 2

Interior, Daytime, Amel and Brahim.

They are at the theatre.

Brahim: We planned the bill together.

Amel: That's true, but Slah's back now. After what he's been through, I want him to get his confidence back.

B: Amel, I'm a theater manager, not a shrink!

A: I'll see the budget if that's what worries you. I beg you, do not let him down.



Scene 2

On the other hand, Aicha has financial problems because she cannot pay the mortgage payments of her house. She has a boyfriend, Taieb, who wants to marry her. But she does not want to marry.

SCENE 3

Interior, Daytime, Aicha and Taieb

They are at Aicha's house.

Aiha: Wants ome tea? Like my house?

Taieb: Not just the house...I like you too.

A: I'm about to lose the house.

T: Why?

A: I cannot afford the mortgage payments.

T: Come and live with me.



Scene 3

A: It's as if I am losing my foster mother a second time. She was French.

I cannot lose this house. It would kill me.

T: There must be a solution. I'll pay your bills and we'll get married.

A: Are you serious? What about my freedom?

T: Money makes the world go round, not freedom. I love you. Forget about freedom.

A: I care about my freedom.

T: I've got to go. Urgent business.

A: Mind your own business.

Slah starts working on the play "The Dam". Amel pays all expenses. At the same time, she works in her office.

SCENE 4

Interior, Daytime, Amel and Her Assistant

They are in Amel's office.

Assistant: A fax from Canada. It's all set for Montreal.

Amel: I need money. A lot of money. Montreal can wait...

Assistant: It's a good opportunity.

Amel: I must invest elsewhere. Money is not everything.

Assistant: No, ma'am! Money is everything. Is it Brahim's theater again? A new play?



Scene 4

Amel: None of your business.

Assistant: Does your father know?

Amel: It does not concern you. It's my business. I'm going to the bank.

Send the fax to Montreal.

Slah starts holding rehearsals of the play with his team. Brahim does not support him, but does not stop rehearsals since Amel pays all expenses. When he gets angry about the situation, Amel softens the tension between two men.

On the other hand, an officer from the bank comes and tells Aicha to move out from the house. The bank seizes the house. At the night, Slah goes to see Aicha at the club where she sings.

SCENE 5

Interior, Daytime, Aicha and Slah

They sit down together after Aicha finished her song.

Slah: Will you give me some time?

Aicha: Time is never given. It passes.

S: It was a very moving song. I envy you. I cannot sing.

A: Thank you for coming.

S: Do you sing to earn a living, or is it your vocation?

A: Do I look like a bank clerk! I enjoy what I do. I spend in the daytime what I earn at night.

S: It's strange...I feel like I've always known you.



Scene 5

A: Are you married?

S: Her name is Amel. She's rich and sophisticated. I'm her passion.

A: You're lucky. Is she good in bed?

S: You ask funny questions!

A: You think so? I've got big money problems. I do not know what to do.

S: Free tonight?

A: I'll go with you.

They walk around in the streets. Slah offers Aicha the leading role in his play. Aicha does not accept. She says that she only worked for herself. In the meantime Slah feels a pain in his heart. He says that's because of nothing but tiredness.

Aicha comes to the theatre. There she meets Samy. She tells Slah that she accepts his offer and wants to be the leading actress. Amel sees them talking, but says nothing to Slah since she does not want to lose him. Yet, she goes to Aicha's house to speak to her. She cannot find her, but learns about her financial problems from the neighbours.

On the other side, Slah continues with the rehearsals of the play. Brahim stops the rehearsals because he thinks that this play cannot be staged and he has any money left. After that event, Slah gets depressed once again. His doctor says that he should go to a peaceful place for a while. Before their departure, Amel visits her family.

SCENE 6

Exterior, Daytime, Amel, her father and mother.

They walk in the garden.

Amel: The doctors want Slah to leave Tunis.

Father: He does not seem to be getting better.

A: No, he is getting better. He has to get better.

F: Did he go out today?

A: Yes, but alone. He does not want to see anyone.

F: He will not change...We're worried.

A: Dad, please...

F: I'm sorry darling. I want to see you happy.

A: What about you, Dad? Are you happy?



Scene 6

F: I've had my fair share of happiness. In my day, people lived and worked hard, got on with their lives without asking questions.

(Amel's mother comes near them.)

A: Slah has been suffering from insomnia. But I'm sure he'll be fine.

F: Why cannot he get a regular job?

Mother: Why should he? He's on a free ride!

A: What do you mean?

F: Our daughter's money, our money, is his money. Your assistant called me.

A: I know. It's about Montreal. I have not decided yet.

M: You're kidding! This man will destroy you. You know that.

A: Mom, you've been saying that for ten years.

M: That's not true. Well, what about kids? They cost less than plays! If he cared more for you...

A: I do not want to have kids. (She kisses them) Goodbye.



Scene a: Amel meets Aicha at the airport

Amel takes Slah to her parents' house which is in the South of Tunisia. But Slah does not get better. He says to Amel that he cannot stomach being in the shadow of a woman and wants to get a divorce. Amel does not say anything, but she invites Aicha to spend some time with them since she does not want to separate and lose Slah. Amel meets Aicha at the airport. They become friends while Amel brings her to the house.

Slah feels so happy when he sees Aicha. He says to Aicha that they resemble each other so much wants to kiss her. But Aicha says that they're friends. Thereupon, Slah offers her a perpetual friendship and working together at the theatre. Amel understands that Slah loves her, not Aicha when she learns that Aicha and Slah are only friends.

Slah gets better. Before going back to Tunis, Aicha and Amel cook dinner, and they make a little celebration. They go back to Tunis and start working on the play. During the rehearsals Aicha and Samy fall in love.



Scene b: Slah dies

The play is staged. Slah is so excited. During the play, he cannot stand at the offstage, and goes to the cafe in the theater. There, he feels a new heartpain. At that time, Brahim comes and takes him to the offstage. At the final

part of the play, Slah has a heart attack and dies. Amel has a nervous breakdown. Play has a great success. Slah has achieved his aim, but this costs his life.