

**A MYSTIC QUEST IN THE SHELTERING COUNTRY: AN
INVESTIGATION INTO PAUL BOWLES'S LITERARY IMAGE OF
MOROCCO**

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Abstract

Paul Bowles (1910-1999) was an American writer who restlessly travelled throughout the world until he finally chose Morocco as a country of permanent residence. He settled in Tangier from 1947 until his death in November 1999. Paul Bowles's work as a whole includes writings set in the different countries he travelled to but the bulk of his literary production is essentially Moroccan in themes, characters and settings. This dissertation attempts to investigate Paul Bowles's mystic quest in Morocco as a sheltering home and the reasons why this country retained him for a lifelong expatriation. It also demonstrates the impact Morocco exerted on the fulfilment of the writer's quest in Morocco. In short, this study analyses the reasons why Morocco became the writer's adopted and sheltering home and the extent to which it fulfilled his mystic quest. My study is a text based analysis involving Paul Bowles's fiction, autobiographies, travel essays and interviews.

This research has been conducted in the light of different methods, namely the comparative method of investigation, the psychoanalytical approaches of Jacques Lacan, Julia Kristeva and others when appropriate and of J.Olney's and G.Gusdorf theories of autobiography.

The comparative method of investigation analyses the different contextual influences that shape the expatriate's image of Morocco and show the extent to which the writer was receptive to the different world cultural and movements, in addition to the author's familial, American and Moroccan influential contexts.

Bowles's literary production as a whole includes writings set in the different countries where he resided for different periods of time. A significant element of my study is then the analysis of the autobiographical cohesion and centrality that subtend the writer's work as a whole. This part is mostly conducted in the light of J.Olney's and G.Gusdorf theories of Autobiography. The cohesion and centrality linking Paul Bowles's life and work reveal the Moroccan specificities as well as the cultural and spiritual ethos that retained him for a definite expatriation and contributed to the fulfilment of his mystic quest. In the contexts of J. Lacan's and J. Kristeva's psychoanalytical theories, the image of Morocco is also revealed as the projection of Paul Bowles's psyche, as the metaphor of his self-recovery and definition and finally of his aspirations at transcendence.

Paul Bowles's adoption of Morocco was to a significant extent due to his uncompromising and sheer fascination by Moroccan Nature, scenery and cosmic elements. This appeal induced and, to a great extent, contributed to the fulfilment of the writer's mystic quest in the context of Pantheism. I have therefore analysed Paul Bowles's quest in the light of Ibn-al-Arabi's Pantheism and of other mystical philosophies as appropriate. Thus, the final chapter of this investigation has been devoted to Paul Bowles's mystic Morocco as the sheltering realm of his mystic quest.

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To my exceptional husband

To Amine and Fahd, my gifts from life

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Introduction

Paul Bowles (1910-1999) was an American inveterate traveler who was strongly attracted by exotic and foreign countries. His life was a perpetual journey to alien countries and continents such as Europe, Ceylon, India, South America, Algeria until Morocco became his elected and sheltering home country. This investigation analyses the protective value of Morocco and the fulfillment of the writer's mystic quest in this chosen abode.

Paul Bowles's image of Morocco has been the subject of a drawn-out, intermittent debate over the exoticism and primitivism of his image of Morocco. The literature available on the writer's Morocco abounds in the usual and unrevealing stereotypes on the 'mysterious', 'exotic' and 'primitive' country of Paul Bowles's expatriation. In it, Morocco is a mere backdrop and an exotic spot upon which critics project subjective images of kif addiction, exoticism, and primitivism.

Morocco is focal to Paul Bowles's work as a whole. Without fully understanding the Moroccan context of Bowles's work, we cannot really appreciate and evaluate his actual vision of Morocco. Last but not least, the mystic facet of Bowles's image of Morocco as well as the author's spiritual quest has not yet been investigated.

In fact, the experience of living in Morocco radically altered Bowles's life and work in ways that have not yet been the subject of scholarship. Thus, my research unites two apparently disparate cultures and worldviews: Bowles's original western culture and his adoption of an Arabo-Maghrebine approach to life.

This investigation analyses the different contextual influences that shape the image of Morocco. The multiple facets of Bowles's image of Morocco are analysed in the light of the world literary and cultural movements that can be found in various forms and at different levels in Bowles's representation of Morocco. His literary production spans several decades, from 1949 with the publication of his first novel, *The Sheltering Sky*, to 1989 with *Two Years Beside the Strait: Tangier Journal 1987-1989*, an autobiographical work. Accordingly, this work is infused with the various world cultural and literary movements that prevailed during the second half of the century, mostly Existentialism and Surrealism. The analysis of the diverse correlations linking these movements to Bowles's Moroccan work sheds lights on the richness and complexity of the image.

Even if Paul Bowles was a contemporary of the Beats, this movement does not seem to have impacted greatly upon his literary image of Morocco. Likewise, Orientalism does not seem to me a

suitable approach to Paul Bowles's image of Morocco. In Orientalism, Edward Said maintains that the Orientalists, that is to say the Western scholars of the Arab world, have a generalizing, and text-centred approach to the Orient. Their understanding of the 'Orient' was about texts only, that is to say an approach which is out of touch with the human realities. This view is not appropriate to Paul Bowles's image of Morocco: the expatriate's treatment of Morocco is 'human' and 'humane', in the sense of more concerned with the Moroccan social realities, with a strong interest in the 'little' people and in direct human relationships.

Even if the Orient as a place for self-discovery where the disillusioned Westerner escapes from the West to feel alive¹ and achieve his personal integrity may at face value seem appropriate to Paul Bowles's Morocco, the violence that pervades the images contradicts this Orientalist trait. The severing of the Professor's tongue in 'A Distant Episode' and the young boy's mutilation in 'The Delicate Prey' are cases in point. In this regard, the above mentioned violent act can be interpreted as the suggestion that the orient may be as tragic and violent as the west, an implication that points to Paul Bowles's refutation of any such orientalist trait

Besides, the Orientalist discourse also focuses on the myths and stereotypes of the Orient as a suitable background for myth and mystery. Such a worldview does not apply to Paul Bowles's Morocco since the author notably focuses on human relationships linking the two communities and, to a really major extent, on his deep-seated fascination with Moroccan Nature and cosmic elements. As a matter of fact, the fulfilment of the author's spiritual quest in the context of a pantheist mysticism shows that Paul Bowles's Moroccan work is essentially not an orientalist discourse.

The outcome of the orientalist view as a binomial opposition of the West versus the Orient is as well contradictory with the author's approach to Morocco: Paul Bowles's choice of Morocco as an elected home is itself an implicit reconnaissance of the Moroccan civilization. Besides, his unprecedented adoption of Moroccan linguistic and cultural elements reveals his adherence to and adoption of the Moroccan cultural ethos. Paul Bowles's unparalleled fascination by Moroccan Nature and cosmos and the fulfilment of his mystic quest set a spiritual bridge between his western origins and Morocco, his North African elected country. So, Paul Bowles's literary image of Morocco is by no means an Orientalist discourse. The analysis of the diverse correlations linking these movements to Bowles's

¹ This frame of mind applies to Nelson Dyar's expectations from Morocco: "I want to feel I'm alive" is his avowed motivation. Yet, this positive perspective is tempered by his existential and gloomy prospect of exchanging "one cage for another", *Let it Come Down*, p. 22.

Moroccan work is part of the richness and complexity of Paul Bowles's image of his adopted country.

The interwoven and correlative influences of the above-mentioned literary and cultural movements highlight the cosmopolitan dimension and the complexity of Bowles's Morocco. This cosmopolite facet grants Bowles's image of Morocco a multicultural character and raises the issue of a double aesthetics, drawing from the Western literary and cultural tradition and from a *certain*¹ Maghrebine cultural and literary aesthetics.

The Maghrebine cultural and literary aesthetics, in association with the a universal and cosmopolitan level suiting his lifelong expatriation and his status as a perpetual traveller, grants Paul Bowles's Moroccan work a cosmopolitan dimension and points to the multicultural facet of the image. As I. Hassan's states, 'culture is permeable to time past, time present, and time future. [...]. This means that a period must be perceived in terms of *both* continuity and discontinuity'². This viewpoint accounts for the variety and combination of the correlative influences that are present in the writer's image of Morocco

Thus, the main component elements of the image are quite exclusively derived from the writer's past and own cultural heritage in combination with Moroccan folk culture and traditions, from the folk literature and the oral tradition. To state it in a nutshell, they are derived from a certain Morocco, that is to say, a country viewed from the author's own perception and invested with his personal connotations, worldviews and spiritual aspirations.

Paul Bowles's aspirations for transcendence and a mystic quest are pivotal to his image of Morocco and to the autobiographical cohesion and centrality. The latter are at the core of the writer's literary production and bind his life and work. A psychoanalytical approach also highlight the writer's drives and 'unconscious' expectations from his adopted country. In this respect, this analysis is conducted on the basis of Jacques Lacan's theory of the mirror-stage, of Julia Kristeva's psychoanalytic theory and of other theories as appropriate.

My dissertation takes into account Paul Bowles's Moroccan fiction, his travel essays and articles as well as the interviews. My subject being the study of Paul Bowles's literary image of Morocco, the writer's unique collection of poems, Next to Nothing (1926-1977), will not be taken

¹ This restriction refers to the Moroccan, French and Spanish words Paul Bowles includes in his text and to the themes he draws from the Moroccan cultural heritage.

² I.Hassan, "The Question of Postmodernism", Bucknell Review, p. 120.

into account as his verse is totally devoid of any local Moroccan color and absolutely unrelated to any of his numerous places of residence. The travel essays and critical articles on Morocco highlight and present the author's "objective" standpoint on Morocco, the Moroccan culture and people. As 'concrete' or 'realistic' literature, they straightforwardly express the author's view without the literary "wrappings" of fiction. In these writings, the distance separating the image from reality is at its lowest level and, consequently, might be viewed as representing a kind of "reality kernel". The sampling of travel essays and critical articles will be done according to the different aspects of the image they represent or, in some instances, according to elements they occult.

Bowles's travel literature and critical essays were more numerous and typical at the beginning of his expatriation. A chronological analysis should then highlight any evolution in the author's "objective" view of the Moroccan reality and culture and underscores the reasons why Paul Bowles turned more commonly to the writing of fiction. This shift from travel literature to fiction writing might be interpreted as a step towards a certain assimilation with the Moroccan people and cultural ethos. Writing a fiction which is Moroccan in themes, characters and settings, Bowles was no more a mere traveller but a Moroccan resident.

Bowles's writings have been selected according to the different aspects of the image they represent or, in some instances, according to elements they occult.

The above mentioned research directions and theories show that Morocco, through all its diverse and symbiotic literary representations, is Paul Bowles's metaphor for the adopted country: it is the figurative expression for the author's release from the past and of the fulfilment of the spiritual quest in the elected home.

Chapter I: Contextual Framework of the image

Paul Bowles's image of Morocco is shaped by the combined influence of the different contexts in which it was produced. Paul Bowles's Moroccan work spans several decades and, as such, has been necessarily influenced by different cultural movements. In view of F.Guyard's comparative theory, the author is receptive to contextual influences, and his literary production is therefore shaped by the different contexts in which it is written. Bowles settled in Morocco in 1949 and lived there until his death in 1999, resident for a half century. He was then a Moroccan resident for a half century. Existentialism and, to a lesser extent, Surrealism, were then influential contexts. On more personal levels, the American background, the writer's familial context and the Moroccan environment are of a notable influence on the image of Morocco. This chapter analyses the consequent impact of the above mentioned contexts on the image.

The existential facet of the image of Morocco

Alienation

This study is mostly conducted in the light of the philosophies of J. P. Sartre and Camus who seem to be the writer's main existential influences. The existential facet of Bowles's image of Morocco will mainly be studied through Let it Come Down as this novel is the writer's most elaborate existential work¹ which fictionalizes different features of the existential exposure².

Bowles settled definitively in Morocco in 1947, that is, at the height of Existentialism. The earliest works, in particular Let it Come Down, are consequently marked by the Existentialist influence. In addition to this, the author's numerous travels throughout the world and his quite lifelong expatriation have probably made him more receptive to world literary and cultural movements; as J. Collins affirms, "his expatriation has certainly made him a citizen of the international literary world"³.

Bowles's first Moroccan works were written shortly after his quite definite exile in Morocco. Accordingly, major existential themes such individual existence, commitment and freedom, the possible destructive consequences contingent to individualism, and the irrationality and absurdity of

¹ Cf L.D. Steward, The Illumination of North Africa, pp. 87-98.

² M. Bradbury, The Modern American Novel, p.129.

³ J. Collins, "Approaching Paul Bowles", in: The Review of Contemporary Fiction, Paul Bowles , Coleman Dowell Number, p. 56.

the world are significantly basic to Paul Bowles's early image of Morocco. As a matter of fact, Paul Bowles himself acknowledged the influence of Sartre and Camus on his thought¹.

Existentialism emphasizes the prevalence of existence over essence, individual freedom, commitment and choice, and is based on the assumption that life is irrational, absurd and that nothingness prevails. This existential attitude engenders intense feelings of anxiety, 'non-being' and nothingness, as well as a desire to act in a meaningless and absurd world². This worldview leads to alienation, anguish, despair and loneliness. These feelings are key components of the existential attitude towards life³. Thus, nihilism, pessimism, hopelessness and destruction are the overall consequences of such a philosophical attitude.

As a foreign country, Morocco provides then an adequate setting and environment. The adopted country is accordingly appropriate to the treatment of some major existential themes such as the characters' separation from their past and from their native land as well as their approach to a new life in an unknown environment. Paul Bowles's adopted country is also relevant to some other existential concepts such as choice and commitment as well as the absurdity and irrationality of life to quote but the most notable ones. Drawing on Husserl's epistemology, J.P. Sartre put forward that human consciousness shapes reality that is dual, in the sense that it is composed of the *en-soi* (in-itself) or the world of the real and objective reality and the *pour-soi* (for-itself) or man's consciousness or his subjective perception of reality⁴.

Generally, the existential man is often a stranger in a strange land. As R. Lehan puts it, the characters of an existential novel live in an unknown or strange world to which they must adjust⁵, statement which largely applies to the main protagonist of Let it Come Down and to the author himself. Therefore, this country also favours the characters' estrangement, displacement and life in an unknown environment which engenders an absurd and irrational vision of life. Besides, travels and journeys are part of the existential perspective and are means to realize oneself: travel entails the belief that one can recover himself through experience on the road.

¹ Cf Oleg Kerenski, "Aspects of Self: A Bowles Collage", in: Twentieth Century Literature, p. 266.

² As Sartre states in existentialism and humanism, "Heidegger knows, as did Kierkegaard, the intensity of man's anxiety to feel that he exists, and that this is the root of all his anxieties. If –as phenomenology demonstrates– we do not know objects, nor do we know ourselves the subjects, if we know only phenomena which are the transitory and contingent products of the interaction of these two "unknowns"- then, to be born into this life is to find oneself pitched into the drift of phenomena, "abandoned", -"responsible" for our existence and yet ever more clearly realizing to our "anguish" that the whole is meaningless". Jean Paul Sartre, existentialism and humanism, pp. 13-14.

³ Cf C.H. Holman, A Handbook to Literature, p. 193.

⁴ Cf R. Lehan, A Dangerous Crossing, French Literary Existentialism and the Modern American Novel, pp. 14, 15.

⁵ Cf R. Lehan, A Dangerous Crossing, French Literary Existentialism and the Modern American Novel, p. 15.

Most of Bowles's characters accord to this perspective. Morocco provides a destination for such characters who are generally travellers, migrants and questers, seeking freedom and having committed themselves through their exile. Therefore, they are displaced and experience the various consequences of their separation from their homeland. As R. Lehan states, they are uprooted and puzzled. On the whole, they are unsuccessful people, having failed in life, self-destructive or destroyed by their environment. They generally seek in Morocco an outlet from their existential cage of the self.

As a matter of fact, in Let It Come Down, Dyar's life prior to his arrival in Morocco is depicted as marked by boredom, motionlessness, depression, unhappiness and emptiness¹. All these emotional aspects can be subsumed under the existential feeling of alienation.

Morocco is then the expected heaven that would let him out of the existential prison. Indeed, Dyar's actual and announced goal to travel to Tangier is to feel that he can experience positive being: "All the way across on the ship to Gibraltar, he had told himself that it was the healthy thing to have done, that when he arrived he would be like another person, full of life, delivered from the sense of despair that had weighed on him so long".² He perceives the new environment as having the potential to take him out from the Western alienating 'cage', that is, divorce him from the mores of his mother-country. In fact, he asserts that 'there's nothing wrong with me that a change won't cure. Nobody's meant to be confined in a cage like that year after year. I'm just fed up that's all'³.

Nearly the same motivations are shared by some of the other expatriates of Let it Come Down. The irony of these expatriates' situation is that, while seeking to escape from the alienation of their original country, they find themselves entangled in another kind of alienation, which is the estrangement contingent to their existence in an alien country. So, they live in a kind of deadlock, with no escape: alienation is all pervading, even though under different forms. This vicious circle accounts for the characters' pessimistic and somehow existential nihilistic view of life in Morocco.

Morocco is therefore viewed as a kind of Promised Land, endowed with all the virtues change would cause. In Let it Come Down, Dyar imagined that Morocco was the solution to all his existential problems: "There's nothing wrong with me that a change won't cure"⁴ sums up the motivations underpinning his taking off to Tangier and his desire for transformation and self-

¹ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, pp. 19-22.

² Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 22.

³ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 20.

⁴ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 20.

realisation. In this context, Morocco is assimilated to what Albert Camus views as 'La terre nourricière', that is to say, the redeeming country.

In this perspective, alienation arises also from the individual's physical displacement and his contact with a foreign country and culture. In this context, Bowles's Moroccan fiction is at the junction of two cultures, two countries, which therefore explains and favours the recurrence of alienation as a theme. On the whole, Bowles projects his characters across cultural boundaries as travellers, nomads. This situation is at the origin of their dislocation and ensuing alienation in Morocco. Morocco, in Bowles's existential works, acts as the generator of the characters' alienation in the sense that, being in an alien country, they experience a kind of disjunction and fragmentation from their real self which becomes itself alien.

In Let it Come Down, alienation is figuratively conveyed through the metaphor of the 'cage'. This recurrent metaphor illustrates the existential estrangement. At the very beginning of the novel, that is, at Dyar's arrival in Tangier, the writer already points to the alienation and motionlessness of his life in America by comparing life in a cage¹. Even the protagonist's newly acquired freedom in Morocco is suggested by the comparison associating him to a prisoner who has broken the bars of his cell². Even the exile in Morocco that is supposed to let him free is assimilated to a cage to which no one has the keys³. The same metaphor recurs whenever the author wants to stress his protagonist's alienation and confusion⁴, even in a country that was supposed to let him free. Even his new place of work, the travel agency, which is presumed to provide him with liberty and well-being, is assimilated to a prison: 'Well, here is your cage'⁵ is he told as an introduction.

The metaphor of the prey is also a figurative representation of the existentialist alienation. Dyar is described as a 'prey to a demoralizing sensation of motionlessness'⁶ even in his original country. He imported this status with him in the 'would be' haven, Morocco. The status of 'prey' recurs also in Tangier where he is chased by taxi drivers as the only prey that evening⁷. Throughout the whole work, he is also the victim of different kinds of crooked people; for instance, in a bar in

¹ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 20.

² Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 144.

³ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 252.

⁴ Cf Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 169.

⁵ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 80.

⁶ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 20.

⁷ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 17.

Tangier, his status of prey is suggested by the 'predatory fashion'¹ a sly Moroccan youth looked down at him.

The unfamiliar physical environment and dislocation are also alienating elements. Therefore, Morocco, as an alien country, also generates the characters' feeling of alienation and contributes to highlight his sense of estrangement. In Let it Come Down, Dyar travels from his original country to a completely unfamiliar city. He arrives in the unknown Tangier in a windy and stormy black night, which heightens the uneasiness he feels in this new environment. The author's recurrent references to the darkness² that surrounds him at his arrival in Tangier are intended to emphasize the strangeness and the unknown character of Dyar's new environment. The obscurity of the night and the darkness that encompasses his close surroundings emphasizes the unfamiliarity of the place³, increasing thus his feelings of estrangement. After this somewhat uncomfortable arrival, and once in this foreign city, examples of Dyar's alienation and estrangement abound: even after the shock of the first encounter, and amid expatriates like himself, he still feels at odds with his surroundings, as if the others were in 'another world'. The lack of communication and his estrangement are as well highlighted by his feeling of being surrounded by dead people⁴. In the same perspective, the discrepancy between him and the alien environment takes sometimes the form of a lack of an inner sense of orientation and a loss of a sense of balance⁵. Adaptation proves to be difficult and in Tangier, 'he is an instrument that strives to adapt itself to the new exterior; he must get those unfamiliar contours more or less into focus once again'⁶.

This state of mind is first illustrated by his physical disorientation. Tangier is often described as dark and labyrinthine, made of 'tortuous corridors'⁷ and of buildings 'like plants, chaotic, facing no way, topheavy, one growing out of the other'⁸; consequently, he is often unable to steer himself whether in Tangier⁹ -or in its environs- as he sees no landmarks to direct him. His inability to remember the way to the bar Lucifer he had consciously carved in his mind is intended to underlie his dislocation and alienation. The lengthy enumeration of roads and turns is a means to suggest that Dyar is somewhat lost, incapable of involvement and unable to sort out the things of his life. In fact,

¹ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 47.

² Cf Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, pp. 18, 19, 32.

³ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 18.

⁴ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 127.

⁵ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 191.

⁶ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 191.

⁷ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 169.

⁸ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 169.

⁹ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, pp. 166-169.

Dyar's disorientation in the streets is representative of the aimlessness and the disarray of his life as well as his physical expatriation and dislocation.

Dyar's spatial disorientation and the labyrinthine pattern of the streets of Tangier illustrate his chaotic and alienated life. The author's description of the chaotic and cacophonous aspects of the setting¹ – that is, the night atmosphere of the streets in Tangier- is intended to emphasize and illustrate Dyar's alienated existence. Besides, the intermittent descriptions of the filth, darkness and apparent disorder of Tangier's city life illustrate and emphasize the protagonist's inner disorder. So, the protagonist's moral disorder is thus reflected by the absence of landmarks. His inability to direct himself in the tortuous streets of Tangier and the chaotic environment² express the underlying depth of his alienation.

Staticity or the feeling of being 'motionless' is another expression existential alienation. Dyar's static personality and life illustrate his alienation. The sensation of the 'growing paralysis'³ he experienced while in America illustrates the lifelessness of his existence. One of his main drives to leave his father-country country was, as he states, a feeling of "motionlessness" that made of him a kind of 'dead weight'.

The absence of life and the existential malaise are conveyed through an absence of motion or stasis. Even his arrival in Tangier, which is expected to be the remedy to all his disorders, is placed under the sign of a persistent motionlessness. In this sense, and ironically enough, Dyar's refers to his new position and job in Tangier as his 'new station in life'⁴, which at the same time illustrates his staticity in life and suggests the failure of his prospect.

Existence as it precedes essence: anti-essentialism

The detailed presentation of the protagonist's situation as well as his acute awareness of it is itself an aspect of the Existential humanism. Dyar's arrival in Tangier is immediately followed by an insightful assessment of his human situation⁵. In addition to this, his behaviour and experiences throughout the novel are punctuated by thoughtful moments of meditation on his existence and on his past and present life, which corresponds to concept of the Sartre's *pour-soi* or the *Being-for*

¹ Paul Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, pp. 167-169.

² Paul Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, pp. 166-169.

³ Paul Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, p. 21.

⁴ Paul Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, p. 84.

⁵ Cf Paul Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, pp. 19-22.

*Itself*¹. It is Sartre's expression for human existence. It is a form of consciousness that entails possibility rather than a fatal act. Therefore it is the recognition that man can change himself. This view applies to Dyar because his arrival to Tangier is basically motivated by aspirations to a new life and to a restored state of being. As Bowles discloses, "All the way across on the ship to Gibraltar, he had told himself that it was the healthy thing to have done, that when he arrived he would be like another person, full of life, delivered from the sense of despair that had weighed on him for so long"². As Kaufmann explains, in the existential context, man's status is tributary to new decisions³. Accordingly, man always has the ability to choose a new role, a new state of being. This capability subtends Dyar's travel to Tangier and his firm decision to stay there: "He was really here now; there was no turning back"⁴.

In this novel, the other characters are also subjected to the same existential considerations. Even Eunice Good, another American resident in Tangier, derives a feeling of self-satisfaction from the mere thought of existing: "I insist too hard on living my own life"⁵. She prefers her own universe or 'cosmos', as Paul Bowles states, to be *in life*⁶, which could be seen as representing Sartre's *pour-soi*.

This attitude to life can be replaced in the context of Existential humanism. This concept was first established by Sartre in 'L' Existentialisme est un Humanisme': "Existentialism maintains that in man, and in man alone, existence precedes essence"; 'We mean that man first of all exists, encounters himself, surges up in the world-and then defines himself'⁷. Through this declaration, Sartre asserts that man defines himself through his life and actions and by means of his ability to think, grow and change. On this basis, the most significant act of life is that man and things exist, and that there is no real meaning in any event or life except what the individual gives it. Consequently, individuals are self-creators, that is to say that man's character is his fate. It is the individual's actions that define his self.

¹ "The *pour-soi* (for-itself) is that being which is aware of itself: man". William Kaufmann, *Existentialism*, p.43.

² Paul Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, p. 22.

³ "What makes self-deception possible, according to Sartre, is that the *pour-soi* differs from the *en-soi* or to be concrete: a man is not a homosexual, a waiter, or a coward in the same way in which he is six feet tall or blond.....If I am six feet tall, that is that. It is a fact no less than the table is, say, two feet high. Being a coward, or a waiter, is different: it depends on ever new decisions". Kaufmann, *Existentialism*, p. 44.

⁴ Paul Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, p. 18.

⁵ Paul Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, p.58.

⁶ Paul Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, p.58.

⁷ Cf W.Kaufmann, *Existentialism*.

As a matter of fact, a parallel can be drawn between Dyar and Roquentin, the main character of *La Nausée*. Roquentin experiences visual illusions and is unable to fit in a given context. For instance, sitting in a trolley car and staring out of the window, he cannot discern whether it is the buildings outside that are moving or the trolley. This blurred vision is similar to Dyar's distorted image of the surrounding reality, when he is under the influence of drugs or when he is immersed in an unknown environment such as Tangier. So, Morocco, as an unknown country, underscores the prevalence of existence over essence. In the same perspective, young Paul Bowles's pondering over the word 'mug' recalls Roquentin's celebrations over the word 'seat'¹. In this sense, in *Without Stopping* the author relates that at the age of four he repeated the word so many times that it lost its meaning and did not mean 'mug' any more: 'How could 'mug' not mean mug any more?'"². Separating being and function, these considerations are thus a means to stress the distinction between existence and essence.

The notion of the prevalence of existence over essence is also conveyed through the main character's constant concern about his being and existence. As soon as he arrives in Morocco, Dyar assimilates the current interval of time, set after his departure from his native country but just before the actual beginning of his new life in Tangier, to a non-existence³, which implies that his arrival in Tangier is expected to be the starting point of a new life⁴. Towards the middle of the novel, at the beginning of the second section, significantly entitled 'fresh meat and roses' because it corresponds to a period when he believes that he actually does exist, Dyar moves a step forward in his existentialist concerns: he sums up his whole life through the assertion of his mere existence: "Here I am⁵", declaration which recalls Sartre's aphorism. In the same sense, one of his most intense existential experiences occurs when, lying in complete symbiosis with the natural elements of the beach of Tangier, he underscores the importance of existence and values the immediate moment: "The whole of life does not equal the sum of its parts. It equals any one of the parts; there is no sum"⁶.

The existential anti-essentialism is also expressed through Dyar's intense and recurrent desire to isolate the present, that is to say what M. G. Williams refers to as the "Now"⁷: "If only existence could be cut down to the pinpoint of here and now, with no echoes reverberating from the past, no

¹ Roquentin cannot clearly associate the word 'seat' with its function while he is putting his hand on the seat.

² Paul Bowles, *Without Stopping*, p. 9.

³ Paul Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, p. 19.

⁴ Dyar's attempts at revival join and illustrate the author's quest in Morocco that also corresponds to a kind of rebirth.

⁵ Paul Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, p. 117.

⁶ Paul Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, p. 183.

⁷ M.G. Williams, "Tea in the Sahara: The Function of Time in the Work of Paul Bowles", p. 417.

tinglings of expectations from the past, no tinglings of expectations from times not yet arrived”¹. Weaning the ‘actual’ instant from all bonds, Dyar is isolating pure experience and so, asserting sheer existence.

The primacy of ‘Existence’ is as well highlighted by drug induced hallucinatory states: “The road could go on, time could go on, but he was neither time nor the road. He was an extra element between the two, his precarious existence mattering only to him, known only to him, but more important than everything else”². The timelessness he feels, the lack of contextualization in space as well as his ‘being’ amid rough time and space elements are means to emphasize the pre-eminence of his unreserved existence.

In this experience, Dyar is reduced to sheer consciousness, which corresponds to J.P.Sartre’s concept of ‘*en-soi*’. The protagonist’s acute and sensuous perception of the reality around him, especially the natural elements, reflects his keen consciousness of his own existence in communion with the existent world³. He is aware of the feeblest sounds and spots the smallest images; for instance, the first time he goes out of his refuge he notices “far below, on a ridge here, in a ravine there, a minute figure moved, clothed in garments the color of the pinkish earth itself”⁴. He even discerns at a distance a shape as pinkish as the earth, that is, not easily detectable. Besides, his sensitivity was so heightened that he perceived even the most inaudible sounds:

It even seemed to him that in the tremendous stillness he could hear now and then the faint frail sound of a human voice, calling from one distant point to another, but it was like the crying of tiny insects, and the confused backdrop of falling water blurred the thin lines of sound, making him wonder a second later if his ears had not played him false⁵.

Here again, keen consciousness of the universe and existence is conveyed through the protagonist’s perception of his environment that is so heightened that it seems to grant him supernatural powers.

These existential concerns compose the background of the whole novel and the climax is reached when Dyar murders his Moroccan friend, Thami, an act which is also intended to prove his existence. The nail and hammer used to kill Thami are associated with existence, instead of death. In

¹ Paul Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, p.

² Paul Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, p. 248.

³ Cf Paul Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, pp. 245-49.

⁴ Paul Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, p. 250.

⁵ Paul Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, p. 250-251.

the inner turmoil preceding the fatal act, Paul Bowles states that Dyar ‘had willed them into existence’¹; the presence of these tools in his pocket suggests life and implies that the act the tools are going to be used for is expected to lead to the protagonist’s assertion of life and existence.

‘I must remember that I exist, he told to himself; that was clear, like a great rock rising out of the sea around it. ‘I must remember that I am alive’²: these existential ponderings immediately precede the crime. These words at the same time validate his act, which instantly engenders in him the serenity of rest that is subsequent to his newly acquired conviction. This respite can be explained by the momentary release from the existential anguish Thami’s death has stimulated in him. The same existential satisfaction is aroused by the view of Thami’s inert hand: “the very presence of the hand gave him his unshakable certainty, his conviction that his existence, along with everything in it, was real, solid, undeniable”³.

Dyar’s exacerbated perception of the slightest natural sounds and images recalls the pantheist communion with Nature and at the same time foretells Paul Bowles’s later mystic approach to Morocco. Besides, the above mentioned existential considerations have as well an autobiographical value since they recall the author’s ponderings about his existence at an early age. For instance, in Without Stopping, he relates that at the age of four, he was already acutely conscious of his existence: “I was I, I was there and it was that precise moment and no other”⁴. This awareness of sheer existence is not articulated in terms of existentialism but as a sharp consciousness of life, most often related to the notion of time. As a matter of fact, in the autobiography quoted above, the existential awareness is triggered by the chimes of a clock: “then a clock in the house struck four. It began all over again. I am I, it is now, and I am here.”⁵

The notion of ‘Time’ is a focal issue to Existentialism and to Paul Bowles’s Moroccan work. Life being time, the function of time is very closely to the assertion of one’s existence. As such, it is a noteworthy issue in Paul Bowles’s early Moroccan work and serves the purpose of existentialism in its relation to the perception of Life and Timelessness.

For instance, in Let It Come Down, shortly before his death, Thami recalls a favourite proverb of his father: “The morning is a little boy. Noon is a man. Twilight is an old man. I smile at

¹ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 283.

² Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 284.

³ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 291.

⁴ Paul Bowles, Without Stopping, p. 9.

⁵ Paul Bowles, Without Stopping, p. 10.

the first. I admire the second. I venerate the last". As M.G. Williams asserts, the "mystery and magic of this proverb lies in the very concept of Life"¹. Associating time with the different phases of man's life, this saying also presages the impending turning point in Dyar's life, that is to say, the liberation from the past and from its torment.

Dyar's killing of Thami is announced by and closely associated with timelessness; this absence of time is expressed through the boundless stretching of time into 'endless hours' and through Dyar's assimilation of the corridor separating him from the door to 'pure time'². The murder is contextualized in a 'no man's time'³, in a 'time slowly dissolving, falling to pieces'⁴. These images associate time to timelessness in the sense of infinity. The destruction of time illustrates thus the characters' annihilation. The moment immediately preceding death is then placed in a moment of infinity, outside the two characters' existence.

In the Existential perspective, Kierkegaard stresses the absurdity of life. In terms of moral choice, there are no objective and rational bases; this worldview entails subjectivity and an absurd vision of life. As Sartre states in existentialism and humanism, "Truth, said Kierkegaard, "is subjectivity"⁵. In this context, the Existential facet of the image of Morocco is also conveyed through absurd and irrational conducts as well as subjective views. In addition to this, Sartre's position on existential human decisions suits the conduct of Dyar, the main protagonist of Let it Come Down, Bowles's existential novel par excellence:

It is only minor decisions, upon which nothing of great importance hangs, that can proceed serenely from such detached deliberations: the genuine, critical dilemmas of the individual's life- and to Kierkegaard individual alone were real - are not solved by intellectual explorations of the facts nor the laws of thinking about them. Their resolutions emerge through conflicts and tumults of the soul, anxieties, agonies, perilous adventures of faith into unknown territories.⁶

This existential situation properly applies to the fate of Dyar⁷ in Tangier, a territory that is unknown to him.

¹ M.G. Williams, "Tea in the Sahara: The Notion of Time in the Work of Paul Bowles", p. 418.

² Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 282.

³ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 283.

⁴ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 283.

⁵ Jean-Paul Sartre, existentialism and humanism, p.3.

⁶ Jean-Paul Sartre, existentialism and humanism, p. 2-3.

⁷ Dyar is the hero of Paul Bowles's main existential work, Let it Come Down.

In the same sense, to Sartre, absurdity is the fact that rationalizes existence. Nothing in or beyond being can explain a sentient presence. Similarly, Heidegger argues that humanity finds itself in an incomprehensible, indifferent world. Men can never understand their existence nor the reasons why they are here. Therefore, the human situation is ambiguous, absurd and chaotic. Existence is absurd and meaningless except what meaning the individual chooses to give it. Meaning is thus a social construction. In this situation, every individual must choose a goal and strive to achieve it with conviction, even if the only certainty is death and the meaninglessness of life. The above mentioned existential considerations are at the core of many of Paul Bowles's early Moroccan works, notably in Let it Come Down¹.

The absurdity of life is conveyed through different sub-themes such as the irrational, the ethical vacuum consequent to the discarding of points of references, as well as the disjunction between being and consciousness. It also develops through other themes such as the search for the self as a quest for meaning and the individual's struggle against a fate he cannot understand. In relation to Existentialism, the search for meaning corresponds to the search for the self.

As R. Lehan states, the absurd results when meaning is blurred and distorted by unexpected and unknown² criteria. In this perspective, Morocco plays an important part in the Western characters' Existential perception of a country that is alien to them. In an unfamiliar country, reality seems mostly absurd. Their estrangement is a means that underscores the absurdity of life when they are confronted with a reality they do not understand.

In the same sense, existential heroes generally struggle against a fate they cannot understand; this is what happens to Dyar who does not and, probably cannot, control the course of events of his life once in Tangier. For instance, he frequently finds himself entangled in absurd circumstances, such as scratching forcibly and dispensing medicine to an aggressive Siamese cat lying on 'an antique bed with a torn canopy over it'³ for instance. This episode takes place at the beginning of his sojourn in Tangier and sets the tone for most of his subsequent experiences. The protagonist is caught in a flux of events he does not understand nor expects such as obligations or traps to go to lunches, parties and meetings to serve other persons' schemes he is not aware of; for example, a party he was unwillingly drawn to is depicted as a moment when 'they all sat there in another world,

¹ Detailed analyses will be included later.

² Cf R. Lehan, A Dangerous Crossing, French Literary Existentialism and the Modern American Novel, p. XIV.

³ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, pp. 31-32.

talking feverishly about nothing, approving and protesting, each one delighted with the sound his own ideas made when they were turned into words'¹.

Furthermore, the absurdity of Dyar's life in Tangier sometimes stems from his being caught in a series of incongruous situations that are imposed on him and on which course he has no control. For example, the author himself qualifies as absurd the situation in which another person, Eunice, made the questions and the replies he would not himself have given². This focus on the illogical aspect of life recalls Sartre's view of the world as irrational and without plan.

The absurd encompasses even the settings, such as the hotel, theatre of the apparently illogical peregrinations of the caricatural, picturesque and puzzling Eunice Good who is explicitly described as 'absurd-looking'³. Sometimes, even Dyar admits that his situation in Tangier is at the same time absurd and unsustainable⁴.

For the sake of emphasis, the absurdity of life often goes beyond mere situations and includes essential considerations such as human dignity. A notable instance is when Wilcox' tumbling arises Dyar's grave thoughts:

The sudden sight of a human being deprived of its dignity did not strike him as basically any more ludicrous and absurd than the constant effort required for the maintenance of that dignity, or than the state itself of being human in what seemed an undeniably non-human world⁵.

On the whole, whenever the protagonist analyses his situation in Tangier, it often seems to him irrational⁶. Even his escape with the stolen money appears to him so unlikely that he could not believe it⁷. As opposed to this, the occurrences when he finds himself in a natural environment are probably the rare moments when he experiences a certain harmony and plenitude.

In addition to the preoccupation with the absurdity of life, most of Dyar's interests and actions in Tangier revolve around one major concern, which is his sense of the self. This feature makes of Let it

¹ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 127.

² Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 125.

³ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 162.

⁴ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 170.

⁵ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 179.

⁶ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 170.

⁷ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, pp. 229-30.

Come Down an absurd novel, since, as R. Lehan maintains, a literature of the absurd drives the individual to an unsheltered sense of self¹.

Dyar's situation draws both from Camus and from Sartre. While the former saw the absurd struggle in terms of living the present, Sartre regarded it as a projection in the future. Both views correspond to Dyar's portion of life: his travel to Tangier is sub-tended by a dual goal: it is the expression of his effort to enjoy and improve his present life as well as of his expectations for the future, that is to say, the aspiration to change his status from a loser to a winner.

A basic tenet of Sartre's philosophy is that the world is absurd. Absurdity denotes that nothing can rationalize existence. In Being and Nothingness, Sartre labels the 'absurd' as:

That which is meaningless. Thus man's existence is absurd because his contingency finds no external justification. His projects are absurd because they are directed toward an unattainable goal ("the desire to become God" or to be simultaneously the free For-itself and the absolute In-itself²).

The irrational is an element that also contributes to the absurdity of life. Life seems absurd because of its irrationality. The absurdity and the disorganization of the world is another basic concept of Sartre's existential philosophy that is illustrated in Paul Bowles's image of Morocco. Tangier during the International Zone provides a suitable irrational setting. Daisy De Valverde, the representative of the European community in the novel, characterized that North African city as a 'complete, utter madhouse'³. The craziness of life in Tangier recalls Camus who holds that life is absurd, defying logical explanation and ultimately irrational. In this sense, Let It Come Down is the illustration of the Absurd as the true state of existence.

In this context, hallucinations, alcohol and drug induced states of mind are tools that create and heighten the irrationality of Dyar's situation. His repeated and striking delirium states confer to life a certain absurdity and irrationality⁴. Drug induced fantasies, increasing the discrepancy between the outer reality and his perception of it, are effective means used by Bowles to underscore the

¹ R. Lehan, A Dangerous Crossing, French Literary Existentialism and the Modern American Novel, p. XIV.

² Jean-Paul Sartre, Being and Nothingness, p. 649.

³ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 29.

⁴ Cf Let It Come Down, pp. 79, 276, 278-285.

irrationality of life, which, in these instances, appears as meaningless. Alcohol too is an agent that fosters the protagonist's detachment and heightens the absurdity of the situation¹.

In addition to the contextual existential influence, the absurd also reflects the author's point of view. As a matter of fact, when asked if he considers himself as an existentialist, the writer answered that "if one's going to subscribe to the tenets of a formulated belief, I suppose atheistic existentialism is the most logical one to adopt. That is, it's likely to provide more insight than another into what attitudes to take vis-a-vis today's world"².

The absurdity and irrationality of life are concepts that generate another existential feeling, that is, the disjunction between being and consciousness. Sartre maintained that all reality is contingent upon human consciousness and at the same time presents a dual characteristic: an aspect of this reality is the 'en-soi' or 'being in-itself' and the other is the 'pour-soi' or 'being for-itself'³. The 'being-for itself' corresponds to human consciousness and to the state of self-awareness and control. It is the 'subjective, personal, individual, concrete, limited, free, undetermined element'⁴. It corresponds to that being which is aware of itself, that is man⁵. As to the 'being-in-itself', this concept refers to the concrete and objective reality and encompasses the universal and timeless elements of reality.

Disjunction occurs when there is an incompatibility or discrepancy between the being-for-itself (pour-soi) and the being-in itself (en-soi). As W. Kaufman explains, "what makes self-deception possible, according to Sartre, is that the 'pour-soi' differs from the 'en-soi'⁶. This self-deception accounts for the dualism between being and consciousness which generates disjunction, alienation and failure.

Numerous expressions of this disjunction can be found in Bowles's early image of his elected land. Morocco, a country that is alien to most of Bowles's characters and to the author himself, suits the existential experience of disjunction and at the same time triggers and embodies this disjunction between reality and consciousness. The characters' and the writer's estrangement highlights their existential disjunction between 'being' and 'consciousness' as designated by Sartre. In front of a

¹ Cf Let It Come Down, p. 127.

² 'Interview with Paul Bowles, (1975), by Daniel Halpern, 1975, in: Conversations with Paul Bowles, Paul Bowles, Gena Dagal Caponi, p. 92.

³ Cf Jean-Paul Sartre, Being and Nothingness, p. 650.

⁴ Richard Lehan, A Dangerous Crossing. French Literary Existentialism and the American Novel, p.14.

⁵ W. Kaufman, Existentialism, p. 43.

⁶ W. Kaufman, Existentialism, p. 44.

Moroccan reality that is new and somewhat mysterious to them, the protagonists of Bowles's work are subjected to an existential disjunction between their subjectivity and consciousness on the one hand (the 'being-for-itself), and the unfamiliar Moroccan reality (the 'being-in-itself).

In Bowles's Moroccan work, the disjunction between being and consciousness stems from the characters' alienation and is illustrated by their incomprehension of their foreign environment, Morocco. As R. Lehan maintains, in an existential novel, the heroes live in an alien and unfamiliar environment¹. The characters' consciousness of the undetermined and unknown elements is at the origin of the existential disjunction. The combined effects of Paul Bowles's expatriation and of the influence of existentialism on his work concur to the author's treatment of the existential disjunction between being and consciousness, which is a logical upshot of expatriation.

Let it Come Down presents numerous illustrations of this discrepancy. A great part of the action of the novel revolves around the duality opposing Dyar's perception and consciousness of the reality of Tangier (the being-for-itself) to the Moroccan reality itself (the being-in-itself); he is often ushered in various schemes he is not aware of and does not understand; for instance, the starting point of the plot is his unaware involvement in a corrupt exchange of money where he is being 'used' and reduced to a mere witness². The protagonist's encounter with the tangerine environment and with people living in Tangier is at the same time bewildering and apparently absurd. For instance, he was handed a slip of paper he believed destined to someone else³, the caretaker was shouting in an incomprehensible language⁴ and he was bewildered by the senseless monologue of Wilcox, the money changer⁵. Dyar's first contact with Tangier was so confusing and apparently absurd that "at the moment he felt like being alone, having an opportunity to accustom himself to the strangeness of the town"⁶. In the same way, he often acts without being conscious of the other characters' plans: he is not alert to Eunice's plan scheme to keep his girlfriend away from him, nor is he conscious of Thami's views on Hadija. In the same way, his misjudgement of the young Moroccan girl results in a series of quiproquos and in a two levels conversation⁷. Projected into an unknown milieu, the American expatriate is alienated and displaced, constantly living through a discrepancy separating what is actually happening and his perception of it.

¹ R. Lehan, *A Dangerous Crossing, French Literary Existentialism and the Modern American Novel*, pp. 14-15.

² Cf Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, pp. 80-85.

³ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 77.

⁴ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 78.

⁵ Cf Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, pp. 80-85.

⁶ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 78.

⁷ Cf Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, pp. 93-101.

On the whole, the general the atmosphere of mistrust and cheating that prevails in Dyar's environment is an incentive that underscores his feelings of estrangement and disjunction: Wilcox frauds, Daisy pushes him to achieve her plan, Eunice Good -whose name contradicts her nature- multiplies the schemes to drive away her protégée from him and "practically everyone is dishonest"¹. In fact, according to Richard Holland, a character the author acknowledges as representing his own caricature², dishonesty characterizes Tangier at that time³.

Dyar's depression and the ensuing feeling of disjunction are also heightened by his awareness of the deceitfulness of Daisy De Valverde, the representative of the European community in Tangier: "For no particular reason, knowing this depressed him, put him back into the grey mood of despair he had felt the night of his arrival on the boat, enveloped him in the old uneasiness"⁴. The climax of this disjunction is reached during a party where Daisy takes him and where nearly everybody is unknown to him; as a matter of fact, the party at the Beidaoui's symbolizes and illustrates the general malaise and disjunction that characterize his stay in the unfamiliar Tangier. Dyar is 'brought' to a party given in the palace of a rich Moroccan family, the Beidaouis, just to carry out the plans of Mme Jouvenon, another expatriate. Once there, his disjunction is at its height when he experienced a total disconnection: first, the alcohol he drunk is at the origin of his physical isolation. Alcohol was "like an ever-thickening curtain being drawn down into his mind, isolating him from everything else in the room"⁵. Dyar as well lived through a temporal disconnection because people 'were speaking, and he heard their voices, but the actual uttering of the words had been done many years ago'⁶. The peak of Dyar's numerous existential states of disjunction in the International Zone Tangier is thus reached when he experiences a spatial as well as a temporal aloofness with the surrounding world. Besides, even the rare moments when he does not sense the gap separating him from the Moroccan environment are underrated. Thus, the first time he is positively aware of his existence is nevertheless accompanied by his explicit remark on the disjunction that separates him from the outer world: "At the same time, that which went on outside was remote and had no relationship to him; it might almost as well not have been going on at all"⁷.

¹ Paul Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, p. 121.

² Paul Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, p. 9.

³ Paul Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, p. 121.

⁴ Paul Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, p. 123.

⁵ Paul Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, p. 127.

⁶ Paul Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, p. 127.

⁷ Paul Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, p. 117.

This state of mind is a constant characteristic of the protagonist's slice of life in Tangier except for his alcohol and drug induced experiences and for the occasional moments of harmony in the context of a natural environment¹. In this last context, darkness and night are recurrent metaphors that parallel and highlight Dyar's unvarying confusion and disjunction. A semi-obscurity always colours the background of the protagonist's actions throughout the whole novel. Even in the circumstance of rich Moroccans' party, Paul Bowles emphasizes the darkness that surrounds the palace and its garden; for example, Daisy and Dyar are ushered in a dark room, then in a living room lighted only by candles²; this space grows bigger and darker³ as Dyar's discomfort and confusion increase. This obscurity mirrors his estrangement and ensuing feeling of disjunction, as 'he felt smothered and out of place, and he wished he had not come'⁴. In fact, the novel as a whole is framed by dimness: he first arrives in Tangier at night and his final moral confusion is illustrated and underscored by the bleary Moroccan scenery.

The existential result of this disjunction is a physical sensation of nausea⁵. In Sartre's philosophy, the word nausea is used for the individual's recognition of the pure contingency of the universe. Dyar also experiences nausea. His experiences of estrangement and disjunction are illustrated by the physical discomfort he is subjected to as soon as he arrives in Tangier. Like the hero of Sartre's *Nausea*, he feels sick and disgusted⁶ when he first disembarks in Tangier. Even his hotel is a repulsive and stinking⁷ place, smelling of 'close air' and of a 'mixture of wet plaster and unwashed feet'⁸. Similarly, at the end of the novel, on the boat taking him to Agla where he will commit the existential murder, Dyar experiences a feeling of nausea. A comparable nauseous feeling is also experienced by Amar, the hero of *The Spider's House*⁹.

Anxiety also accompanies this feeling of nausea. The existential attitude towards life also puts forward that dread and general feelings of anxiety are part of the human experience. In Sartre's existentialism, anguish is the feeling of groundlessness when the freedom to act reveals itself to consciousness. Anxiety (existential *Angst*) is the result of the individual's confrontation with the impossibility of finding ultimate justifications for the choices he has made. The word 'anguish' is

¹ The contextualization of Dyar's scarce moments of peace in harmony with the surrounding natural environment foretells Paul Bowles's later involvement in Pantheist mysticism.

² Paul Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, p. 117-118.

³ Paul Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, p. 126.

⁴ Paul Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, p. 118.

⁵ Cf R. Lehan, *A Dangerous Crossing, French Literary Existentialism and the Modern American Novel*, p. 14.

⁶ Paul Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, pp. 17, 18.

⁷ Paul Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, p. 19.

⁸ Paul Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, p. 19.

⁹ Cf E. Mottram, p. 20.

used for the recognition of the total freedom of choice that confronts the individual at every moment. In relation to this, Heidegger, in Being and Time stated that anxiety leads to the individual's confrontation with nothingness and the impossibility to justify one's choice.

In Sartre's philosophy, anguish is used for the total freedom of choice and nausea for the individual's recognition of the pure contingency of the universe. This framework applies to Dyar: The anxiety he quite permanently feels also corresponds to the 'existential angst'. It is a consequence of the irrationality and absurdity of life. Dyar, in a country that is supposed to offer opportunities of freedom, self-realization and choice is therefore subject to feelings of dread whenever he has to make a choice. For instance, his first contact with Wilcox, his new boss, is approached with an 'increasing sensation of dread'¹.

Nothingness is another existentialist feature that characterizes Let it Come Down, Paul Bowles's existential novel. In the context of Sartre's existentialism, 'being-for-itself' relates to human consciousness as endowed with characteristics of incompleteness and strength, with an indeterminate nature due to the absence of a Creator. Without a determined nature, individuals equate to nothingness. Therefore, an ethical vacuum exists at the core of an existential novel, reflecting the spiritual emptiness present in man's life.

Nothingness is Dyar's most striking feature. As Paul Bowles specifies, he is a 'nonentity'². This label points to the vacuum that is central to the protagonist's life. His identification as a nonentity is echoed later in the novel by Daisy de Valverde, the pragmatic European character: "He has nothing, he wants nothing, he is nothing"³. The emptiness of his life and personality is also illustrated by Daisy's description of his figuratively empty hand and her connecting it to the meaninglessness of his life:

No. I see no sign of work. No sign of anything, to be quite honest. I've never seen such an empty hand. It's terrifying [...]. I mean, [...]that you have an empty life. No pattern. And nothing in you to give you any purpose"⁴. The reduction of the

¹ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 144.

² Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 8;

³ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 36.

⁴ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 34.

hero's identity and personality to 'nothing'¹ emphasizes his interior void that is so intense that it equates to a 'progressive paralysis'².

Nothingness marks Dyar's life too. These existential characteristic and state of mind are not tributary to his stay in Morocco but he was already experiencing them while in America. In fact, his momentary expatriation to Morocco was intended to relieve him from the stifling vacuum. Emptiness is conveyed by the absence of a clear and specific objective when coming to Tangier. A kind of general purposelessness in his enterprise is referred to when he says to himself that 'the old thing was gone beyond recall, and the new thing had not yet begun'³. The author's use of the word 'thing' increases the vagueness and the emptiness of his life. In addition to this, Dyar is presented as leading a purposeless and empty life, with 'no pattern'⁴ as Daisy views it.

The lack of involvement in his own life also points up to the emptiness he feels. He is not actually living his existence but just witnessing it. Except on rare occasions such as during his communion with nature or when he is subjected to a mystic rite⁵, Dyar is often reduced to a mere eyewitness of his own life. As a general rule, he does not communicate with others, views them as if they were dead people living in another world⁶. In this respect, Paul Bowles's frequent references to death are a means to stress the 'deadness' life.

In the existential context, nothingness is close to freedom and commitment. Man, not being endowed with a fixed nature, is therefore nothingness. Sartre thought that nothingness is free will and freedom. Thus, in L'Existentialisme est un Humanisme, Sartre stresses that existentialism is a form of humanism leading to human freedom, choice and responsibility. Similarly, in Being and Nothingness (1943), Sartre maintains that human beings create their own world by acting according to their personal responsibility. Kierkegaard too, stressing the ambiguity and absurdity of life, put forward that the individual's response to this situation must be to live in a totally committed life, and this liability can only be understood by the individual who made it.

This pattern of thought applies to Let it Come Down. In this existential novel, the quest for freedom and the necessity of commitment are crucial Dyar's resolution to change the course of his

¹ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, pp. 34, 36.

² Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 21.

³ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 19.

⁴ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 34.

⁵ This exception points to the writer's mystic quest as soon as 1952 and foretells his later evolution towards Pantheist mysticism.

⁶ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 127.

life. Once in Tangier, he lives through a newly acquired freedom and his pledge to get out of his alienating cage. The hero's first clear assertion of existence occurs right after his commitment in the theft of money and during his escape by boat, which itself connotes a certain liberty: "He sniffed the wet air, and said to himself that at last he was living, that whatever the reason for his doubt a moment ago, the spasm which had shaken him had been only an instant's return of his old state of mind, when he had been anonymous, a victim"¹.

This escape represents a kind of turning point in his life and marks a shift from the status of a victim to that of a winner:

And he expected to lead now the procession of his life, as the locomotive heads the train, no longer to be a helpless incidental object somewhere in the middle of the line of events, drawn one way or another, without the possibility or even the need of knowing the direction in which he was heading².

Freedom and his commitment are the agents of his expected transformation. His motives are deeper than the surface value stealing of money. He now feels and acts as a real winner. Assuming himself after his act, Dyar is a new and responsible man who conducts himself like a grown up and a would-be winner.

So freedom, through escape, is the event which is supposed to enable him to get out from his existential cage he used to suffer from:

Two days ago, he had been moved to feel the trunks of the palms outside the Hotel de la Playa, [...] to rejoice at the fact of being alive on a fine morning. But then, he remembered, he had still been in his cage of cause and effect, the cage to which others held the keys. Wilcox had been there, hurrying him on, standing between him and the sky³.

Running away from the dark and stifling Tangier is also a means to get free from the different bonds that made of his life a 'cage'. It is worth noting here that all through his flight the protagonist is close to and acutely aware of the natural environment with which he communes and experiences a kind of osmosis. The sun and the sky are metaphors for freedom as opposed to the cage. As a matter

¹ Paul Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, p. 230.

² Paul Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, p. 230.

³ Paul Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, p. 252

of fact, his advance towards liberty¹ is described as a harmonious progress punctuated by references to the rising sun, amid a beautiful nature and bright landscape. Moroccan Nature and cosmic elements at the same time mirror Dyar's new positive frame of mind and foretell Paul Bowles's subsequent mysticism. The constructive connotations of the Moroccan sun and sky show that the seeds of the writer's later pantheist mysticism were already present in 1952² through the primary importance he grants Nature and through the close communion he sets between Nature and his character's frame of mind.

Self-definition

Self-definition or self-recovery³ is the objective of the existential concepts of freedom and man in motion⁴. In front of the alienated world of an 'exhausted possibility'⁵, man attempts to define and to redeem himself. This prospect is relevant to Paul Bowles and to his characters as men on the move and as questers. Their expatriation is the expression of their struggle against the 'stationnariness'⁶ of life and also of their attempts at self-definition and self-recovery⁷.

Paul Bowles's characters' attempts to start a new life in a foreign country can be interpreted as efforts to transcend their real selves and to achieve self-definition⁸. In this perspective, Dyar's different actions and endeavours to 'exist' express his desire to change his social and personal status and his quest to achieve self-definition. His experiences in Tangier could be considered as 'encounters with himself', to take up Sartre's words in "L'Existentialisme est un Humanisme"⁹. Dyar's actions are openings for self-definitions and means to achieve a place in the world, a definite status.

¹ Cf Paul Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, p. 252

² Date of the first publication of *Let it Come Down*.

³ In the sense of redemption and liberation from the yoke of the past.

⁴ The existential philosophy sets a very close relationship between man's life and actions, on the one hand, and his self on the other: In "A Propos de L'Existentialisme: Mise au Point" (*Action Magazine*, December 29, 1944), Sartre defines existentialism as follows: "In a word, man must create his own essence: it is in throwing himself into the world, suffering there, struggling there, that he gradually defines himself. And the definition always remains open ended: we cannot say what this man is before he dies, or what mankind is before it has disappeared". The existential individual is therefore identified by his actions; he defines his essence through his existence and behaviour. The quest for redemption and self-recovery can as well be traced back to F. Nietzsche's superman, concept that implies that man has the ability to remake himself, to become the product of his own mind. His quest in life is the pursuit of himself and his self-assertion. So, the objective of the existential quest being an attempt at self-definition and self-recovery, the existential quest is, therefore, a quest for redemption where man is the redeemer of his self.

⁵ R. Lehan, *A Dangerous Crossing, French Literary Existentialism and the Modern American Novel*, p. XVIII

⁶ Cf Paul Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, p. 21.

⁷ In Paul Bowles's case the quest for redemption culminates in his mystic quest.

⁸ This status and objective parallels Paul Bowles's expatriation in Morocco.

⁹ J.P. Sartre as quoted by R. Lehan, *A Dangerous Crossing, French Literary Existentialism and the Modern American Novel*, p. 16.

The new status and self-achieved personality Dyar seeks to attain are ideals impossible to reach¹. They might be viewed as corresponding to the existential and chimerical balance fusing the ‘in-itself’ and the ‘for-itself’. Towards the end of L’Etre et le Néant Sartre argues that man’s basic wish is to achieve a state of being where the ‘en-soi’ and the ‘pour-soi’ are synthetized². According to Sartre, this impossible ideal would be G-d. The fusion of the ‘in-itself’ and the ‘for-itself’ could be viewed as the ultimate status Dyar is seeking in Tangier. The protagonist’s failure and destruction at the end of the novel suggests the impossibility of such enterprise, that is, finding G-d in terms of Sartre’s existential philosophy. In relation to the author, it could be inferred that Paul Bowles’s mystic quest could be interpreted as an alternative to this impossibility, that is to say an attempt to transcend the reality of existence, to reach God or at least to attain a certain spirituality.

In Bowles’s Moroccan work, the approach and discovery of this foreign country corresponds to the recovery of unknown parts of the characters’ and the author’s self. Expatriation in Morocco therefore involves and means an encounter with the self. The discovery of Morocco³, as a country that is alien to the western travellers of Bowles’s work, parallels and triggers his characters’ self-discovery and the ensuing self-definition. In Let It Come Down⁴ for instance, the setting in time suits the protagonist’s attempt at self-recovery. It is set when Tangier was an International Zone, characterized by economical liberalism, social permissiveness and freedom. Therefore, Tangier offered its inhabitants limitless opportunities of self-development. Besides, the mere presence of Dyar in the unfamiliar environment elicits the need to focus on and discover remote parts of himself: “...recently he had felt , like a faint tinkling in an inaccessible region of his being, an undefined need to let his mind dwell on himself”⁵. In the same instance, he also unconsciously links his presence in Tangier to self-knowledge. At the junction of his journey in Morocco and of his existence is the awareness that he is at a turning point in his life, the beginning of a new phase which allows for self-discovery:

There were no formulated thoughts, he did not even daydream, nor did he push matters so far as to ask himself questions like: ‘What am I doing here?’ or ‘What do I want?’ At the same time he was vaguely aware of having arrived at the

¹ In the autobiographical context setting a parallel between the Paul Bowles’s characters and the author’s life, mysticism can be regarded as the alternative to the existential void and as a means of self-definition.

² W. Kaufmann, Existentialism, p. 47.

³ A ‘Promised Land’?

⁴ The analyses of the Existential facet of Paul Bowles’s Morocco is to a great extent based on Let it Come Down because this novel is ‘par excellence’ the writer’s Existential work.

⁵ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 116.

edge of a new period in his existence, an unexplored territory of himself through which he was going to have to pass.¹

At this point, Dyar has reached a further phase in his life, that is, an unknown part of his self. Morocco also acts as a catalyst in the protagonist's self-discovery: the novel environment and the events he is confronted to in Tangier drive him to exorcize the past in order to achieve redemption.

Let it Come Down as a whole and its final chapter in particular can be read as the existential expression of the quest of self-definition and emancipation through the release from the past. As a matter of fact, Dyar's journey to Morocco and the process that leads him to kill Thami are expressions of a backward journey to sever the links with his childhood and past, in fact, to reach an emancipated adulthood. By killing his Moroccan friend, he is unconsciously willing to find his real self through the murder². As a matter of fact, from the beginning of the last chapter, Bowles suggests that Dyar is going to experience a kind of flashback into childhood because he "was entering a region of his memory which, [...], he thought had been lost for ever"³. The motion of the boat as well brought back reminiscences of the happiness inducing lullabies of his infancy: "Go. Go to sleep. My little pickaninny. Hushabye. Rockebye. Mammy' little baby"⁴. Further, these memories are followed by nursery rhymes⁵ and by references and descriptions of well-being⁶, of a revivifying natural environment such as a life generating air⁷ which point to the forthcoming liberation. These remembrances can be viewed as means to exorcise the past. Also, the life generating Nature, along with childhood recollections point to the positive result of the murder, that is, a coming of age, self-definition and liberation from the past.

The last part of the novel actually exposes a slow backward evolution in his inner journey, a movement towards infancy and childhood in search of the self, to attain maturity. Dyar's meditations are for the most part focused on his past; for instance, in the isolation and calm of his shelter in Agla, he refers to his past as follows:

Always before, he had believed that, although childhood had been left far behind, there would still somehow, some day, come the opportunity to finish it in the

¹ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 116.

² The murder itself can as well be read as an expression of the Oedipus Complex.

³ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 228.

⁴ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 228.

⁵ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 284.

⁶ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p.252.

⁷ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, pp. 230, 251.

midst of its own anguished delights. He had awakened one day to find childhood gone –it had come to an end when he was not looking, and its elements remained indefinable, its design nebulous, its harmonies all unresolved. Yet he had felt still connected to every part of it by ten thousand invisible threads; he thought he had the power to recall it and change it merely by touching these hidden filaments of memory¹.

The protagonist's sojourn in Agla corresponds to that day, that is, to the opportunity to put an end to the 'anguished delights' of childhood. In this perspective, this 'coming of age' is heralded by childhood reminiscences and shifts in memory that recall scenes and emotions of Paul Bowles's childhood in the Fatherland. Indeed, the killing of Thami is basically intended as an existential deliverance from the past: "if only existence could be cut down to the pinpoint of here and now, with no echoes reverberating from the past, no tingling of expectation from time to time not yet arrived"² Paul Bowles's text can therefore be read as explicitly suggesting that, to come of age, Dyar³ is imminently going to cut out the bonds connecting him to his childhood⁴.

On the basis of Dyar's above mentioned ponderings about existence, the murder is accordingly an existential act meant to prove his existence as a mature person, free from the bonds of the past. To this end, the murder, as an attempt at redemption, freedom and self-definition, is described in a highly metaphorical way: the door, as a symbol of escape and liberty, parallels and reflects his state of mind. The distance separating him from the exit is made of 'pure time'⁵, which means that the action is not to be related to his present but bears a strong relation to his past. In addition to this, the door is personified: it is 'silent, staring, baleful'⁶, that is to say, reflecting his own fears and hesitations before the murder.

Dyar's act is symptomatic of his aspiration at revival and life. Thus, it evokes Nietzsche's existential belief that man affirms himself by striving towards life against death. Viewed in this philosopher's perspective, Dyar's, and therefore the author's, expatriation to Morocco can be interpreted as an attempt at self-definition and rebirth. His attempt at self-control is explained

¹ Paul Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, pp. 255-56.

² Paul Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, p. 255.

³ Dyar's reminiscences of a past that presents exactly the same terms and conditions of the writer's recollections in *Without Stopping* show that the protagonist's liberation from the torment of the past and his self-definition are as well the author's.

⁴ The exorcism of the past is contextualized in a hellish atmosphere which recalls J.P.Sartre's existential affirmation in *Huis-Clos* that 'hell is the Other.

⁵ Paul Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, p. 282.

⁶ Paul Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, p. 283.

towards the end of the novel, when he acknowledges that he was driven by a desire to ‘assume control himself’¹.

Paul Bowles’s expatriation and Morocco represent then a particular expression of an existential journey in search of the self, that of self-definition through the redemptive value of Nature, which foretells the writer’s mystic quest and the Pantheist view of Nature

The moments immediately preceding the murder are built in a paradoxical situation that highlight the protagonist’s impulse to come alive again. The irony consists in the inversion of the two characters’ roles. A striking difference opposes their respective states of mind: Thami, the victim, is calmly singing and absorbed in a pleasurable mirage putting forward ‘miles of verdant gardens, and the water ran clear in blue enamel channels’². He is in a blissful state, cut off from the reality around him and experiencing a kind of physical and cosmic pleasure: “Thami, his eyes shut, his body weaving slowly back and forth as he sang, [...]. The perspective from his tower grew vaster, the water bubbled up out of the earth on all sides. He had ordered it up to be, many years ago. (The night is a woman clothed in a robe of burning stars [...].)”³. On the contrary, Dyar, is engaged in a warlike⁴ and fiery fantasy: “The carpet had caught on fire, too. Someone would blame him. ‘I’m God damned if I’ll pay for it,’ he said. Regular hours, always superiors to give you orders, no security, no freedom, no freedom, no freedom”⁵. The striking contrast between the two protagonists’ deliriums is probably intended to magnify the extent of Dyar’s failure by tempering Thami’s impending death through the description of his high spirits.

The symbolism of the fire is equally important. The fire constitutes a kind of running thread during the process of murder and shapes the background of Dyar’s hallucinations. Figuratively it is a metaphor for the anger and rage that will lead him to commit murder.

Immediately after Thami’s murder, Dyar savours his victory by focusing on his survival⁶ and on Thami’s death. But his success is tempered by his vision of the surrounding space which carries connotations of failure and anger: “The fire was out; the inhuman night had come into the room.....A maniacal light had fallen into the room and was hopping about”⁷. The extinguished fire suggests the

¹Paul Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, p. 251.

² Paul Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, p. 279.

³ Paul Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, p. 280.

⁴ One of Dyar’s delusions is the vision of a decayed house after the passage of soldiers; cf *Let it Come Down*, p. 279.

⁵ Paul Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, p. 279.

⁶ Paul Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, p. 285.

⁷ Paul Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, p. 285.

end of life and vitality, the inhuman character of the night evokes the cruelty of his act but also his retreat from life, while the falling maniac light illustrates the violence and madness of the murder. The correlations linking the protagonist's state of mind to the surrounding space and setting is worth mentioning. The contrast between the above mentioned negative setting and the subjective 'positive' feelings and impression of survival underscores his complete failure and self-destruction that bring him close to death. Besides, the failure of his action is implied in his vision of the door – usually a symbol of freedom and liberation- as sending an 'ominous message'¹, and characterized as 'baleful'².

The existential quest may be either worthwhile or destructive. In the context of Bowles's Moroccan work, in particular in Let It Come Down, it is destructive and demonic. Sartre held that there are at least two choices at all moments: life and death. These two options can be found in Dyar's portion of life in Morocco: his coming to Tangier is the expression of a desire to live and to achieve a self-recovery. This inclination towards life ends on a certain death. With reference to Nietzsche's definition of man in Thus Spake Zarathustra³, Dyar's life can be assimilated to a 'dangerous crossing', because his attempt at self-realization and to surpass himself is paired with connotations of death.

In this context, Dyar's quest of self-definition also leads to his destruction and death. In Let it Come Down, Bowles's representative, Richard Holland⁴, suggests from the very beginning of the novel that Dyar's undertaking is doomed to failure: "The species is not at all intent on destroying itself. That's nonsense. It's intent on being something which happens inevitably to entail its destruction, that's all"⁵.

Dyar's final destruction is suggested as soon as the end of chapter two which coincides with the turning point of the plot. Dyar's previous leitmotiv about his existence, 'here I am', is then replaced by another one, 'it's no good'⁶ which hints at his final destruction and the failure of his quest. As a matter of fact, the unravelling of the plot and the hero's destruction begin as soon as the third chapter of the novel, whose title, 'The Age of Monsters' foretells Dyar's final downfall as well

¹ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 282..

² Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 283.

³ "Man is a rope stretched between the animal and the Superman -a rope over an abyss"; such rope stretching is a "dangerous crossing", in: Nietzsche, Thus Spake Zarathustra.

⁴ In the preface of the 1980 edition of Let it Come Down, the author admits that the character R. Holland is a 'caricature' of himself.

⁵ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 128.

⁶ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, pp. 169, 170.

as the failure of the other characters' schemes; for instance, all of them, Thami, Wilcox, Daisy De Valverde and Dyar are described as having a restless and anxious night¹ which prefigures the failure of their plans and life.

Several significant references and allusions indicate that Dyar, in fact, is moving towards self defeat instead of the victory he has been seeking. In the final chapter, Dyar hears the 'chilly' and 'peculiar' sound of a night bird, a 'youca'² which stirs up echoes from his past. 'Youca' is the Moroccan dialect word meaning a 'bat' and is viewed as a bad omen in the context of Moroccan superstition. The bad omen this bird presages hints at the protagonist's imminent act and failure which are also evoked by his reference to the black sky and by his childhood reminiscences comparing the still house to a dead one.³

The negative ending of Let it Come Down may as well be an illustration of Nietzsche's tragic pessimism. The protagonist's total breakdown at the end of the novel also recalls Sartre's pessimism with his assertion in Being and Nothingness that man's life is a futile passion:⁴ this futility or uselessness are emphasized in the fiasco of Dyar's life.

The notion of death is thus central to the demonic aspect of Dyar's quest because the protagonist's journey in Morocco ends on the murder of Thami as well as on his own moral despondency. In this perspective, many references, similes and connotations are significant; for example, the hero's preparations in view of his escape take place in his room where "the air [in his room] was dead, colder by several degrees than the air outdoors"⁵; the coldness –and therefore the deadness- of the air indoors obviously evoke that his forthcoming 'internal' or moral death as well as his friend's.

The destructiveness of the quest and the utter existential pessimism of Let it Come Down are also conveyed through the recurrence of the same negative metaphors and connotations that round up the novel. As mentioned earlier, from the very beginning of the novel, Dyar is presented as living in a

¹ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 175.

² Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, pp. 276, 278.

³ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 277.

⁴ In Being and Nothingness, Sartre explicitly confirms that man is a useless passion: "Each human reality is at the same time a direct project to metamorphose its own For-itself into an In-itself-For –itself and a project of the appropriation of the world as a totality of being-in-itself, in the form of a fundamental quality. Every human reality is a passion in that it projects losing itself so as to found being and by the same stroke to constitute the In-itself which escapes contingency by being its own foundation, the *Enscassa sui*, which religions call God. Thus the passion of man is the reverse of that of Christ, for man loses himself as man in order that God may be born. But the idea of God is contradictory and we lose ourselves in vain. Man is a useless passion". Jean-Paul Sartre, Being and Nothingness, p. 636.

⁵ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 197.

cage - the alienated cage of the self; this figurative image is at the end replaced the 'rat-trap'¹, that is to say the space where he commits the murder leading to his destruction. Contrary to his expectations, no evolution has taken place in the interval between the beginning of the novel and its end: the protagonist has simply exchanged his existential cage with the abyss of self-destruction and social annihilation.

The natural environment of the crime also denotes the protagonist's failure and the demonic side of Dyar's quest in Morocco. There is a close correlation between the natural elements on the one hand and the hero's frame of mind and fate on the other. The rain, metaphor for murder², desolation and cheerlessness, constitutes the natural background of the last episode of the novel. As a metaphor for murder, the rain, falling harder and making a 'dead, flat sound'³, repeatedly echoes Thami's killing, which implies that the hopelessness and desolation Dyar is experiencing are end results of the murder. That rain is also an element that makes of Let it Come Down a circular novel, which also increases its existential pessimism. As a matter of fact, the rainy weather connects the end of the novel to its beginning. When Dyar arrived in Tangier, it was windy and it rained so hard that "the rain pelted the windshield and the squeaking wipers rubbed painfully back and forth on the glass"⁴. As well, Let it Come Down ends on a heavy rain as the natural background of Dyar's gloomy mind: "The rain fell heavily and the wind had begun to blow again. He sat down in the doorway and began to wait. It was not completely dark"⁵ In addition to this, throughout the novel, the rain is a sort of leitmotiv that punctuates the protagonist's hardships in Tangier. This connection indicates that his life is a kind of confinement in a vicious circle, in the sense that Dyar just ends where he began, that is to say a loser instead of being the winner he hoped to become. Dyar came to Tangier to escape the "progressive paralysis" of his past ten years; in fact, he does not succeed in this task and the reader even attends to a kind of stasis, since there is no positive evolution in his life and personality. This stasis itself contributes to the circularity of Let it Come Down and, accordingly, to the implied pessimism of the novel and of Dyar's gloomy fate.

Light in general and the Mediterranean luminosity played a major role in Bowles's Moroccan expatriation and, as such, is a recurrent theme in his literary image of Morocco. As Lawrence D. Stewart underscores, "Light is North Africa's most compelling feature; it has been the object, and

¹ The shack where he hides himself is compared to a rat-trap.

