**Student Name:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**THREE MOROCCAN AUTHORS**

**Leila Abouzeid**

**Leila Abouzeid** was born in 1950 in El Ksiba, Morocco, near Beni Mellal. She is a Moroccan author who writes in Arabic. She is the first Moroccan woman writer of literature to have her books published in an English-language translation.

1. What town is Leila Abouzeid from? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. Can people read her books in English? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Abouzeid began her career with a radio show. It was unique because it was in Arabic, as opposed to French. Almost every radio broadcast was in French because the radio was a business, and French was used in business. As part of her program, she translated movie scripts into Arabic and did dramatic readings. One of these was the famous Autobiography of Malcolm X. She translated this book into Arabic and read it theatrically over the air. Reading other people's books may have led her to begin writing her own books. She speaks French but refuses to use it because it is the language of foreign invaders, and Arabic is both Morocco's true language and Islam's language. She does not want to stand for a culture that she is not a part of. To Leila, the use of the French language is being submissive to invaders that are not even present anymore.

1. What was different about Leila’s radio show? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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1. Why doesn’t Leila Abouzeid write in French? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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Her work touches upon the identity of people, and the nature of the possession of it or lack thereof. In the beginning of The Year of the Elephant, the main character, Aisha, is wandering the streets after a devastating divorce. As she barely holds onto the will to live she states, "I feel nothing. Have I lost my own identity?" (Abouzeid, Year of the Elephant, 2). Her divorce has taken away her personality and sense of self entirely. Identity is again brought up in the last chapter regarding the lost teacher Mademoiselle Doze. Aisha's teacher had been rejected by her fiancé, and she became a shell of her former self. Abouzeid describes her as just a body showing up for class, not Doze (Abouzeid 6). All soul that was left in her body had seemingly left, and the teacher barely existed. Aisha examines how this sudden change happened, and questions: "Can you lose your identity like you use an identification card? Does some unseen part of the machinery snap, suddenly and irreparably?" (Abouzeid, pg. 6).

1. What is “identity” according to this paragraph? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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1. What has Mademoiselle Doze “lost?” \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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1. Why is she “lost?” \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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Adapted from:

Wikipedia: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leila_Abouzeid>

**Driss Chraibi**

Driss Chraïbi was born in El Jadida, a town near Casablanca, in 1926. His father was a wealthy tea merchant. When his family moved to Casablanca, Chraïbi continued his studies at a French lycée. At age nineteen he went to France to study science at the university.

1. Was Chraïbi born in Casa? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. In what city did Chraïbi go to the lycee? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Chraïbi did not finish his university degree. He worked at odd jobs and traveled throughout Europe and Israel, where he spent two years. Eventually Chraïbi settled in France and married Catherine Birckel. In 1954 Chraïbi began writing for the French National Radio and Television Broadcasting System. Chraïbi's relationship with his father was strained for many years. When his father died in 1957, Chraïbi did not attend his funeral. Chraïbi began to write novels in French and moved to Canada, where he taught at a university, and then back to France. His work has been translated into five languages. He died in France in 2007, but his body was brought back to Morocco and he was buried in a cemetery in Casablanca.

1. Did Chraïbi live in Morocco as an adult? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. Did Chraïbi see his father die? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Chraïbi’s first novel—*[Le Passé simple](http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/445693/Le-Passe-simple)* (1954; “Simple Past”), published shortly before the outbreak of hostilities in Algeria—is a powerful, bitter, ironic cry of revolt against oppressive traditionalism. *Les Boucs* (1955; *The Butts*) shifted the author’s accusatory finger from a paternalistic Islamic formalism to the oppressed condition of many North Africans living in France. Then, leaving aside the directness of polemic, Chraïbi turned to more allegorical political expression in *[L’Âne](http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/24241/LAne)* (1956; “The Donkey”) and [*La Foule*](http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/214718/La-Foule) (1961; “The Crowd”); both confront the inadequacies of the newly independent Third World countries, as well as the failings of European civilization. The weaknesses of Western values appear most noticeably in *[Un Ami viendra vous voir](http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/20532/Un-Ami-viendra-vous-voir)* (1966; “A Friend Is Coming to See You”), in which Chraïbi combines the themes of insanity, violence, and the oppression of women. The demand for freedom and justice, and a need for love, are the major themes of Chraïbi’s work.

1. What language does Chraïbi write in? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. Is he more critical of North Africa or the West? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. How do you know? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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Adapted from:

Pegasos:

<http://www.kirjasto.sci.fi/chraibi.htm>

Encylopedia Britannica Online: <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/114793/Driss-Chraibi>

**Laila Lalami**

Lalami was born in [Rabat](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rabat), [Morocco](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Morocco) in 1968. She studied English at Mohammed V University. She also studied in England and at the University of Southern California in the United States. Now she is a professor at the University of California, Riverside.

1. Where does Lalami live? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. Where did she go to school in Morocco? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

After earning her B.A. in English at Rabat, Lalami studied linguistics at University College, London, and then earned a Ph.D. in linguistics at USC in Los Angeles, California. Lalami began writing fiction and nonfiction in 1996.[[2]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Laila_Lalami#cite_note-2) She has published literary criticism and political essays in many American newspapers and elsewhere. Lalami became the first Moroccan author to publish a book of fiction written in English with a major commercial press in the United States in 2005. She has written one book of short stories, *Hope and Other Dangerous Pursuits* (about Moroccans living in Europe)*,* and two novels, *Secret Son* (2009, about a young boy growing up in Casablanca) and her most recent novel, *The Moor’s Account.*

1. What did Lalami study in the United States? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. What language does she write in? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

In her stunning work of historical fiction, *The Moor’s Account,* Laila Lalami brings us the imagined memoirs of the first black explorer of America, Estebanico--a Moroccan slave whose testimony was left out of the official record. The Moor's Account brilliantly captures Estebanico's voice and vision, giving us an alternate narrative for the Spanish conquest of America. As the dramatic chronicle unfolds, we come to understand that, contrary to popular belief, black men played a significant part in New World exploration and Native American men and women were not merely silent witnesses to it. In Laila Lalami's deft hands, Estebanico's memoir illuminates the ways in which stories can transmigrate into history, even as storytelling can offer a chance for redemption and survival.

1. What is the name of “the Moor” in Lalami’s novel? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. How does this novel challenge history? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Adapted from:**

Bookworks: http://www.bkwrks.com/laila-lalami

Wikipedia: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Laila_Lalami>