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**Psychological Repression in Tennessee Williams' *The Night of the Iguana* (1961) and Malika Mokeddem's *La Nuit de la Lézarde* (1998)**

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# Dedications

To

My beloved parents

My brothers Ahmed, Moussa and Azouaou

Without forgetting their wives Lydia and Tiphaine

My nephew Raphael

My beloved Nacer for his precious help and support

My mate Sihem and her respected family

All my friends and relatives.

Zahia.

To

The memory of my beloved father.

My dear mother.

My brothers: Yacine and Aghiles and my sister Hayat.

My dear husband for his great encouragement and support

My sweet daughter Dehbia .

My mate Zahia and her respected family.

Sihem

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## **Abstract**

This dissertation deals with a comparative study between Tennessee Williams ***The Night of the Iguana*** (1961) and Malika Mokeddem La ***Nuit de la Lézarde*** (1998). Our main interest in this research is to show that the above cited works are akin for their representation of repressed characters who are inwardly tormented. Therefore, we have borrowed some concepts of Sigmund Freud's theory on repressed desires. Throughout our study of the two works, we have reached the conclusion that, both Williams and Mokeddem lived in the same repressive conditions which make them produce the same literary productions which is characterized by repressive characters. We have divided our work into two parts. The first part deals with the issue of Sexual repression in both ***The Night of the Iguana*** and ***La Nuit de la Lézarde***, whereas the second part discusses the two authors' use of symbols that best reinforce the theme under study.

## **I. Introduction:**

This piece of research falls within comparative literature. It probes to compare the American playwright Tennessee Williams' play *The Night of the Iguana* (1961) and the Algerian novelist Malika Mokeddem's *La Nuit de la Lézarde* (1998). Throughout their writings, it is noticeable that both authors are highly influenced by their social and personal life experiences. Despite their different backgrounds, cultural context and geographical distances, Williams and Mokeddem as southern literary figures reflect individuals' unrest and repression through their remarkable works. Indeed, South America and south Algeria offered favorable terrains for investigation as both settings were and are still places of psychological, political and religious oppression, as it will be discussed in depth throughout our work.

It is interesting to note that, both authors frequently deal with intricate relationships between individuals living in deteriorated circumstances, often surrounded by neurosis and psychological disintegration. After the emergence of the theoretical approach to psychoanalysis in the twentieth century by the father of psychoanalysis Sigmund Freud, many playwrights as well as novelists incorporated the Freudian psychoanalytical ideas in their works as it is the case with the authors under study who shape their characters as suffering from repression.

### **Literature Review**

From our review of some of the literature written on Tennessee Williams' play *The Night of the Iguana* and Malika Mokeddem's *La Nuit de la Lézarde*, we have noticed that both authors and their works have been considerably scrutinized from various perspectives.

To begin with *The Night of the Iguana*, in *the Transmutation of Experience: The Aesthetics and Themes of Tennessee Williams' Fiction*, D. Dean Shackelford argues that: "Williams the playwright is an effective, entertaining, and often perceptive prose writer. As a personal essayist, he moves from the personal to the critical to the social in one fell

swoop”<sup>1</sup>. He also acknowledges Williams’ comprehension of the literature that is associated to the American society. In this sense, he asserts: “as a theorist of drama and critic of his own work, he is particularly significant. He understands his place in the western dramatic and literary traditions, and he recognizes the value and the importance of literature and nonfiction prose to American society and culture”<sup>2</sup>. Besides, the same critic assumes that: “much of what is reflected in Williams’ nonfiction is sensitive souls who understands the inseparability of art and the artist, subject and object, self and other”<sup>3</sup>.