² The rain relates to the title of the novel, inspired from Shakespeare's play, Mc Beth, refers to the murderer's reply to Banquo : 'Let it come Downe'.

³ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down , p. 292.

⁴ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 18.

⁵ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 292.

here illuminates, all of Bowles's pursuits there'¹. In the context of Thami's murder, a gray sky and the absence of luminosity are images reflecting Dyar's destructive fate. The light and the sky of the Moroccan landscape that used to be bright have turned to grey, colour which evokes dreariness and echoes the rain: "as the day advanced the wind increased, the blue sky grew white, then gray"². This shift from vividness to greyness recurs and reflects Dyar's featureless future: "A dense cloud was drifting down from the invisible peaks above. In the wet gray twilight everything was colourless"³. In the same sense, the darkness of the falling night as well as his inability to find a match to light the candle illustrate and emphasize his despair and the nothingness that henceforth characterizes his life. So, this bleak and cheerless landscape and weather are in tune with his state of mind and destiny. Even the light that used to be dazzling is invested by devilish has overtones and has become 'maniacal'⁴. Similarly, the weather and the drabness of the usually luminous Nature are at the image of the new pattern of his life: "A dense cloud was drifting down from the invisible peaks above. In the wet gray twilight everything was colourless"⁵. The greyness of the dusk suggests the void and lack of prospects in his future. In the same way, the dreariness of the landscapes correlates with the dullness of his life.

In fact, Dyar's mood and fate at the end of the novel illustrate its title. As Bowles specifies at the beginning of the novel,⁶ the title of Let it Come Down is inspired from Shakespeare's play, Macbeth. When Banquo remarked: 'It will be rain tonight', 'Let it come down' were the words the murderer uttered before knifing his victim. This image of the rain highlights the failure of Dyar's prospects when coming to Tangier. In this North African city, the American expatriate aimed at achieving a definite status in life but he has ended as the murderer of Thami, his Moroccan friend. The very last sentences of the novel also underscore his despair: "The rain fell heavily and the wind had begun to blow again. He sat down in the doorway and began to wait. It was not yet dark"⁷. The notion of time is important and implies that a more intense darkness is still to come, and so, by implication, a greater desolation is yet to come.

Dyar is so despondent that even the status of murderer and hostility seem to be an escape from the Existential nothingness: "A place in the world, a definite status, a precise relationship with

¹ Lawrence D. Stewart, Paul Bowles, the Illumination of North Africa, p. xiii.

² Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 285.

³ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 290.

⁴ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 285.

⁵ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 291.

⁶ Cf Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 7.

⁷ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 292.

the rest of men. Even if it had to be one of open hostility, it was his, created by him”¹. Clinging to his need to achieve something, he considers his new status of murderer as an accomplishment, a position that is better than nothing, even if it generates the resentment of maybe the unique person who cares for him, Daisy. His attempt to see something positive even in the middle of despair and loneliness is a sort of denial of nihilism which recalls Camus’s standpoint about nihilism: according to him, life is meaningless but each person has the opportunity to define a role in life, which can be applied to Dyar who considers that even if his apparently gratuitous act has engendered negative consequences, it has nevertheless granted him a status, even if it is a murderer’s.

Dyar’s failure to achieve a definite status in life also extends to human relationships. The murder he commits engenders the loss of the friendship and attention of the unique person who cared for him, that is, Daisy. The immediate and most painful expression of his downfall is illustrated by the loss of her esteem and care. Being abandoned by Daisy is all the more upsetting that she has acted as a mother for him and that she is actually his unique ally. In this sense, the only moment when Dyar is moved and truly affected is probably when he saw the tears that filled her eyes at the sight of Thami’s corpse. The tears being a demonstration of the sadness and concern Daisy feels towards him, this moment is also the unique instance when someone is presented as really worrying about him. Dyar’s situation is all the more desperate that this proof of love entails an irrevocable rejection: “[...] as he stared into her eyes he was conscious of the instantaneous raising of a great barrier that had not been there a moment before, and now suddenly was there, impenetrable and merciless”². Daisy’s decision to leave him and to refute their encounter is also a kind of denial. She departs and “where she had paused there was only the rectangle of grayness”³, a colour that echoes Dyar’s dismal future. Daisy’s condemnation marks the climax of his despair and loss; like the fatal blow, it makes him sink into despair so much so that, at the end, he is cut off from the Moroccan nature he used to revel in; the bright natural environment, which so far has always responded to his moods and movements, has now become silent, windy and rainy. The novel ends on a grim natural image: “The rain fell heavily and the wind had begun to blow again. He sat down in the doorway and began to wait. It was not yet completely dark”⁴. Even if the temporal precision that it was not yet dark connotes a probable hopeful future, this final natural image illustrates the failure of the protagonist’s expectations in Morocco and his existential anguish.

¹ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down , p. 292.

² Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down , p. 292.

³ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down , p. 292.

⁴ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down , p. 292.

Dyar's inactive and static life is also illustrated by the lack of evolution in his conduct: he has always behaved under the influence of the strong-minded Daisy. At the end of the novel, we can even note a kind of regression towards infancy; this degeneration is partly illustrated by Daisy who addresses him as if he were a young child who needs to be disciplined, directing and rebuking him without care¹. As S.T.Olson states, "Nelson Dyar regresses towards an infantile condition of wholeness and self-assertion during the final section of the novel"². The protagonist's attempt at self-assertion has been thus achieved at the expense of his maturity.

Ironically, his unique achievement is a shift from the condition of a failure to that of a criminal, state which does not bring about a significant transformation; rather, it is a symptom of the stagnation that characterizes his life, even in Morocco. This desperate standstill situation represents the culmination of the staticity which has characterized his behaviour and life throughout the whole novel. Instead of the redemption, freedom and change of status from a victim to a winner, the result of Dyar's act is stasis instead of life and freedom. In this perspective, the greyness that has always coloured his life metaphorically turns to a complete darkness³ as a symbol of despair. The quest has thus changed from a quest for freedom and redemption to a demonic one. This demonic aspect of the protagonist's abortive quest in Morocco is symbolized in Let it Come Down by a powerful pattern of metaphors, the most recurrent ones being the cage, the door, the rain, as well as grey and dark colours.

This unwarranted crime is at the image of the existential void in which Dyar lives. The total failure of his quest in Morocco, resulting in loneliness, murder, and in psychological confinement, recalls Sartre's assertion that there is no right choice, therefore entailing certain nihilism. In fact, the murder, as L.D.Stewart asserts, is an 'acte gratuit'⁴ and we are compelled to consider it as an existential act⁵. Yet, Let it Come Down is apparently focused on the antinomy opposing death and failure on the one hand to self-assertion and revival on the other. The demonic quest and the murder that end this novel account for its existential facet while the outcome of the murder as it relates to Dyar's evolution may conversely be regarded as a means to self-definition and revival.

¹ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 289.

² S.E. Olson, "Alien Terrain: Paul Bowles's Filial Landscapes", in: Twentieth Century Literature, A Paul Bowles Issue, Fall/Winter 1986 p. 339.

³ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 292.

⁴ L.D. Stewart, Paul Bowles, the Illumination of North Africa, p. 98.

⁵ L.D. Stewart, Paul Bowles, the Illumination of North Africa, p. 98.

In this regard, the figurative meaning of the 'door' and the 'cage' is significant. The recurring metaphor of the cage suggest that Dyar has come to Tangier 'to exchange one cage for another'¹ as it also illustrates his existential malaise when he was in the Unites States². The metaphor of the cage comes to an end when, utterly drugged, he drives the nail into Thami's head, act which does indeed close the door on his cage"³. In fact, the cage just gives way to the 'door', another effective metaphor for Dyar's existential malaise and cage of the self. The last chapter of the novel is built around the symbolism of the door, the nail and hammer and finally of Thami's head. At the core of his kif induced hallucinations, Dyar envisions Thami's head as a door that would set him free. Opening it by means of a nail and hammer show his endeavours and aspirations to freedom. His driving a nail into his friend's head carries a symbolical value in the sense that it illustrates his efforts to release himself from his confinement in an existential cage. Indeed, Let it Come Down thus bridges the gap between the existential influence on Paul Bowles's image of Morocco and the author's aspirations at self-recovery and at the ensuing feeling of revival.

Mystical existentialism in the image

Basically, mysticism can be defined as the experience of a mystical union or direct communion with the ultimate reality. It is also the belief that direct knowledge of God, spiritual truth or ultimate reality can be attained through subjective experience (as intuition or insight)⁴. Bowles's mysticism or more precisely the mysticism of his image of Morocco does not present any noetic quality. As well, the writer does not draw any cognitive conclusions or present statements from his approach to Moroccan Nature and cosmos. As a matter of fact, in his literary image of Morocco, Bowles does not infer any principles or conclusions as far God or any deity are concerned. Nor does he present rational and intellectual rapports and views of Moroccan cosmos and Nature. In fact, Bowles's spellbound descriptions of Moroccan scenery, his admiring and even quite deferential approach to Moroccan cosmic elements and Nature and his associating them with the sublime account for the mystical existentialism that characterizes his image Morocco. The association of a mystical approach to Morocco with existential themes allows the reference to a mystical existentialism in Bowles's early literary production, that is, in works produced during the heyday of existentialism. The author's mystical and existentialist approach to Morocco is, to a great extent, implied in the descriptions and rapports of his characters to the Moroccan cosmos and Nature.

¹ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 22.

² Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, pp. 20-22.

³ L.D.Stewart, The Illumination of North Africa, p. 96.

⁴ Merriam Webster dictionary.

The contextual existential influence on Bowles's early Moroccan writings is associated with a very close relationship with Moroccan Nature and with vivid descriptions highlighting the beauties of Moroccan Nature and cosmos. The writer's laudatory descriptions of Nature and the metaphorical pattern of images of Moroccan cosmic elements such as the rain, the clouds in Let it Come Down (1952) for instance prefigures the writer's later Pantheism that shapes Bowles's image of Morocco starting from the 1960s. In this respect, the association of negative and pessimistic existential themes with a mystic and positive approach to Moroccan Nature sets Paul Bowles's existentialism as mystical.

In the context of this investigation, mysticism is viewed as 'the urge to reach out to the infinite'¹. This definition suits Bowles's nontheism, in the sense that his writings do not present any belief in a personal God or Gods. In all respects, the writer does not believe in any God or deity. In point of fact, Bowles's work in general and Moroccan work as a whole presents a keen focus on Nature. The author's fascination by Moroccan Nature and cosmic elements is so strong that it is almost veneration.

There is a relationship between mysticism and Paul Bowles's spiritual reaction to the existential philosophy. In fact, Existentialism is also a form of mysticism. In this regard, K. Jaspers rejected explicit religious doctrines and influenced modern theology through his preoccupations with transcendence and the limits of human experience. He used the term 'encompassing' to refer to the ultimate limits of being. Besides, to this philosopher, 'existence' means the indefinable experience of freedom and responsibility; it is an experience which constitutes the authentic being of individuals who become aware of 'the encompassing' by confronting suffering, conflict, guilt, chance and death. In this context, 'transcendence' is the term Jaspers uses to identify God in the emotional experience of human beings.

In this sense, a dominant form of mysticism in western civilization is Existentialism and its many disguised variations such as Gestaltism, transcendental meditation, Zen Buddhism, Sufism. The latter can be found in Paul Bowles's image of Morocco through Pantheist mysticism. Thus, human existence is a kind of comprehensive and all-inclusive experience which recalls Ibn Al Arabi's notion of Wahdat Al Wujud², apart from the Existential atheist belief in nothingness.

¹ Majid Fakhri, Islamic Philosophy, Theology and Mysticism, p. 73

² Hereafter referred to as the 'Unity of Existence'.

Therefore, the link between Existentialism and mystical references to Moroccan Nature and cosmic elements stress the contextual, mystical and existential facet of the image of Morocco. In fact, as Let it Come Down illustrates, there are mystical elements and experiences even at the heart of Paul Bowles's most compelling existential work.

However, there is a chronological evolution in Paul Bowles's existential mysticism. Due to the existential influence of the 1950s, the early works are more plainly existential than the late ones which present more noticeable mystic features. On the whole, there is an evolution from mystical existentialism to Pantheist mysticism. This development highlights the author's journey all through his mystic quest in the adopted country.

The notion of 'transcendence' is central to mystical Existentialism in the sense that both Existentialism and Mysticism entail the notion of transcending the self¹. In Kant's philosophy and in Husserl's phenomenology², 'transcendence' means something 'beyond or before experience'. In the perspective of Sartre's existential phenomenology, transcendence is also the mental act of projecting a consciousness beyond itself, referring to and establishing new relations with entities that are external to the self. Transcendence, through the establishment of links with the external world, involves consequently spirituality and unity of existence. This phenomenological approach to 'transcendence' as related to existentialism is recurrent in Paul Bowles's early image of Morocco, notably Let it Come Down. The label 'phenomenological' can be related to Maurice Merleau-Ponty's view that transcendence is linked to existentialism. As this philosopher asserts, "phenomenology is also a philosophy which puts essences³ back into existence, and does not expect to arrive at an understanding of man and the world from any starting point other than that of their facticity"⁴. Thus, Dyar's transcendent consciousness of Moroccan natural elements and environments fit into this perspective. His mystical experience, that is to say his 'going beyond' mere perception,

¹ 'Transcendence' literally means 'going beyond'. In one sense, it thus refers to the context of 'otherness', and involves whatever lies 'beyond' or is 'other'. In this sense, Paul Bowles's mystical and 'transcendent' approach to Morocco is then his existential expression of the 'other'.

² In Husserl's phenomenology, transcendence as 'going beyond' is also related to a deeper experience of selfhood or 'self-experience'. This last acceptance is particularly appropriate to Paul Bowles's Moroccan work as Morocco and Moroccan Nature are presented as means to self-definition. Besides, Husserl also sets the essential experience of 'transcendence' within immanence, that is to say that it has dimensions of 'infinity'. This last notion matches the existential transcendence of Paul Bowles's early Moroccan work and his mystic aspirations at 'infinity' in Morocco.

³ In relation to the essence, Maurice Merleau-Ponty states that "seeking the essence of consciousness will consist in rediscovering my actual presence to myself, the fact of my consciousness which is in the last resort what the world and the concept of consciousness mean. Looking for the world's essence is not looking for what it is as a fact for us, before any thematization". Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Basic Writings, p. 72.

⁴ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Basic Writings, p.63.

can be regarded as 'transcendent' in the context of the Existential phenomenology¹. Dyar often transcends his worldly concerns and existential preoccupations, bridging thus the gap between him and the external elements, therefore achieving a mystic unity and harmony with the world. The combination of his frank existential attitude to life with transcendence stress the mystical existentialism of Let it Come Down.

In this novel, one of the most powerful and symbolical scenes in relation to mystical existentialism is Dyar's sun and sand bathing naked under the hot sun in the beach of Tangier. In addition to the sensation of physical and voluptuous plenitude, this scene imparts another significant facet: the protagonist's existential ponderings are closely associated with a mystical natural encounter via the feeling of 'transcendence'. At the core of the above mentioned experience, Dyar, as usual, wonders about his own existence: "And so he, lying in the sun and feeling close to himself, knew that he was there and rejoiced in the knowledge [...] .Whatever a man thought, said or did, the fact of his being there remained unchanged"². He is once more asserting the prevalence his existence. His existential assertion is accompanied by the experience of an encompassing fusion of all the natural fundamental things of existence: in this symbiosis, Dyar, the representative of mankind, transcends his human condition in a symbiosis with all the natural elements, such as water, sand, sky and even time. The union is first of all expressed through a harmonious concord³ binding different natural elements of the landscape: "The soft, regular cymbal crash of the waves was like the distant breathing of the morning; the sound sifted down through the myriad compartments of the air and reached his ears long afterwards"⁴.

The central harmony of this metaphoric description of morning is first conveyed by the soft-toned melody of the waves. The concord that radiates from this sensuous image at the same time encloses and unites the waves and their music. The agreement that is therefore suggested also involves the rippling of the waves which is compared to and echoed in the 'morning'; this original metaphor merges both the notion of time and the landscape or space, and so, highlights the basic harmony of the instant. This natural unity involves as well the air which is referred to as composed of 'compartments', as if to stress the tangible character it would have, a common point the air would share with the earth and that would unite it with the other natural components.

¹ Dyar's transcendent perception of his existence in Tangier fits into the phenomenological ontology of J.P. Sartre, P. Ricoeur and M.M. Ponty.

² Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 183.

³ This concord once more foretells the pantheist notion of the 'Unity of Existence'.

⁴ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, pp. 181-82.

Dyar, too, is involved in this unity: he is completely wrapped up by the natural elements -sun, sky, sand, heat- and the well-being and harmony he feels are translated through the beneficial sleep that overcomes him. By personifying the morning and referring to its 'breathing' the author creates a link between Dyar and Time in order to stress the concord of the Creation. At the same time, by implying that Dyar breathes in unison with the morning Paul Bowles underlines his feeling of harmony with nature. So, there is an all encompassing process involving the unity of all things, an agreement involving the earth, the sky, sea, the air and finally man, that is to say the whole gamut of the Creation. As a matter of fact, Dyar, later on, significantly refers to this experience as a pilgrimage¹, which highlights its sacred character. Viewed from this perspective, Dyar's experience on Tangier's beach is a mystical experience that recalls Ibn-al-Arabi's concept of the Unity of Existence². This association suggests that the mystical side of Paul Bowles's contextual existentialism.

Further, transcendence is another mystical and existential concept that is inherent to the above mentioned occurrence. In this scene there is a gradual movement from Dyar's acute consciousness of his surroundings and the clear-cut natural elements of the beach, to a state of oblivion where he forgets about his worries and the space around him³. The point of cleavage towards transcendence coincides with his turning over and lying face down on the sand. This image and his transcendent consciousness highlight Dyar's projection beyond his conscious self, that is, transcendence. This experience brings to mind that from now on he will represent mankind and will transcend his own condition, life and time. As a matter of fact, in the long monologue that follows, Dyar's refers to 'man' and his reflections are extended to mankind as a whole and to life and death in general.

As a matter of fact, transcendence also finds its most concise expression in Dyar's definition of life: "Life needs no clarifying, no justification. From whatever direction the approach is made, the result is the same: life for life's sake, the transcending fact of the living individual"⁴. He has gone beyond

¹ Paul Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, p. 187.

² In the context of this investigation, Bowles's image of Morocco is analysed in the light of pantheism, especially Ibn al Arabi's notions of 'existence' or *wujud* and of '*wahdat al wujud*' or unity of Existence. This aspect will be more specifically investigated in subsequent parts.

William C. Chittick explains *wujud* or existence as follows: 'Wujud' or existence refers to "God *wujud*", a word that is usually translated as 'being' or 'existence'. Chittick also observes that "In Arabic the word *wujud* is applied to God and to everything else as well. God has *wujud*, or rather, God is *wujud* and everything else has *wujud* in one way or another..... we might say that *wujud* means Being when referring to God and existence when referring to anything other than God". Ibn 'Arabi, *Heir to the Prophets*, p. 36. In the context of this study, the 'Unity of Existence' invokes the basic unity linking Nature and the cosmos to the Infinite or the Divine in the context of Pantheism.

³ Cf *Let it Come Down*, pp. 181-83.

⁴ Paul Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, p. 183.

his actual condition, replacing himself in the context of Man ‘on his way’¹. The combined effects of the protagonist’s spatio-temporal union with the cosmos grants a mystical dimension to his existentialism.

Settings too are vectors for the mystical existentialism of Let it Come Down. There is a very close relationship between the places where Dyar experiences his existential malaise and mysticism. In this perspective, it is worth noting that the desert beach where the above mentioned mystic and existential experience occurs recalls ‘*khalwa*’, the mystic practice of retreat. In the same way, even the spot where Dyar commits his existential act is a sort of refuge favouring mystical experiences and recalling ‘*khalwa*’: the house where he kills Thami is situated in an isolated olive grove near Agla, a small village lost in the countryside across the Strait of Gibraltar and which can only be reached after a long voyage through the sea; as a matter of fact, before attaining it, Dyar explicitly views the portion of the sea they have to cross as a solitary retreat: “And as the small boat passed more certainly through a region of shadowed safety, farther from the lights and the possibility of discovery, he found himself thinking of the water as a place of solitude”². The difficult way to get to the house, made of very steep and rocky climbs and descents,³ also stresses its isolation and inaccessible situation, suggesting thus its status as an isolating shelter. Dyar’s reflections while reaching it are revealing:

As Dyar walked toward the house he noticed the deep troughs dug in the earth by the rain [...]; it still dripped here and there, an intimate sound in the middle of an encompassing solitude- almost with an overtone of welcome, as if the mere existence of the house offered a possibility of relief from the vast melancholy grayness of the dying afternoon⁴.

The relationship between existentialism and the mystic experience of the ‘Unity of Existence’ is even present at the core of the scene preceding Dyar’s main and fatal existential act, that is, the killing of Thami in order to survive and to prove his existence. Bowles stresses then the protagonist’s close union and awareness of natural elements, which recalls the Unity of Existence⁵. Even time is described as melting in the course of its ‘fusion with fire’: “Inside, by the fire, time was slowly

¹ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 183.

² Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p.228.

³ Cf Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down pp. 237-244.

⁴ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 244.

⁵ Cf Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, pp. 282-83.

dissolving, falling to pieces”¹. The very moment of the murder coincides with a strong symbiosis associating nature and Dyar: “The mountain wind rushed through his head, his head that was a single seashell full of grottoes; its infinitely smooth pink walls, delicate, paper-thin, caught the light of the embers as he moved along the galleries”². So, after the crime through which Dyar asserts his existence³, Bowles depicts him as forming a single entity with the wind, the seashell and the fire. Even the soundness of the existential belief at that moment is compared to the clarity of ‘a great rock rising out of the sea around it’⁴.

Moroccan Nature is thus a major vector of transcendence. It is a means to transcendence, to rise above chaos and existential considerations and therefore to generate the harmony and communion with Nature that evoke the mystic concept of the Unity of Existence.

In this context, Dyar usually transcends chaos through a communion with Nature. For example, the boredom and futility he experiences at the Beidaoui’s social gathering culminate when he decided to escape outside the palace. There, Dyar, wrapped by the night, senses an immediate calm and harmony with the surrounding natural elements: the sounds and rustle made by plants, stalks and pods, the movements of vines, trees and stars. These natural sounds and views contrast with the chaos of the social environment he just escaped from and have a soothing, cleansing and boosting value: “he did not even realize that he was welcoming these sounds as they washed through him, that he was allowing them to cleanse him of the sense of bitter futility which had filled him for the past two hours”⁵. Altogether with his existential preoccupation, Dyar derives then from nature and the concord that transpires from it the energy and the new direction of his life:

‘Here I am’, he told himself once again, but this time the melody, so familiar that its meaning was gone, was faintly transformed by the ghost of a new harmony beneath it, scarcely perceptible and at the same time, merely because it was there at all, suggestive of a direction to be taken which made those three unspoken words more than a senseless reiteration.’⁶

¹ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 283.

² Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 284.

³ Dyar’s first sensible words after the murder are: “ I must remember that I exist’,...I must remember that I am alive’ ”. Let it Come Down, p. 284.

⁴ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 284.

⁵ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 130.

⁶ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 130.

Nature and the harmony that radiates from its elements are consequently means that enable Dyar to transcend the chaos and senselessness of Tangier's social life as well as his existential speculations. His retreat from the stifling room to the isolated calm of the garden and the ensuing relief recall the mystic practice of retreat and the intense harmony he comes into contact with also evokes Ibn-al-Arabi's concept of the Unity of Existence. So, the protagonist's experience can be compared to a mystic encounter with nature. This establishes a link between the contextual existential influence on Bowles's works of the fifties and his mystic quest. The seeds of mysticism can then be traced back to the works written at the beginning of his expatriation.

On the whole, in Let it Come Down, existential experiences are combined with mystical ones¹: obvious mystical feelings of communion with nature and the unity of existence are immediately followed by openly existential considerations on the meaning and the consciousness of life: "Therefore living meant first of all knowing one was alive, and life without that certainty was equal to no life at all"². This assertion sets as a primacy of life the consciousness of it. A clear statement of Dyar's mystical existentialism is found in the association he establishes between the earth, that is the cosmos on the one hand, and life and consciousness on the other: "A life must have all the qualities of the earth from which it springs, plus the consciousness of having them"³.

The Surrealist facet of the image

The contextual influence on Paul Bowles's image of Morocco also includes Surrealism. At the age of seventeen, Paul Bowles already wrote poems in the Surrealist fashion. The avant-garde magazine Transition published some of his poems which were labelled as surrealist. During the surrealist glory days, Bowles's Moroccan work started to bear the stamp of this cultural and literary movement. In fact, the writer's image of his host country is not only the outcome of his Moroccan experiences but it is as well the combined result of the encounter of the contextual influence of Surrealism with the Moroccan reality.

Even if Gertrude Stein did not like his attempt to write in the surreal manner, that is, without 'conscious intervention'⁴ Bowles already had a penchant for Surrealist poles of interest, such as exotic countries like Morocco, so-called 'primitive' cultures and all their subsequent characteristics. As a sign of the surrealist contextual influence, nearly all of his fiction is set outside America. For

¹ Cf also Let it Come Down, pp. 252-56.

² Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 255.

³ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 255.

⁴ G. Vidal, in: Paul Bowles, Collected Stories, p.3.

the most part, his writings are either set in North Africa, or in Central and South America. Only 3 out of his 39 short stories written between 1939 and 1976 take place in America. The common point between the settings of his work as a whole is their exoticism and their foreignness and contrast with Western culture and civilization. These features correspond to some of the centre of interests which were dear to the surrealists and to some of the major facets Bowles presents in his image of Morocco. On the whole, in his Moroccan fiction, the American writer is fascinated by the non-western mind, by the remote and exotic Moroccan landscapes as well as by the mystical dimension his adopted country offered him.

Bowles's choice of Morocco in 1947¹ is partly due to the Surrealist influence and to the advice of Gertrude Stein. To escape from America and from the connotations of his fatherland, the writer could have chosen any other country. Fleeing from America during the Surrealist heydays, he sought alien, exotic and what seemed to him as primitive cultures².

Thus, Morocco, with all its associations with liberty and its connotations with exoticism, wisdom and happiness³ obviously fulfilled the writer's inclination. His numerous voyages and stays throughout the world are as well an expression of his interest in Surrealism. For instance, he and Jane his wife lived for some time in Acapulco, Mexico and in the spring of 1945, Charles Henry Ford asked him to edit an issue of the magazine View on Central and South American cultures, which stirred up in him an ethnographic penchant. Consequently, writing on mysterious and unknown countries, generated, as he asserts " [...]the desire [...] to invent my own myths, adopting the point of view of the primitive mind [...]"⁴. This description corresponds to Paul Bowles's state of mind when he settled in Morocco.

The main Surrealist features that characterize Bowles's image of Morocco are the refusal of social conventions, primitivism, exoticism in relation to folk and oral tradition, the irrational through magic and sorcery as well oneirism and finally the Surrealist automatic writing and the stream of consciousness technique.

Even if Surrealism is considered as having generally lasted from 1919 to 1966⁵, that is to say, until the death of André Breton, its significance in intellectual life declined after WWII. Therefore, my

¹ The context is important because nowadays it is not invested with the same connotations

² cf. Paul Bowles, Without Stopping, pp. 125, 297

³ Cf Paul Bowles, Without Stopping, p. 125.

⁴ Cf, G.Vidal, p. 3 and Paul Bowles, Without Stopping.

⁵ Cf Internet site David Cunningham, <http://www.litencyc.com>

analysis of the surrealist contextual influence on the image will take into account Paul Bowles's Moroccan work written mainly from the 1940s to the 1960s, starting with his first Moroccan writing, 'The Scorpion', a short story published in 1945.

Refusal of social conventions is symptomatic of Surrealism. As stated in the Second Manifesto of Surrealism, A. Breton states that 'Surrealism, as I envisage it, proclaims loudly enough our absolute nonconformity, [...]. It could only account, on the contrary, for the complete state of distraction which we hope to attain below'¹. In this sense Surrealism rejects all forms of order and condemns logical, social and moral conventions, opposing to them the values of dreams, instinct, desire and revolt in the expression of the real process of the thought.

As a matter of fact, most of Bowles's characters are marginal people, as a result discarding social norms and conventions. The great majority of his characters, whether Moroccan or European, do not live according to conventional and established social rules.

'The Scorpion' is a notable example of the surrealist nonconformity and social marginality; its main protagonist is an old woman living 'in a cave which her sons had hollowed out of a clay cliff near a spring before they went away to the town where many people live'².

A marginal way of life is also significant in Let it Come Down. Thami and Dyar, The novel's main protagonists, do not fit in the conventional social pattern. As Mitzi Berger Hamovitch observes, "Thami is a kind of mirror image of Dyar. He too is rebellious, detests his existing family -his older brothers- although he had dearly loved his father and felt abandoned when he died. Thami had been his favourite, but cannot seem to 'fit in'"³. Most of the characters that people Paul Bowles's short stories fit into this context. They are mostly marginal persons living in the fringe of Moroccan set society.

Surrealists had a wide variety of interests, but the most appealing to them were anthropology and a concern for primitive cultures, perhaps accounting for the writer's personal interest in anthropology. Both primitivism and exoticism were among the writer's early centres of interest: While he was living in New York in the 1940s Paul Bowles was already attracted by 'primitive' countries. As Marilyn Moss claims, in Without Stopping 'he recalls his curiosity about alien and

¹ André Breton: Second Manifeste du Surréalisme

² Paul Bowles, 'The Scorpion', Collected Stories, p. 27.

³ Paul Bowles, Let It Come Down.

primitive cultures'¹. Actually, he confesses that his 'curiosity [...] was avid and obsessive. I had a placid belief that it was good for me to live in the midst of people whose motives I did not understand'². In fact, Morocco, as a 'primitive' and unknown country, was the alternative to America which was 'clearly the nightmare from which Paul Bowles seeks to awaken'³. Accordingly, the so-called primitivism and exoticism of unknown lands are surrealist features that shape Bowles's early image of Morocco. They partly account for Bowles's expatriation in Morocco, a country that was at that time invested with the connotations of exoticism.

When Bowles settled in Tangier in 1947, and as L. D. Stewart remarks, Morocco has become an outpost of the American dream and colonized by Americans in exile, mostly seeking the 'alleged' foreignness of Morocco⁴. Actually, the writer affirms his anticipated admiration of Tangier, a city he describes as follows: " 'It's a continuous performance, anyway', I said with satisfaction. Even before getting to Tangier, I knew I should never tire of watching Moroccans play their parts"⁵.

Bowles sought then refuge in Morocco, a country he viewed as also endowed with a pristine Nature. Thus, exoticism to a great extent correlates with the Moroccan luxuriously intact Nature. Morocco basically appealed to him because of the simple and bucolic life allowed by the primitive closeness to an unspoiled nature:

I like the world as it is, you know- the trees, the wind, the globe and whatever's on it [...]. Yes, it's wonderful that here there are those little –what shall I call them? - rocks in the brook that just stay there while everything else rushes by them in the water, people who just stand or sit all day while time goes by and people go by⁶.

In this context, the author carefully avoided the Moroccan modern urban centres and revelled in the simple atmosphere of the traditional and rural Moroccan society and areas. This attitude partly explains why the author's image of Morocco is geographically restricted to desert and rural places. Even Tangier, his elected Moroccan city, attracted him partly because of its provincialism. In addition to this, his short stories are mostly set in the deep Morocco, away from cities such as Casablanca for example.

¹ Marilyn Moss, 'The Child in the Text', in: *Twentieth Century Literature*, a Paul Bowles issue, p. 326.

² Paul Bowles, *Without Stopping*, p.297.

³ Marilyn Moss, 'The Child in the Text', in: *Twentieth Century Literature*, a Paul Bowles Issue p. 326.

⁴ Lawrence D. Stewart, *Paul Bowles, The Illumination of North Africa*, p. 1.

⁵ Paul Bowles, *Without Stopping*, p. 127.

⁶ Oliver Evans, 'An Interview with Paul Bowles', *Mediterranean Review* 1:2 (Winter 1971),.

The exotic and primitive surrealist facet of Bowles's image of Morocco also takes the form of unknown and strange settings inhabited by marginal natives. In fact, the first short story Bowles wrote is 'The Scorpion' (1939). In Without Stopping he recalls that at the onset this tale was 'primitive', based on his own myths¹. 'By the Water' is also set in a supernatural place: in this short story, Amar, the protagonist is travelling to a strange town to see so-called relatives he has never known. Exoticism is here conveyed through the weird environment and the people's strange behaviour. Once there, Amar is attracted to an uncanny 'hammam' by a languid 'oud'² music which will lead him to express his primitive instincts, since, as L.D.Stewart affirms, 'in Bowles's world, music frequently traps man into expressing his primitive instincts'³.

The primitive mind is as well notable in 'A Distant Episode' (1945) where a Professor, a linguist, has his tongue cut by the Reguibat. The cruelty of this tribe and the professor's mutilation⁴ are viewed by the author as the act of 'adopting the point of view of the primitive mind'⁵. As this short story suggests, the primitive mind is often associated with cruelty and barbarity. The same relationship can be found in 'The Delicate Prey' (1948). This short story relates fictionalises the violent behaviour of a Mougari⁶ towards a young Filali⁷. It describes how Driss, a young Filali is savagely mutilated:

The man moved and surveyed the young body lying on the stones. He ran his fingers along the razor blade; [...] he stepped over, looked down, and saw the sex that sprouted from the base of the belly [...]. It was swiftly severed [...]. He put his hand on the hard belly and smoothed the skin. Then he made a small vertical incision there, and using both hands, studiously stuffed the loose organ in until it disappeared⁸.

The cruelty brought out in the 'Delicate Prey'⁹ and in 'A Distant Episode'¹⁰ should nevertheless be modulated. The primitive violence features only on the surface level, due to the surrealist contextual influence on Bowles's work. As the author contends, its most important function in the image of Morocco is to elucidate his own character and that of the natives. Besides, L. D. Stewart underlines that "Bowles has spent the greater portion of his life in Morocco, and that

¹ Paul Bowles, Without Stopping, pp. 261-62.

² That is to say a Moroccan traditional guitar.

³ L.D. Stewart, The Illumination of North Africa, p. 29.

⁴ The Professor's tongue has been severed by the Reguibat tribe.

⁵ Paul Bowles, Without Stopping, pp. 261-62.

⁶ Paul Bowles explains that a Mougari is an inhabitant of Mougarr, 'a holy place in that part of the world' 'The Delicate Prey', p. 166.

⁷ A member of the Filali tribe.

⁸ Paul Bowles, 'The Delicate Prey', in: Collected Stories, p. 170.

⁹ Paul Bowles, 'The Delicate Prey', in: Collected Stories, pp. 165-172.

¹⁰ Paul Bowles, 'A Distant Episode', in: Collected Stories, pp. 39-49.

his writings dealing with Barbary do so in no customary way. He has found in North Africa the ideal climate for the elucidation of character, first his own and then the native”¹. In fact, in the Oliver Evans interview, referring to ‘A Distant Episode’, the author specifies that most of his stories “had a therapeutic purpose behind them when I wrote them. For me personally, I needed to clarify an issue for myself, and the only way of doing it was to create a fake psychodrama in which I could be everybody”². In addition to the influence of primitivism and its propensity to violence, the author grants thus an autobiographical dimension to the theme of the primitive violence which tends to reveal his own character and ‘make his own myths believable’³.

The author’s penchant for exotic and mysterious locales can as well be traced back to his childhood. Thus, *Without Stopping* provides us with the autobiographical context of this inclination. As a child he used to invent routes and place-names such as ‘Snake-spiderville’ or ‘Hiss’⁴. He also invented maps of planets with landmasses and seas with strange names such as Zaganokworld⁵ for instance.

The Surrealist focus on man’s private memories is as well noticeable in Paul Bowles’s early image of the adopted country. Private memories relate to what the surrealist reference to man’s profound life. This emphasis on private memories as a source of inspiration is prominent in ‘By the Water’ that was written in 1945, that is, in Surrealism’s prime. This short story is, according to Bowles, a ‘surrealistic’ story built on a ‘synthesis of memories’⁶. As L. D. Stewart states, the fantastic Lazrag resembles a man the writer knew in Fes while the pool of the ‘hammam’ corresponds to another memory, that is, a cave that was destroyed by the Moroccan government.

Paul Bowles’s literary image of Morocco is also indebted to the Surrealists’ adherence to the ‘irrational’⁷ in life. Surrealism is also a means to explore dreams, the unconscious, madness, and

¹ L. D. Stewart, *The Illumination of North Africa*, p. 2.

² Oliver Evans, ‘An Interview with Paul Bowles’, *Mediterranean Review* 1:2 (Winter 1971), pp. 3-15.

³ L. D. Stewart, *The Illumination of North Africa*, p. 35.

⁴ Paul Bowles, *Without Stopping*, p. 27. The animal connotations of these names recall his later theme of animal legends and stories in the image of Morocco.

⁵ Paul Bowles, *Without Stopping*, p. 27.

⁶ Cf L. D. Stewart, *The Illumination of North Africa*, p. 26.

⁷ In the first Manifesto, André Breton underscores the importance of the irrational and defines it as: ‘.....Thought’s dictation, in the absence of all control exercised by the reason and outside all aesthetic or moral preoccupations’. This cultural movement makes a critical reconsideration of the mental and esthetical schema that is imposed by western ‘rationalism’. So, ‘to change life’, the Surrealists tried to rise above all the barriers that limit the individual. This venture drove them to discard the cleavages such as the separation of reason and madness, dreams and wake, child and adult to enable individual’s reunification, that is to say the recovery of the person’s lost abilities. This worldview accounts for the importance of daydreams and the hallucinatory flights of the imagination that are at the basis of Paul Bowles’s Moroccan writings.

hallucinatory states. Surrealism at the same time entails a state of mind and a way of life: thus, to live surrealistically is to derail the rational mind. One of the major goals of Surrealism, especially of André Breton, was to liberate the mind by experimenting on new modes to explore the 'real world' (le réel) and transcend reality via new means of expression. In this perspective, Paul Bowles draws on the surrealist automatic writing, plays on words, in short what the surrealists term as the 'cadavres exquis'. Thus, the irrational in Bowles's image of Morocco is to a great extent conveyed through the characters' use of hallucinatory drugs leading to illogical behaviours and to madness and through the themes of magic and sorcery. Drugs, essentially kif and majoun, recur throughout Bowles's vision of Morocco and are also vectors of hallucinatory imagery and of fortuitous effects and happenings.

The characters use of drugs and its ensuing irrational behaviours and hallucinations are common to most of Paul Bowles's Moroccan writings. From the first short stories to 'Allal' produced in 1976 which ends on a real drug induced delirium tremens, kif engenders illogical thoughts and attitudes without links of cause to effects. For instance, an irrational behaviour culminates in Dyar's fortuitous murder of Thami that ends Let it Come Down. Having smoked pipes of kif and eaten majoun, Dyar, absolutely freaked out, quite unexpectedly drives a nail in Thami's skull, without any apparent logical reason¹. This crime is all the more illogical that he previously admitted he was feeling well and greeted his victim with pleasure². Kif and majoun induced states of mind are the starting point of hallucinations and irrational imaginative flights and imagery. It induces hallucinations and stirs the characters' imagination, providing thus the reader a 'surrealistic' view of Morocco. For example, 'He of the Assembly' is a short story, which for the most part, describes the hallucinations and the imagination flights of Boujemaa, literally translated by the writer as 'He of the Assembly'. In a long imagination flight he fantasizes on how he would hide himself and visualizes himself hiding in a hot soup kettle³. Besides, the whole story is punctuated by numerous references to kif smoking and ends on the apology of its effects: 'A pipe of kif before breakfast gives man the strength of a hundred camels in the courtyard'⁴.

Kif, imagination and the unconscious are narrowly connected in the sense release the imagination which itself is an open door to the unconscious. This facet of Bowles's Moroccan writings is a surrealist feature because it recalls the Surrealists' immersion into the unconscious in

¹ Cf Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, pp.279-284.

² Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, pp. 274, 276.

³ Paul Bowles, 'He of the Assembly', Collected Stories, p. 314.

⁴ Paul Bowles, 'He of the Assembly', Collected Stories, p. 325.

order to gain access to forbidden territories¹. In fact, the writer himself was aware of relationships linking kif and the unconscious: In an interview with L. D. Stewart, Bowles establishes intimate links between kif induced hallucinatory states and the unconscious:

Whatever kif or any drug give you is not determined by the kif itself. The kif is simply the key which opens a door to some particular chamber of the brain that lets whatever was in there out. It does not put anything in. it doesn't supply the matter. It liberates whatever's in, that's all.²

Kif and majoun as well as their subsequent irrational and hallucinatory states of mind are all the more intimately related to the image of Morocco that the author sets very close links between them and the North African country. As a matter of fact, Bowles unambiguously associates hashish with the Moroccan culture: "It is to be expected that there should be a close relationship between the culture of a given society and the means used by its members to achieve release and euphoria"³. In addition to this, the author also considers that kif constitutes an aid to composition because it enables the writer to work 'better and 'prolongs the creative energy'⁴. Therefore, kif, as a source of inspiration provides the writer with 'the detonating vision of a story'⁵. In fact, as Bowles himself observed in his interview with Stewart, owing to kif, a writer 'can have total recall, if you want to have it'⁶. This assertion underscores the importance of kif as it relates to fantasy in Bowles's kif stories. These tales are considered as 'an endless, proliferated tale of intrigue and fantasy in which the unexpected turns of the narrative line play a far more decisive role than the development of character in the plot'⁷. The prevalence of fantasy and imagination over characters and the bond the author sets between kif and the Moroccan culture denote the importance of the mental pictures and imagination flights in Bowles's image of Morocco.

The outcome of the drug induced hallucinatory and the flights of imagination is expressed in a style that recalls the Surrealist automatic writing. In this sense, Bowles, in an interview with Jeffrey

¹ Indeed, drawing on Freud, Breton viewed the unconscious as the wellspring of imagination. In the first manifesto of Surrealism, A. Breton defines this movement as a means of reuniting conscious and unconscious realms of experience in such a way that the world of fantasy and dreams would be joined to the everyday rational world in an 'absolute reality, a surreality'.

² Tape conversation with Paul Bowles quoted by L. D. Stewart in: The Illumination of North Africa

³ Paul Bowles, Their Heads are Green and their Hands are Blue, p. 86, quoted by L. D. Stewart, in: Twentieth Century Literature, A Paul Bowles Issue, Fall/Winter 1986 p. 115.

⁴ L. D. Stewart, The Illumination of North Africa, p. 115.

⁵ L. D. Stewart, The Illumination of North Africa, p. 115.

⁶ L. D. Stewart, The Illumination of North Africa, p. 115.

⁷ Paul Bowles, "Kif - Prologue and Compendium of Terms" in: George Andrews and Simon Vinkenoog (eds), The Book of Grass, New York, Grove, 1967, p.111.

Bailey, acknowledges the influence of André Breton¹ on his writing without conscious control and underlines how he achieved the automatic way of writing². In Bowles's Moroccan work, kif is then at the origin of the surrealist automatic writing and of the stream of consciousness technique. It also entails a kind of dislocation of language that can be noticed in what is termed as his 'kif stories'.

Free flow of consciousness similarly suits the status of Bowles's characters. They are often dislocated travellers who are out of phase with the environment and psychologically fragile. For example, Dyar in Let it Come Down, Amar in 'By the Water' or Ben Tajah in 'He of the Assembly' are cases in point. Their geographical and psychological dislocation is conveyed and highlighted by their drug induced states of consciousness as well as by the ensuing stream of consciousness and associations of ideas. As J. Collins states³, dislocation, occurring when the status quo is psychologically disturbed by drugs, suggests a Surrealist influence.

In fact, the 'stream of consciousness' has also an autobiographical dimension. In Without Stopping, the writer relates that at the age of sixteen he used to write without 'conscious intervention'⁴ and without having any knowledge of what he had written. His autobiography itself, originally intended to be a novel, "was the application of automatic writing"⁵. Beside the contextual importance of the surrealist influence on the image of Morocco, kif induced hallucinatory states and the 'writing without conscious intervention', as an open door to the unconscious, is a means to reveal hidden aspects of the writer's unconscious.

As Eric Mottram recalls, a result of the surrealist methods of abandoning conscious control involves stories of animal legends and of animals disguised into human beings.⁶ The first short stories written in this vein are 'The Scorpion' and 'By the Water'⁷. For instance, 'The Scorpion'

¹ In the first Manifesto, Breton provides a dictionary definition of what he terms as 'automatism': "SURREALISME, n, m. Automatisme psychique pur par lequel on se propose d'exprimer, soit verbalement, soit par écrit, soit de toute manière, le fonctionnement réel de la pensée, en l'absence de tout contrôle exercé par la raison, en dehors de toute préoccupation esthétique ou morale ».

² 'I read André (Breton) who explained how to do it, and so I learned how to write without being conscious of what I was doing. I learned how to make it grammatically correct and even to have a certain style without the slightest idea of what I was writing. One part of my mind was doing the writing, and God knows what the other part was doing....' Interview with Jeffrey Bailey, *The Paris Review*, No 81, (1981), pp 62-98.

³ J. Collins, 'Approaching Paul Bowles', pp 60, 61.

⁴ Paul Bowles, Without Stopping, p. 70

⁵ Paul Bowles, Without Stopping, p.3.

⁶ Eric Mottram, 'Staticity and Terror', p. 28.

⁷ According to Paul Bowles, these two short stories are 'surrealistic', rooted in private memories. As Lawrence D. Stewart reports in Paul Bowles, the Illumination of North Africa, Bowles once characterized 'By the Water' as 'an experiment in automatic writing.....I sat down with no previous idea in my head, wrote the thing without 'knowing' what I was writing, and at a certain point stopped, probably because I was physically tired, and called that the end'.

presents a kind of automatic union between an old woman and a scorpion: “Then she realised that he was not going to sting her. A great feeling of happiness went through her. She raised her finger to her lips to kiss the scorpion [...] .Slowly in the peace which was beginning, the scorpion moved into her mouth’¹. In ‘By the Water’ the automatic writing consists in a surrealistic dream where events follow each other according to a cause and effect pattern².

The flow of consciousness is also recurrent in the novel Let it Come Down as a support to Dyar’s numerous hallucinatory instances and the consequential mental pictures. This novel abounds in surreal scenes where Dyar, the protagonist, experiences confusions between reality and his kif induced hallucinations; the association of ideas thus created lead the protagonist to concretise his unconscious desires which the author transcribes by means of the stream of consciousness technique³. The automatic writing at the same time reflects the influence of Surrealism on the image and at the same time illustrates the characters’ delirium tremens that is contingent to their Moroccan drug and alcohol consumption.

Bowles’s characters often dream or are immersed in their kif hallucinations. Dreams and hallucinations are a source of pure imagination as well as the expression of the unexpected and the unconscious. So, dreams and hallucinations engender an unexpected juxtaposition of images and are Surrealist⁴ ‘mental pictures’ of Morocco.

The juxtaposition of images may also be regarded as emphasizing what Roman Jakobson terms as the ‘metaphoric’ pole of literary language. These images correspond to the writer’s ‘obsessive metaphors’. During the prime days of Surrealism these compulsive metaphors constitute the basis of the unexpected juxtaposition of images that are reflective of the author’s and his characters’ psyche.

Writing in a hypnotic and a trancelike state is a means to record the train of mental associations. Breton, influenced by Freudian psychological analytical theory, believed that the symbols and images produced, though seeming strange and incongruous to the conscious mind, actually constitutes a record of a person’s unconscious psychic forces. In the context of Bowles’s image of Morocco, the author’s final aim and quest in Morocco being mystical, the flow of consciousness as

Quoted by L. D. Stewart from Paul Bowles Collection, Humanities research Collection, University of Texas, Austin, in: The Illumination of North Africa, p. 27.

¹ Paul Bowles, ‘The Scorpion’, in: Collected Stories, p. 30.

² L. D. Stewart, The Illumination of North Africa, p. 29.

³ Paul Bowles, Let It Come Down, pp. 278, 282-83.

⁴ Cf André Breton, ‘Le Manifeste du Surréalisme’ (1924).

revelatory of man's unconscious and psychic forces is therefore closely related to the automatic writing. Accordingly, there is a correlation between the irrational, dreams, imagination, on the one hand and the unconscious as viewed by Freud¹ and Jacques Lacan² on the other. The literary image of Bowles's adopted country is, therefore, a 'metaphor' of the author's inner 'reality', the writer's subconscious reality.

In relation to Bowles's quest in Morocco, surrealism appealed to him at the beginning of his expatriation; yet, beyond the exotic appeal, the writer found in Morocco other elements that fulfilled his mystic quest. Given the close relationship linking the unconscious to the surrealist automatic flow of consciousness, the characters' dreams and flights of imagination and into the unconscious are symptomatic of the writer's quest in the chosen country: thus, the mysticism inherent to the characters' flow of consciousness reveals the writer's mystic quest in Morocco as early as the 1940ies. Since Bowles's mystic quest in Morocco underlies and legitimates his choice of Morocco as a home country, the relationships linking the flow of consciousness to the author's and his characters' psyche assume a primary significance. This is due to the fact that the mystic practice of trance is itself partly mediated by and expressed through the Surrealist stream of consciousness technique and automatism.

The American Context

The American context also exerted a noteworthy influence on Paul Bowles' image of Morocco. Given the effects contexts exert on literary productions³, the impact of post World War II America is therefore notable in his literary image of Morocco. This contextual influence includes the impact of the Second World War and the familial contexts exerted on Paul Bowles's representation of his adopted country.

Bowles established himself in Tangier in 1947, shortly after the end of the Second World War. The timing of the author's expatriation shows that the author's setting in Morocco was as well an escape from post WWII context. Affluence, modernism and conformism were the main characteristics of the post war America from which Bowles fled. This background was one of the reasons that prompted him to leave his home country and search refuge under other sheltering skies. Having at that time socialist sympathies, he first went to South America and then, following the

¹ Cf D.L.Smith, *Freud's Philosophy of the Unconscious*, pp. 81-99, E.Wright, *Psychoanalytic Criticism: Theory in Practice*, pp9-76.

² Cf Malcolm Bowie, *Lacan*, pp 44-87, Elizabeth Wright, *Psychoanalytical Criticism*, pp 9-55.

³ Cf J.F.Guyard, *La Littérature Comparée*.

advice of Gertrude Stein, settled down in Tangier. There is a strong antagonism between Bowles's Morocco and his native land: post war America was prosperous, conformist, well-equipped, modern, urban and a mass society while his elected Morocco was rural, anti conformist and traditional, as reflected in the literary image of his adopted country. The liberalism and a certain anti-conformism that prevailed in the American expatriates' circle in Tangier attracted him, which entails that his exile was also an escape from WWII American conformism. Accordingly, the characters of his Moroccan literary production are also modest people living off mainstream society. Their unconventional behaviour as well as their anti-conformist views of life is at the image of the author's Morocco.

Bowles did not have a positive view of modern civilization. His lifelong expatriation therefore expresses the fulfilment of his wish to escape from a certain prison and from anything American. As M. Moss argues, 'America is clearly the nightmare from which Bowles seeks to awaken'¹. In this background, horror and violence are significant themes which are consequent to and representative of the post World War II European context. Horrifying instances of violent behaviours recur in the image. Murder and gratuitous torture acts are often the outcome of people's encounters.

'The Delicate Prey' for instance illustrates the author's gloomy view of western civilization. In this short story, a western Professor, a linguist, is tortured, has his tongue cut by merciless tribesmen² and is sold into slavery. This torture is all the more humiliating and merciless as the linguist's tongue is severed by those whose language he studies. Without his tongue, he is literally silenced and metaphorically annihilated. Besides, his physical agony is underscored by a psychological one since, in spite of his social status, the Professor, is turned into a jumping jack and deprived of his humanity:

Even when all his wounds had healed and he felt no more pain, the Professor did not begin to think again; he ate and defecated, and he danced when he was bidden a senseless hopping up and down that delighted the children, principally because of the jangling racket it made. And he generally slept through the heat of the day, in among the camels³.

¹ Cf Marilyn Moss, 'The Child in the Text: Autobiography, Fiction and the Aesthetics of Deception in Without Stopping, p.326.

² Paul Bowles, 'A Distant Episode' in: Collected Stories, p. 45.

³ Paul Bowles, 'A Distant Episode' in: Collected Stories, p 46.

Accordingly, as a representative of modern civilization, the Professor's mutilation casts subsequent negative connotations on the modern civilization he represents. The writer's desolate view of western civilization and his pessimism are all the more heightened that, even in desert spaces, crimes and violence prevail. Consequently, even the flight to the Sahara and to unknown and faraway spots cannot shelter from the violent and predatory post WWII western world. In this short story, violence and murder are not directed against Europeans only but involves natives as well; for instance, in a fit of anger, a Reguibat almost decapitated a member of another tribe¹.

In addition to violence, human decadence, as a metaphor for the negative post WWII context, is figuratively conveyed through the stench emitted by 'the sweet black odor of rotten meat' and by the constant stink of human excrement². The barbarous and inhuman character of the tribe points to the horrors of the war and is suggested by the Reguibat's careful avoidance of 'any stationary civilization'³. The Professor is repeatedly described standing at the edge of an abyss: 'Standing there at the edge of an abyss which at each moment looked deeper [...]. He got to his feet and looked over the edge of the precipice [...]. And there was nothing to give it scale; not a tree, not a house, not a person ...'⁴.

As a matter of fact, in a talk with Harry Breit⁵, referring to decadence, Bowles expressed his fearsome and negative view of the context that followed the Second World War. This background greatly influenced his literary representation of Morocco. In this sense, the negative themes such as violence, isolation, and pessimism for instance that characterize the image might be read as the metaphoric and negative representations of the post war universe. Thus, most of the characters are marginal people leading miserable lives. As well, the despondent Americans that people Paul Bowles's fiction are mostly dejected people. This unhappiness is shared by Moroccans and westerners alike: Dyar in Let it Come Down is as dejected as Thami, or the other minor characters of this work. In point of fact, the writer's compliant assertion encapsulates the post WWII situation: "You must watch the universe as it cracks above your head"⁶

The author's refusal of the dynamics of the war is also conspicuous in The Spider's House. This novel deals with the end of the traditional pattern during the Moroccan Independence War; it is

¹ Paul Bowles, 'A Distant Episode' in: Collected Stories, p. 48.

² Paul Bowles, 'A Distant Episode' in: Collected Stories, p. 41.

³ Paul Bowles, 'A Distant Episode' in: Collected Stories, p. 46

⁴ Paul Bowles, 'A Distant Episode' in: Collected Stories, pp. 42-43.

⁵ 'A Talk with Paul Bowles', in: New York Time Book Review, March 9, 1952.

⁶ 'A Talk with Paul Bowles', in: New York Time Book Review, March 9, 1952.

a kind of parable of the Fall since the author indicates in its preface that it is about mankind's Fall from innocence. Amar, the protagonist of this novel, represents the city of Fez and his purity is synonymous with the city's wholesomeness. Modernism is implicitly associated with Amar's loss of innocence and happiness. Additionally, in the same novel, the progress of western civilization is dealt with contemptuously¹.

Bowles's recurrent travels might also be viewed as escapes from the western world. In this respect, the writer's choice of exotic and faraway lands is in itself an implied flight from and refusal of the post war context. Consequently, in Without Stopping the author recounts his 'nomadic' existence in Europe and North Africa. The account is built on the metaphor of 'travels' which represents an obsessive image of the expatriate's rejection of America. In fact, America, the author's western country, is equated with a prison:

Each day I lived on this side of the Atlantic was one more day spent outside prison. I was aware of the paranoia in my attitude and that with each succeeding month of absence from the United States I was augmenting it. Still there is not much doubt that with sufficient funds I should have stayed indefinitely outside America².

Geographical dislocations and the characters' psychological disruption as well as the disintegration of their personality can then be considered as metaphors expressing the author's nightmarish view of post WWII context. Settings also illustrate the characters' psychological disorders and social disruption. The strange Moroccan settings are mirrors of the characters' psychological and 'physical' confusion that is consequential to post WWII. Furthermore, the various mysterious locales where Bowles sets his fiction as well as the disorienting Sahara desert grant human destructiveness a universal and cosmic dimension. In fact, the predatory facet of the Sahara is a suitable setting and an expressive metaphor for nihilism, death decay and insanity.

Other 'horrible' stories also involve violence and are indicative of post war context. This is the case of 'Allal', of 'Reminders of Bousselham', of 'the Hours after Noon' where a child molester is killed by a twist of wire about the neck or of 'The Wind at Beni Midar', where the victim is beaten, stabbed, and finally poisoned.

¹ Steven E. Olson, 'Alien Terrain: Paul Bowles's Filial Landscapes', in: Twentieth Century Literature, A Paul Bowles Issue, p. 335.

² Paul Bowles, Without Stopping, p. 165.

In a hostile environment man becomes a prey. Bowles's western characters are often victims and preyed upon as they immerse themselves in an alien culture. Unable to stand the frightful and self-destructive encounter with a foreign culture and country, they evolve, as I. Hassan asserts, 'from pilgrim into prey, from incipient decay to total regression, (is) unattended by regeneration or self-discovery'¹. The alien culture and the metaphor of the 'prey' should also be associated with post WWII context in the sense that they stand for the inhumanity and destructiveness of the war. For the sake of emphasis, the status of 'prey' involves both westerners and natives alike; Dyar in Let it Come Down is a prey for the natives in an urban setting, Tangier, as Thami becomes at the end of the novel his own victim.

The awfulness and violence of the above mentioned works recall the horrors of the Second World War that confirmed human vulnerability. Man is thus described as an exposed victim. His fragility, combined with the dreadfulness and geographical dislocation, results in a psychological disruption and in the disintegration of their personality.

Geographical dislocation for westerners, social disruption as well hostile and aggressive relationships even in alien and supposedly 'primitive' imply that no sky shelters from violence and horror. These negative features prevail in Bowles's Moroccan work until the end of the 1950s, when a mystic approach to Morocco gradually replaced the negative consequences of the Second World War. Paul Bowles found in Pantheist mysticism a protective shield from inhumanity and aggressivity.

The Familial Context

The familial context also exerted a background impact on Paul Bowles's image of Morocco. Familial relationships and behaviours triggered his lifelong expatriation in Morocco. Claude Bowles, the author's father, was the main problematic figure. The familial background and the warfare that primarily opposed father and son shape, to a great extent, Bowles's literary representation of Morocco.

Bowles, an only son, was born and educated in New England, the state and cradle of Puritanism in America. He lived an austere and rigid childhood because his parents were convinced that any pleasure was destructive and that an unpleasant activity could contribute in a positive way to the shaping of the child's personality. As a matter of fact, the opening chapter of Without Stopping

¹ I. Hassan, Radical Innocence, p. 86.

sets the basis of what he endured as a child: ‘Very early I understood that I would always be kept from doing what I enjoyed and forced to do that which I did not. The Bowles family took it for granted that pleasure was destructive, whereas engaging in an unappealing activity aided in character’¹. Pleasure being considered as destructive, he was most of the time kept from doing the things he enjoyed², and, as a result, he had the feeling that he was treated like an animal³.

Accordingly, Bowles’s childhood is narrated as unpleasant and frustrating. Apart from his mother, Rena, his Grandma was the only person in whose presence ‘the world seemed acceptable’ and whose voice was comforting⁴. In Without Stopping, the author narrates that he was obliged to keep to a rigid and military discipline such as packing up his toys at exactly six to avoid having them confiscated once and for all⁵. Young Paul was also a sort of guinea-pig, having to carry out absurd and incongruous acts such as chewing at least forty times the ‘bolus’⁶ in his mouth. Another strange regulation he was obliged to abide by was a yoga practice, that is, “proper breathing enabled one to inhale prana along with the air. [...]. He immediately decided that what I needed was more prana. (He even went so far as to suggest that prana could take the place of food when one was hungry). I was obliged to learn to breathe by stopping and unstopping my nostrils with my fingers”⁷.

Beyond their comical and incongruous character, these compulsory practices account for the writer’s lack of freedom during childhood and, later on in life, impelled him to leave his original country.

In addition to this, Bowles was an absolutely lonely child. He used to spend his days alone in the house, except for an hour when he was allowed to play in the backyard⁸. He was also prevented from meeting and interacting with kids of his own age. Therefore, he was living in a world that did not match his needs as a child since he lived in an adults’ world. For instance, in Without Stopping he relates that at the age of five he had never yet spoken to another child or seen children playing together⁹. Besides, while a child, his mother taught him how to retreat into the "blankness" of his

¹ Paul Bowles, Without Stopping, p. 17.

² Paul Bowles, Without Stopping, p. 17.

³ Paul Bowles, Without Stopping, p. 26.

⁴ Paul Bowles, Without Stopping, p. 13.

⁵ Paul Bowles, Without Stopping, p. 14.

⁶ Paul Bowles, Without Stopping, p. 24.

⁷ Paul Bowles, Without Stopping, p. 17.

⁸ Paul Bowles, Without Stopping, p. 14.

⁹ Paul Bowles, Without Stopping, p. 23.

mind to escape his father¹. Thus, retreat and isolation were characteristic of the author's childhood and evoke the mystic ways that illustrate his image of Morocco.

The mystic practices of '*khalwa*' and '*uzl*' are then upshots of Paul Bowles's familial context. The compulsory void of the mind prefigures the writer's later practice of '*khalwa*' or spiritual retreat. In the same way, isolation was as well a current practice of the author's childhood. Young Paul was most often obliged to remain physically isolated in his room, which evokes '*uzl*' or physical isolation. Beside the obligatory isolation, he was always seeking an escape and he willingly used to find a shelter in his room. Morocco can then be considered as the counterpart of the retreat he sought when a child and as an escape from his father's domination.

The author's miserable childhood was to a great extent due to his authoritarian father whose rules are referred to as 'edicts'², which connotes the dictatorship he underwent. A noteworthy example is when Claude Bowles kept unjustly spanking his son simply because the latter locked his bedroom's door. Here again the incongruity of the situation is underscored by the basic misunderstanding that separated father and son: there is an absurdity between the father's interpretation of the locking and Paul's who kept earnestly explaining that he locked his door to draw houses³. The injustice of such an act is also highlighted by the uselessness of the spanking itself⁴. In fact, the beating resulted in making young Paul more resistant to his father's attacks: "I also felt stronger, because I knew that no matter what physical violence was done to me, I would not have to cry"⁵.

Father and son conflicts⁶ can best be epitomized by the writer's evocation of his father's attempt to kill him by putting him in a basket and leaving it on the windowsill for the snow to fall on.⁷ The father's figure as a murderer is all the more highlighted that, recalling the incident in Without Stopping, Paul Bowles demeans it and, referring to it with a characteristic detachment, writes that 'the thing seemed only too possible'⁸.

¹ Cf Paul Bowles, Without Stopping, p.43, 165 and M. Moss, "The Child in the Text: Autobiography, Fiction, and the Aesthetics of Deception in Without Stopping, in: Twentieth Century Literature, pp. 320-21.

² Paul Bowles, Without Stopping, p. 14.

³ Paul Bowles, Without Stopping, p. 44.

⁴ Paul Bowles, Without Stopping, p. 44.

⁵ Paul Bowles, Without Stopping, p. 44.

⁶ In chapter III, father and son conflicts will be analyzed as an oedipal struggle.

⁷ Paul Bowles, Without Stopping, p. 39.

⁸ Paul Bowles, Without Stopping, p. 8.

Warfare between father and son are significantly illustrated by Bowles's throwing a meat knife at his father. This onslaught was a trigger that pushed young Paul to cry out his basic grief: 'But it's not my fault I'm alive. I didn't ask to be born'¹. This denial of life later influenced Paul Bowles's image of Morocco since, as Steven E. Olson 'Bowles fiction is peopled by unhappy Americans who 'didn't ask to be born' and who are not particularly happy to be alive'².

On the whole, the first chapters of Without Stopping are rich in significant instances and details illustrating Paul Bowles's austere and difficult childhood³. The writer's autobiography provides the contextual background that influenced his Moroccan work in general and the earlier writings in particular.

Bowles's early Moroccan fiction abounds in illustrative instances of father and son discord. As L. D. Stewart states, "a recurrent belief that amounts almost to a fixation in Bowles's world is that the relationship between parent and child –or between an adult and a youth – is invariably destructive"⁴. This 'fixation' is due to the contextual relationship linking Bowles's literary image of Morocco to his familial context, in particular the conflicting relationships with his father.

Father and son discord is then a recurrent feature of Bowles's early image of Morocco. In 'The Hours after Noon' Paul Bowles presents childhood memories as well as parents and child difficult relationships. This short story exposes an edifying example of a gratuitous brutality towards a child. Mr Royer, a French resident in Tangier, inexplicably and repeatedly beats a young beggar: "With a suddenness and ferocity which astonished him even as he acted, he dealt it a savage blow in the face, and a fraction of a second later heard it moan. [...] In a new access of rage he stuck it again, much harder. This time it made no sound; it merely stood"⁵. The protagonist's unexpected and violent behaviour recalls Claude Bowles's. The lad, referred to as 'it', is therefore denied humanity and his 'animal moan'⁶ reduces him to an animal status, to a prey. The child's incomprehension of such an act is also evocative of young Paul Bowles's. In fact, the outcome of this prejudice is 'an unbridgeable abyss'⁷ that evokes the author's expatriation in Morocco.

¹ Paul Bowles, Without Stopping, p. 105.

² Steven E. Olson, "Alien Terrain: Paul Bowles's Filial Landscapes", in: Lawrence D. Stewart, The Illumination Of North Africa, p. 335.

³ Notable other examples are as well presented in Without Stopping, pp. 17, 20, 22, 43.

⁴ L. D. Stewart, The Illumination of North Africa, p. 58.

⁵ Paul Bowles, "The Hours After Noon", in: Collected Stories, p. 223.

⁶ Paul Bowles, "The Hours After Noon", in: Collected Stories, p. 223.

⁷ Paul Bowles, "The Hours After Noon", in: Collected Stories, p. 223.

The Spider's House also illustrates the conflict opposing Bowles to his father. In this novel, Amar, the protagonist, is flogged by his father and the discordant relationship with his father recalls Paul Bowles's¹. In the same novel, Stenham's desertion of Amar at the end symbolizes both betrayal and an irremediable fall from grace for the protagonist. Consequently, this work can be read as a stinging indictment of fathers who rob their sons of happiness. As Steven E. Olson states, it fictionalises filial and anti-patriarchal themes, the adults' betrayal of childhood as well as the destruction of childhood itself². A correlation links the filial themes of The Spider's House to Paul Bowles's account of his childhood. In this sense, this novel can as well be read as the Moroccan expression of childhood's destruction³.

While in the fatherland, the father's male authority⁴ drove Bowles to empathize with the female members of the family such as his mother and grandmother for instance. Rena, his mother, was the only person with whom he had privileged relationships. Mother and son played together like friends and communicated with each other⁵. The writer had then contrasting relations with his parents: his mother was a safeguard that alleviated the hardships inflicted by Claude Bowles to his child. Father and son conflicts can then be regarded as having triggered his expatriation whereas the constructive relation he had with his mother initiated his quest for exotic and remote country-lands like Morocco. As M. Moss claims 'it was Claude Bowles's attempt to dominate his young son's life that also led Bowles to seek out the femaleness of exotic and erotic landscapes in North Africa later in his life'⁶.

Father and son hostile relationships are therefore background elements that impelled him to exile, expatriation to Morocco being a means to secure a shelter from his father's tyranny and authority. The escape from the fatherland is thus a flight from the father's censorship, intrusion and authority. The basic constraint he suffered from when a child was a struggle for authority and 'his inability to gain control over and achieve autonomy from his father'⁷. In fact, autonomy and victory over the Father's domination were offered and secured by his lifelong expatriation in Morocco.

In this perspective, after a useless and unfair beating, Bowles clearly affirms his intention to devote his life to his father's destruction: "This was the only time my father beat me. It began a new

¹ S. O. Olson, "Alien Terrain: Paul Bowles's Filial Landscapes", in: Twentieth Century American Literature, 343.

² S. O. Olson, "Alien Terrain: Paul Bowles's Filial Landscapes", in: Twentieth Century American Literature, pp.342-348.

³ Childhood destruction is conveyed through various metaphors such as the 'victimized adolescent', the 'rebellious child' and 'travels' for instance. These metaphoric expressions will be dealt with later in this study.

⁴ In Without Stopping, the figure of the Father is described as the prototype of male domination.

⁵ Paul Bowles, Without Stopping, p. 33.

⁶ M. Moss, 'The Child in the Text', p. 318.

⁷ M. Moss, 'The Child in the Text', p. 317.

stage in the development of hostilities between us. I vowed to devote my life to his destruction, even though it meant my own- an infantile conceit, but one which continued to preoccupy me for many years”¹. The writer’s desertion of his father-country expresses the achievement of his oath. The combination of indifference and remorse Bowles felt when his parents died points to a complete physical and psychological separation: “For some reason the death of my parents diminished my unwillingness to leave Tangier; very likely the shock made itself felt by leaving me in a state of indifference. I can only deduce that I felt profoundly guilty for having excised them from my life”². Consequently, Morocco is admittedly a way to expel his Father from his life. Once his father dead, Morocco, to some extent, lost its rationale. In relation to this, Paul Bowles even changed his funeral plans: instead of having his ashes spread over the sea at Cape Spartel³ as scheduled, he requested that his body be sent back to the fatherland to be cremated there and that his ashes would be buried in Glenora, New York, with the ashes and bodies of his parents and paternal grandparents⁴. The wish to have his ashes buried besides his parents’ after his father’s death implies that his flight from America was to a great extent motivated by stormy father and child rapports. In the absence of the figure of the Father, Bowles’s original country lost its negative connotations. This new funeral plan also suggests that the death of his father actually eradicated his visceral impulse to reject anything related to the Fatherland.

Warfare with the author’s father while in America engendered in him a stifling feeling which urged him to flee from the fatherland. During one of their frequent altercations Bowles regrets his being alive: “But it is not my fault I am alive. I did not ask to be born”⁵. Consequently, his Moroccan fiction is peopled by unhappy Americans who experience conflicting relationships with their parents. In this perspective, the writer’s expatriation can be regarded as an attempt at rebirth which culminates in his mystic quest. With the passing of time, and as the writer became more involved in Moroccan culture and spirituality, America, with its different links and connotations, became remote and Morocco, along with the different mystic practices, took over. As M. Moss states, Bowles’s most important concern as a child was to shield himself from his father⁶. In this sense, the shelter the expatriate looked for in remote countries may be viewed as an attempt to seek protection from his father’s domination. Because of his inability to solve the problem of his father’s authority and his

¹ Paul Bowles, *Without Stopping*, p. 45.

² Paul Bowles, *Without Stopping*, p. 359.

³ Cape Spartel is the cape North West of Tangier.

⁴ Victoria Spencer Carr, *Paul Bowles, A Life*, pp. 128, 140-141.

⁵ Paul Bowles, *Without Stopping*, p. 105

⁶ Marilyn Moss, ‘The Child in the Text’, p. 317.

incapability to achieve autonomy he left the fatherland, and, as an ultimate attempt, adopted mysticism as a safeguard.

The writer's triumph over his father's authority and dictatorship is conveyed through his acknowledgement that his expatriation suggest that 'Morocco took over'¹. Getting to Morocco, Bowles was at the same time escaping from the fatherland and looking for a magical² place. The enchanting character the writer endows Morocco with is an expression of his regeneration. The magic and fascination that retained him in Tangier, Morocco, were basically linked to his conviction that expatriation to Morocco was an escape from the Father's stifling domination. As a matter of fact, one of the rare instances when Paul Bowles is manifestly and overtly happy was aboard the *Imérétie* II, on his way to Tangier:

On the second day at dawn I went on deck and saw the rugged line of the mountains of Algeria ahead. Straightaway I felt a great excitement; much excited.....And now, as I stood in the wind looking at the mountains ahead, I felt the stirring of the engine within, and it was as if I were drawing close to the solution of an as-yet-unposed problem. I was incredibly happy as I watched the wall of mountains slowly take on substance, but I let the happiness wash over me and asked no questions.³

The expatriate's unambiguous happiness and his total acceptance of life then suggest that Morocco was markedly an escape from the 'prison' of his fatherland, a space for rebirth. The renaissance is achieved through his mysticism and through exile in Morocco as an attempt to overwhelm his father's domination. In this context, Morocco and its specificities account for the author's revival as it triggered the pantheist⁴ mysticism that characterize the literary image of Bowles's elected country.

Indeed, Bowles's familial and cultural contexts also induced the pantheist mysticism that is basic to his Moroccan writings. The writer's New England heritage from both sides of his family was the second main influence the American context exerted on his representation of Morocco. The writer's deep and strong love of Nature in general and of Moroccan scenery and cosmos was inherited from his family's New England cultural and intellectual backgrounds. Paul Bowles's New England

¹ Paul Bowles, *Without Stopping*, p. 276.

² Paul Bowles, *Without Stopping*, p. 125.

³ Paul Bowles, *Without Stopping*, p. 125.

⁴ Pantheism involves the idea that God, or the Absolute, is identical with the cosmos. God is not distinct from the universe. Sufi mysticism may be marked by pantheistic ideas and feelings.

cultural heritage is derived from both sides of his family: Reverend Edward Green, Paul Bowles's maternal uncle, was a Unitarian minister in Exeter, his paternal grandfather, Fredericks Bowles and Aunt Mary Robbins, his grandfather's sister, had Transcendental affinities. For instance, Mary, his paternal aunt, organized a Transcendentalist Center at the house¹. Further, his paternal grandmother introduced him to theosophy² and Rena Weinewisser, his mother, also had in spiritual affinities.

Emerson's Transcendental philosophy was at the core of Bowles's cultural and intellectual conditioning. Actually, he was influenced by the theosophy of his grandmother which was close to Emersonian Transcendentalism and by his uncle Edward's Transcendental affinities. In Without Stopping the writer relates that his uncle Edwards offered him Emerson's essays and that he read them with pleasure³, which points to his intellectual exposure to Emerson's Transcendentalism as well as to his acute receptivity to Nature and to cosmic elements.

