

3 Daughters of Annam

When war strikes close to the home, even women must fight.
Vietnamese popular saying

IN 1925, my grandfather had a photograph taken of his two eldest daughters, my aunt and my mother. Looking awkward in their flowing gowns and elaborate hairdos, the two girls, then aged seventeen and twelve, seemed demure and untouched by life. There exists another picture of Nguyen Trung Nguyet, the eldest, taken only four years later. In it, she no longer wears the colorful tunic of a scholar's daughter, but the short jacket of a peasant woman. She stares at the camera with defiant eyes: it is a police mug-shot. I found it in the archives of the French Sûreté.

At the time of her arrest, Nguyet was responsible for recruiting women into the Vietnamese Youth League, an anticolonial organization which Nguyen Ai Quoc had founded among Vietnamese exiles in China in 1925. She spent the next eight years of her life in prison after going through a sensational trial, during which her reputation was torn to shreds and she was branded a dangerous revolutionary. The story of Nguyet's brief and tragic involvement in revolutionary politics is of interest not because of its lurid aspects, but because she was so much a product of her times. But, whereas most of her contemporaries in the Vietnamese Revolution generally graduated from personal rebellion to political engagement, Nguyet herself made a different journey. It was filial piety that led her to patriotism and to feminism.

Like Nguyen An Ninh, Nguyen Trung Nguyet came from a close-knit family with scholarly leanings and anticolonial sympathies. And like him, she became, under the influence of patriotic relatives, a dutiful rebel, a pious iconoclast. Nguyen An Ninh appealed to a seemingly gender-neutral but actually masculine youth to combine its quest for personal freedom with national independence. Nguyen Trung Nguyet represents the marriage of feminism and anticolonial-

ism within the Vietnamese Revolution. Until she left home in the wake of the students' strikes of 1926, Nguyet had not shown signs of wanting to take up the cause of women's emancipation. But while she was growing up, the role of women in Vietnam had become a major point of confrontation between cultural progressives and conservatives. Moreover, since disputes on culture and morality usually had a political subtext, the question of women operated as a discourse on freedom, in which differences between personal and national concerns blurred and merged together.

A Family Affair

The connection between feminism and revolution is not unique to the Vietnamese context. Indeed, it can be found in so many other revolutionary settings as to appear organic. Is the link between feminism and communism coincidental or is it made inevitable by some inherent revolutionary logic? The tensions and contradictions between communism and feminism in the Soviet Union and in China have been the subject of a substantial body of scholarship.¹ In each case, early commitment to the emancipation of individual women through the reshaping of familial relationships yielded to a more economic, class-based, vision of society that relegated gender to a minor role. Some scholars of the Vietnamese Revolution have suggested a natural alliance between national liberation and women's emancipation.² But as Alexander B. Woodside has observed, the marriage between feminism and revolution was "far from a foregone conclusion."³ So how did this marriage come about? And how harmonious was it? Answers to the second question will be proposed in subsequent chapters. To the first, it can be replied that in their different ways, in the early stages of the Revolution, the struggle to liberate women and the struggle to liberate the nation were family affairs.

As the arena where the individual became part of society and the polity, the family was subject to the conflicts that inevitably arose when consensus over the meaning of these concepts broke down. The paternalistic rhetoric of the colonial state reflected traditional Vietnamese views of the family and of the polity. Yet, though the authority structure of the family might be patriarchal, its anchor was definitely feminine. The continuity of the lineage depended on male offspring, but the task of ensuring cultural and social continuity fell to their mothers. Men were traditionally expected to "roam the lakes

and mountains" (*ho thi tang bong*); women represented the welcoming stability of home and hearth where the weary adventurer or responsibility-laden official could return to find solace.

Gender acted as a coded language for debating a whole range of issues without overstepping the limits imposed on public discourse by colonial censorship. The French rhetoric of empire which presented France as the mother country, the Governor-General as a father figure, and the colonial people as children at various stages of immaturity met its match in the Vietnamese literary practice of commenting on the human condition through the device of female characters. The Vietnamese woman stood like an emblematic figure against the canvas of tangled meanings and crumbling institutions that colonial society had become and made personal and concrete abstract issues of morality, social structure, independence, collaboration, empowerment, liberty, and equality.

Disdaining traditional literary representations of feminine self-abnegation beloved of neo-traditionalists, young Vietnamese chose a character out of French Romantic fiction to incarnate both their plight and their aspirations: Camille. To them, Camille represented the struggle of youth against age, class-transcending passion against worldly hypocrisy: the quest for freedom made feminine. Debates on women thus represented a body of reflection on their condition and a commentary on a whole range of cultural, social, and political questions. Woman was youth; woman was also the only possible symbol of a colonized nation. Not the buoyant, self-confident personification of European imperialism, such as Marianne, Germania, or Britannia, nor one modeled after the tragic heroines of Vietnamese history, such as the Trung sisters or any female warrior, ruler, or poet who came after them, but woman-as-quintessential-victim. In her plight was her strength, for it undermined the legitimacy of both the Vietnamese paterfamilias at home and the French "father" of the colonial people abroad. Later on, woman would assume yet another symbolic role in public discourse as the representative of the disenfranchised masses. This multiplicity of functions ensured that the question of women would continue to be hotly debated over the years, but there also existed the danger that the condition of women as women would be lost from view in the welter of symbolism.

In Cochinchina, where rules governing political speech were more relaxed than in Annam and Tonkin, the Constitutionalists, who dominated the native press, were too obsessed with expanding their own

electoral representation and furthering their economic interests to pay attention to women. Even in France, after all, women did not yet enjoy the right to vote. Equally important was the fact that education and Confucian morality, the two issues around which early debates on women were constructed, aroused little controversy in Cochinchina, which was less bound by tradition than Tonkin or Annam. Nary a protest was uttered when the Constitutionalists proposed equal education for men and women in 1919. Nguyen Phan Long tried to contribute to the debate by writing a highly mannered novel about a modern young woman, which was serialized in *Tribune Indigène* under the title *Le Roman de Mlle Lys* in 1919. In 1924, Nguyen An Ninh ran a series of articles on Indian women by Ananda Cooramaswamy in his own journal, *Cloche Fêlée*. That was more or less the extent to which the question of women was debated in the South in the early years.