Heintzleman Greta and Smith Howard Alycia are two other critics who believe that Williams’ works reflect the reality of his private life. Both critics believe that most of Williams’ works were transformed into fictional writing which makes of him one of the outstanding playwrights in the American theatre. In their *Critical Companion to Tennessee Williams* (2005), they discuss the playwright’s transformation of base reality into theatrical work. Many of his works bear elements of his private life. They believe that *The Night of the Iguana* is typically an autobiographical play. In this context, they maintain that

The barely concealed casting of family members is a prominent feature of the autobiographical *The Glass Menagerie*, and Williams does it again in *The Night of the Iguana*, when he bases Nonno (the Italian word for grandfather) on his maternal grandfather, The Reverend Walter Edwin Dakin, who had been a surrogated father to young Tom and his sister Rose.<sup>4</sup>

Moreover, the two critics declare that

Jonathan “Nonno” Coffin, Hannah’s grandfather, “ninety-seven years young” and “the oldest living and practicing poet” shares part of his name with Tennessee’s father, Cornelius Coffin Williams, all of his spirit and frailties are those of Walter Dakin.<sup>5</sup>

The same critics attempted to compare family affinities of Williams’ *The Night of the Iguana* and *The Glass Menagerie*. They argue “other family members have made their way into *Night of the Iguana* via the Wingfield family of *The Glass Menagerie*. The resemblance is most conspicuous in the case of Hannah Jelks, whose description echoes almost verbatim

that of Laura Wingfield.”<sup>6</sup> They add: “Laura embodies Williams’ sister, Rose, on a near-realistic level, Hannah is “a projection of what might have become of Rose.”<sup>7</sup>

For his part, Hirsch Foster is another critic who criticized Williams’ literary works. In *A Portrait of the Artist: Two Affirmative Plays* (1979), he compares the characters of his two plays *The Night of the Iguana* and *Period of Adjustment* stating that:

William’s two plays written in the early sixties, *Period of Adjustment* and *The Night of the Iguana*, are guardedly, almost reluctant optimistic. The characters in both plays have happy fates: husbands are reunited with their wives; an old poet completes his final, long-awaited poem; a defrocked minister is comforted by his fiery mistress. They are haunted and as sexually obsessed as the characters in earlier plays, but they survive.<sup>8</sup>

In his piece of criticism, Foster adds that *The Night of the Iguana* is also ‘wary’ in its affirmations, though the characters are released from their ‘demons’ in a more persuasive way than in the preceding play”.<sup>9</sup> In addition, he describes the main character Shannon as: “a “misbehaving child” who delights in shocking the philistines. From preaching about a God of ‘Thunder and Lightning’ to a congregation weaned on a concept of God as “a bad-tempered, childish, old, old, sick, peevish man.”<sup>10</sup> He even goes further to state that “like the playwright himself, Shannon celebrates oddity and perversion.”<sup>11</sup> Contrary to Shannon, “Hannah is the fair heroine, the saint, to Maxine’s whore. She is a prim Williams’ matron.”<sup>12</sup> He adds: “Hannah is one of William’s few absolutely poised characters.”<sup>13</sup> Accordingly, Foster argues that “Williams does not treat Hannah as a stereotypical spinster, but instead presents her as radiant and wise. She is probably his purest character.”<sup>14</sup> He assumes that “typical of Williams’ confession dramas, the play is basically a series of monologues: Shannon on the nature of God; Hannah on art; Maxine on Sex.”<sup>15</sup> Finally, he contends that “*The Night of the Iguana* is a strong character study that doesn’t need its religious and philosophical embellishments: the problems of the characters don’t need to be seen with respect to the problems of mankind.”<sup>16</sup>



The Algerian novelist Malika Mokeddem and her work *La Nuit de la Lézarde* have also been handled from different angles. In fact, *La Nuit de la Lézarde* is regarded as being different from Mokeddem's other novels as *L'Interdite* (1993), and *Les Hommes qui Marchent* (1990) which denounce directly the social injustice of Algeria during what is known as the black decade.