The author's overwhelming fascination and love for Moroccan Nature and scenery is embedded in the family's intellectual and cultural background. The writer's spiritual heritage is thus literally epitomized in a letter Paul Bowles sent to Virgil Thomson⁴:

I have been back for ten days with aunts and relatives, back in the accustomed mist of Besant, Leadbetter, Krishnamurti, Prince Mozundar, Nirvana, Life, omniscience, the Oneness, the partless Brahm, Blavatsky, Karessa, clouds and darkness and Karma, the Master and Truth, Truth, Truth, Truth. Everyone agreed that I had had a spiritual awakening, and so did I and brought out the Koran to prove it⁵.

The enumeration of spiritual attitudes and philosophies presents a focal importance. It denotes the writer's familial interest in theosophy and theology, illustrates his early awareness in different spiritualities, and presages his later pantheist mysticism and interest in Moroccan spirituality. In short, it underlines the author's basic and precocious mystical involvement in life and in his Moroccan work. Besides, the reference to the Koran as a signal of his further mystical development is invested with particular connotations in the context of a pantheist mysticism and Moroccan

¹ Cf Without Stopping, pp. 62-63.

² Cf Without Stopping, pp. 13, 14, 62-64.

³ Cf Without Stopping, p. 53-54.

⁴ Virgil Thompson, a composer and music critic, was Paul Bowles's friend.

⁵ Paul Bowles, Letters, p. 122. In this letter, Paul Bowles refers to his exposition to 'spirituality' when he visited Krishnamurti in Eerden (Holland) and when he met Soares, his disciple, in Paris. Krishnamurti (1895-1986) was the advocate and speaker for different philosophical and spiritual attitudes. Cf Paul Bowles, Without Stopping, p. 144 and Virginia Spencer Carr, Paul Bowles: a Life, pp. 72, 75, 82-83.

spirituality: it demonstrates that Bowles was already aware that the Koran entails mystical perceptions as emphasized by Ibn-al-Arabi's Pantheism.

Accordingly, the utter love and attraction for Moroccan Nature Paul Bowles displays in his image of Morocco is an upshot of his family New England and Transcendental background. The characteristic New England rapport to Nature infused and triggered Paul Bowles's fascination by Nature and by cosmic elements. Basically, the spectre of the different nuances of the Moroccan light, the desert¹, the sea, the sun, or the Moroccan sky in all its shades of blue are the object of Paul Bowles's absorption.

A common point links Paul Bowles's New England background and its Transcendental inclinations to his existentialism. For instance, in Without Stopping, he associates his existential awareness with a sensory, sensitive and admiring perception of Nature:

I sat on the swing under one of the giant maples, bathing in the smells and sounds of a summer afternoon in Massachusetts. [...] Then a clock in the house struck four. It began all over again, I am I, it is now, and I am here. The swing moved a little, and I saw the green depths of maple leaves and, farther out, the unbelievably blue sky².

This experience associates a pristine experience of being with a sensory and admiring view of Nature. As such, it foretells Bowles's subsequent fascination with Moroccan scenery and cosmic beauty. The writer's Pantheist appeal by Moroccan Nature and cosmos is thus indebted to a large degree to his familial cultural context.

The writer's instances of primal existence on the one hand and the Transcendental awareness of Nature also account for the mystical existentialism he inherited from his family's intellectual heritage which, to a certain extent, shapes his image of Morocco. On the basis of his familial and cultural conditioning, the correlation between Nature and an existential primal awareness can be regarded a contextual influence that subtends Paul Bowles's Pantheist approach to Moroccan Nature. Bowles found then in Morocco and in Pantheism a counterpart of his familial cultural heritage.

The Moroccan Context

¹ In this respect, the essay 'Baptism of Solitude' is Paul Bowles's compelling literary expression of the Sahara. Cf 'Baptism of Solitude', in: Their Heads are Green and their Hands are Blue, pp. 128-129.

² Paul Bowles, Without Stopping, p. 10.

In *Without Stopping*, Paul Bowles underscores his triumphal arrival to Morocco: relating his landing in Tangier, he asserts that ‘Morocco took over’¹, which implies that the host country gained control over Bowles’s life and destiny. His positive frame of mind at his coming back in Morocco is also described as ‘a state of perpetual excitement’². The exhilaration Bowles experienced when he disembarked in Morocco denotes his joy at having succeeded in setting an ‘abyss’ between him and his father.

From Bowles’s exile onwards Morocco notably coloured and shaped his writings. As Brian Edwards puts forward, ‘Bowles didn’t invent Morocco—he lived there and was affected by it’³. The Moroccan context radically affected his life and work until the eighties and nineties, that is, until the period when his gradual mystical immersion started decreasing the contextual influence and driving him aloof from the Moroccan background.

Tangier

Tangier⁴ is granted a special place in Bowles’s Moroccan work. It actually is his real Moroccan home from the beginning of his expatriation in 1947 until his death in 1999. It is the writer’s s elected abode and ‘dream city [...].in the strict sense’⁵. This Moroccan city attracted him for its ‘prototypal dream scenes’ composed of corridors, hidden terraces, and dark impasses, for its violent and languorous weather and for its ‘August wind that hissed in the palms and rocked the eucalyptus trees’⁶. This description of the writer’s chosen city presents characteristic elements of his favoured settings: a secret topography, a constant sunshine and blue sky as well as a calm and windy weather. This North African city was also endowed with a climate and natural environment that suited the writer’s expectations in Morocco. For instance, in an interview⁷, he praised the wonderful sun that shined everyday there. He also significantly praised Tangier’s weather and sun: “the heat here is like that of a Turkish bath. It is utterly delightful, and it is permanent [...].steady, hot, dry

¹ Paul Bowles, *Without Stopping*, p. 276.

² Paul Bowles, *Without Stopping*, p. 277.

³ Brian Edwards, ‘Desert of Memory’, Internet essay, 10.20.2000.

⁴ Morocco and its specificities shape and mark Paul Bowles’s image of his chosen country as a whole. The contextual Moroccan influence on the image is mainly studied here through the forceful contextual impact the city of Tangier exerted on the author and his Moroccan literary production. Tangier, as his elected home, triggered the writer’s definite expatriation and is the context that elicited Paul Bowles’s most significant facets of his literary representation of Morocco.

⁵ Paul Bowles, *Without Stopping*, p. 128.

⁶ Paul Bowles, *Without Stopping*, pp. 128-129.

⁷ Oliver Evans, “An Interview with Paul Bowles”, *Mediterranean Review*, 1, (Winter 1971), p. 8.

weather, with a sun that burns a white hole in the ultramarine sky, with a moon that is like the sun when it is full'¹.

From the very beginning of his self-imposed exile, the author confesses that the North African capital is the place where he 'feels more comfortable than anywhere else'². After having travelled throughout Europe, Asia, South America, Bowles settled in Tangier. No logical rationale supports his choice of Tangier; he himself does not explain his forceful attraction by this city: 'I did not choose to live in Tangier permanently, it happened'³. Choosing Tangier was to be the most fateful decision of his life. At the beginning of his expatriation, a sort of a visceral bond linked him to his chosen home. This link later developed in such a way as Tangier became the womb and setting of his mystic practices and quest. Tangier therefore represents a macrocosm of the major elements and central of his representation of Morocco. These factors attracted and, more importantly, retained Bowles in the sheltering country.

Tangier, as the writer's chosen home, constitutes then an influential context of his literary representation of Morocco. He had felt a very strong appeal to this city even before he settled down in it. In the preface of Let it Come Down, the author confesses that the mere view of Tangier from the freighter on his way to Ceylon urged in him 'an unreasoning and powerful desire to be in Tangier'⁴. This attraction was the 'psychological' starting point of this novel, but, in a sense, it also marks Paul Bowles's final expatriation in Morocco because, as he asserts while recalling Kafka's aphorism, '*from a certain point onward there is no longer any turning back. That is the point that must be reached*'⁵.

This appeal was first due to the fact that Tangier 'has been touched by fewer of the negative aspects of contemporary civilization than most cities of its size'⁶ and constitutes, as the concluding lines of Without Stopping show, a sort of buffer against modern civilization⁷. Tangier, 'a doll's

¹ From a letter written by Paul Bowles to Daniel Burns and quoted by Lawrence D. Stewart, The Illumination of North Africa, p. 16.

² Quoted by Christopher Sawyer Lauçanno, in: 'Aspects of Self: A Bowles Collage', Twentieth Century Literature, Paul Bowles Issue, p. 260.

³ Paul Bowles, Without Stopping, p. 366.

⁴ Paul Bowles, Let It Come Down, p. 7.

⁵ Paul Bowles, Let It Come Down, p. 8.

⁶ Paul Bowles, Without Stopping, p. 366.

This viewpoint also calls attention to the post WWII contextual influence since Paul Bowles's exile in Tangier is then an escape from contemporary civilization.

⁷ Among the features of Tangier that pleased was that "Tangier had not yet entered the dirty era of automotive traffic" and that "the radio had not yet entered Morocco". Without Stopping, p.129.

metropolis'¹, also attracted him because of its stationary status² that differs from the American one. Accordingly, the writer's definite exile in Tangier might be considered as partly due to his awareness of the extent to which the world had worsened³.

In the same perspective, Tangier also embodied a counterpoint to western places. In an interview with Oleg Kerensky⁴ Bowles confessed that even in 1986⁵, he still found Tangier a fascinating city mainly because of its unpredictability, because nobody knows what will happen next. This assertion points to his attraction to the unknown, to the new and unusual, as well as to his aversion of and escape from the strict and monotonous way of life of his fatherland. The charm that retained the American expatriate in that North African city was to a great extent due to its predominant pastoral character which the writer highlights in an interview with Oliver Evans:

Yes, it's wonderful that here there are those little- what shall I call them? –rocks in the brook that just stay there while everything else rushes by them in the water, people who just stand or sit all day while time goes by and people go by. That's the proof that life goes on, somehow, whereas in New York there isn't any proof. It's all going by, nothing going on⁶.

On the whole, Bowles's choice of Tangier was effectively sub-tended by an intense fascination. In a letter to Gertrude Stein, who first advised him to go to Tangier⁷, the expatriate expresses his frank attraction by this city: 'We are completely taken by Tangier'⁸. This appeal was felt as quite definitive, as the author emphasized again: "Beginning with the first day and continuing through all the years I have spent in Tangier, I have loved the white city that sits astride its hills, looking out across the strait of Gibraltar to the mountains of Andalusia"⁹.

Tangier was thus his magic and dream city¹⁰. At the beginning of his residence, the author depicts it as an idyllic place:

¹ Paul Bowles, *Without Stopping*, p. 129.

² Paul Bowles, *Without Stopping*, p. 129.

³ Paul Bowles, *Without Stopping*, p. 366.

⁴ cf. Oleg Kerensky, "Aspects of Self: A Bowles Collage", in *Twentieth Century Literature*, p. 266

⁵ Year when the interview was given.

⁶ Oliver Evans, 'An Interview with Paul Bowles', p. 8.

⁷ Paul Bowles, *Without Stopping*, p. 123.

⁸ Cf L.D. Stewart, *The Illumination of North Africa*, p. 14.

⁹ Paul Bowles, 'The Worlds of Tangier', *Holiday* 23, March 1958, p. 66.

¹⁰ Paul Bowles, *Without Stopping*, p. 128.

If I said that Tangier struck me as a dream city, I should mean it in the strict sense. Its topography was rich in prototypical dream scenes: covered streets like corridors with doors opening into rooms on each side, hidden terraces high above the sea, streets consisting only of steps, dark impasses, small squares built on sloping terrain so that they looked like ballet sets [...] ; as well as the classical dream equipment of tunnels, ramparts, ruins, dungeons, and cliffs¹.

As Marilyn Moss put it, he chose Tangier for its dreamlike attraction and the magic of its streets².

The weather of Tangier and its natural environment also played an important part in the magnetism this city exerted on Paul Bowles. In fact, in his laudatory depictions, the writer combines the physical description of the city itself with its natural environment. For instance, natural elements are presented as part and parcel of the city: “The climate was both violent and languorous. The August wind hissed³ in the palms and rocked the eucalyptus trees and rattled the canebrakes that bordered the streets”⁴. Natural elements such as the sun, the moon and the heat are also appreciatively quoted: “The sun is always wonderful. And it always shines all day”⁵. The heat and the moon are similarly praised: “There is never any objectionable let-up that makes one so conscious of it all when it returns. Steady, hot, dry weather, with a sun that burns a white hole in the ultramarine sky, with a moon that is like the sun when it is full”⁶.

The strong harmony linking these cosmic elements, in addition to the role Nature played in Paul Bowles’s appeal to Tangier, already recalled the mystic concept of Unity of Existence. The context of Tangier can then be viewed as the first step of the author’s mystic quest in Morocco. The bases of the writer’s mysticism were then acutely laid as soon as he established himself in Tangier, which points to the contextual influence of that city.

In fact, Bowles sets a direct link between the land, North Africa, and an inner instinctive surge: “Straightaway I felt a great excitement; much excited; it was as if some interior mechanism

¹ Paul Bowles, *Without Stopping*, p. 128. We should note here that the writer’s attraction by dark and closed spots already foretell his later mystic quest in Morocco as well as his subsequent search for shelter.

² Marilyn Moss, “The Child in the Text”, p. 327.

³ The connotations of the hissing of snakes evoke the writer’s treatment of animal legends and metamorphoses.

⁴ Paul Bowles, *Without Stopping*, p. 129.

⁵ Quoted by L. D. Stewart, *The Illumination of North Africa*, p. 16 from the Gertrude Stein Collection, the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University Library.

⁶ Quoted by L. D. Stewart, *The Illumination of North Africa*, p. 16 from Paul Bowles Collection, Humanities Research Center, The University of Texas at Austin.

had been set in motion by the sight of the approaching land”¹. The magical bond that related him to that land is characterized as ‘direct’ and ‘visceral’², which imparts a ‘womblike’³ dimension to the writer’s main destination during that trip, that is, Tangier, Morocco. The ‘visceral’ link and, so, the primordial dimension Paul Bowles grants the African land point to Morocco as a sheltering mother-country.

During his crossing to Tangier, the view of North Africa made the expatriate to depict the land as a magic place and as a springboard for happiness:

Always without formulating the concept, I had based my sense of being in the world partly on an unreasoned conviction that certain areas of the earth’s surface contained more magic than others [...]. I was incredibly happy as I watched the wall of mountains slowly take on substance, but I let the happiness wash over me and asked no questions⁴.

The author’s intuition and the reference to magic grant his host country a certain supernatural character in keeping with his mystic quest. Magic, that is, the ‘secret connection between the world of nature and the consciousness of man’⁵ recalls Ibn-al- Arabi’s mystic concept of the Unity of Existence.

In the same sense, the link the author sets between magic on the one hand and wisdom, ecstasy and death on the other prefigures his spiritual course until his death in Tangier; besides, the reference to ecstasy also foretells the mystic practices of trance he fictionalised in his Moroccan writings. In relation to the contextual influence of Tangier as it relates to his mystic quest in Morocco, Paul Bowles stresses the harmony associating the dreamlike characteristic of Tangier to the sound of muezzins⁶ and to the Muslims’ glorification of Allah: “I hear the drums and incorporate them into my dream, like the nightly cries of the muezzins. Even if in the dream I am in New York, the first *Allah akbar!* effaces the backdrop and carries whatever comes next to North Africa, and the dream goes on”⁷. The mystic connotations allotted to Tangier point to its contextual influence in the image.

¹ Paul Bowles, *Without Stopping*, p. 125.

² Paul Bowles, *Without Stopping*, p. 125.

³ In the sense of a space enclosing something, especially when it is warm and sheltering.

⁴ Paul Bowles, *Without Stopping*, p. 125.

⁵ Paul Bowles, *Without Stopping*, p. 125.

⁶ The muezzin is the call for prayers in the mosque.

⁷ Paul Bowles, *Without Stopping*, p. 366.

In addition to this, Tangier accounts for the liberal and the cosmopolite facet of Paul Bowles's image of Morocco during the period when the North African city was an International Zone. A marked liberalism was a feature of the city of Tangier during the fifties and the international decades. Tangier's political, social, and economical "ouverture" at that time engendered a liberal atmosphere. It was liberalism in the sense of a lack of social constraints, obligations, and a laxity in manners and way of life. It took the form of drugs and alcohol addiction as well as sexual deviations, and prevailed chiefly in the cosmopolitan community of Tangier.

Tangier's liberal and cosmopolitan ambiance influenced to a certain extent the fiction of Paul Bowles and mostly constitutes the social background of Let it Come Down, Paul Bowles's first novel set in and about life in Tangier during the International Zone. Even if it was published in 1952, that is, after the end of the International era, the novel, 'like a photograph, is a document relating to a specific place at a given point in time, illuminated by the light of that particular moment'¹. Consequently, it portrays some features of the city at that moment, such as an extreme liberalism, a permissive atmosphere, an unlimited drug and alcohol consumption and corruption²; Daisy³, a representative of the European community, embodies the characteristic permissiveness of that era. Besides, Tangier in this context is described as a 'complete, utter madhouse'⁴ and a mysterious city⁵, which corresponds to the actual state of affairs that prevailed in Tangier at that time.

In this same novel, Bowles's treatment of the International Zone Tangier is at the same time a faithful and revealing picture of the author's judgment. His ironical descriptions of the vain mundane European parties during which Moroccans were only appreciated for their 'picturesque' connotations as well as his straight criticisms of corruption illustrate the author's self and preferences. For example, in Let it Come Down, Richard Holland, Bowles's mouthpiece⁶ compares Tangier to New York, describing it as a model of corruption⁷ and stating that both cities are peopled by smugglers

¹ Paul Bowles, Let It Come Down, p. 7.

² Cf Paul Bowles, Let It Come Down, pp. 26, 87, 121-122.

³ Paul Bowles, Let It Come Down, p. 26.

⁴ Paul Bowles, Let It Come Down, p. 29.

⁵ Paul Bowles, Let It Come Down, p. 33.

⁶ In Let it Come Down, p.9, Paul Bowles specifies that Richard Holland is a caricature of himself. In spite of this denigration, the author's attraction by Tangier in the fifties may partly be due to the city's rural and simple character, since, in the same novel, Eunice Good, avows that 'Tangier has no urban culture, no pain' (p. 59,) which evokes Paul Bowles's refusal of Post WWII American urbanisation.

⁷ Paul Bowles, Let It Come Down, pp. 121-122.

and robbers of all kinds¹. This statement denotes the author's criticism of the atmosphere that prevailed in the North African city during that International period.

Tangier also constitutes the background of many short stories. In Midnight Mass for instance, there is a quite realistic description of the social atmosphere and the lack of communication that prevailed when Tangier was an International Zone: the characters who mostly belong to pseudo-artistic spheres have a superficial discourse and delight only in alcohol drinking, as if they - Moroccan and European alike - wanted to forget and escape from something, either their self or their condition or whatever they aspire to rub out from their consciousness. The author describes the western people as if they were actors, probably to suggest the superficiality of their lives and the incoherence of their conduct. In this sense, Bowles, to the same end, presents, still in the same story, three Muslims, an atheist and a Hindu attending a midnight mass which should essentially be taken care of by Christian believers.

Tangier, as an influential context, is also present in Bowles's other Moroccan writings such as the short stories 'Tea on the Mountain' or 'A Thousand Days for Mokhtar'. The impact of Tangier fades out as his mystical quest and immersion developed. Paul Bowles's general image of Morocco presents a gradual shift from Tangier's social atmosphere and urban settings to more desert, desolate and austere locales which are more in keeping with his mysticism.

Bowles's responsiveness to Tangier, its magical character and the beauty of its Natural environment are then contextual factors that motivated for the writer's definite expatriation and account for his laudatory approach to Moroccan Nature and cosmos. The initial appeal of Tangier foreshadows the author's later pantheist mysticism.

On the whole, Bowles's Morocco is indebted to the combined outcomes of different contextual influences. On that account, the author's literary Morocco is the end result of the combined contextual influences in addition to the mystical specificities of his elected country and to his utter absorption by the Moroccan cosmic elements. The synthesis of these main influences generated the pantheist and mystical character of Bowles's view of his chosen country.

¹ Paul Bowles, Let It Come Down, p.121.

Chapter II: Autobiographical cohesion and centrality in Paul Bowles's image of Morocco

This chapter presents the autobiographical cohesion and centrality of Paul Bowles's image of Morocco. On the basis of James Olney's theory of autobiography, cohesion underlies the image of Morocco, relates it to the author's self, life and unconscious and accounts for the centrality of Bowles's self as it appears in the image of Morocco.

In this perspective, Bowles's literary Morocco is the outcome of his unconsciously selective mind. Accordingly, the validity and truth of the image also results from the 'significant negligences' that characterize the writer's image of Morocco and that are due to truth as subservient to self and subjectivity. Finally, cohesion and centrality also account for the various reasons why Morocco became his sheltering country in the context of his mystic quest.

The distinction between autobiography and fiction is a very tenuous one, since, as Louis A. Renza contends, "autobiography is the writer's de facto attempt to elucidate his present rather than his past. [...]. Any first-person narrative-of-a-life that necessarily seems to re-present the author's own mental experiences at the time of writing could be termed autobiographical and/or fictive".¹ In the same sense, R. Barthes links autobiography and fiction when, in the opening epigraph of Roland Barthes, he specifies that its content should be considered as narrated by a character of fiction. R. Barthes's statement complies with the above mentioned statement by Louis A. Renza and equates autobiography, self-analysis and fiction. Further, in Roland Barthes, Michael Moriarty as well connects autobiography to fiction².

Accordingly, the image of Morocco in Bowles's non-fiction and fiction writings presents two biographic and complementary selves. In fact, the writer himself rubs the limits between fiction and autobiography in the preface of Let it Come Down: to introduce his novel, he contextualizes it in time, space, and underlines that the characters were real, which sets this novel as presenting real, hence, autobiographical aspects of his life. So, Paul Bowles's whole work can be considered as

¹ Louis A. Renza, "A Theory of Autobiography", in: *Autobiography, Essays Theoretical and Critical*, J. Olney (ed.), p.271-272.

² In Roland Barthes, p. 173, Louis Moriarty links autobiography to fiction and asserts that "Roland Barthes par Roland Barthes is rather the exploration of identity as fiction, which is worth it simply for the pleasure it produces. ... The text is sometimes referred to as Barthes's autobiography. And it is partly composed of references from his life (...). But equally the text tells us that it should all be viewed as the utterance of a character in a novel or of many such characters (RB 123/119).

autobiographical, even if he himself rejected as ‘self-indulgence to write about one’s own life and one’s own childhood’¹ and so, sets a limit between fiction and autobiography.

Given the close relationships existing between Bowles’s life and work, the writer’s literary creation as a whole can be regarded as presenting an autobiographical dimension. As J. Olney’s states, “all writing that aspires to be literature is autobiography and nothing else.”² In his seminal article, “A Theory of Autobiography”, he also asserts that a writer’s final work

will express and reflect its maker and will do so at every stage of his development in articulating the whole work. To turn the matter round, a man’s lifework is his fullest autobiography and, he being what he is and where and when he is, neither the lifework nor the autobiography could be otherwise³.

On the basis of this assertion, Bowles’s Moroccan work as a whole is autobiographical. It encompasses the expatriate’s entire work and involves an autobiographical impulse or dimension as well as the writer’s biography, individuality and unconscious. So, the image of Bowles’s chosen country is originating from his self and unconscious and is, as well, reflective of his life.

The representation of Morocco can therefore be considered as more revealing of the writer’s life and person than of his adopted country. Thus, even Bowles’s works of fiction, which constitute the bulk of his Moroccan literary creation, are to be viewed as presenting autobiographical elements.

Autobiographical cohesion in the image of Morocco

The image of Morocco is the literary metaphor of the author’s self and biography. It is at the same time grounded in the writer’s past and mirrors the author’s life in Morocco.

Even if the writer’s literary production as a whole has an autobiographical dimension, Bowles’s autobiographies can be considered as a “magnifying lens”⁴ that highlights all that was relevant enough to the writer to be dealt with creatively. As J. Olney additionally states, it is also the “symptomatic key to all else that he did and, naturally, to all that he was”.⁵ They are images of his

¹ Quoted by L.D.Stewart in “Paul Bowles and ‘The Frozen Fields’ of Vision”, 17-21 and 27, from a taped conversation with the author in Santa Monica, California, Jan. 1969.

² J. Olney, “Autobiography and the Cultural moment”, in: *Autobiography, Essays Theoretical and Critical*, p. 4.

³ J. Olney, *Metaphors of Self, The Meaning of Autobiography*, p. 3.

⁴ J. Olney, *Metaphors of Self, The Meaning of Autobiography*, p. 3.

⁵ J. Olney, *Metaphors of Self, The Meaning of Autobiography*, p. 4.

life in Morocco putting forward his present self-identity¹. The image of Morocco as it is presented is therefore the author's own mirror-image².

A certain cohesion links Bowles's biography and self. The text takes on a life of its own since it is the combined product of the author's self and life. As such, it is the literary expression of the writer's self 'dissolved' in the text:

Here is where the act of writing - the third element of autobiography- assumes its true importance: it is through that act that the self and the life, complexly intertwined and entangled, take on a certain form, assume a particular shape and image, and endlessly reflect that image back and forth between themselves as between two mirrors³.

Mediating between the self and life, Bowles's text⁴ and the image of Morocco he presents in it are then the image-reflect of the author's life and self. In this perspective, the analysis of the literary representation of Morocco will involve the examination of his way of life, his personal knowledge of the Moroccan dialect, of the Moroccan traditions and way of life, of the Moroccan cultural life as well as his relationship with the Moroccan people. In fact, the writer himself, referring to the way he wrote Let It Come Down, acknowledges that the text serves "as an umbilical cord between me and the novel before I landed in an unfamiliar place".

Bowles published Without Stopping, an autobiography, and a journal, Two Years Beside the Strait, in which, to take up G. Gusdorf's definition of autobiography, he "[...] gives himself the job of narrating his own history; what he sets out to do is to reassemble the scattered elements of his individual life and to regroup them in a comprehensive sketch"⁵. These autobiographical writings present glimpses of Morocco which are mirrors reflecting the author's own image.⁶ Paul Bowles's life parallels, to some extent, the image of Morocco he presents in his autobiographical writings as

¹ J. Olney, Metaphors of Self, The Meaning of Autobiography p. 271.

² J. Olney, Metaphors of Self, The Meaning of Autobiography, p. 4. In Autobiography, Essays Theoretical and Critical, p. 22, J. Olney also emphasizes the importance of the act of writing as it relates to the revelation of the self: "Here is where the act of writing- the third element of autobiography- assumes its true importance: it is through that act that the self and the life, complexly intertwined and entangled, take on a certain form, assume a particular shape and image, and endlessly reflect that image back and forth between themselves as between two mirrors".

A constructive and complete approach is then to combine this autobiographical approach with Lacan's theory of the mirror stage. This facet is the subject of chapter two of this investigation.

³ J. Olney, Metaphors of Self, The Meaning of Autobiography, p. 22.

⁴ On the basis of Olney's and Gusdorf's definitions of autobiography and literary creation, no distinction is made between Bowles's autobiographical works and his writings of fiction.

⁵ G. Gusdorf, "Conditions and Limits of Autobiography", in: J. Olney (ed), Autobiography, essays Theoretical and Critical, p. 35.

⁶ G. Gusdorf, "Conditions and Limits of Autobiography", in: J. Olney (ed), Autobiography, essays Theoretical and Critical, p. 33.

well as in his fiction. Some of Paul Bowles's short stories are 'autobiographical', in the sense that they are inspired from 'private memories'¹. This is the case of 'By the Water', which, according to its author, is 'a synthesis of memories'².

The correlation between Bowles's life and his Moroccan writings can as well be noted in his passion for travels. Before his quite definite expatriation in Tangier the writer was an inveterate traveller. His eagerness for voyages can be traced back to his childhood when he used to draw maps of imaginary spots in notebooks. In Without Stopping, the author acknowledges that when young he considered his grandfather's itinerant years as the 'perfect life'³. Similarly, he also relates that one of his distractions was the invention of imaginary place-names that he used to consider as stations on an imaginary railway and for which he used to draw maps and set up timetables⁴. This activity was recurrent and he mentally began to 'travel' outside his fatherland and to extend his imaginary world to 'a planet with landmasses and seas'⁵. The invented places and continents were given alien and exotic names such as 'El Apepal, Zaganokworld, or Araplaina'⁶ which already reflect Paul Bowles's attraction by the exotic and the unknown; others unreal locales were assigned names such as 'Snake-spiderville or Hiss'⁷ that foretell the writer's later use of animals in his Moroccan fiction. At the age of eight, he also imagined a fictitious world and a newspaper featuring sea trips to invented places such as 'Cape Catoche'⁸. In the same way, he used to get lost in the contemplation of the maps of a heavy loose-leaf-atlas⁹.

Bowles's excitement in his first contact with his adopted country illustrates and recalls his longing for unknown and exotic places as a child. The seeds of Bowles's enthusiasm in discovering Morocco were already present in his passion while exploring imaginary unknown spots in his homeland. In this sense he reveals in Without Stopping that 'the excitement inherent in exploring an unknown terrain was big enough to keep me fully occupied'¹⁰.

Bowles's invented cosmos as well as his impulse towards the discovery of new places filled up the void that characterized his childhood and partly explains his quite lifelong expatriation in

¹ Lawrence D. Stewart, The Illumination of North Africa, p. 26.

² Paul Bowles's tape conversation with L.D. Stewart, quoted in The Illumination of North Africa, p. 26.

³ Paul Bowles, Without Stopping, p. 19.

⁴ Paul Bowles, Without Stopping, p. 20.

⁵ Paul Bowles, Without Stopping, p. 26.

⁶ Paul Bowles, Without Stopping, p. 27.

⁷ Paul Bowles, Without Stopping, p. 27.

⁸ Paul Bowles, Without Stopping, p. 34.

⁹ Cf Paul Bowles, Without Stopping, pp. 34,35.

¹⁰ Paul Bowles, Without Stopping, p. 52.

Morocco, in that this adopted country comes to represent an alternative to and a counterpart of these imaginary journeys¹. His life experience concretizes such dreams and longings that then permeate his aesthetic visions. The North African realm is therefore the ‘written’² realization of the invented cosmos. Bowles’s adopted country fulfils then his childhood dreams of escape and life in exotic countries. These aspirations perhaps inspired his expatriation and are, subsequently, reflected in the writer’s image of Morocco.

On another level, the unpleasant atmosphere at home was one of the triggers that led Bowles to the North African country. The first two chapters of *Without Stopping* present the account of the different frustrations³ he suffered from as a child in his fatherland. As a matter of fact, the author acknowledges that he was reluctant to live in his parents’ beautiful new house simply because his ‘Mother and Daddy would be there’⁴. In this context, an unjust spanking by his father strengthened Paul Bowles’s hard feelings: “It began a new stage in the development of hostilities between us. I vowed to devote my life to his destruction, even though it meant my own – an infantile conceit, but one which continued to preoccupy me for many years”⁵. The exile to Morocco meant then an escape from the stifling family atmosphere and was a means to put a distance between him and his parents. In fact, Bowles explicitly admits that Morocco would be a flight from this context: “the trip to Morocco would be a rest, a lark, a one-summer stand. The idea suited my overall desire, that of getting as far away as possible from New York.”⁶

The year 1929 marks the fulfilment of his desire and the beginning of his repeated travels and lifelong expatriation in the elected country. At the age of nineteen he ‘escaped’⁷ for Europe without telling his parents. After a brief stay in Paris he came back to New York to leave it for Paris again shortly after. On the suggestion of Gertrude Stein, Paul Bowles went to Tangier in 1931 and it was the beginning of his long-term fascination with Morocco. Tangier counteracted the austere and leaden ambiance he was used to in the fatherland. Paul Bowles’s very first impression of Tangier was that he ‘would never tire of watching Moroccans play their part’⁸. In actual fact, the writer characterizes Tangier as a ‘dream city, [...] in the strict sense’⁹. He also sets a close relationship

¹ Cf Paul Bowles, *Without Stopping*, p. 46.

² Paul Bowles, *Without Stopping*, pp.52, 53.

³ Paul Bowles, *Without Stopping*, p.61.

⁴ Paul Bowles, *Without Stopping*, p. 25.

⁵ Paul Bowles, *Without Stopping*, p. 45.

⁶ Paul Bowles, *Without Stopping*, p. 124.

⁷ Paul Bowles, *Without Stopping*, p. 78.

⁸ Paul Bowles, *Without Stopping*, p. 127.

⁹ Paul Bowles, *Without Stopping*, p. 128.

between the topography and the ‘prototypical dream scenes’¹ of this North African city and the maze of the trips and cities he used to fantasize when a child. At his arrival in Morocco, he found in Tangier, Morocco, the magic and exotic place he was dreaming of as a child:

Straightway I felt a great excitement; much excited; it was as if a secret mechanism had been set in motion by the sight of the approaching land. Always without formulating the concept, I had based my sense of being in the world partly on an unreasoned conviction that certain areas of the earth’s surface contained more magic than others.²

The intense feelings and the instinctive bond Paul Bowles experienced at his arrival to North Africa basically suggest that Morocco already fulfilled the longings he lived through as a child and prefigured the mystic tie that bound him to his adopted country in his later years. In fact, the author actually indicates that this connection was ‘direct’ and “equivalent to ‘visceral’³, adjective which evokes the intuitive surge that will lead him to his later mysticism.

In addition to Tangier, the exoticism of the Moroccan city of Fez also generated in Bowles an enthusiasm that was so strong that it became ‘unbearable’⁴. This was subsequent to his feeling that he had ‘at last left the world behind’⁵. The contact with Fez is thus presented as the separation from the original country he longed for.

The author had already experienced the same excitement in discovering exotic new places; during an excursion with his father’s friend on the beach at Napeague he writes that “For me there were sandy paths through the wilderness of beach plum and scrub oak. The excitement inherent in exploring an unknown terrain was big enough to keep me fully occupied”⁶. Fez therefore duplicated the writer’s rare pleasurable moments in the fatherland. Bowles’s experience in Fez also put an end to his usual sheltering practice of ‘invisibility’ to be unnoticed by his family members and more precisely by his father: “Even with my past experience of pretending not to exist, I could not do it in Morocco”⁷. Through Fez, Morocco can then be considered as the trigger of a kind of revival and the

¹ Paul Bowles, *Without Stopping*, p. 128.

² Paul Bowles, *Without Stopping*, p. 125.

³ Paul Bowles, *Without Stopping*, p. 124.

⁴ Paul Bowles, *Without Stopping*, p. 130.

⁵ Paul Bowles, *Without Stopping*, p. 130.

⁶ Paul Bowles, *Without Stopping*, p. 52.

⁷ Paul Bowles, *Without Stopping*, p. 131.

starting point of his existence, since, as he states, Fez, elicited Bowles's renaissance and the 'existence' that was denied to him in his original country.

After these first encounters, the expatriate travelled relentlessly from Tangier to other Moroccan cities and to desert and remote parts. Most of the Moroccan cities and areas that constitute the geographical background of the image share the same characteristics. The basic cohesion linking the different Moroccan cities and regions of the image basically accounts for the writer's journey and for his attraction by exotic and unknown spaces that suit his aspirations at freedom, exoticism, revival and that also provide him with the contexts and favourable conditions to fulfil his mystic quest in the chosen country. The writer's itinerary composes thus the geographical 'canvas' of the image of Morocco that mirrors his aspirations and quest in Morocco. The autobiographical cohesion linking Morocco to Bowles's life is therefore articulated around the recurrence of themes that denote his yearnings as a child and his aspirations in the elected country.

The author's passion for travels is also notable in his characters who, as psychic agencies, are mostly expatriates; like the author, they expect from Morocco the fulfilment of their quest. For instance, Let It Come Down is the story of Nelson Dyar's stay and experience in Tangier. This young American bank clerk hopes that his stay in Tangier will push him into existence and liberate him from the depressing sensation of motionlessness he suffered from while in America. In the same way, The Spider's House fictionalizes John Stenham's Moroccan portion of life in Fez in the hope of saving and asserting his 'existence'. The course of these characters' life and goal in Morocco parallels the author's since, as Bowles suggest in Without Stopping, his first contact with Morocco put an end to his invisibility and 'nonexistence'¹. It was therefore the beginning of his existence, a sort of rebirth that will ultimately find its complete expression in mysticism.

Parents and child relationships in Paul Bowles's Moroccan writing additionally present an autobiographical dimension in the sense that they recall the writer's own rapport with his parents in America. Frustrating and devastating parents' behaviour is a recurrent and basic facet of the expatriate's image of Morocco. For example, from the beginning of Let It Come Down, Dyar expresses his contempt for his parents and their lack of comprehension: "He was polite with them but inwardly contemptuous. It was so clear that they could never understand the emptiness he felt, nor

¹ Paul Bowles, Without Stopping, p. 52.

realize the degree to which he felt it”¹. This state of mind recalls the writer’s distress resulting from his parents’ incomprehension².

The autobiographical facet of Paul Bowles’s unconscious in the image

Michael Sprinkler’s view of autobiography sets a very close relationship between the writings and their author: “The origin and the end of autobiography converge in the very act of writing, [...], for no autobiography can take place except within the boundaries of a writing where concepts of subject, self, and author collapse into the act of producing a text”³. Sprinkler’s view is relevant to Paul Bowles’s literary image of Morocco since it mirrors some aspects of the author’s self and life that are, to use Sprinkler’s expression, buried in his unconscious⁴.

In this perspective, the image is also the outcome of the combined effects of characters, settings and themes. In Paul Bowles’s work, characters are not subservient to the plot, which meets R. Barthes’ point in *S/Z* that characters have narrative properties⁵. Concerning the characters’ moral profile and as Seymour Chatman asserts in *Story and Discourse*, “Barthes by 1970 is not only stressing the legitimacy of terms like ‘trait’ and ‘personality’: he is arguing that reading narratives is nothing less than a ‘process of nomination’, and that one element to be named is the trait.”⁶ Chatman also explains that in psychological or character-centred narratives, which constitute the bulk of Bowles’s literary production, “actions are ‘expressions’ or even ‘symptoms’ of personality, hence ‘transitive’⁷. So, the characters’ personalities and traits are full elements of the narrative, thus, components of the image of Morocco. In Bowles’s Moroccan work, they are inherent to the image, and, as agencies, are to be related to the author and to some major themes and components of the image such as the cultural contexts or the author’s quest for instance.

The analysis of the different types of characters, their comparison to those of the writings set outside Morocco highlight the writer’s unconscious. Bowles’s characters, as his psychic agencies, present similarities with the author’s self since, for instance, they are mostly travellers and questers

¹ Paul Bowles, *Let It Come Down*, p. 21.

² *Without Stopping* abounds in illustrative examples. Cf also ‘The Child in the Text: Autobiography, Fiction, and the Aesthetics of Deception in *Without Stopping*’ and Steven E. Tolson, ‘Alien Terrain: Paul Bowles’s filial Landscapes’, pp. 334-349, in: Lawrence D. Stewart, *The Illumination Of North Africa*, pp. 314-333.

³ Michael Sprinkler, “Fictions of the Self: The End of Autobiography”, in J. Olney (Ed.) *Autobiography, Essays Theoretical and Critical*, p. 342.

⁴ Michael Sprinkler, “Fictions of the Self: The End of Autobiography”, in J. Olney (Ed.) *Autobiography, Essays Theoretical and Critical*, p. 342.

⁵ R. Barthes, *S/Z*, pp. 74-75.

⁶ Seymour Chatman, *Story and Discourse, Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film*, p. 116.

⁷ Seymour Chatman, *Story and Discourse, Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film*, p. 114.

in foreign lands like him. For instance, the existential cultural context of the 1950s is the basis from which Dyar's behavior stems. Boredom, lifelessness, hopelessness and nothingness characterize his life in America¹. This context is the basic drive that urged him to leave the USA for Morocco, to fight for life as opposed to stagnation and death he experienced in America. Tangier, Morocco was the alternative to escape from this condition². As the protagonist states, "the old thing was gone beyond recall, the new thing had not yet begun"³. The main protagonist's journey to Tangier is mainly an attempt to escape from this condition. In the fatherland, Bowles as a child used to invent imaginary places and in his autobiography, he explains that his "non-existence was a *sine qua non* for the validity of the invented cosmos"⁴. Therefore, the author's expatriation may be seen as a quest for 'existence' and Morocco as a warranty for existence, in the sense of 'real life'. Similarly, Eunice Good, another American resident in Tangier, derives a feeling of self-satisfaction from the mere thought of existing: "I insist too hard on living my own life"⁵. This character prefers her "little cosmos"⁶ in Tangier or as the writer states, to be really *in life*⁷.

As a matter of fact, the search for the self is a quest that subtends the image of Morocco: for instance, nearly all the characters, Moroccan and Europeans alike, are travelers and 'questers', modeled at the image of the author. This is the also the case for the protagonist of the short story 'Tea on the Mountain'⁸ who wonders about the rationale of a picnic in the surroundings of Tangier: "The idea of such a picnic had so completely coincided with some unconscious desire she had harbored for many years. To be free, out-of-doors; with some young man she did not know –*could* not know –that was probably the most important part of the dream"⁹.

¹ Paul Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, pp 20-22.

² Cf Paul Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, p. 19.

³ Paul Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, p. 19.

⁴ Paul Bowles, *Without Stopping*, p. 52-53.

⁵ Paul Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, p. 58.

⁶ Paul Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, p. 58.

⁷ Paul Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, p. 58.

⁸ 'Tea on the Mountain', in: Paul Bowles, *Collected Stories*, pp 15-25.

⁹ 'Tea on the Mountain', in: Paul Bowles, *Collected Stories* p. 22.

The metaphorical pattern of the image of Morocco

The author's life and self are also present through the metaphorical pattern of the image of Morocco. Obsessive metaphors and images are part of the writer's unconscious. In a tape interview with Lawrence D. Stewart¹, Bowles, defines his metaphors as

'my obsessive images'. They come and go, the same ones over and over and over, I think – I know that ... I don't mind that, I don't feel that that is confining to an author at all – necessarily I mean. It's like a bird, I think. Everybody really sings his own song, no matter in what medium, he's always singing the same song somehow².

So, Bowles underscores the permanent and 'unconscious' character of the recurring metaphors in the image of Morocco. Bowles's Moroccan work abounds in metaphors which are expressions of his own self, of his mystic quest and of his worldview during his expatriation. J. Olney, in "Theory of Autobiography" defines metaphors as "[...]order-produced and order-producing, emotion-satisfying theories and equations – all the world views and world pictures, models and hypotheses, myths and cosmologies mentioned earlier – it may be that another, for our purposes better and more comprehensive, name for these would be 'metaphors'³. By means of metaphors, the author's subjective consciousness gives order to itself and to the objective reality.⁴ They are the focus with which the individual succeeds in presenting a coherent vision of all reality and in "making the universe take on his own order"⁵. Implementing Olney's definition of metaphors, these figures of speech can then be viewed as vehicles ordering and expressing Bowles's self as well as the objective reality, that is, Morocco. They are at the same time the literary expression of his subjective consciousness and a means by which he makes Morocco adopt his own order. Bowles's Moroccan work and style are rich in metaphors and symbols such as the sand, the desert, the spider, landscapes, to quote but the most conspicuous ones. The Moroccan elements of Bowles's work are conveyed through various metaphors which form a pattern of connections and are images of the authorial self, or the 'highest peaks of self'⁶. To quote J. Olney again,

¹ Lawrence D. Stewart, Paul Bowles, The Illumination of North Africa, p. 20.

² Paul Bowles to Lawrence D. Stewart, 15 September 1960, cf Lawrence D. Stewart, The Illumination of North Africa, p. 20.

³ G. Gusdorf, Op. Cited p. 30.

⁴ J. Olney, Opus Cited, p. 30.

⁵ J. Olney, Opus Cited, p. 30.

⁶ J. Olney, Opus Cited, p. 25.

The artist, we may say, is 'imaginative': he imagines, he makes images, and in them he forges the metaphoric bond that joins the known to the unknown phenomena [...]. His metaphor is a bridge outward from the centre to the farthest circumference possible, a bridge that bears his own form and image, a thrust of subjective self into external reality¹.

The metaphors can then be considered as images that represent the author's self. On the whole these recurring figures of speech fall into two main categories, that is, metaphors involving nature and different others illustrating the writer's -and hence his characters'- status and experience in Morocco.

The natural metaphors are by far the most recurring ones which denote the writer's innate fascination by nature. Nature as a whole is a metaphor for relief. In his fatherland, Nature has always been a keen centre of interest as well as a source of well-being. References to beautiful natural elements point to the writer's rare pleasant moments that alleviated the burden of his family atmosphere. In fact, the natural environment of his parents' home enchanted him: "Early mornings in spring and summer had a particular magic [...]. I could go to the windows and look out and smell the air and hear the birds singing"². The magic of Morocco that Paul Bowles underscores in the image is, to a large extent, due to its Nature and presents thus an autobiographical value. Besides, the fascination of Moroccan Nature was all the more irresistible that even the simple smelling of the air and the hearing of birds 'pleasures' that were forbidden in his original country³.

Rain is the basic metaphor of Paul Bowles's novel Let It Come Down whose title is inspired from the first murderer's reply in MacBeth. This figure of speech carries an autobiographical dimension as the author draws attention to its link with his own childhood:

From the time when I was a boy of eight or nine, I had been fascinated by that brief passage in Macbeth where Banquo comes out of the castle with his son and makes a passing remark to the men outside about the approaching rain, to be answered by the flash of a blade and the admirable four-word sentence, succinct and brutal: 'Let it come down'⁴.

¹ J. Olney, *Opus Cited*, p. 47.

² Paul Bowles, Without Stopping, p. 43.

³ Paul Bowles, Without Stopping, p. 43.

⁴ Paul Bowles, Let It Come Down, p. 7.

The image of the heavy rain that runs throughout the opening pages of Let It Come Down illustrates the weather when Paul Bowles was writing this novel Tangier:

At the end of 1950 I was back in Tangier; it was a memorably stormy winter and I was living in a newly opened *pension*. It was also newly (read *badly*) built, so that the rain ran down the walls of my room, across to the door into the corridor, and thence down the stairs into the reception hall below¹.

Rain is also a key metaphor for some major themes. It highlights Thami's murder and, by way of consequence, Dyar's failure. This figure of speech also rounds up the whole novel since the protagonist's negative experience in Tangier starts and ends on a heavily falling rain.

In the same novel, darkness and light are other major natural metaphors in the image. Darkness often suggests ambiguity and doubtful enterprises. For instance, the darkness of the smuggler's office is intended to illustrate his unreliable behaviour². In the same way, darkness is a recurring metaphor that highlights the protagonist's existentialist doubts³. Antonymic with darkness, light is also a powerful metaphor. In Let it Come Down, it represents Dyar's expectations from Morocco and the duality of his final act. The dichotomy of light and darkness is associated with the antagonism opposing positive outcomes and expectations from Morocco to feelings of despondency.

Actually, the Moroccan light is another of Bowles's recurrent metaphors as well as being the object of his fascination. It quite exclusively highlights most of the writer's positive and eulogistic descriptions of the Moroccan scenery and Nature. Light is even presented as more important than the writer's favourite setting, the Sahara or the desert. As Paul Bowles asserts, "The S. (Sahara) is the place of the great lie, where nothing is true save that light makes it so. (a pitiless and capricious light)⁴. Light is as well the metaphor that links Paul Bowles's attraction by Nature in the fatherland with his fascinated perception of the Moroccan sun and light. On the figurative level, light is at the same time the sign of the author's utter fascination by Moroccan cosmos and of his pantheist mystic quest in the adopted country. As L.D. Stewart remarks, "Light is North Africa's most compelling feature; it has been the object of [...] all of Bowles's pursuits there"⁵.

¹ Paul Bowles, Let It Come Down, p. 8.

² Paul Bowles, Let It Come Down, p. 82.

³ Cf Paul Bowles, Let It Come Down, p. 67 for instance.

⁴ Paul Bowles, quoted by L.D. Stewart, The Illumination of North Africa, p.52.

⁵ Paul Bowles, The Illumination of North Africa, p. xiii.

The sun is placed on the same level as the Moroccan light. It is a significant metaphor both in Bowles's image of Morocco and in his life. Indeed, the sun motivated and triggered his expatriation. For instance, in Without Stopping, the writer states that a major expectation from Morocco was to have 'sun everyday'¹. Moreover, as L.D.Stewart indicates, "the sun that dominates consciousness-that was North Africa's essential contribution"². This assertion stresses the significance and cohesion this cosmic element embodies in Morocco and in the author consciousness, that is to say his life and self.

The sky is another powerful natural metaphor in Bowles's image of Morocco. The sky can be interpreted as a metaphor standing for shelter, protection and so, in the context of this study, for the sheltering country. In 'He of the Assembly' for instance, the metaphor of the sky is woven into Bowles's whole text. This story is introduced by an epigraph that lays out a natural background and where a tribute is paid to the sky: "He salutes all parts of the sky and the earth where it is bright"³. The protagonist's kif induced hallucinations and fear are paralleled by a leitmotiv referring to the sky which accompanies his hallucinations: "Over his head was the sky, which he felt was about to burst into light"⁴. The bursting into light of the sun also links the protagonist's head to the star of the solar system.

In the same way, it is often, if not exclusively, referred to and described in the author's Moroccan writings. It is a basic feature that recurs in Bowles's autobiography, novels, short stories and travel essays. The Moroccan azure at the same time parallels, highlights and reflects the characters' mood and behaviour. It is the most significant metaphor of Bowles's Moroccan work. The sky, its luminosity and sheltering attributes and connotations subtend Paul Bowles's whole literary production.

In Bowles's literary production, even the plot and the characters are presented as having very close links with the natural environment. Beside the characters' close communion with Nature, quite the same natural metaphors recur in Paul Bowles's writings regardless of the setting. For example, even if the story 'How Many Midnights' is set in New York, natural references to the sky⁵, to the 'perfect moonlight'⁶, to the wind¹ and to the clouds complement the narrative and highlight the character's

¹ Paul Bowles, Without Stopping, p. 124.

² Paul Bowles, The Illumination of North Africa, p. 51.

³ Paul Bowles, 'He of the Assembly', in: Collected Stories, p. 313.

⁴ Paul Bowles, 'He of the Assembly', in: Collected Stories, p. 316.

⁵ Paul Bowles, 'How Many Midnights', Collected Stories, pp.102, 107.

⁶ Paul Bowles, 'How Many Midnights', Collected Stories, pp. 101,102.

behaviour and mood. The same reference to Nature also punctuates ‘Under the Sky’, a short story set in Latin America and which begins with a long description of the sky, of other natural elements and of the weather². The sky is an ever-present leitmotiv in this story and at the same time guides and reflects the protagonist’s behaviour and mind.

In the same way, the sky is often, if not exclusively, referred to and described in Paul Bowles’s Moroccan writings. It is a basic feature that recurs in the author’s autobiographies, novels, short stories and travel essays. The sky at the same time parallels, highlights and reflects the characters’ mood and behaviour. It is the most significant metaphor of Paul Bowles’s Moroccan work. The sky, its luminosity and sheltering attributes and connotations subtend Paul Bowles’s whole literary production.

In addition to this, the sky, a metonymy for the cosmos, can also be interpreted as the metaphor for the author’s existence. In Without Stopping, he recollects that, when a child in his father country, he used to associate his feeling of existence, that is, ‘a total awareness of the moment’³ with the sky; similarly, in Let it Come Down, the author associates his character’s feeling of revival with Nature: “It was a morning whos very air, on being breathed, gave life”⁴ On the basis of this correlation, and given that an utterly blue sky is one of Morocco’s powerful characteristics, we can therefore infer that the metaphor of the sky in the image represents the author’s existentialist feeling in Morocco, which entails the notion of revival. Conversely, since the writer links his ‘nonexistence’ when a child with the validity of his imaginary cosmos⁵, we can deduce that, the ‘real cosmos’, that is Morocco, is the home of his actual ‘existence’ and of his renaissance. The Moroccan sky is protective, sheltering and, as the author himself states, “Shadow can have more reality than rock, the sky can be more solid than the earth beneath”⁶. The autobiographical cohesion of the metaphor of the sky is that either in Paul Bowles’s life in the original country or in the literary image of his adopted home, the sky is endowed with the same protective connotations.

The metaphors of the ‘cage’ and the ‘prey’ are as well noteworthy figures of speech presenting an autobiographical value. In Let it Come Down for example, the first chapter is to a great extent centred on the metaphor of the cage is inherent to the main protagonist’s life. Dyar has

¹ Paul Bowles, ‘How Many Midnights’, Collected Stories, p. 107.

² Paul Bowles, ‘Under the Sky’, Collected Stories, p. 77.

³ Paul Bowles, Without Stopping, p. 10.

⁴ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 252.

⁵ Paul Bowles, Without Stopping, p. 52.

⁶ Paul Bowles, quoted by L.D.Stewart, The Illumination of North Africa, p. 52.

run off to Tangier in order to escape the stifling atmosphere of his life in America. His existence there was characterized by stationariness, boredom, unhappiness¹ and despair², feelings that are explicitly symbolized by the metaphor of the cage: “Nobody’s meant to be confined in a cage like that year after year”³. Wilcox also uses the same metaphor to refer to the smallness of Dyar’s office in Tangier: “Well, here’s your cage”⁴. In this last instance, the metaphor of the cage presages that Dyar’s undertaking in the North African capital is doomed to failure and parallels his estrangement and alienation.

Even if in the preface of this novel the author refers to Richard Holland as ‘a caricature of himself’⁵, Dyar’s life parallels Paul Bowles’s. The author himself, as stated above, settled in Tangier in order to escape from his the ‘cage’ of ‘nonexistence’ and uneasiness in his familial community. Moreover, in Without Stopping, Paul Bowles relives his childhood and describes the space where he resided as if it were a prison: “I spent my days playing by myself in the house, except for the occasional hour when I was turned out into the backyard. It was a large flat plot of grass hut in by a very high wooden fence. There was no way of seeing anything beyond the yard. However, on one side there were nine windows, looking out on me like nine eyes, and from any one of them could come a sudden shout of disapproval”⁶. The isolation and the permanent surveillance the writer recalls relate his parents’ home to a prison and make of his childhood years of confinement. The metaphor of the ‘cage’ correlates with Paul Bowles’s life. As Marilyn Moss observes, his childhood was ‘an imprisonment dealt to him by the power of the father’⁷.

In Without Stopping Paul Bowles portrays himself in his father’s home as if he were the prey of his parents’ perpetual reprimands. This atmosphere where admonitions prevailed is at the heart of the author’s treatment of the metaphor of the prey in his image of Morocco where the westerner or the expatriate in Morocco is often depicted as a ‘quarry’. For instance, from the very beginning of Let It Come Down, the American expatriate in Tangier is presented as a prey⁸.

On the whole, the metaphorical pattern of Paul Bowles’s image of Morocco presents an autobiographical cohesion as it reflects and narrates the writer’s life. The metaphors involving

¹ Cf Paul Bowles, Let It Come Down, p. 21.

² Cf Paul Bowles, Let It Come Down, p. 22.

³ Paul Bowles, Let It Come Down, p. 20.

⁴ Paul Bowles, Let It Come Down, p. 80.

⁵ Paul Bowles, Let It Come Down, p. 9.

⁶ Paul Bowles, Without Stopping, p. 14.

⁷ Marilyn Moss, ‘The Child in the Text: Autobiography, Fiction, and the Aesthetics of Deception in Without Stopping’, in: Twentieth Century Literature, A Paul Bowles Issue, p. 320.

⁸ Paul Bowles, Let It Come Down, p. 17.

Nature are predominant and recurrent. The primacy of Moroccan Nature and cosmos points then to Paul Bowles's basic attraction and fascination by Nature and accordingly evoke the pantheist mysticism that characterize his later Moroccan literary production.

Chronological evolution or the dynamics of Paul Bowles's image of Morocco

The above-mentioned cohesion and unity is nevertheless accompanied by a chronological evolution. According to J. Olney's theory of autobiography, this development could be the reflection of the evolution in the author's self, for, as he exposes, "like the elements, individual man never is but is always becoming: his self [...] is a process rather than a settled state of being"¹. In this perspective, the image of Morocco, far from being static, follows the chronological evolution in relation with the writer's self and life. For instance, the differences existing between the inquisitive and rather enthusiastic tone of Bowles's earlier articles and travel essays on Morocco² and his laconic, cynical and uninterested late publications³ are informative of the evolution of the author's self. In fiction too, there is a progress from the plainly pessimistic themes of his first Moroccan publications to the mystic ones and to the detachment of his late writings.

On the basis of J. Olney's theory of autobiography, 'it is the "oneness of the self, an integrity or internal harmony that holds together the multiplicity and continual transformations of being"⁴. This statement at the same time entails oneness and multiplicity. Bowles's Moroccan work therefore presents an evolution that illustrates the developments in the author's self in Morocco, in a given period of time and also revolves around the writer's 'oneness of the self', a core that is independent from the Moroccan context.

In the same way, the author's Moroccan literary production is grounded in the writer's past and at the same time reflected in his present self⁵. In this regard, the influence of the past on the image of Morocco is expressed through the writer's expatriation as a flight from his father's authority and through the different themes related to the writer's parental relationships⁶. The author's past also

¹ J. Olney, *Opus Cited*, p.6.

² Paul Bowles, "Fez". *Holiday Magazine*. Vol. 8. July 1950. Paul Bowles "The Secret Sahara", *Holiday Magazine*. Vol. 13, January 1953.

³ Paul Bowles, *Two Years Beside the Strait. Tangier Journal 1987-1989*. Peter Owen. London. 1990. 80 p.
Paul Bowles, *Points In Time*. London. Peter Owen.1982. 92 p

⁴ J. Olney, *Op. Cited*, p. 6.

⁵ Referring to Marcel Proust, in "A Theory of Autobiography" p. 274, Louis A. Renza explains that "the fiction writer thus effectively displaces the private 'darkness on which the memory draws' and reflects the human tendency to universalize, to make public or representable images out of personal memories".

⁶ This aspect of the image is studied in the following chapter.

accounts for his fascination by Moroccan Nature and cosmic elements that is consequent to the contextual Transcendental influence he inherited from his familial cultural background. Bowles's expatriation and his adopted country generated the 'transformation' of the author's being' to take up J. Olney's words. This viewpoint entails a chronological evolution.

So, a marked chronological evolution characterizes then Paul Bowles's image of Morocco and can be noticed at the level of the characters, style, and themes. The development of the author's self, as seen through his literary production, informs more on the writer than on the country that is depicted and dealt with.

Bowles's travel literature and critical essays were more important at the beginning of his expatriation. These writings denote a kind of 'open' mind towards Europe and America. The Moroccan writings of fiction display an evolution from western characters and themes to Moroccan ones. This shift from travel literature to a fiction that is Moroccan in themes and characters might be interpreted as a step towards certain integration in the Moroccan ethos and assimilation of Moroccan culture. Writing a fiction which is Moroccan in themes, characters and settings, Bowles was no more a mere traveller but a Moroccan 'resident'.

The first short stories revolve mostly around western characters and portray their way of life. The first short story, 'Tea on the Mountain' (1939), presents the tentative of a young Moroccan to set a relationship with a young American woman writer. The dominant character in this story is the Westerner who refuses the Moroccan's offer and no resolution is made. Equally, in 'The Hours after Noon', set in International Zone Tangier, the main characters are European residents in Mrs Callender's pension while the natives are for the most part servants with no real interaction with the western community¹.

As Bowles became more culturally involved, he fictionalized western characters interacting with natives, and finally, as a last step, he produced a fiction that is Moroccan in themes, characters and settings. A movement towards Moroccan life and culture is thus noteworthy in 'He of the Assembly' which refers to Fes, Djemaa el Fna, Kasba Tadla and, in its epigraph, to Aguelmous. The reference to more precise and more rural geographical spots denotes a deeper 'integration' and move into Morocco. Furthermore, this story is also characterized by the predominance of popular and superstitious beliefs. For instance the writer refers to the 'bad eye', to 'fasoukh'² and repeatedly

¹ "The Hours After Noon", in: Collected Stories, p.218, 219.

² Paul Bowles, 'He of the Assembly', in Collected Stories, p. 319

mentions Satan¹ and ‘djinnns’². ‘Aicha’ Qandicha³, a popular supernatural ‘spirit’ is also the leitmotiv of this short story.

The same movement towards Moroccan popular culture characterizes ‘A Friend of the World’ (1960). The characters are native and the action mostly takes place in the medina⁴, that is the traditional and ancient part of a Moroccan city. In this short story, the same use of local stories and popular beliefs denotes Bowles’s further engagement in Moroccan popular cultural life. For example, magic and superstitious beliefs in the properties of ‘porcupine quill powder’⁵ for example are an important component of the plot.

In the same way, ‘The Story of Lahcen and Idir’ (1961) the protagonists are Moroccan⁶ and the action is also set in popular Tangier with descriptions of its physical and social environment.

The same evolution can be noticed in the novels. For instance, in Let it Come Down, the references to Moroccan culture and folk elements are only invested with a secondary importance. The whole novel, written in 1952, is set in the International Zone era and for the most part presents European characters and community life. The rare Moroccan people are mere props, used for the sake of the plot or to punctually emphasize important elements. The Moroccan background provides the context of the main protagonist’s moods and projects, highlighting them without actually affecting him or his existential preoccupations. The western protagonist is not actually involved in the social life of Tangier. The Moroccan scenes in this novel are seen from without, as if he were a mere observer or an invisible spectator like the author.

The action involves mainly Europeans and the natives do not have a central role in this novel. This denotes that at the beginning of his expatriation Paul Bowles was still looking at Morocco with a westerner’s eyes. Besides, the existential character of the novel also indicates that Paul Bowles was closer to the western existential and western literary tradition than to Moroccan traditional culture and rites.

¹ Paul Bowles, ‘He of the Assembly’, in Collected Stories, pp. 313, 316, 319, 321.

² In the Islamic religion and in Moroccan spirituality and cultural ethos, ‘djinnns’ are ‘spirits’ who are believed to co-exist with man.

³ Paul Bowles, ‘He of the Assembly’, in Collected Stories, 316-319.

⁴ Paul Bowles, ‘A Friend of the World’, in Collected Stories, p. 295.

⁵ Paul Bowles, ‘A Friend of the World’, in Collected Stories, p. 303.

⁶ Paul Bowles, ‘The Story of Lahcen and Idir’, in Collected Stories, pp. 305, 306-7.

Conversely, *The Spider's House* (1955) is set in Fez, Morocco's traditional and spiritual capital. The setting is significant as it points to the author's involvement in Moroccan spirituality and ethos. Furthermore, this novel is about Moroccan independence and presents a positive view of the relationships between western characters and natives. Communication links the two communities. As J. Collins maintains, "for the first time in his longer fiction, he projects himself into a completely un-Westernized consciousness"¹.

The thematic development of Paul Bowles's short stories also illustrates the writer's evolution towards Moroccan spirituality. From 1974 to 1981 Paul Bowles published 'Mejdoub' (1974), 'The Fqih' (1974) and 'Things Gone and Things Still Here' (1975) which are stories that fictionalize Moroccan shrines and the behaviour of Moroccan religious scholars. 'Mejdoub'² for instance is about the misadventures of a fake 'mejdoub'. In Moroccan Arabic, a 'mejdoub' is a visionary person whose predictions come true and who rejects earthly values as well as substantial matters. This story fictionalizes the misfortunes of a fake 'mejdoub' who pretended to be 'Sidi Rahal', a famous Moroccan shrine, and who was finally put in a mental asylum. Among mad people, nobody paid attention to his words and the short story ends on a cynical note: "The months moved by. Through nights and days and nights he lived with the other madmen, and the time came when it scarcely mattered to him any more, getting to the officials to tell them who he was"³. 'The Fqih' narrates the misfortune of a young boy who, fearing of being contaminated by his brother who has been bitten by a dog, locked him up in a shed following on the advice of a 'fqih', that is, a religious scholar. Once his brother released, he definitively left even if his brother did not have a rabic disease.

In the same way, 'The Waters of Izli' (1977) revolves around the burial of Sidi Bouhajja, a 'saint'⁴, and the scheme of a 'Aissaoui', that is to say a member of the 'Aissaoua' spiritual brotherhood. 'The Empty Amulet' (1981) is as well centred on the Moroccans' traditional beliefs in shrines and their 'Baraka', that is to say their mystical powers⁵. The spiritual themes highlight and parallel Paul Bowles's mysticism and thus point to the autobiographical cohesion that Paul Bowles's life and work.

¹ J. Collins, in: *The Review of Contemporary Fiction*, p. 58.

² 'Mejdoub', in: Paul Bowles, *Collected Stories*, pp 371-375.

³ 'Mejdoub', in: Paul Bowles, *Collected Stories*, p. 375.

⁴ In Paul Bowles's text, Sidi Bouhaja is referred to as "the most important saint of the region" ; cf 'The Waters of Izli', in : Paul Bowles, *The Stories of Paul Bowles*, p. 475.

⁵ Cf 'The Empty Amulet', in: Paul Bowles , *The Stories of Paul Bowles*, pp. 536-540.

Written in the 1970s, the above mentioned short stories point to Bowles's gradual interest in Moroccan popular and spiritual ethos. These stories are about popular spiritual beliefs. Even if the author does not present any faith or belief in Moroccan popular spirituality, they nevertheless point to his progressive movement into Moroccan traditions and spiritual matters.

The lexical and stylistic autobiographical evolution of Paul Bowles's image of Morocco

The chronological overview of Paul Bowles's lexicon also evaluates the extent to which Morocco influences the image of Morocco and assesses the evolution of the writer's self.

A recurrent and noteworthy feature of the author's Moroccan writings is the introduction of words from the different languages and their literal transcriptions. This facet includes words and/or their phonetic transcription from the different languages spoken in the geographical and social sphere where he evolves. This aspect includes the Moroccan dialect, French and Spanish words as well as a kind of *lingua franca* of these languages. Phonetic transcriptions of the regional Moroccan dialect are sometimes included. These transcriptions and insertions of various languages account for the author's involvement in the Moroccan cultural ethos.

At the beginning of his residence in Tangier during the International Zone period, Paul Bowles included in his text expressions from Tangier's regional dialect. For instance, in Let it Come Down, Paul Bowles's perfect English text is peppered with idiomatic words from Tangier's dialect such as the "bacal"¹ or the "qaouaji"² or with standard Moroccan dialect such as "Yal-latif"³. There are as well scripts from French or Spanish such as "*Veinteyochocerouno*"⁴, 'expression' that recalls the Spanish cultural environment of Tangier. The local colour is thus introduced in the text by means of sentences in correct standard Spanish⁵ as illustrating the good command of this language in Tangier during the International Zone era. To recreate the local colour, the writer sometimes includes the combination of a phrase in Spanish along with a transcription from Moroccan dialect in the same sentence in English such as in "Quiere algo? said the qahouaji"⁶ or presents in one paragraph different languages at the same time⁷. The same combination concerns Moroccan common words

¹ Meaning the shopkeeper. Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p.54.

² Meaning the owner of the café. Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 132.

³ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 40.

⁴ This 'word' is the phonetic transcription of the number 2801 in Spanish, Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 78. Cf also pp. 56-5.

⁵ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 192.

⁶ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 192.

⁷ Cf Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 274.

such as ‘soussi’, ‘chnou?’, ‘mottoui’, ‘sebsi’, ‘qadi’, ‘oud’¹ that are introduced in the text as if they were part of the English lexicon.

Besides, Bowles also includes in his text phonetic transliterations of the pidgin language some Moroccans speak such as “Spickin english you like wan bleddy good soulima yah mister?”² and as “What he sigh you?”³. This quite unfathomable jargon relieves the stress of the situation and illustrates the natives’ accent. Sometimes whole sentences in correct Spanish, French or in Moroccan dialect⁴ are included in the text in such a way as to complete it and as if they were part of the English language⁵.

In addition to the local colour these scripts convey, Bowles also includes Moroccan dialect to serve narrative purposes: for instance, in Let it Come Down, Dyar is identified as the ‘Nesrani’⁶, written with a capital letter as if it were his first name and emphasizing thus his status as a foreigner and the distance separating him from the natives. Occasionally, Bowles also transcribes even the French pidgin some Moroccan speak such as ‘Illi firmi, m’sio’⁷ to highlight the comic of certain situations.

The same treatment of the Moroccan dialect characterizes Bowles’s short stories as, for instance, in ‘Tea on the Mountain’⁸ (1939), his earliest short story, “He of the Assembly”⁹ (1961) or in ‘Allal’, (1976) to quote but some. The introduction of words from the Moroccan dialect and the language common Moroccan people speak is notable in Paul Bowles’s Moroccan work from 1939¹⁰ until about 1962 which is the publication date of the short story ‘The Wind at Beni Midar’¹¹.

On the whole, the author’s use of French and Spanish words as well as expressions and transcriptions from the Moroccan dialect suggest his rapport with the Moroccan reality and cultural ethos. The closer Paul Bowles is to the Moroccan culture and life the more prolific are the Moroccan, French and Spanish expressions and transcriptions he includes in his text.

¹ Respectively Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, pp. 198, 199, 253, 240,260,264.

² Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 47.

³ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 57.

⁴ Respectively cf. to Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, pp. 56, 57.

⁵ Cf Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, pp. 268, 199, 78,162, 192 .

⁶ Meaning alien or Christian in the Moroccan dialect.

⁷ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 194.

⁸ Paul Bowles, ‘Tea on the Mountain’, in: Collected Stories, pp.1-, 18, 20.

⁹ Paul Bowles, ‘He of the Assembly’, in: Collected Stories, pp. 313, 314, 315, 317-18.

¹⁰ Date of publication of ‘Tea on the Mountain’, his first Moroccan short story.

¹¹ During this span of time, Paul Bowles also published other stories with Moroccan dialect words and French or Spanish vocables and expressions. ‘A Thousand Days for Mokhtar’ (1940), ‘The Hours after Noon’ (1950), ‘A Friend of the World’ (1950) are some of these stories.

Language being the basic means of communication, the absence of Moroccan dialect words and colloquial expressions therefore evokes the author's spiritual detachment from the Moroccan social life and worldly concerns. For instance, even if 'The Empty Amulet' and 'The Waters of Izli' present spiritual themes, they are nevertheless written in a Standard English. The absence of Moroccan dialect and of colloquial expressions points to Paul Bowles's detachment from Moroccan social life in the spiritual context of '*khalwa*' and '*uz'l*'. As the writer becomes more immersed in mysticism and, subsequently, more introspective, Bowles's text grows to be more neutral, less colloquial and more detached from the Moroccan reality as illustrated in Points in Time and Two Years Beside the Strait (1987-89), his last two autobiographies.

A total absence of punctuation is a further step in the stylistic evolution of Bowles's Moroccan writings. This feature characterizes 'Massachussets 1932' and 'Tangier 1975'¹. Published both in 1983, that is to say, quite at the end of his literary career and during his mystical detachment from life, these two short stories are absolutely devoid of any punctuation and of paragraph organization. For instance, 'Massachussets 1932' ends on a free sequence of words:

said he wasn't much surprised at what she'd done he'd sort of been expecting something bad well it was a pleasure talking to you come back if you still want to see the place in good weather be glad to see you any time a pleasure take it easy on the road you won't get back before dark anyway².

In the same way, 'Tangier 1975' begins on 'I first met her just after she'd bought the big villa overlooking the valley Saudis have it now they've got most of the good properties I remember she asked Anton and me to tea we hadn't been married very long then she seemed very much interested [...]'.³ The absence of punctuation and paragraph organization can be regarded as a kind of stylistic screen that strongly contrasts with Bowles's perfectly 'wrought' usual style. This detachment from standard writing is at the image of the author's detachment from social life in the context of the mystic practices of '*khalwa*' and '*uz'l*'.

So, the thematic, lexical and stylistic evolution parallels Paul Bowles's gradual immersion in Moroccan culture and spirituality. This development is proportionate to the progression of Bowles's

¹ 'Tangier 1975', in: Paul Bowles, The Stories of Paul Bowles, pp. 563-568. 'Massachussets 1932', in: Paul Bowles, The Stories of Paul Bowles, pp. 558-562.

² 'Massachussets 1932', in: Paul Bowles, The Stories of Paul Bowles, p. 561.

³ 'Tangier 1975', in: Paul Bowles, The Stories of Paul Bowles, p. 563.

mysticism and denotes his 'transformation of being'¹ in the context of the autobiographical cohesion that links the image of Morocco to the writer's life and mystical evolution.

Autobiographical centrality of Paul Bowles's image of Morocco

In spite of the evolution in the image of Morocco, a strong unity prevails in Bowles's work. In fact, a marked harmony characterizes the American writer's work as a whole. His literary representation of Morocco does not differ from his treatment of other countries and from his fiction set in other different and exotic locales. This unity might be considered as the 'core' of the writer's self which, to take up J. Olney's theory of autobiography, 'is the "oneness of the self, an integrity or internal harmony that holds together the multiplicity and continual transformations of being"². So, in spite of the strong Moroccan character of his work, no matter what his place of residence is and where his fiction is set, a marked consistency characterizes it. The unity linking Bowles's work as a whole includes a correspondence in the settings, themes, characters and the style considered altogether. The author's works written in and out of Morocco present the same features in general.

Therefore, the study of the 'unity' and similarity the image of Morocco shares with the representation of the other countries are revealing of the 'centrality' of the writer's self. The following brief comparative analysis of the similarities linking Bowles's work as a whole is intended to show the core and centrality of the writer's self.

Bowles was an inveterate traveller, but his places of predilection were the exotic Latin American countries and Morocco. The similarities linking the images of his adopted country and those of the Latin American ones inform us on the centrality of Paul Bowles's self. The comparative analysis between Moroccan and South American writings highlights the unity or 'core' of the writer's self.