But in northern Vietnam, where political discourse was so circumscribed by censorship as to be rendered meaningless, debates on women became primary vehicles for arguing about topics that could not be addressed forthrightly, in particular the meaning of freedom and the best way of achieving it. The strain of individualism which asserted itself in these debates was different from the one represented by Nguyen An Ninh. His notion of freedom was the realization of the highest potential of the individual as an autonomous moral and social being. The debates on women focused on a more practical and structural approach to freedom: emancipation first from ignorance, and later from the webs of familial relationships and social responsibilities in which young people of both sexes found themselves enmeshed.

The question of women, first debated exclusively among male writers, eventually attracted contributions from women, some timid, others full of barely controlled rage. To describe as feminism the many solutions offered is to obscure the range of opinion on the matter. Just as the proper role of women was perceived differently in different quarters, so was the meaning of emancipation: from whom, from what, how, and to what purpose? Should women receive formal education? What kind of education and how much of it? What for? Were women, by virtue of their domesticity, really untouched by political currents, or were they doubly enslaved by male domination at home and colonial rule abroad? Should women leave their quiet corner by the family hearth and plunge into public life? Should they leave politics, including the making of revolution, to the men? Should they

merely aspire to be ornaments to their husbands' salons? These questions and many more were earnestly examined alongside equally earnest debates about new culture, new morality, new bases of social organization, and new politics. At bottom, the question was: "What kind of society do we want?"

The link between women's emancipation and radicalism was initially (and unwittingly) forged by conservative opinion-makers who had abdicated to the French the responsibility of ruling the country but worried that traditional values were being eroded and that Vietnamese society was drifting, anchorless, on the sea of change. It was in articles dealing with women's education and family morality that their calls for preserving the national essence rang loudest, for they clung to the illusion that the traditional family could provide a haven of stability in a swiftly changing society. Since national essence was supposedly synonymous with Confucianism, the debates on women thus helped shape perceptions of Confucianism among a generation of students emerging from Franco-Annamite schools without exposure to classical studies. Ironically, the self-professed champions of a synthesis between Western learning and national essence turned out to be their own worst enemies. By choosing to defend neo-traditionalist values in the context of a debate almost entirely concerned with domestic morality, they emptied Confucianism of intellectual substance as well as of its larger social and political relevance. It was reduced to a code of personal behavior which was perceived as narrow, hidebound, elitist, moralistic, and even anti-intellectual. Thus, having set the terms of the debates, conservative moralists soon lost control of them: instead of steering Vietnamese youth in the direction of slow, steady, incremental change, these debates uncovered a generational divide that made paternal authority a focus of the radical critique of society.

The Education of Women

Until the twentieth century, women had not had the right to formal education. Prohibited from taking the civil service examinations, women had been taught, if they were taught at all, at home. This consisted of instructing them in household skills and morality, the latter being summed up by the Three Submissions and the Four Virtues (*tam tong tu duc*). Women were supposed to be perpetual minors. When young, they were under the authority of their fathers;

when married, they came under the authority of their husbands; when widowed, they were required to acquiesce in the decisions of their sons.⁴ Their everyday behavior was guided by the Four Virtues: housewifery, appearance, speech, and conduct (*cong, dung ngon, hanh*). They were expected to be skilled and diligent in the various chores needed to run their household smoothly; additionally, they must be good managers of the family finances, thrifty in their expenditures, and good at earning money at their market stalls or shop counters. They must maintain a neat appearance and modest expression at all times; their speech must be mild and conciliatory.⁵ Under the Nguyen legal code, a wife's loose mouth or sharp tongue was considered cause enough for repudiation. Above all, women must be chaste.

Women's lives were circumscribed by injunctions and taboos which filled manual upon manual of "family education in verse" (*gia huan ca*). They constituted a flourishing literary subgenre which went as far back as the fifteenth century, the oldest example being attributed to the scholar and statesman Nguyen Trai (1380–1442). Other famous scholars through the ages had also tried to lay down the law to women. Written in verse for easy memorizing, these manuals combined in haphazard fashion instruction in household management and morality. As Pham Quynh acknowledged, they were long on prohibitions and made for depressing reading. In one, he counted one hundred "don'ts."

Do not talk to a man who is not a relative;
Do not say hello to him, so as not arouse suspicion.
Do not frequent women who are not virtuous;
Do not alter your clothing without reason;
When sewing do not let your needle be idle;
When alone, do not sing or declaim poetry;
Do not look out the window with a pensive air.
... Do not shrug, do not sigh;
Do not laugh before you have even said a word;
When laughing, do not show all your teeth;
Do not gossip, or talk crudely . . .

As Pham Quynh noted, these injunctions and restraints were as "inconsistent as children's stories, tedious, trivial and petty."⁶

Not all women could live up to the ideals of domestic femininity these rules were meant to enforce. When debates on women first be-

gan in the pages of *Southern Wind*, Than Trong Hue, the Imperial Minister of Rites, pointed out that women had not always been kept within the home, but had traditionally worked in the fields alongside their husbands, or had been market stall-holders, and producers of handicraft.⁷ Few traditional moralists, however, could be found to praise the free and easy demeanor of peasant women. Although the rules contained in family education manuals truly applied only to the wives and daughters of the elite, they represented the dominant ethos, values to which women of all classes were expected to aspire even if they could not apply them in their daily conduct. Women who did absorb the teachings of the family education manuals and fulfilled the criteria of the Three Submissions and the Four Virtues were praised as “wholesome daughters, gentle wives, and caring mothers.”⁸ There was no positive way of describing an independent woman of the elite. The best-known and most admired woman of the early 1920s, the Widow Nguyet Anh, wore her widowhood like a cloak. Daughter of Nguyen Dinh Chieu, the most famous scholar and poet the South had produced, she could boast a considerable erudition and no small talent at poetry. Nor was she a fragile hothouse plant who could not bear being taken outdoors. Having lost her husband early, she supported herself and her children through a variety of businesses. In 1919, she launched the first women’s magazine, *Women’s Bell* (*Nu Gioi Chung*), in Saigon. Yet she preferred to be remembered as the chaste relic of her husband rather than as a woman of talent and achievements. The title “widow” which she affixed to her name became an integral part of her identity. Her insistence on being a living monument to Confucian values, her scrupulous avoidance of political discussion (forbidden in the Vietnamese language press in any case) in order to dispense sage and entirely conventional advice to female readers, made this grandmotherly figure seem not so much a feminist pioneer as the representative of traditional womanhood at its best. In fact, the creation of *Women’s Bell* resulted from Pham Quynh’s efforts to coopt, on behalf of the French colonial authorities, the descendants of Nguyen Dinh Chieu. In addition to his fame as a poet, Nguyen Dinh Chieu was the symbol of southern patriotism.⁹