Mireille Rebeiz, in her PHD dissertation named *Feminist Writing during the Algerian and Lebanon Civil Wars* studies the new literary writing form in *La Nuit de la Lézarde*. She states: "La Nuit de la Lézarde présente une nouvelle forme d'écriture, une écriture loin de la colère et de la guerre. Situé au désert algérien, le récit porte sur la vie de deux amis, Nour et Sassi."<sup>17</sup> The critic claims that the novel is different from the previous ones, since it does not tackle violence enacted upon the Algerians openly.

Mireille Rebeiz goes further to argue that this changing of style and themes, created harsh criticism from the part of an Algerian journalist who maintains: "le texte est mal écrit, son devoir en tant que journaliste, est de dénoncer cet acte de malhonnêteté."<sup>18</sup> The journalist remains unknown and accused Mokeddem of taking profit of the Algerian sufferance during the 90s.

Besides, Susan Ireland is another critic who studies Mokeddem's novel thematically. She believes that *La Nuit de la Lézarde* is a text in which nearly nothing happens because waiting and silence constitute the major themes of the novel. This goes with her declaration that : "il ne s'y passe pas grand-chose ; l'attente dans le calme constitue un des principaux thèmes. Avec son intrigue minimaliste, le roman semble plutôt s'inscrire dans la lignée de Flaubert qui rêvait d'écrire un livre sur rien".<sup>19</sup> Moreover, Malika Mokeddem, in one of her interviews with Yoland Aline Helm states:

Pour ce roman, j'avais envie d'écrire quelque chose de serein.  
L'action se passée dans le désert ou il n'ya pas de terrorisme...  
J'ai décidé de ne plus écrire sous le coup de la colère car  
au bout d'un moment ça épuise....Je voulais garder l'écriture

comme un espace de liberté et me le réapproprier comme je l'entendais, moi.<sup>20</sup>

Within her thesis entitled *Tactical Silence in the Novels of Malika Mokeddem* (2001), Jane Elizabeth Evans examined many subjects in the novels of the author throughout different angles. As far as *La Nuit de la Lézarde* is concerned, similarly as the previous critics, Evans argues that in this novel, “Mokeddem presents a new form of writing. Even though it shares many themes and issues with her former novels, but in this one she presents a calmer subject, far from denouncing the crimes of the religious fanatics in Algeria during that period.”<sup>21</sup>

The same critic Adds: “unlike Mokeddem’s previous works that I have examined, *La Nuit de la Lézarde* does not focus on tactical silence as it relates to the feminine condition in Algeria, rather, it has moved beyond that point.”<sup>22</sup> The novel deals with two main characters, Nour and Sassi who try to survive in an abandoned ksar in the Algerian desert. The two protagonists try to enjoy their daily life which is resumed to gardening and selling their products in the market.<sup>23</sup>

The critic focused on the role of silence, its force and impacts on the life of the two protagonists Nour and Sassi. In fact, silence is very relevant in the novel; Evans calls it “the third protagonist.”<sup>24</sup> Furthermore, “silence is characterized as a sinister, a heavy force capable of razing both sky and earth”.<sup>25</sup> Evans examines how the two protagonists are exposed to that silence, and how together, they try to fight against it by discussing to fill the emptiness and break the silence that surround them.<sup>26</sup> Nour the main character of the novel, falls as a victim of that deadly silence.<sup>27</sup>

## **2- Issue and Working Hypothesis:**

From the review of some of the literature on Tennessee Williams and Malika Mokeddem and their works, one can notice that many critics have dealt with the two selected works; *The Night of the Iguana* and *La Nuit de La Lézarde* separately. While

some limited Williams' play to its literary value, others focused on its main characters being typical of other Williams' plays. As for Mokeddem, most of the criticism we have reviewed tends to be studied comparing the form and the style of her novel *La Nuit de la Lézarde* with her previous novels. Yet, it is surprising how no previous study, to our knowledge, has been undertaken so far to compare both literary figures and their works. It remains therefore our task to endeavor a comparative study of Williams' *The Night of the Iguana* and Mokeddem's *La Nuit de La Lézarde* under the theory of psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud on "Repression".