In fact, Mrs Callender, the main protagonist of 'The Hours After Noon' experiences a unity in her memories, hence in her personality as a whole: "Voluptuous memories burned in the mind like fire in the tree stump: they were impossible to put out, and they consumed from within, until suddenly nothing was left"³. The simile the writer uses underlines the inherent unity that links Mrs Callender and his memories, and consequently that emphasises the human unity. This concord is as well suggested in the epigraph of this short story. The author suggests thus that the plot of 'The Hours

¹ G. Gusdorf, *A Theory of Autobiography*, p. 6.

² J. Olney, *A Theory of Autobiography*, p. 6.

³ Paul Bowles, 'The Hours After Noon', *Collected Stories*, p. 220.

after Noon' is reflective of his memory – and therefore of his past- and that a unity links it to his existence, and consequently, to his other writings.

Expatriation and travels are themes that recur in Bowles's writings. For instance, in 'The Echo' (1946), Aileen's mother and her lover are American expatriates living in Columbia and in 'Call at Corazon', the two main protagonists are honeymooner Americans travelling on a ferry boat in South America, that is, in an alien environment. Similarly, most of the characters in the Moroccan writings are travellers. This is the case of the American woman writer in 'Tea on the Mountain', of the western Professor in 'The Delicate Prey' and of Dyar in Let It Come Down or the Slades in The Spider's House. Besides, the majority of Bowles's American expatriate characters are at the beginning content to reside outside America. For instance, in 'The Echo', Aileen's mother asserts that living in South America is "absolute heaven after Washington"¹.

At the level of the settings, Bowles's work shows a movement from jungle to desert landscapes. This shift follows the writer's biography since he travelled and resided in the Caribbean and Latin America before definitively settling down in Tangier and travelling to desert regions of Morocco. In addition to their autobiographical dimension, a close relationship links the jungle and the desert: both are wild, exotic, and inhabited. In addition to this, there are similarities that bring together short stories set in these two extreme settings; for instance, in 'The Echo', set in the Columbian jungle, Aileen's mother's house is built on a precipice² which recalls the abyss³ on the edge of which stands the Professor in 'A Distant Episode', set in the desert, in what the writer metaphorically refers to as 'the warm country'⁴. In the same way, Norton's house in the short story 'Pages from Cold Point' is also built on the cliffs above the Caribbean Sea. In this respect, Steven E. Olson points to a similarity between the Moroccan landscapes and the Latin American ones as they relate to "the projected topography of the psychic fissures, cliffs, and abysses formed in a vanished psychological age- the age of childhood"⁵.

The geographical opposition between the jungle and the desert structures Bowles's work as a whole. This division is only a superficial one as actually the same unity can be found in all his work. North African and desert settings have simply replaced the jungles of his literary production prior to his expatriation in Morocco. Both jungle and desert settings are wild, abrupt and tormented

¹ Paul Bowles, 'The Echo', Collected Stories, p. 51.

² Paul Bowles, 'The Echo', in Collected Stories, p. 55.

³ Paul Bowles, 'A Distant Episode', in Collected Stories, pp. 42, 43.

⁴ Paul Bowles, 'A Distant Episode', in Collected Stories, p. 39.

⁵ Steven E. Olson, 'Alien Terrain', in: Twentieth Century Literature, A Paul Bowles Issue, p. 336.

landscapes fitting Bowles's themes. The jungle as a wasteland is consistent with the emptiness of the desert where the author 'meets' himself. Both settings are also void and desert places that favour introspection and later, during the author's mystic phase, '*khalwa*' and '*uz'l*'.¹

The same themes also recur in Bowles's work as a whole, no matter what the settings are and which country the author lives in. Negative and tumultuous parents and child relationships are common to the author's writings, regardless of the setting. For example, 'The Echo' (1946), set in Columbia, is about a violent failure of parent and child relationships; Aileen, a young American girl, visits her mother who is living in Columbia with Prue, her female lover. Considering their relationship as an estrangement from her mother, Aileen misbehaves with Prue, which leads her mother to downgrade her daughter to the status of guest and to impassively let her depart. Mother and child frosty farewell pushed the daughter to physically molest and attack her mother's lover². Beside the pleasure of visiting her mother, Aileen was intensely fascinated by the beauties of the Columbian Nature and landscapes. Finally, she is banished from the heavenly landscapes of the Columbian jungle and therefore symbolically ousted (from heaven?).

According to Steven E. Olson, the mother's reaction constitutes 'a decided act of parental betrayal'³ and her daughter's response amounts to a child's rebellion against patriarchal authority as the mother's masculine and aggressive female lover embodies a substitute-father and a phallic aggressor⁴. Through her assault on the father-substitute, Aileen, the child in 'The Echo', is trying to assert her identity and existence. As a matter of fact, Aileen's shouting 'nobody! Nobody! Nobody! Nobody can do that to me!' is referred to by Steven E. Olson as a 'primal scream'⁵, which reports to the newborn's cry and coming into life. Bowles equates Aileen's scream with the primal cry by emphasizing the amplitude of the scream, by echoing it and by specifying that it is the 'greatest scream of her life'⁶. In fact, Aileen's claim to be recognized as a child and not as a guest has an autobiographical value since it recalls the author's childhood and his invisibility as a child. In the same way as in 'The Echo', Bowles's work presents 'a persistent anti-patriarchal stratum'⁷. Indeed Columbia in "The Echo" being an alien terrain both to Aileen and to her mother, a parallel with

¹ Respectively meaning 'spiritual retreat' and 'physical isolation'.

² Cf 'The Echo', *Let it Come Down*, p. 63.

³ Steven E. Olson, 'Alien Terrain', in: *Twentieth Century Literature*, A Paul Bowles Issue, p. 336.

⁴ Steven E. Olson, 'Alien Terrain', in: *Twentieth Century Literature*, A Paul Bowles Issue, p. 336.

⁵ Steven E. Olson, 'Alien Terrain', in: *Twentieth Century Literature*, A Paul Bowles Issue, p. 336.

⁶ Paul Bowles, 'The Echo', *Collected Stories*, p. 63.

⁷ Steven E. Olson, 'Alien Terrain', in: *Twentieth Century Literature*, A Paul Bowles Issue, p. 335.

Bowles's Morocco as a foreign country enables us to assert that the writer's adopted country is as well the image of his filial landscape¹.

Likewise 'Call at Corazon', set in Latin America' is about domestic quarrels and separations. These negative relationships also join Dyar's troublesome relationships with his parents in Let It Come Down, set in Tangier. As L.D. Stewart observes, "A recurrent belief that amounts to a fixation in Bowles's world is that the relationship between parent and child –or between an adult and a youth- is invariably destructive"².

A general pessimism is as well common to Bowles's work as a whole. It is composed of various negative themes such as isolation and loneliness, emptiness and lack of communication. A damaging effect is most of the time due to human relationships based on an undeniable lack of communication and on the absence or failure of any human contact. This is fictionalized in many Moroccan short stories such as 'The Delicate Prey', 'A Distant Episode', and 'Tea on the Mountain' as well as in works set outside Morocco, such as 'The Frozen Fields' or 'How Many Midnights' for instance. In 'If I should Open my Mouth', a short story set in America, if the protagonist should open his mouth to scream, the only cry would be: "I am left only with vague impressions of being solitary in the park of some vast city [...]. I am as alone as if I were a spirit returned from the dead"³. This utter solitude is also representative of the loneliness Moroccan characters suffer from in 'He of the Assembly' or in Let it Come Down, where the loneliness of the main protagonists is a kind of leitmotiv⁴.

Isolation is all the more conspicuous in 'A Distant Episode' that it is coupled with an impossibility to communicate which involves the impossibility of an inter-cultural dialogue. In this story, a linguist whose tongue is severed by the Reguibat tribe can no more communicate and is reduced to the status of a mere jumping jack. As L. D. Stewart remarks, "[...] Bowles has expressed the impossibility of cross-cultural bridge building. The Professor is even more lonely than the woman novelist or Amar in earlier stories"⁵.

The theme of Nature is another common point linking Bowles's Moroccan writings and his literature set under other skies. The natural background of 'The Echo' is to a great extent composed

¹ Steven E. Olson, 'Alien Terrain', in : Twentieth Century Literature, A Paul Bowles Issue, p. 334.

² Lawrence D. Stewart, Paul Bowles, The Illumination of North Africa, p. 58.

³ Paul Bowles, 'If I should Open my Mouth', in Collected Stories, p. 258.

⁴ Paul Bowles, 'He of the Assembly', in Collected Stories, pp. 315, 322, 323.

⁵ Lawrence D. Stewart, Paul Bowles, The Illumination of North Africa, p. 30.

of laudatory descriptions of the luxurious¹ Nature of Columbia. Besides, in ‘The Echo’, references to the South American natural environment parallel the events of the story². The characters’ state of mind is often reflected in and highlighted by the natural elements: for instance, Aileen’s pleasure in being in Columbia is implicitly underlined by positive descriptions of the surrounding gorgeous scenery³ and by explicit and laudable appreciations of ‘[...] a radiance in the air that she had never seen before’⁴.

Magic and the supernatural also recur in the author’s work as a whole. In fact, these themes were already present in the writings set in tropical America. As John Bernard Myers indicates, ‘tropical America demonstrated to what extent Bowles was drawn to the magical and supernatural, and the strangeness to be found among other peoples, other ways of life different from our own: themes that run throughout his work both musical and literary’⁵.

In this perspective, ‘The Circular Valley’, a short story set in Latin America, involves a supernatural spirit named Atlajala who takes the form or inhabits humans and animals⁶. In this sense a parallel can be drawn between Atlajala and Lazrag, the supernatural character who inhabits a Turkish bath in the short story ‘By the Water’. Unnatural elements are also at the background of ‘Pastor Dowe at Tacaté’ a story set in Latin America and where references to the Indians’ pagan deities are a form of mysticism and of ‘unleashing the divine’⁷.

Magic is also common to Bowles’s work as a whole. In fact, it was a motivating element that subtended the author’s definite expatriation. In the concluding chapter of Without Stopping, Bowles relates his abandon of a nomadic life to the appeal of an invisible canvas woven out of sorcery.

Thus if I Moroccan here now, it is only because I was still here when I realized to what extent the world had worsened, and that I no longer wanted to travel. [...]. I relish the idea that in the night, all around me in my sleep, sorcery is burrowing its invisible tunnels in every direction, from thousands of senders to thousands of unsuspecting recipient. Spells are being cast, poison is running its course; souls are

¹ Cf Paul Bowles, ‘The Echo’, Collected Stories, pp. 55-56, 58-59.

² Cf ‘The Echo’, Collected Stories pp.53-55.

³ Paul Bowles, ‘The Echo’, Collected Stories, pp. 55, 56, 57.

⁴ Paul Bowles, ‘The Echo’, Collected Stories, p. 58.

⁵ John Bernard Myers, in: Twentieth Century Literature, A Paul Bowles Issue, p. 285.

⁶ Cf ‘The Circular Valley’ in Collected Stories, pp. 114-116.

⁷ Paul Bowles, ‘Pastor Dowe at Tacaté’, in Collected Stories, p. 152.

being dispossessed of parasitic pseudo-consciousnesses that lurk in the unguarded recesses of the mind¹.

These lines represent the essence of the final paragraphs of Paul Bowles's autobiography, Without Stopping. They are indeed the literal explanation and the rationale that substantiate the writer's final stop and stay in Morocco as a chosen country. As the title of the autobiography indicates, Without Stopping exposes the author's numerous travels throughout the world. In this quotation, Morocco is no more equated with incessant voyages nor is it a mere halt in a non-stop sequence of journeys.

The writer indeed feels that Morocco is a final stopover, a definite stand in a country he senses as the trigger of self-actualization. This state may be understood in the light of Carl Rogers' psychological theory, that is, in the sense of 'man's tendency to actualize himself, to express and activate all the capacities of the organism'². In this context, Morocco may as well be placed in the final level of psychological development in the framework of Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs. More specifically, the state of self-actualization involves the fulfillment of man's basic needs, namely the physiological, safety, love and belonging, esteem and self-actualization. These requisites involve basic human needs such as shelter, warmth, security, sense of belongingness and significance to life.

Morocco, to a great extent, fulfilled these basic human needs. The sentiment of accomplishment is inherent to Bowles's serene acceptance and eulogy of life in his elected realm. Thus, the word 'sorcery' might be figuratively understood as the spell and magic Morocco cast upon him. Spellbound by his chosen country, the author then senses a feeling of calm and serene acceptance of life in Morocco, which therefore backs up a feeling of self-actualization.

This peaceful state of contentment and self-actualization may as well be viewed as having a cathartic value, in the Aristotelian sense of the word. Catharsis³ is defined by Aristotle as 'the elimination of destructive emotions through appreciation of an aesthetic experience'⁴. A cathartic

¹ Paul Bowles, Without Stopping, p. 366.

² Carl Rogers, On Becoming a Man, pp 350-351.

³Catharsis in Greek means purification. In the New World Encyclopedia, <http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/catharsis>, catharsis means 'purification' or 'purgation'. It is a sudden emotional breakdown or climax that constitutes overwhelming feelings of great pity, sorrow, laughter, or any extreme change in emotion that results in renewal, restoration, and revitalization.

⁴ Cf <http://www.philosophypages.com/ph/aris.htm>

experience may as well induce a pleasant relief¹ and is purgation and purification at the same time. It induces an acute alteration in emotions that leads to renewal and restoration. Relating catharsis to Bowles's Morocco, we can infer that the writer's self-actualization in his chosen country induced purgation, that is, enabled him to get rid of the different constraints he experienced while in the fatherland and induced a pleasant relief. The pleasant release and the emotional relief might be related to his utter admiration of the Moroccan scenery and to the feeling of communion he experiences with the Moroccan natural and cosmic elements. Therefore, Bowles's Morocco may be viewed as the expression of his cathartic experience as suggested in the following line where the notion of dispossession suggests purgation: "souls are being dispossessed of parasitic pseudo-consciousnesses that lurk in the unguarded recesses of the mind"².

Validity and truth: Significant negligences

Even if a literary production is at the same time a historical source and a reflection of the author's self and life, this resource is nevertheless problematic in its validity and truth. In this regard, Bowles's Morocco is presented in a partial way, overlooking many Moroccan aspects but intensifying and highlighting others. According to the theory of autobiography, the partiality of the writer's image of Morocco and the numerous negligences depend on the writer's memory which may revive some things and conversely disregard others. The past and memories present earlier selves, but the "present also which is capable or not of perceiving with intensity, and of holding with coherence, selves past and present"³. Therefore, the Moroccan elements intensively perceived by the American expatriate, as well as those he disregarded, are inherent to and revealing of Bowles's selves, to take up Olney's expression. The author's distortion and partial view of Morocco are then informative of his life and 'whole' self, past and present.

¹In '*Politics*' Aristotle defines catharsis as follows: For every feeling that affects some souls violently affects all souls more or less; the difference is only one of degree. Take pity and fear, for example, or again enthusiasm. Some people are liable to become possessed by the latter emotion, but we see that, when they have made use of the melodies which fill the soul with orgiastic feeling, they are brought back by these sacred melodies to a normal condition as if they had been medically treated and undergone a purge [catharsis]. Those who are subject to the emotions of pity and fear and the feelings generally will necessarily be affected in the same way; and so will other men in exact proportion to their susceptibility to such emotions. All experience a certain purge [catharsis] and pleasant relief. In the same manner cathartic melodies give innocent joy to men (Aristotle, *Politics VIII:7*; 1341b 35-1342a 8). Cf: [http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Catharsis#Catharsis in Philosophy and Aesthetics](http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Catharsis#Catharsis_in_Philosophy_and_Aesthetics)

² Paul Bowles, *Without Stopping*, p. 366.

³ J. Olney, *Metaphors of Self*, p. 25.

Since in “autobiography the truth of facts is subordinate to the truth of the man”¹, the gaps, the distortions and the events and facets of Morocco Bowles disregards are the result of the writer’s will and his version of his private reality. Therefore, these ‘omissions’ are significant and revealing of the writer’s inner self and personality.

We should not necessarily expect any ‘realism’ from the image of Morocco as it is presented in his fiction and in his autobiographical works. Autobiography is not a simple recollection of the past as it was, mainly because of the evolution of the author who recalls events of his past life. The image is, as a result, distant, incomplete and distorted². In such autobiographical works, the truth should be sought beyond the surface value of the narration, that is, as Gusdorf states, in the truth of the man, images of himself and of the world. Therefore, the validity of the image of Morocco lies in the images of the writer, in his truth. The image of Morocco is thus revealing of Bowles’s life and self in relation with his consciousness in memory, that is, the way he recalls his past experience. Bowles’s recollection of his life in Morocco gives birth to a new self and a new mode of being which are synthesized in his work as the literary expression of his pantheist and mystic approach to his chosen sheltering country.

The autobiographical ‘significant negligences’ of the image involve Moroccan cities and urban places. Bowles’s Morocco is more focused on rural and desert places and, to a great extent, represented by its Nature and cosmic elements. Apart from Tangier, the writer disregards Moroccan cities and urban areas where Nature is mostly overshadowed and at the same time favours desert regions such as the Sahara and the deep Moroccan South. This approach to the sheltering country and its geographical limits is autobiographical as it accounts for the author’s physical isolation and loneliness when a child as well as for the appropriate Moroccan context for the fulfilment of the mystic practices of ‘*khalwa*’ and ‘*uz’l*’ and of his mystic quest.

In conclusion, an autobiographical centrality and cohesion is at the core of Paul Bowles’s image of Morocco. The centrality of Paul Bowles’s work is reflected in the unity that links the different aspects of the writer’s self as they appear in his work as a whole, no matter in which country he was residing. On the basis of the autobiographical cohesion, the expatriate’s literary

¹ Cf G. Gusdorf, Conditions and Limits of Autobiography, p. 43.

² Cf G. Gusdorf, Conditions and Limits of Autobiography, p. 38.

representation of Morocco parallels his existence. The evolution or dynamics of the image corresponds to the writer's 'transformations of being'¹ in the context of a spiritual development.

The cohesion and centrality that bind Paul Bowles's work and life indicate that the Moroccan specificities and the Moroccan cultural and spiritual ethos retained him for a lifelong expatriation.

¹ Cf J. Olney's theory of Autobiography. Paul Bowles actually acknowledges that autobiography emphasizes the evolution of the self: "Writing an autobiographyis a sort of journalism in which the report, rather than being an eyewitness account of the event, is instead only a memory of the last time it was recalled. The notion of time introduces the idea of evolution and of transformation of the self. Cf Paul Bowles, Without Stopping, pp. 366-36.

Chapter III: The image of Morocco as the projection of Paul Bowles's Psyche

This chapter presents the psychoanalytical analysis of Paul Bowles's image of Morocco. This study will basically be conducted in the light of different psychoanalytical literary theories, namely Jacques Lacan's theory of the mirror stage¹ and of the Oedipus Complex, of Julia Kristeva's theory of abjection and, whenever applicable, Julia Kristeva's and Melanie Klein's literary hypotheses.

According to Jacques Lacan's notion that the unconscious is structured like a language², the text functions as the reflection of the writer's psyche. On the basis of the theory of Autobiography, writing therefore means self-exposure and self-observation. The implementation of this theory to Bowles's literary image of Morocco leads to the assertion that it is revealing of the author's self and unconscious.

On the basis of Lacan's theory of the mirror-stage and subjectivity the different facets of the image correlate with the writer's ego and unconscious: major themes in Paul Bowles's image of Morocco such as aggressivity, subjectivity, the author's alienation and fragmented self, alterity, the Desire of the Other, the search of Paradise, the feelings of plenitude, wholeness, are issues that are relevant to the mirror-stage phase. Their interrelation generates a distorted image of Morocco that represents a paradigm of the desire of the other³ and the author's quest for a Moroccan paradise. In his Moroccan writings, and as does the child during the mirror stage, Bowles views or reviews himself, situates himself in a social space –Morocco-, at the core of which he reshapes his own reality and through which his quest(s) comes true.

The image of Morocco as the vehicle of Paul Bowles's alienation

On the basis of Lacan's theory of subjectivity and of the mirror-stage as formative of the function of the 'I', literature reflects the writer's self and therefore functions like the mirror in the development of the child. So, the mirror phase is systematically related to the formation of the author's identity and accordingly to his literary production. Morocco could be considered as the mirror against which Bowles's fragmented self is projected. In this sense, the writer's literary image

¹ The analysis will mainly be based on J. Lacan's psychoanalytic approach centred on the workings of the text as psyche, that is, of the theory that the unconscious is structured like a language.

² Cf 'The Agency of the Letter in the Unconscious', in : Jacques Lacan, *Ecrits*, translated by Sheridan, pp 146-177. Cf also E. Wright, *psychoanalytic Criticism : Theory in Practice*, pp 107,114, 132-34.

³ Things are viewed as distorted, fixed, rigid entities, salient for man insofar as they are desirable to others. Cf J.P. Muller, W.J. Richardson, *Op. Cited*, p. 34.

of Morocco can be equated with the infant's reflection in the mirror with all the subsequent inferences studied in this chapter.

During the mirror stage, "the subject is in-formed by his own image, is captivated by the other's image, and objects themselves take on the rigid features of the ego"¹. This stage is then a crucial event in the development of the child's sense of identity as it contributes to the movement towards the state of human subjectivity. Subsequent to the concept of the mirror-stage is Lacan's theory of subjectivity which disregards the notions of human unity, objectivity and absolute unity. The projected image is only a subjective perception of the infant's fragmented body and of its illusory unity. All these developments of the mirror stage affect the human subject and therefore influence, to various extents, Bowles's literary production. In this context, there is a parallelism between the objects of the writer's fascination in Morocco and his personality and ego.

Another facet of Lacan's structural psychoanalytical theory that is relevant to this investigation is the constant interactive relationship between man's ego and his unconscious. As Elisabeth Wright states, "conscious and unconscious are asymmetrically co-present: the inner structure maps the outer conceptualizings."² According to the statement that the unconscious is structured like a language³, the text then functions as representative of the individual's psyche. For example, Lacan's reading of Poe's The Purloined Letter puts forward the primacy of the signifier over the signified and subjects, therefore establishing that the text –or the letter- does not belong to the writer or to the reader, but reveals a new figure in the text, that is the unconscious embodied in the letter/text⁴. Drawing on Lacan's own metaphor, E. Wright states that 'the reader/writer is an ostrich burying his head in a book'⁵, that is to say that every word is invaded by the unconscious, which, when applied to Bowles's Moroccan text, implies that the image is invaded by the author's unconscious.

Morocco, representing the 'other' in Bowles's work, one can consequently infer that the writer's fascination by his chosen country can be replaced in the context of Lacan's theory of the ego and related to the subject's captivation by the other's image. The correlations between the writer's personality and the Moroccan elements and facets of the image account for the acquisition of the

¹ J. Lacan, "The mirror stage as formative of the function of the I as revealed in psychoanalytic experience", in: A. Sheridan, Jacques Lacan, Ecrits, p. 34.

² Elisabeth Wright, Psychoanalytic Criticism: Theory in Practice, p. 107.

³ J. Lacan, "The Direction of Treatment", in: Jacques Lacan, Ecrits, A Selection Translated from the French by Alan Sheridan, p. 234.

⁴ Cf E. Wright, Psychoanalytic Criticism: Theory in Practice, p.116.

⁵ Cf E. Wright, Psychoanalytic Criticism: Theory in Practice, p.116.

rigid features of the ego in the context of Lacan's theory. Bowles's Morocco then reflects the author in the sense that it captures the form of his ego and personality. For instance, the writer's proneness for wild and isolated places he displays in writings set in Morocco was already an inherent feature of his personality when young. In the same way, his disposition to loneliness was a trait of his personality when he was a boy. For instance, in the fatherland, during childhood, the writer spent his days mostly alone except for one hour when he was allowed to go and play in the backyard¹. This isolation was all the more severe that, even the yard where he was allowed to play, was an oppressive space: "It was a large flat plot of grass shut in by a very high wooden fence"². Loneliness and isolated places were then central to the writer's childhood as they are essential facets of his literary representation of Morocco.

Furthermore, a common point also links the author's natural crave for travels and exotic countries on the one hand and his appreciation of Morocco as an exotic and unknown land on the other. For instance, in Without Stopping, he relates that, when a young boy, one of his games was "the invention of lists of place-names"³; he "considered them stations on an imaginary railway, for which I would then draw a map and prepare a timetable"⁴. Bowles also imagined strange countries with weird names such as 'Zaganokworld' and 'Fercawland'⁵ for instance. There is an analogy between the author's leaning to exotic and unknown countries and the exoticism and the alien character of Morocco.

The relationship Lacan sets between the ego and objects can safely be applied to Bowles's image of Morocco for the reason that Lacan considers that everything is literature. As Juliet Flower Mac Cannell asserts, "it is *literature* and not language or linguistics that is the proper model for figuring Lacan"⁶. On this basis, there is a close correspondence between the writer's character and preferences on the one hand and aspects of his image of Morocco on the other. Here the word image may possibly be assimilated to the 'imago', on the basis of the metaphorical power of Lacan's term. In this context, the 'imago' is "a mental object, an unconscious prototype based upon the infant's earliest experiences"⁷ For instance, the marked isolation and loneliness that forged Bowles's personality can be found in his representation of Morocco: on the basis of Lacan's assertion that 'objects take on the rigid forms of the ego, Bowles's Moroccan settings are mostly isolated and

¹ Cf Without Stopping, p. 14.

² Without Stopping, p. 14.

⁴ Paul Bowles, Without Stopping, p. 20.

⁵ Paul Bowles, Without Stopping, p. 27.

⁶ Juliet Flower Mac Cannell, Figuring Lacan, p. 14.

⁷ Malcolm Bowie, Lacan, p.29.

closed locales. Besides, the writer's inclination to loneliness is further developed into the practice of *khalwa* in the context of his mystic quest in Morocco.

In fact, Morocco provided Bowles with elements he was looking for unconsciously. This connection might as well be viewed in the context of the ego as being constituted by "alienating identifications"¹. Bowles's ego and personality in relation to his literary image of Morocco can also be viewed as what Lacan terms as 'amorous relations'². The term 'amorous' especially suits the writer's devoted and appreciative relationship with the country he has adopted. In this perspective, Bowles's literary image of Morocco involves a devoted and appreciative attitude towards the country he has definitively chosen.

Image and alienation in relation to Lacan's theory of the mirror-stage

Alienation is a key theme that pervades Bowles's literary image of Morocco as a whole until the later writings of the 1970s which are more directly related to mysticism. Alienation in Paul Bowles's Moroccan work can also be interpreted in terms of subjectivity in the context of Lacan's theory of the mirror stage. It is consequent to the total unity the infant experiences: the unity is external to the infant, so, it is an alienation of it³. During the mirror stage, "the subject is in-formed by his own image, is captivated by the other's image, and objects themselves take on the rigid features of the ego"⁴. Therefore, this stage is crucial in the development of the child's sense of identity: it contributes to the movement towards the state of human subjectivity which disregards the notions of human unity and objectivity. The projected image is only a subjective perception of the infant's fragmented body and of its illusory unity. Alienation is, as Lacan says, "the armour of an alienating identity which will mark with its rigid structure the subject's entire mental development"⁵. In the same way, as Muller and Richardson make clear, the infant's identification with its reflection in the mirror establishes "a radical alienation and distortion in the very foundation of one's identity"⁶. Alienation and subjectivity mark then man's entire development and, by way of consequence, his literary creation.

¹ Cf Juliet Flower Mac Cannell, *Figuring Lacan*, p. 60.

² "Culture is always experienced as an *intersubjective* discourse. In this process, the relationship of self to other is definitively cancelled in favour of what Lacan now calls the relation of subject to Other. And it is an amorous relation", Juliet Flower Mac Cannell, *Figuring Lacan*, p. 61.

³ Cf J.P. Muller, W.J. Richardson, *Lacan and Language, A reader's Guide to Ecrits*, pp. 6, 31. Cf also Sheridan, *Jacques Lacan, Ecrits*, pp. 4, 6.

⁴ Muller and Richardson, *Lacan and Language, A Reader's Guide to Ecrits*, p. 34.

⁵ A. Sheridan, *Jacques Lacan, Ecrits* p. 4.

⁶ J.P. Muller, W.J. Richardson, *Lacan and Language, A reader's Guide to Ecrits*, p. 6.

On this basis, Bowles's image of Morocco is like the child's reflection in the mirror. The image, being 'exterior'¹ to the writer, reflects his unconscious and is therefore an expression of his 'alienation'. The projection of Bowles's ego and unconscious in his literary image of Morocco is consequently subjective, reflective of this alienation and devoid of any unity. A certain number of key themes in Bowles's image of Morocco are relevant to Lacan's theory of the mirror phase, one of the most conspicuous being characters' alienation and the different facets of the image that are at the basis of the distortion of the image.

Expatriation per se is a form of alienation. As Steven E. Olson asserts, 'expatriation and deracination are by-products of a much deeper alienation, an alienation of self'². Since Bowles spent most of his life in the North African foreign country, therefore Morocco in his work is an expression of his alienation. Alienation is notable through the writer's status of expatriate in Morocco as well as in his way of life during his quite lifelong estrangement in Morocco. He remained a stranger in the country he seemed to have definitively adopted, an invisible spectator, as epitomized in the title of Christopher Sawyer-Lauçanno's biography of the writer. The author's 'invisibility' or his lack of actual involvement in his representation of Morocco at the same time reflects the dread he retained from of his father³, points to his alienation and mystic quest in the adopted country and presages the mysticism of his final years in his chosen home.

Alienation in the image is present in the image through the characters' status as expatriates. Most of Bowles's Moroccan writings are peopled by characters, who, as the writer's psychic agencies⁴, are alienated individuals. Their alienation is first of all notable at the level of their social status: most are travellers and uprooted characters so, alienated, since they are not living in their original country. The European characters are expatriates in the Moroccan oasis in search of a certain security. They are also worn out voyagers looking for an escape from the self. For instance, Dyar in Let It Come Down hopes to find in Tangier a remedy for his demoralizing sensation of staticity and 'motionlessness'. In the same sense, J. Stenham, in The Spider's House, hopes to save himself and the Slades aspire to a kindling of love in their relationship. This is also the case of the Professor in the short story 'A Distant Episode'. This linguist ties to improve his knowledge of the 'Moghrebi'⁵ at

¹ In the sense of 'alien'.

² Steven E. Olson, « Alien Terrain : Paul Bowles's Filial Landscapes », in : Twentieth Century American Literature, p. 336.

³ Cf Leslie Fiedler, "Love and Death in the American Novel, p. XIII

M. Moss, "The Child in the Text: Autobiography, Fiction and the Aesthetics of Deception in Without stopping" in: Twentieth Century American Literature, pp. 330-31

⁴ Cf Laplanche and Pontalis.

⁵ The Moroccan dialect.

the cost of his life and Mrs Callender in 'The hours After Noon' unsuccessfully struggles to manage her pension. These characters' troubled existence and in some cases their fatal end in Morocco is to a great extent due to their expatriation.

In addition to this, the characters' empty and purposeless life is also point to their alienation. This feature applies to J.Stenham in The Spider's House who, like Dyar, the hero of Let it Come Down¹, lives in the cage of the self and is alienated. Stenham is described as living in the 'tower' of 'Les Merinides' hotel in Fes, which suggests that he is isolated in an ivory tower and, as such, connotes his alienation. These characters' estrangement evokes the infant's during the mirror stage.

Alienation also accounts for the distortion of the image. This misrepresentation of the image of Morocco is also partly conveyed through the characters' metamorphoses and disintegration of personality which reminisces of the fragmentation of the body in the context of Lacan's theory of the mirror stage. During this phase, the subject experiences a state of initial fragmentation of his own body, that is when his movements are totally uncoordinated and 'discord' during man's 'specific prematurity of birth'².

This fragmented body contrasts with his image in the mirror, which reflects the infant's body as a total form or *Gestalt*. This discord is experienced as an 'aggressive disintegration of his own body'³. The recognition of his own body as 'other' than himself sets the subjects as a 'rival' to himself and, accordingly, the body is endowed with the previous fragmentation which generates aggressivity. As such, in the essay 'Aggressivity in psychoanalysis' Lacan states that 'aggressivity in experience is given to us as [...] an image of corporal dislocation'⁴. So, aggressivity is basically associated to images of the fragmented body which are characterized by Lacan as follows: "These are images of castration, mutilation, dismemberment, dislocation, evisceration, devouring, bursting open of the body, in short, the *imagos* that I have grouped together under the apparently structural term of *imagos of the fragmented body*⁵. Most of the above mentioned "*imagos of the fragmented body*" constitute conspicuous and noteworthy facets of Bowles's representation of Morocco. In this context, Bowles's images of mutilation, dismemberment, and evisceration correlate with this fragmentation and as such are basic to the disintegration of some characters' personality.

¹ Dyar's alienation has been studied in chapter I in relation with the existentialist context.

² Cf Muller and Richardson, Lacan and Language, A Reader's Guide to *Ecrits*, pp. 4, 96 and Bice Benvenuto and Roger Kennedy, The Works of Jacques Lacan, p. 54.

³ Bice Benvenuto and Roger Kennedy, The Works of Jacques Lacan, p. 57.

⁴ Jacques Lacan, Ecrits, translated by Sheridan, p. 10.

⁵ Jacques Lacan, Ecrits, translated by Sheridan, p. 11.

Melanie Klein also considers that the aggressive drives originate in the earlier months of life. Hence, the child, and afterwards the adult, experiences images of aggressivity and violence linked to the images of the fragmented body.

Violence and characters' bodily mutilations

Bowles's literary representation of Morocco abounds in violent images of bodily mutilations that recall the fragmentation of the infant's body. "A Distant Episode" (1945)¹, is a short story in which a Western professor of Arabic dialects has his tongue cut up by the Reguibat, a savage and pitiless tribe². The severing of the tongue, that is, man's organ that plays an important part in the articulation of speech sounds, is all the more cruel and violent given that the Professor is a linguist. This image may be placed in the context of 'aggressive intentions, [...] those that involve in one way or another fragmentation of the body (witness certain ritualistic practices, the fantasies of children, [...]). These images coalesce into a certain gestalt proper to aggression'³. Further, this amputation⁴ is emphasized by the fact that the linguist has his tongue butchered by those whose language he studies. The image of the Professor's mutilation may be read as an instance of corporal dislocation and as a 'subjective' case of aggressivity, more specifically as the symptom of the writer's aggressivity⁵. On the basis of Lacan's theory, the Professor's mutilation may be included in the 'structural term of *'imagos⁶ of the fragmented body'⁷*. Besides, the image of mutilation is to be viewed as a 'vector of aggressive intentions'⁸. Therefore, this 'imago' reflects, as Lacan sets, the author's 'pressure of intention'⁹ and is constituted for the 'instincts' themselves¹⁰. Consequently, the imagos of mutilation in 'A Distant Episode' can be interpreted as symptomatic of and embedded in the author's aggressive 'instincts'¹¹ in relation to his oppressive childhood.

In addition to this bodily mutilation, the professor is reduced to a mere plaything: a jumping jack:

That night, [...], over the dusty rags that remained of his clothing they fastened a series of curious belts made of the bottoms of tin cans strung together one after

¹ Paul Bowles, 'A Distant Episode', *Collected Stories*, pp. 39-49.

² Paul Bowles, 'A Distant Episode', *Collected Stories*, p. 45.

³ J. Lacan, *Écrits*, p. 45.

⁴ This mutilation is related to different facets of the image: violence and fragmentation of the body, castration and impossibility of communication.

⁵ J. Lacan, *Écrits*, translated by Sheridan, p. 11.

⁶ Cf J. Lacan, *Écrits*, p. 11.

⁷ J. Lacan, *Écrits*, p. 11.

⁸ Lacan specifies that "These are images of castration, mutilation, dismemberment, dislocation, evisceration, devouring

⁹ Lacan, *Écrits*, p. 10.

¹⁰ J. Lacan, *Écrits*, p. 11.

¹¹ J. Lacan, *Écrits*, p. 11.

another of these bright girdles was wired around his torso, his arms and legs, even across his face, until he was entirely within a suit of armor that covered him with its circular metal scales. [...] he danced when he was bidden, a senseless hopping up and down that delighted the children, principally because of the wonderful jangling racket it made¹.

Actually, the character's being enveloped by bottoms of tin cans and covered by circular metal scales denies him any humanity. On the contrary, it emphasizes his status as a dummy. The professor's reduction to a puppet and the lack of coordination in his movements recall the image of the infant's disjointed body and movements. The autobiographical and metaphorical value of the jumping jack as well connotes Bowles's dominated childhood and his father's military rules. He was then treated as mere 'thing', [...], enduring and compliantly accepting his father's edicts.

Fragmentation of the body is as well notable in 'A Delicate Prey'. This short story presents an instance of amputation through the violent severing of a young boy's penis: hostility and theft have led a Mougari to sever a young Filali's penis and to stuff it in his belly before raping him. The castration that is basic in this story is brought about by the young boy's dismemberment which can be viewed as a form of mutilation. The latter may be interpreted in terms of Lacan's notion of the 'fragmented body'² and associated with the 'alienating identity of the ego'³. In fact, the corporal dislocation in 'A Delicate Prey' might be read as an instance of destructiveness. In the context of the theory on postulating a 'notion of human selfhood'⁴, Lacan states that

From spare parts, an armoured mechanical creature is being produced within the human subject, and developing unwholesome habits and destructive appetites of its own. The self-division of the subject, first revealed to Freud by dreams, is here being re-imagined by Lacan as nightmare⁵.

On this basis, Bowles's Moroccan dreadful images of fragmentation may be read as his nightmarish representation of the self-division of the subject.

Bodily dislocations, in the sense of feeling at odds with his body, are also suggestive of the fragmentation of the body. As a matter of fact, Paul Bowles describes an episode of

¹ Paul Bowles, 'A Distant Episode' in: Collected Stories, p. 46.

² M. Bowie, Lacan, p. 26.

³ M. Bowie, Lacan, p. 26.

⁴ M. Bowie, Lacan, p. 17.

⁵ M. Bowie, Lacan, p. 26.

‘depersonalization’¹ in *Without Stopping*: “The best way of describing it, [...], is to say that the connection between me and my body was instantaneously severed”². In the same sense, the characters’ physical uneasiness and mutilations along with the discrepancy they experience between their body and mind recall the infant’s experience of fragmentation and the writer’s feeling at odds with his own body and with the physical environment³.

In relation with the author’s spiritual quest in Morocco, the mystic notion of a Unity of Existence and communion with the Moroccan natural environment that characterize the image of Morocco also correlate with the symbiosis and harmony with the world he was lacking while in his fatherland. In point of fact, Bowles’s images of corporal fragmentation are a nodal issue. These images apparently contradict the author’s spiritual quest in Morocco and the mystic notion of Unity of Existence. Actually, the mystic communion with the Moroccan natural environment and cosmic elements may also be read as a wish of wholeness. As Bowie expounds,

The body once seemed dismembered, all over the place, and the anxiety associated with this memory fuels the individual’s desire to be the possessor and the resident of of a secure bodily ‘I’. [...]. Whether the subject looks forwards to the ego or backwards to the *corps morcelé* he is contemplating a construction - the same one in alternative states. [...]. The fundamental psychical dialectic of wholeness and disintegration supports a cellular fabric of images that reactivate in the reader the very phantasies that Lacan discusses. This fabric is his own *Garden of Earthly Delights*⁴.

The dichotomy opposing corporal fragmentation to wholeness accounts for the duality of Bowles’s image of Morocco. For instance, corporal dislocation involves the disintegration of the characters’ personalities for instance while completeness entails plenitude and an ensuing self-actualisation. Indeed, the writer’s images of fragmentation might be linked to his psychological heritage while the plenitude that characterizes his literary representation of Morocco might be considered as his ‘*Garden of Earthly Delights*’ to take up Malcolm Bowies’ words.

¹ Cf Marilyn Moss, ‘The Child in the Text’, in : *Twentieth Century American Literature, Paul Bowles Issue* , p. 319.

² Paul Bowles, *Without Stopping*, p. 59.

³ Cf Paul Bowles, *Without Stopping*, p. 59 and Marilyn Moss, ‘The Child in the Text’, in : *Twentieth Century American Literature, Paul Bowles Issue* , p. 319.

⁴ M. Bowie, *Lacan*, pp. 26-28.

Mutilating ritual practices and bloody Moroccan rites

Mutilating social practices and bloody Moroccan rites¹ are also forms of aggressivity². As such, they are to be linked to Lacan's view of the infant's fragmented body.

In the context of Lacan's theory of the mirror stage, the link between the subject and his body is also expressed through dismembering social practices and rites, and through the modern denial of respect for the 'natural forms of the human body'³. In relation to this, it is worth noting that Bowles was keenly interested in the most violent Moroccan rites and cults. These ritual practices are basic facets of his image of Morocco. It is worth noting that Paul Bowles mostly integrates in his image of Morocco the bloodiest and most violent Moroccan rites to the exclusion of the peaceful and joyful ones.

Aggressivity and fragmentation of the body are thus conveyed through images and descriptions of mutilating and bloody Moroccan rites. Bowles generally discards peaceful Moroccan rites in favour of the most aggressive Moroccan ones involving bloody bodily mutilations and aggressivity. For instance, in *The Spider's House* (1955) the author refers to the festival and rite of Sidi Bou Chta that involves self-flagellation⁴ and mutilation⁵.

A bloody rite of self mutilation⁶ is equally depicted and witnessed by the western protagonist of *Let It Come Down*: Dyar, the hero of the novel, attends a dancing and drumming group rite during which a dancer, trapped in the group's hypnotic shouts and drum beating, mutilate himself by slashing his hands and hacking his legs:

The blade glinted, struck at it on a down beat of the drum pattern. And again and again, until the arm and hand were shining and black. Then the other arm was slashed, the tempo increasing as the drummers' bodies bent further forward toward the centre of the circle. [...] . But as to the dancer, it was hard to say whether they

¹ These mutilations are also expressions of horror and will subsequently be studied as such in relation with J. Kristeva's theory of abjection.

² Eric Mottram, 'Staticity and Terror', p. 7.

³ A. Sheridan, Jacques Lacan, *Ecrits*, p. 11.

⁴ Self-flagellation can be viewed as a form of fragmentation of the body since the protagonist(s) slashes parts of his body which is therefore fragmented.

⁵ Cf Eric Mottram, 'Staticity and Terror', in: *The Review of Contemporary Fiction*, Paul Bowles, Coleman Dowel Number, *Fall 1982*, pp. 21-22.

⁶ Paul Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, pp. 269-271.

were commanding him or he them. He bent over, and with a great sweep of his arm began a thorough hacking of his legs¹.

This Moroccan ritual represents social practices and ‘rites involving tattooing, incision, and circumcision’² which deny respect for the natural form of the human body³ and, as such, express aggressivity in the context of Lacan’s theory.

In addition to this psychoanalytical view of corporal fragmentation, Bowles’s images involving violence and aggressivity recall Mark Seltzer’s notion of trauma and spectacle.

The violence of Bowles’s scenes and themes may be linked to M.Seltzer’s notions of trauma and wound culture. The difference between Bowles’s and Seltzer’s views of violence is that Seltzer, goes beyond childhood trauma by stating that it has become canonical⁴, while Bowles’s scenes of violence are to a great extent related to his childhood. In addition to this, whereas Seltzer refers a wound culture of scenes of violence and of a public fascination with torn and opened bodies, the violence in Bowles’s texts is mainly related to mutilations in the context of traditional rites

On the whole, the above mentioned expressions of aggressiveness, violence, and bodily mutilations are forms of fragmentation of the infant’s body and expressions of the horror and the violent destructiveness that pervade the image of Morocco as a whole until the 1970ies. The bloody destructiveness that links the instance of bodily mutilations, self-flagellation and bloody rites significantly contributes to the violence and horror that characterize the image of Morocco as a whole⁵. Horror also indicates that Bowles’s literary representation of Morocco can additionally be read as an expression of the abjection of the Mother⁶.

The disintegration of the personality

The disintegration of the characters’ personality is a significant facet of the image of Morocco. In addition to its Poesque and autobiographical⁷ dimension, the disintegration of

¹ Paul Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, p. 270.

² A.Sheridan, *Jacques Lacan, Ecrits*, p. 11.

³ A.Sheridan, *Jacques Lacan, Ecrits*, p. 11.

⁴ Mark Seltzer, *Wound Culture: Trauma in the Pathological Wounded Sphere*, p.8.

⁵ This violent destructiveness is also notable in Paul Bowles’s writings set in other remote locales such as the short story ‘The Circular Valley’, set in South America and which presents an episode of self-flagellation.

⁶ On the basis of the notion of overdetermination in psychoanalysis, abjection will subsequently be studied in the part devoted to the feminisation of Morocco.

⁷ In *Without Stopping* and in the dedication of *The Delicate Prey*, his first collection of stories, Paul Bowles confesses that his mother used to read him stories by Poe.

personality may be interpreted as a literary expression of a psychological disruption that is representative of Lacan's fragmentation of the body.

The disintegration of personality is conveyed through the western characters' destructive travel and quest in Morocco, an alien country: in Bowles's work the western traveller most often confronts a violent and self-annihilating destiny and metamorphoses into a prey in the context of an unknown environment. This pattern is inherent to the plot of the short story 'A Distant Episode' in which the westerner's personality and self are completely destroyed in North Africa. This disintegration stems from the foreigner's contact with hostile natives¹ and with unwelcoming landscapes. This disintegration is again mediated by desert and adverse landscapes which objectify the hostile forces within the individual native.

In Bowles's Moroccan work, the desert, these desolate areas, connote wilderness. They are spots devoid of life and without humanity. As such, they are the theater of westerners' doom; their end is representative of the destruction of the super-ego that is consequent to the contact with wild spaces and native people. The desert is an element that splits up the westerners' personality. They become stripped of their civilization and personality. For instance, in 'A Distant Episode', the professor, amid a tribe who 'avoided civilization'², becomes a mere 'thing. He is therefore is dehumanised, which is a form of disintegration of the personality. This destruction is a consequence of their geographical disruption as well as of their contact with alien people. In the desert, western characters are not only geographically lost but also psychologically. So, there is a correlation between their geographical dislocation and their psychological disruption. The desert could also be seen as similar to that shapeless self, like Lacan's 'l'hommelette'.

The destruction of the personality stems either from external forces represented by alien people and hostile landscapes or from repressed areas of Bowles's own psyche³. On the basis of the nature of the super-ego, aiming at perfection and controlling our sense of right, wrong and guilt, we can interpret the disintegration of the characters' personality as maybe representing the destruction of their super-ego, and consequently, expressing the writer's feeling of guilt and the 'collapse of the

¹ Hostility in human relationships will afterwards be studied along with alterity in the image.

² Paul Bowles, 'A Distant Episode', *Collected Stories*, p. 46.

³ Cf W.Pounds, 'Paul Bowles and Edgar Allan Poe : the Disintegration of the Personality', in : *Twentieth Century Literature, A Paul Bowles Issue*, p. 424.

civilized super-ego'¹ . This aspect is illustrated in the short stories 'The Time if Friendship', 'The Delicate Prey' and in the novel Let it Come Down.

More importantly, the annihilation of the westerners' personality and ego may suggests that self-destruction, that is, a form of death, is the outcome of the foreigners' journey and quest in Morocco². On this basis, a foreigner cannot live or survive in an alien country, Morocco in the context of this study.

In this sense, the destruction of the characters' personality is mostly conspicuous in Paul Bowles's early fiction, that is, The Delicate Prey (1950), a collection of short stories, in the novel Let it Come Down (1952), and in The Time of Friendship (1967). Around 1967, stories fictionalizing the western traveller abroad are replaced by stories that are North African in characters and in settings: so the theme of disintegration characterized his work at beginning of the writer's expatriation, which suggests that at that time, he was a 'foreigner' in Morocco, still close to western civilization and before he takes to mysticism

Alienation as a key facet of Bowles's image of Morocco, lies at the heart of the 'primitive distortion' of the image and of the 'miscognitions'³. It has a "fictional"⁴ quality which is understood by J. P. Muller and W. J. Richardson as meaning 'primitive distortion'⁵: the mirror image is an inverted reflection of the external world and the spatial environment⁶. This distortion "accounts for the miscognitions (*méconnaissances*) that, for Lacan, characterize the ego in all its structures"⁷. Relating the concept of 'miscognitions' to Bowles's image of Morocco, we can first infer that the image is 'primitively' distorted and then that it is at the origin of some 'miscognitions' of the author's spatial environment, Morocco in this context. The image of Morocco is misrepresented because the miscognitions are an expression of the writer's refusal to accept the truth or to acknowledge thoughts and feelings⁸. The image is then the counterpart of the author's subjectivity and unconscious. Paul Bowles presents his 'distorted' views of Morocco which constitute his 'miscognitions' of his host country.

¹ Tennessee Williams, 'The Human Psyche Alone', Review of 'The Delicate Prey, Saturday Review-, 33, (1950), pp. 19-20.

² This issue will later be studied in relation with Paul Bowles's mystic quest in Morocco.

³ Cf Muller and Richardson, Lacan and Language, A Reader's Guide to *Écrits* p. 31.

⁴ A. Sheridan, Jacques Lacan, *Écrits*, p. 2.

⁵ J.P. Muller, W.J. Richardson, Lacan and Language, A reader's Guide to *Écrits*, p. 31.

⁶ Cf Bice Benvenuto and Roger Kennedy, The Works of Jacques Lacan, p. 55.

⁷ J.P. Muller, W. J. Richardson, Lacan and Language, A reader's Guide to *Écrits*, p. 31.

⁸ Cf Bice Benvenuto and Roger Kennedy, The Works of Jacques Lacan, p. 52.

The different facets of the image that are relevant to Bowles's ego and unconscious reflect the writer's paranoiac alienation and compose his paranoiac knowledge¹ of Morocco in the lacanian sense of the term. The image is paranoiac because the ego is projected onto things. As Muller and Richardson explain², human knowledge is paranoiac because the ego is projected onto things, or, in other words, things are narcissistically viewed as reflections of the ego³. Therefore, objects and things, which correspond to themes and characters in Bowles's image of his adopted country, assume the features of the writer's ego. In fact, Bowles's characters are mostly alienated people, being either strangers in a foreign country or living confined in the cage of their self.

Lacan characterizes these objects as "identifiable egos, having unity, permanence, and substantiality"⁴. As a matter of fact, the themes related to alienation as well as the characters physical and psychological alienation recur throughout Bowles's work as a whole and in his image of Morocco in particular. As such, Bowles's image of Morocco might then be viewed as representing the mental permanence of the author's self (ego) and identity. The intransience of the ego accounts for the common features linking Bowles's entire work and for the harmony that characterizes the image as a whole.

The projection of the ego onto the image correlates with the writer's imago of the world. The ego is formed at this point of alienation and fascination with one's own image, which, reflected in the mirror, "organizes and constitutes the subject's vision of the world"⁵. Thus, the literary image of Morocco Bowles presents is peopled by alienated and troubled strangers who are not living in agreement with the Moroccan environment stands for the author's partial vision of the world. This feature characterizes the image until his involvement in mysticism around the 1970s.

¹ A double alienation results from the mirror-reflection: it involves the subject's own confusion with his reflection in the mirror and his misidentification of this reflection with the image of the other in the process of transitivity. A consequence of this double alienation is paranoiac knowledge: in addition to the subject's distorted view of reality and to the interpersonal confusion, it also engenders a basic miscognition of external things, to which Lacan refers to as 'paranoiac knowledge'.

² Muller and Richardson, Lacan and Language, A Reader's Guide to Ecrits, pp. 31-34.

³ Muller and Richardson, Lacan and Language, A Reader's Guide to Ecrits p. 34.

⁴ J. Lacan, quoted in Muller and Richardson, Lacan and Language, A Reader's Guide to Ecrits p. 33-34.

⁵ Bice Benvenuto and Roger Kennedy, The Works of Jacques Lacan, p. 55.

The fictional characteristic of the primitive alienation may also be viewed as meaning that the absolute ideal unity is fictive, that is 'unattainable'¹. This utopian quality accounts for Bowles's mystic quest and for the mysticism that marks with its imprints his later literary production.

Literary expressions of the Oedipus complex in Bowles's image of Morocco

Bowles's literary image of Morocco is also the stance of his relationships with his parents as it relates to the Oedipus Complex. This pivotal element of the image is mainly conveyed through the hate for the Father and the desire for the Mother (Other).

The figure of the Father

The figure of Bowles's father plays a pivotal part in the image of Morocco. It accounts for major and recurrent themes such as father and son relationships and partially explains the writer's self imposed exile in Morocco.

Father and son conflicts

As a child in America Bowles lived through very conflictuous rapports with his father which are particularly referred to and profusely described in his autobiography, Without Stopping. For instance, Claude Bowles is repeatedly portrayed as behaving with a 'usual asperity'².

Bowles was inflicted an austere childhood mainly because of his father's severity. At a very young age, he imposed on him a military discipline such as the obligation 'to chew each mouthful of food forty times, regardless of its consistency'³ and to take cold showers every morning⁴. The acme of the open hostilities that characterized father and son relationships is illustrated by their mutual desire to kill each other: the father left him naked on the windowsill for the snow to fall on him when he was only six weeks old⁵ and the son threw a knife at him at the age of nineteen⁶. Bowles was conscious that he had to win the struggle that opposed them in order to survive⁷. In fact, after an unfair beating, Paul Bowles acknowledged his desire to kill the father: "This was the only time my father beat me. It began a new stage in the development of hostilities between us. I vowed to devote

¹ Muller and Richardson, Lacan and Language, A Reader's Guide to Ecrits, p. 31.

² Paul Bowles, Without Stopping, p.10.

³ Paul Bowles, Without Stopping, p. 24.

⁴ Paul Bowles, Without Stopping, p. 120.

⁵ Paul Bowles, Without Stopping, p. 38.

⁶ Paul Bowles, Without Stopping, p. 104.

⁷ Paul Bowles, Without Stopping, p. 28.

my life to his destruction, even though it meant my own- an infantile conceit, but one which continued to preoccupy me for many years”¹.

In Bowles’s early Moroccan fiction notable elements illustrate father and son conflicts as a stance of the Oedipus Complex; the latter is conveyed through the themes of filial discord and father and son conflicts in the The Spider's House (1955). In this novel, there is a parallel between Amar, the protagonist, being beaten by his father and young Bowles. Amar’s relationship with his father recalls Bowles’s². It is also a stinging indictment of fathers who rob their sons of happiness.

Besides, even if in the preface of The Spider's House Bowles specifies that the main theme is the dissolution of the traditional pattern of Fez, this novel can nevertheless be read as a parable of a lost childhood. Amar, the Moroccan young protagonist, represents the city of Fes, and his innocent childhood stands for the purity of that city before independence. So, the dissolution of the traditional pattern of Fes represents the destruction of childhood, which, might be understood as an expression of the Oedipus complex. In The Spider 's House, Stenham’s desertion of Amar at the end symbolizes both betrayal and an irremediable fall from grace for the protagonist.

The above mentioned novel is set in Fez -Morocco- but the same theme of father and son discord underlies short stories set in South America such as "Frozen Fields”, ‘You are not I’, ‘Senor Hong and Senor Ha’ and ‘Hours after Noon’ which abound in childhood memories and underscore father and son conflicts.

This cohesion and unicity linking Moroccan writings to works set under other skies not only underscore the autobiographical dimension of Bowles’s works but mostly imply that Morocco does not neutralize the effects of the Oedipus complex and its corollary antagonisms in his early Moroccan work. Therefore, as S. E. Olson states "Although his landscapes are exotic and his more familiar scenes shocking, Bowles writes generally of the country within -the topos of promise betrayed, childhood destroyed”³.

The ‘killing’ of the Father

Parricide is another literary expression of the Oedipus complex in Paul Bowles’s Moroccan work.

¹ Paul Bowles, Without Stopping, p. 45.

² S. O. Olson, “Alien Terrain: Paul Bowles’s Filial Landscapes”, in: Twentieth Century American Literature, 343.

³ S. O. Olson, “Alien Terrain: Paul Bowles’s Filial Landscapes”, in: Twentieth Century American Literature, 343.

Up Above the World, is a novel set in Morocco and depicting a parricide: an abused son wishes his father dead. Bowles's second novel, Let It Come Down, also presents a symbolical killing of the Father. Its last section displays a backward journey into childhood. The relationship the author sets between the murder and the western protagonist's childhood is a way of associating it with the Oedipus Complex. In this perspective, Dyar's childhood constitutes the general background of the murder which is introduced by flashbacks into Dyar's early years. The scene of the murder is interwoven with memories of his childhood, proceeding from general recollections to more specific details.

The correlation with childhood is brought in by a general reference to his inner life and by his intuition of the imminence of the end of infancy:

In some remote chamber of himself he was staring through the wrong end of a telescope at his life, seeing it there in intimate details, far away but with awful clarity, and as he looked, it seemed to him that now each circumstance was being seen in its final perspective. Always before, he had believed that, although childhood had been left far behind, there would still somehow, some day, come the opportunity to finish it in the midst of its own anguished delights¹.

Dyar is thus suggesting that his childhood is coming to an end, end which will coincide with the forthcoming killing of the father-like figure of the novel, Thami.

The scene preceding the murder actually underscores the metaphorical dimension of Thami as representing the Father. Thami, the main Moroccan protagonist of the novel embodies a surrogate father for Dyar, and therefore, for the author: Thami is endowed with a double faceted personality, protective and mischievous at the same time. Thami symbolizes the Father by means of his constant care for his protégé. From the very beginning of their relationship he acts as a guardian: he lends Dyar money at the bar and helps him escape with the stolen huge amount of money. Thami behaves in a fatherlike way even right before the murder; he conducts himself as if he were responsible for Dyar, providing him with food, shelter, warmth and light², putting him to sleep while preparing the dinner and recommending him not to catch cold³. As a result, Dyar behaves as if he were a contented babe: an intense sleep spread over him so much so that speaking would have been too excessive an

¹ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 255.

² Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, pp. 245-49.

³ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 278.

effort¹. The well-being is also concretised by his eating with a good appetite the ‘chopped meat and egg swimming in boiling green olive oil’² whose brilliant colours recall his positive frame of mind. Thami’s protective attitude just before the murder suggests that the forthcoming murder will be symbolizing the killing of the father, not Thami’s.

Nevertheless, this caring comportment is paralleled by a malicious one because Thami personifies the Father as well as the rival. For example, both characters are attracted by the same girl, Hadija, and Thami, hiding his intentions from Dyar³, deceitfully seduces her. Whatever care Thami provides, he is quite always regarded by Dyar as a rival, an enemy who should not be trusted. Dyar also often refers to him as ‘the bastard’ and, in hallucinatory states, even looks upon the food Thami offers him as hiding poison⁴. This suspicion, even when the ‘surrogate’ father acts in a constructive way, is intended to underscore his malevolent character and his being a rival to Dyar.

As a matter of fact, the scenes preceding the murder are characterized by the duality opposing the protagonist’s distrust to Thami’s unusual confidence and repose⁵. This peacefulness is illustrated by the Moroccan’s profound sleep and also by his lying hands upwards and “fingers curled in the touching helplessness of sleep”⁶. It is as if the roles had been inverted, Dyar becoming the innocent and Thami the vulnerable victim, thus foretelling the forthcoming murder.

Thami’s duplicity and ambiguous character are also conveyed by his keeping at home three functioning alarm clocks, each one showing a different hour. The disorder, filth⁷ and heteroclitic character of his home⁸ and neighbourhood are illustrative of his personality and action in the novel. In the same sense, he is depicted in a negative and caricatural way: he is a husband who might send his wife to his parents’, who sees her body as a mere ‘flesh’, and, last but not least, who does not care about his son and who ‘savagely’ represses his cries by means of a blasphemous oath⁹. This sketch might be interpreted as evocative of Bowles’s childhood miseries.

¹ Paul Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, p. 246.

² Paul Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, p. 246.

³ Paul Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, p. 164.

⁴ Paul Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, p. 246.

⁵ Paul Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, p. 248.

⁶ Paul Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, p. 249.

⁷ Cf *Let It Come Down*, pp. 40-43 where the author highlights the absurdity of Thami’s family life and the squalid character of his home and neighbourhood.

⁸ In *Let It Come Down*, p. 200, Thami’s room is described as filled with pictures of Moroccans with fezzes and gandouras that are representative of his native culture, and with figurines of Santa Claus evoking thus the Westerners’ culture, the wall is ludicrously papered by identical and repetitive brochures advertising a tooth brush, etc.

⁹ Paul Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, pp. 40-43.

The above mentioned duality of Thami's personality evokes the antagonism of the loving and hostile wishes of the Oedipus Complex. The growing hostility between the two rivals¹ is carefully built up and climaxes in the symbolical killing of the father figure. In this sense, Dyar's murdering of Thami symbolizes the killing of the father. This figurative murder is one of the most complete expressions of the Oedipus Complex in Bowles's Moroccan work. In this novel, Dyar's killing of Thami is at the same time an act of release from torment as well as a stance of the Oedipus Complex.

The metaphorical value of Thami's killing is also conveyed through the report of the scene of the murder. The turmoil that is invading Dyar's inner life is evoked by reference to the fragile silence² that was previously described as a strong one. The fire, which recalls Dyar's anger, rage, and inner turmoil has its red light cast on Thami's face, more precisely on his 'masklike face'³, simile which bestows him a mythical dimension, suggesting thus that it is not Thami, the Moroccan friend who is going to be killed, but the Father.

In the same sense, Thami, the surrogate father, is being deprived of his identity and personality; this is displayed in the gradual fading away of his individuality: first, Dyar only recognises the different parts of his body, without relating them to Thami as a person. Then, the imminent victim is more explicitly viewed as 'an unidentifiable object [...] immeasurably heavy with its own meaninglessness'⁴. Thami is now an unknown body, with no specific individuality. This transfer from a friend or at least a social contact to an anonymous object or 'thing'⁵ is intended to underlie the fact that Dyar's action is directed to a person who does not exist, the surrogate father of his unconscious.

The triteness of the murder itself is also a means to hint at its symbolical value. It is depicted as insignificant since Dyar refers to his forthcoming deed as a 'work to be done, but later'⁶, or as a 'thing he had to do'⁷. This absence of specification suggests the symbolical and unreal dimension of the crime, even though he 'knew what it was but (he) could not think what it was'⁸. Even the climax,

¹ The last part of the novel, 'Another Kind of Silence' dramatizes the amplification of their antagonism, such as when they land from the boat on pp 240-43 or when Thami's slightest move is regarded as doubtful on pp. 248-251 for instance.

² Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p.282.

³ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 282.

⁴ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 283.

⁵ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 283.

⁶ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 282.

⁷ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 283.

⁸ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 284.

that is, the very moment of Thami's death is depicted as trivial, an instant when 'the object relaxed imperceptibly'¹.

However, it may be worth noting that Dyar's reminiscences about scenes from his own childhood are followed by Thami's flashbacks to his own childhood too². The two protagonists' memories are totally opposed: while Dyar recollects the stifling air of his classroom atmosphere - which recalls the uneasiness and the oppressive atmosphere of his childhood-, Thami reminisces the tender and loving complicity that characterized his relationship with his father, the happiness he experienced at being nested in his lap as well as the devotion and respect he dedicated him³. Thami's blissful childhood is projected on a bright landscape:

When he thought of it now, perhaps he was referring in memory to one particular morning, a day radiant as only a day in spring in childhood can be, when his father, after sprinkling him with orange flower water [...] had taken him by the hand and led him through the streets and parks of sunlight and flowers [...].⁴

The two characters' flashbacks to their respective youth are antonymic and maybe signal converse destinies.

This crime is directly associated to Dyar's unconscious. Being committed under the effect of cannabis jam, it is therefore related to the unconscious by the close correspondence Daisy sets between the consumption of majoun and one's inner life:

But it's how you think once you've accepted it that makes what I call the forbidden way of thought. Forbidden, of course, by your own mind, until the moment you accept the fact of the hill. That's majoun for you. You find absolutely new places inside yourself, places you feel simply couldn't be a part of you, and yet there they are⁵.

Daisy is thus suggesting that the effect of the drug will lead him to something forbidden by his consciousness, that is, his unconscious desire to kill the father figure. In this context, the

¹ Paul Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, p. 284.

² Cf Paul Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, pp. 254-59.

³ Cf Paul Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, pp. 257-259.

⁴ Paul Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, p. 257.

⁵ Paul Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, p. 213.

protagonist's driving a nail into Thami's skull under the influence of majoun stresses its assimilation to the killing of the Father.

As a matter of fact, drug induced hallucinations and actions fragment Dyar's self and liberate his double which may be interpreted as his unconscious. For instance, under the influence of majoun, Dyar hears someone uttering his own words¹, which implies that his ego is 'split' in two, and that the murder he is going to commit is the expression of an unconscious wish, of the Oedipus Complex.

Under the influence of majoun, Dyar's eyelids become transparent and he views the ceiling as a screen, a kind of mirror against which images and figures are projected:

It was not necessary to open them -he could see it anyway, because his lids have become transparent; It was a gigantic screen against which images were beginning to be projected –tiny swarms of coloured glass beads arranged themselves obligingly into patterns, swimming together and apart, forming mosaics that dissolved as soon as they were made. Feathers, snow-cristals, lace and church windows crowded consecutively onto the screen, and the projecting light grew increasingly powerful².

Feathers, beads, lace, church-windows, snow-crystals³ are patterns that suggest his childhood because of their connotations of childhood. Besides, the mosaic they form might be viewed as the montage of his fragmented self before the symbolical murder of the father- figure.

The symbolical killing of the Moroccan father-figure is also meant to enable Dyar to achieve self definition. Dyar's driving a nail into Thami's head is brought in through a kind of psychological mimetism, that is, by Dyar's visual and hearing perception of the environment. The noises made by the door are heard as announcing an unwanted visit and the loose door itself as an open one that will let someone in. "A little piece of wood, a hammer and one nail could arrange everything: the barrier between himself and the world outside would be more real"⁴. The tools that could at the same time secure the door and lead Dyar to real life are a hammer and a nail, that is, those with which Thami will be murdered. By implication, Dyar's killing of Thami is therefore a means to self protection and self definition through the symbolical murder of the Father.

¹ Paul Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, p. 213.

² Paul Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, p. 278.

³ Cf Paul Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, p. 278.

⁴ Paul Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, p. 249.

In this respect, the Moroccan identity of the father-figure is significant: Thami, as a Moroccan, represents Paul Bowles's sheltering country and, accordingly, his murder implies that the author's expatriation and adoption of a country other than his fatherland is the expression of the Oedipus Complex and of a death wish for the father.

Time, through its connotative references to the past, also stresses the correlation between the killing of the Father and Dyar's attempt at self-definition. An acute notion of time punctuates the whole scene preceding the murder, which underscores Dyar's journey back to childhood in search of the self. For instance, even space is interpreted in terms of time: "He saw the door ahead of him, but suddenly between him and it a tortuous corridor made of pure time interposed itself"¹. The interval separating him from liberation, that is, the annihilation of the Father's influence through the murder of Thami, is figurative, composed of time and space. The tools to secure the door will be those with which he will kill the father-figure and, at the same time, he is aware that the distance separating him from the door is made of 'pure time'²; this metaphor implies that his release, symbolized by the door ahead of him, is imminent and depending on a backward journey into childhood which is metaphorically represented as time 'slowly dissolving, falling into pieces'³.

Weight and deadness are also central to Dyar's childhood recollections, which may be regarded as suggesting that the murder stands for the death of the Father as well as for the end of his childhood. In this respect, the heaviness associated with Thami's body⁴ evokes that, by killing him, Dyar will free himself from a load. In addition to this, death, decay, military rules and a lack of freedom are common points linking the scenes from his past, which also suggests that Thami's murder is an act that will enable him to get rid of this stifling past and achieve a release. In this respect, the definite and irremediable disconnection from his past is explicit when Dyar states: "that summer was in a lost region, and all the roads to it had been cut"⁵. In fact, metaphors for death contrast with the liveliness and high spirits⁶ he experiences just before the murder.

Silence too signals Dyar's liberation. The climax of the inner journey is reached when, attaining the acme of his hallucinatory state, Dyar gradually succeeds in silencing his inner turmoil, his childhood memories and in completely falling back into infancy. Once his decision taken to 'get

¹ Paul Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, p. 282.

² Paul Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, p. 282.

³ Paul Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, p. 283.

⁴ Paul Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, p. 283.

⁵ Paul Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, p. 277.

⁶ Paul Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, pp. 275-76.

through'¹ and kill Thami, no more memories surface; this phase corresponds to a moment when 'every small sound was razor-sharp, but inside there was only silence'². Silence means that the inner turmoil of his past has been made quiet and that stillness and peace will replace it. The peak is reached when he completely relapses into infancy; this is illustrated by his uttering, before and after the symbolical murder, mere children's gibber: "Many Mabel damn. Molly Daddy lamb. Lolly dibble up-man. Dolly little Dan,' he whispered, and then he giggled"³. For the sake of emphasis, after the crime, he even also experiences again scenes from his childhood: " 'Merry Mabel dune'; the children were going to make a noise when they came out at recess-time"⁴.

The murder is thus liberating. Dyar has achieved a release from torment. Its cathartic value was announced before and associated with a deliverance from prison:

Like a rat in a trap,' he told himself, looking longingly out at the furthest peaks, which the sun was now flooding with its early light. But now he knew it would not be like that, because he was going to get out of the trap. It was a morning whose very air, on being breathed, gave life, and there was the path, its stones still clean and shadowless because they lay in the greater shadow of the cliffs above⁵.

The natural environment depicted here is metaphorical. The bright future and deliverance he longs for are symbolized by the resplendent natural elements that lay ahead of him; the sun, light and the absence of shadows connote Dyar's prospects of release from torment. In addition to this, the air is also sensed as life generating, corresponding to the protagonist's liberation. This deliverance is also explicitly affirmed by the quietness and peace that characterize his post-murder childhood recollections as well as by the serenity of the night:

Someone had shut the bureau drawer he was lying in and gone away, forgotten him. The great languor. The great slowness. The night had sections filled with repose, and there were places in time to be visited, faces to forget, words to understand, silences to be studied⁶.

¹ Paul Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, p. 280.

² Paul Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, p. 280.

³ Paul Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, p. 284.

⁴ Paul Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, p. 284.

⁵ Paul Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, p. 251.

⁶ Paul Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, p. 284.

By eliminating the Father-figure, Dyar has defined his self. As E.Mottram points out, he has achieved pure ego¹. Consequently, Dyar's act at the end of Let It Come Down suggests then that expatriation and Morocco are means to Bowles's self definition, search for childhood and lost innocence. In this respect, Morocco and Bowles's image of his adopted country can be regarded as expressions of the writer's liberation from his father's domination and his quest for self definition. In the context of this investigation as a whole, the quest for self-definition is associated with the writer's mystic quest and finds its complete expression in the mysticism of Bowles's later Moroccan writings. As L. D. Stewart asserts, Bowles's adopted Morocco to recover himself and his 'words', that is, the literary image of Morocco, 'ransom the recovery of identity'².

The Moroccan expatriation

Expatriation in Bowles's Moroccan work is related to different facets of the image: it can be viewed as an expression of the Oedipus Complex because of the author's desire to escape from his father's domination, as an attempt at self definition as well a quest for paradise and a stance of the desire for the Mother.

Morocco is an attempt to overwhelm his father's domination. While a child, his mother taught him how to retreat into the "blankness" of his mind to escape his father³. The young Paul was always seeking an escape and he used to find a shelter in his room. Morocco can then be considered as the retreat he sought when a child and as an escape from his father's domination. In addition to this, the image of Morocco is invested with what could be assimilated to the blankness of the mind he cultivated in his room when a child. So, as M. Moss asserts, the flight from the original country was a mere defiance and the 'escape from the fatherland is an escape from the father'⁴.

Expatriation is then a means to widen the gap separating him from his father and his death wish for the Father. Refusal of the fatherland equals the symbolic killing of the Father. Travels and the author's voluntary exile to Morocco are means to live as far as possible from his fatherland, and, in doing so, a way of annihilating the authoritarian figure. It is the expression of the wish for death of his rival: his father. Thus, the image of Morocco can be read as the literary manifestation of Bowles's Oedipus Complex. The author left the USA partly because he did not agree with his

¹ Eric Mottram, 'Staticity and Terror', p. 15.

² Lawrence D. Stewart, Paul Bowles, The Illumination of North Africa, p. 2.

³ Cf Paul Bowles, Without Stopping, p.43, 165 and M. Moss, "The Child in the Text: Autobiography, Fiction, and the Aesthetics of Deception in Without Stopping, in: Twentieth Century Literature, pp. 320-21.

⁴ Paul Bowles, Without Stopping, p.43, 165 and M. Moss, "The Child in the Text: Autobiography, Fiction, and the Aesthetics of Deception in Without Stopping, in: Twentieth Century Literature, p.326.

father's rule and worldview. Claude Bowles, the writer's father, is not only the third figure in the Oedipal triangle, but also the representative of the social order that governs all human interrelations. Therefore, Bowles's flight from his fatherland and his expatriation might be interpreted as an expression of the Oedipus Complex as well as the expression of his desire of the Mother. The Oedipus Complex and the desire of the Mother constitute two opposed trends of the same process and can be traced back in the image of Morocco, mostly in the author's implicit criticism of America and in his strong attraction by the Moroccan exotic country and culture.

The image of Morocco as the reflect self-definition through Bowles's search for childhood

During childhood, Bowles was, in a sense denied carelessness and cheerfulness. As the writer declares in his autobiography, his vision of life during childhood was governed by the idea of the world as "a place inhabited exclusively by adults"¹. In fact, the author's deprivation of liveliness accounts for his later search lost innocence and for his literary representations of childhood in the image of Morocco.