At the time the Widow Nguyet Anh began publishing *Women’s Bell* in Saigon, women in Annam and Tonkin had just won the right to formal education. The drive to grant them that right had been slow in gathering force. The Reformers wanted to build a more egalitarian society, and when they opened their classrooms in 1907, they decided

that perhaps girls and married women could also be taught how to use the romanized script. In fact, women, not having undergone a rigorous classical education, were more receptive to New Learning than many a scholar. Finding that his daughter was already familiar with the new script, Luong van Can put her in charge of the women’s section at the Tonkin Free School. At least two poems were produced for use in her class. One, entitled “A Mother Draws Glory from Her Children,” exhorted young people not to forsake their duty to their country in the pursuit of riches and position. The other, entitled “Advice of a Wife to Her Husband,” exuded patriotic fervor. The anonymous author invited her husband to strive to become a Bismarck or a Gladstone, while she would try to emulate Joan of Arc or Mme. Roland.¹⁰ The reference to these two French heroines was not uncommon either in Vietnam or in China, from which the Reform Movement drew its inspiration. More important, both poems conceived of women as wives and mothers, as nurturing figures whose essential function was to provide assistance, succor, and backstage advice to the male actors on the public stage. Their identity was defined in relation to others. In this, the Reformers followed the spirit of the contemporary Chinese women’s press.¹¹

Phan Boi Chau, who was perhaps the first Vietnamese to discuss the role of women in Vietnamese society, viewed women primarily as effective anticolonial warriors whose services it would be foolish to sacrifice to traditional notions of feminine decorum. Phan knew the value of women in the anticolonial movement. Women (even those belonging to the elite) ran small businesses which could be used as fronts for anticolonial activities. They could travel without exciting undue suspicion, and they were less likely than men to be detained and searched by the police. Phan, who subsumed everything to the cause of independence, was not open to arguments such as those advanced by Ho Chen in *Natural Justice* when he was still in Japan. Ho Chen argued against conceiving of sexual equality purely as a means of strengthening the nation and presented it as a natural right and a class issue.¹² In his drama on the Trung queens, written in 1911, Phan made it clear that feminism must serve the cause of the nation.¹³ The Trung sisters, who had led a rebellion which briefly overthrew Chinese rule in A.D. 39, had long symbolized Vietnamese patriotism. Phan depicted them as women whose love of country had led them to rise above ordinary feminine weaknesses. Turning these two icons of Vietnamese patriotism into paragons of Confucian femininity, he

made them ask themselves how to reconcile the resoluteness and strength necessary to wage war with the docility and meekness traditionally expected of women.

Since self-strengthening was the primary objective of the Reform Movement, the education of women was decidedly secondary to the need to rethink the education of (male) literati. Nor was it the exclusive concern of the Reformers. In 1907, classes were organized within the Imperial Citadel in Hue to provide formal education for the daughters of the imperial family and court mandarins. There were forty-seven pupils who learned French, arithmetic, and sewing under the supervision of the French director of the school; a Vietnamese auxiliary taught the romanized script, the French alphabet, and Chinese characters. The school was moved outside the Imperial Citadel the following year. Finally, in 1919 the foundations of the Dong Khanh College for girls were laid down in Hue amid much fanfare.¹⁴ That year marked a turning point in women's education. Until then, only a handful of girls had attended school, usually only in the first three grades. In the South, where innovations were introduced first, it had become possible in 1910 for girls to attend secondary school in Saigon, whereas previously, only elementary education had been available to a tiny, privileged minority.¹⁵ However, with the end of the Confucian examinations and the expansion of secondary education, older girls began to receive formal schooling.

Articles on women began appearing in the northern press soon after the promulgation of Sarraut's educational reforms. Pham Quynh himself launched the first salvo in his article "The Education of Women and Girls," in one of the first issues of his journal.¹⁶ The prospect that young women would emerge from behind the "high walls and closed gates" (*tuong cao cong kin*) of home to attend school, and that, away from parental supervision, they would absorb new ideas and come into contact with people of different backgrounds was highly disturbing to conservative moralists. Nguyen Ba Hoc lamented that good women were traditionally not supposed to exchange even names with strange men, let alone engage in conversation with them; but now women felt free to speak out on topics normally reserved for men and, worse, did so publicly.¹⁷ At any rate, he argued, there was no point in educating women when even educated men could not find jobs.

Pham Quynh, younger and less hidebound in his notions, conceded: "Until now, the world has been the exclusive property of men.

Now, it belongs also to women."¹⁸ But what kind of women? Though in general Pham Quynh supported the idea of granting formal education to women, he too had grave qualms. Like Nguyen Ba Hoc, he feared that education might lead women to moral turpitude. He had met the "New Woman" and did not like her. In a talk given in May 1924, he offered a savage portrayal of this dreaded breed in his account of two young women traveling on a train. They were coiffed in the latest style, rouged and lipsticked, and wore objectionable clothes. One had propped her feet on the seat across from her and was languidly smoking a cigarette. The other affected a pair of sunglasses even though the train compartment was darkened. Supremely oblivious to the silent disapproval of their fellow passengers, they talked in carrying, self-assured voices about card parties, French food, and other frivolous pleasures in which they had recently indulged.

For all his endorsement of women's education, Pham Quynh was an old-guard moralist at heart, as were other advocates of national essence. In his eyes, the "New Women" were little better than brazen hussies: idle, self-centered, and pleasure-seeking, loud and free in their manners to a point bordering on immorality. They were a sad contrast to "Traditional Ladies," who behaved as "true daughters of Confucius."¹⁹ The prejudices of these moralists were revealed in their choice of adjectives: "New Woman" (*thi tan*) and "Traditional Lady" (*cuu nuong*). The latter was a paragon of feminine decorum, shunning public display, mindful of the welfare of her family, and always putting duty before pleasure. Becomingly modest and obedient, she always deferred to her father or husband in every way. The New Woman was bold and brash; she wore make-up and revealing clothes, and was acid-tongued. She was not truly worthy of being the daughter of mandarins.