In Bowles's representation of Morocco childhood and lost innocence are often associated with the Moroccan Nature and scenery. References to childhood and lost innocence are related to the feelings of plenitude Bowles and his characters derive from their interactive experience with the Moroccan natural environment. This correlation implies that Morocco is associated with the search of a lost innocent childhood. For instance, in Let it Come Down Eunice Good's perception of the beauty of Nature and the ensuing feeling of contentment she derives from it are accompanied by hopes to access her lost childhood: "She smiled mysteriously, following with her eye the faint line of the mountains, range beyond range, blue in the night's clarity. [...] Whenever a possibility of happiness presented itself, through it she sought to reach again that infinitely distant and tender place, her lost childhood"². As a matter of fact, Hadija, the Moroccan young girl whose love she is seeking, acts as a 'catalyst'³ and embodies 'the prospect of return'⁴ of her lost childhood. In addition to this, even Dyar, the protagonist of the novel, loves Hadija too, which also points to his yearning to attain the state of happiness that is inherent to childhood. Consequently, these characters being the writer's psychic agencies, Bowles's expatriation can then be associated with his quest of the innocence and plenitude of childhood which are illustrated in his image of Morocco.

¹ Paul Bowles, Without Stopping, p. 23.

² Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 58.

³ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 58.

⁴ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 58.

Nature is among the essential requirements Bowles was deprived of during his childhood. In Without Stopping, the writer often makes reference to the natural elements that strongly attracted him. For instance, in one of his rare moments of happiness and communion with his environment, Bowles expresses his wonder of the ‘unbelievably blue sky’¹ and of ‘sunlight’². Even in his works of fiction, he underscores the beauty of and communication with Moroccan nature. For example, in Let it Come Down, Eunice Good, a representative of the American expatriates in Tangier, expresses her new feeling of a reinvigorating communion with Nature and her admiration: “She was suddenly conscious of the world outside herself – not as merely a thing that was there and belonged to other people, but as something in which she almost felt she could share. For the first time she smelled the warm odor of fulfilment on the evening air, [...]. What a beautiful night she said dreamily”³.

Bowles also underscores the natural and ‘particular magic’⁴ of early mornings in spring and summer when, like a prisoner, he could just ‘go to the windows and look out and smell the air and hear the birds singing’⁵, pleasures which were explicitly stated as forbidden. These simple delights ironically enough won him his father’s wrath and spanking and resulted in a ‘new stage in the development of hostilities’⁶. An intense blue sky, a bright sunlight, a fresh wind and closeness to Nature are among the elements Bowles was deprived of during childhood. These marked elements of Moroccan Nature at the same time explain his admiration of Moroccan Nature and scenery and contain the seeds of the mystic involvement in the Unity of Existence that distinguish Bowles’s late Moroccan literary production. The Moroccan glorious features are Bowles’s ‘obsessive metaphors’ in the image of Morocco. They are basic to his intense fascination by Moroccan Nature and are key elements factors for his mystic quest in his chosen home. The close relationship linking Morocco, its natural scenery and Paul Bowles’s search for childhood and innocence partly account for the writer’s quest as it relates to the mystic Unity of Existence that prevails in his later Moroccan literary production.

The Desire of the Mother and expatriation as a quest for paradise

Expatriation is at the same time an escape from the Father, but also a stance of the desire for the mother. Two opposed poles are present in Paul Bowles’s representation of Morocco. The Desire of the Other is associated with the Desire of the Mother, which, in a sense, can be read as a quest for paradise.

¹ Paul Bowles, Without Stopping, p. 10.

² Paul Bowles, Without Stopping, p.11.

³ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p.58.

⁴ Paul Bowles, Without Stopping, p. 43.

⁵ Paul Bowles, Without Stopping, p. 43.

⁶ Paul Bowles, Without Stopping, p. 45.

As Marilyn Moss states in her article entitled “The Child in the Text”¹, Claude Bowles's domination over his young son maybe led the latter to " seek out the femaleness of exotic and erotic landscapes in North Africa later in his life ". So, we can consider that the image presents a certain feminisation of Morocco that is consequent to Bowles’s fascination and attraction by the exotic and by the Moroccan country and culture. This appeal Morocco exerts on the expatriate can be interpreted as an expression of his ‘Desire of the Other’: an open, positive exchange with his mother.

On the whole, themes and metaphors related to the Father and the Oedipus Complex shape Paul Bowles’s earlier Moroccan works. As the writer gets more involved in Moroccan culture and mysticism, the fatherland with its different links and ensuing facets of the image becomes remote as Morocco and mysticism take over.

Alterity in the image of Morocco: Literary representations of the Other

Alterity, another expression of the writer’s unconscious, is a fruitful and focal facet of the image of Morocco. It is “the quality or state of being radically alien to the conscious self or a particular cultural orientation”². Thus, in Paul Bowles’s Moroccan writings as a whole, the chosen country stands for the Other. Besides, relationships with the natives as well as the theme of the ‘other’ are invested with a particular importance: as an expatriate writer, everything related to the host country becomes representative of the Other.

Alterity, in the psychoanalytical sense of ‘otherness’, is crucial to this investigation. As Bowie explains, ‘psychoanalysis is a science not of isolated minds, but of minds that are co-present and interactive’³. In addition to this, language, and consequently literature, is ‘a third locus’, the endlessly mobile space in which the Subject and its Other are made, dissolved and remade”⁴. Hence, language, that is to say the image of Morocco in the context of this study, is thereby the ‘space’ that embraces both the writer and his Other, that is, the author’s identity image in combination with the Other’s specificities.

¹ M. Moss, “The child in the Text”, in: *Twentieth Century American Literature*, p.318

² Definition of the Merriam-Webster dictionary.

³ M.Bowie, *Lacan*, p. 79.

⁴ M.Bowie, *Lacan*, p. 82.

The 'Other' has a pivotal place in Bowles's image of Morocco since, as Dylan Evans clarifies, "the big Other¹ denotes an essential alterity, 'an other-ness' which transcends the illusory otherness of the imaginary because it cannot be assimilated through identification². Lacan equates this radical alterity with language and the law, and hence the big Other is inscribed in the order of the symbolic"³. On these bases, Bowles's literary representation of Morocco can be related to the symbolic and viewed as the illustration of his 'radical alterity'.

The image of Morocco is not to be viewed as representative of the author's life and ego only, but grounded in his unconscious as well. In this sense, the analysis of alterity will be mainly carried on with reference to Lacan's theory of the unconscious and of the mirror-stage. In his landmark article "Function and Field of Speech and Language"⁴, Lacan characterizes the unconscious as transindividual, that is, "not at the disposal of the subject in re-establishing the continuity of his conscious discourse"⁵, which implies that Paul Bowles's 'conscious discourse', that is, his Moroccan writings in this study, is directly related to his unconscious and independent of his own will. In this respect, two main facets of the image can be regarded as illustrative of the writer's unconscious as far as alterity is concerned. These components are human relationships and aggressivity on the one hand, and the different signs representative of the 'Other' and the author's fascination with elements of Moroccan culture on the other.

Human Relationships and aggressivity

Morocco, as a country that is alien to the writer, is an appropriate background for representations of the 'other'. It acts like a Lacanian mirror against which the author casts his view of the 'other'. In Bowles's image of Morocco, there are fragmented and inharmonious representations of the 'other'. These mental pictures are the author's stance, since, as Lacan states, 'the I is an other'⁶. In this perspective, alterity in Bowles's representation of Morocco is conveyed through different significant expressions such as aggressivity and discordant, sometimes clashing human relationships;

¹ The Other with a capital 'O' is to be differentiated from the 'other' as the latter is only the reflection of the ego. The 'other' with a lower-case 'a' is comprised in the imaginary order and correlates with the counterpart and the specular image. Cf Dylan Evans, *An Introductory Dictionary of Lacanian Psychoanalysis*, p. 133.

² Cf J.Lacan, Seminar III, *Le Transfert*.

³ Cf Dylan Evans, *An Introductory Dictionary of Lacanian Psychoanalysis*, p. 133.

⁴ J. Lacan, "Function and field of speech and language, p. 49, in: *Jacques Lacan, Ecrits, A Selection* Translated from the French by Alan Sheridan, p. 49.

⁵ Cf also Sheridan, pp. 49, 234 and E. Wright pp 107,116..

⁶ A. Sheridan, *J. Lacan, Ecrits*, p. 23.

In spite of the definite attraction the host country exerts on Bowles's Moroccan work, there is a recurrent distance separating him from his subject matter, Morocco, which embodies the 'other', or more precisely the "alien other". This distance is reflected in the characters' moral profile and personality, in the violence and aggressiveness that mark human relationships, and in the predominating lack of communication.

Native characters' profile and personality

The field of the 'other' obviously involves human relationships and communication. Basically, a general latent hostility and lack of harmony characterize human relationships in the image of Morocco. This contention can be traced back to the mirror stage. According to Lacan, during this phase, the infant identifies his body as 'other' than himself, thus setting the subject as a rival to himself because endowed with the fragmentation of earlier months. The discordance the infant experiences during the mirror stage prefigures his relations with others¹, which, to a great extent, accounts for Paul Bowles's treatment of the 'Other' in the image of Morocco. The natives in Paul Bowles Moroccan work stand for the 'other'. Accordingly, his treatment of communication and human relationships with the Moroccan people point up to the way he deals with the 'other'.

In Bowles's Moroccan writings as a whole, the natives are referred to and described in a negative way². Such a reductive view of the natives prevails in Bowles's Moroccan work as a whole. For instance, in his first Moroccan short story, 'Tea on the Mountain' (1939), Moroccan adolescents are presented as having a dubious behaviour because they do not live up to their religious convictions for instance.

Other examples of downgrading generalizations on Moroccan people include references to an 'Oriental deviousness and cunning'³ for instance, blunt categorizations such as "He made the hideous grimace of disgust typical of the low-class Moroccan"⁴ and the identification of a native in 'By the

¹ Cf Bice Benvenuto and Roger Kennedy, *The Works of Jacques Lacan*, pp. 57-58.

² It is may be worth mentioning that these negative characterizations do not relate to the natives only, but to the other communities as well. For instance, in the same novel, the author also pejoratively refers to the Spanish community by pointing to 'spitting like a Spaniard'. Other unconstructive references about the 'other' can also be noticed in his late publications and in writings set in other alien countries. The critical characteristics shared by people alien to the writer show that, whether in Morocco or in other countries, the natives are perceived negatively, which implies that the 'other' is a rival and that the disparaging traits Paul Bowles attaches to the 'other' are signs of aggressivity in the Lacanian sense.

³ Paul Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, p. 242.

⁴ Paul Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, p.51,160.

Water' as 'an Arab'¹. In the same sense, we can also find some references to the Moroccan's hostility toward non-Moslems². This antagonism is conveyed through the gap separating the two communities. To this end, Moroccan people are shown as expecting Americans to act in an assertive and commanding way in order to maintain a certain distance between them: for instance, in Let it Come Down, Dyar's forceful behaviour for the first time is viewed as typically American: "At last the American was behaving like an American"³.

From the natives' standpoint, the European characters are also referred to as 'Nesrani'⁴, that is, Christians and, so, strangers, which is a direct way to underline their foreignness. Most often Paul Bowles refers to the natives or to the western characters by pointing out to their cultural or racial profile.

The natives' negative profile and personality are, to a certain extent, the fountainhead from which springs the characters' lack of communication. The above mentioned categorizations and the repeated emphasis on their being Arabs show the distance separating the western characters from the natives and point to a definite lack of communication.

In the main, the author's demoting view of the Moroccan people is notable in his early Moroccan literary production, such as in the short stories 'Tea on the Mountain' (1939) 'A Distant Episode' (1945), the 'Hours after Noon' (1950) or in Let it Come Down (1952) for instance. Actually, this depreciating attitude decreased with Bowles's involvement in mysticism and with his pantheist concentration on and admiration of the Moroccan cosmic and natural environment.

Lack of communication

Human relationships are, from the very beginning of the writer's Moroccan literary production, placed in negative and inauspicious circumstances. The western protagonists and the natives experience different sorts of clashes in a climate that is marked by a definite lack of communication.

¹ Paul Bowles, 'By the Water', in: Collected Stories, p. 35.

² Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p.170-71.

³ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p.196.

⁴ For instance in Let it Come Down, p. 162.

Lack of communication is thematically significant and recurrent in Bowles's image of Morocco. It concerns the native and the American characters alike: Moroccan protagonists do not communicate with European characters and there is no communication even among the members of the same community. A case in point is the author's cataloguing of characters into labels referring to their religious beliefs or to their racial or ethnic origins: Bowles's references to 'Muslims', 'Mericiani', 'Nesrani', 'Nazarene woman'¹ underscore the distance separating the two communities and a real lack of communication between the natives and the western protagonists.

There is an impossibility of communication between the western and the Moroccan characters who respectively consider their vis- à- vis as the Other. There is also the impossibility to see the world as the 'Other' does and the difficulty to accept this 'Other' and to acknowledge the existence of something which is other than oneself.

For instance, in 'The Hours after Noon', in addition to different downgrading descriptions, the Moroccan people are referred to as the 'Moors', a synecdoche that entails lack of communication and highlights the distance that separates the Moroccan and European communities of Tangier : "With these Moors all about, and strange new people coming to the pension every day. Of course, we try to get the good Moors, but you know how they are – utterly undependable and mad as hatters, every one of them. One never knows what any of them will take into his head to do next"². In this instance, Mrs Callender, the main protagonist of this short story, generalizes her negative viewpoint to Moroccan people as a whole. More importantly, referring to the natives as 'Moors', is figuratively a movement back to the people who created the Arab Andalusian civilization. It is then a means to create and widen a spatio- temporal gap between the western protagonist and the inhabitants of Morocco as a North African country. The lack of communication is as well emphasized by Mr Callendar's repeated, violent and unjustified slapping of a small Moroccan beggar and by his ensuing awareness of the their lack of communication: "It did not answer, and he felt its silence making an unbridgeable abyss between them"³.

Recurrent and numerous examples illustrate the absence of interaction between the two communities: The cultural gap separating the natives from the western characters is a theme that is present in Paul Bowles's Moroccan work as early as 1939 with 'Tea on the Mountain', the writer's first North African story. In this short story, sexual desire bridges the gap between a Moroccan

¹ Paul Bowles, 'Reminders of Bouselham', in *Collected Stories*, p. 387.

² Paul Bowles, 'The Hours after Noon', *Collected Stories*, p. 220.

³ Paul Bowles, 'The Hours After Noon', *Collected Stories*, p. 223.

adolescent and an American young woman but no other communication is possible between them. For instance, the nascent relationship between M'jid and a young American lady is doomed to failure mainly because the young people do not share the same cultural standards. As a matter of fact, this story abounds in instances of misunderstandings and breaches of etiquette that abort their potential relationship. Besides, the writer's references to European habits such as having 'aperitifs'¹ and to the Moroccan traditional tea ceremony underscores the cultural divergence. This difference is all the more striking that Mjid and Ghazi, the two Moroccan youngsters, are presented as having dubious and hypocritical personalities, that is, enjoying drinking wine and eating ham even if they are forbidden by the Islamic religion.

In addition to this, the young American's sadness at the sound of the *muezzin*² and her Moroccan boyfriend's reference to her unfaithfulness to the Islamic religion³ ironically point to a definite rupture in the two adolescents' relationship as well as to a lack of communication. Their contradictory point of view about the *muezzin*'s voice points to and highlights the cultural and religious gap that separates them; while the Moroccan young man listens to it devotedly and considers that the call for prayer is a necessity, it only arouses the western woman's sadness. As a matter of fact, Mjid, explicitly emphasized their lack of communication by linking her sadness to a religion issue: "Because you are not of the faith"⁴

In spite of Mjid's attempts, there is neither communication nor any nascent romance with the French writer. The failure of their relationship and lack of communication are conveyed by the description of a cold and cheerless natural environment only stirred by a dejected crow: "Far in the distance she heard the forlorn crow of a cock. It made her feel that the sun would soon set, that all the creation was on the brink of a great and final sunset"⁵. This natural background also correlates with the chill and the sadness the western woman feels: "She abandoned herself to sadness, which crept over her like a chill [...] She sat down perversely with her back to the view and played with pebbles, feeling utterly useless and absurd"⁶. Her feeling useless and absurd during an afternoon outdoors that was expected to be pleasurable points to a definite lack of communication which is explicitly highlighted by the remark that everything has gone wrong⁷. As L.D.Stewart affirms, this story 'prefigures one of his obsessive beliefs: the need for, and the impossibility of, communication

¹ Paul Bowles, 'Tea on the Mountain', in *Collected Stories*, p. 15.

² The Muslims' call for prayers.

³ Paul Bowles, 'Tea on the Mountain', in *Collected Stories*, p. 24.

⁴ Paul Bowles, 'Tea on the Mountain', in *Collected Stories*, p. 24.

⁵ Paul Bowles, 'Tea on the Mountain', *Collected Stories*, p. 21.

⁶ Paul Bowles, 'Tea on the Mountain', *Collected Stories*, p. 21.

⁷ Paul Bowles, 'Tea on the Mountain', *Collected Stories*, p. 22.

among people¹: it fictionalizes the failure of a possible love between M'jid, a young native from Tangier and an American woman writer whose name is not mentioned by the author in order to stress the triviality of their relationship.

The issue of a culture clash is raised and presented as the origin of their misunderstanding: having different standards, she misinterprets M'jid's present of a ring and is not aware that the boy categorizes her as a 'Nazarene, an infidel, and therefore, they assume, available'². In fact, at the end of the day the American writer becomes fully conscious of the gap that separates her from M'jid, a Moroccan she '*could* not know- [...]. For if she could not know him, he could not know her'³. In addition to this, the description of the Moroccan boys' habit of drinking wine⁴ on the sly accentuates the cultural differences and, therefore, widens the gap that separates them. For example, Bowles highlights the phony side of Driss's behaviour that hinders communication between the two communities: "Driss had been Europeanized to the point of insisting on aperitifs before his meals; however, instead of having two Dubonnets, for instance, he would take a Gentiane, a Byrrh, a Pernod and an Amer Picon"⁵. The number and the disparity of his different beverages actually make his drinking appear compulsive and caricatural. In fact, the Moroccan protagonist's excessive behaviour and his being 'roaring drunk'⁶ indeed cast a negative effect on the relationship between the two communities since the French woman was then considered as having a harmful effect on him and was regarded as a 'symbol of corruption'⁷. This 'corruption' is all the more unjustified that the author's ironically underlines the young Moroccan's breaches of religious rules: "The opening of the ham was observed in religious silence. It was no time before both cans were consumed. Then they attacked the wine"⁸.

In fact, the rapport between the representatives of the two communities is counterfeit and there is no real communication between them. Truly, the young Moroccan's excessive drinking is as well in keeping with the overdone and "exaggerated"⁹ bend he saluted the French writer with.

As a matter of fact, an ensuing break up and lack of communication abort their idyll. This failure is conveyed through American woman's sudden consciousness of the silence of the afternoon, the

¹ L.D. Stewart, Paul Bowles, The Illumination of North Africa, p.21.

² L.D. Stewart, Paul Bowles, The Illumination of North Africa, p. 22.

³ Paul Bowles, 'Tea on the Mountain', in: Collected Stories, p. 22.

⁴ Paul Bowles, 'Tea on the Mountain', in: Collected Stories, pp. 15, 20.

⁵ Paul Bowles, 'Tea on the Mountain', Collected Stories, p. 15.

⁶ Paul Bowles, 'Tea on the Mountain', Collected Stories, p. 18.

⁷ Paul Bowles, 'Tea on the Mountain', Collected Stories, p. 18.

⁸ Paul Bowles, 'Tea on the Mountain', Collected Stories, p. 19.

⁹ Paul Bowles, 'Tea on the Mountain', Collected Stories, p. 15.

sadness and chill that enveloped her¹ and by the sound of the ‘muezzin’² that acts as a reminder and leitmotiv recalling the cultural distance separating the two communities. The story ends on the failure of any communication that is highlighted by the triteness of the story’s ending, that is, the American woman’s reading of a French newspaper and the indication of how much time was left for dinner to be served.

A ‘Distant Episode’ (1945) represents a step further in the impossibility of communication between the two communities. For instance, the native waiter of the café is described as never pleased³ and as misunderstanding. In the same way, the grave ending of ‘The Hours after Noon’ (1950) intensifies the lack of communication that separates the two communities. This short story ends on Mr. Royer’s murder by natives on the basis of a simple misinterpretation, while he was not doing any harm to the little Moroccan girl:

From the spot where he lay, he could have heard the two motors grow fainter and be drowned by the vaster sound of the sea; [...]. In the bright moonlight he had sat with the child on his knee (for she was really no more than a child) letting her examine his watch. For some reason – probably the sight of this innocent animal holding the thin gold toy in her tattooed hands [...]⁴.

In this case, the lack of communication is emphasized by the casual character of the supposed murder and as well by the reference to the child as an ‘innocent animal’.

Likewise, lack of mutual understanding is a crucial theme in Let it Come Down (1952). In this novel, Dyar remains a lonely figure in spite of his numerous attempts to socialize either with outgoing European characters such as Daisy de Valverde or with Moroccan people.

This novel as well illustrates the negative picture of the ‘other’. This novel presents a fresco of the Tangerine life during the International Zone and also depicts human relationships between the two communities who view each other as rivals. It exposes the ‘picturesque’ and stereotyped opinion on Moroccans. This aspect is conveyed through the openly impolite and aggressive behaviour he assigns to Eunice Good even though the author’s slight disapproval is implicit in the stress he places on her madness and alcoholic loss of consciousness⁵. In this novel, the personality of Eunice Good, whose

¹ Paul Bowles, ‘Tea on the Mountain’, in: Collected Stories, p. 21.

² The call for prayers.

³ Paul Bowles, ‘A Distant Episode’, pp. 42-44.

⁴ Paul Bowles, ‘The Hours After Noon’, Collected Stories, p. 242.

⁵ Paul Bowles, Let It Come Down, p. 134.

name pejoratively echoes the superficiality of human relationships between the two communities, is significant. Her awkward and often ridiculous behaviour and manners exemplify the European's who usually mistrusts and debases Moroccans. At her first encounter with Thami, the representative of the Moroccan people in the novel, Eunice Good expresses her disdain:

She was not surprised to find Thami exactly the sort of Moroccan she most disliked and habitually inveighed against: outwardly Europeanized but inwardly conscious that the desired metamorphosis would remain forever unaccomplished, and therefore defiant, on the offensive to conceal defeat, irresponsible and insolent¹.

Reciprocally, Thami's answer is incisively critical of the view that the natives are simply exotic and different people: "You want us all to be snake-charmers and scorpion-eaters"². In the same way, Dyar, the American protagonist, never succeeds in communicating with the others, whether American or Moroccan; as Jack Collins asserts,

despite his flickering attraction to the wordly, disillusioned Daisy Valverde and his obsessive companionship with the pliable, friendly, semi-Europeanized Thami, Dyar never makes more than shallow or fleeting contact with another, using his acquaintanceship solely to enhance his own prospects for survival³.

The ending of this novel is as well an overt expression of a lack of communication, when, Dyar, the American, drives a nail in the head of his friend Thami. It is probably the most arresting expression of the two communities' separation.

In the same vein, Up Above the World, a short novel published in 1966, presents situations of an absolute misunderstanding; as the main character affirms, "people could not really get very close to one another; they merely imagined they were close"⁴.

An absence of communication is as well basic to 'Here to Learn'⁵. In this short story, the distance separating the Moroccan people from the Western characters is highlighted by the writer's reference

¹ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 133.

² Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 133.

³ Cf Jack Collins, 'Approaching Paul Bowles'.

⁴ Paul Bowles, Up Above the World, p. 178.

⁵ Paul Bowles, 'Here to Learn', The Stories of Paul Bowles, pp 428-465.

to the latter as 'Nazarene'¹ and by the natives' disapproval² of Malika's marriage with Tex, an American resident in Tangier.

This lack of communication goes even beyond personal relationships. In *The Spider's House* (1955), Bowles includes different examples of cultural mutual misunderstanding³. This novel widens the absence of communication to cross-cultural disparities and political conflicts in Fez during the Moroccan decolonization period. Even if Amar, the Moroccan protagonist, succeeds in getting close to John Stenham and Lee Veyron, who are American travellers in Fez, the events in this Moroccan city are presented through the native's fatalistic consciousness that is misunderstood by the westerners. A cultural misconstruction separates the two communities: to Stenham, the 'mericani'⁴, 'Muslims embodied the mystery of man at peace with himself, satisfied with his solution of the problem of life [...]'⁵.

On the basis of this incomprehension, Bowles's characters do what they should not: they avoid each other and the result is a basic lack of communication. There is a complete separation between the persons, with no harmony nor communication since the Other always remains the Other, that is to say, an alien and different entity.

On a symbolical level, the Moroccan and European characters' lack of communication is symbolized and magnified by their intrinsic disconnection: Bowles's characters are not only isolated people who do not communicate with others, but as a further step, there is a separation between their own body and soul. There is no harmony existing between what is happening in their head and their body or between their state of mind and their physical experience of it. Even in case of a consumption of drugs for instance, the character is no more his old self, but he experiences a difficulty to harmonize his conscious self with the unconscious one. The spirit and the body are and remain separated. So, even drugs, which are usually taken to achieve a certain harmony and communication between body and soul, are inefficient.

Partly because of the characters' deep isolation that is fairly consequent to the predominating lack of communication, Bowles's image of Morocco is an utterly pessimistic one, where characters are most of the time alone, facing a harsh reality and with no possibility of escape.

¹ Meaning 'not belonging to the Islamic religion' or 'Western person' in Moroccan dialect.

² Cf 'Here to Learn', Paul Bowles, *The Stories of Paul Bowles*, pp 428, 431, 463.

³ Cf E. Mottram, p. 20, Metcalf, pp.33-34.

⁴ Moroccan dialect phonetic pronunciation of 'American', *The Spider's House*, p. 262.

⁵ Paul Bowles, *The Spider's House*.

There is an evolution in Bowles's treatment of the 'other' when considering his image of Morocco as a whole. At the beginning of his literary career, the writer openly sets a distance between the Western protagonists and the natives. To stress their status as 'different' from him he refers to them as the 'other'. Later, in his Moroccan literary production, and as he goes further in his mystic quest, the 'other' is smoothly rubbed out in his Moroccan writings to leave space to his involvement in mystic practices of 'uz'l' and of 'khalwa', which, by definition, deny any interaction and communication with people.

Rivalry and aggressivity

Discord also marks human relationships in the image. This antagonism can be interpreted in terms of Jacques Lacan's theory of the mirror-stage. In this context, the relation between the infant and the mirror image is inharmonious because it is based on a subjective and imaginary experience. This discordance prefigures the child's relations with others, the persons who occupy the space around him. This pattern is noticeable in Bowles's image of Morocco: alterity, the author's fragmented and inharmonious view of the 'other' as well as the distance that always separates his characters from each other may also be considered as expressions of the author's stance, since, as Lacan asserts, "the I is an other"¹.

This marked dissimilarity, including physical, environmental and cultural differences leads to a rivalry. The antagonism separating the two communities is then conveyed through different forms of aggressivity which mark, to various degrees, human relationships between the two communities.

The Moroccans are then most of the time presented as adversaries. For example, the 'other' as a rival finds his most articulate expression in the relationships between Thami and Dyar in Let it come Down: Thami is referred to by Dyar as the 'other', denying him thus any individuality and just equating him with an alter ego, another consciousness. The American protagonist significantly refers to his Moroccan friend after his death as the 'other'², which suggests that his death is also the symbol of the annihilation of the alien 'other'. As a matter of fact, these hostile rapports vis-a vis the 'other' can be related to Lacan's theory of the mirror stage. During this phase, the infant identifies his body as 'other' than himself, thus setting the subject as a rival to himself because endowed with the fragmentation of earlier months.

¹ J. Lacan, "Aggressivity in Psychoanalysis", in: *Ecrits*, Op. Cited, p. 23.

² Paul Bowles, Let It Come Down, p. 292.

The natives' aggressive behaviour emphasizes the marked hostility that separates the two communities. Thus, the rivalry opposing Westerners to natives is often conveyed through allusions and mentions to their cruelty. In this respect, natives are overtly referred to as a 'destructive people'¹. As a matter of fact, in 'A Distant Episode', the cruelty of the Reguibat tribe² can be extended to the Moroccan natives as well. In this short story, aggressivity is emphasized by the writer's references to much feared tribes known for their cruelty and violence. For instance, the Reguibat tribes are described as 'plundering'³, compared to 'a cloud in the face of the sun'⁴ and basically dealt with as potential enemies: 'if you meet any Reguibat, keep them ahead of you'⁵.

A further dimension is granted to aggressivity when both natives and Westerners are victims of mutilations. In this context, 'A Distant Episode' (1945) and 'The Delicate Prey' (1948) present a general atmosphere of aggressivity and distrustfulness: These short stories are both based on instances of mutilation and dismemberment. In the first one, the Reguibat are the agents of corporal damage; it is a story on mutilation and dismemberment with the cutting out of the Western linguist's tongue⁶ and the near decapitation of a member of the Reguibat tribe⁷.

In the same way, 'The Delicate Prey' (1948) at the same time fictionalizes mutilation with the cutting up of a young Filali's⁸ penis as well as eventration with the bursting open of his body to stuff the mutilated organ in his belly⁹. In the same short story, violence and aggressivity are not only restricted to the mutilation itself but it as well involves the general atmosphere of cruelty pervades the story as a whole. It ends and climaxes on the image of the criminal Mougari, buried alive and up to the neck waiting "through the cold hours for the sun that would bring first warmth, then heat, thirst, fire, visions"¹⁰. The cruelty is all the more arresting that the story finishes on a casual image: "the wind blew dust along the ground into his mouth as he sang"¹¹.

¹ Paul Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, p.208.

² The Reguibats are known for their cruelty; they can be considered as representing the 'other' or 'anyone' as Paul Bowles in an interview stated that he could have called them 'anything'. Cf L.D. Stewart, *The Illumination of North Africa*, p. 35.

³ Paul Bowles, 'A Distant Episode', in: *Collected Stories*, p. 165.

⁴ Paul Bowles, 'A Distant Episode', in: *Collected Stories*, p. 44.

⁵ Paul Bowles, 'A Distant Episode', in: *Collected Stories*, p. 165.

⁶ Paul Bowles, 'A Distant Episode', in: *Collected Stories*, p.45.

⁷ Paul Bowles, 'A Distant Episode', in: *Collected Stories*, p. 48.

⁸ A member of the Filali tribe.

⁹ Paul Bowles, 'The Delicate Prey', in: *Collected Stories*, p. 170.

¹⁰ Paul Bowles, 'The Delicate Prey', in: *Collected Stories*, p. 172.

¹¹ Paul Bowles, 'The Delicate Prey', in: *Collected Stories*, p. 172.

In addition to these instances of fragmentation of the body, aggressivity is also conveyed through certain bloody and violent Moroccan rites and ritualistic practices. Violence is central to the Moroccan rites Bowles includes in his fiction. Moroccan ethos and traditional culture abound in rites and ritual practices that range from joyful and peaceful ceremonies to bloody and aggressive ones. Yet, in his literary picture of Morocco, the writer only refers and depicts the bloodiest and the most violent Moroccan traditional rites. For instance, Let It Come Down presents a notable example of the Jilala¹ rite, a violent and bloody Moroccan rite Dyar witnessed: people singing, incessantly beating drums and playing the flute until the dancer goes into a trance; the climax is reached when the hysterical dancer starts slashing his arms, hacking his legs with a blade and licking his own blood in syncopation with the music². This image, providing a beatific expression of aggressivity, can once more be viewed in the light of Lacan's theory of aggressivity in the sense that this ritual self-laceration represents the specific relation between man and his own body that involves tattooing, incision, and circumcision in primitive societies and which contradict respect for the natural forms of the human body³.

'The Wind at Beni Midar' equally presents instances of the Jilala's and Hamadcha's⁴ practice of self-laceration⁵. This story displays scenes of violent rites where the Jilala danced and cut their legs and arms and chests until blood is left on the floor⁶. These bodily mutilations in the image of Moroccan are vectors of aggressivity in Lacan's sense of the word.

The images of fragmentation of the body account for Lacan's theory of the mirror stage. In this context, recurrent images of aggressivity in Bowles's picture of Morocco are to be related to the child's identification with his reflect in the mirror and to the images of the fragmented body. The infant experiences the discrepancy between the fragmented self and his harmonious image as an aggressive disintegration of his own body; so, he identifies his own body as 'alien' to himself and characterizes the subject as a contender.

In this context, aggressivity is conveyed through 'an image of corporal dislocation'⁷ and of fragmentation of the body¹. It is worth noting here that the author mostly disregards the nonviolent

¹ The Jilala are a Moroccan brotherhood.

² Cf Paul Bowles, Let It Come Down, pp.268-271.

³ Cf Alan Sheridan, Jacques Lacan, Ecrits, A Selection Translated from the French by, p. 11.

⁴ The Hamadcha and the Jilala are Moroccan brotherhood known for their violent and bloody rituals.

⁵ Paul Bowles, 'The wind at Beni Midar', in Collected Stories, p. 328.

⁶ Paul Bowles, 'The wind at Beni Midar', in Collected Stories, pp. 327-328.

⁷ J.P. Muller and Richardson, A Reader's Guide to Ecrits, p. 44.

Moroccan traditional rites such as offerings to Moroccan marabouts, religious incantations and chants, as well as hadras, that is, spiritual trance dances for instance. Accordingly, the author's focus on violent rites calls attention to the relationship linking violence to Lacan's theory of aggressivity.

It is worth noting that these '*imagoes of the fragmented body*'² involve both natives and Westerners alike. This dichotomy can be interpreted in terms of Lacan's theory of aggressivity: the latter arises either from the encounter of the ego with another subject like himself, which awakens in him 'a desire for the object of the other's desire'³ or when the infant experiences himself as united to his counterpart in a confused identity while internally experiencing a 'conflictual tension' that prefaces the awakening of desire⁴. In the context of this study, Morocco can be interpreted as corresponding to the 'other' and, hence, to an object of desire. The marked aggressivity that characterizes the image can therefore be read as an expression of the writer's desire for Morocco⁵.

Horror in the image of Morocco

The above mentioned images of self-lacerations and disintegrations of the personality are image vehicles that also convey horror. Horror is a noteworthy facet of the writer's image of Morocco. It is the outcome of the violent Moroccan rites underscored by the author and of the aggressivity resulting from instances of mutilations and self-flagellations. Besides, horror is as well disclosed through the animal metamorphoses that mark the writer's Moroccan work.

In Bowles's Moroccan writings there is the coexistence of an animal world beside the human one. In many of his writings, terrifying animals, animals which frighten man and which are not familiar to him, fascinate the writer. The recurrent animals are a scorpion, a wolf, a hyena, ants, and a monk spider. The fact that they are not domestic animals generally engenders a certain feeling of horror. Strange and disturbing animal stories also convey horror: This aspect of the image is conducted through the reference to frightening animals, to animal metamorphoses and through transferences, that is to say instances when men are transformed into animals.

¹ J.P. Muller and Richardson, *A Reader's Guide to *Écrits**, p. 45. The different ritualistic practices Bowles refers to are castration, mutilation, bursting open of the body, dismemberment¹ and devouring¹; these rites recall the fragmentation of the body in Lacan's sense.

² Jacques Lacan, *Écrits*, A Selection Translated from the French by Alan Sheridan, p. 11.

³ J.P. Muller and Richardson, *A Reader's Guide to *Écrits**, p. 48.

⁴ J.P. Muller and Richardson, *A Reader's Guide to *Écrits**, p. 48

⁵ This aspect will be dealt with in the part devoted to 'Desire'.

Even if sometimes the animal included in the short story is not properly frightening, such as the ant or the singing bird for instance, Bowles places them in such an ambiguous and unusual situation that they become disturbing and fear provoking. Besides, in his short stories, men are often transformed into animals, such as scorpions and snakes. These metamorphoses are recurrent metaphors for the "horrible" and for the author's pessimism. They are intended to underscore the total absence of harmony in the world. The animal world of Bowles is the metaphor of the human world and the illustration of his vision of life and humanity. These horrible metamorphoses of men into animals represent the total absence of harmony in the world. For instance, 'By the Water' is built on a series of supernatural transferences. The ghostlike creature that haunts the Turkish bath is presented as having changed the two men into birds and finally transformed itself¹ into a crab. In 'The Scorpion', the transference takes the form of the old woman swallowing a scorpion. The short story "Allal" is a kind of climax as far as the metamorphosis and the metaphoric representation of the 'Other' are concerned. In this story, it is the snake that becomes human. Its head, recently endowed with thinking faculties, is cut at the end of the story.

The transferences, that is, the transformation of men into animals can be considered as a form of transference or 'displacement' in Freud's sense, that is, the transposition of feelings from one idea to another. As Elizabeth Wright specifies, "transference is a mode of investing persons and objects with positive and negative qualities, according to our early memories of significant experience of familial figures and the expectations founded thereon"². Accordingly, the animal metamorphoses and transferences can be viewed as the author's unconscious process of investing Moroccan characters, or the 'Other' with negative characteristics and of his pessimistic view of the world.

The general background of horror and aggressive images picturing bodily mutilations, dismemberment and evisceration accounts for an atmosphere of horror that pervades the image of Morocco. This facet of the image can be read as an expression of Lacan's notion of aggressivity and as a stance of abjection in Kristeva's meaning of the word.

With reference to the notion of overdetermination³, the images of aggressivity, violence and horror can also be read as expressions of the 'abject' in Kristeva's sense of the word. According to Kristeva, "the abject marks the moment when we separated ourselves from the mother, when we began to recognize a boundary between 'me' and the other, between 'me' and '(m)other'. It is the stage that

¹ 'By the Water', Paul Bowles, *Collected Stories*, p. 35.

² E. Wright, *Psychoanalytic Criticism: Theory into Practice*, p. 15.

³ A key concept in Freud's psychoanalysis, overdetermination is the concept that a single effect is determined by multiple causes. Any agent can account for the effect.

correlates with the loss of distinction between subject and object, that is, between the self and the other. So, in the context of this investigation, Morocco representing the 'other', the abject therefore corresponds to a loss of difference, dissimilarity between the writer and his adopted country.

The abject is as well a phase when a body is separated from another body, the mother, in order to be, to exist and when one's subjective identity is formed by excluding anything that constitutes a menace. The main threat to the novice subject being his or her dependence on the maternal body, abjection is therefore basically related to the maternal function. On this basis, matricide is our decisive need. To become subjects we have to abject the maternal body. In Bowles's Moroccan fiction images of maternal figures are not recurrent. The character of Daisy in the novel Let it come Down can be interpreted as an instance of a maternal figure: the breakdown of Dyar's relationships with Daisy, the mother figure of the novel may be viewed as an expression of Kristeva's abject. The novel ends on a complete separation that is symbolized by the raising of a 'great barrier, [...] impenetrable and merciless'¹. Given the utmost importance Daisy grants to her relationship with Dyar, this divorce can safely be understood as a crime, a sort of matricide. So, the split in the relationships of the maternal figure of the novel and Dyar might be read as an expression of the abject, of the infant's severance from the Mother.

Characters being psychic agencies of the author, we can infer that, as in Dyar's case, Morocco propounds the weaning from the Mother and corresponds to the abject according to Kristeva's theory of psychosexual development. In this context, Bowles's expatriation itself is to be related to abjection, since "abjection preserves what existed in the archaism of pre-objectal relationship, in the immemorial violence with which a body becomes separated from another body in order to be"². The writer's expatriation is then a separation from the Mother and marks his entry into life, existence³. In this context, the author's mystic quest in Morocco and the mysticism of his later Moroccan literary production can be interpreted as a 'revival'.

In Kristeva's theory, images of death and corpses are reminders of our own materiality. Abjection, that is, horror images, is a refusal of our own death. The abject images are a refusal of death: "a wound with blood and pus, or the sickly, acrid smell of sweat, of decay do not signify death. They "*show me* what I permanently thrust aside in order to live"⁴. Bowles's images of the abject in his Moroccan work are a means to thrust aside death. Death, or more precisely the human

¹ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 292.

² Cf Internet text: Modules on Kristeva, on the abject.

³ The correlations between this entry into life and the mystic quest will be investigated later.

⁴ Julia Kristeva, Powers 3.

corpse, is a reminder of our own death. It stands for the intrusion of death into life. As Kristeva denotes, “the corpse, seen without God and outside of science, is the utmost of abjection. It is death infecting life.”¹ In this context, Bowles’s mysticism can be viewed as an attempt at life and as a refusal of death, an attempt at eternity. On this issue, mysticism, can be interpreted as Kristeva’s notion of transcendent or sublime which compensates the disruptions linked to the abject.

The author’s strong and deep fascination with certain ‘abject’ aspects of Morocco can also be interpreted in the light of Kristeva’s association of the abject with what she identifies as *jouissance*: “One does not know it, one does not desire it, one joys in it (on en jouit). Violently and painfully. A passion”². Bowles’s recurrent depiction of Moroccan scenes of violence and of abjection, along with his deep and dedicated fascination with Morocco, can consequently be interpreted as a form of abjection. The duality opposing abjection in the image to the writer’s fascination with Morocco is a form of *jouissance* in Kristeva’s meaning of the word.

The abject in Bowles’s image of Morocco can also be related to the author’s mystic quest in that country since it corresponds to the author’s ‘existence’ ‘in order to be’ and to his entry into another life. This stage is what disturbs identity and system. Accordingly, the seeds of author’s ‘new identity’, his involvement in mysticism later in life can be found in his literary expressions of the abject. In the same sense, Kristeva also associates the abject with the outbreak of the Real in our life, especially with the rejection of the materiality of death. Therefore, Bowles’s expatriation and his image of Morocco are expressions of the abject but also of his yearning for life and refusal of death. In relation with the author’s quest in Morocco, the refusal of death can be regarded as conveyed through his different attempts at transcendence as well as through his mystic quest. For Kristeva, the transcendent – that is transcendence and mysticism in this study- is the expression of the effort to cover up the breaks of the abject (Powers 207). Literature and religion being two ways of purifying the abject³, Bowles’s mystic quest and his image of Morocco can therefore be considered as catharses and expressions of the purification of the abject.

The recurrent imagoes of the ‘fragmented body’ and the various facets of aggressivity in the image of Morocco account for Bowles’s own myths of cruelty that can be read in the light of Kristeva’s notion of the abject and of Lacan’s theory of the fragmentation of the body. The

¹ Julia Kristeva, Powers 4.

² Julia Kristeva, Powers 9.

³ “The various means of *purifying* the abject- the various catharses- make up the history of religions, and end up with that catharsis par excellence called art, both on the far and near side of religion”, J.Kristeva, (Powers 17).

combined effects of rivalry, of the lack of communication between people and the aggressive images lead to a vilification of Morocco that justifies rejection and abjection.

Besides, aggressivity, rivalry, and a general lack of communication account for a deep and marked pessimism that is woven in the tapestry of Bowles's Moroccan fiction. Accordingly, a common atmosphere of distrustfulness and hostility prevails. Yet, horror and mutilations account for the violent destructiveness that pervades the image as a whole until the eighties because these years roughly correspond to the writer's gradual shift to mysticism.

In the process of fixation and stagnation determined by Lacan, the writer's image of Morocco can be considered as representing Bowles's paranoiac knowledge¹. However, the aggressive and pessimistic representation of Morocco contrasts with the writer's deep and strong fascination with his adopted country. A manifest duality distinguishes the image: a marked aggressivity contrasts with a strong fascination with Morocco. This dual relation can be interpreted as an 'ambivalent' aggressivity or an aggressive relativity² that takes the form of 'resentment'³ and that is derived from the menace caused by the triangular relationship of self-other-thing.

Paul Bowles's identification with Morocco

Fascination with Morocco

Despite the different negative features Paul Bowles assigns to his elected country, he nevertheless expresses an utter fascination with Morocco. In the context of Lacan's theory of aggressivity, fascination is to be linked to the narcissistic identification which determines the structure of man's ego, that is, that the 'I is another'. Lacan emphasizes the affective aspect of this primal identification and refers to it as an 'erotic relation' on which the 'organization of passions'⁴ or ego is based⁵.

According to Lacan, the Imaginary Order covers the fields of fantasies and images and extends into the adult subject's relationships with others⁶. Bowles's fascination with Morocco can be considered as the metaphor of the child's attraction by his own image in the mirror. Since the typical

¹ Cf J. P. Muller and W. J. Richardson, *Lacan and Language*, pp. 46-47.

² Cf J. P. Muller and W. J. Richardson, *Lacan and Language*, pp. 47-49.

³ Cf J. P. Muller and W. J. Richardson, *Lacan and Language*, p. 48.

⁴ More erotically referred to by Lacan as 'organisation passionnelle'.

⁵ Cf J. P. Muller and W. J. Richardson, *Lacan and Language*, p. 47.

⁶ Cf Bice Benvenuto and Roger Kennedy, *The Works of Jacques Lacan*, p. 81.

imaginary relationship is the infant's fascination with his own image¹, the author's fascination with Morocco as well as with the Moroccan ethos can be viewed as a kind of typical imaginary and 'narcissistic' relationships extending the infant's situation².

Besides, on the basis of Lacan's dialectic of 'the eye and the gaze', the eye, i.e perception, is an organ of pleasure that involves both the desires and feelings of the Symbolic Order as well as the 'narcissistic fantasies'³ of the Imaginary Order⁴. Consequently, the writer's perception of his adopted country can be interpreted as an expression of the writer's desire of the Other and of his fascination with his own image⁵.

Some aspects of Bowles's image of Morocco may stem from the writer's unconscious but are also 'transindividual'⁶, that is, meaning 'other' than the individual consciousness, or simply the 'Other', that is Morocco in the context of this study. This transindividual character is noticeable in certain of signs such as bodily symptoms, childhood memories, one's particular vocabulary, lifestyle, and character, traditions, legends and distortions⁷. The inferences of this assertion are significant as they relate to Bowles's literary representation of Morocco. Some of the signs quoted above, which are substantial elements in Bowles's image of Morocco, should then be considered as transindividual 'illustrations' of the author's unconscious rapport with his adopted country. These elements, to a significant extent, belong to the Moroccan culture and ethos. They are to be included in Lacan's process of "transitivism"⁸ and, accordingly, are revealing of the writer's captation and fascination by Morocco. From the beginning of his expatriation Paul Bowles was absolutely captivated by Morocco to which he referred to as a 'magic place'⁹. Accordingly, the literary picture of his elected home mainly presents a marked fascination for this country.

Childhood memories, legends, traditions, vocabulary are among the transindividual signs that reflect the author's fascination by Morocco. Paul Bowles's keen fascination by Morocco is conveyed

¹ Cf Bice Benvenuto and Roger Kennedy, The Works of Jacques Lacan, p. 81.

² Cf Bice Benvenuto and Roger Kennedy, The Works of Jacques Lacan, p. 81.

³ E. Wright, Psychoanalytic Criticism, Theory in Practice, p.117.

⁴ Cf E. Wright, Psychoanalytic Criticism, Theory in Practice, pp.116-117 and Bice Benvenuto and Roger Kennedy, The Works of Jacques Lacan, pp. 80-81.

⁵ Cf E. Wright, Psychoanalytic Criticism, Theory in Practice, pp. 117-118.

⁶ The unconscious is transindividual, that is "not at the disposal of the subject in re-establishing the continuity of his conscious discourse. Transindividual, it is "other" than individual consciousness, "the other scene", or simply the Other. Cf J. P. Muller and W. J. Richardson, Lacan and Language, pp.17-18.

⁷ J. P. Muller and W. J. Richardson, Lacan and Language, pp.17-18. Cf also Sheridan, J. Lacan, Ecrits, p. 49.

⁸ "transitivism ... is the result of 'a veritable captation by the image of the other'. Cf J. P. Muller and W. J. Richardson, Lacan and Language, pp. 31-32, 55.

⁹ Paul Bowles, Without Stopping, An Autobiography.

through two main facets of his image of Morocco: A distinct admiration for Moroccan folklore and traditional culture on the one hand and a deep-rooted fascination for Moroccan natural elements and landscapes.

Moroccan folklore and traditional culture

Bowles's treatment of Moroccan folklore and Moroccan traditional culture denotes his fascination with deep Morocco. He was consistently fascinated by the enchantment of story-telling¹. In his Moroccan writings, he displays a distinct interest for the Moroccan oral tradition and traditional culture. Various components of the Moroccan traditional culture are a major source of inspiration as he uses them as bases for his writings legends and tales heard in deep Morocco, in souks² and in remote Moroccan areas and locales. Moroccan traditional tales, legends and elements of native traditional culture are more conspicuous in his 'kif stories', that is, those where the characters' drug induced hallucinatory states of mind are supports of legends, traditional tales, beliefs and practices. 'He of the Assembly', 'The Wind at Beni Midar' and 'The Story of Lahcen and Idir' are stories representative of the Moroccan traditional culture and where the focus is essentially placed on kif-smoking as the source of the Moroccan fantastic tales and legends.

'He of the Assembly' presents a macrocosm of some major aspects of Moroccan traditional culture and tradition; it is inspired from Moroccan popular tales and legends told to Bowles by Boujemaa, a young Moroccan whose name literally means 'he of the assembly'. The setting is the Medina³ of Marrakech and Jamaa El Fna which is the most important and popular Moroccan square where traditional story tellers meet. The story revolves around a traditional proverb and an idiomatic expression, 'The eye wants to sleep but the head is no mattress' and 'the eyes are not brothers'⁴, which illustrate the unrest as well as the hallucinatory fantasies of the main protagonist. It also ends on a traditional saying, 'A pipe of kif before breakfast gives a man the strength of a hundred camels in the courtyard'⁵, which is an epitome of the different kif delusions that form the body of this story. In addition to this, the story is rich in references to 'djinnns'⁶, to the Moroccan traditional practice of

¹ As a child, his mother used to tell him stories to help him go to sleep. Cf Without Stopping.

² Moroccan weekly fairs and markets.

³ That is, the ancient part of the city of Marrakech.

⁴ Paul Bowles, 'He of the Assembly', in: Collected Stories, pp. 313,

⁵ Paul Bowles, 'He of the Assembly', in Collected Stories, p. 325.

⁶ That is spirits. Cf 'He of the Assembly', in Collected Stories, p. 319.

burning ‘*chihh, fasoukh, tib, nidd*’¹ and to common superstitious beliefs that bad fate can be caught by walking near a ‘*segua*’² for example and dispelled by superstitious practices.

Similarly, “The Wind at Beni Midar” is set in deep Morocco and can also be associated with the Moroccan oral tradition. ‘By the Water’ dramatizes a Moroccan superstitious legend that ‘*hammams*’³ are inhabited by ‘*djinns*’, that is, spirits: a young Moroccan comes in a Turkish bath where Lazrag, the owner, is described as dwarfish and as having diabolic powers capable of turning a man into a bird. Paul Bowles reference to Lazrag as a ‘*dwarfish creature*’ suggests that he is not human and Amar’s encounter with a menacing crab hints that the ‘*djinn*’ has been metamorphosed into a sea-animal.

The above mentioned stories are *kif*-tales focused on traditional legends and practices and where the Moroccan points of view are included and the European people have either disappeared or become minor characters⁴.

Moroccan folk traditional types and myths are significant features of Bowles’s writings published after 1960. Two of the most popular and ancient Moroccan legends and folk tales is the adventures of Hadidan Aharam⁵, a popular and folk Moroccan character. Aisha Qandisha⁶ too is a Moroccan mythical spirit that recurs in the fiction of the sixties, especially in the short story ‘He of the Assembly’. Finally the figure of the ‘*mejdoub*’ belongs to the Moroccan traditional culture. It is a person who is either possessed by ‘*djinns*’ or spirits or a wanderer. The writer’s use of this figure as the central character of a short story points to his adoption of and fascination with Moroccan traditional culture. ‘Sidi Rahal’, the ‘*mejdoub*’ is the main character of the short story entitled ‘*Mejdoub*’ which fictionalises the way of life of the nomad character. The ‘*mejdoub*’, dressed in rags, symbolizes destitution, as well as a sort of renunciation to worldly affairs. The character himself illustrates the writer’s attraction by Moroccan traditional culture and at the same time recalls the writer’s later asceticism and future mysticism. In point of fact, published in 1974, this short story is one of the latest tales Paul Bowles wrote before he turned to mysticism and to a different style in writing.

¹ Cf ‘He of the Assembly’, in *Collected Stories*, pp. 318,319. These are herbs and products traditional people used to burn in order to ward off bad spirits.

² That is a brook.

³ Turkish baths

⁴ Cf J.Ditsky, “The Time for friendship: The Short Fiction of Paul Bowles”, in: *Twentieth Century American Literature*, p.380

⁵ Cf .M.Rountree, “Paul Bowles: Translations from the Moghrebi”, in: *Twentieth Century American Literature*, p. 397-400

⁶ Aisha Qandisha is the most popular and fearsome female djinn in Moroccan folklore.

Moroccan folklore and traditional music also colors Bowles's fiction. In fact, from the very beginning of his expatriation the writer presented a keen interest in Moroccan traditional folklore and music, especially the ancient and popular art forms and the music of the 'Rhaita'¹. Moroccan traditional musical instruments sometimes accompany the events of the writer's fiction. For instance in 'The Hours After Noon', Mrs Callenders distaste for the natives is also suggested by her comparing the sound of this instrument to a reptile: "A *rhaita* was being played fairly far away on the mountain. It would probably go on for several days and nights. She put her hands over her ears. As if that could help! Whenever she took them away, the slippery little sound would be there, twisting thinly around itself like a tree-snake"².

Generally, Moroccan traditional musical instruments either highlight or parallel the events and the characters' moods in the author's fiction. A case in point is the experience lived by Amar, the main protagonist of 'By the Water'. In this short story, Amar is attracted to the '*hammam*'³ by "a few languid notes being strummed on an oud"⁴. The languorous music correlates with the warm atmosphere of the bath and with the beguiling encounter Amar experiences in the public steam bath.

Bowles's interest in traditional Moroccan music is also the subject of 'The Rif, to Music'⁵. This article relates the writer's travel in the Rif⁶ to record different traditional music and presents his viewpoints as regards Moroccan folk music. In fact, the author's accurate and knowledgeable references to specific musical instruments such as the *zamar*, a 'double-reed instrument fitted with a pair of bull's horns'⁷ or the *qsbah*, 'a long reed flute with a low register'⁸. The author's concern in traditional culture as well involved folk dances such as the 'fraja'⁹ or the *imdyazen*¹⁰. The detailed specificities the writer provides account for his keen interest in Moroccan traditional culture and folk music as early as 1957, publication date of 'The Rif to Music'

Black Magic and superstition are other noteworthy signs of Paul Bowles's strong attraction by traditional Morocco. He was fascinated by black art from the very beginning of his expatriation in

¹ A reed instrument, equivalent to oboe that is current in northern Morocco .

² 'The Hours After Noon', Paul Bowles, Collected Stories, p. 236.

³ A Moroccan public steam bathhouse.

⁴ 'By the Water', Paul Bowles, Collected Stories, p. 32.

⁵ 'The Rif to Music', Paul Bowles, Their Heads are Green and their Hands are Blue, pp 82-127.

⁶ A northern region of Morocco.

⁷ 'The Rif to Music', Paul Bowles, Their Heads are Green and their Hands are Blue, pp 93, 111.

⁸ 'The Rif to Music', Paul Bowles, Their Heads are Green and their Hands are Blue, p. 111.

⁹ The 'Fraja' is a popular show where men sing and women dance. Cf 'The Rif to Music', Paul Bowles, Their Heads are Green and their Hands are Blue, p. 101.

¹⁰ Bowles specifies that the "Riffians are fond of drawing an analogy between the *imdyazen* (as the minstrels are called both here and in the Atlas) and the *gitanos* of Spain – only, as they point out, the *imdyazen* live in houses like other people, and not in camps outside the towns like gypsies". Paul Bowles, 'The Rif to Music', p. 110.

Morocco. Sorcery to a significant extent motivated his settlement in Tangier. The writer's autobiography, *Without Stopping*, ends on his straightforward fascination by sorcery: 'I relish the idea that in the night, all around me in my sleep, sorcery is burrowing its invisible tunnels in every direction, from thousands of senders to thousands of unsuspecting recipients'¹. In the context of the image of Morocco as a whole, black magic and superstition are mostly notable in the author's later fiction, that is to say written and published after 1960.

These two supernatural beliefs are prominent features in the stories 'A Friend of the World' and in 'the Wind at Beni Midar' for instance. The first short story is built around the forceful belief in the exercise of black magic by means of cats, in this particular case, Farid, the main protagonist's kitten. In the same way, sorcery is a critical issue in 'The Wind at Beni Midar'; this story is focused on the efficacy of 'djaoui' to induce trance states and on the supernatural powers of potions and curses to achieve magic.

'The Hyena' is also a short story inspired from the Moroccan traditional repository. It fictionalises a dialogue between a stork and a hyena about two Moroccan popular beliefs on the use of the hyena's urine for black magic purposes. The first belief is that is that the urine of a hyena is an efficient means to bewitch people and the second one is that the stork is a holy bird².

In addition to this, most characters in these tales are superstitious and embody the Moroccan traditional beliefs that bad spirits or 'djinn's' can bring bad fate and even death. For example, Driss resorted to a Fqih³, that is to say a sorcerer, and to a witch to cast a curse on the 'cabran' who died because of the curse that was cast on him. As a matter of fact, the story ends on the assertion of protagonist's superstition: "Then he was sure that the cabran's soul had been torn out of his body and that the power was truly broken"⁴.

The Moroccan dialect

Bowles's uses colloquial words and expressions taken from the language spoken by his characters, that is, the average Moroccans. The writer's popular Moroccan dialect combines phonetic transcriptions from dialectical Arabic in addition to words and expression taken from the French and Spanish languages. Different forms characterize this local colour style and English. Basically,

¹ Paul Bowles, *Without stopping*, p. 366.

² Cf Paul Bowles, 'The Hyena', in *Collected Stories*, p. 292.

³ Paul Bowles, 'The Wind at Beni Midar', in *Collected Stories*, p. 334.

⁴ Paul Bowles, 'The Wind at Beni Midar', in *Collected Stories*, p. 336.

phonetic transcriptions of dialectal idiomatic expressions are at times included as such in the writer's text : for instance, 'mkiyef maa rassou'¹, 'selkha min rassou'², 'Annah'³ and 'fondouk'⁴, 'a kouffa full of good *hindiyats*'⁵ and 'Yhoudia'⁶ form an integral part of Paul Bowles's text and are used as if they were English words. In addition to this, the text is also characterized by the repeated use of specific words from the same lexicon such as *chqaf*, *sebsi*⁷ and *mottoui*⁸, 'jduq jmel, fasoukh'⁹ and of the phonetic transcription of the singular and plural forms of the same word, such as 'chqaf' and 'chqofa'.

Bowles treatment of the Moroccan language also includes words from regional dialects such as 'noua'¹⁰, takes into account regional differences in the pronunciation for the word 'haouma'¹¹ and underscores different usages for the same word such as 'khai'¹² and 'khoya' for example. In addition to this, Paul Bowles as well includes words from standard Moroccan dialect such as *chouwal*¹³, that means the seven days that follow the Ramadan, which is the sacred month when Muslims fast.

The writer even reports the natives' distorted pronunciation of English words, such as "I spickin"¹⁴ or "what he sigh you"¹⁵ for instance. This picture of Moroccan dialectal Arabic also includes Spanish and French terms. Spanish and French words such as 'sinverguenza'¹⁶ and 'comisaria'¹⁷, 'merci mille fois, madame. Bonne nuit'¹⁸ are realistically integrated in the text on the same level as English and Moroccan dialect.

Morocco then is also present in Bowles's text via local colour features such as a colloquial and picturesque use of Spanish and French words as well as through phonetic transcriptions from

¹ Meaning absolutely druggy. Cf Paul Bowles, 'He of the Assembly', in: *Collected Stories*, p. 317.

² Paul Bowles, *Let it come Down*.

³ Paul Bowles, 'By the Water', in *Collected Stories*, p. 35.

⁴ Paul Bowles, 'By the Water', in *Collected Stories*, p. 35.

⁵ Meaning a basket full of good cactus fruits. Paul Bowles, 'The Wind at Beni Midar', in *Collected Stories*, p. 331.

⁶ Meaning a Jewish woman. Paul Bowles, 'A Friend of the World', in *Collected stories*, p. 297.

⁷ Words from the kif smoking lexicon. Cf 'He of the Assembly' in *Collected Stories*.

⁸ Word also meaning a kif pipe. Paul Bowles, 'A Friend of the World', in *Collected Stories*, p. 297.

⁹ Herb and mineral said to be used to practice sorcery or to ward off bad luck. Paul Bowles, 'A Friend of the world', in *Collected Stories*, p. 297.

¹⁰ 'He of the Assembly' in *Collected Stories*, p. 315. Word from the dialect spoken in the North of Morocco which refers to a sexually transmitted disease.

¹¹ Word meaning neighbourhood.

¹² Both words mean 'my brother';

¹³ 'He of the Assembly' in *Collected Stories*, p. 316.

¹⁴ Paul Bowles, *Let it come Down*, p. 56.

¹⁵ Paul Bowles, *Let it come Down*, p. 57.

¹⁶ Paul Bowles, 'A Friend of the World', in *Collected Stories*, p. 299.

¹⁷ Paul Bowles, 'A Friend of the World', in *Collected Stories*, p. 300.

¹⁸ Paul Bowles, *Let it come Down*, p. 57.

Moroccan Arabic. In fact, the idiomatic and informal facet of the image points to the scalpel precision and carefully wrought vein of Bowles's style.

This interest in Moroccan traditional and folk culture is not a constant facet of the writer's literary representation of his adopted country. In actual fact, there is an evolution in this facet of the image.

Viewed chronologically, Paul Bowles's image of Morocco denotes a gradual immersion into Moroccan culture and ethos. This progression is mostly notable at the level of characters and themes. The first writings deal Western characters interacting with native people. This is the case for instance of the short stories 'Tea on the Mountain' (1939), 'A Distant Episode' (1945), 'The Delicate Prey' (1948) and of the novels Let It Come Down (1952) and The Spider's House (1955). The next noteworthy stage of Paul Bowles's literary career is more focused on Moroccan issues, that is, the stress is placed on Moroccan characters' interaction and on themes inspired from Moroccan folklore and traditional culture. This development is marked in the short stories published starting from 1948 such as 'The Hyena' (1960), 'A Friend of the World' (1960), 'The Story of Lahcen and Idir' (1961), 'He of the Assembly' (1961) and 'The Wind at Beni Midar' (1962) to quote but a few.

With regards to Paul Bowles's Moroccan work as a whole, we can assert that there is a movement from Western and Moroccan characters and themes to strictly Moroccan ones. The first writings are characterized by the interaction between Westerners and native people and by themes involving both communities. Then, as Bowles became more immersed in Moroccan traditional life and culture, his literary production is focused on Moroccan characters only and presents themes essentially derived from the Moroccan traditional repository and settings from deep Morocco.

This framework also applies to the language component of the image. There is a slight, yet notable evolution in the vernacular aspect of the image of Morocco. This facet of Bowles's text seems to be composed of three main phases. The Moroccan, Spanish and French terms and expressions, their phonetic transcriptions and the idiomatic expressions are already present in Paul Bowles's earlier text as illustrations that are integrated in the text at the same level as the English language.

This local color becomes more marked in Bowles's Moroccan literary production starting from 1960s. This decade can be viewed as a turning point towards a more 'Moroccan' imprint of the image. This local color language at the same time illustrates his strong fascination with Morocco

and his identification with the other. At the level of the image of Morocco as a whole, Bowles's handling of Moroccan traditional culture at the same time grants an emblematic dimension to the image of his adopted country and represents the stance of the author's fascination of his Morocco.

Paul Bowles's magic country: Fascination with Moroccan Nature

Moroccan Nature and scenery are pivotal to Paul Bowles's representation of Morocco. An overt admiration of the Moroccan natural elements and landscapes is undoubtedly the writer's deepest and most important expressions of his fascination with Morocco. Actually, the Moroccan sunshine was a major motivation in his expatriation to the North African country; as he confesses in *Without stopping*, "I had been told there would be [...] sun every day"¹. Following this perspective, Moroccan nature and scenery became recurrent and major themes in the image of the writer's new home territory. A visceral and magical bond links up Paul Bowles to Moroccan Nature. In fact, at the onset of his expatriation, the writer was already conscious of Morocco's charm:

Had anyone asked me what I meant by magic, I should probably have defined the word by calling it a secret connection between the world of Nature and the consciousness of man, a hidden but direct passage which bypassed the mind.²

Bowles's fascination with nature can be traced back to his childhood. In this respect, in *Without stopping*, the writer underscores his privileged rapport with nature when young³. Besides, the writer's experience of Moroccan Nature as a whole and of Moroccan natural elements often induces a sensation of voluptuousness and of plenitude. Fragrant winds mediated his contact with Fez: "the dry, scented winds of inland Morocco were exhilarating. I lived in a state of perpetual excitement"⁴. Accordingly, Paul Bowles's image of his adopted country is the literary expression of this enchantment and instinctive bond. This fascination is mainly conveyed through two channels, that is, the author's striking admiration of Moroccan natural elements and the characters' rapport with nature.

The Moroccan astral elements, that is, the sky, the wind, the air, the sand and light are significant vectors of Paul Bowles's captivation by Moroccan Nature. The sky is a recurrent natural element in the image. In *Let it come Down* the sky is a constant reference. Tangier, the setting of this

¹ Paul Bowles, *Without Stopping*, p. 124.

² Paul Bowles, *Without Stopping*, p. 125.

³ Cf Paul Bowles, *Without Stopping*, p. 10.

⁴ Paul Bowles, *Without Stopping*, p. 277.

novel, is first of all introduced by Paul Bowles's first glimpse of that city which underlines a sort of union between the sky and the city's lights: "[...] only the glow of the city's lights was visible, reflected in the sky. That was when I felt an unreasoning and powerful desire to be in Tangier"¹. So, the author's lifelong expatriation in this North African city was first of all induced by the appeal of the tangerine lights and sky. This attraction is notable in the novel itself, since as the author underscores, "the tale is like a document relating to a specific place at a given time, illuminated by the light of that particular moment"². The word 'light' should be taken here at the figurative level, that is, the events of that moment, and at the literal level, which represents Tangier's natural glow. Further, all the subsequent significant sequences of the novel are introduced, framed or highlighted by meaningful and clear-cut natural descriptions that underline the beauty of Moroccan landscapes. For example, one of Dyar's rare moments of serenity and rest is illustrated by such descriptions:

When he opened his eyes again the room was pulsing with sunlight. The sun was out there, huge and clear in the morning sky, and its light was augmented by the water, thrown against the ceiling, where it moved like fire. He jumped up, stood in the window, stretched, scratched, yawned and smiled.³

The stunning blue Moroccan sky accounts for the dazzling light that characterizes Morocco. The overwhelming Moroccan light has a revivifying value that matches Dyar's expectations from Morocco. Nature often has a healing and restoring value. In Let it Come Down for instance, fresh air has a soothing value and conditions Dyar to sleep after the anguish of his previous existential reflections⁴. In the same sense, his waking up rested, with the prospect of a new day in which he will be the winner -instead of the victim- simply happy to live his life as it unfolds is stressed by the revitalizing energy of sunshine.

In fact, the harmonious union of the sky, wind, air and the various other natural components express the writer's absorption by Moroccan nature as illustrated by the following eulogistic and clear-cut landscape:

The end of the afternoon was splendid: the clouds had been blown away by a sudden wind from the Atlantic. The air smelled clean, the sky had become intense and

¹ Paul Bowles, Let it come Down, p. 7.

² Paul Bowles, Let it come Down, p. 7.

³ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 177.

⁴ Cf Let it Come Down, p. 177.

luminous [...]. The little waves on the beach were coming in quietly, the hills were changing color slowly with the dying of the light behind the city [...]¹.

The significance of nature is all the more stressed that one of the major passages of this novel, that is, Dyar's voluptuous experience on the beach of this city, is primarily lived through his perception of the Tangier's natural elements, a symphony in which the sand, the sun, the sky and the 'regular cymbal-crash of the waves'² associate to reveal the author's fascination of Moroccan landscapes.

Moroccan Nature is also a predominant feature in 'He of the Assembly', a short story characterized by a heightened imagery involving the sky as a major natural element. It begins with an epigraph that pays a tribute to the brightness of the sky and of the earth and, thus, sets the tone of the story. References to natural elements constitute the basic framework to the story and to the protagonist's kif delusions. The sky parallels and punctuates the protagonist's states of mind during his hallucinations. For instance, "The sky trembles and the earth is afraid, and the two eyes are not brothers"³ is a leitmotif that reflects Ben Tajah's mood at the beginning of the story and subsequently the protagonist's brief instants of calm are expressed through the sky that bursts into light⁴. Even the 'seven skies'⁵ are a metaphor for his fright from Aisha Qandisha. Other natural elements are emphasized: the night is compared to a jewel in his crown⁶, the wind fills his head⁷ and the voice of Aisha Qandisha, the female djinn, is 'a voice like water, like the wind moving the leaves in the trees, a woman'⁸. In this respect, in Moroccan mythology this female 'djinn' is said to be an extremely beautiful woman who uses his charm to captivate and trap men; so, Paul Bowles's comparing her to natural elements at the same time stresses Aisha Qandisha's attractiveness as well as the splendour of Moroccan nature. These parallels are a means to sublimate nature and to fuel the character's delusions.

Light and brightness are among Morocco's most compelling features and, as such, constitute Bowles's constant concern. The writer's depiction of brightness is so minute that even the 'afterglow'⁹ is underlined and the sky is described as bright even at night¹⁰ in 'A Distant Episode'.

¹ Paul Bowles, Let it come Down, p. 115.

² Paul Bowles, Let it come Down, p. 182.

³ Paul Bowles, 'He of the Assembly', in Collected Stories, p. 313.

⁴ Paul Bowles, 'He of the Assembly', in Collected Stories, p. 316.

⁵ Paul Bowles, 'He of the Assembly', in Collected Stories, p. 319.

⁶ Paul Bowles, 'He of the Assembly', in Collected Stories, p. 317.

⁷ Paul Bowles, 'He of the Assembly', in Collected Stories, p. 318.

⁸ Paul Bowles, 'He of the Assembly', in Collected Stories, p. 318.

⁹ Paul Bowles, 'A Distant Episode', in Collected Stories, p. 39.

¹⁰ Paul Bowles, 'A Distant Episode', in Collected Stories, p. 40.

This short story, set in the desert, presents many references to light, such as the ‘bright desert’¹, the ‘moon shining through the red lattice work’². The close attention the writer pays to minute aspects of Moroccan elements as well as his precise descriptions at the same time reflect his interest in and admiration of Moroccan scenery and nature. For example, even in a correspondence to a friend, Bowles emphasizes the beauty and unity of the cosmic environment of Tangier:

Here I shall live until the eucalyptus leaves all fall and it starts to rain across the strait. It is unbelievably lovely here and the sea is peacock feather blue. The rest is whiter than Jesus's soul, so white the eye's pupils are pained to grow tiny enough³.

The beauty and the precise focus of this picture are per se an expression of Bowles’s admiration of Tangier’s landscape.

The wind and the sun are as well privileged natural elements in ‘The Wind at Beni Midar’ for instance. As a matter of fact, during a kif dream in ‘He of the Assembly’, the protagonist’s listening to the music of the wind in the telephone wires fuels his fantasy⁴. Nature parallels the protagonist’s journey in the countryside: Driss’s hopeful prospects at the beginning of the day are represented by a very blue sky, his journey began when he heard ‘many birds singing in the *safsaf*⁵ tree and the ‘cabran’s⁶ forthcoming end is forecast by natural references. The wind too is interwoven in the text. The short story ends on the cabran’s moans along with an evocative description of the wind: “a dry wind blew between the mountains. It made a great noise in the *safsaf* tree outside the window. The air roared and the leaves rattled, but Driss still heard the cabran’s voice crying⁷”.

In the same way, the action of ‘A Friend of the World’ is interlaced with descriptions highlighting the beauty of nature; for example, Salam’s soporific siesta is introduced by ‘the sun had gone down behind the plain and the soft breeze began to come in through the windows’⁸, then

¹ Paul Bowles, ‘A Distant Episode’, in *Collected Stories*, p. 41-42.

² Paul Bowles, ‘A Distant Episode’, in *Collected Stories*, p. 40.

³ Retrieved from http://articles.chicagotribune.com/1994-02-13/entertainment/9402130104_1_paul_bowles-tangier-letters.

⁴ Paul Bowles, ‘He of the Assembly’, in *Collected Stories*, p. 313.

⁵ ‘Paul Bowles, ‘The Wind at Beni Midar’, in *Collected Stories*, p. 329. *Safsaf* means a poplar tree in the Moroccan dialect.

⁶ A ‘cabran’ is a corporal in Moroccan popular dialect.

⁷ ‘Paul Bowles, ‘The Wind at Beni Midar’, in *Collected Stories*, p. 336.

⁸ Paul Bowles, ‘A Friend of the World’, in *Collected Stories*, p. 300.

the quiet place he was looking for is associated with ‘the blue light of the moon and the sky’¹ and finally he sat to contemplate the ‘deep muddy river that was moving below in the moonlight.’²

The soothing dimension Bowles grants to certain natural elements underscores his fascination by the Moroccan Nature. For instance, the tale ‘The Story of Lahcen and Idir’ ends on the protagonist’s calming and restoring sleep at Merkala, a beach near Tangier: “Instead he took off his clothes and bathed in the sea, and when he had finished, he lay in the sun on the sand all day and slept.”³

The writer’s enchantment with Moroccan scenery is also apparent in the characters’ rapport with Nature. In Bowles’s kif stories⁴ for instance, man’s relationship to nature is magical. Kif induced hallucinations alternate with references to the magical beauty of Moroccan nature.

In these stories, kif is a medium to highlight the beauty of Moroccan Nature and to achieve a visceral closeness and communion with it. This rapport illustrates the author’s closeness to the Moroccan nature as well as his intense fascination with it. Since kif generates a sort of trance and detachment from real life, the characters’ rapport to Nature can therefore be interpreted as the sign of a deep and symbiotic bond and admiration. In Bowles’s kif stories, hallucinogen substances such as kif and majoun⁵ are ways to the writer’s unconscious⁶ and means to achieve catharses. This aspect of the image partly accounts for the distortion that characterizes it.