If neo-traditionalist opinions on the issues of women's education and morality seem unreal, even for the 1920s, it is because they concerned only a tiny minority of women. Than Trong Hue had already pointed out the important economic role of peasant women. In the cities, too, young women who were good at making money (*dang dang*) were deemed highly marriageable. A small number of unmarried women chose to live on their own, supporting themselves by working as seamstresses or shopkeepers. The debates, however, were not about these ordinary women, but about the development of a new Western-educated elite and the role of women in that elite. The talk in which Pham Quynh had presented his picture of the New Woman

was given under the auspices of AFIMA. Gracing the proceedings with her presence was Princess Thieu Bao, the wife of AFIMA's president, Hoang Trong Phu. The rest of the audience was made up of the very type of Western-educated, upper- and middle-class women he was caricaturing in his speech. Pham Quynh was not concerned about the damage formal education might do to women of the lower classes: in all probability, they would continue to have no access to it. He was concerned only with the small number of women whose families could afford to keep them cloistered behind high walls and closed gates, as in the past, or to send them to school, as was now being proposed.

Underlying Pham Quynh's gradualist philosophy was the belief that the world was composed of those who ruled and those who were ruled. Individuals should receive the training and education most appropriate to their nature, their station in life, and their future calling. Since it was the duty of the rulers to provide leadership and the duty of those whom they ruled merely to follow their lead, Pham Quynh concerned himself only with the cultivation and development of the elite. He acknowledged that the great majority of Vietnamese (he put it at 75 percent but it was closer to 90 percent) would never receive any schooling beyond the third grade. As secretary-general of AFIMA, he worked hard to remedy the situation, spearheading the opening of nursery schools in villages and towns and the general expansion of schooling for boys.²⁰ He was of the view that the education of boys was aimed at cultivating talent for the country; because talent knew no social barriers, it followed that all boys should have the chance to attend school.²¹ Women, however, were made of different stuff. Pham Quynh had begun by welcoming the idea of sexual equality. But in the next breath, he argued that men and women had different natures:

Men are like clouds in autumn
 Women are like smoke in the hearth.
 Though they reach different heights
 They are both capable of soaring.²²

These images so delighted him that he used them on several other occasions.

As for clouds, the natural domain of the male resided well above the mundane concerns of home; but women, like smoke, would al-

ways be linked to the hearth. Clouds and smoke could both soar, but they would always reach different heights. To prevent smoke from soaring at all would be to deny its very nature, but how high it reached depended on the hearth it came from. A woman's place was still in the home, even though Pham Quynh claimed that the world outside also belonged to her. But why consider her contribution to society negligible because her domain was domestic? Indeed, in oriental civilizations the family was considered the very basis of society, and therefore the woman's role must be appreciated more fully. As Nguyen Don Phuc, a frequent contributor to the debates on women, noted, "The virtue of the Oriental woman is not in quelling revolt in the East or bringing order to the North [*danh Dong dep Bac*]; it does not reside in competing with men for sexual equality, nor in studying the stars, or algebra. Even if they are educated, they should learn only the Four Virtues [*tu duc*]." ²³ He further argued that women were entirely responsible for the education of their children, since men, busy with work outside the home, had no time left for the task. This was how he explained the meaning of the popular saying, "If a child turns out badly, that is his mother's fault." ²⁴

Pham Quynh's family history, replete with women who devoted themselves to the welfare of their menfolk, reinforced his belief in their nurturing vocation.²⁵ Pham Quynh did not propose to take elite women out of their domestic sphere and into public life, but to equip them with the new skills their changing duties demanded. Until now, the women's sphere had been the kitchen, where they cooked, worked, and ate, in strict segregation from their men. According to Pham Quynh, women should now prepare to emerge from their kitchen hearths to grace the salons of their husbands. And for that, they needed to learn a whole new set of skills. In days past, it had not been unusual for daughters of scholarly households to acquire a smattering of book-learning while their brothers prepared for the Confucian exams. In families of more modest means and aspirations, a girl probably would not be taught how to read and write; all her education would be concentrated on the acquisition of domestic skills that would make her a desirable match. For centuries, women had dominated trade, though mostly at a petty level. The poorer sold fruits and vegetables or handicrafts at market stalls. The more prosperous owned shops. But these activities were considered part of family management; they were not supposed to lead women into the pub-

lic arena of cultural or political debate. As conceived by Pham Quynh, the education of middle-class girls, who would have to perform their own household chores, should emphasize practical skills. They must learn sewing, weaving, embroidery, arithmetic, reading and writing in the romanized script, and a smattering of literature suited to feminine sensibilities. Since middle-class women were heavily engaged in small-scale trading, they should also learn enough French to be able to deal with French customers or officials. As for upper-class girls, who would probably not have to do menial household work, their education should be aimed at turning them into talented and gracious hostesses for their husbands. But whereas traditional feminine accomplishments included music, chess, and poetry, Pham Quynh thought that the new Vietnamese woman should learn, in addition to literature, some geography, history, hygiene, and the natural sciences. If a student showed aptitude, she might learn Chinese and even French literature in translation, which he himself was busy promoting and interpreting in *Southern Wind*.²⁶ Pham Quynh envisaged the day when such a young woman would become the ideal wife for a modern man. He would be someone who had studied in France, and become a medical doctor, an extreme rarity in those days. Upon his return, he would practice medicine, then become involved in politics. As for his wife, aside from running her household and supervising the education of her children, she would involve herself in charitable work such as visiting hospitals, distributing relief, supporting kindergartens, and so forth. She would also become a celebrated hostess, maintaining a salon where she would welcome the flower of Vietnamese society. Then, coming down to earth, Pham Quynh conceded that such a dream would not materialize for another thirty or forty years.²⁷

Although *Southern Wind* was the chief vehicle of neo-traditionalist thought, its position on the question of women was not without ambiguity. The overt message was clear enough: women must be taught how to be obedient daughters, supportive wives, and caring mothers for new generations of Vietnamese. But the subtext was open to different interpretations. In February 1922, *Southern Wind* ran a poetry contest to honor a Cochinchinese woman for contributing to AFIMA and to the building of a hospital in a Tonkinese village. Although her donation accorded with Pham Quynh's dictum on doing charitable work, it also underlined her financial success and independence,

which went well beyond conventional ideas of household management. In that same issue ran an article proposing the casting of a bronze statue to the Trung queens.²⁸ In May 1924, *Southern Wind* ran a compilation of biographies of famous women by Ngo Huy Linh. Amid a gallery of women whose sole claim to fame was that they had married men of importance were three who were famous leaders in their own right, the Trung sisters and Lady Trieu, all heroines of rebellions against Chinese rule. Others had gained fame for their own literary accomplishments.²⁹ Thus, in its absorption in the topic, *Southern Wind* published a huge variety of articles on women, real and fictional, native and foreign. Not all of them were paragons of feminine decorum and meekness, and they had certainly not confined themselves to the kitchen hearth.

There was a barely concealed subtext to the discourse on women's rights: the question of political maturity and national independence. Among the cautiously progressive elements who dominated this discourse, the consensus was that education was the only way to attain the maturity necessary for national independence. This position united northern neo-traditionalists and southern Constitutionals despite their differing educational philosophies. Debates on women's emancipation thus closely paralleled debates on political independence. By the mid-1920s, the idea that educating women was desirable had gained ground even among more conservative writers. Though hostility to New Women remained, the halo of the Traditional Ladies was dimming somewhat. Even their champions had to concede that the "true daughters of Confucius" were woefully ignorant, that they were ill prepared to face the rigors of modern life, to advance their husbands' careers, or even to defend themselves. They needed to trade some of their self-effacing ways for a modicum of the self-assurance which their modern sisters possessed in such overabundance. Even Nguyen Don Phuc thought that rustic virtue could be carried too far.³⁰ Though few girls were formally enrolled in schools, many more were being taught privately at home; their parents were fearful that in a more public setting their daughters might absorb immoral ideas along with the rudiments of math and geography. These numbers, however small, were gradually transforming elite and middle-class women into a distinctive social group. They also provided a ready-made readership for the fiction that was emerging as the most exciting literary trend of the decade. Indeed, fiction

was the real arena in which the issue of women was debated most forcefully. As a result, northern individualism had a literary flavor quite lacking in its southern manifestation.

Fictional Emancipation

Here again, Pham Quynh played an important role. Passionately interested in developing a truly Vietnamese fiction, he wrote numerous articles explaining the nature, aims, and rules of this genre, buttressing his essays with profiles of authors he particularly liked and extracts from their works. He also did much to encourage the growth of native fiction; many of the contributors to *Southern Wind* tried their hand at writing short stories as well as essays. It was Pham Quynh's opinion, borrowed without acknowledgment from Liang Ch'i-ch'ao, that fiction should be rescued from its traditional ill-repute. Instead of being seen as immoral and of no educational value, it should enjoy the same prestige as scholarly essays. Fiction, he argued, possessed a didactic role and a high moral purpose.

But the fiction that captured the public imagination in the mid-1920s was of a heavily romantic sort. There had been many Western novels available in translation, including romantic ones, before. Some had been serialized in *Southern Wind*, others were published in book form. But, despite skillful translations, their Western origins were inescapable. To many readers, especially the conservative literati who formed an important proportion of the readership of *Southern Wind*, the psychology of Western characters, the problems they faced, the landscapes in which they moved, all remained alien. Even their style was criticized as lacking in poetry, for straight prose was still unfamiliar. Only with the appearance of native fiction in the early 1920s did literature truly become a vehicle of cultural discourse. Although clearly influenced by Western literature, its sensibilities owed a great deal to late Ch'ing fiction, in particular to the genre known as "mandarin ducks and butterflies." This was a type of popular literature, often with some obvious moral message, that appealed to a reading public caught, as the Vietnamese were, in the throes of cultural change.

A short story by Doan Ngoc Bich which appeared in *Southern Wind* in November 1922 illustrates the widespread distrust of women's education. The main character in this morality tale is the daughter of a rural scholar. Her father lets himself be persuaded, out of

misguided paternal love, to send her to school instead of teaching her at home. She is sent to Haiphong, Tonkin's second-largest city, presumably to attend one of the new Franco-Annamite schools. But soon reports of her willful behavior reach her anxious parents. Called home, the young woman quickly becomes bored; she longs for the bright lights of Haiphong, the cinemas, theaters, hotels, and restaurants; she misses her fashionable clothes and shoes. Her mother worries that she has become bold, disobedient, and flirtatious. The good lady flies into a rage when she catches her daughter wearing make-up. Feeling misunderstood, the girl flees home and gradually sinks into vice and misery. She becomes addicted to gambling and has illicit affairs. She enters into a disastrous marriage with a wastrel who refuses to support her child, and is reduced to begging. Clearly, starting with innocuous adolescent rebelliousness and fascination with clothes and make-up, she has fallen beyond redemption. The whole tale is told with a heavily moralizing tone typical of the fiction of the period. There is no hint that the girl's parents may have erred by overreacting to her departures from conventional behavior. Although the author does not specifically lay the blame for her downfall on her schooling, the message is clear. A modern education for women promotes unfiliality, dishonesty, and promiscuity.³¹

Doan Ngoc Bich was not without sympathy toward women trapped into loveless, polygamous marriages. In another short story, entitled "The Daughter Sold in Marriage" (*Ga ban cho con*), which appeared only two issues later, he recounted the sorry tale of a young woman forced by her well-to-do but greedy parents to become the concubine of a married middle-aged man. Her marriage turned out badly. The more her husband showered unwelcome favors on her, the more his first wife victimized her. Eventually, she fled the conjugal home to extricate herself from this unbearable situation. For the next several years, she was able to support herself and was content with her life as an unattached woman. Her story, however, did not end there. Her creator, apparently, did not like to leave her in her single state and had her remarry. But her new husband turned out to be a wastrel and a gambler who spent all her hard-earned savings and beat her. The heroine fled again; and again, the author could not bear to let her live happily on her own. Although in the first half of the story he had heaped scorn on her greedy parents (who, among their sins, had reneged on their promise to give her in marriage to a poor student), at the end, he had her return to the bosom of her family, swear-

ing to give up the idea of marital happiness and to live according to the dictates of filial piety. The story's improbable ending was in all likelihood the result of its author's difficulties in coming to terms with the contradictions of transitional morality.³²

In a climate of opinion which prized filial obedience above all, it was considered *risqué* to advocate allowing young people to choose their own mates. Indeed, moralizing reformers preferred to preach obedience to the young while advising their elders to be thoughtful in choosing marriage partners for their children. But other aspects of marriage customs were coming under attack. In 1922, *Southern Wind* ran a series of articles by Tran Quan Chi on the need to reform customs, especially in rural areas, which were deemed more backward than the westernized urban centers (it was no coincidence that these articles ran together with a series on the need to overhaul village government). Early marriages were singled out as deleterious both to the health of the partners involved and to their chances of happiness. They were thought to be a contributing factor to polygamy, another custom which the author denounced. Among the reasons for arranging early marriages, the author cited a desire to acquire another pair of hands to work in the fields or in the house and the wish of one of the families involved to ally itself with a richer one in order to have access to new sources of money. The selling of young girls into marriage was also roundly condemned.³³ In these articles, a link was established between marriage customs and economic considerations; this would be an important theme of feminist rhetoric in later years. But, though the authors who wrote in *Southern Wind* occasionally showed an awareness of the economic plight of poor women, they were primarily interested in shaping a new elite. Therefore, when it came to discussing morality, most acted as if the typical Vietnamese woman never stepped outside the household compound or came into contact with males who were unrelated to her. And though polygamy was attacked, fidelity throughout marriage and even into widowhood, obedience, and meekness continued to be the ideals propounded for women.