Natural elements are then a running thread in the image which account for Bowles’s constant preoccupation and fascination with Moroccan nature. The writer’s captivation by Moroccan Nature is at the background of all his Moroccan writings and eulogistic natural descriptions are intertwined in the events of the story. The quite unconditional fascination by Moroccan Nature and landscapes is the most conspicuous and comprehensive aspect of the author’s image of Morocco. An intense captivation by Moroccan scenery and Nature subtends Bowles’s image of Morocco as a whole starting from the beginning of his Moroccan literary production. It is an intertextual connecting thread that marks the author’s short stories, novels as well as different interviews.

¹ Paul Bowles, ‘A Friend of the World’, in *Collected Stories*, p. 301.

² Paul Bowles, ‘A Friend of the World’, in *Collected Stories*, p. 301.

³ Paul Bowles, ‘The Story of Lahcen and Idir’, in *Collected Stories*, p. 311.

⁴ Kif stories are tales essentially built on the characters’ kif induced states of mind. These most important of these stories are ‘He of the Assembly’, ‘The Wind at Beni Midar’ and ‘The Story of Lahcen and Idir’.

⁵ Kif means hemp and majoun is a sort of cannabis jam.

⁶ Cf Lawrence D. Stewart, *The Illumination of North Africa*, 114.

The captivation by Moroccan Nature and heavenly elements can be interpreted as metaphors for an ideal of completeness and wholeness¹. Paul Bowles's fascination with Moroccan Nature entails the representation of Morocco as a Paradise. In this regard, the Moroccan Eden, along with the sense of completeness, involves the immediate satisfaction of Desire².

A compelling admiration for Moroccan Nature is woven in the author's literary image of his adopted country. The Moroccan sun, sky, wind and air for instance are the author's obsessive metaphors. They are images reflecting his fascination by Morocco at the beginning of his expatriation, yet they already include the seeds of the writer's later mysticism. This enchantment with Morocco set in motion the strong and intuitive 'interior mechanism'³ that is expressed by the author's fascination with Moroccan Nature and that initiates his mystic quest and mysticism. In this respect, the writer's early attraction by Moroccan cosmic elements already contained the seeds of the mystic Unity of Existence. Morocco's appeal to the writer can be interpreted as the metaphor⁴ for his early enchantment by Nature and for the seeds of his mystic quest in Morocco.

In actual fact, a physical and visceral link, in the sense of instinctive and symbiotic, unites Bowles to Moroccan nature. As the author states in Without Stopping, the first glance of Africa stirred in him a 'visceral' emotion and set in motion an 'engine-within'⁵ that surpasses the mind. This connection sets a connection between the African country and the writer's unconscious. So, there is a correlative link between the author's fascination with Morocco and his unconscious. The author's laudatory descriptions of Moroccan landscapes and natural elements, his adoption of Moroccan traditional culture and folklore and his symbiotic tie with Morocco point to his identification with the host country.

In this respect, the attraction Morocco exerted on Paul Bowles can be interpreted in terms of Lacan's theory of the mirror-stage. In the process of 'transitivism', the infant confuses his external image with images of other subjects. The outcome of this confusion is a misidentification of himself with the 'other'. According to Lacan, this new development that is transitivism is the outcome of 'a

¹ Cf Muller and Richardson, Lacan and Language, A Reader's Guide to Ecrits, p. 16 and E.Wright, Psychoanalytical Criticism: Theory into Practice, pp.108-109.

² Desire will be studied later in relation with the Desire of the Mother;

³ Paul Bowles, Without Stopping, p. 125.

⁴ In the sense of a form of substitution. Cf J.P. Muller and Richardson, Lacan and Language.

⁵ Cf Paul Bowles, Without Stopping, p. 125.

veritable captation by the image of the other'¹. During this development, 'it is by means of identification with the other that he sees the whole gamut of reactions of bearing and display [...] the slave being identified with the despot, the actor with spectator, the seduced with seducer'². On this basis, Bowles's captivation by Morocco, by Moroccan landscapes and natural elements as well as his adoption of Moroccan themes and traditional culture can be interpreted as expressions of a captation by the image of the 'other' in the lacanian sense.

Bowles's fascination is a narcissistic identification, that is, an identification with the reflected image, where 'the I is an other'³. The identification and confusion with images of other subjects is the beginning of the 'social dialectic', that is, a link between the ego and society in the context of transitivity. Paul Bowles's captivation by Morocco correlates with the identification and confusion with the reflected image. Accordingly, the literary image of Morocco corresponds to the specular I that is deflected in to the social I⁴.

Moroccan space and settings

Mastery of the Moroccan environment is also an expression of identification. Bowles's expatriation can be viewed as an attempt to master the Moroccan space and as an expression of identification with the 'other'. The writer visited Tangier for the first time in August 1931 and settled permanently there from 1947 until his death in 1999. His definitive expatriation can be considered as expressing a domination of the Moroccan space. Equally, even at the level of his Moroccan fiction, the settings are quite exclusively Moroccan. In the writer's literary image of Morocco, the mastery of the environment is expressed through the centrality and focus on Moroccan settings and spaces.

The writer's expatriation and his attempt to master the Moroccan environment can be interpreted in terms of Lacan's theory of the child's mastery of his environment and of his attempt to make his an alien territory. Accordingly, the analysis of Bowles's treatment of space and settings illustrates Lacan's concept of space: the different Moroccan settings and environments should be approached as an "imagery of the ego"⁵ and the way the different spaces are mapped corresponds to places where the imagery of the ego develops. In the context of this investigation, Morocco corresponds to the

¹ Cf Muller and Richardson, *Lacan and Language, A Reader's Guide to Ecrits*, pp 30-34.

² Lacan, (1977, p. 19/113) quoted by Muller and Richardson, *Lacan and Language, A Reader's Guide to Ecrits*, p. 32. cf also A. Sheridan, *Jacques Lacan, Ecrits*, pp 1-7.

³ Cf Muller and Richardson, *Lacan and Language, A Reader's Guide to Ecrits*, pp 30-34,

⁴ Cf Sheridan *Jacques Lacan, Ecrits*, p. 5 and Muller and Richardson, *Lacan and Language, A Reader's Guide to Ecrits*, p. 33.

⁵ J. P. Muller, W. J. Richardson, *Lacan and Language, A Reader's Guide to Ecrits*, p. 50.

reflected space¹ and contains the imagery of the author's self. Therefore, the writer's treatment of the Moroccan space and settings mirrors his ego as well as his aspirations to freedom, harmony, plenitude and unity.

Space and settings take on a crucial importance in the context of this research. This is due to Bowles's status as an expatriate whose Moroccan work is not set in his mother country. Morocco is his chosen country and expatriation is therefore a form of mastery of the environment. Morocco and the Moroccan spaces and settings are then the writer's reflected space in the context of Lacan's theory of the mirror stage.

Moroccan space and settings in Bowles's image of Morocco fall into two main categories: confined and closed places on the one hand and desert open spaces on the other.

Closed and confined settings

Closed spaces are a recurrent feature of Bowles's Moroccan work. The action very often takes place in restricted areas such as caves, grottoes and tiny rooms. For instance, most of the action of *Let it come Down* takes place in confined spaces such as a smuggler's tiny office² which is compared to a cage³, the office of Wilcox, the western smuggler is compared to an 'unventilated little box'⁴, the money changer's shop which is barren, dark and tiny⁵, small bars⁶ or the 'medina'⁷ of Tangier for instance. The medina recurs in Bowles's Moroccan fiction because of its 'closed' topography; it is usually organized in dark, narrow and tortuous streets. It is the setting of the short story 'A Friend of the World'⁸ for instance. The secluded and dim atmosphere of a cave in "The Scorpion", a 'hammam'⁹ in "By the Water", a ravine in 'The hyena' or a small room with a tiny window in 'A Thousand Days for Mokhtar' for instance are restricted settings that are characteristic of Paul Bowles's image of Morocco.

These reduced spaces are oppressive. The more reduced and alienating the space is, the more intense is the oppression. These places recall his secluded life in his room in the father country. When

¹ Cf J.P. Muller and W.J. Richardson, *Lacan and Language, A Reader's Guide to Ecrits*, pp 50-51 and A. Sheridan, *Jacques Lacan, Ecrits*, pp 25-29.

² Paul Bowles, *Let it come Down*, pp 80, 82.

³ Paul Bowles, *Let it come Down*, p. 80.

⁴ Paul Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, p. 85.

⁵ Paul Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, p. 85.

⁶ Paul Bowles, *Let it come Down*, p. 87.

⁷ That is the ancient part of the city;

⁸ Paul Bowles, 'A Friend of the World', in *Collected Stories*, p. 295.

⁹ These Moroccan Turkish bathes were usually small and dimly lit spaces.

young, Paul Bowles used to withdraw in the privacy of his room to escape from his father's repressive domination and took a 'forbidden' pleasure in the exploration of the dim recesses of the sheds in his father's house¹.

The correlation between the writer's confinement in his room when young and the restricted spaces in his Moroccan fiction may be read in the light of Bachelard's view of space. First, according to this philosopher, the settings in a work of fiction correlate with the spaces where one lives or used to live. As Stilgoe comments in the introduction of The Poetics of Space,

In The Poetics of Space, Bachelard reveals time after time that setting is more than scene in works of art, that it is often the armature around which the work revolves. He elevates setting to its rightful place alongside character and plot, and offers readers a new angle of vision that reshapes any understanding of great paintings and novels, and folktales too. His is a work of genuine topophilia².

On this basis, the settings of Bowles's image of Morocco should be read in terms of the different spaces of the writer's life. As John A. Stilgoe asserts, the house³ is for Bachelard 'the metaphor for humanness'⁴. Thus, the author's confinement in his private room during childhood parallels the restricted settings of his Moroccan fiction. In addition to this, the confined and closed locales of the author's Moroccan fiction should not be taken at the literal level but as metaphorical since, as Bachelard specifies, the 'inhabited space transcends geometrical space'⁵. This assertion entails that the settings in Bowles's work should not be considered as mere abodes, but as spaces that correlate with the author, and more precisely with his imagination and mind, in the sense of recollection of the space he lived in most of the time while in the fatherland. As Bachelard observes, the "inhabited space transcends the geometrical space"⁶ and "the poetic image is a sudden salience on the surface of the psyche"⁷.

In the same sense, in the light of Bachelard's philosophy of space, the settings and space of the writer's literary Morocco can be viewed as representative of his first cosmos, that is, the confined and isolated atmosphere of his childhood. As this philosopher points out, "Our house is our corner of

¹ Cf Paul Bowles, Without Stopping, p. 11.

² Gaston Bachelard, The Poetics of Space, p.X.

³ Taken in the sense of 'locales' and settings.

⁴ John A. Stilgoe, in: Gaston Bachelard, The Poetics of Space, p. VII.

⁵ Gaston Bachelard, The Poetics of Space, p. 47.

⁶ Gaston Bachelard, The Poetics of Space, p. 47.

⁷ Gaston Bachelard, The Poetics of Space, p. 1.

the world. As has often been said, it is our first universe, a real cosmos in every sense of the word”¹. Therefore, Bowles’s Moroccan settings in the image physically and psychologically replicate his first cosmos, that is, his confined room and isolation when a child. So, settings, or the external cosmos, represent the writer’s first and inner cosmos. Indeed, Bowles’s Moroccan space reverberates² his past in the original country; as Bachelard specifies; “The poetic image [...] is not an echo of the past. On the contrary: through the brilliance of any image, the distant past resounds with echoes”³. Bowles’s Moroccan settings can thus be related to the writer’s universe: as Bachelard states, ‘all important words, all the words marked for grandeur by a poet, are keys to the universe, to the dual universe of the Cosmos and the depths of the human spirit’⁴.

The restricted spaces also reflect the writer’s needs for shelter and freedom. Imagination, kif and fantasy⁵ are means Bowles uses to liberate the oppression of a limited space. These confined settings at the same time reflect the writer’s shelter in Morocco and foreshadow the writer’s retreat and khalwa of his later Moroccan fiction in the context of his mystic quest.

There is a truly a link between the limited space of the author’s childhood, the confined settings of his Moroccan fiction and the isolated retreats in the context of his mystic quest. As Bachelard rightly states, “all the spaces of our past moments of solitude, the spaces in which we have suffered from solitude, enjoyed, desired and compromised solitude, remain indelible within us, and precisely because the human being wants them to remain so”⁶. Accordingly, the writer’s confined childhood contained the seeds of his Moroccan mystic retreat.

Bowles’s Moroccan work is as well rich in shabby, dark and grim locales. In addition to the smallness and the oppressive character of most settings, a negative and sordid environment is often the background of the author’s writings: In Let it Come Down for instance, the hotel where Dyar stays in Tangier is a gloomy and cracked hotel smelling of close air and compared to a cage⁷. Many grimy details punctuate the westerner’s arrival in Tangier, such as the rats invading the streets⁸ as

¹ Gaston Bachelard, The Poetics of Space, p. 4.

² In fact, Bachelard refers to the poetic image as ‘reverberation’ in the sense of ‘resounding’ and in Bergson’s ‘elan vital’. In this context, ‘reverberation’ represents ‘being’ and consequently at the same time reflects the writer’s past and present. Cf. Gaston Bachelard, The Poetics of Space, pp. XVI-XVII.

³ Gaston Bachelard, The Poetics of Space, p. XVI.

⁴ Gaston Bachelard, The Poetics of Space, p. 108.

⁵ In the sense of dreams.

⁶ Gaston Bachelard, The Poetics of Space, p. 10.

⁷ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, pp. 18-20.

⁸ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 74.

well as the all-pervading dirt. Likewise, in 'A Thousand Days for Mokhtar' the setting is made of a 'blood-like smell of the sea'¹ and of cats sitting on mounds of garbage².

Desert and open spaces

The desert and the different rural open spaces contrast with the confined places. Vast wastelands are also a noteworthy facet of the image of Morocco. Bowles was an inveterate traveller. The expatriate was relentlessly in search of new and open spaces that counterbalanced the oppressive confinement of his room while a child. Settings and space in Paul Bowles's fiction as a whole present a movement from jungle to desert landscapes.

Bowles's residence in Morocco engendered in his fiction a shift from the South American jungles to the Saharan desert and Moroccan places. The jungle is the recurrent and characteristic space of Paul Bowles's writings set in other remote lands such as Central or South America. So, there is a shift from the jungle to the Sahara and to desert places. Similarities link both spaces. The jungle and the desert equally connote fear, dread, violence, isolation and warfare. There is a marked similarity in the desert and the jungle settings. As Wayne Pounds asserts, in Morocco, only the "raw" social and human material has become North Africanized³.

The Sahara and desert places constitute a significant setting of Bowles's image of Morocco. This is the case for 'A Distant Episode' which is set in Ain Tadouirt, an imaginary city located in the 'warm country'⁴ that is to say in the 'bright desert'⁵. In the same sense, 'The Delicate Prey' is set in 'remote regions'⁶ set in Southern wastelands, probably the Western Sahara. The wild and desert settings of these two short stories are the stages of barbarous acts of castration, violence and cruelty.

Even the open spaces, such as the desert wastelands, the beach or the mountain of Tangier are oppressive. Physical spaciousness is to be opposed to and related to the psychological space. They are inversely proportionate. Space and settings are always oppressive. For instance, the captivating description the scenery of Tangier's mountain offers contrasts with the definite lack of communication that separates hopeful young people in 'Tea on the Mountain'. In the same way, the vast and wild Saharan territories are spaces for oppression, violence, blood and terror in 'A Distant

¹ Paul Bowles, 'A Thousand Days for Mokhtar', in *Collected Stories*, p. 194.

² Paul Bowles, 'A Thousand Days for Mokhtar', in *Collected Stories*, p. 194.

³ Wayne Pounds, "The Subject of Paul Bowles", in: *Twentieth Century American Literature*, p. 303

⁴ Paul Bowles, 'A Distant Episode', in: *Collected Stories*, p. 39.

⁵ Paul Bowles, 'A Distant Episode', in *Collected Stories*, pp. 41-42.

⁶ Paul Bowles, "The Delicate Prey", in *Collected Stories*, p. 165.

Episode' and in 'The Delicate Prey'. So, a dichotomy underlies Paul Bowles's treatment of Moroccan settings: confined and closed places are opposed to open desert spaces, yet both settings are oppressive and harbour violent acts.

The desert and the open spaces of Bowles's image of Morocco can as well be replaced in the perspective of Bachelard's poetics of space. In this context, the open wastelands of Bowles's image of Morocco can be replaced in the context of Bachelard's philosophy and therefore be associated with the '*elsewhere*'¹. In this context, these vast spaces are referred to as an 'intimate immensity'². This denotation highlights the correlation that unites the 'immensity' of vast spaces to man's being.

In fact, the isolation of wastelands also matches Bowles's image of Morocco. According to Seltzer, man's moments of past solitude are quite indelible; thus, Seltzer observes that "all the spaces of our past moments of solitude, the spaces in which we have suffered from solitude, enjoyed, desired and compromised solitude, remain indelible within us, and precisely because the human being wants them to remain so"³. In this context, the isolation his characters suffer from may be traced back to the seclusion and loneliness of his childhood. Extending Seltzer's view on isolation to Bowles's mysticism and practice of '*khalwa*' and mystic isolation.

Geographical limits of Paul Bowles's Morocco

Bowles's Morocco is geographically limited. The main places that are referred to and that constitute the settings of the image only include Tangier, some indefinite rural spots, imaginary Saharan cities and some vaguely defined places in the South of Morocco and in Western Sahara. The remaining parts of the writer's host country are peripheral and present only through the glimpses of a traveller. For instance, the author describes some Moroccan cities such as Sefrou and Marrakech in a succinct, detached and postcard way⁴. Casablanca did not attract him and he vowed not to return to it any more⁵. As he acknowledged in the Evans interview, cities and urban Morocco did not attract him: "I don't like cities anywhere. I like the country"⁶. The city of Fes is the setting of The Spider's House. This novel dramatizes the period and conflicts that preceded the Moroccan decolonisation

¹ Cf Gaston Bachelard, The Poetics of Space, p. 184: Bachelard defines '*elsewhere*' as follows: "When this *elsewhere* is in *natural* surroundings, that is, when it is not lodged in the houses of the past, it is immense". Since the desert and the Moroccan open spaces do not belong to Bowles's past, they can therefore be considered as the '*elsewhere*' of Bachelard's theory.

² Gaston Bachelard, The Poetics of Space, p. 183.

³ Mark Seltzer, Trauma in the Pathological Public Sphere, p. 10.

⁴ Cf Paul Bowles, Without Stopping, pp. 132-133.

⁵ Cf Paul Bowles, Without Stopping, p. 133.

⁶ Oliver Evans, "An Interview with Paul Bowles", Mediterranean Review, 1, (Winter 1971).

and therefore it is just set at the background of the events, with no significant relationship with the author.

Symbiosis between settings, themes and characters

A perfect symbiosis links characters and settings. Settings and spaces match the characters' state of mind. There is an equal and complementary correlation between the landscapes and the characters. The author is not a paysagist in the sense that he is not interested in nature itself but in peopled landscapes. In his work, even the desert is inhabited. A Bowles situation is mainly composed of characters and landscapes. Usually characters are revealed in landscapes and the different settings such as the desert, the jungle, Tangier, and even in the closed, dark and shabby locales. For instance, the confined settings reflect the characters' misfortunes and psychological oppression; this is the case for Dyar, the main protagonist of *Let it come Down*, who lives in a small stifling room in Tangier and which is associated to a 'cage' of the self.

On the other hand, desert spaces find their hidden significance in characters. There is a correspondence the desert spaces and the moral profile and destiny of his characters. In this regard, the western professor's deadly fate in 'A Distant Episode' is suggested by the abyss at the edge of which he is standing¹ and by the precipice he decides to explore². The heroes who people Bowles's Moroccan work are usually desperate, wandering without purpose in desert and desolate landscapes and places. These wild and desert locales that harbour Bowles's characters illustrate and correspond to their desolation. In this sense, the author's choice of the Sahara and wild desert places fits his examination of human failures.

On another level the author sets a link between characters and settings, that is, their synthetic and cosmic environment. For instance, in an interview he specified that

The motivation of characters in fiction like mine should be a secondary consideration [...] the characters are made of the same material as the rest of the work. Since they are activated by the other elements of the synthetic cosmos, their own motivations are relatively unimportant.³

¹ Paul Bowles, 'A Distant episode', in *Collected Stories*, p. 42.

² Paul Bowles, 'A Distant episode', in *Collected Stories*, p.43.

³ Daniel Halpern, "Interview with Paul Bowles", *Tri Quaterly*, 33, 1975, p. 168.

So, characters are activated, that is, respondent to and reflective of the man made social cosmos. In another interview the writer explicitly associates characters to settings:

[...] I suppose what I look for is accurate expressions, for accurate accounts of states of mind, the way in which the consciousness of each individual is reported in the book. How the author makes us believe in the reality of his characters, in the reality of his settings.¹

In addition to this, Paul Bowles also often sets his short stories in obscure and frighteningly mysterious places such as darkrooms, hammams (Moroccan Turkish baths), and shabby hotels for instance. Once more, the writer's choice is not made at random. It is not only the natural landscapes that reflect the state of mind of the characters but also the social environment.

So, the settings, far from being touristically material, are an integral part of the writer's examination of character's states of mind. Bowles did not only write stories for the sake of exoticism, but partly because of the relationship existing between his characters' states of mind, on the one hand, and Morocco as an alien sheltering territory on the other hand.

Analysis of Paul Bowles's treatment of space and settings in terms of the imagery of the ego

If Bowles's image of Morocco presents glimpses of the host country that are 'mirrors' of the author's self and of his interior space, then this location can then be viewed as the "universe" of the writer's inner self and space. Generally, the recurrent and closed settings as well as restricted areas of his fiction are inversely proportionate to his characters' and his yearning for space and spaciousness.

Bowles's image of Morocco entails the representation of the author's ego² which is reflected in his treatment of space and settings³. In this sense, Morocco and Moroccan spaces can be interpreted in terms of Freud's defence mechanisms of denial and displacement to overcome the feeling of guilt. In this sense, in Without Stopping Paul Bowles expressed his feeling of guilt at being born. Denial and displacement in the image of Morocco are then represented by his expatriation, that is, by Morocco and by the Moroccan settings in the image.

¹ Oliver Evans, "An Interview with Paul Bowles", *Mediterranean Review*, 1, (Winter 1971).

² The ego should be understood as part of a person's mind which tries to fulfil the hidden desires of the unconscious.

³ Cf Muller and Richardson, Lacan and Language, A Reader's Guide to Ecrits, p. 50.

The Moroccan confined and dim settings on the one hand and the open bright desert spaces triangulate with a concealed space, that is, his homeland, or more specifically, with the dim recesses where he used to hide in his parents' home¹. The open spaces such as the beach of Tangier, vast and empty places contrast with the confined locales and mirror the author's yearning for freedom that is consequent to his punitive seclusion in his room when a child.

The desert, Tangier, some indefinite rural and desert places as well as small and closed locales compose the spatial elements of his Moroccan shelter. These areas correspond to places that matched the author's ego and his characters' personalities and frame of mind. As S.E. Olson asserts, there is a direct relationship between the alien terrain and topography on the one hand and the characters'-and so the author's- psychic 'fissures' and childhood². Paul Bowles's Moroccan settings reflect "the topos of promise betrayed, childhood destroyed"³. Confined locales revealing oppression and open spaces communicating yearning for freedom and terror, settings then are expressions of consciousness.

Morocco and Moroccan settings in the image also stand for Bowles's elected country as opposed to his fatherland. The spatial symmetry contrasts his Moroccan homeland versus America, the fatherland. So, the writer's self imposed exile and the Moroccan settings of the image can be viewed as expressions of the killing of the Father. In fact, his father's unfair behaviour and military rule were decisive. As the writer declares, 'it began a new stage in the development of hostilities between us. I vowed to devote my life to his destruction [...]'⁴. On the basis of this confession, the Moroccan space in the image can be viewed as a shield against his father's authority and as expressions of the 'killing of the Father'. As a matter of fact, in his autobiography, the writer clearly equates the fatherland with a prison: "Each day lived on this side of the Atlantic was one more day spent outside prison"⁵. So, Morocco as a space, can be read as a form of shedding, implying then that the symbolical killing of the Father was achieved through the discarding of the fatherland. In this same context, the 'femaleness of exotic and erotic landscapes in North Africa'⁶ may also be interpreted as an expression of the killing of the Father. In the light of Lacan's theory of the mirror-

¹ Cf Paul Bowles, *Without Stopping*, p. 11.

² Steven E. Olson, 'Alien Terrain', in: *Twentieth Century Literature, A Paul Bowles Issue*, p. 336.

³ Steven E. Olson, 'Alien Terrain: Paul Bowles's filial Landscapes', in *Twentieth Century Literature, A Paul Bowles Issue*, p. 349.

⁴ Paul Bowles, *Without Stopping*, p. 45.

⁵ Paul Bowles, *Without Stopping*, p. 165.

⁶ Marilyn Moss, 'The Child in the Text: Autobiography, Fiction, and the Aesthetics of Deception in *Without Stopping*', in: *Twentieth Century Literature, A Paul Bowles Issue*, p. 318.

stage, the author's definite choice of Morocco as a homeland is a spatial identification that expresses his killing of father.

According to Lacan, there is a spatial symmetry in man's narcissistic structure¹ which is essential in the establishment of the bases of a psychological analysis of space². The infant, and man afterwards, views himself in a spatial symmetry and the reflection is correlative to his ego. So, space and settings in the image of Morocco are correlative with the writer's ego and are reflections of his narcissistic structure³.

The reflected space is, as Lacan asserts, kaleidoscopic⁴, that is to say distorted. Accordingly, Bowles's Moroccan settings and his handling of space should be regarded as distorted expressions of the writer's ego. Like the infant during the mirror-stage, the adult person always longs for a mastery of his environment and for an imaginary unity, that is to say, for the feeling of being a unified and total person in symbiosis with the surrounding space. Thus, the Moroccan space and settings can be regarded as expressions of the author's spatial identification and mastery of the Moroccan environment. These two facets of Paul Bowles's image of the host country are as well representative of the imaginary unity and plenitude.

The confined places are metaphors for oppression and strongly contrast with the open spaces and bright natural environments that correlate with the author's quest for paradise in Morocco and with his experience of plenitude. The duality that characterizes Bowles's treatment of space and settings expresses the dichotomy of fatherland versus homeland, oppression as opposed to liberty. A brilliant natural outer space very often stands out against closed spots, representing thus some of the facets writer's ego. The closed and grubby settings are also set in opposition to the constructive references of positive natural elements such as the open space where the sky, water, and sand are related to and suggestive of the writer's efforts at transcendence. In general, these natural elements are metaphors representing Morocco and, because of their correlation with positive states of mind and with feelings of shelter, security, illustrate Bowles's expectations, yearning and quest in his host country.

¹ Cf A. Sheridan, *Jacques Lacan, Ecrits*, p. 27.

² A. Sheridan, *Jacques Lacan, Ecrits*, p. 27.

³ Cf Muller, Richardson, Lacan and Language, *A reader's Guide to *Ecrits**, p. 50 and A. Sheridan, *Jacques Lacan, Ecrits*, p. 27.

⁴ A. Sheridan, *Jacques Lacan, Ecrits*, p. 27.

The author's adoption of Morocco and his definite residence there may be viewed as attempts to make his an alien territory and therefore as a contribution to the feeling of plenitude and totality he experiences. In Lacan's terms, the domination of space correlates with the instinct of self-preservation¹. There is a correlation between the 'instinct of self-preservation' and the 'vertigo of the domination of space'². As Muller and Richardson explain, this correspondence indicates that aggressivity stems from Darwin's struggle for 'survival of the fittest'³. In relation with Bowles's Moroccan space, we can infer that his complete expatriation and treatment of space and settings are reflective of his 'fear of death'⁴ and of his 'narcissistic fear of damage to one's own body'⁵. So, Morocco, and the way the writer deals with space and settings, can be regarded as representative of his instinct of self-preservation. This predisposition is in keeping with different facets of the image of Morocco, namely with his expectations from the host country, with his unconscious desire to kill the Father and with his mystic quest in the sheltering realm.

The image of Morocco, which is the author's reflected space, can then be interpreted as illustrative of his attempt at survival. This perspective becomes clearer when one considers the intersection point of flight and inhibition, that is, the basic cleavage that signals both plenitude and finitude. Freud refers to this basic junction as the *death instinct*⁶. At this junction there is the opening up of a gap in man, which signals both plenitude and finitude, that is to say the death instinct. In this context, there might be a correlation between the 'instinct of self-preservation' and the 'vertigo of domination of space'⁷. Thus, the desert, the open spaces and Morocco as a reflected space are indicative of Bowles's attempt at survival and regeneration which are expressed and enacted in his mystic quest. In this respect, the writer's mystic quest in Morocco and the subsequent attempt at transcendence can be considered as efforts to fear of death and damage to the body as stated by Lacan.

The spatial identification is only an illusory unity. This aspect is metaphorically expressed in 'The Garden' where the main protagonist is referred to as 'a man' in order to underline his symbolical status. This short story is set in a heavenly oasis which is granted a gemstone beauty. The farmer's land is so beautiful that it is referred to as a garden, which involves connotations of beauty

¹ J.P Muller and W.J.Richardson, *Lacan and Language, A Reader's Guide to Ecrits*, p. 50.

² Cf Muller, Richardson, *Lacan and Language, A reader's Guide to Ecrits.*, p. 50 and Sheridan, *Jacques Lacan, Ecrits*, p. 28.

³ Muller, Richardson, *Lacan and Language, A reader's Guide to Ecrits.*, p. 50.

⁴ Sheridan, *Jacques Lacan, Ecrits*, p. 28.

⁵ Sheridan, *Jacques Lacan, Ecrits*, p. 28.

⁶ J.P. Muller and W.J. Richardson, *Lacan and Language, A Reader's Guide to Ecrits*, p50.

⁷ Jacques Lacan, 1977, p. 28/123. quoted by Muller and Richardson, *Lacan and Language, A Reader's Guide to Ecrits.*, p. 50. Cf also Muller and Richardson, *Lacan and Language, A Reader's Guide to Ecrits.*, p. 28

and harmony. In fact, the garden is figuratively associated with a 'treasure'¹. The splendour of this garden induces the farmer's persistent joyful gaze and triggers him to 'work happily with the plants and trees'².

Yet, the harmony and unity that linked the garden and the man are illusory because the celestial oasis actually triggered his destruction and death. The garden, metaphor for happiness and harmony, is but an illusion. The impossibility to find happiness on earth is symptomatic of Bowles's characters. Most often their search of happiness ends on a failure because they never find the Eden they are looking for. The conclusion that could therefore be drawn is that the Eden, as the metaphor for man's happiness and harmony on Earth, does not exist. The impossibility of harmony and unity also recalls Lacan's illusory unity during the mirror-stage. It is also an expression of the author's basic pessimism; it seems to suggest that Paradise, as representing man's happiness, is but an illusion, a phantasm. The world is nihilistic and alienating. Therefore, Bowles's characters, even though surrounded by a fascinating Edenic Nature, always end up as failures and face forms of death. The harmony and unity are then a deceptive wild dream. In this sense, the author's mystic quest in Morocco is a step further towards the illusory harmony and mystic plenitude. On the whole, settings and space have a primary and metaphoric importance in Bowles's image of Morocco. The Moroccan settings and space are channels through which Paul Bowles has carved out a space for his quest for the self and for his mystic quest in Morocco.

These considerations are crucial in the sense that they correspond to some of Bowles's quests and to major facets of his image of Morocco. There is an inter-relation between the quest for harmony and the mastery of the environment: the writer's quest for harmony -even though illusory in the lacanian sense of the term - was somewhat fulfilled through in his complete physical expatriation and his adoption of Morocco, through the symbiosis that links Moroccan settings and space, elements of the Moroccan culture and people on the one hand, and his own aspirations, affinities and purposes in this country on the other.

Bowles's image of the host country illustrates the harmony that unites characters to landscapes and that represents their mastery of the environment; yet, Bowles's literary Morocco also points to finitude, that is, to Lacan's notion of 'manque à être'³ that signals the end of the infant's

¹ Paul Bowles, 'The Garden', *Collected Stories*, p. 363.

² Cf Paul Bowles, 'The Garden', *Collected Stories*, pp 363, 364.

³ Cf Muller and Richardson, *Lacan and Language, A Reader's Guide to *Ecrits**, pp 22-23, 92-94.

illusion of totality and the beginning of the endless quest for a lost paradise¹. In this sense, Bowles's mystic quest in Morocco is an expression of 'finitude' in Lacan's meaning of the term. Accordingly, plenitude is present in the writer's image of Morocco until his involvement in mysticism, that is to say, in his Moroccan literary production starting from the 1970s.

Paul Bowles's Moroccan paradise

The Moroccan paradise is a focal facet of Bowles's image of the chosen country. The writer's spatial and cultural identification with Morocco, along with the symbiotic relation linking characters, settings and the sublime Moroccan Nature are statements of the author's Moroccan heaven. This part involves the writer's quest for paradise, the Desire of the Other, and the different expressions of plenitude in their relation with Morocco as a chosen haven and home territory.

The writer's quite definite exile is basically subtended by the prospect of a magic life under the ultramarine blue sky and sun and finally by the opportunity to go as far away from his father's domination. In the context of Lacan's theory of the mirror stage, the image, through language, is an expression of the 'humanisation' of the child's desire and of his yearning for the lost paradise and fusion with the All². In this sense, Bowles's Moroccan paradise involves different expressions of the Desire of the Mother and representations of harmony and plenitude.

Desire and the Moroccan Paradise

Bowles's Moroccan paradise can be interpreted in terms of 'Desire' as it relates to Lacan's theory of language. In this context, the moment when desire becomes human coincides with the moment when the child is born into language³. Desire is then the 'dynamic power'⁴ that drove the writer to Morocco and that, at the same time, shapes and subtends his literary image of the adopted country. In addition to this, the desire of the 'Other' being associated with the desire of the Mother, the image of Morocco can as well be viewed as the stance of the author's desire for the Mother.

Desire is also associated with 'lack' or 'want-to-be'⁵, that is to say with 'the radical and humanly unsatisfiable yearning of the infant for the lost paradise of complete fusion with its All- a wanting

¹ Cf Muller and Richardson, *Lacan and Language, A Reader's Guide to *Ecrits**, pp 22-23.

² Cf Muller and Richardson, *Lacan and Language, A Reader's Guide to *Ecrits**, pp. 23, 50.

³ Cf Muller and Richardson, *Lacan and Language, A Reader's Guide to *Ecrits**, pp. 9,19-23. cf also A. Sheridan, Jacques Lacan, *Ecrits*.

⁴ Muller and Richardson, *Lacan and Language, A Reader's Guide to *Ecrits**, p. 19.

⁵ A. Sheridan, *Jacques Lacan, *Ecrits**, p. xi.

born of want'¹. In the context of the mirror stage, the idealization of the ALL corresponds to the experience of wholeness the infant experiences. In Paul Bowles's image of Morocco the same experience is conveyed through the plenitude the characters live through.

Morocco in the image is at the same time an escape from the Father but also a stance of the desire for the Mother. Two opposed poles are present in the same process in the image of Morocco. The Desire of the Other is associated with the Desire of the Mother or/and the quest for paradise. So, expressions of the Desire for the Mother and of wholeness are representative of Bowles's Moroccan paradise. The image of Morocco is rich in expressions of the Desire of the Mother and of wholeness and plenitude. This facet involves Bowles's treatment of the figure of the Mother and the feminisation of his elected country.

Literary expressions of Desire of the Mother

Language being social,² texts and literature express elements of the author's desire of the Other, the Mother, or the desire of the All in the context of Lacan's psychoanalytical theory. Thus, "the moment in which desire becomes human is also that in which the child is born into language"³, statement which sets a close relationship between language and desire: the child's first utterances are the expression of his desire, which is for Lacan the basic human drive. The 'humanisation' of the child's desire is the expression of his original experience of 'want'. Language is "the radical and humanly unsatisfiable yearning of the infant for the lost paradise and of complete fusion with its All – a wanting born of want"⁴. It is the expression of the end of the symbiotic relationship with his mother, of his illusion of totality and the expression of his feeling of finitude. This is also a moment of death in the sense of Heidegger's "notion of death as the ultimate limit that de-fines a human being (i.e sets him within definitive limits)⁵. So, want⁶, castration -in the sense of weaning- and death distinguish the moment when the child is born to language and when the desire becomes human.

This moment corresponds to the manifestation of his desire, to his loss of paradise and of his illusion of totality and, finally, to a certain death. From this time onward, the child will strive to be recognized by his mother and to bring back his lost plenitude by being the phallus for his mother.

¹ Muller and Richardson, *Lacan and Language, A Reader's Guide to *Ecrits**, p. 22.

² Cf Muller and Richardson, *Lacan and Language, A Reader's Guide to *Ecrits** p. 11.

³ Cf J. Lacan, Op. Cited, p. 103-104 and J.P. Muller and W.J. Richardson, Op. Cited, pp. 9-10.

⁴ John P. Muller, William J. Richardson, *Lacan and language, A Reader's Guide to *Ecrits**, p. 22.

⁵ John P. Muller, William J. Richardson, *Lacan and language, A Reader's Guide to *Ecrits**, p. 22.

⁶ Sheridan translates Jacques Lacan 's 'manque à être' by the expression 'want-to-be'

Phallus here must be understood as representing the symbiosis between every infant and its All, that is to say, the plenitude by being desired by the Mother, which is no more possible. From this break onwards, the child will endlessly search for a lost paradise, Morocco in the context of this study.

This quest takes place in the context of the symbolic order, represented by the father and “structuring all human relationships and making it possible that absence become present through language”¹. So, the absence of plenitude, that is to say, the absence of the mother and the child’s quest, are present through words. The implications for this research are manifold: Bowles’s expatriation and the image of the host country might be interpreted as the end of the presumption of infinity and of the illusion of plenitude and totality. It also represents the rupture with the mother and the feeling of want or ‘want-to-be’. In this sense, the literary image of Morocco corresponds to the expression through language of the feeling of finitude, of the illusion of unity and of the absence of the mother that develops into words. Expatriation is also illustrative of the continuous search for the lost plenitude and paradise. This pursuit is enacted through the writer’s mystic quest. Bowles’s text, and consequently his image of Morocco, can be viewed as the expression of a certain death, of his search and desire of his mother, and, on a more comprehensive level, of his quest for the lost paradise.

Thus, the writer’s expatriation may be considered as a kind of death – in the sense of severing all the ties linking him to his homeland. As opposed to this, his pursuit in Morocco may also be regarded as a search for the lost paradise, a certain attempt towards rebirth and plenitude. His fascination and idealization of Morocco as well as his expectations might embody the lost paradise he is looking for as representative of the symbiosis with the desired mother. In this respect, Bowles’s image of Morocco can be viewed as the stance opposing the Oedipus Complex and the Fatherland to the Desire of the Mother and Morocco as a mother country.

In this context, the literary expressions of the Desire for the Mother involve the maternal love and the motherly figures in the image of Morocco as well as aspects of Moroccan scenery and the writer’s ‘feminisation’ of the adopted country.

Maternal love and motherly figures

The Desire of the Mother is conveyed through maternal love and motherly figures. The figure of the Mother is often, if not exclusively, presented in settings that suggest qualities and feelings

¹J.P. Muller, W.J. Richardson, *Lacan and Language, A Reader's Guide to *Ecrits**, p. 23.

usually connectional with the Mother's positive connotations. 'By the Water' (1945) for instance is a short story set in a dimly lit and warm hammam where Amar, the main protagonist, is irresistibly attracted by the all-pervading warmth¹ of the place and whose atmosphere of dimness, dampness and warmth recall the mother's womb.

On another level, the apartment in which the writer lived in Tangier was a refuge, a kind of womb. Besides, and in accord with this interpretation, Bowles's final wish was to be cremated and buried in the same grave with his mother, in the USA. So, his ultimate resting place, his tomb, and therefore his death, can be viewed as a return to the womb. This coming back to the womb may recall Kristeva's logic of negation which, in a sense, rules the child's relationships with his mother. For example, the mother weans the infant by denying her breast, and, as Kelly Oliver explains, "the infant's body itself is already operating according to a logic of negation [...]. Even birth itself, with one body expelled from another, becomes a prototype of negation and separation"². In this sense, Bowles death wish, his symbolic return to the womb can therefore be interpreted as a metaphorical refusal or neutralisation of the maternal separation and of the abject primary negation and separation that are consequent to birth³. Accordingly, it can be considered as a confession of love and a wish for an ultimate union with the mother and for the mother's love. In fact, this death wish illustrates his quest for a final shelter, yearning for plenitude as well as an ultimate expression of the Desire of the Mother.

The writer's treatment of mother-like figures can also be viewed as illustrative of the Desire of the Mother. In this context, a close and maternal relationship unites Dyar and Daisy. As a matter of fact, the latter's behaviour is motherly. She is presented as a caring figure in her relation to Dyar: the instructions she gives him to 'eat his salad'⁴ reveal that she behaves as if he were her infant. In this sense, her concern about his being wet⁵, her preoccupations by his activities in Tangier⁶, her considerate worry until the end and his calling him 'my pet'⁷ are all signs of her maternal conduct. Her voice is even described as having a 'maternal note'⁸. This caring and protective behaviour starts at the very beginning of the novel and lasts until the end when she goes to Dyar's sheltering place to save him.

¹ Paul Bowles, 'By the Water', in: *Collected Stories*, pp. 32-33.

² Kelly Oliver, *Reading Kristeva, Unravelling the Double-bind*, p.4.

³ Kelly Oliver, *Reading Kristeva, Unravelling the Double-bind*, p.4.

⁴ Paul Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, p. 30.

⁵ Paul Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, p. 27.

⁶ Paul Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, p. 34.

⁷ Paul Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, pp; 33, 35.

⁸ Paul Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, p. 28.

Feminisation of Moroccan landscapes

The writer's unreserved fascination with Moroccan Nature and landscapes can be read as his stance on the desire of the Mother. The latter is notable in the feminisation of Morocco as a mother country. The womanly character is basically conveyed through the 'earth' as a metaphor for the Mother and through the erotization of Moroccan landscapes. For instance, in the final chapter of Let it Come Down¹, the earth is presented as the 'Mother Earth'. There is a symbiotic tie between the earth and Dyar: "There was no part of him which had not come out of the earth, nothing which would not go back to it. He was an animated extension of the sunbaked earth itself [...]. A life must have all the qualities of earth from which it springs, plus the consciousness of having them"².

The erotization of Moroccan landscapes is also a marked expression of The Desire for the mother. 'The Delicate Prey' presents an association of landscapes with erotic thoughts such as in "In the advanced heat he dozed, his mind playing over a landscape made of soft thighs and small hard breasts rising like sand dunes"³. The erotically charged Moroccan landscapes associated to the writer's fascination of Moroccan Nature become clear expressions of the author's Desire for the Mother. The femininity of the exotic and erotic Moroccan scenery as well expresses his choice of Morocco as a mother-country.

Plenitude and harmony

These crucial facets can be linked to the infant's imaginary wholeness and unity as well as his experiencing of himself as a totality. This totality is perceived as the idealization of the All, that is to say, of the infant's mother and the feeling of plenitude beside her. Bowles's comprehensive fascination by Morocco also includes expressions of plenitude in the Lacanian sense of the word.

Plenitude and harmony with Nature stand for representations of Paul Bowles's Moroccan paradise. The writer's intense captivation by Moroccan celestial elements and Nature are at the same time expressions of plenitude and manifestations of the Desire of the Mother. They evoke the total unity that replaces the infant's previous experience of fragmentation of the body in the lacanian sense of the word. For instance, the relationship between Dyar and Daisy, a mother like figure, is symbiotic. It is illustrated by the physical and voluptuous well-being Dyar experiences beside her: "But he had already seized her hand and was covering it with quick kisses. He was floating in the air,

¹ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, pp. 251-255.

² Paul Bowles, Let it come Down, p. 255.

³ Paul Bowles, 'The Delicate Prey', in: Collected Stories, p. 168.

impelled by a hot, dry wind which enveloped him, voluptuously caressed him [...]”¹. In spite of the objective and burlesque conditions where this occurrence takes place, the ‘ineffable happiness’² he feels then recalls the infant’s experience of plenitude beside the Mother. In fact, his standing before a mirror, ‘smiling triumphantly’³ evokes the reflected image of Lacan’s theory of the mirror stage. This instance suggests the idealization of the ALL which corresponds to the experience of wholeness the infant experiences. It therefore corresponds to the experience of wholeness Dyar goes through.

The Moroccan sky is at the same time representative of the writer’s sheltering country as well as a metaphor for plenitude and well-being. A noteworthy example is the fascination it exerts on Dyar:

The sky seemed to have reached a paroxysm of brilliancy. He had never known it was possible to take such profound delight in sheer brightness. The pleasure consisted simply in letting his gaze wander over the pure depths of the heavens, which he did until the extreme light forced him to look away.⁴

The happiness the protagonist feels is so deep that it is evocative of the wholeness and contentment the infant experiences beside the Mother.

Besides, the sky is also associated with the security and shelter the Mother provides. In Let it Come Down for instance, the Moroccan sky is clearly associated with the Mother and with a secure shelter: “And like the sky, his mother was spread over him”⁵. This image at the same time involves the notions of shelter, security, the figure of the Mother and plenitude. Security is a component element of plenitude and well-being: This simile associates the safety granted by the Mother with the protection provided by the sky, which is a representative metonymy for Morocco in the context of Let it Come Down. So, the feminisation of Morocco, in the sense of the author’s endowing it with maternal attributes, combined to his definite expatriation, is an expression of his quest for Mother’s plenitude in Morocco as well as his inner journey towards childhood.

In the same novel, the protagonist’s flashbacks to childhood are very closely linked up to experiences of unity. For instance, Dyar’s flight on the boat, representing his inner move towards infancy, and more precisely aiming at killing the father-figure represented by Thami, is associated

¹ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 217.

² Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 218.

³ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 220.

⁴ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 253.

⁵ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 228.

with a revival of the happiness he experienced beside his mother. As soon as he got on the boat, he reminisces a lullaby his mother used to sing to get him to sleep. This song, opening a 'region of his memory', released childhood recollections of happiness:

It was the only song that had ever made him feel really happy¹. The physical well-being and the feelings of plenitude and security he felt then are suggested by the recollection of his lying under a quilt securely tied on both sides of the bed, by the sensuous evocation of his fingering the stitches of the bedcover and of his head lying 'under the softest pillow he has ever had'².

This passage expresses one of the most obvious references to Paul Bowles's -or Dyar's- harmonious rapport with the Mother.

Plenitude through rites of self-mutilation and destruction is a paradox that is basic to the image of Morocco. Even the experiences of self-destruction during the bloody rites are associated with sensations of communion with the environment and with feelings of unity. Characters often derive portentous sensations of wholeness from their experience of these violent and bloody rites. The experiences of self-destruction and of bloody rites are associated with sensations of communion with the environment and with a sort of catharsis. For example, the moment when Dyar feels really alive and experiences wholeness is when he takes part in the bloody rite of self-mutilation³. This trance episode is performed by a Jilali⁴ and inspired from a similar ritual practice Paul Bowles observed in a café in Chaouen in 1952 while he was completing the novel *Let it Come Down*⁵. In the novel, this self-mutilating experience engendered a sort of catharsis involving the protagonist as well as the audience:

The mutilation was being done for him, to him; it was his own blood that splattered onto the drums and made the floor slippery. In a world which had not yet been muddied by the discovery of thought, there was this certainty, as solid as a boulder, as

¹ Paul Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, p. 228.

² Paul Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, p. 228.

³ Paul Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, pp.269-71.

⁴ A Jilali is a member of Jilala, which is a Moroccan Muslim brotherhood.

⁵ L.D. Stewart, 'The Twilight Hour of a Story Teller', in : *Twentieth Century American Literature*, Paul Bowles Issue, p. 123.

real as the beating of his heart, that the man was dancing to purify all those who watched¹.

The dancer's cry, as well as the communion and release linking the Jilali to Dyar and to the watchers is underlined as 'a cry of victory'². The contrast opposing the dancer's physical state and blood-dripping hand to the audience's and Dyar's feeling of well-being underscores their contentment which is echoed by the 'solemn kiss'³ the Jilali dancer plants on the musician's forehead. The overall sensations of plenitude as well as the communion with the surrounding world are clear expressions of the writer's mystic quest and signs foretelling the mysticism of his later years and writings. Further, the rare moments when the protagonist of this novel is not presented as a fragmented double coincide with the mystical Moroccan rites, when he experiences a wholeness and union with the outer world. This correlation may be viewed as illustrating the fact that the author's quest for paradise is fulfilled by his different experiences of plenitude.

In fact, it is the closing chapter of Let it Come Down that provides the most comprehensive and straightforward expression of wholeness in Bowles's image of Morocco. It encompasses expressions of fascination with Nature, the symbiosis linking characters, landscapes and Nature, and finally the dyadic unity with the Mother and a compelling plenitude.

In this novel, one of Dyar's occasional moments of spiritual peace and physical rest coincides with a feeling of fullness engendered by a physical contact with different natural elements of the beach of Tangier. This experience is expressed through a sensuous description of the landscape:

He lay a while, intensely conscious of the welcome heat, in a state of self-indulged voluptuousness. When he looked at the sun, his eyes closed almost tight, he saw webs of crystalline fire crawling across the narrow space between the slitted lids, and his eyelashes made the furry beams of light stretch out, recede, stretch out. It was a long time since he had lain naked in the sun⁴.

Besides, the landscape and the whole experience are depicted through the five senses: for instance, the 'beach was flat, wide and white, [...] he walked along the strip of hard sand, [...] it was a wet and flattering mirror for the sky, intensifying its brightness [...] in here there was nothing but the

¹ Paul Bowles, Let it Come down, p. 271.

² Paul Bowles, Let it Come down, p. 271.

³ Paul Bowles, Let it Come down, p. 271.

⁴ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 182.

beating of the hot sun on the skin”¹. This voluptuous experience recalls the infant’s feeling of physical completeness according to Lacan and suggests that the author’s expatriation in Tangier was also driven by a search for the physical harmony and plenitude that are correlative with the Mother.

The combined effects of all the natural elements evoke the dyadic unity felt beside the Mother. This experience is all the more evocative of the infant’s desires as the sand-filled boat where Dyar lies down is compared to a “perfect couch” which reminisces of the infant’s cradle², or, to a further extent, the mother’s womb. The sand, a metaphor for voluptuousness and wholeness, wraps Dyar’s body. It is as well a powerful metaphor for the earth which symbolizes the Mother. Besides, his being naked, wrapped up in the sand and surrounded by hot sunrays evokes the infant being enveloped by the mother’s warmth and love. Bowles’s insistence on the warmth spread out by the sun reminds of the mother’s affection and the comfort displayed by her presence. The recurring references to the sensuous warmth and heat radiated by the sun and the burning sand underline the feeling of completeness and have a healing value: Dyar succeeded in forgetting all his existential worries and in falling in a restorative sleep:

That was what he wanted, to be baked dry and hard, to feel the vaporous worries evaporating one by one, to know finally that all the damp little doubts and hesitations that covered the floor of his being were curling up and expiring in the great furnace-blast of the sun. Presently he forgot all about that, his muscles relaxed, and he dozed lightly, waking now and then to lift his head above the worm-eaten gunwale and glance up and down the beach³.

In fact, Dyar’s various worries, doubts and hesitations are being evaporated under the heat of the sun; consequently, he succeeds in falling into a sort of semi-unconsciousness, dozing in the desert beach and amid a sand-filled couch. His refuge in the sand and the physical well-being generated by the combined effect of the sun and sand suggest a desire to come back to the infant’s blankness in the womb. Even further in Dyar’s meditation, the author compares the full-grown man’s life to the new-born’s:

The full-grown man is no more deeply involved in life than the new-born child; his only advantage is that it can occasionally be given him to become conscious of the

¹ Paul Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, pp. 181-82.

² The comparison of the sun rays to the ‘sun’s burning sheet’ stresses this metaphor of the boat as the infant’s cradle. *Let it Come Down*, p. 182.

³ Paul Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, p. 182.

substance of that life, and unless he is a fool he will not look for reasons or explanations.¹

This is a way to relate his present time experience on the beach to the infant's experience of plenitude in the Lacanian sense of the word.

Dyar's experience of unity is the end result of his release from torment. In point of fact, the last chapter of this novel underscores the protagonist's backward journey into childhood to achieve catharsis. The 'thing'² he had to do is to kill Thami in order to exorcize painful childhood memories from another world³ as Dyar specifies. This task is framed by recollections of children's songs and a school scene: "Merry Mabel dune. The children were going to make a noise when they came out at recess-time"⁴. The outcome is deliverance, calm and wholeness: "The night had sections filled with repose, and there were places in time to be visited, faces to forget, words to understand, silences to be studied"⁵. Tensions have thus been relieved, catharsis achieved, and plenitude accomplished.

On another level, a parallel can be set between Dyar's experience of wholeness and blankness on the one hand and the author's expatriation on the other: Bowles's forceful fascination by Moroccan Nature and the experience of plenitude his characters go through implicitly express a desire to come back to the wholeness of the womb as well as a quest for the symbiotic relationships with the Mother. In this sense, Morocco becomes a sort of 'mother-country' as opposed to America, the father country. In fact, the two are antonymic.

The joint effects of the different metaphors of Nature and the emphasis Paul Bowles places on the character's experiences of plenitude and wholeness recall the symbiosis and the wholeness experienced by the infant when the mother represents the All.

It is also important to specify that the above mentioned experience is related in Let it Come Down, a novel published in 1952, that is, quite at the beginning of his expatriation. Afterwards, as his mystic quest progresses, the symbolical ties with the Mother are gradually replaced by his increasing involvement in mysticism.

¹ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 183.

² Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 283.

³ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 280.

⁴ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 284.

⁵ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 284.

The quest for the Mother's plenitude is also related to Dyar's -hence Bowles's - mystic quest in Morocco: The protagonist's experience on the boat is at the same time reminiscent of his childhood memories of harmony and happiness beside his mother, but also a mystic encounter. There is a correlation linking the sky, the Mother and 'something more powerful'¹. Dyar transcends the Mother as a symbolic person. He closes his eyes not to visualize her and to come into contact with the security and unity he used to sense as a child in his bed: "If he opened his eyes, there were her eyes looking at him, and that terrified him. With his eyes closed, there was nothing but his bed and his presence. Her voice was above, and she was all around"². His mother's memories are fused with the world around him, which somewhat grants her a cosmic dimension. This union recalls Ibn Al Arabi's concepts of transcendence and the Unity of Existence³. Consequently, it might be safe to suggest that Bowles's mystic quest represents then a progression in his quest for the Mother's Desire and wholeness. The writer's mystic quest in Morocco might then be interpreted as a step further in his quest for the Mother's plenitude. The harmony sought by the mystics is, in Bowles's case, associated with the harmony of the Mother's presence. In the same context, the drug induced states of well-being are means to reach this sense of wholeness. Both the Mother's and the mystic plenitude contribute to the representation of Paul Bowles's chosen country as a heavenly shelter.

Morocco: Paul Bowles's heavenly shelter

Bowles's image of Morocco presents features that assimilate the host country to a heavenly shelter. For instance, in Let It Come Down (1952), Tangier is portrayed as a refuge. Surprisingly enough, Dyar, in this novel, derives a certain feeling of security from his being lost in an unknown city: he is thus being out of reach of his past, that is his family, his acquaintances and America which is being represented by the American Legation:

It was rather fun, being lost like this; it gave him a strange sensation of security - the feeling that at this particular instant no one in the world could possibly find him. Not his family, not Wilcox, not Daisy de Valverde, not Thami, not Eunice Good, not Mme Jouvenon, and not, he reflected finally, the American Legation⁴.

The chaotic and anarchic pattern of the streets of Tangier also connotes shelter: it is the metaphor for the protagonist's alienation and at the same time allows for security and shelter. In fact,

¹ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 228.

² Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 228.

³ These aspects will be studied in the final chapter of this study;

⁴ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p.168.

Dyar's disorientation is purposeful and he draws a positive impulse from his being lost in the tortuous, anarchic and dirty streets:

He was trying to lose himself. Which meant, he realized, that his great problem right now was to escape from his cage, to discover the way out of the fly-trap, to strike the chord inside himself which would liberate those qualities capable of transforming him from a victim into a winner¹.

So, at this point, Tangier, in spite of all the constraints, is lived through as a kind of shelter, providing the needed landmark where he would be set². In relation with the author, this might suggest that his voluntary exile in that North African city was also a move towards the security of refuge. In this instance, Tangier and the protagonist's wish to lose himself are also metaphorical. The labyrinthine street pattern may figuratively be viewed as a protective shield which provides an emblematic shelter to Dyar and is an actual refuge for the author. Also, the protagonist's wish to lose himself in the maze of the streets of Tangier may as well be interpreted as a metaphor for the privacy and protection he elicited from his protective room in the fatherland.

The sheltering dimension of Morocco is also conveyed through the metaphors of its natural and cosmic elements as symbols of safe havens: The stars and the sky are at the same time metaphors for Morocco as well as for security and shelter. In Let it Come Down the protagonist's exceptional moments of contentment are often associated with references to and descriptions of Nature, especially of the Moroccan sky; for instance, immediately after his arrival in the refuge, a strong feeling of happiness is triggered by the view of a bright blue sky:

He went back to the entrance door, opened it, and stood bathing in the fresh air and the sensation of freedom that lay in the vast space before him. Then he realised that the sky was clear and blue. [...]. Immediately an extraordinary happiness took possession of him [...]³.

The connotative meaning of the fresh air, the boundless space and the clear sky suggest the optimistic prospects and the protected life Morocco secured. The association of Moroccan natural elements with feelings of freedom and satisfaction implies then that Bowles's expatriation is to be related to his quest for security and that Morocco is a haven for him.

¹ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 169.

² Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 169.

³ Paul Bowles, Let It Come Down, p. 250.

The representation of Morocco as a sheltering refuge is also based on the writer's cultural and spatial identification with Morocco and, to a greater and deeper extent, on the attraction the sublime Moroccan Nature and celestial natural elements exerted on him. The recurrent laudatory descriptions of the Moroccan scenery and Nature express the author's strong attraction and fascination by Morocco. Bowles's adopted country provided the requisites he lacked in his nation state and which responded to his quest. He found in Morocco a motherland and the nature he was deprived of in his father's realm. Paul Bowles escaped from his original country to find his 'self' in an alien terrain. The same step is taken by most of his western characters in the short stories as well as in the novels, especially Let it Come Down. Paul Bowles's universe is made of worn out characters looking for an escape from their old self and taking refuge in a foreign and alluring heaven.

So, the author's quest in his chosen country was first of all a quest for the self. The quest for the Moroccan paradise is a quest for the self. In Bowles's image of Morocco this pursuit is enacted through the sheltering dimension granted to Morocco and through the positive characteristics the host country is endowed with. The plenitude and wholeness Morocco offers and the Mother's attributes of security and warmth it endows grant Paul Bowles's Morocco the dimension of a sheltering heaven.

Morocco presents a refuge in the mother home territory as opposed to an escape from the fatherland. Yet, characters, as the writer's psychic agencies, seldom fulfil themselves and their aspirations. For instance, in spite of his intense experience of wholeness and harmony with Nature on the beach of Tangier, and of his cathartic experience of plenitude following the murder of Thami, the novel ends on Dyar's disenchanted mood. His disillusioned mood is compared to a day 'like an old, worn-out film being run off – dim, jerky, flickering, full of cuts, and with a plot he could not seize'¹. This image expresses misunderstanding and deception. In fact, even if the protagonist has exorcized the oppressive atmosphere of his childhood, he has not actually succeeded in attaining happiness. This failure is conveyed through a shift from a bright blue sky, a reviving morning "whose very air, on being breathed, gave life"² to a dark day where the brilliancy of Nature is absent and where the rain, a symbol for alienation, has closed the circle. This bleak and grim view of Moroccan Nature that used to be resplendent implies a shift from well-being and revival to deadness. This pessimistic ending heralds Bowles's mysticism and implies that no sky shelters from infinity.

¹ Paul Bowles, Let it come Down, p. 286.

² Paul Bowles, Let it come Down, p. 251.

Conclusion

On the whole, Bowles's Moroccan paradise is at the same time the metaphor for his quest for the self and for his aspirations at transcendence. Yet, this paradise is but an illusion as the introductory epigraph of the The Spider's House suggests. This novel is introduced by a quotation from the Coran: "the likeness of those who choose other patrons than Allah is as the likeness of the spider when she taketh unto herself a house, and lo! the frailest of all houses is the spider's house, if they but knew"¹. Even if this epigraph is literally intended to illustrate the fragility of the socio-political pattern in Fez before independence, it is nevertheless applicable to the writer's sheltering country as a whole. The frailness of the spider's house and the illusory unity conveyed by the image of Morocco contradict the representation of Morocco as a heavenly shelter that mediates self-definition. The implications are therefore portentous. The sheltering and heavenly dimensions Morocco is granted are as fragile as the spider's house. The writer's quest for the self and for a sheltering paradise in Morocco is then enacted through his mystic quest.

Bowles's image of Morocco is the literary representation of the Oedipus Complex and an expression of the end of the presumption of infinity, of the illusion of plenitude and totality. It is also the stance of the rupture with the Mother and the feeling of a 'want-to-be' (*manque à être*). So, the image of Morocco conveys his representation of finitude in the absence of the Mother. Expatriation can therefore be equated with the severing of all the ties linking the author to his fatherland. Conversely, his mystic quest in Morocco is an attempt towards rebirth.

In his Moroccan writings, much as the child does during the mirror stage, Bowles views or reviews himself, situates himself in a social space -Morocco- at the core of which he reshapes his own reality and through which his mystic quest(s)? comes true. Morocco and its sheltering sky are only an illusion of shelter. On the other hand, since no sky shelters from infinity, the author's aspirations to eternity and infinity are expressed through his mystic quest.

The author's fascination by Morocco, its feminisation as well as the various experiences of plenitude are literary manifestations of his quest of paradise, the lost heaven of the Mother's presence. They correspond to expressions of the infant's feeling of totality in the mirror-stage as well as of the sublime in Kristeva's notion of abjection. In relation to abjection, the latter involves the sublime but also the repulsive. This last aspect is conveyed through the Gothic and horror that also characterize the writer's image of Morocco. The sublime and the repulsive partly account for the

¹ Epigraph of Paul Bowles, The Spider's House.

ambivalence of his literary representation of this country, alluring yet allotted negative connotations and characteristics.

In closing, Morocco represents the mirror-image of Bowles's unconscious and his 'paranoiac knowledge' in Lacan's sense. It is, as T. Weiss stated, 'a means to a chosen alterity'¹. This change is to a great extent motivated by the Moroccan Nature and cosmos.

The Moroccan natural world and scenery is a focal facet of Bowles's Moroccan paradise. The natural world was, to a great extent, the stimulus of the writer's infatuation with the adopted country. In Morocco, Bowles praises Moroccan scenery as follows:

One aspect of this part of the world which has not been changed in the sixty years I've known it is the beauty of landscape. I can think of nothing more stimulating than to embark, preferably in a convertible, on a long, unhurried voyage through the wild Moroccan countryside, following the roads where they lead, beside the streams that cut through the mountains and across the empty stretches of desert. [...]. No signboards mar the splendid vistas.²

Written in 1993, that is, decades after his expatriation, Paul Bowles's admiration of the beautiful Moroccan vistas remained intact.

The wind, the sea, the azure of the sky, the Moroccan natural light for instance exerted a visceral and passionate fascination on the author. These celestial elements constitute the network of Bowles's 'obsessive metaphors'³. These images at the same time illustrate his allurement by a glowing Moroccan natural universe, underscore his yearning at transcendence and initiate his mystic quest.

¹ T. Weiss, 'Paul Bowles as Orientalist: Toward a Nomad Discourse', Journal of American Studies of Turkey, 7(1998): 37-61.

² Paul Bowles, Morocco, pp. 11-12 .

³ Cf Charles Mauron, Des Métaphores obsédantes au Mythe Personnel, pp. 9-34.

Chapter IV: Paul Bowles's Mystic Morocco

Oh, Lord, Let me enter the depths of the
ocean of your infinite Unity

Ibn'al-Arabi

Bowles's search for the lost paradise, plenitude and identity initiates his mystic quest. Basically, the concept of mysticism is closely related to a religious experience but is not identical to it and does not necessarily involve the experience of the presence of God¹. Given Bowles's agnosticism, the mystical component of his work can be considered as relating to the numinous and pantheist side of Nature and to the noetic² element of his mysticism. The noetic feature of the writer's mysticism may be regarded as involving the association he sets between Nature and cosmic elements on the one hand and the Divine, in the sense of sublime, on the other. In addition to this, Bowles's experience of Pantheism is as well associated with mysticism. In the philosophy of mysticism and religion, 'a mystic might as well claim to experience the unity of a timeless spirit everywhere present'³.

The different possibilities of the quest are sought in mystical states of transcendence and of the wholeness that is inherent to the Unity of Existence and that replace the infant's experiences of plenitude. The search for the lost paradise and infinity is conveyed through the writer's spiritual pursuit. The specificities of Morocco, that is, mysticism, the appeal of Moroccan cosmic elements and open spaces matched the writer's expectations and contributed to make of his elected home the chosen space of his mystic quest.

A primary⁴ spiritual quest and a gradual movement towards mystic states constitute a part of the dynamics of Bowles's image of Morocco. Morocco gradually becomes a spiritual space in the author's Moroccan work. As a whole, the main themes and aspects of the image develop towards a

¹ Cf Ted Honderich, *The Oxford Companion of Philosophy*, p. 636.

² The noetic element in mysticism may be viewed as follows: "The other way is especially attractive for the subjects of mystical experiences which have a strong noetic element. For in those experiences the subject is strongly convinced that he or she is acquiring a piece of knowledge, a sort of revelation, in the course of the experience itself". Ted Honderich, *The Oxford Companion of Philosophy*, p. 636.

³ Nicholas Bunnin, E.P. Tsui-James, *The Blackwell Companion to Philosophy*, p. 455.

⁴ In the sense of wellspring.

mystic representation of Morocco. Bowles evolves from themes and aspects associated with his fatherland to Moroccan themes, characters and, above all, the pantheist spirituality that springs from Moroccan landscapes and Nature.

Chronologically, the Moroccan writings picture the weaning distance that keeps him apart from Morocco¹. The 1960s may be considered as pivotal in the author's mystic quest and as a landmark in his later involvement in mysticism. These years herald a shift from Western themes and European characters to a fiction that is more Moroccan and mystic in settings, characters and themes. Later, the Moroccan literary production of the seventies and eighties represent the last stage of the evolution towards mysticism and reflect the mysticism and retirement of his last decades. Bowles's literary work presents then a movement from West to Morocco, from travels to mystic states and features.

The evolution towards Moroccan mysticism takes the form of a movement towards deep and traditional Morocco. For instance, in the short story 'He of the Assembly', the writer travels deeper in Morocco, far from urban centers, to small rural geographical spots such as Kasba Tadla , Zerektin, Aguelmous². In the same way, Bowles's themes also shift to Moroccan traditional mystic and superstitious beliefs. For example, in 'The Hyena' (1960), set in the mountain of Khang el Ghar, the writer gets his inspiration from the Moroccan traditional repository, that is, from the belief that the urine of a hyena can be used for witchcraft and magic purposes³.

'A Friend of the World' (1960), also fictionalizes Moroccan superstitious and popular beliefs with references to the use of 'jdug jmel'⁴. Similarly, in 'He of the Assembly', there is a predominance of popular beliefs and superstition such as the reference to the 'bad eye'⁵, to the burning of 'fasoukh'⁶ and to Satan who is traditionally believed to be the initiator of bad curses and witchcraft⁷. References

¹ In fact, the seeds of Paul Bowles's mysticism were already present, to a certain extent, in the writings set in other locales such as South America as early as 1946: for instance, 'The Circular Valley' (1948) fictionalizes 'Atlajala', the God of the circular valley, a spirit that takes the form or inhabits human beings or animals and 'Pastor Dowe at Tacatè' (1946) presents 'local deities'.

² Cf Paul Bowles, *Collected Stories*, pp. 313, 315, 319, 320.

³ Paul Bowles, 'The Hyena', in: *Collected Stories*, p. 291.

⁴ An ingredient which is said to be used in traditional Moroccan witchcraft. Cf 'A Friend of the World', Paul Bowles, *Collected Stories*, pp. 297, 298, 299.

⁵ 'He of the Assembly' in: Paul Bowles, *Collected Stories*, p. 319. The 'eye' is a popular superstitious belief according to which a malevolent look can cast a bad curse, an adverse fate and even death. This credence is also the main theme of 'The Eye', a short story published in 1976 where Duncan Marsh, the main protagonist, dies because of the consequences of the 'eye'.

⁶ A sort of gum that is burned in order to drive away bad curses and the 'eye'.

⁷ Cf 'He of the Assembly', pp. 313, 316, 319, 321.

to 'Aicha Qandisha'¹, to djinns², to the 'Chahada'³ and to Allah⁴, to the seven skies⁵ and to *jehennem*⁶ are as well closely related to the writer's nascent mysticism and illustrative of his interest in Moroccan traditional and mystic culture. This evolution towards Moroccan traditional culture at the same time accounts for the dynamics of Paul Bowles's image of Morocco, for his 'identification with the alien point of view'⁷ and finally for his gradual involvement into mysticism.

The life of Bowles's characters reflects his quest. As psychic agencies, their moral disposition reflects the author's. Accordingly, most are questers, in pursuit of a goal or an ideal in a foreign country. For example, Dyar's basic motivation to travel to Tangier is get out of his existential cage⁸. Likewise, John Stenham, in *The Spider's House*, is an American expatriate novelist who comes to Fez in the hope to save himself. Therefore, an aspiration at revival and the prospect of an escape from the boredom, depression and emptiness of life in the United States subtend the characters' quest. In addition to this, even the native characters are travelers and, as such, do not lead a stable life. In this respect, even the figures inspired from the Moroccan traditional rites are nomads like Bowles himself. They are desperate people, wandering without purpose in desert and desolate landscapes. There is a correlation between the characters' status as travelers, the landscapes and their moral profile. As I.Hassan states, 'they are seekers of something they cannot name- the fullness of life, the graciousness of surrender, the meaning of identity [...]'⁹. In this respect, their moral frame of mind is appropriate to a mystic quest: unable to meet their aspirations in the social context in which they live, they turn to sheltering skies as a means to fulfilment and transcendence.

In addition to this, some mystic features shape Bowles's Moroccan work from the beginning of his expatriation, even the writings set in other remote locales such as South America for instance. The most important of these characteristics are an acute fascination and interest in Nature, landscapes and in cosmic elements on the one hand, and the union between cosmos and the characters frame of mind, which recall the mystic notion of 'Unity of Existence', on the other. This recurrence creates a cohesion in Bowles's work and shows that from the onset his writings as a

¹Aicha Qandisha is a popular and much feared demoness in the Moroccan ethos. Cf 'He of the Assembly', in Paul Bowles, *Collected Stories*, pp. 319, 322.

² Moroccan word for 'spirits'. Cf 'He of the Assembly', in Paul Bowles, *Collected Stories*, p. 318.

³ The 'Chahada' is the Muslims' basic confession of faith in the unicity of Allah. Cf 'He of the Assembly', in Paul Bowles, *Collected Stories*, p. 310.

⁴ 'He of the Assembly', in: Paul Bowles, *Collected Stories*, p.323.

⁵ The Coran states the existence of 'seven skies'. 'He of the Assembly', in Paul Bowles, *Collected Stories*, p. 319.

⁶ Meaning hell. 'He of the Assembly', in Paul Bowles, *Collected Stories*, p. 322.

⁷ Wayne Pounds, 'Paul Bowles and Edgar Alan Poe: The disintegration of the Personality', in *Twentieth Century literature, A Paul Bowles Issue*, p. 437.

⁸ Cf Paul Bowles, *Let t Come Down*, pp 19-22.

⁹ I.Hassan, *Radical Innocence*, p. 86.

whole were subtended by a mystic quest. Accordingly, since Bowles's quest dates from before his expatriation in Morocco, one can safely infer that the specificities of the North African country as well as the appeal of Moroccan mysticism are major motives that retained him in Morocco for fifty two years.

This chapter presents the different mystical facets of Bowles' literary image of Morocco. The writer's spiritual quest corresponds to the climax of the author's search for paradise. Lacan's theory on the infant's identification with the All and the alien 'other' is also expressed in the writer's quest for spirituality where it culminates. Mysticism can then be viewed as an alternative to another fusion with the All as well as a quest for paradise, symbiosis and plenitude. In addition to this, this quest also mirrors his attempt at self-definition and at transcendence.

The analyses of Paul Bowles's mysticism are mainly conducted in the light of Ibn-al-Arabi's mystical pantheistic philosophy and of other philosophers as appropriate.

Mysticism and Pantheism

Bowles's Moroccan work presents the hallmark of a manifest mysticism. Mysticism can basically be defined as the experience of a mystical union or direct communion with the ultimate reality. It is as well the belief that direct knowledge of God, spiritual truth and ultimate reality can be reached through personal experiences such as intuition or insight.

Paul Bowles's mysticism is not a strictly Sufi spirituality given his agnosticism and the distance he sets towards the Islamic religion. The spiritual facet of the writer's image of Morocco does not involve any direct references to the Islamic religion nor images or statements alluding to or invoking a specific deity.

In fact, the mystic facet of his image of Morocco is very close to Ibn-al-Arabi's pantheistic mysticism. According to this mystic philosopher's teachings in The Meccan Revelations¹, knowledge can be obtained by means of prophetic revelation and through '*kashf*' or 'unveiling', that is to say through opening the door to divine knowledge². Of these two modes, it is the latter that suits Paul Bowles's mysticism. This revelation encompasses the legitimacy of 'every perspective that exists'³, that is to say, the creation in the wider sense of the word. In this perspective, Paul Bowles's

¹ The Meccan Revelations is the English translation of Ibn-al-Arabi's landmark book Futuhat-al-Makiyah by W.C. Chittick and J.W. Morris.