A new development occurred in November 1923 when *Southern Wind* began to serialize the translation of a late Ch'ing novel, the *Chronicle of Great Tears of Bygone Days* (*Hsueh hung lei shih*), by Hsu Cheng-ya. Its story, set in 1909 in the dying days of the Manchu dynasty, was one with which Vietnamese readers could easily empathize. Furthermore, it was written in the classical style, replete with

poems whose absence in Western fiction the Vietnamese so deplored. The *Chronicle of Great Tears of Bygone Days* was originally written in 1915 in the form of a diary kept by one of its protagonists, Ho Meng-hsia. This was Hsu's attempt to improve on an earlier version, published in 1912 as a straightforward narrative under the title *Jade Pear Spirit* (*Yu li hun*). In each format the novel was a phenomenal success, both in China and abroad.³⁴ Hsu Cheng-ya, who had been deeply influenced by Western classics such as Dumas' *La Dame aux camélias* and Goethe's *Young Werther*, skillfully blended Western romanticism with Chinese literary sensibilities.

In his introduction, the translator hailed the book for its newness, remarking that it was set in the last decade, not in some nebulous past, and that the story concerned a "talented and highly educated young man of our own epoch." Indeed, it represented a radical departure from the steady dose of historical novels which Nguyen An Khuong and others had offered to a Vietnamese reading public eager for literature in the new vernacular. The translator extravagantly praised it as being superior to the *Tale of Kieu*, considered the masterpiece of Vietnamese literature. Yet the classical style in which the story was written and its plot, centering on a love triangle involving two sisters, were familiar to readers of premodern literature, both Chinese and Vietnamese. The *Tale of Kieu* involved a young man of great talent and high birth who had to choose between two sisters; in the *Dream of the Red Chamber*, it was two cousins. In both cases, one was beautiful, talented, but also high-strung and overly romantic, the other more plodding though worthy. In both cases, the hero settled for the more prosaic one.

Essentially, the *Chronicle* concerns three young people: Ho Meng-hsia (Mong Ha in Vietnamese translation), an impoverished young man hired as tutor to the son of an attractive twenty-seven-year-old widow named Li Niang (Le Anh); Li Niang herself, the product of tradition; and her sixteen-year-old sister Yun-ch'ien (Van Kien), who attends a new type of school and typifies the modern young woman. Though Li Niang and Meng-hsia fall madly in love, Li Niang considers herself bound by the rules of chastity to remain faithful to her dead husband, and proposes to her father-in-law that a marriage be arranged between Meng-hsia and her sister. Meng-hsia reluctantly proposes to Yun-ch'ien, who, resenting its arranged character, is no more eager for the marriage than he is. But Li Niang remains afraid that Meng-hsia is still in love with her, and decides to set him free by

taking to her bed and allowing herself to drift into death. Yun-ch'ien, who had been unaware of the attachment between her sister and her fiancé, comes across a farewell letter Li Niang had left for Meng-hsia. Shocked at Meng-hsia's duplicity toward herself and moved by her sister's purity and devotion, she falls ill, vowing to die. The Vietnamese translation of the novel stopped at this point in the June 1924 issue of *Southern Wind*. In the September issue, the translator reached into the earlier version to let his readers know what had happened to Meng-hsia. He had gone to Japan to study with the intent of serving his country. In 1911 he took part in the Wuchang Uprising, and, clutching a volume of his own poetry, died both for love and for country.³⁵ The combination of personal concerns and political engagement, the reference to Japan, and the death of Meng-hsia in an event so crucial to the overthrow of Manchu rule and the creation of Republican China all struck a deep chord in Vietnamese readers.

Still, the translator of the *Chronicle* seemed dubious about the moral content of the story and asked his readers to enjoy the novel without necessarily approving of the conduct of its characters. Despite this exercise in self-protection, the novel created a sensation. Emboldened, the translator changed its description from "a story of faithfulness" (*tiêu thuyet chung tinh*) to "a love story" (*ai tinh tiêu thuyet*). The publication of the *Chronicle* seems to have given local authors the courage to publish romantic fiction of their own. One such effort is no longer extant, but an advertisement for it appeared in *Southern Wind* one month after the serialization of the *Chronicle* ended. Like the *Chronicle*, *The Tearful Story of Kim Anh* (*Kim Anh le su*) was described as a new novel, set in Tonkin within the last decade. The advertisement was followed by a highly favorable commentary from the newspaper *Cultural Overtures* (*Khai Hoa*), which praised "its photographic portrait of northern society: ineffectual but greedy mandarins, treacherous masters, wrongdoings in high places, petty rivalry in villages."³⁶ Above all, it promised to show the tragedies caused by the institution of polygamy. The heroine was described as unusually beautiful and virtuous but burdened also by extraordinary sorrows. The novel was especially recommended to elite women who still lived behind "high walls and closed gates." Perhaps Kim Anh was too unbelievable a paragon of beauty and virtue to capture the imagination of modern readers, and therefore sank without a trace. But within months, a literary sensation occurred with the publication of *To Tam* by Hoang Ngoc Phach.³⁷

Hoang Ngoc Phach, who had studied with a Chinese master, was familiar with late Ch'ing fiction as well as with the story of *La Dame aux camélias*. In 1921, he wrote a short story, "Tears from the Red District" (*Giot le hong lau*), which fell within the late Ch'ing literary mainstream in its fascination with the lives of prostitutes.³⁸ He also began a longer story and sent it to the *Bulletin of the Alumni* of the Normal School where he was studying. But when the *Bulletin* stopped appearing, he set aside his novel. Then, in 1925, he went back to it, and published it under the title *To Tam*. The novel was an immediate success. A first printing of three thousand copies was sold in two weeks; a second printing of two thousand copies sold equally fast.³⁹

Like the late Ch'ing novels from which Hoang Ngoc Phach drew inspiration, *To Tam* carried a preface in which its author set forth the salient moral points of the story. He explained that he had originally had qualms about publishing it, fearing the reception that would be accorded to it. But the highly favorable welcome received by the serialization of *The Chronicle of Great Tears of Bygone Days* may have changed his mind. Hoang Ngoc Phach's novel is also about two doomed young lovers, To Tam and Dam Thuy, a friend of her brother. When they meet, Dam Thuy, a writer, is already engaged to marry a young woman whom his mother has chosen for him. Despite his warning that he does not wish to go against his mother's wishes, To Tam is convinced that she can love for the sake of loving, that love and marriage are unrelated. To Tam herself had been resisting pressure from her mother to marry another young man. But when her mother falls ill, To Tam gives in to her mother's wishes and marries. But she cannot forget Dam Thuy and dies of a broken heart shortly after her wedding, leaving Dam Thuy (and presumably her husband) desolate. Romantic love, unsanctioned by family and existing outside the bonds of marriage, was thus portrayed as a recipe for disaster.

Hoang Ngoc Phach seems to have taken the didactic dimension of fiction seriously, even as he saw the danger of encouraging romantic self-indulgence in his readers. Before publishing the novel, he had sent to *Southern Wind* an article warning about the danger of fostering literary sensibilities among females.⁴⁰ In his preface to *To Tam*, written in August 1922, he stated:

Sometimes, when I listen to my friends as they discuss modern culture, I hear of progressive young men with strong personalities, young men of culture and ideas, who abuse these gifts in the pursuit

of romance; they awaken the affections of young women in order to put to the test ideas they have read in books or thought up themselves. Sometimes, they do it on purpose, sometimes unconsciously; whatever the case, they find a good occasion to experiment and make someone fall in love with them; and thus, they provoke many a tragedy, bringing harm to themselves and misery to others, sowing turmoil in their families and in society.

This was no disingenuous disclaimer. Years later, after many more stories focusing on conflicts between duty and love had appeared, Hoang Ngoc Phach clung to his original, and totally unrevolutionary, belief in the virtue of resignation and self-abnegation: "The characters in my story know the meaning of sacrifice for the sake of their parents. That is as it should be. Only someone who can make sacrifices for his family can be faithful to his country."⁴¹ But the young Vietnamese who clutched copies of his novel to their hearts and wept over the sorrows of its fictional characters had a very different interpretation of its message. They saw in its protagonists the embodiment of their own plight, and clung to the idea that To Tam and Dam Thuy were the victims of their respective families. In fact, the two mothers in the story were far from the tyrants who would later abound in similar novels. With the best intentions in the world, each had chosen for her child a highly suitable mate that the child could not love. To Tam and Dam Thuy were far too dutiful, filial, and perhaps far too weak to go against their mothers' wishes. Yet, for their youthful readers, it was enough that they gave voice to the individual's right to exist in the face of family pressure to conform.⁴²

Contemporary commentators were divided on the merits of the novel. Literary critics expressed their fervent appreciation of its stylistic innovations, but moralists were loud in their condemnation of *To Tam*, seeing in it (as in *The Chronicle of Great Tears of Bygone Days*) a pernicious poison that would cause the downfall of Vietnam's youth.⁴³ Indeed, alarming stories began circulating after the publication of *To Tam* that young women who found themselves coerced by their parents into arranged marriages were seeking escape in death.⁴⁴ Much as the moralists might deplore the influence of romantic fiction over their delicate psyches, the fact remained that, by taking seriously their concerns rather than holding them up to ridicule, this fiction helped bury the idea that women should be kept cloistered behind "high walls and closed gates." It would be another decade before the next installment in the fictional war between the generations was

published. Long before that, however, literature caused a political firestorm to erupt. It was not connected to the publication of a new novel attacking tradition and espousing alien principles. Instead, it erupted around the most beloved of traditional Vietnamese literature: the *Tale of Kieu*.

Patriots and Prostitutes

The *Tale of Kieu* contained the quintessential representation of woman-as-victim. In writing it, the nineteenth-century poet, Nguyen Du, had been inspired by an incident which took place in fifteenth-century China and had already been fictionalized in novels and plays before it reached him.⁴⁵ In Nguyen Du's reworking, the originally marginal figure of Kieu assumed a central role in the story. Ostensibly, it concerned a young woman of good birth, extraordinary beauty, and great talent. When her father was suddenly imprisoned on false charges, Kieu, anxious to rescue him, succumbed to the blandishments of a professional seducer, after which she fell into the *demi-monde*. She endured many adventures, first in a brothel, then as the tyrannized concubine of a hen-pecked official, and later as the favorite of a bandit chief, before escaping from her life of degradation. She was eventually reunited in a platonic marriage with her first love, who by then had married her younger sister.

Originally written in the old demotic script rather than in Chinese, the *Tale of Kieu* was easily transliterated into modern Vietnamese. Its wonderful imagery, its music, its gallery of rogues and heroines, its psychological insights, and its Confucian ideals coupled with Buddhist philosophy all made it immensely popular with Vietnamese from every background, from scholars trained in Chinese classics to barely literate peasants who could remember only a few verses. It was the basis of countless pieces of popular theater and art songs; it was consulted by fortune-tellers; its rhyme schemes were used for poetry contests; its characters had become archetypes. But the *Tale of Kieu* also contained an autobiographical dimension which added a richness of meaning and poignancy lacking in the original. Born and educated under the Le dynasty, Nguyen Du had managed to avoid serving the Tay Son when they overthrew the Le. But when Gia Long in turn deposed the Tay Son and ascended the throne in 1802, he summoned Nguyen Du to his court. Nguyen Du went, in contravention of the dictates of dynastic loyalty, which called for him to serve only

the Le. It was as an envoy of Gia Long to China that Nguyen Du had learned of the story of Kieu. Generations of poetry lovers, even illiterate ones, knew of Nguyen Du's personal dilemma, and saw in his verse-narrative more than the tragic story of a woman of beauty and talent of whom fate had been jealous. It was understood to be his *apologia pro vita sua* and a plea for compassion on behalf of all scholars trapped in the moral quicksands of political change.