² W.C. Chittick, Imaginal Worlds: Ibn-al-arabi and the Problem of Religious Diversity, p. 10.

³ W.C. Chittick, Imaginal Worlds: Ibn-al-Arabi and the Problem of Religious Diversity, p. 10.

treatment of the Moroccan landscapes, Nature and cosmos is a major mystic means to unveil the divine knowledge.

In the context of Ibn-al-Arabi's pantheistic philosophy and mysticism, the divine is not necessarily closely linked to God or to the Islamic religion. Pantheism¹ is based on the belief that God is identical with the whole of reality, which entails that God is the universe. The divine refers then to a transcendental deity. According to Ibn al Arabi, the cosmos as a whole is then the locus of all the manifestations of all the divine attributes, that is, of the divine. Paul Bowles's mysticism is, in this perspective, a means to discover and get closer to the divine.

Paul Bowles's approach to the Islamic Religion

Bowles's agnosticism is illustrated in Let it Come Down where the writer expresses one of his rare references to religion via Richard Holland, his declared mouthpiece², who stated that 'religion all over the world is just about dead'.

Besides, the writer displays a certain distance, if not a negative attitude, towards Islam. In spite of his quite lifelong expatriation in Morocco, a Muslim country, he admitted his lack of insight in this religion: "I don't think we are likely to get to know Moslems very well, and I suspect that if we should we we'd find them less sympathetic than we do at present [...]. Their culture is essentially barbarous, their mentality that of a purely predatory people"³. Even if before his expatriation he compared the fascination Paris exerted on him to the 'glow (he) could feel 'when (he) faced eastward as a Moslem feels the light from Mecca'⁴, he never openly expressed a plain inclination or insight in the basic tenets and principles of the Islamic religion.

Accordingly, the writer's Moroccan writings present an inaccurate and fairly reductive view of the Islamic religion. His early Moroccan writings often focus on the violence and cruelty of the natives in association with their Islamic religious belief. For instance, in 'The Delicate Prey' the Filala merchants who will sever the adolescent's tongue are first introduced as engaged in 'complicated theological discussions'⁵. In the same way, 'The Wind at Beni Midar' ends on the main

¹ In the context of this study, pantheism is viewed as the belief that God, in the sense of deity, exists in and is the same as all things, animals and people within the universe. This doctrine also regards God as identical with the material universe or the forces of Nature and as a transcendent reality of which man, Nature and the material universe are manifestations.

² In the introduction to this novel, the writer refers to Richard Holland as 'a caricature of myself'. Cf Let it Come Down, p. 9.

³ Paul Bowles, 'A Talk with Paul Bowles', *The New York Times Book Review*, 9 March 1952, p. 19.

⁴ Paul Bowles, Without Stopping, p. 70.

⁵ Paul Bowles, 'The Delicate Prey', in Collected Stories, p. 165.

protagonist's 'prayer of thanks to Allah' on account of the cabran¹'s illness and death as a consequence of the curse he cast on him. Thanks are then extolled to Allah even if in the context of Islam black magic is by no means a key to success. Islam is then only present through the association of the characters' savage deeds with religious invocations and wrong beliefs.

The Islamic religion is also assigned negative connotations through Bowles's characterization of Muslims as a predatory people endowed with a violent nature. 'The Delicate Prey' and 'A distant Episode' are noteworthy examples of this feature because Muslims are there presented as the authors of strikingly cruel deeds.

Besides, Muslim figures are also depicted as pejoratively fatalists. 'The Fqih' can be read as a depreciatory expression of fatalism or the Islamic concept of 'mektoub'². This short story presents the dramatic failure of the fqih³'s recommendations and thus represents a mocking caricature of the scholar's determinist concept of 'mektoub'. The plot of this short story is symptomatic of Paul Bowles reductive view of Muslims. Their fatalism is pejoratively described and the author's debasing view is conveyed through the discrepancy separating reality and their fatalist prediction.

The writer's negative view of Muslims is not limited to his fictional Moroccan world, but it is as well included in his essays on Morocco and Muslims. For instance, 'Africa Minor' is rich in examples illustrating the Moslems's lack of honesty⁴, their duplicity⁵, their 'conspirational'⁶ and duplicitous⁷ behaviour. In fact, even their characterization as the 'Moslems' points to the distance the writer sets between westerners and the native community.

Further, in Morocco, a travel book on Morocco and its people, the writer often presents depreciatory views on Muslim believers. For instance, in the part entitled 'The Moslems', the narrator relates the occurrence when the accidental cutting off of an old Muslim's finger elicits his apparently incongruous gratitude: 'Thanks be to Allah'⁸. The writer's following comments on the old man's reaction at the same time stress its incoherent character and point to the author's inaccurate knowledge of Islam: "To show no outward sign of pain is unusual enough, but to express no

¹ Meaning 'corporal' in the sense of a military rank in Paul Bowles's text.

² The 'Mektoub' is an Islamic fatalist concept according to which everything on earth is pre-ordained.

³ The 'fqih' is a Muslim religious scholar.

⁴ Paul Bowles, 'Africa Minor', in : Their Heads are Green and their Hands are Blue, p. 23.

⁵ Paul Bowles, 'Africa Minor', in : Their Heads are Green and their Hands are Blue, p. 24.

⁶ Paul Bowles, 'Africa Minor', in : Their Heads are Green and their Hands are Blue, p. 24.

⁷ Paul Bowles, 'Africa Minor', in : Their Heads are Green and their Hands are Blue, p. 27.

⁸ Paul Bowles, Morocco, p. 78.

resentment against the person who has hurt you seems very strange, and to give thanks to God at such a moment is the strangest touch of all”¹. This comment reveals a certain lack of insight in the Islamic religion since the man’s gratitude only expresses his awareness that his finger could have been more seriously injured.

Even if Bowles’s image of Morocco is devoid of direct statements to the Islamic religion, the bulk of Paul Bowles’s Moroccan work nevertheless shows that his approach to Muslim believers is pejorative, hence reductive of the Islamic religion. As Richard H. Goldstone put it, “in his thinking, [...] there is not the slightest whiff of Islam”².

The Spider's House is probably the only work that presents rare instances when the author is close to Muslims and to Islam: the title of this novel is inspired from a ‘Surah’³ of the Coran , the epigraphs of the opening book and of the fourth one take up ‘surats’⁴ from the holy book. Besides, the writer appears to be closer to Muslims when he shares Stenham’s desire to be a believer. Yet, even if The Spider’s House seems to be Bowles’s most ‘religious’ work, the author entirely refutes the existence of God⁵ and labels it, along with the other novels, as written from “a point of view which precludes the existence of supernatural consciousness”⁶. So, God as the originator and ruler of the Universe, is absent from the author’s work in general and from his literary image of Morocco in particular. Thus, in an interview with John Spilker⁷, the writer confirms his refusal of any dogmatic religion.

The Pantheist facet of the image of Morocco

In spite of Bowles’s agnosticism and of the distance he sets regarding the Islamic religion⁸, his literary representation of Morocco nevertheless displays a strong mysticism⁹, as well as a pantheist view of the Universe. In this context, Paul Bowles’s mysticism and transcendent ideas are

¹ Paul Bowles, Morocco, p. 78.

² Richard H. Goldstone, ‘Aspect of Self: A Bowles Collage’, in: Twentieth Century Literature, A Paul Bowles Issue, p. 277.

³ A ‘surah’ means a chapter of the Coran.

⁴ Plural form of ‘surah’.

⁵ “We’ve killed God and that’s the end of it. There won’t ever be that again’. Conversations with Paul Bowles, Gena Dagal Caponi, p. 55.

⁶ Conversations with Paul Bowles, Gena Dagal Caponi, p. 55.

⁷ Conversations with Paul Bowles, Gena Dagal Caponi, pp. 135-144.

⁸ Islam is specified because it is the state religion of Morocco. In any case, the writer does not believe in any other religion

⁹ In the context of this study, mysticism will be considered as transcendence above humanity’s worldly existence to a state of enlightenment and oneness.

expressed through the particular bond he sets between Nature and God¹ on the one hand and through his utter admiration of and close communion with Moroccan Natural and Cosmic elements on the other. As a matter of fact, the author clearly relates and interprets Nature in terms of God: “And if you use the word God in place of nature, then I think you can even get closer to it”². Nature, then, is God. Consequently, in Bowles’s literary image of his adopted country, the Moroccan Cosmos, Nature and landscapes can be interpreted as mystic fictional representations of the Divine.

On this basis, Moroccan Nature in general and the writer’s favourite and recurrent natural elements such as the sky, the desert are representative the Divine, since Bowles does not believe in any religion nor in the existence of a particular deity. In this respect, the writer’s unreserved admiration of Moroccan Nature can be equated with a sort of adoration of the Divine. The Moroccan Cosmos becomes the space for his mystic transcendence and admiration of the divine.

Bowles’s spiritual Morocco encompasses a pantheist approach to Moroccan Nature and landscapes and also includes certain mystic practices even though they are not objectively articulated as such in the writer’s text. In this perspective, the mystic facet of the writer’s literary Morocco at the same time involves references and description of Moroccan mystic practices as well as a pantheistic approach to Moroccan Nature and cosmos. Because of Bowles’s agnosticism, the spiritual facet of the image of Morocco cannot be associated with Moroccan Sufism. The writer’s mysticism is to be included in the context of mystic pantheism. Yet, his lifelong expatriation in Morocco and his closeness to Moroccan traditional culture led him to retain some mystic practices and features that are close to khalwa, uz’l and zuhd even though they are not expressed as such in his Moroccan writings.

Mystic practices in the image of Morocco

Mysticism is, on the whole, a rejection of intellectualism and rationalism. A mystical experience usually goes through the liberation from social constraints. This release involves the freedom from social and worldly constraints and preoccupations as well as a physical isolation. In this perspective, the mystic side of Bowles’s Moroccan work encompasses descriptive images of trance states as well as themes recalling Sufi practices such as uz’l or physical isolation, khalwa or spiritual retreat and finally zuhd or renunciation.

¹ In the sense of the Divine since he does not believe in the existence of a particular deity.

² Gena Dagal Caponi, *Conversations with Paul Bowles*, p. 54.

A slight sequential evolution towards a more marked mysticism characterizes the image of Morocco. The earliest short stories are more social and more involved in earthly affairs. 'Tea on the Mountain' (1939) for instance fictionalizes the failure of a nascent idyll between a European woman and a Moroccan youngster, and 'The Hours after Noon' (1950) presents mostly western characters and portrays their mundane preoccupations and concerns¹.

As Bowles progresses towards mysticism and retreat, the focus is more markedly set on the Moroccan community with the natives as main characters, and on themes inspired from Moroccan traditional culture and beliefs. The writer's later short stories are closer to mysticism as they are inspired from mystic and traditional beliefs in the 'supernatural' and from the existence of uncanny events and convictions. Actually, 'The Eye' (1976) and 'The Empty Amulet' (1981) are short stories inspired from the Moroccan mystic traditional repository. Likewise, 'Things Gone and Things Still Here' (1975) and 'Allal' (1976) are short stories that deal with 'djinn's'² and brotherhoods, which denotes a movement towards spirituality.

Subsequently, Bowles's late Moroccan writings evolve into sort of monologues quite cut off from the Moroccan reality. This is the case of Points in Time (1982) and of Two years beside the Strait (1987). Accordingly, there is a shift of focus from temporal themes to more traditional and mystic concerns. This evolution accounts for the writer's involvement in mystic practices such as uz'l, khalwa and, to a lesser extent, zuhd.

Physical isolation or the mystic practice of Uz'l in Paul Bowles's Morocco

The mystic practice of uz'l or physical isolation has an autobiographical dimension. Physical isolation dates from the author's childhood in the fatherland. As a child, he was most of the time confined in his room which was his shelter and from where he used to invent place names and to travel mentally³. The author's predisposition to seclusion can then be traced back to his childhood when, at the age of four, he was strongly attracted by closed, isolated and dim sheds⁴. As Marilyn Moss underscores, as a child, he also used to hide himself behind 'a wall of silence'⁵ and that he aspired at becoming 'invisible'⁶. The 'silence' of the writer's childhood was a protective shield from

¹ 'The Hours after Noon', in Paul Bowles, Collected Stories, pp. 218, 219.

² That is to say 'spirits' in the context of Moroccan spirituality.

³ Paul Bowles's autobiography, Without Stopping, is rich in details describing his physical isolation as a child.

⁴ Cf Paul Bowles, Without Stopping, p. 11.

⁵ Marilyn Moss, "The Child in the Text: Autobiography, Fiction, and the Aesthetics of Deception in Without Stopping", in Twentieth Century Literature, Paul Bowles issue, Volume 32, (1986), Number 3/4, p. 322.

⁶ Marilyn Moss, "The Child in the Text: Autobiography, Fiction, and the Aesthetics of Deception in Without Stopping", in Twentieth Century Literature, Paul Bowles issue, Volume 32, (1986), Number 3/4, p. 323.

the adults' world. It also foretells the practice of *uz'l* of his adult years in Morocco and its illustration in the writer's Moroccan work. In this respect, Bowles's physical isolation as well as his characters' can be viewed as a kind of safeguard and Morocco as a sheltering country.

The above-mentioned invisibility closely relates to the practice of physical isolation. Even in his chosen home, Morocco, Bowles endeavoured to hide himself and to be as isolated and 'invisible' as possible. The adopted country was the space where he fulfilled his desire to retreat physically and spiritually to the point of becoming invisible. Actually, the writer wittily underscores that this wish for isolation and invisibility was acute to the extent of even hiding his intentions from himself¹! Accordingly, in his protective country, he remained an 'invisible spectator' as signified in the title of Christopher Sawyer-Lauçanno's biography of Bowles.

The writer's mystical physical retreat in Morocco is a step further towards invisibility. In fact, his whole life was marked by a distinct inclination to hide himself² to the extent of becoming hardly 'present'. In an interview he admitted that he disliked Moroccan cities and resented being with lots of people³. On the whole, this penchant can be traced back to the extreme and unusual loneliness of his childhood, to his deliberate wish to become 'invisible' in order to escape his father's unpredictable fits of anger and to his gradual mystic involvement in Morocco.

A manifest tendency to physical isolation then marks Bowles's literary representation of Morocco. Placed in the general context of his mystic quest in Morocco, physical isolation can be interpreted in terms of the mystic practice of *uz'l*.

Uz'l, that is, seclusion, entails loneliness. "I think of myself as completely alone and I imagine other people as a part of something else"⁴. On this basis, loneliness is a recurrent and important aspect of the image. In this respect, 'Tea on the Mountain' illustrates for instance loneliness and the impossibility of communication between two young Moroccans and a European writer. In the same way, Dyar, the main protagonist of *Let it Come Down* (1952) is described as isolated and living in the cage of his self⁵.

Likewise, in 'A Distant Episode' (1945), isolation and loneliness are expressed through the American linguist's fate. The Professor adapts himself to his status of detainee without rebellion, like

¹ Cf Paul Bowles, *Without Stopping*, pp. 131-132.

² Cf Paul Bowles, *Without Stopping*, pp 32, 33.

³ Cf Gena Dagal Caponi (Ed.), *Conversations with Paul Bowles*, p. 46.

⁴ Daniel Halpern, 'Interview with Paul Bowles', *Tri Quarterly*, 33, (1975), p. 168.

⁵ Cf Paul Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, pp. 22, 80.

an ‘absolute captive within an endless and timeless prison’ who is compelled to lead a ‘detached life’¹. Besides, the severing of the Professor’s tongue entails isolation and the impossibility of communication. In this short story, the severing of the Professor’s tongue as well as his reduction to a mere toy symbolizes an extreme case of loneliness, impossibility of communication, physical isolation and detachment.

A detached life is sort of refuge. As E. Mottram remarks, nostalgia for peace and security leads ‘man towards the terrible awareness that the sky does not enclose safely, or that he may himself be compelled to create the circumstances of his absolute detachment’². From this perspective, Bowles’s secluded way of life implies that in Morocco, and through mysticism, the expatriate has finally found the refuge he had formerly sought under other sheltering skies. Therefore, his *uz’l* and mystic quest are advanced or maybe final stages in his search for protection in Morocco.

‘If I Should Open my Mouth’ is a notable example of invisibility and isolation. This diary presents the author’s primal cry and statement of isolation and invisibility: “Solitary in the sense that although life is going on all around me, the cords that could connect me in any way with the life have been severed, so that I am alone as if I were a spirit returned from the dead [...]. I am invisible [...]. I am hidden”³. Since the speaker harbours these feelings while he is in Times Square, a usually crowded spot, this instance is at the same time an extreme case of ‘*uz’l*’ and of ‘*khalwa*’.

Spiritual retreat or the mystic practice of *Khalwa*

In the context of Ibn-al-Arabi’s mysticism, spiritual retreat or ‘*khalwa*’ is a form of ‘withdrawal’⁴ to empty oneself from earthly considerations. Its purpose is also to a “turning us over to ourselves” in order to reach the divine. Besides, according to Ibn-al-Arabi, retreat is to be linked to theophany⁵ in the sense that *khalwa* is a means⁶ to avoid being distracted in the quest of God or theophany⁶.

The spiritual retreat in Morocco can as well be traced back to the writer’s childhood. Very early in life, Paul Bowles already experienced a ‘psychological’ isolation⁷. He was an only child and led a secluded life in the silence and privacy of his room. As a matter of fact, he never spoke nor

¹ E. Mottram, ‘Staticity and Terror’, p. 18.

² Eric Mottram, ‘Staticity and Terror’, p. 18.

³ Paul Bowles, ‘If I Should Open my Mouth’, in: *Collected Stories*, p. 258.

⁴ Ibn-al-Arabi, *The Meccan Revelations*, p. 157.

⁵ Theophany will be studied along with the concept of the ‘Unity of Existence’.

⁶ Cf Ibn-al-Arabi, *The Meccan Revelations*, p. 157.

⁷ Cf to Paul Bowles, *Without Stopping*, pp. 14, 18, 19.

played with any child¹ until the age of five. Therefore, his secluded life in Tangier as well as his characters' loneliness presents an autobiographical dimension which can be related to the mystic practice of '*khalwa*'.

Bowles's habit of spiritual isolation also goes back to his mother's advice to retreat in the blankness² of his mind. He was thus accustomed to mentally confine himself in the 'void' of his mind. The 'blank state' he used to take refuge in can be assimilated to a state of spiritual isolation since, as the author specifies, it enabled him to shelter himself in the vacuity of his mind and thus recede into his own securely hidden world³. This 'blank state' can be regarded as prefiguring the spiritual isolation or *khalwa* of his later years in Morocco.

As a child, Paul Bowles already invented a fiction with imaginary places and names he used to read and write backwards in order not to be understood and to focus on his own interior space. The universe he invented made him focus on his inner life and consider himself only as a 'registering consciousness and no more. My nonexistence was a *sine qua non* for the validity of the invented cosmos'⁴. Consequently, the mystic practice of *khalwa* loneliness, that is, the prerequisite for a spiritual isolation, has an autobiographical dimension. So, in Morocco, Bowles fulfilled his yearnings at spiritual isolation as well as his visceral need to conceal himself by means of the mystic practices of *uz'l* and *khalwa*.

Even in Tangier, *khalwa* characterized Bowles's way of life. In *You are not I*, Millicent Dillon reports a remark Jane, his wife, made: "There is a disconnection. Even if he's on the same floor, he's in another room"⁵. This statement points to the writer's 'disconnection', that is to say, his spiritual detachment from real life. Dillon too made the same remark: "The phrase '*participation mystique*' came to me [...]. He has escaped me. I recalled the moment I knocked on his door in May 1992, that first moment when I returned to look at him. There was no answer. I thought he was not there; yet he was there"⁶. So, Bowles was detached from life and was absent even if he was physically present. In this perspective, he even metaphorically compared Tangier, his adopted home,

¹ Paul Bowles, *Without Stopping*, pp. 23, 53.

² Cf Paul Bowles, *Without Stopping*, p. 43.

³ Cf Marilyn Moss, "The Child in the Text: autobiography, Fiction, and the Aesthetics of Deception in *Without Stopping*", in: *Twentieth Century Literature, Paul Bowles issue*, Volume 32, (1986), Number3/4, p. 322.

⁴ Paul Bowles, *Without Stopping*, p. 52.

⁵ Millicent Dillon, *You are not I*, p. 336.

⁶ Millicent Dillon, *You are not I*, p. 336.

to a 'pocket outside the mainstream'¹. This image suggests that what retained him in Tangier is the staticity of this city, which recalls a retreat from worldly considerations and progress and thus evokes a mystic way of life.

In some short stories the style also subtends spiritual detachment. For example, the text of 'Tangier 1975', a story written in 1983, is, from beginning to end, absolutely devoid of any punctuation mark. Besides, in the instance, 'somethingorother'², Bowles even aggregates words together to form an incomprehensible word. This hermetic text is a metaphor for spiritual seclusion as it is a detachment from the standard accepted style. As such it forms a kind of screen that illustrates the writer's spiritual detachment and seclusion.

Spiritual retreat is an inner state mediating meditation, allowing concentration on one's inner life and facilitating transcendence. In Bowles's image of Morocco the spiritual retreat is expressed through his characters' and his own gradual discarding of worldly concerns, through the focus on 'moral' considerations and themes such as transcendence and self definition.

Khalwa is, to a great extent, also conveyed through the recurrent theme of loneliness. Characters are often and lonely isolated figures. For instance, in Let it Come Down, even in Tangier, a would-be outlet, Dyar still experiences the same feeling of despair and loneliness³. This persistent sentiment suggests that isolation is not an ephemeral state. It is rather a condition that will accompany him to the release from earthly torments and to his final experience of transcendence.

In fact, a spiritual as well as a physical isolation have always characterized Bowles's way of life no matter under which sky he was sheltering himself. The main difference is that Morocco and the mystic practices of uz'l and khalwa met his natural predisposition to isolation and concealment. Actually, in 'Africa Minor' (1963), the writer presents a laudatory description of Morocco as a mysterious and secretive country. According to the writer, a sense of mystery is 'fortunately'⁴ found in

the patterns of sunlight filtering through the latticework that covers the souks, in the unexpected turnings and tunnels of the narrow streets; in the women whose features

¹ Daniel Halpern, 'Interview with Paul Bowles', Tri Quarterly, 33, 1975, in Conversations with Paul Bowles, Gena Dagal Caponi, p. 86.

² Paul Bowles, 'Tangier 1975', in: The Stories of Paul Bowles, p. 566.

³ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 18.

⁴ Cf Paul Bowles, 'Africa Minor', in: Their Hands are Green and their Heads are Blue, p. 24.

still go hidden in the *litham*¹, in the secretiveness of the architecture.....If they listen as well as look, they find it too in the song the lone camel driver sings by his fire before dawn, in the calling of the muezzins² at night [...]³.

This eulogistic presentation is essentially focused on the secrecy that distinguishes Morocco. This facet at the same time connotes concealment, loneliness and isolation. These three features as well as the secrecy and the sense of mystery the author values thus recall his compulsory confinement in the privacy of his room as a child and foretell his later and more articulate mystic practice of *uz'l* and *khalwa* in Morocco. Consequently, the above mentioned images of mystery and secrecy can be considered as metaphors for a physical and spiritual retreat as early as 1963.

Asceticism or zuhd in the image of Morocco

Paul Bowles's way of life in Morocco and his gradual detachment from worldly matters recall as well the mystic practice of zuhd, that is to say, asceticism or renunciation. It is probably Bowles's ultimate and advanced step in his mystic quest in Morocco. In its broadest sense, asceticism is man's practice of renunciation in order to attain a higher ideal or spiritual goal. It implies an austere self-discipline and lifestyle.

The writer's way of life in Tangier denotes a marked asceticism. Bowles's life in Morocco, especially in Tangier, is marked by a progressive detachment from worldly affairs. At the beginning of his expatriation, he used to lead a mundane and interactive life. But as his involvement in mysticism increased, he gradually cut himself from any social life⁴, so much so that, towards the end of his life, he never left his apartment, and led an isolated life, detached from social constraints⁵. Actually, during the last years of his life, he almost never left his apartment. Once physically unable to live amid the fascinating Moroccan Nature and cosmos, Bowles sheltered himself in his apartment which he seldom left. As Paul Theroux remarks, he was often couched on the floor like a hermit⁶.

Towards the end of his life the author did not travel anymore. The limits of his Moroccan space first shrank to Tangier, his adopted city, then to his apartment where he welcomed his guests. During his

¹ A 'litham' is the veil women used to wear in Morocco.

² The muezzin is the person who calls for prayers from the mosque.

³ Paul Bowles, 'Africa Minor', in: *Their Hands are Green and their Heads are Blue*, p. 24.

⁴ In 'an Interview with Paul Bowles' by Daniel Halpern (1975), the writer actually recognized being 'very asocial'. This statement recalls and partly explains his physical isolation.

⁵ Cf Paul Bowles, 'A Letter from Tangier' and E. Mottram, 'Staticity and Terror', p. 18.

⁶ Cf the interview with Paul Theroux, in: <http://www.worldmind.com/cannon/culture/theroux/html>

last years he seldom left his apartment and when death and illness were close, his bed was his unique shelter.

In Bowles's Moroccan work, *zuhd* is basically illustrated in the writer's choice of desolate settings. The barrenness of these settings recalls and connotes a discarding of worldly considerations and matters. In this perspective, the desert is the most appropriate space. In relation with *zuhd*, the highest stage of renunciation was reached in 1975 when Paul Bowles declared: "What I was ultimately running toward was my grave. The Paths of Glory lead but to the grave"¹. Expatriation in Morocco was then explicitly assimilated to death as a final detachment from worldly concerns.

Actually, the style and the detachment that emanates from Paul Bowles's latest writings are the most conspicuous expression of asceticism and renunciation. The author's gradual involvement in asceticism is reflected in the style and themes of his late writings, namely in *Points in Time* (1982) and in *Two Years beside the Strait, Tangier Journal 1987-1989*.

Points in Time (1982) records a journey in Moroccan history. The span of time ranges from the Moorish sultans to the local and recent history of the Anjra region in Northern Morocco. The immersion in the past can be interpreted as an expression of Bowles's detachment from current worldly considerations. However, this work still retains his recurrent picture of Moroccan Nature. As such, *Points in Time* is framed by the same fusion of natural elements: "The river runs fast at the mouth where the shore is made of the sky, and the wavelets curl inward fanwise from the sea"². The writer's symptomatic image of the unity subtending the sky, the shore and the sea shows that, in 1982, he was still receptive to the appeal of Moroccan Nature. In this 'historical' work, renunciation might be viewed as expressed through the author's account of and immersion in the Moroccan distant past³ as well as through the total absence of contemporary Moroccan elements.

In Bowles's work there is an evolution from a metaphorical state of *khalwa*, that is to say, as an interior state, to the actual practice of seclusion during his last years in his adopted home. In fact, the year 1987 coincides with the writer's open turning to renunciation or '*zuhd*' with the publication of *Two Years beside the Strait* (1987-1989). It is a journal presenting the record of the writer's daily life during two years in Tangier. Its most striking feature is the void of the occurrences reported: Paul

¹ Daniel Halpern, 'Interview with Paul Bowles', *Tri Quarterly*, 33, 1975, in *Conversations with Paul Bowles*, Gena Dagal Caponi, p. 117.

² Paul Bowles, *Points in Time*, p. 5.

³ The historical events related in *Points in Time* range from the Moorish history of Andalusia to the Moroccan French and Spanish colonization.

Bowles laconically relates minor and unexciting events such as: “Three Italian journalists all afternoon”¹. This record illustrates the acme of the writer’s aloofness. The brief entries are also rare and sometimes three or four weeks elapse before a new one is included. Boredom and staticity prevail in the writer’s life and are expressed through the taciturnity and lack of personal involvement in the different logs. Thematically, the writer’s renunciation to earthly considerations is conveyed through the triteness of the events recorded as well as through the coldness of his tone and his lack of personal involvement.

The style also reflects detachment. The diary demonstrates a shift from Bowles’s usual style that is marked by a vivid imagery, finely tuned metaphors and captivating pictures of the Moroccan Natural splendour to a terse and functional style which became truncated, disconnected and impersonal.

The most eloquent expression of Bowles’s detachment from life is the discarding of the object of his absolute admiration, that is, Moroccan Nature, landscapes and cosmic elements. In this perspective, only Tangier’s weather still attracted the writer’s attention as shown in the opening lines: “Clear. Walked to Merkala². The Cherqi³ was violent, and raised mountains of dust along the way”⁴. The object of the author’s infrequent references to natural elements is only a practical and climactic one. Nature is mostly referred to via the bad weather which often prevented him from walking in the beach. Even if Paul Bowles slightly underlines the beauty of Merkala beach, he is really far from the sensitive and eulogistic descriptions highlighting the magnificence of Moroccan Nature. In fact, there is a shift from the deep verve that subtended the sensitive descriptions of Moroccan Nature in the travel essays published in Their Heads are Green and their Hands are Blue (1963) for example to the strong monotony and generalities of Two Years beside the Strait, Tangier Journal 1987-1989, written decades later.

This diary is essentially self-centred. Paul Bowles’s renunciation is markedly conveyed through the absence of the usual laudatory references and descriptions of Moroccan Nature and cosmic elements. His utter admiration of the Moroccan sky and landscapes has left the place to laconism, boredom and to a real lack of involvement in life that also evokes disconnection from worldly considerations.

¹ Paul Bowles, Two Years beside the Strait, Tangier Journal 1987-1989, p. 23.

² Merkala is a beach at the outskirts of Tangier.

³ The Cherqi is an East wind that often blows in Tangier.

⁴ Paul Bowles, Two Years beside the Strait, Tangier Journal 1987-1989, p. 1.

As a matter of fact, the most unusual and yet significant entry is focused on a spider that used to hang in a corner of his home and which is maybe replaced by another one in exactly the same place. The spider recalls the epigraph of his novel The Spider's House (1955) which translates a quotation from the Koran about the ephemeral side of life: "The likeness of those who choose other patrons than Allah is as the likeness of the spider when she taketh unto herself a house, and lo! The frailest of all houses is the spider's house, if they but knew"¹. This entry and the symbolism of the spider's fragile and ephemeral house elicit feelings of transience from the author's behalf and point to his detachment from earthly considerations. These different expressions of aloofness at the same time connote and express the zuhd or renunciation that marked Paul Bowles's latest literary productions.

Moroccan settings as metaphors of uz'l, khalwa, and zuhd

The recurrent and predominant settings and spaces of Paul Bowles's image of Morocco favour and illustrate the mystic practices of uz'l and khalwa and zuhd. From the beginning of his expatriation the author was mainly attracted by desert and barren regions of Morocco that on the whole connote isolation and detachment.

Bowles's Morocco is regionally restricted. Cities and urban environments are criticized and neglected. At the beginning of his expatriation, that is, when he was still discovering his new home territory, the writer expressed a sort of implicit dislike of Moroccan cities. For instance, 'Casablanca', a travel essay on the Moroccan economic capital, is only a kind of tourist's postcard with an emphasis on the way of life of the inhabitants of this city with an emphasis on their minor standard treacheries. The author's dislike is forcefully expressed in the metaphor and negative connotations of the introduction: "Casablanca is not Morocco: it is a foreign enclave, an alien nail piercing Morocco's flanks"². Bowles disliked the Moroccan metropolis so much that he even denied its relationship with Morocco: "Casablanca is not a Moroccan city and never was one"³.

To the author, Fez, the Moroccan spiritual capital, was more attractive. This city first appealed to the writer because of aesthetic reasons and the splendour of the homes, mosques and universities⁴. To him, Fez was at that time 'unique in the world'⁵ because of the mystery that surrounded it, because it

¹ Paul Bowles, The Spider's House.

² Paul Bowles, 'Casablanca', in:

³ Paul Bowles, Morocco, p. 12.

⁴ Cf Paul Bowles, 'Fez', in : Holiday Magazine, p. 13.

⁵ Paul Bowles, Morocco, p.13.

was enclosed in a ‘solid frame of verdure [...] like a white bouquet tightly encased in leaves’¹ and most of all because of its mystery and of its unchanged character that places it beyond civilization. Once more, Nature is the writer’s basis criterion

Tangier is undoubtedly the writer’s chosen city. It remained his home until his death in 1999. The attraction it exerted on the author was due pastoral character and, most of all, to the beauty of its surrounding natural environment. This city is nestled between the Mediterranean sea and the Atlantic ocean and the land is mostly wrapped with pinewoods. Moroccan Nature and cosmic elements are this city’s most conspicuous features. These pastoral characteristics account for Paul Bowles’s fascination. It is the writer’s ‘dream city’ and ‘doll’s metropolis’², a place that was not affected by the negative sides of civilization.

On the whole, the author’s attraction by these Moroccan cities was mainly subtended and motivated by their pastoral characteristics that could favour his mystic isolation.

On this basis, the settings of the image are mostly desert or secluded places. The preference of isolated and desert settings recalls and is symptomatic of his habit of concealment and isolation as a child and, at the same time, illustrates his mystic practice of *uz’l* and *khalwa* in Morocco. Besides, closed locales are representative of *uz’l* as physical isolation while desert open spaces can be read as metaphors of *khalwa*, that is, spiritual retreat.

Actually, settings such as caves, grottoes, closed spaces on the one hand and the Sahara and desert spaces on the other recur in the image of Morocco and favor both *uz’l* and *khalwa*. In fact, these kinds of areas were the very first spaces that attracted his attention. Crossing the Gibraltar strait on his way to Ceylon, the very first portions of Moroccan land that caught the author’s attention and prompted him to start writing Let it Come Down were “ [...] the beach, the grotto, the cave [...]. It was one of my favorite places there, this cave”³. Accordingly, desert landscapes and beaches as well as secluded locales are the author’s recurrent and favourite settings. The barrenness of desert places connotes renunciation while closed spot and the desert, two divergent kinds of settings, are both metaphors for retreat.

For instance, an isolated spot in the outskirts of the mountain of Tangier is the theatre of the action of the short story in ‘Tea on the Mountain’ (1939), a grotto is the setting of ‘The Scorpion’

¹ Paul Bowles, *Morocco*, p. 34.

² Cf Paul Bowles, *Without Stopping*, pp. 128-129.

³ Paul Bowles, tape conversation, cf Lawrence D. Stewart, *The Illumination Of North Africa*, p. 87.

(1944) and a hammam¹ in ‘By the Water’ (1945). In addition to this, even the characters are living in almost sheltered homes: in “A Thousand Days for Mokhtar” (1948), seclusion is paired with isolation since the main protagonist has been alone for ten years and lives in a tiny room without windows. In the same way, in Let it Come Down (1952), the emphasis is placed on tiny and closed locales: a cave harbours Dyar’s and Hadija’s intimate moments², the smuggler’s office is small, with no windows and is metaphorically compared to a ‘cage’³ and described as expressing an ‘inhospitable bareness’⁴. In the short story ‘The Hyena’⁵, the author even stresses the seclusion of the animals’ hide-outs such as a cave and a ravine.

These isolated and secluded areas constitute an aspect of the ‘physical’ environment of the image. They at the same time fulfill and represent his mystic penchant to the physical isolation he inherited from his childhood in the Fatherland and are recurrent spatial illustrations and metaphors for shelter, *khalwa* and *uz’l*.

The writer’s gradual isolation denotes a renunciation to worldly affairs and is reflected in the predominance of isolated and desert Moroccan settings. The Sahara, the arid Moroccan landscapes and desert spots can be read as settings symbolizing seclusion and barrenness. The author’s mystic journey towards *uz’l* is reflected in his fiction through the movement from the Western world to South American jungles to the Sahara and Moroccan desert spaces. Similarly, there is a movement from writings with western and native characters to works with North African characters only. The late productions are the last stage of his isolation: these writings only consist in the author’s monologues and in his being his own interlocutor⁶.

Thus, the Sahara and desert places constitute the second main kind of Moroccan settings. A basic dichotomy underlies Bowles’s treatment of Moroccan settings and spaces. The small and secluded places contrast with the openness and spaciousness of desert spots and of the Sahara. The small and closed places convey states of physical isolation or retreat while the Sahara and the desert voids of Morocco favor and so illustrate the Sufi practice of *khalwa*, that is, a spiritual isolation that entails loneliness. Besides, the desert void is also a metaphor for renunciation. Therefore, landscapes

¹ A Moroccan Turkish bath .

² Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 97.

³ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 80.

⁴ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 80

⁵ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, pp. 292, 293.

⁶ Cf Paul Bowles, Two Years beside the Strait.

of barrenness and sterility as well as the desert spaces at the same time serve the mystic practices of *uz'l*, *khalwa* and *zuhd*.

Consequently, Bowles' Morocco is geographically antinomous: it is rural, desert, open and at the same time secluded. Tiny and secluded settings contrast with desert open spaces. This dichotomy characterizes the image of the sheltering country from the beginning of his expatriation to his last literary production. In fact, the writer's expatriation in Morocco is per se a physical and spiritual retreat. These contrasting and recurrent spatial illustrations are metaphors for shelter, *khalwa* and *uz'l*. The seeds of spiritual and physical isolation take the form of a focus and adoption of Moroccan desert and rural places and a refusal of modern and urban places.

In Let It Come Down for instance, the main protagonist's major experiences often take place in desert places. After his flight, Dyar takes refuge in a grotto-like house built in a rock and cut off from the world. This haven favours meditation and isolation. As a matter of fact, the author stresses the feelings of nothingness and emptiness Dyar experiences as soon as the door closes on him: There was nothing [...]. He did not even remember that he was hungry; although the emptiness was there in him, more marked than before he had slept, it seemed to have transformed itself into a simple inability to think or feel¹. This numbness at the same time evokes the blankness of the mind the author used to take refuge in as a child and illustrates the mental state of detachment that heralds spiritual isolation. In fact, this state shortly precedes Dyar's explicit and final mystic experience on the beach. In the same way, the 'water as a place of solitude'², that is to say the Mediterranean sea, is the background of Dyar's plainly mystic experience when, in the company of Jilali³, he meditates upon existence, life and Moroccan Nature.

The predominance of wastelands like the desert and barren spots also illustrates the discarding of Paul Bowles's western consciousness and point to an actual mystical involvement. Silence and timelessness are at the same time corollaries of desert spaces and of spiritual and physical retreat. In this context, timelessness is at the same time a medium to spiritual isolation and a means to transcendence, to come closer to the divine.

¹ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 245.

² Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 229.

³ Jilali is a first name that literally means 'belonging to the Jilali brotherhood. In his context, the Jilali's presence points to Dyar's mystic experience and view of Moroccan Nature.

Desert places and the Sahara at the same time provide isolation, but also silence and a feeling of timelessness. Paul Bowles's mysticism is then mediated by these prerequisites that concurrently favour *khalwa* and *uz'l*.

Silence and timelessness

In addition to the closed and desert places, silence and timelessness also directly relate to the mystic practices of *uz'l* and *khalwa*. As such, they are notable facets of the mystic image of Morocco. Silence accompanies and is a pre-requisite of spiritual and physical isolation while timelessness at the same time refers to and connotes transcendence and eternity. Silence and timelessness are the main characteristics of the desert. Consequently, in the literary image of Morocco the stillness of the desert is also paired with timelessness. As Bowles states, in the Sahara 'There is a way to master silence, control its curves, inhabit its dark corners and listen to the hiss of time outside'¹. This affirmation 'materializes' silence, equates it with a place and associates it to time. So, the silence of the desert is to be related to the notion of time, or timelessness in the context of the writer's Moroccan work. Thus, the actual emphasis on the concord uniting places, time and silence points to the writer's keenness and mastery of these conditions that facilitate *khalwa* and *uz'l*.

Timelessness is a central issue in the exercise of *khalwa* and *uz'l*. As both mystic ways aim at transcendence and detachment from worldly considerations, they therefore correlate with timelessness. The absence of sound can be regarded as the most natural aural equivalent of *khalwa* and timelessness as means to transcendence and eternity. For instance, in *The Spider's House*, Stenham is characterized as nourishing the immature hope that time might be stopped and man sent back to his origins². In the same way, the leitmotiv of 'The Hours After Noon' expresses a kind of appreciation of timelessness: "*Le temps qui coule ici n'a plus d'heures, mais tant l'inoccupation de chacun est parfaite... »*³.

Time is quite literally the essence of *Let it Come Down* where the recurrent theme of timelessness is conveyed through the main protagonist's desire to stop time and through his yearning at timelessness⁴. This novel presents a movement from Dyar's acute notion of the passing of time to its conception as something perennial. *Let it Come Down* begins on the passing of time and on its

¹ Paul Bowles, 'Too Far from Home', in: *The Stories of Paul Bowles*,

² Cf Paul Bowles, *The Spider's House*, p. 345.

³ Paul Bowles, "The Hours After Noon", in: *Collected Stories*, p. 241.

⁴ Paul Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, p.269.

unconstructive effects as illustrated in Dyar's reflections: "The present stood in its way; it was the minutes that were inimical. Each empty, overwhelming minute as it arrived pushed him a little further back from life"¹. Subsequently, the novel ends on the protagonist's ultimate experience of *uz'l* and *khalwa* in a lonely, yet reviving experience in a pastoral environment:

Little by little the uncertain trail led downward across regions of rough pastureland and stony heaths. It was with astonishment that he saw on a hillside a group of cows grazing. During the morning he had grown used to thinking of himself as the only living creature under this particular sky².

The pure profundity of heavens is contextualized in the 'pure time'³, that is, the timelessness that heralds Dyar's liberation. This release takes place in a context where silence and a perennial notion of time prevail⁴.

Timelessness suggests eternity and therefore entails transcendence. Accordingly, in this novel there is a shift from an 'inimical' time which evokes death to revival through timelessness and transcendence. To Dyar, and consequently to the author, Morocco is then a generator of life and transcendence. The shift from temporality to timelessness accounts for Morocco as the space that mediates the fulfilment of the author's mystic aspirations at physical and spiritual isolation.

The last chapter of Let It Come Down fictionalizes the interaction of silence and timelessness as leading to plenitude and, largely, to spiritual isolation and transcendence. In fact, the mystic notion of timelessness and silence are introduced by the beating of drums that initiates mystic trance states⁵ and foretells liberation. The sound of drums adds another dimension since it is itself presented as a symbol of the continuity of Time. The beating of drums leads to timelessness. The music 'had kept every detail of syncopation intact, even at its present great rate of speed, thus succeeding in destroying the listeners' sense of time'⁶. Thus, Dyar's experience of *khalwa* and plenitude takes place in an absolute silence and timelessness that connote transcendence.

¹ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 20-21.

² Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 254.

³ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 282.

⁴ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 269.

⁵ Cf Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, pp. 268, 269, 270-271

⁶ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 270.

In the same sense, infinity is basic to ‘If I Should Open my Mouth’, a diary written from ‘the region within’¹, precision that implies introspection and an unspoken reference to meditation and isolation. It is Bowles’s most eloquent and direct synthetic expression of infinite time and invisibility: ‘The time – timeless. If I should open my mouth to cry out, no sound would come forth. [...] because I am invisible. I am hidden’². The correlation between invisibility and timelessness points to the objectives of *uz’l* and *khalwa*, that is, isolation for the sake of transcendence to get close to the Divine.

Timelessness is sometimes associated with silence that is a prerequisite that favors spiritual isolation. Let it Come Down presents the author’s most comprehensive treatment of silence as a metaphor for spiritual isolation and for communion with Nature. In fact, in the introduction to this work, the author indicates that the last chapter, entitled *Another Kind of Silence* and dealing with the main protagonist’s mystical rapports to Nature and with liberation and timelessness, was actually written in ‘the absolute silence of the mountain nights’³. The kind of silence that prevails in this chapter is linked to the mystic practice of trance and mutilation⁴. Silence in this instance is also associated with timelessness since the ‘listeners’ sense of time’ is destroyed⁵. Trance states being means of communion with the divine, silence becomes then a metaphor for the aspiration at transcendence.

The desert as a means to transcendence and the sublime

The finality of the mystic practices of *uz’l*, *khalwa* and *zuhd* is isolation in order to get close to the divine. Their corollaries, that is to say, silence and timelessness, are the means to reach the sublime or the infinite.

In Bowles’s Moroccan work, the Sahara is the space that most directly mediates transcendence⁶. The desert at the same time provides the silence, the isolation and the closeness to Nature that are essential to the achievement of mystic practices such as *uz’l* and *khalwa*. Because of the void and the barrenness that characterizes it, the Sahara is a space that is also appropriate to the practice of *zuhd*. In addition to a knowledgeable and objective overview of the Saharan geography,

¹ Paul Bowles, ‘If I Should Open my Mouth’, in; Collected Stories, p. 256.

² Paul Bowles, ‘If I Should Open my Mouth’, in; Collected Stories, p. 258.

³ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 8.

⁴ Cf Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, pp. 269-270.

⁵ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 270.

⁶ In the sense of beyond material existence in order to reach the Divine.

fauna and flora, the travel essay ‘Baptism of Solitude’¹ is the author’s most comprehensive and straightforward literary illustration of the desert and its correlation with *uz’l*, *khalwa*, and *zuhd*. The writer also presents silence and of timelessness and their correlation with the Divine. Bowles initially published this essay in 1953², that is, a few years after his definite residence in Morocco and therefore shows that a mystic quest was already a basic motive behind the author’s choice of Morocco as a sheltering country.

The Sahara is the ideal space as Paul Bowles explains in its opening lines:

Immediately when you arrive in the Sahara, for the first or the tenth time, you notice the stillness. An incredible, absolute silence prevails outside the towns; and within, even in busy places like the markets, there is a hushed quality in the air, as if the quiet were a conscious force, which, resenting the intrusion of sound minimizes and disperses sound straight away³.

Thus, the Saharan silence is so profound that it is described as a dynamic and all pervading force. Silence is so overpowering that loneliness immediately engenders the ‘baptism of solitude’, that is, a sensation where ‘nothing is left but your own breathing and the sound of your heart beating’⁴.

The writer presents the desert as engendering the highest state of spiritual and physical retreats leading to a sort of revival or rebirth: ‘A strange, and by no means pleasant, process of reintegration begins inside you. For no one who has stayed in the Sahara for a while is quite the same as when he came’⁵. Reintegration might here be understood as meaning the recovery of one’s real self and therefore highlights the view that Bowles’s mysticism is a means at self-definition and revival. Even though the author underlines some worldly pleasures⁶ the Sahara offers, the appeal of the desert is essentially a mystic attraction. The cosmic and compelling quiet and wilderness of the desert are forceful features that viscerally and mystically link the author to the Sahara.

Inducing a ‘process of reintegration’⁷ as the author specifies, the Sahara also becomes a means to transcendence: the Saharan stillness is so great that nothing is left and even memory disappears¹. The

¹ Paul Bowles, ‘Baptism of Solitude’, in: *Their Hands are Green and their Heads are Blue*, pp 128-144.

² ‘Baptism of Solitude’ was initially published in 1953 under the title ‘The Secret Sahara’ in *Holiday*, 13:1, Philadelphia, January 1953.

³ Paul Bowles, ‘Baptism of Solitude’, in: *Their Hands are Green and their Heads are Blue*, p. 128.

⁴ Cf Paul Bowles, ‘Baptism of Solitude’, in: *Their Hands are Green and their Heads are Blue*, p. 129.

⁵ Paul Bowles, ‘Baptism of Solitude’, in: *Their Hands are Green and their Heads are Blue*, p. 129.

⁶ Paul Bowles, ‘Baptism of Solitude’, in: *Their Hands are Green and their Heads are Blue*, p. 136.

⁷ Paul Bowles, ‘Baptism of Solitude’, in: *Their Hands are Green and their Heads are Blue*, p. 129.

annihilation of memory suggests a transcendental state and fusion with the desert, since, in that context, memory, as a human faculty essentially related to existence, disappears in the Sahara. The Sahara and the correlated silence and timelessness are then the main channels that generate renaissance and connote eternity.

The writer's approach to the Moroccan desert and the fascination it exerts on him recall Emmanuel Kant's notion of the sublime. The greatness Bowles confers the Sahara meets Kant's aesthetic philosophy and his definition of the sublime. This philosopher identifies the sublime as 'absolutely great'² and as represented by 'boundlessness'³. Both definitions suit the writer's view of the Sahara: a boundless, timeless and great space.

In the author's Moroccan work, Nature, the cosmos and the Sahara represent the sublime and are means at transcendence in the context of Pantheist mysticism. As a matter of fact, the Moroccan Nature and the Sahara are equated with the Absolute. In the context of this investigation, Bowles's sublime Moroccan Nature and the desert are the Divine. As the writer specifies in a notebook entry for 'The Time of Friendship: "[...] the mystery and beauty were not to be found in the dark corners of the earth, but in the glaring face of the Absolute, in the desert"⁴. So, the desert is explicitly equated with the Absolute, that is, the Divine.

Given the agnosticism of Paul Bowles, the concepts of the divine and God should not be linked to a specific deity or religion. On the basis of the spiritual dimension Bowles grants to the Moroccan Nature and Cosmos, a correlation can therefore be set between the author's mystical approach to Nature and the pantheist philosophy of Ibn-al-Arabi. This philosopher's beliefs point to a pantheistic mysticism where Nature and the cosmos are linked to the divine, that is, to the Infinite. In the mystic perspective, Ibn-al-Arabi's teachings in The Meccan Revelations⁵ are basic principles that support and illustrate Bowles's mystical approach to Nature. As W.C.Chittick extends,

When Ibn'Arabi discusses time and space, he keeps in view their divine roots. There is nothing in the universe that is not a sign of God and his workings. As signs, time and place provide reminders for the human soul in its becoming. In other words,

¹ Paul Bowles, 'Baptism of Solitude', in: Their Hands are Green and their Heads are Blue, p. 129.

² Immanuel Kant, Critique of Judgement, paragraph 25.

³ Immanuel Kant, Critique of Judgement, paragraph 23.

⁴ Paul Bowles, quotation from the Paul Bowles Collection, Humanities Research Center, The University of Texas at Austin. Cited by Lawrence D.Stewart, The Illumination Of North Africa , p. 143-144.

⁵ Ibn Al Arabi, The Meccan Revelations, M.Chodkiewicz (Ed.).

understanding them and perceiving their *haqq*¹ has direct relevance to achieving the realization, or assuming as one's own the character traits of God"².

Time and space have therefore a celestial essence. This worldview meets the spiritual link Bowles sets between Moroccan Nature and cosmos on the one hand, and the Infinite on the other. Space, being Morocco in the context of Bowles's work, one can therefore infer that this country, and consequently its Nature and cosmic elements, have divine attributes in the context of Ibn al Arabi's pantheism.

Ibn-al-Arabi emphasized the relationship between mental or 'imaginary' experiences on the one hand and reality on the other. As Chittick asserts, the image³ in its different denotations as referred to by Chittick, is as well relevant to the external reality. Accordingly, the author's image of Morocco, its different metaphorical representations correlate with the actual circumstances. Thus, the metaphorical dimension of the image as it relates to the Divine and to the infinite is relevant to the external reality. Consequently, in Bowles's work, the imaginal world and the Divine correlate with the Moroccan reality. As a result, worldly elements are, as R.W.J. Austin translates, 'an infinite display of ayat or signs, the intelligent interpretation and contemplation of which leads one, inevitably, back towards the absolute and unitive truth of God'⁴. Bowles's subjective view of Morocco can be read as his cosmic imagination⁵ of his chosen country. In this context, the divine attributes he grants to Moroccan Nature and cosmic and their association with the Infinite may be considered as a sign of his pantheism⁶.

Bowles's attraction and sheer fascination by North Africa in general and by Morocco in particular was to a great extent due to the 'minimum of discrepancy between dogma and natural

¹ William C. Chittick explains this term as follows: "'*haqq*' means not only 'real', [...], but also true, proper, appropriate, right and just". W.C. Chittick, *Ibn'Arabi, Heir to the Prophets*, p. 79.

² W.C. Chittick, *Ibn'Arabi, Heir to the Prophets*, p. 87.

³ W.C. Chittick defines the image as follows: "Few notions are more central to Ibn'Arabi's conceptual apparatus than *khayal*, imagination or image. The Arabic word denotes not only the power that allows us to picture things in the mind, but also mental pictures, mirror reflections, and images on a screen. It refers both to the internal faculty and the external reality". W.C. Chittick, *Ibn'Arabi, Heir to the Prophets*, p. 105-106.

⁴ R.W.J. Austin, *The Bezels of Wisdom by Ibn Arabi*, p. 96.

⁵ Cf W.C. Chittick, *Ibn'Arabi, Heir to the Prophets*, pp. 105-107.

⁶ A parallel may be drawn here between Bowles's pantheism and the theory of Spinoza. This philosopher devised a whole theory unifying God and Nature. According to him, "God or Nature is the one substance which exists, the single unchanging reality which underlies all phenomena of any kind, and which a perfect science would reveal [...] God is therefore identified with Nature, [...] in so far as God is the fundamental facts of nature which explain all the rest. God, then, is the fundamental facts of the world, from which all the phenomena of nature necessarily flow". Nicholas Bunnin, E.P. Tsui-James (eds.), *The Blackwell Companion to Philosophy*, p. 659.

behaviour'¹. This assertion accounts for the author's mysticism as a non-dogmatic and intuitive behaviour. In this perspective, the images of Moroccan Nature and cosmos can then be regarded as mental experiences corresponding to a mystic display leading to the absolute and the Infinite. In this regard, the author's mysticism can be defined as 'the urge to reach out to the Infinite'².

Infinity and the divine

Bowles's literary representation of Morocco presents various references to the 'Infinite' and to the 'Absolute'. The references to the notions of the Infinite or the Absolute express his pantheist conception of the divine.

In this context, 'Africa Minor'³ is one of the rare works where Paul Bowles expresses his standpoint about the Islamic religion and dogmas in relation with his own fascination with Morocco. In this travel essay, the writer approves and values the primary importance North African people confer to Nature, or what he terms as the 'heavens that surround us'⁴. As the following quotation highlights, the sky is awarded a specific and central dimension:

In other parts of Africa you are aware of the earth beneath your feet, the vegetation and the animals; all power seems concentrated on the earth. In North Africa the earth becomes the less important part of the landscape because you find yourself constantly raising your eyes to look at the sky. In the arid landscape the sky is the final arbiter. When you have understood that, not intellectually but emotionally, you have also understood why it is that the trinity of monotheistic religions [...]. were evolved in desert regions. And of the three, Islam, perhaps because it is the most recently evolved, operates the most directly and with the greatest strength upon the daily actions of those who embrace it⁵.

The sky, as a final authority, is thus explicitly presented as a metaphor for the divine. In association with the sky as a metonymy for Morocco, we can therefore imply that, the sky being the divine, the sheltering country or its sky becomes the sheltering and mystic dimension of the divine. The latter is introduced by the writer's reference to a mystic and emotional understanding of the sky instead of a

¹ Paul Bowles, 'Africa Minor', in *Their Heads are Green and their Hands are Blue*, p. 22.

² Definition given by Majid Fakhry, *Islamic Philosophy, Theology and Mysticism*, p.72.

³ Paul Bowles, 'Africa Minor' pp. 20-40 in *Their heads are Green and their Hands are Blue*. This volume is a collection of eight travels essays on different places viewed through their religious beliefs.

⁴ Paul Bowles, 'Africa Minor', in: *Their Heads are Green and their Hands are Blue*, p. 21.

⁵ Paul Bowles, 'Africa Minor', in: *Their Heads are Green and their Hands are Blue*, p. 21-22.

dogmatic one. This emotional representation of the sky can then be regarded as a metaphor that emphasizes the spiritual and intuitive tie uniting the writer to his chosen home. Consequently Morocco becomes a sheltering mystic space where the beauties of the Moroccan sky fulfil his aspirations at the Divine.

The writer's image of Morocco can then be considered as the expression of his mystic quest under a protective sky. This search already marked his earlier writings. Thus 'Africa Minor' was published as early as 1953, which entails that the seeds of Bowles's later mysticism were already present quite at the beginning of his expatriation and that his quest in the adopted country was from the onset a mystic one. Accordingly, Morocco, from the start, offered the writer essential elements that compose and favour a mystical behaviour and communication with an absolute reality, that is, the Divine.

Bowles's notions of the 'Absolute', the 'Divine' or the 'Infinite' should be distinguished from any religious approach and contextualized in a pantheist framework. As a matter of fact, pantheism is free from the belief in any particular religion and from any limit of time. It is the belief that 'all is God'¹. For instance, Spinoza, the great prophet of pantheism, was at the same time a Catholic and a Pantheist. In the same way, Muhiyiddin-In-al-Arabi was at the same time Muslim and a fervent pantheist. Consequently, Bowles's references to the 'Divine', the 'Infinite' or the 'Absolute' should not be associated to any particular God but placed in the context of this philosophical theory. These mentions may be considered as signs of Bowles's mysticism. Since mysticism may be viewed as "the urge to reach out the Infinite"², therefore the association the writer sets between Nature and cosmic elements may be interpreted as featuring his mysticism.

The author's references to Infinity and to the Absolute may be read as invoking the divine, in the sense of a transcendental power and supreme creation, encompassing the cosmos, that is, the different cosmic and natural elements. His supreme ideal is the cosmos and Nature, that is to say, the Moroccan landscapes and the various cosmic elements in the context of this study. Bowles associates eulogistic descriptions of Moroccan Nature and landscapes with references to the Infinite and the Absolute.

In this perspective, the author's approach to Moroccan Nature and cosmos is close to pantheistic mysticism. Pantheistic mysticism in general involves the basic tenet that the cosmos is divine. This conviction does not refer to an invisible deity, but it concerns man's emotional reaction to the real

¹ Nicholas Bunnin, E.P. Tsui-James (eds.), *The Blackwell Companion to Philosophy*, p. 456.

² Majid Fakhry, *Islamic Philosophy, Theology and Mysticism*, p. 73.

cosmos and universe. It is a statement about the response of man's senses and emotions to the surrounding cosmic power.

Bowles's mystic approach to Moroccan Nature and cosmos is more precisely close to Ibn-al-Arabi's cosmology and pantheistic theosophy of the Creation¹. The symbiosis linking man, Nature and cosmic elements is mainly present in Bowles's Moroccan work and recalls Ibn-al-Arabi's pantheistic vision of the universe as well as the notion of the 'Unity of Existence' or 'Wahdat-al-Wujud'².

In the context of Ibn-al-Arabi's philosophy, the cosmos is the creation, 'the result of a creative act'³. The creation or cosmos is also the self-disclosure of God since 'Everything qualifies as a sign of God'⁴. This theosophy applies to Bowles's text as he does not believe in any particular God or deity and presents the cosmos and Nature as a supreme reality that discloses the divine. Actually, the writer openly sets a direct link between the Moroccan Nature and cosmos on the one hand and the divine or the infinite on the other. From this standpoint, the Moroccan cosmos and Nature in Bowles's work can then be regarded as mystic disclosures of the divine. In this sense, a direct link unites landscapes to the infinite or the divine when he asserts that 'the landscape is conducive to reflections upon the nature of the infinite'⁵. On this basis, Bowle's association of landscapes to the infinite recalls the pantheist philosophy of Ibn al Arabi.

Indeed, the author's literary view of Morocco may be replaced in the context of Ibn al Arabi's concept of the image. As Chittick explains,

Few notions are more central to Ibn'Arabi's conceptual apparatus than *khayal*, imagination or image'⁶ cosmic imagination. The Arabic word denotes not only the power that allows us to picture things in the mind, but also mental pictures, mirror reflections, and images on a screen. It both refers to the internal faculty and the external reality.⁷

¹ The main difference between Ibn-al-Arabi and Paul Bowles is that the latter refers to the 'infinite' and the 'absolute' as expressions of the divine while Ibn-al-Arabi believes in Allah, as the Creator and unique God.

² This pantheist view of the cosmos will be analysed later in this study.

³ W.C. Chittick, *The Self-Disclosure of God: Principles of Ibn-al-'Arabi's Cosmology*, p.3.

⁴ W.C. Chittick, *The Self-Disclosure of God: Principles of Ibn-al-'Arabi's Cosmology*, p. 4.

⁵ Paul Bowles, 'Africa Minor', *Their Heads are Green and their Hands are Blue*, p. 21.

⁶ William C.Chittick, *Ibn'Arabi Heir to the Prophets*, p.105.

⁷ William C.Chittick, *Ibn'Arabi Heir to the Prophets*, pp 105-106.

This author as well states that “*khayal* denotes not only our subjective power of imagining things, but also the objective reality of images in the world, such as reflections in the mirror”¹. The association of ‘*khayal*’ or imagination with the objective reality entails that the image reflect the objective reality and the writer’s mind.

Bowles’s image of Morocco being a mental picture, and, given the close relationship connecting the writer’s approach to Nature to Ibn al Arabi’s philosophy, one can therefore associate the writer’s representation of the country he elected to Ibn al Arabi’s cosmic imagination. Chittick explains the latter as the interactive relationship of the subjective realm² and perception:

Invisible realities come down into imagination embodied as notions and dreams, and the objects of sense perception rise up to imagination and become the landscape of the soul. [...]. As two all-comprehensive images of the Real, cosmos and soul reflect each other. The universe is outward, deployed, dispersed, and objectified; the soul inward, concentrated, focused and subjectified”³.

There is therefore a correlation between imagination, notions, dreams, perception on the one hand and the soul on the other. The correspondence between cosmos and soul accounts for the connection Bowles sets between landscapes and man’s mind and soul. The writer’s image of Morocco, in the sense of imagination or ‘*khayal*’ of Morocco may therefore be included in the context of his cosmic imagination of his chosen country⁴.

Actually, Spinoza’s pantheist philosophy also suits Bowles’s approach to Nature and the divine. This philosopher equates God with the infinite: “By God I understand a being absolutely infinite, that is, a substance consisting of an infinity of attributes, of which each one expresses an eternal and infinite essence”⁵. Spinoza also associates Nature with God and the infinite. In this respect, Hampshire underlines the relationship linking God to Nature in the context of Spinoza’s ethics:

God is by definition (*Ethics* Pt. I. *Def.* VI) – and this definition is in accordance with orthodox theological and scholastic uses of the word ‘God’ – the being who possesses

¹ William C.Chittick, *Ibn’Arabi Heir to the Prophets*, p. 18.

² Cf William C.Chittick, *Ibn’Arabi Heir to the Prophets*, p. 106.

³ William C.Chittick, *Ibn’Arabi Heir to the Prophets*, p. 107.

⁴ Cf William C.Chittick, *Ibn’Arabi Heir to the Prophets*, pp 105-107, 117-120.

⁵ Cf Michael Della Rocca, *Spinoza*, p. 51.

infinite attributes; therefore, the single substance, which is identified with Nature conceived as a whole, is properly identified with God¹.

This identification of Nature with God validates the pantheist side of Spinoza's beliefs; as Hampshire maintains, "It is on account of this phrase that Spinoza has been alternately abhorred and venerated as a pantheist, pantheism meaning the identification of God with Nature"². In Spinoza's pantheist worldview, God is then omnipresent in Nature.

The ubiquitous aspect of God's presence involves the issue of the relationship of God to space as it relates to pantheism. Essentially, the spatial omnipresence of God and Nature correlate in pantheism:

If the space of God's omnipresence were identical with geometrical space, which is composed of units of measurements, pantheism would indeed be an inevitable consequence. One sees this result in the philosophy of Spinoza, with whom Albert Einstein sympathized in the twentieth century³

Hence, the pantheist feature of Bowles's image of Morocco may be included in the context of 'the space of God's omnipresence'. Spinoza's axiom that God is Nature matches the writer's association of Moroccan landscapes and Nature with the infinite⁴ and therefore relates it to God in a pantheist context. This adequation justifies Bowles's pantheism as well as his belief in God's omnipresence in Moroccan Nature and cosmos.

The bond which links Moroccan Nature to the divine and the infinite accounts for the rationale of the writer's lifelong expatriation and for the mystic quest he pursued under the Moroccan sky. Indeed, Bowles stipulates that the close relationships between dogma and natural behaviour, the harmony between man and the divine is 'one of the great pleasures of being in North Africa'⁵. The mystic accord that links man to Nature and the cosmos meets Paul Bowles's quests in Morocco. As he explains, Morocco still retains

¹ Stuart Hampshire, *Spinoza, An Introduction to his Philosophical Thought*, p.42.

² Stuart Hampshire, *Spinoza, An Introduction to his Philosophical Thought*, p.42.

³ Philip Clayton, Zachary Simpson, *The Oxford Handbook of Religion and Science*, p. 366.

⁴ Paul Bowles, *Morocco*, p. 78.

⁵ Paul Bowles, 'Africa Minor', in *Their Heads are Green and their Hands are Blue*, p. 22.

the ancient pattern of concord between God and man, agreement between theory and practice, identity of word and flesh (or however one prefers to conceive and define that pristine state of existence we intuitively feel we once enjoyed and now have lost¹.

Transcendence and unveiling of the Divine are main objectives of pantheist mysticism. In this context, imagination plays a crucial part in the conception of the cosmos and Nature as expressions of the divine and in the acquisition of the divine knowledge. According to Chittick, it is ‘only by placing imagination near the center of our concerns will we be able to grasp the significance not only of religion, but also of human existence’².

Imagination is also a focal aspect of mysticism. As Chittick underscores, it is ‘the realm where invisible realities become visible and corporeal things are spiritualized’³. Applying this assertion to Paul Bowles’s literary picture of Morocco, we can possibly infer that it represents his ‘imaginal’ picture of the Moroccan Nature where the Divine becomes visible through its manifestations in the cosmos.

Paul Bowles’s treatment of Moroccan Nature and cosmos

Bowles’s treatment of Moroccan Nature is close to Ibn-al-Arabi’s cosmology and notion of Imagination. According to this mystic philosopher, the Cosmos encompasses a hierarchy of three different worlds or levels, that is, the world of spirits, bodies and images. The latter, called the world of Imagination or ‘*Alam-al-khayal*’ plays a key role in the unveiling of the divine; it is the isthmus or ‘barzakh’, that is to say the intermediate imaginal world where spirits are materialized and bodies spiritualized.

The world of images is a really existent one in mystic states. Imagination is then a key to mysticism. Bowles’s representation of the Divine is thus a creative mental image⁴ that unites the beauties of Moroccan Nature and cosmos to the infinite. As Henri Corbin specifies, the ‘creative’ function of the Imagination is a metaphor⁵. The author’s association of the beauties of Moroccan Nature to the infinite and the mimetism he sets between characters and landscapes are imaginary images and

¹ Paul Bowles, *Africa Minor*, in *Their Heads are Green and their Hands are Blue*, p. 22.

² W.C. Chittick, *Imaginal Worlds: Ibn-al-Arabi and the Problem of Religious Diversity*, p. 12.

³ W.C. Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge: Ibn-al-Arabi’s Metaphysics of Imagination*, p. ix.

⁴ Cf Henri Corbin, *L’Imagination Créatrice dans le Soufisme d’Ibn Arabi*, p. 139.

⁵ Henri Corbin, *L’Imagination Créatrice dans le Soufisme d’Ibn Arabi*, p. 139.

therefore metaphors for the Divine. They are theophanic representations, or images of ‘tajalli’¹ in the context of Ibn-al-Arabi’s philosophy.

As Henri Corbin describes, the theophanic perception can only be achieved through the ‘*mundus imaginalis*’², which is the organ of the theophanic imagination. This imagination is active and theophanic, and is a means to unveil the Divine. The theophanic facet of imagination corresponds to Ibn-al-Arabi’s disclosure of the divine: ‘*kashf*’ or the unveiling of the divine functions through the imagination that perceives the identity and similarity with God or the Divine. So, unveiling sees the Divine presence through ‘*tashbih*’, that is to say the assertion God is similar to the creation or the divine immanence. On this basis, Bowles’s appreciative descriptions of Nature and the relationships he sets with the divine or infinity point to the divine immanence.

Consequently, the writer’s mystic images of Moroccan Nature and cosmos can be viewed as instances of ‘*kashf*’ or unveiling of the Divine knowledge. The latter is obtained through imagination and therefore constitutes the writer’s ‘Imaginal’ world, that is to say the world of the ‘Presence of Imagination’ or ‘*hadrat al- khayal*’ as Chittick explains³. This imaginal world is a field in which everything that exists is woven out of images. This ‘realm is one of the ‘five Divine Presences’ which are domains where God is to be found’⁴. In this perspective, Bowles’s mimetic and imaginative treatment of Moroccan Nature and cosmic elements can possibly be interpreted as his imaginal world and as a means to unveil and get closer to the divine.

In addition to this, the writer’s acute perception of Moroccan Nature can as well be read as an instance of the ‘Presence of Sense Perception’ or ‘*hadrat al’ hiss*’ that can be perceived by the senses. A ‘presence’ is identical with God since, as Chittick underlines, it is “considered as not other than God and as somehow identical with the He (al-Huwa); the existing things are more likely to be referred to in terms of the ‘presences’ (hadra)’⁵. Thus, ‘presence’ being a domain in which God is to be found⁶, the writer’s marked sensory and vivid imaginative approaches to Moroccan Nature and cosmos are then means to come close to the divine.

¹ This word denotes the self-disclosure of God. William C. Chittick explains that self-disclosure (tajalli) ‘plays an important role in Sufi teachings about the nature of God’s presence in creation’. *Sufism*, p. 128. The divine self-disclosure is as well a basic concept in pantheism

² Henri Corbin, *L’Imagination Créatrice dans le Soufisme d’Ibn Arabi*, p. 69.

³ W.C. Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge: Ibn-al-Arabi’s Metaphysics of Imagination*, p.5.

⁴ W.C. Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge: Ibn-al-Arabi’s Metaphysics of Imagination*, p.5.

⁵ W.C. Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge: Ibn-al-Arabi’s Metaphysics of Imagination*, p.5.

⁶ Cf W.C. Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge: Ibn-al-Arabi’s Metaphysics of Imagination*, p.5.

Such a perspective concurs with Bowles's pantheist facet of Morocco in the sense that he re-creates or imagines man's relationships with Moroccan Nature and cosmos. Besides, imagination is pivotal to the writer's image of Morocco because the writer visualizes, in the sense of envisioning, his characters' rapports to Moroccan Nature. Thus, imagination is central to the mimetic relationships the writer sets between his characters' states of mind and fate on the one hand and Nature on the other. In this context, theosophical¹ relationships link Bowles's characters to their natural environment.

A visceral and manifest fascination of Nature and cosmic elements subtends Bowles's Moroccan writings. This attraction can first be traced back to his childhood. Very early in life, he was utterly attracted by and receptive to natural elements. For instance in his childhood memories, he often refers to the sunlight and the blue sky²; the appeal of the cosmos was so great that he even characterizes his grandma as a 'sunny' person to emphasize her positive personality³. In the same sense, the writer's fascination by the azure sky of the Sahara was so intense that he underscores the 'ardent' blue colour of the sky even during the night:

At sunset, the precise, curved shadow of the earth rises into it swiftly from the horizon, cutting it into light section and dark section. When all daylight is gone, and the space is thick with stars, it is still of an intense and burning blue, darkest directly overhead and paling toward the earth, so that the night never really grows dark⁴.

The paradox of an 'ardent' blue sky at night illustrates the author's passionate attraction by cosmic elements. This allure is woven in the canvas of his Moroccan literary production as a whole.

Nature and cosmic elements are as well invested with a primordial dimension in the image of Morocco mainly because Bowles manifests close relationships and a marked harmony with Nature. These rapports are expressed through the healing and restoring value Nature is endowed with. In Let it Come Down for instance, fresh air has a soothing value and conditions Dyar to sleep after the anguish of his previous existential reflections⁵. In the same sense, his waking up rested, with the prospect of a new day in which he will be the winner, simply happy to live his life as it unfolds is stressed and introduced by the picture of a bright nature:

¹ In the sense that there is a deeper mystical reality with which a direct contact can be established through intuition, meditation, revelation or some other states that transcend moral human consciousness.

² Paul Bowles, Without Stopping, pp. 10, 11.

³ Paul Bowles, Without Stopping, p. 11.

⁴ Paul Bowles, 'Baptism of Solitude', in: Their Heads are Green and their Hands are Blue, p. 128.

⁵ Cf Let it Come Down, p. 177.

When he opened his eyes again the room was pulsing with sunlight. The sun was out there, huge and clear in the morning sky, and its light was augmented by the water, thrown against the ceiling, where it moved like fire. He jumped up, stood in the window, stretched, scratched, yawned and smiled¹.

The reference to natural elements such as the fire, the sun, the sky and the enumeration of the successive movements Dyar accomplishes link his dynamism and hope to Nature, creating thus a perfect consonance and unison between him and the cosmos. The vitality the protagonist displays as well as his ensuing smile cast a constructive glow on the natural surrounding. In this occurrence, the protagonist is so cheerful and positive that he is described as literally dazzled and drowned by light and sunshine², sensitive even to the air and utterly receptive to the natural environment.

Bowles's representation of Morocco is then absolutely rich in natural images that bring to light the splendour of the Moroccan Nature and cosmos and that underscore the author's entrancement. In fact, the writer's captivation by the Moroccan cosmos is the most striking facet of his literary image as a whole. Accordingly, a total fascination by Nature prevails in the image of Morocco. For instance when 'Morocco took over'³, the writer actually savoured the natural environment of inland Morocco:

I lived in a state of permanent excitement. It was hot, and we walked for miles every day, in all the quarters of Fez. It was more than enough just to be present in the landscape, smelling the fig trees, the cedar wood and the mint beds, and hearing the murmur of fast running water⁴

Bowles's literary production as a whole presents his absorption by Moroccan Nature and sceneries. As early of 1953, the Sahara is depicted as a real Eden: "The oases; those magnificent palm groves, are the blood and bone of the desert; [...].To stroll in a Saharan oasis is rather like taking a walk through a well-kept Eden"⁵. The heavenly description of the desert at the same time involves 'clean alleys', a 'riot of verdure', 'narrow ditches of running water', as well as evening coolness and "the gurgle of running water and the smell of mint in the air, and your host may bring

¹ Paul Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, p. 177.

² Paul Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, pp. 177-79.

³ Paul Bowles, *Without Stopping*, p. 276.