Pham Quynh seized on the *Tale of Kieu* as the acme of Vietnam's literary heritage, the purest distillation of its national essence, but it was actually Nguyen van Vinh who had first become interested in making it the centerpiece of a new educational curriculum in the romanized script. Vinh began publishing an annotated translation of the *Tale of Kieu* in his *Indochina Review* in 1913. Pham Quynh published his first article on the *Tale of Kieu* in *Southern Wind* in December 1919; it was an essay intended to show how to apply the methods of literary criticism learned from the West. After his trip to France in 1922, where he lectured extensively on Kieu, this topic became a favorite theme of the journal. Beginning with the seventy-fifth issue (1923), a column entitled "Contributions to the *Tale of Kieu*" appeared regularly in *Southern Wind*, bringing forth comments from a variety of literary and cultural critics. Many who praised diverse aspects of the *Tale* nonetheless expressed reservations concerning its morality. Women had traditionally been forbidden to read her story for fear their moral fiber might be corrupted. Nguyen Don Phuc observed: "Few are those who read the *Tale of Kieu* to put literature and good conduct at the service of mankind; those who read it because they are seduced by passion and sexuality and thus poison society are far more numerous."⁴⁶ Until then, however, the debate had involved only contributors to *Southern Wind*, most of whom more or less espoused Pham Quynh's own political views. But in 1924, Pham Quynh decided to create a national cult to honor Kieu and to hold a solemn ceremony to commemorate her author. Pham Quynh's idolatrous admiration for the *Tale of Kieu* precipitated a debate in which literary aesthetics took second place to morality and politics, and in which the fictitious woman Kieu was used to articulate the conflicts of accommodation and resistance.

The ceremony was held on 8 September, the anniversary of Nguyen Du's death, under the auspices of AFIMA. It was a grand affair. *Southern Wind* jubilantly reported that "the audience was estimated at two thousand . . . In Hanoi, the only time a ceremony has attracted

so many people was the reception for Governor-General Sarraut when he lectured at the Temple of Confucius in 1919."⁴⁷ The self-congratulatory tone of the article was not due entirely to the success of the event. In July, Pham Quynh had been asked to head the Chinese section of a new Indochina Normal School.⁴⁸ This new school was part of a set of educational reforms which had begun with the closing of the Faculty of Law and of hundreds of traditional schools as well as private Franco-Annamite institutions, but which included the establishment in Tonkin of a program of primary education in Vietnamese. Pham Quynh had long advocated such a program, so he could contemplate with satisfaction the realization of some of his most cherished ideas.

But Pham Quynh had chosen poorly in the timing of his grandiose ceremony. Pham Hong Thai's attempt to assassinate Governor-General Merlin in June had revived old tensions between upholders of the colonial order and advocates of revolutionary violence. To the latter, Pham Quynh's words rang like a challenge: "As long as the *Tale of Kieu* endures, so does our language, as long as our language endures, so does our country. As long as there are mountains and rivers, what is there to be afraid of?"⁴⁹ His solemn oath to "be faithful to the national language, the national soul, and the national institutions" sounded like an endorsement of the colonial status quo and an oath of collaboration. It provoked a backlash among those scholars of Tonkin and Annam who, unlike Nguyen Ba Hoc or Nguyen Don Phuc, combined cultural and moral conservatism with anticolonial politics. Some were newly released from the penal prisons into which they had been thrown in 1908. Though they were not able to set the terms of the discourse on culture and morality, their influence was not negligible, especially after they acquired a vehicle of their own. Their journal, *Friendship's Sound* (*Huu Thanh*), had been launched in 1921 by the Commercial and Industrial Association of Tonkin (Hoi Tuong Te Thuong Mai va Ky Nghe Bac Ky) with subsidies from the Government-General, but soon its editor-in-chief, Ngo Duc Ke, had turned it into a platform for his own brand of cultural politics.⁵⁰ Ngo Duc Ke, a degree-holder who had once been a close associate of Phan Chu Trinh, was highly critical of Pham Quynh's accommodationist line. In April, he published an article which directly challenged Pham Quynh's argument. Starting from the same Social Darwinian premise as did Pham Quynh, Ke argued that the world had been formed at different times, and thus human beings had

appeared in different places at different times. As a result, some people were civilized, others still barbaric. As the more advanced tried to conquer and exploit the less advanced, there ensued perpetual struggle and warfare. Therefore, he continued, "if a nation survives, so will its culture and language; if a country is exterminated, so will be its culture and language."⁵¹

After the ceremony, Ngo Duc Ke became vitriolic in his criticism. According to him, all the members of AFIMA, starting with Hoang Trong Phu, and all the contributors to *Southern Wind*, with Pham Quynh at their head, were people who "gave up their bodies and their good names into the keeping of brothels." They had allowed themselves to behave like girls "seduced by men so that they rejected their parents' teachings and now were prostitutes who let their bodies be used like those of horses or buffaloes."⁵² Chagrined, Pham Quynh kept a dignified silence, but he stopped writing about Kieu. Contributions on the subject, however, continued to be printed in *Southern Wind*, and this was not the end of the controversy. Six years later, it erupted again, as virulently as before. Instead of embodying the survival of the Vietnamese language and culture, Kieu had become a symbol of the disintegration of the Vietnamese nation. Moreover, Kieu, the high-born girl whose love for her family had led her into prostitution, had become a symbol of elite collaborationism and treason. As the French authorities suspected, the patriarchal family often served as a stand-in for the colonial regime in contemporary fiction. On a superficial level, much of that fiction seemed to consist of fairly innocuous love stories; yet it could also be used to articulate critiques of colonial society.⁵³

Although they chose to express their cultural anxieties through debates about women, conservative moralists were actually less concerned with issues of gender than of generations. Young Vietnamese looked upon the familial home not as a refuge from the storms of life but as a prison. It called forth visions not of the nurturing mother but of the domineering father. The degree to which their efforts to break free of familial ties and old-fashioned morality bred fear among their elders stands revealed in an apocryphal story recounted by Pham Quynh. As he told it, a modern young woman was refusing to let her husband send money to his aging parents on the ground that, according to Western ideas of marriage, she and her husband constituted a new family unit, distinct and separate from their parents, and owing nothing to them.⁵⁴ The intensely personal dimension of the effects of

cultural change could not have been better underscored. But in advocating the retention of "tradition" and family morality while constantly reiterating their gratitude toward the French mother country, conservative accommodationists reinforced Sarraut's own efforts to put the family metaphor at the service of colonial rule. The perceived collusion between the family and the colonial state, and the parallelism between moralist conservatism and political collaboration explain why the first attempts at revolution seemed so much like a rebellion against familial authority, and why it seemed vitally necessary to emancipate women along with the nation.