⁴ Paul Bowles, *Without Stopping*, p. 277.

⁵ Paul Bowles, 'Baptism of Solitude', in: *Their Heads are green and their Hands are blue*, p. 135.

out a flute¹”. Forty years later, the same heavenly picture recurs in Morocco (1993). In this travel book, the author demonstrates the same delight in the beauty of Moroccan landscape and its ‘splendid vistas’².

This continuity illustrates the writer’s captivation. The Moroccan heavens fascinated him and retained him for a lifelong exile. As he foresaw in Without Stopping, “The trip to Morocco would be a lark, a one-summer stand. [...]. I had been told there would be [...] sun every day. That seemed to me enough”³. The author’s enchantment was so intense that the short stay turned into a lifelong sojourn.

The works of fiction are equally illustrative of the writer’s fascination by Moroccan Nature. The recurrence of references and descriptions of Nature can be interpreted as an intrinsic expression of admiration. For instance, the events of Paul Bowles’s fiction are always interwoven with natural and laudatory descriptions. The writer’s admiration of Moroccan landscapes and Nature can be illustrated by Dyar’s laudatory and sensory experience of Nature before his release from torment:

The sun’s light filtered through his closed eyelids; making a blind world of burning orange warmth; with it came a corresponding ray of understanding which, like a spotlight thrown suddenly from an unexpected direction, bathed the familiar panorama in a transforming glow of finality⁴ .

This quotation may be read as a eulogy of Moroccan Nature. The main protagonist’s experience involves a combination of positive natural elements such as the ‘sun’s light’, the ‘burning orange warmth’ and the ‘familiar panorama’, all of which coalesce and herald his final liberation. Actually, the writer’s reference to a ‘glow of finality’ at the same time brings together the radiance of Nature and Dyar’s determination. As a matter of fact, the protagonist’s definite and positive evaluation of his life followed:

His life had not been the trial life he had vaguely felt it to be – it had been the only possible one, the only conceivable one. [...]. And so everything turned out to have

¹ Paul Bowles, ‘Baptism of Solitude’, in: Their Heads are green and their Hands are blue, pp. 135-136.

² Paul Bowles, Morocco, p. 12.

³ Paul Bowles, Without Stopping, p. 124.

⁴ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 256.

been already complete, its form decided and irrevocable. A feeling of profound contentment spread over him¹.

Moroccan natural elements and landscapes are then the author's recurrent and 'obsessive images'² that express his attraction by Moroccan Nature. They are his refrain as he specifies: "they come and go, the same ones over and over and over [...]. Everybody really sings his song no matter in what medium, he's always singing the same song somehow"³

Bowles's attraction by the Moroccan cosmos may be interpreted as illustrating a mystic union. As Henri Corbin remarks, mystic love is the religion of Beauty because the latter is the secret of theophanies⁴. In this sense, given the link Bowles sets between Nature and Infinity or the Divine, the beauty of Moroccan Nature and cosmos can be regarded as manifestations of 'tajalli', that is, as 'theophanic' representations.

In the pantheist conception of the universe, Nature is God. This axiom applies to Bowles's treatment of a fascinating Nature. In fact, the writer explicitly equates Nature and God: "It's all one: they're both the same, part of nature [...]. And if you use the word God in place of nature, then I think you get even closer to it"⁵. On the basis of this assertion, Bowles is therefore very close to Spinoza's pantheist belief that God is infinite and identical with Nature.

A similar stand would be to consider Bowles's utter captivation by Moroccan Nature and cosmos as a form of glorification of God in Ibn-al- Arabi's pantheism in which 'tajalli' is a mystical unveiling or 'kashf' of the Divine. Since everything on earth and in the heavens glorifies god, man's fascination by and glorification of cosmic and natural elements might be viewed as a glorification of the divine. As W.C.Chittick expounds, "The creatures glorify God to the extent that they know Him. Flowers glorify Him as the Lord of the sun, the earth and the rain [...] people glorify Him as the Lord of their goals and desires whatever these might be"⁶. In this perspective, the author's laudatory descriptions of the natural forms of the Moroccan landscapes as well as the attraction Moroccan cosmic elements exerted on him from the onset of his expatriation are then pantheistic expressions of the glorification of the divine. In the context of Ibn-al-Arabi's pantheism, Moroccan Nature and

¹ Paul Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, p. 256.

² Cf Lawrence D. Stewart, *The Illumination Of North Africa* p. 20.,

³ Paul Bowles, tape conversation at the Paul Bowles Collection, Humanities Research Center, the University of Texas at Austin and quoted by Lawrence D. Stewart, *The Illumination Of North Africa*, p. 20.

⁴ Cf Henri Corbin, *L'Imagination Creatrice dans le Soufisme d'Ibn Arabi*, p. 83.

⁵ Oliver Evans, 'An Interview with Paul Bowles', *Mediterranean Review*, 1:2 (Winter 1971) ..

⁶ W.C. Chittick, *Imaginal Worlds: Ibn-al-Arabi and the Problem of Religious Diversity*, p. 35.

cosmos can then be read as images of 'tajalli,' that is to say, representations of the self-disclosure of the divine¹. God is then immanent in Nature. In this worldview, Bowles's image of Morocco can as well be construed as a literary expression of his mystic adoration of the divine.

A pantheist similarity links Paul Bowles's representation of Morocco to Ibn-al-Arabi's cosmology and universality. The latter's ontology should not be confined to the limits of Islam. Even if Ibn-al-Arabi's philosophy is deeply rooted in the Islamic religion, it is actually a universal and mystic ontology.

In addition to this, two key themes of Ibn-al-Arabi's theosophy apply to Bowles's view of the divine. The first is that various religions devote themselves to different self-limited forms of God but each individual has a personal way to believe in God. In this sense, as the author often relates the natural environment to the 'infinite' and the 'divine', his approach to Nature and cosmos can be regarded as his own expressions of the divine. The second issue is that this personal relationship with the divine is private, that is, a close interaction linking man to his God or to the divine. In the context of this study, this rapport is represented by Paul Bowles's pantheistic view of the 'infinite' as the whole creation in a 'Unity of Existence'.

Light is Morocco's most attractive and enchanting feature. It is Bowles's mesmerising natural element. The dazzling Moroccan light was the magnet that first attracted him and that triggered his responsiveness to Moroccan Nature. Harry T. Moore justifies the title of Lawrence D. Stewart's work on Bowles and observes that "The illumination of North Africa, for it is mostly in terms of that phrase that Paul Bowles is remarkable: the fierce colors of the terrain, of its sea, and of its sky, burn in his writing"². Indeed, the author's references to light are a constant facet of his image of Morocco. For instance, even in the dark circumstances of 'A Distant Episode' Bowles invokes the moonlight and the brightness of the night sky³; similarly, in 'He of the Assembly' the author uses a periphrasis of light to express darkness: "The sky was almost empty of daytime light"⁴.

The icon of light is associated with light generating cosmic elements such as the sky, the sun and the moon. Yet, light predominantly relates to the sky, which is Bowles's appealing cosmic element. The sky is the illumination of Morocco and of the Sahara. As the writer points out, "Solid

¹ W.C. Chittick, *Imaginal Worlds: Ibn-al-Arabi and the Problem of Religious Diversity*, p. 24. Cf also W.C. Chittick, *Sufism*, p. 93.

² Lawrence D. Stewart, *Paul Bowles, the Illumination of North Africa*, p. VII.

³ Paul Bowles, 'A Distant Episode', in: *Collected Stories*, p. 40.

⁴ Paul Bowles, 'He of the Assembly', in: *Collected Stories*, p. 313.

and luminous, it is always the focal point of the landscape”¹. The absolute attraction the sky exerts on the author is also due to the light it radiates. Accordingly, Tangier’s landscapes and light are dazzling: “Then, the intensity of the sky, even when it is cloudy, is such that the lighting of these vistas is dramatic, often breathtaking [...]”². The appeal of light is so deep that Paul Bowles paradoxically underlines the radiance of the Saharan night: “When all daylight is gone, and the space is thick with stars, it is still of an intense and burning blue, darkest directly overhead and paling toward the earth, so that the night never really grows dark”³.

The communion between Nature and man recalls the basic *Unio Mystica*⁴. In fact, Bowles’s approach to Light can as well be replaced in the context of the mystic way. The latter is the process through which the mystic attains the union with the absolute. In fact, Moroccan light is the revelator of the writer’s utter and mystic attachment to Nature. It is also a metaphor for his quest of transcendence and the divine. As Lawrence D. Stewart affirms, light “has been the object of, and here illuminates, all of Bowles’s pursuits there”⁵.

Light is a metaphor that is common to most mystic religions and philosophies. In a mystic context, God being light, illumination therefore conduces to and symbolizes the divine. Ibn-al-Arabi identifies Light with Being, that is to say, with God. As W.C. Chittick, asserts, God is Light⁶. The visible light of this world is but the reflect of Being, which is God. The existing things are rays reflected from the ‘Light’s substance’⁷, that is, God’s. In the context of Ibn-al-Arabi’s ontology, God is Light and the immutable entities are ‘rays’ reflected from the divine light⁸. The cosmos and the world are both the mirror images of the divine in the perspective of the Unity of Existence. This assertion entails both the immanence and the transcendence of God.

God is Light and radiates on things. So, light and cosmic elements are representative of God. In the context of Ibn-al-Arabi’s ontology, God is manifest in the theophanic imagination. The mystic cosmography identifies the world as a luminous world of images. Ibn-al-Arabi’s theosophy of light views Light as a cosmogonic agent⁹ that reveals the divine. Consequently, Bowles’s admiration and focus on light illustrates his closeness to the divine in Moroccan Nature. It also brings up his

¹ Paul Bowles, ‘Baptism of Solitude’, in : *Their Heads are Green and their Hands are Blue*, p. 128.

² Paul Bowles, *Morocco*, p. 18.

³ Paul Bowles, ‘Baptism of Solitude’, in : *Their Heads are green and their Hands are Blue*, p. 128.

⁴ This is a common theme in mysticism putting forward that the mystic and reality as a whole or God are united.

⁵ Lawrence D. Stewart, *The Illumination Of North Africa*, p. xiii.

⁶ W.C. Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge: Ibn’al’Arabi’s Metaphysics of Imagination*, p.7.

⁷ W.C. Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge: Ibn’al’Arabi’s Metaphysics of Imagination*, p.7.

⁸ Cf W.C. Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge: Ibn’al’Arabi’s metaphysics of Imagination*, p. 7.

⁹ Cf Henri Corbin, *L’Imagination Créatrice dans le soufisme d’Ibn-Arabi*, pp. 147-148.

pantheist approach to light as revealing the divine through the epiphanic images of the perceptible world, or the 'Zahir'¹. Applying this conception to the writer's image of Morocco, we can infer that the importance he grants to light generating celestial elements² is a means that highlights or make the divine 'visible' and that expresses God's immanence.

On the basis of the importance Bowles grants to light, his mystic image of Morocco can also be regarded as presenting a form of a mystical neo- Illuminationist conception of the Universe in Corbin's sense³. This philosophy presents a vision of reality where essence is more important than existence and where perceptive⁴ knowledge is more important than the scientific one. The notion of light is as well focal to this philosophy: light is a means to explore the relationships between God, who is viewed as the Light of lights, and his creation. This philosophy is also relevant to the author's Moroccan work.

The basic elements of this world-view are met in Bowles's image of his adopted country. For instance, the writer's instinctive and spontaneous⁵ practices of *uzl'a*, *khalwa* and *zuhd* are close to the notion that essence is more important than existence since this behaviour refutes any worldly considerations. In addition to this, the notion of 'intuitive knowledge' is reflected in the author's mimetic treatment of Moroccan Nature and Cosmos in the context of the 'Unity of Existence'. Further, the recurrent metaphor of light is a means to unveil the divine and to underscore the relationships between the divine and the creation. The Illuminationist philosophy results then in a continuous reality where the physical and Natural world is the expression of the divine. Similarly, Bowles's image of Morocco presents a comprehensive approach to Moroccan Nature where the characters' states of mind and lives are mirrored in different natural elements and where the author sets an explicit link between Nature, light and the Infinite, that is, the divine.

Corbin conceived an '*Ishraqi*' or Illuminationist philosophical school putting forward the recurrence of archetypal symbols such as the icon of light. As a matter of fact, the term 'ishraqi' is derived from the Arab word 'ishraq' which means light and at the same time designates the East or Orient. It also denotes 'rising', especially the rising of the sun as a source of light. As Corbin states,

¹ Cf Henri Corbin, *L'Imagination Créatrice dans le soufisme d'Ibn-Arabi*, p. 148.

² Henri Corbin refers to the sensible light and to the sun. Henri Corbin, *L'Imagination Créatrice dans le soufisme d'Ibn-Arabi*, p. 148.

³ Henri Corbin is a French philosopher who was a specialist of Ibn-al-Arabi's mysticism as well as an advocate of neo-Illuminism. This philosophy stems from the *ishraqi* philosophy.

⁴ In the sense of intuitive.

⁵ Because these practices are not formally articulated as mystical practices in Paul Bowles's text.

‘ishraq’ is not only the reference to a spatial direction or situation, but it is as well an invitation for a hermeneutic reorientation to analyse spiritual needs and to go back to archetypal origins.

In this context, Bowles’s recurrent metaphors and references to the Moroccan light can be considered not only as the writer’s spatial orientation or residence in Morocco but also as the sign of his ‘hermeneutic’ reorientation.

Light is not the unique object of Bowles’s fascination. Other cosmic elements such as the Moroccan sky, sun, and air for instance are subject to the author’s eulogy. ‘The Hours after Noon’ presents a characteristic picture of the author’s literary use of the Moroccan cosmic background:

The wind was near to being a gale, but the clouds, which until now had covered the sky, were breaking up, letting the hard blue backdrop of the sky show through in places. In the cypresses the wind whistled and hissed, and even when it hit her face it took her breath away. The air was sharp with the odor of eucalyptus, and damp from the fine spray of the breaking waves below. Then, when the landscape was least prepared for such a change, the sun came out¹.

These detailed and sensory images offer an epitome of the writer’s admiration of the different cosmic and natural elements that compose the Moroccan natural universe. Appealing to different senses, these mental pictures relate to what Ibn-al-Arabi terms as ‘Hadrās’ or ‘Presences’ of God. The presence of God in cosmic elements entails the immanence of the divine. In this context, Paul Bowles’s admiration of Moroccan cosmic elements can then be regarded as expressions of the divine immanence in Nature.

The cosmic features can as well be viewed as the ‘Ayan Tabita’ or immutable entities in the context of Ibn-al-Arabi’s ontology. These entities represent the divine presence. They are forms of the Self-manifestation and immanence of God or the Divine. In the context of Ibn-al-Arabi’s ontology, the existent immutable entities are vehicles of god’s or the divine’s self-manifestation. As W.C.Chittick translates, each immutable entity ‘has been made manifest by the shining of *wujûd*’s light² and ‘represents *wujûd*, and *wujûd* is God’³. Accordingly, the author’s attraction by cosmic

¹ Paul Bowles, ‘The Hours after Noon’, in: *Collected Stories*, p. 221.

² W.C. Chittick, *Imaginal Worlds: Ibn-al-Arabi and the Problem of Religious Diversity*, p. 21.

³ W.C. Chittick, *Imaginal Worlds: Ibn-al-Arabi and the Problem of Religious Diversity*, p. 21.

and natural elements can be read as a form of a pantheist adoration of the divine since ‘the cosmos exists only after a fashion, much as a reflection may be said to exist in a mirror’¹.

On the basis of the ‘direction of khezr or ‘khadir’² who was the spiritual master of Ibn-al-Arabi, these cosmic entities can accordingly be interpreted as corresponding to the writer’s own theophany, as reflecting his ‘interior sky’ and finally as matching the writer’s divine spirituality³. So, Bowles’s closeness to Moroccan cosmos and his fascination by the ‘immutable entities’ can be associated with his theophanic representation of the chosen country and with a ‘divine encounter’⁴. This equation might suit the correspondence Bowles sets between the infinite and the cosmos, as well as his agnosticism and pantheist mysticism. Even if the writer is agnostic, he directly relates Moroccan Nature and cosmic elements to the infinite or Absolute which connotes the divine.

In this respect, the mystic facet of Bowles’s image of Morocco and his laudatory treatment of Moroccan Nature in relation with the ‘infinite’ acquire thus a theophanic dimension⁵.

The mystical unity of Paul Bowles’s image of Morocco

Harmony and unity subtend Bowles’s Morocco. The writer displays thus a sheer fascination for Moroccan landscapes and celestial elements. The sun, the heat, the ultramarine sky and the sun-like moon are among the heavenly elements that shaped his mystic and pantheistic approach and bound him to Morocco. This responsiveness to Moroccan cosmos pervades his Moroccan literary production as a whole, except for Points in Time (1982) and Two years beside the Strait (1989)⁶. The author’s fascination is conveyed through the vividness of his landscapes that are devotedly and minutely described to the last rock, shade or sunray.

Besides, a comprehensive and compelling unity links Nature and cosmic elements to characters and themes. The basic agreement that underlies Bowles’s literary image of Morocco is conveyed through two main channels: The mimetic and harmonious relationships linking man to Nature and the cosmos and the different trance states that mediate the Divine.

¹ W.C. Chittick, Imaginal Worlds: Ibn-al-Arabi and the Problem of Religious Diversity, p. 33.

² Cf Henri Corbin, L’Imagination Créatrice dans le Soufisme d’Ibn Arabi, p. 32.

³ Cf Henri Corbin, L’Imagination Créatrice dans le Soufisme d’Ibn Arabi, p. 54.

⁴ ‘Rencontre de l’*Alter Ego divin* in the text of Henri Corbin. Cf Henri Corbin, L’Imagination Créatrice dans le Soufisme d’Ibn Arabi, p. 54.

⁵ Cf Cf Henri Corbin, L’Imagination Créatrice dans le Soufisme d’Ibn Arabi, pp. 72-73.

⁶ Written towards the end of his life, these works are more directly illustrative of his isolation and, accordingly, of the practices of *uz’l* and *khalwa*.

Bowles's mystic's approach to Moroccan Nature seems to fulfil W.C.Chittick's definition of a mystic person as being 'someone who undergoes supranormal or perhaps 'extrasensory' experiences'¹. Such a characterization applies to the writer's mimetic and sensory treatment of characters and of Moroccan Nature. In this sense, Bowles's Moroccan work as a whole displays a strong and symbiotic interaction that connects the characters' state of mind to settings, to landscapes and to their natural environment.

A marked mimetism is thus recurrent in Let it Come Down. For example, in the first two chapters of this novel, the repeated references to darkness and to the stormy night echo Dyar's moral confusion and isolation. As the title suggests, the rain accompanies and reflects Dyar's different states of mind until the final murder and release from torment.

Also, Dyar's prospects of a bright future are reflected in the positive connotations of his environment before the fatal murder; for example, his actions are intertwined with positive references to the environment:

He went back to the entrance door, opened it, and stood bathing in the fresh air and the sensation of freedom that lay in the vast space before him. Then he realized that the sky was clear and blue. The sun had not risen high enough behind the mountains to touch the valley, but the day danced with light².

The constructive and hopeful connotations of this natural environment at the same time echo and herald the protagonist's hopeful prospects.

As opposed to this, the Dyar's final bewilderment and failure are paralleled by the gloomy weather of the last lines of the novel: 'The rain fell heavily and the wind had begun to blow again. He sat in the doorway and began to wait. It was not yet completely dark'³.

Even the protagonist's occasional moments of well-being are reflected in the surrounding natural elements. For instance, his forthcoming intimate moments with Hadija are brought in by the wind which is depicted as 'a great, amorous body'⁴. Eunice's agitation is expressed by a very bad

¹ W.C. Chittick, 'Mysticism in Islam', a lecture delivered at the David M. Kennedy Center for International studies, Brigham Young University, May 2003.

² Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 250

³ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 292.

⁴ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 96.

weather¹. In the same way darkness and night parallel Dyar's feelings of incomprehension² and contrariety³.

In this novel, Nature not only echoes but it also underscores the characters' inner self and state of mind. For instance, Dyar's hopeful expectations of his meeting with Hadija are highlighted by the ending of the rain; then the prospect of their promising day together is introduced by an occasional description of pastoral lively landscapes: "Halfway down, where the gradient was less steep and brilliant green grass covered the slope, a flock of black goats wandered. The odor of iodine and seaweed in the air made Dyar hungry"⁴. The protagonist's high spirits and optimism are expressed through his hunger as well as through the comparison he sets with the pleasant countryside and life⁵.

The Moroccan landscapes and countryside also parallel the main character's quest of the self. For instance, Dyar's liberation and the murder of Thami are forecast by the prospect of a bright and intense nature that is loaded with dramatic connotations, portending at the same time his killing of Thami but also his inner release from torment:

There were only the multiple details of the bright landscape around him. He studied them attentively; it was as though each hill, stone, gully and tree held a particular secret for him to discover. Even more - the configuration of the land seemed to be the expression of a hidden dramatic situation whose enigma it was imperative that he understands⁶.

Nature correlates then with the main character, and, by implication, with the author's efforts to achieve self-recovery. On the basis of the mimetism linking characters to landscapes, this natural panorama correlates with Dyar's life. In fact, the rough and irregular scenery matches the protagonist's restless life and with suggests his upcoming failure to achieve the definite status in life he was expecting from his arrival to Tangier.

The same mimetic relationships unite the characters' personality and fate to landscapes and cosmic elements. In "Tea on the Mountain" mimetic ties unite the characters' moods and mental

¹ Paul Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, p. 61.

² Paul Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, p. 177.

³ Paul Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, p. 126.

⁴ Paul Bowles, *Let It Come Down*, p. 93.

⁵ Paul Bowles, *Let It Come Down*, p. 93.

⁶ Paul Bowles, *Let It Come Down*, p. 253.

dispositions to natural elements. Rain, light, sun and water are meaningful mimetic elements in this short story. In 'By the Water', darkness¹ echoes and symbolizes the inimical character of the town where Amar has just arrived. Conversely, daylight and bright natural elements² herald the two men's survival and victory over Lazrag, the supernatural creature.

Likewise, 'A Distant Episode' to a great extent illustrates the close rapport linking characters to cosmic elements. In this short story, the repetitive references to rotten environmental elements and foul air³ are foreboding omens of the Professor's forthcoming misfortunes. Besides, the reference to sunsets which were at 'their reddest'⁴, to the 'flaming sky'⁵ presages the bloody and savage elements of the short story. Also, the abyss⁶ and the precipice⁷ at the border of which the Professor is standing suggest his impending tragic fate and the pitiless Rguibat tribe is metaphorically described as "a cloud across the face of the sun"⁸. Finally, the story ends on the image of a "lunar chill [...] growing in the air"⁹ which expresses an absence of warmth and life and therefore connotes the Professor's death. Thus, a symbiotic and mimetic bond links Bowles's characters to Moroccan landscapes, Nature and cosmic elements. The parallel the writer sets between Nature and cosmic elements on the one hand and the main theme and events of the short story on the other account for a mimetic rapport. This link is an unvarying feature of the image of Morocco that subtends it from the earliest writings. As W. Pounds asserts, "what composes the 'situation' in a Bowles story is precisely character and landscape, concealing and revealing each other: landscape, the externalization of character; character, the internalization of landscape"¹⁰. This mimetic rapport to Nature highlights the mysticism of Moroccan landscapes and at the same time expresses Bowles's pantheist view of the basic unity of existence.

Bowles establishes a reciprocal rapport not only with landscapes but also with celestial bodies such as the sky, the sun or the moon for instance. A cosmic concord of different natural elements constitutes the natural background of the short story 'A Thousand Days for Mokhtar'. For instance,

¹ Paul Bowles, 'By the Water', in: Collected Stories p.31.

² Paul Bowles, 'By the Water', in: Collected Stories p. 36.

³ Paul Bowles, 'A Distant Episode', in: Collected Stories, pp. 39-44.

⁴ Paul Bowles, 'A distant Episode', in : Collected Stories, p. 39

⁵ Paul Bowles, 'A distant Episode', in : Collected Stories, p. 39.

⁶ Paul Bowles, 'A Distant Episode', in: Collected Stories, pp.42, 43.

⁷ Paul Bowles, 'A Distant Episode', in: Collected Stories, p. 43.

⁸ Paul Bowles, 'A Distant Episode', in: Collected Stories, p. 44.

⁹ 'Paul Bowles, A Distant Episode', in: Collected Stories, p. 49.

¹⁰ W. Pounds, 'The Subject of Paul Bowles', in: Twentieth Century Literature, Paul Bowles issue, Volume 32, (1986), Number 3/4, p. 309.

the ‘black sea’¹, ‘the rain, the gusts of wind’, the ‘bamboo trees bending painfully’², the ‘bloodlike smell of sea’³, the ‘crashes of waves roaring’⁴, the wind that rages and the ‘gray morning’⁵ are sensory and expressive natural images of Mokhtar’s wrath as well as of his forthcoming condemnation. Even the synthetic environment is mimetic; the ‘sadness, coldness of damp blankets’ suggests the protagonist’s imminent state of convict. This natural background at the same time mirrors and heralds the protagonist’s fate.

The moon and the sun are as well recurrent celestial elements. Bowles often includes them in his natural descriptions to highlight his characters’ moody states of mind and critical destiny. For instance, in ‘A Distant Episode’ the moon and its associated chill suggest death and, as such, echo and reinforce the Professor’s fate⁶. The sun also recurs in the writer’s fiction in association with the positive prospects it connotes. For example, it highlights the different phases of the plot in ‘The Story of Lahcen and Idir’⁷ and in ‘The Wind at Beni Midar’⁸ as the torrid heat⁹ increases tenfold the ordeal of the young mougari in ‘The Delicate Prey’, to quote but a few examples.

The sky is undoubtedly the major celestial element. It is a mirror-reflection of characters’ personality and destiny and a basic leitmotiv in Bowles’s image of Morocco. The sky at the same time markedly highlights and closely reciprocates the author’s themes and characters. The ‘bowl of the sky overhead’¹⁰ generally harbours and reflects main themes. This image illustrates the celestial background of ‘He of the Assembly’. This short story is a notable instance of the basic communion that unites man to cosmic and natural elements such as stars, the wind, natural light and darkness¹¹. In fact, “The sky trembles and the earth is afraid, and the two eyes are not brothers”¹² is its basic and repetitive dictum; it epitomizes the symbiotic link that unites man with the heavens and emphasizes the reciprocal bond that associates characters to the sky. ‘Over his head was the sky, which he felt

¹ Paul Bowles, ‘He of the Assembly’, in: *Collected Stories*, p. 193.

² Paul Bowles, ‘He of the Assembly’, in: *Collected Stories*, p. 193.

³ Paul Bowles, ‘He of the Assembly’, in: *Collected Stories*, p. 194.

⁴ Paul Bowles, ‘He of the Assembly’, in: *Collected Stories*, p. 194.

⁵ Paul Bowles, ‘He of the Assembly’, in: *Collected Stories*, p. 195.

⁶ Paul Bowles, ‘A Distant Episode’, in: *Collected Stories*, pp. 40, 49.

⁷ Cf Paul Bowles, ‘The Story of Lahcen and Idir’, in: *Collected Stories*, pp. 308, 311, 329.

⁸ Cf Paul Bowles, ‘The Wind at Beni Midar’, in: *Collected Stories*, p.335.

⁹ Cf Paul Bowles, ‘The Delicate Prey’, in: *Collected Stories*, pp. 167-168.

¹⁰ Paul Bowles, *The Spider’s House*, p. 87.

¹¹ Cf Paul Bowles, ‘He of the Assembly’, pp. 313, 314, 316, 316, 317.

¹² Paul Bowles, ‘He of the Assembly’, p. 313.

was about to burst into light'¹. This image implicitly links the near explosion of the main protagonist's kif doped head to the sky's exploding light.

'The Garden' also fictionalizes the union merging the sky with the earth and man's fate. This short story begins with an idyllic image where the earth reflects the sky: "The sky was red, and when the man saw the floor of his garden shining like jewels, he sat down on a stone to look at it. As he watched, it grew brighter, and he thought: 'There is no finer garden in the oasis'². The mimetic side of this setting is conveyed through the shining reflect that unites land and sky and through the red color of the sky which foretells the man's fatal destiny as well as the degradation of the heavenly garden into a desolate desert: "Little by little the trees died, and very soon the garden was gone. Only the desert was there"³.

Let it Come Down presents the same symbiotic rapports uniting the sky and characters. For instance, Dyar, when stuck in a deadlock in Agla with no possibility of escape, looks at the sky and stars expecting an indication or advice, but 'they did not tell him what to do'⁴ as an echo to his own indecision. Besides, a bright blue sky parallels his positive feelings⁵. 'Thank God'⁶ is Dyar's response to the blueness of the sky. This reference to God first associates the sky to the divine and exactly picks up the concluding words of Paul Bowles's autobiography, Without Stopping:

Good-bye said the dying man to the mirror they hold in front of him. 'We won't be seeing each other any more'. [...]. Now, because I no longer imagine myself as an onlooker at the scene, but instead as the principal protagonist, it strikes me as repugnant. To make it right, the dying man would have to add two words to his little farewell, and they are: 'Thank God!'⁷

Dyar's and the author's common feeling of thankfulness to God is the stance of the divine and spiritual dimension Bowles endows the sky with.

Actually, the Moroccan sky also reflects Bowles's interior sky. The writer's perception of the Moroccan cosmos and celestial elements, the sky in particular, is at the image of his 'interior sky'. In

¹ Paul Bowles, 'He of the Assembly', p. 316.

² Paul Bowles, 'The Garden', in: Collected Stories, p. 363.

³ Paul Bowles, 'The Garden', in: Collected Stories, p. 365.

⁴ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 266.

⁵ Cf Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 250.

⁶ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 250.

⁷ Paul Bowles, Without Stopping, p. 367.

the context of Ibn-al-Arabi's pantheism and references to theophany, the form of man's perception of the cosmos corresponds to his inner sky¹. Paul Bowles's awareness of the cosmos and sky in particular corresponds to his own theophany², to his individuality and to his interior sky. The correlative link that unites characters and celestial elements can be associated with the fixed or immutable entities of Ibn-al-Arabi's cosmology. According to W.C. Chittick, the fixed things in the cosmos are analogous to the stars³ and are representative of the divine since 'God is found in all things'⁴.

Accordingly, Paul Bowles's focus on the sky, the moon, and the sun and the unity he sets between his characters and these celestial elements can therefore be read as instances of the self-disclosure of the divine and as illustration of his pantheist conception of the Moroccan cosmos.

In addition to this, the communion between celestial bodies and the frame of mind and life of Paul Bowles's characters might as well be regarded as the occurrence of a Presence or a 'Hadra', that is to say a state illustrating the Divine revelation⁵. This status can also be interpreted as an epiphanic form of the Divine or, as Henri Corbin states, '*mazahir*'⁶, that is to say a microscopic divine representation of the cosmos. This duality also corresponds to the mystic dichotomy that is inherent to the unvarying and reciprocal rapports Paul Bowles sets between the Moroccan sky on the one hand and the themes and his characters' frame of mind on the other.

In fact, the correspondence Bowles establishes between the cosmos on the one hand and his themes and characters on the other recalls Ibn-al-Arabi's pantheist concepts of 'Batin' and 'Zahir'. In The Meccan Revelations, Ibn-al-Arabi explains that the 'zahir', which literally means 'perceptible', is the 'locus of manifestation'⁷ of the divine or theophany⁸ while the 'batin', denoting the inner or non manifest, is the inner psychic and spiritual dimension of the divine. It is the inward expression of the Divine Presence.

Thus, 'batin' corresponds to the esoteric and interior state and 'zahir' to the exoteric or exterior reality. This duality entails the concept of perception. In this sense, W.C.Chittick translates the

¹ Henri Corbin, L'Imagination Créatrice dans le soufisme d'Ibn Arabi, p. 65.

² Henri Corbin, L'Imagination créatrice dans le soufisme d'Ibn Arabi, p. 54.

³ Cf W.C. Chittick, The self-disclosure of God: principles of Ibn-al-'Arabi's cosmology, pp. xix-xx.

⁴ W.C. Chittick, The self-disclosure of God: principles of Ibn-al-'Arabi's cosmology, pp. xix.

⁵ Henri Corbin, L'Imagination créatrice dans le soufisme d'Ibn Arabi, p.94.

⁶ Henri Corbin, L'Imagination Créatrice dans le soufisme d'Ibn Arabi, p.94.

⁷ Cf Ibn-Al-Arabi, The Meccan Revelations, p. 128.

⁸ Cf Ibn-Al-Arabi, The Meccan Revelations, p. 128.

mystic concept of Existence, that is to say ‘Wujud’ or God in Ibn-al-Arabi’s sense, as “undefinable and inaccessible because we can know it to the extent that we have it”¹. This assertion entails that the writer’s own concept of God can be limited to the extent of his own perception and, as such, includes his intuitive and mystic awareness of the Moroccan cosmos and Nature as the sign of the Divine’s -or the Infinite’s in the writer’s phrasing- existence. As R.W.J.Austin specifies, this polarity involves both Being and Perception² in the perfect union of the reality of Nature. This conception fits into the general context of Pantheism and suits Bowles’agnosticism, especially as R.W.Austin notes that, on this point, Ibn-al-Arabi did not use the word God³.

Bowles’s literary image of Morocco is rich in examples that recall the dichotomy of ‘batin’ and ‘zahir’. Either in short stories, travel essays, interviews or in novels, the writer constantly sets a direct correlation between his characters’ mood, life and fate on the one hand and their cosmic environment on the other. Moroccan Nature and cosmos herald forthcoming events and indicate characters’ reactions and feelings. The polarity linking inner states to the outer reality characterizes Bowles’s literary production as a whole to the exception of the last writings that are more hermetic and illustrative of physical and spiritual isolation.

The union of these microcosmic and macrocosmic facets of the divine Reality is basic to the wider concept of the ‘Unity of Being’⁴. This rapport to the cosmos is to be included in the context of the ‘Unity of Existence’ in which the principle of macrocosm and microcosm underlines a complete correspondence between knowledge of the cosmos and the knowledge of the divine. A component part of this concept is also the polarity existing between macrocosm and microcosm. In The Sufi Doctrine of Rumi, W.C. Chittick explains that on the one hand the macrocosm is the Universe which reflects the Divine Names or God and on the other microcosm which represents man who ‘reflects the same qualities but as a totality’⁵. In fact, a strong agreement unites them since, as W.C. Chittick asserts, ‘the macrocosm and the microcosm are like two mirrors facing each other’⁶. Bowles highlights this perspective by affirming that in his work characters “are generally represented as an integral part of situations, along with the landscape, and it’s not very fruitful to try to consider them in another light”⁷. Thus, the ultimate unity lying behind the theophanic façade of created existence is

¹ W.C.Chittick, Imaginal Worlds: Ibn-al-Arabi and the Problem of Religious Diversity, p. 20.

² Cf R.W.J. Austin, Ibn al-‘Arabi, The Bezels of Wisdom, p. 26.

³ Cf R.W.J. Austin, Ibn al-‘Arabi, The Bezels of Wisdom, p. 26.

⁴ Cf R.W.J. Austin, Ibn al-‘Arabi, The Bezels of Wisdom, p. 26.

⁵ W.C. Chittick, The Sufi Doctrine of Rumi, p. 49.

⁶ W.C. Chittick, The Sufi Doctrine of Rumi, p. 49.

⁷ ‘An Interview with Paul Bowles’ (1970) by Daniel Halpern, in: Gena Dagal Caponi (ed.), Conversations with Paul Bowles, p. 91.

illustrated in Bowles's image where the earth communes with the sky, a metaphor for the Divine: "He walked along the strip of hard sand that the receding tide had uncovered; it was a wet and flattering mirror for the sky, intensifying its brightness"¹. The esoteric link uniting macrocosm to microcosm grants a mystic dimension to Bowles's literary image of Morocco which represents his synthetic cosmos.

In this context, characters often have correlative relations with Nature, alone in unknown landscapes, which grant Nature a mystical dimension. The characters' ability to read meanings into landscapes and weather is as well illustrative of the symbiotic union with Nature and cosmic elements. The short story "The Time of Friendship" is a significant illustration of this feature. As John Ditsky remarks, in 'The Time of Friendship', "wind and sand in this story, then accompany both the aridity of personality [...]"².

Equally, in "The Hours after Noon" landscape is a screen on which the inner person is projected. This story emphasizes the concord that subtends human existence. A quotation from Baudelaire introduces the basic unity of existence: "If one could awaken all the echoes of one's memory simultaneously, they would make a music, delightful or sad as the case might be, but logical and without dissonances. No matter how incoherent the existence, the human unity is not affected"³. As this epigraph suggests, Mrs Callender's moody state is openly and closely related to her environment: "There was too intimate and mysterious a connection between what she felt, and the aspect of the countryside, now brilliant under the ardent sun, now somber in shadow as the endless procession of separate clouds raced past"⁴. Further, the correlation linking landscapes to characters is confirmed in 'A Letter from Tangier' where the author himself expresses his feeling of being part of the weather and light of North Africa.

The relationship between characters and landscapes also obeys to the dialectic of concealment and revelation. As Wayne Pounds asserts, a Paul Bowles's situation is composed of character and landscape hiding and disclosing each other⁵. In the Halpern interview, Bowles characterizes this correlation as a constant of his work and explains it in terms of the compliancy or resilience of human consciousness to external conditions⁶. Besides, in Without Stopping, Bowles also describes

¹ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 181.

² John Ditsky, 'The Time of Friendship', in: Century Literature, A Paul Bowles Issue, p. 376.

³ Paul Bowles, 'The Hours After Noon', in: Collected Stories, p. 217.

⁴ Paul Bowles, 'The Hours after Noon', in: Collected Stories, p. 236.

⁵ Cf Wayne Pounds, 'The Subject of Paul Bowles', in: Twentieth Century Literature, A Paul Bowles Issue, p. 309.

⁶ 'Halpern Interview', in; Gena Dagal Caponi, Conversations with Paul Bowles, p. 101.

the unity linking man to the cosmos as “a secret connection between the world of nature and the consciousness of man, a hidden but direct passage which bypassed the mind. (The operative word here is ‘direct’, because in this case it was always equivalent to ‘visceral’)”¹. This communion between man and the cosmos, between the ‘batin’ and the ‘zahir’, is the springboard of the magic appeal Morocco exerted on Paul Bowles.

‘Unity of Existence is also conveyed through the bond that links man to the earth. As such, Dyar acknowledges in Let it Come Down, that “there was no part of him which had not come out of the earth”². In this instance, the writer even underscores, and seems to regret, the unity that characterizes man’s memory. Childhood reminiscences are still painfully present in Dyar’s, and so, in the author’s memory:

Always before, he had believed that, although childhood had been left far behind, there would still somehow, some day, come the opportunity to finish it in the midst of its own anguished delights [...]. Yet he had felt still connected to every part of it by ten thousand invisible threads³.

In fact, Bowles also presents the beauty of Moroccan Nature as an expression of the ‘Unity of Existence’ even though he does not articulate it as such. Actually, in ‘Africa Minor’⁴, the writer acknowledges that his high regard of North African people is due to their admiration of a heavenly and holy Nature: “my experience [...] has [...] become a symbol of that which is admirable in the people of North Africa. ‘This world we see is unimportant and ephemeral as a dream’, they say. [...]. Let us think rather of the heavens that surround us”⁵.

A step further in the correlation Bowles sets between the African landscapes and the divine is expressed through the celestial correlation he establishes between the sky and the earth: “In North Africa the earth becomes the less important part of the landscape because you find yourself constantly raising your eyes to look at the sky”⁶. This assertion clearly associates heavens to the infinite and the sky, a metonymy for the divine, is manifestly referred to as the ultimate authority, connoting the Divine.

¹ Paul Bowles, Without Stopping, p. 125.

² Paul Bowles, Without Stopping, p. 255.

³ Paul Bowles, Without Stopping, pp. 254-55.

⁴ This essay has a critical importance as it relates to the author’s mystic affinities. It presents the author’s viewpoints about religions and dogmas in relation with his fascination with Moroccan Nature.

⁵ Paul Bowles, ‘Africa Minor’, in: Their Heads are Green and their Hand are Blue, p. 21.

⁶ Paul Bowles, ‘Africa Minor’, in: Their Heads are Green and their Hand are Blue, p. 22.

The fascination of existence in North Africa is consequent to the close relationships between ‘dogmas and natural behaviour’, that is, a unity between God and man¹, unity of existence in other words. The ‘Unity of Existence’ is as well conveyed through the association of Nature with the infinite. Thus, in Let it Come Down, the sight of an ant triggered Dyar’s ponderings about infinity². Consequently, the ant, and, by extension, the Creation and Moroccan Nature with which it forms a part, are representative of infinity. In fact, in the same occurrence, Dyar explicitly acknowledges the union of all things: “Everything was part of the same thing. There was no part of him which had not come out of the earth, nothing which would not go back into it. He was an animated extension of sunbaked earth itself”³. The physical communion Dyar experiences with Nature and the earth recalls the mystic notion of the ‘Unity of Existence’ and the relationship linking man to the cosmos. This experience also evokes Ibn al Arabi’s pantheist concept of the immanence of God and the ‘Unity of Existence’. Placed in the context of the pantheist philosophy where God is identical with the whole creation, Bowles’s approach to the Moroccan Cosmos can then be interpreted as the expression of the Divine immanence and as the sign of the Divine Presence and existence. In this regard, it is worth noting that one of the exceptional moments when Dyar is reconciled with himself, when he ‘feels close to himself’⁴ coincides with an experience of transcendence and unity.

The general cohesion and correlation Paul Bowles sets between Nature and cosmic elements and his characters’ life and frame of mind is the metaphoric expression of mystical states. The images of this fusion are images representing mystical states. Since Ibn-al-Arabi considers that the knowledge of mystical states can only be acquired by actual experience⁵, the equation Bowles establishes between Nature and characters entails that these states represent mystical experiences.

Unity of Existence and spiritual communion: Bowles’s treatment of Moroccan brotherhoods and rites

Spiritual communion is the second main expression of the ‘Unity of Existence’ in Bowles’s literary image of Morocco. The author’s approach to Moroccan brotherhoods and rituals that bring about trance states is an expression of a mystical union with the divine.

¹ Cf Paul Bowles, *Africa Minor*, in: Their Heads are Green and their Hand are Blue, p. 22.

² Paul Bowles, Let It Come Down, p. 254.

³ Paul Bowles, Let It Come Down, p. 255.

⁴ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 205.

⁵ Cf R.W. J. Austin, Ibn al-‘Arabi, The Bezels of Wisdom, p. 25.

Spiritual considerations and themes are major elements of the writer's late literary production. The mystical facet of the image as a whole presents a gradual disregard for western cultural elements and, therefore, points to the author's progressive involvement in his Moroccan mystic quest. In 'Baptism of Solitude' (1957), the author already displayed a keen interest in trance and minutely describes this 'religious dancing'¹ in the Sahara and in North Africa.

His concentration on strictly Moroccan themes and issues is an indicator of the strength and involvement in his mysticism. With the publication of *The Spider's House* (1955), Bowles is more involved in aspects of the 'deep' and spiritual Morocco. In this novel, he "projects himself into a completely un-Westernized consciousness, that of the adolescent Amar, whose family is descended directly from the Prophet and whose world view is that of the Islamic fundamentalist: "fatalistic, magical, associative, instinctive, irrational"².

A chronological overview indicates an evolution towards more Moroccan directed works, where the action takes place among Moroccans only. Besides, most of Bowles's later short stories, those published after 1960, are more concerned with Moroccan spiritual beliefs and behaviours. Then, the last phase in the dynamic of the evolution in the image includes works where the unique narrator and protagonist is the writer. This stage may be regarded as a further step towards mysticism.

In this period, Moroccan brotherhoods are a significant facet of Bowles's involvement in spiritual Morocco. In 'Africa Minor' he displays a keen interest and knowledge of the most important spiritual communities such as the Hammadcha, the Derkaoua and the Jilala³ which are important orders belonging to the Moroccan cultural heritage. In spite of somewhat pejorative accounts of brotherhoods' music induced trance states which he described as a 'variation'⁴, Bowles nevertheless admiringly describes Moroccan bloody rites and trance states. Thus, 'Africa Minor' presents a minute and eulogistic account of these mystical practices. To the writer these unforgettable rites prove the 'power of the spirit over the flesh'⁵.

Bowles also included these bloody rites and trance dances in his fiction. 'Things Gone and Things Still Here' (1975) illustrates for instance the author's interest in Moroccan spiritual communities. In this story the writer presents a detailed account of the habits and ways of the

¹ Paul Bowles, 'Baptism of Solitude', p. 137, 'Africa Minor', pp. 27-28, in: Their Heads are Green and their Hand are Blue.

² J. Collins, p. 58.

³ Cf for instance Paul Bowles, in 'Africa Minor', in: Their Heads are Green and their Heads are Blue pp.27-31.

⁴ Paul Bowles, 'Africa Minor', in: Their Heads are Green and their Heads are Blue, pp.30-32.

⁵ Paul Bowles, 'Africa Minor', in: Their Heads are Green and their Heads are Blue, p. 28.

Haddaoua brotherhood and of the natives' belief in and interaction with 'jinns'¹. In addition to this, this story also relates the Haddaoua brotherhood's ways and 'esoteric knowledge'² as well as of country people's attitudes to 'jinns'³.

Traditional mystical Moroccan practices such as self-lacerations, ordeals by fire, knives or by eating broken glass, scorpions or by drinking boiling water as well as the inducing of trances are often held in homage to Moroccan saints and shrines during *moussems*⁴. To Bowles, these manifestations are 'inspiring'⁵ and 'filled with great beauty'⁶.

In addition to this, the way the author reports these ritual and mystical practices corresponds to a personal involvement. For instance, to describe these mass trance behaviours, he involves himself by using the pronouns 'we' and 'I':

You lie in the fire, I gash my legs and arms with a knife, he pounds a sharpened bone into his thigh with a rock-then, together, covered with ashes and blood, we sing and dance in joyous praise of the saint and the god who make it possible for us to triumph over pain, and by extension, over death itself. For the participants exhaustion and ecstasy are inseparable⁷.

This personal rendering of trancelike and ecstatic behaviours, along his explicit fascination, points to the writer's early mystical penchant.

In fact, 'The Scorpion' (1939) is an early short story that ends on an old woman's eating of a scorpion, which is described in 'Africa Minor' as a mystic practice. Even if the setting of this story is not specified, the old woman's swallowing of the scorpion can therefore be regarded as a spiritual act and, as such, illustrative of the author's mystic Morocco. Later stories are as well instances of Bowles's involvement in mystic Morocco, though in a less admiring way. 'The Fqih' (1974) and 'Mejdoub' (1974) are stories on spiritual issues: the first one fictionalizes a superstitious behaviour

¹ In Moroccan traditional culture, a 'jninn' or 'djinn' is a spirit

² Paul Bowles, 'Things Gone and Things Still Here', in: Collected Stories, p. 407.

³ That is to say 'spirits' or supernatural entities. Cf Paul Bowles, 'Things Gone and Things Still Here', in: Collected Stories, pp. 407- 408.

⁴ That is to say local pilgrimages and fairs held in tribute to Moroccan saint patrons.

⁵ Paul Bowles, 'Africa Minor', in: Their Heads are Green and their Heads are Blue, p. 28.

⁶ Paul Bowles, 'Africa Minor', in: Their Heads are Green and their Heads are Blue, p. 27.

⁷ Paul Bowles, 'Africa Minor', in: Their Heads are Green and their Heads are Blue, p. 28.

under the misinterpreted direction of the 'Fqih', a Muslim religious scholar while the latter is about the peregrinations of a fake 'mejdoub'¹, that is to say a mystic visionary.

In 'The Wind at Beni Midar' (1962) even the aspirations at modernity of Driss, a soldier and his superior officer are expressed through the Jilala cult:

Shameful things happen there. Several times he had seen men from the mountains get up from the mat and do dances that left blood on the floor. These men were Jilala, and no one thought of stopping them, not even Driss [...]. A Jilali can do only what the music tells him to do [...]. And until the man has shown the proof and drunk his own blood, the musicians do not begin the music that will bring him back to the world².

In this instance, the casualness of the comparison is a means to call attention to the Jilala brotherhood.

More significantly, the author's recurrent use of uncanny elements such as 'jinns' and the reference to the eerie practices performed by Moroccan brotherhoods such as the Jilala point to mystic preoccupations. This is the case of 'By the Water' (1945) which fictionalizes the mystic encounter of Amar with Lazrag, a spirit who dwells in the hammam, whose head was large and whose body had no legs nor arms³. This creature represents a 'jinn' and recalls the Moroccan traditional belief that Turkish bathes are 'usually inhabited by 'spirits.

Characters often take part in mystic rites. Let it Come Down presents the most articulate and comprehensive expression of a mystical rite and a supernatural communication. In this novel, Dyar attends, participates and achieves a deep symbiosis during a mystic rite in the small town of Agla where he was hiding before his final significant act⁴. The name of the pilot of the boat, the Jilali⁵, evokes from the onset Dyar's spiritual journey.

First, his attraction by the ritual is underscored as soon as he enters the place: he was driven to come in because the faces of the natives appeared to him 'unmistakably friendly'⁶. Another indication of the welcoming and appealing atmosphere is that he was made immediately at home and

¹A 'mejdoub' is a mystic visionary. Paul Bowles refers to this figure as a "holy maniac". cf 'Mejdoub', in: Collected Stories, p. 373.

² Paul Bowles, 'The Wind at Beni Midar', in: Collected Stories, pp. 327-328.

³ Paul Bowles, 'By the Water', in: Collected Stories, p. 33.

⁴ Cf Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, pp. 268-271.

⁵ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 227.

⁶ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 268.

greeted by the turbaned natives. The rite consisted in the pounding of an intense drum music leading a hand-chained man to a trance dance and then to a bloody ritual of self-mutilation. The climax of the trance is reached when the man repeatedly slashed his arm and legs with a knife and when, in a complete hysteria or trance, he started licking his own blood:

In the sudden flare of a match nearby, Dyar saw the glistening black of the arms and hands change briefly to red, as if the man had dipped his arms in bright red paint; he saw, too, the ecstatic face as an arm was raised to the mouth and the swift tongue began to lick the blood in rhythm¹.

This scene is an instance of a 'lila', that is to say an evening of celebration of a spiritual entity. During this ritual, possessed people are 'transported' in what is termed as the 'hal'² and enter into a 'jadba', which is a deeper state of trance during which they lose conscience and even the control of their body³. Self-laceration is a possible outcome of this trance dance. The mysticism of the rite is also indicated by the man's savage cries to the beat of which the drummers responded with 'Al-lah'⁴. This instance recalls the mystic practice of 'Dhikr'⁵, during which the 'possessed' person invokes God or the divine.

Indeed, there is a gradual evolution in Dyar's involvement in this bloody mystic rite. His entry into the mystic realm is illustrated by the shift from the falsetto chants and choruses he had heard before his arrival in the café to the mystic pounding of the drums that are at the background of the mystic dance.

Once in the mystic environment, he shifts from mere observation to enthrallment and communion with the mystic dancer and musicians as well as with the rite itself. At the beginning he is just an impassive observer, then he becomes more sensuously aware of his surroundings through the scents of the room; the springboard that triggers his spiritual communion is the smoking of kif that induced a certain light-headedness as well as an exit from reality. In fact, it marked Dyar's access to a surreal world, 'too far beyond the pale of the possible'⁶, which might be considered as referring to the mystic realm. From now on, a perfect symbiosis binds the protagonist's state of mind and the

¹ Paul Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, p. 270.

² The 'hal' is a 'mystic' or spiritual state of mind.

³ V. Crapanzano, 'L'Espace-Entre: Possession et Représentation', in: *La Transe*, p. 45. During this dance, the possessed people unconsciously dance and gesticulate until they lose conscience.

⁴ Paul Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, p. 269.

⁵ That is, to recite litanies or hymns.

⁶ Paul Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, p. 270.

performance of the rite. He not only participates in it, but he intensely experiences it: “Dyar was there, scarcely breathing [...]. The mutilation was being done for him, to him; it was his own blood that spattered onto the drums and made the floor slippery”¹. The dancer and Dyar, who seem to be the only participants, have thus departed from the material world, have gone beyond their numb bodies and have henceforth, reached a spiritual field.

Trance and spiritual communion

Trance states are the usual outcome of these mystical experiences and rites. In Morocco, trance may be consequent to the initiation held by Moroccan religious brotherhoods. It can be positioned in what Crapanzano terms as the ‘space-between’², that is, a spiritual space of mystical communication. This mystical space is articulated in terms of ‘possession’ where the ‘jinn’ ‘enters’ the person and ‘replaces or displaces’ him for a moment. From a psychoanalytic point of view, this moment is usually termed as the trance where the ‘spirits’ or ‘jinns’ are the projection of man’s psyche³. From an hermeneutic point of view, the Moroccan ‘jinns’ Bowles refers to in his image of Morocco can then be regarded as metaphors for his personal integration in and acceptance of the Moroccan ethos.

In fact, Bowles sets a direct relationship between the rhythmical pattern and sequences of the traditional music played by brotherhoods and the adepts’ unconscious mystic trance states. In this respect, he explains the trance of a character named Farid by the stimulus response theory⁴. This accurate interpretation suits the trance context as characterized by Sheila S. Walker: the trance phenomenon is elicited by a rhythmic stimulus during which spiritual entities or ‘jinns’ take possession of their adepts⁵ to dance in nature and in a choreography of the universe⁶. Relating this definition of trance to Paul Bowles’s enraptured approach to the Moroccan Nature and cosmos, a logical assumption would be to define Bowles’s utter fascination by Moroccan Nature as an ecstatic state.

¹ Paul Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, p. 271.

² My reference to Crapanzano’s notion of the ‘Espace –entre’. Crapanzano defines it as : “Il ya des ‘moments’ que nous ne pouvons comprendre que métaphoriquement en termes d’espace ou de temps, comme des ruptures, des béances, des silences, des ellipses, qui défont toute articulation directe mais qui ponctuent notre vie. Ils sont les précipitations des relations entre nous, entre nous et les esprits, les dieux, entre nous et les choses, les utiles, le sZeuge dont Heidegger parle. J’appelle cette retombée relationnelle ‘l’entre’. V. Crapanzano, ‘L’Espace-Entre: Possession et Représentation, in: *La Transe*, p. 39.

³ V. Crapanzano, ‘L’Espace-Entre: Possession et Représentation, in: *La Transe*, p. 42.

⁴ Cf Paul Bowles, ‘Africa Minor’, in: *Their Heads are Green and their Heads are Blue*, p.30.

⁵ Depending on which brotherhood they belong to.

⁶ Sheila S. Walker, ‘Les Divinités Africaines dansent aux Amériques et au Maroc’, in: *La Transe*, p. 16.

Ecstasy is the usual outcome of trance. The manifestation of trance as an interior state is prepared by the 'dikhr' or the invocation of divine names and leads to rapturous states such as the 'jadba' or ecstasy or the 'hadra'¹ or spiritual 'presence'. In this context, the 'hadra', that is to say the spiritual presence during a dance or a trance, is the climactic expression of the communion between man and the divine. This progression in the interior states denotes the 'kashf' or the unveiling of the divine 'presence'. Through trance and the ensuing feeling of ecstasy, the unveiling mediates the deeper knowledge of man's intimate reality with the ultimate truth or the divine.

Moroccan brotherhoods, whether the Hamadsha, the Jilala or the Derkaoua for instance, usually hold occasions named 'hadra' which end up on ecstatic trance states. According to V. Crapanzano, the ecstatic experience symbolizes the love of the sacred and of the divine². Besides, the 'jinns' or spirits that 'possess' the mystics during the 'hadra' may as well be viewed as 'God's creations'³. In this sense, trance states are mostly ecstatic situations favouring closeness with the divine. Mystical experiences and rites are means to achieve a spiritual communion with the divine. Therefore, Bowles's mystic approach to trance also mirrors his spiritual aspirations at transcendence and the divine in the context of pantheism.

The divine and transcendence are as well inherent to the association of mystic states with water and with timelessness. In 'Things Gone and Things Still Here' for instance, Bowles relates mystic tales of three religious scholars who fell into eternity. In this story, timelessness is purposely brought up: a 'fqih' "stumbled upon one of those rare fissures in time- an open fault, as it were, in the surface of time- and fallen in"⁴, another "fell in a deep well of time"⁵, and a third one is said to have "passed his sojourn in the time bubble as a woman, but returned to the world with greater wisdom"⁶. Eternity or the 'bubble of time' as the author terms it is closely associated to water, as these Muslim scholars were close to water when they fell in the 'well' of time, that is, infinity. This purple patch denotes Bowles's mystic involvement and can be read as an expression of transcendence via the connotations of eternity.

The metaphor associating infinity to the 'well' of time is based on the spiritual connotations of water. In Moroccan mysticism water sources such as rivers, wells and 'hammams' are considered as

¹ The word 'hadra' literally means 'presence'.

² V. Crapanzano, 'L'Espace-Entre: Possession et Représentation', in: *La Transe*, p. 45.

³ Vincent Crapanzano, 'L'espace-Entre: Possession et Représentation', in: *La Transe*, pp. 42-43.

⁴ Paul Bowles, 'Things Gone and Things Still here', in: *Collected Stories*, p. 405.

⁵ Paul Bowles, 'Things Gone and Things Still here', in: *Collected Stories*, p. 405.

⁶ Paul Bowles, 'Things Gone and Things Still here', in: *Collected Stories*, p. 406.

sacrifice areas and as mystic places usually inhabited by 'jinns'. Thus, Bowles often associates water to spiritual occurrences by locating the different mystic experiences near water. For instance, in 'By the Water', the grotto where the 'spirit' abides 'goes on forever, and is made of deep warm water'¹ and most of Dyar's spiritual exposures take place near water: before his final mystical experience, Dyar associates the sea to "water as a place of solitude"²; this simile brings up the mysticism of water and at the same time connotes khalwa. The spiritual connotations of water in Paul Bowles's literary Morocco recall the spiritual dimension it is granted in the context of Moroccan mysticism.

The spiritual experience is a springboard to get close to the divine. As such, it reflects Bowles's yearning at transcendence. In this sense, Henri Corbin asserts that by means of a series of epistemic states - which include revelation (*kashf*) and recollection (or archetypal memory) (*dhikr*) - one may return to the eternal origin. This process describes a cycle, thereby reasserting the mystic theme of the 'Unity of Being' or 'Wahdat-al-Wujud'.

Mysticism, plenitude and ecstasy and an ensuing feeling of triumph are closely related. These states are the outcome of Dyar's spiritual experience where a feeling of victory is paired with a sensation of plenitude: "Dyar sat perfectly still, thinking of nothing, savoring the unaccustomed sensations which had been freed in him"³. The moment explicitly coincides with Dyar's real victory. Owing to his mystic experience, he is now the winner he has been longing for. It is the victory of the spirit over the body and real life, a mystic triumph he shares with the dancer. Dyar will no more be the same person. He has been freed from his fears and anxieties and his newly acquired self-confidence and courage are directly related to this mystic experience:

He walked out into a wide plaza dominated by a high minaret, feeling only acute surprise to find that none of his fear was left. It has all been liberated by the past hour in the café; [...]. But now, whatever circumstance presented itself, he would find a way to deal with it⁴.

He has probably come of age; Dyar will no more be the victim nor the anguished childlike adult unable to take decisions. The mystic experience is then a release from torment and a driving force towards maturation. After this experience, feeling in 'touch with the world', he is aware of his

¹ Paul Bowles, 'By the Water', in: *Collected Stories*, p. 33.

² Paul Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, p. 229.

³ Paul Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, p. 271.

⁴ Paul Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, p. 271.

newly acquired moral strength and dismisses his previous fears as childish and neurotic¹. Dyar's positive state of mind and self-recovery reflect the fulfilment of the writer's mystic quest as a means to overcome the psychological constraints he experienced as a child. These positive outcomes are revealing of Bowles's aspirations in the sheltering country. At the beginning of his literary production, no sky seemed to provide shelters from emptiness. Later, such shelter seems to have come from Pantheism and Moroccan mysticism.

Mysticism and Paul Bowles's self-actualization

In Bowles's literary image of his sheltering country, mysticism is also a medium to achieve self-actualization. Moroccan Nature and cosmos are often the theatre of characters' journey into childhood in search of the self. The author emphasizes the characters' self-actualisation through their mystic encounter with Nature. For instance, in Let it Come Down, Dyar's excursion into childhood coincides with his experience of a total fusion with the surrounding world:

He was trying not to breathe, he wanted to be absolutely motionless, because he felt that the air which fitted so perfectly around him was a gelatinous substance which had been moulded to match with infinite exactitude every contour of his person².

This intimate union makes of his kif-induced state of mind a kind of mystic experience that evokes Ibn Al Arabi's concept of the 'Unity of Existence'. This concept is also brought to mind by the interaction and harmony of the different cosmic elements that constitute the natural background of this experience: "But that wave broke, receded, and he was left stranded for a moment in a landscape of liquid glassy light, greengold and shimmering. Burnished, rich and oily, then swift like flaming water"³. The unity of the natural elements is absolute: the air is gelatinous, the light is fluid like water and the water is aflame, becoming fire. The unity linking the different cosmic elements is absolute: "Above were the stars, and ahead the sky presently assumed a colorless aspect, the water beneath melting smokelike, rising to merge momentarily with the pallid air"⁴. This is also followed by one of Bowles's rare references to Allah and to the infinite. The leitmotiv of Thami's song is introduced by Dyar's following thought: "([...] from the gulf of the infinite, Allah looks across with

¹ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 272.

² Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 280.

³ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 280.

⁴ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 231.

an eye of gold [...]).¹ The mention of Allah grants Dyar's childhood reminiscences a mystic and even a religious dimension.

Dyar's isolation also entails that a spiritual retreat leads to self-actualisation. Extending this implication to the khalwa Morocco offered Bowles, his chosen home also becomes a means to self-definition as illustrated in the final sections of Let it Come Down. The experience of solitude and the mystical experience in communion with nature² Dyar lives through in the outskirts of Tangier involves strong feelings of well-being and wholeness that at the same time recall Lacan's conception of plenitude and Ibn- Al-Arabi's notion of fulfilment:

And so everything turned out to have been already complete, its form decided and irrevocable. A feeling of profound contentment spread through him. The succession of ideas evaporated, leaving him with only the glow of well-being attendant upon their passage³.

This experience also results in his self-definition and in his coming of age. The author underlines that a period of his life is now over as suggested by the natural landscape:

The sun's light filtered through his closed eyelids, making a blind world of burning orange warmth; with it came a corresponding ray of understanding which, like a spotlight thrown suddenly from an unexpected direction, bathed the familiar panorama in a transforming glow of finality⁴.

The protagonist's liberation and self-definition are implicit to his serenity and release from torment. As he peacefully asserts; "The night had sections filled with repose, and there were places in time to be visited, faces to forget, words to understand, silences to be studied"⁵.

Dyar's self-actualization reflects the author's. Bowles has found in Morocco the elements that fulfilled his quest for self-actualization and his aspiration at an uncorrupted primal state. As he specifies, in

¹ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 281.

² Cf Paul Bowles, Let It Come Down, pp. 252-255.

³ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 256.

⁴ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 256.

⁵ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 284.

Morocco there are still people whose lives proceed according to the ancient pattern of concord between God and man, agreement between theory and practice, identity of word and flesh (or however one prefers to conceive and define that pristine state of existence we intuitively feel we once enjoyed and now have lost¹.

The concord inherent to the concept of the 'Unity of Existence' may then be viewed as a medium to the writer's self-definition. The spiritual unity which underlies Paul Bowles's image of Morocco can then be interpreted as representative of man's continual attempt at self-discovery, hence, Bowles's.

The discovery of the spiritual facet of the Moroccan cosmos and Nature is paired with the author's self-actualization. On this basis, Paul Bowles's expatriation and his mystic quest represent his spiritual voyage to self-actualization and to transcendence.

Indeed, Paul Bowles already associated Morocco with self-actualization in Without Stopping when he prophetically associated Morocco, as a magic place, to wisdom, ecstasy and death². This premonition already included the major elements the writer's quest in Morocco. Wisdom relates to self-definition, ecstasy to his fascination by the Moroccan cosmos and the spiritual trance practices, and death to the figurative meaning of *zuhd* and, probably to the writer's actual death in the sheltering country.

In fact, death has always fascinated and attracted Bowles. In Without Stopping he confesses his childhood delight in the contemplation of the *Amanita* mushroom, a metaphor for death: "I would seek out an *Amanita* and stand staring down at it in fascination and terror. There at my feet grew death itself; only waiting for the decisive contact"³. Bowles's mysticism and his spellbound approach to Moroccan Nature and cosmos indicate the fulfillment of wisdom, ecstasy and death⁴ as the expectations he acknowledged when settling down in Tangier, Morocco.

¹ Paul Bowles, 'African Minor', in: Their Heads are Green and their Hands are Blue, p. 22.

² Paul Bowles, Without Stopping, p. 125.

³ Paul Bowles, Without Stopping, p. 19.

⁴ A kind of antinomy subtends the concept of the 'Unity of Existence' and Paul Bowles's expression of death: The 'Unity of Existence' entails the abolition of the ego or the 'passing away from the self' in which man becomes aware of the absolute unity and is able to see God in the creature and the creature in God. The abolition of the 'ego' illustrates Paul Bowles's interpretation of his expatriation when in an interview he confessed that he was not escaping from something but running to his grave, yet it seems contradictory with the author's approach of Morocco as being a springboard to a kind of revival. In this context, death may be related to Nietzsche's conception of death as being the best achievement. Oneness would then be a form of death and Paul Bowles's literary Morocco would be the expression of his going into death in order to revive.

Nevertheless, Bowles's mystic Morocco is as well a springboard for revival. The aspiration at wisdom and ecstasy suggests that the prospect of a mystic way of life in Morocco was the writer's first and basic hope and objective when he first approached Morocco. The writer's aspiration at ecstasy and plenitude in Morocco meets Ibn-al-Arabi's acception of the Divine. As W.C.Chittick explains, "God is sheer being, utter Plenitude, pure consciousness"¹. This last reference to an absolute consciousness evokes Dyar's spiritual experience of plenitude wherein spirituality is conveyed through the timelessness of his 'pure consciousness'². The protagonist's state of mind entails a detachment from earthly affairs and thus expresses his aspirations at transcendence and infinity, which entail life instead of death.

Revival and the fulfillment of the above-mentioned goals mediated Bowles's self-definition. In this context, his mystic quest becomes an attempt to elucidate his own character and the fulfillment of his quest can be replaced in the context of Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs. In Maslow's theory, human actions are directed to attain a given goal and any behavior could fulfill several needs at the same time³. "What a man can be, he must be"⁴ is Maslow's motto for the perceived need for self-actualization. Self-actualization entails the fulfillment of one's desire for personal growth and the need to fulfill one's complete potential⁵. Morocco fulfilled Bowles's natural drive to self-actualization since it provided him with the objects of his quest: the splendor of Moroccan Nature fulfilled his pantheist fascination by the cosmos, Moroccan mysticism met his aspirations at ecstasy and wisdom, and the mystic detachment from worldly affairs suited his natural and autobiographical penchant to isolation. Self-actualization implies the accomplishment of basic needs such as safety, security, belongingness and self-esteem, needs that were denied to him in the Fatherland but satisfied in the sheltering country. Self-definition being the outcome of the combined satisfaction of these needs or self-actualization, Morocco, Pantheism and Moroccan mysticism can then be regarded as vectors of the author's self-definition.

Self-definition and mysticism are epitomized in Bowles's association of Morocco with revival. For instance, in Let it Come Down, Dyar's revivifying encounter with Nature is openly associated with rebirth: "It was a morning whose very air, on being breathed, gave life [...]"⁶. Nature

¹ W.C. Chittick, The Sufi Path of Knowledge: Ibn-al-Arabi's Metaphysics of Imagination, p. 7.

² Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 92.

³ Cf Abraham Maslow, 'A Theory of Human Motivation', (1943).

⁴ Abraham Maslow, Motivation and Personality, p. 91.

⁵ Cf Abraham Maslow, Motivation and Personality.

⁶ Paul Bowles, Let it Come Down, p. 251.

is thus an agent of renaissance that heralds the protagonist's liberation from childhood's pains. In the same way, Bowles equates the sensation he refers to as the 'Baptism of Solitude' with a renaissance:

Here, in this wholly mineral landscape lighted by stars like flares, even memory disappears; nothing is left but your own breathing and the sound of your heart beating. A strange, and by no means pleasant, process of reintegration begins inside you, and have the choice of fighting against it, and insisting on remaining the person you have always been, or letting it take its course. For no one who has stayed in the Sahara for a while is quite the same as when he came¹.

Having surrendered to the spell of the 'baptism of solitude, Bowles adopted Morocco and Moroccan spirituality as sheltering realms.

To conclude, Bowles's mystic Morocco is the synthetic cosmos of his pantheist and theophanic view of his adopted country. His chosen country fulfilled his exceptional and basic fascination with Nature and cosmic elements. Such fulfillment and self-definition would be the key words for Bowles's unprecedented attraction and fascination by the splendor of Moroccan Nature and heavens. The Moroccan natural and cosmic elements on the one hand and the mystic creative imagination² on the other enabled the author to achieve both self-definition and transcendence. As L.D. Stewart underscores, 'he has found in North Africa the ideal climate for the elucidation of character, first his own and then the native [...]. In North Africa's golden light, clear air, and alien culture, [...] words ransom the recovery of identity'³.

Bowles's pantheist absorption by Moroccan Nature, being itself a form of beatitude, is paired with the ecstasy and the feeling of transcendence elicited by the Moroccan mystic practices. In this context, Bowles's residence in Morocco represents a spiritual pilgrimage and commitment that are fictionalized in his literary image of his chosen home. The Moroccan mystic environment subtends and motivates Bowles's serene and mystic acceptance of a peaceful existence in Morocco. Accordingly, spiritual factors such as the 'muezzin' and the beating of drums are focal elements of the writer's Moroccan dream and of the serenity it radiates:

¹ Paul Bowles, 'Baptism of Solitude', in: Their Heads are Green and their Hands are Blue, p. 129.

² In the sense of Henri Corbin's "L'Imagination Créatrice".

³ Lawrence D. Stewart, The Illumination of North Africa, p. 2.

I hear the drums and incorporate them into my dream, like the nightly cries of the muezzins. Even if in the dream I am in New York, the first *Allah akbar!* effaces the backdrop and carries whatever comes next to North Africa, and the dream goes on¹.

The author's self-actualization and his spiritual communion with the Moroccan mystic ethos account for his belongingness² to the protective and redeeming country, Morocco. Thus, instead of death, as symbolized by the 'grave' he announced at the onset of his expatriation, Morocco became the springboard to revival and self-actualization. Thus, serenity and a deep feeling of fulfillment support Bowles's final and radiant words of appreciation: Thank God!³

¹ Paul Bowles, *Without Stopping*, p. 366.

² In *The Illumination of North Africa*, p. 144, Lawrence D. Stewart states that Paul Bowles's fiction shows that for him 'separation from North Africa is separation from the self'.

³ Paul Bowles, *Without Stopping*, p. 367.

Conclusion

The magical and ‘visceral’¹ bond that linked Bowles to Morocco from the first glance resulted in a lifelong expatriation. Thus, the formerly alien space became the author’s sheltering realm. The writer’s adoption of Morocco was first embedded in his basic and overwhelming love of Nature. The recurrence of his intense and vivid sensory experiences of Nature highlights his intrinsic appeal of Nature. The author also found in mystic Morocco the response to his natural propensity for isolation and cultural predisposition to a pantheist approach to Nature and the cosmos. Actually, aboard the *Iremethie II*, Bowles’s first glance at the African continent elicited a prophetic vision of his future mystic development in Morocco:

Like any Romantic, I had always been vaguely certain that sometime during my life I should come into a magic place which in disclosing its secrets would give me wisdom and ecstasy – perhaps even death².

Wisdom and ecstasy are key end results in Bowles’s mystic development which, from the onset, presage the writer’s inner and unconscious expectations Morocco.

As his later writings show, the author’s serene acceptance of life, his detachment from worldly affairs, the Moroccan spiritual and mystic environment, and his pantheist feeling of the ‘Unity of Existence’ point to the fulfillment of his mystic quest in the context of Pantheism. The captivating Moroccan Nature and cosmic elements, along with the pantheist awareness of the basic ‘Unity of Existence’, were major elements in the fulfillment of the writer’s quest. Thus, the Moroccan sky and country became Paul Bowles’s sheltering and pantheist spheres.

Indeed, by means of his lifelong expatriation and through his mystic and pantheist personal development in Morocco, Bowles rose above the split opposing the East to the West. Beyond the cultural diversity, the rapport to the ‘transcendent’ is the same everywhere, rising above cultural and geographical boundaries.

Through Pantheism and mysticism, Bowles has found the way to reach the sublime. Equally, the Moroccan Nature and cosmos have mediated the writer’s way to reach the infinite, fulfilling thus his quest for spirituality. As the author foresaw at the beginning of his expatriation:

¹ Paul Bowles, *Without Stopping*, p. 125.

² Paul Bowles, *Without Stopping*, p. 125.

This world we see is unimportant and ephemeral as a dream,' they say. 'To take it seriously would be an absurdity. Let's think rather of the heavens that surround us'. And the landscape is conducive to reflections upon the nature of the infinite. [...]. In the arid landscape the sky is the final arbiter. When you have understood that, not intellectually but emotionally, you have why it is that the great trinity of monotheistic religions – Judaism, Christianity and Islam – which removed the source of power from the earth itself to the spaces outside the earth – were evolved in desert regions. And of the three, Islam, perhaps because it is the most recently evolved, operates the most directly and with the greatest strength upon the actions of those who embrace it¹.

The Moroccan desert spaces are not 'voids'. Morocco, through its landscapes, its natural forms and cosmos, its desert spaces, provided rich metaphors for Bowles's inner journey in his quest for the divine.

¹ Paul Bowles, 'Africa Minor', in : Their Heads are Green and their Hands are Blue, pp. 21-22.

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