We suppose that there are affinities between both the playwright and the novelist. Our interest stems from several facts.

First, both works' titles are similar and this may have been the result of Mokeddem's reading and influence by Tennessee Williams. This is mainly because Mokeddem herself recognizes her reading of other American literary figures when she says in one of her interviews: " J'allais a la recontre de Sartre et de Beauvoir, Giono et Colette, Tolstoï et Dostoïvski, Gorki, Kafka et Faulkner. Du pied de ma dune je sillonnais le monde..."<sup>28</sup> Second, we also suppose that the repression lived by both authors' societies may have pushed them to produce literary works akin to each other.

### **Methodological outline:**

We intend to undertake our piece of research following the auspices of IMRAD method. Our work starts with an Introduction that states our main purpose. It includes a review of some of the literature written on Tennessee Williams' play *The Night of the Iguana* and Malika Mokeddem's novel *La Nuit de la Lézarde*. It also states our issue and working hypothesis. In the Methods and Materials section, we will borrow some concepts of Sigmund Freud's theory on "Repression" and a brief summary of Harold Bloom's theory of influence developed in his book *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry* (1997).

Then, our work will explore relevant materials about Williams and Mokeddem as well as their works respectively. The latter consist of some biographical elements on the two authors, an overall synopsis, and the historical backgrounds of both works. In the Results section, we will provide the findings of our research. Concerning the Discussion section, it will be divided into two parts. The first part will explore the issue of sexual repression as it is represented by the main characters of the two works relying on Freud's theory on repression. The second will shed light on some symbols that best represent repression in both works. Our dissertation ends with a general conclusion that restates the main issues treated in this piece of research.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>Bloom, Harold. *Modern Critical Views Tennessee Williams*. (United States of America: Library of Congress Cataloging, 2007), 106.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Heintzelman, Greta and Alycia Smith-Howard. *Critical Companion to Tennessee Williams*. (New York: Facts on File, 2005), 173.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

<sup>8</sup>Foster, Hirsch. *A Portrait of the Artist: Two Affirmative plays*. (London: Kennicat Press, 1979), 63.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., 66.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., 67.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., 68.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., 70.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid.

<sup>17</sup>Rebeiz, Mireille. “*Écritures Féminines Et Guerres Civiles En Algérie Et Au Liban*”. (Treatises and Dissertations, 2012. Paper 5130), 86.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., 87.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid.

<sup>21</sup>Evans, Jane Elizabeth, “*Tactical Silence in the novels of Malika Mokeddem*”. The University of New Mexico, (2001), 86.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., 87.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., 88.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., 90.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., 92.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., 91.

<sup>28</sup>Bueno Alonso Josefina. “*Femme, Identité, Ecriture dans les Textes Francophones du Maghreb*”. (Alecante University, 2004), 14.

## **II. Methods and Materials**

### **1 - Methods**

This section aims to shed light on our theoretical approach. For the sake of relevance, we intend to undertake our piece of research under the theoretical guidelines of Sigmund Freud's theory on "Repression". Our choice of Freud's theory on "Repression" stems from the fact that we intend to look into the ways both authors reflect repression in their works.

#### **Sigmund Freud's Theory on *Repression*:**

Sigmund Freud is said to be the father of psychoanalysis; he introduced it during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Psychoanalysis is a field of psychology which has for main concern healing mental disorders by shedding light on the relationship between "the Conscious" and "the Unconscious mind",<sup>1</sup>

Freud states that there are two types of 'Unconscious' the one which is latent but capable of becoming conscious and the one which is repressed and which is not, in itself and without more ado, capable of becoming conscious.<sup>2</sup> In other words, the former is the 'Preconscious', that holds those emotions that are not repressed, and are not currently in the consciousness but are ready to manifest since it is closer to consciousness, whereas the latter is called the Unconscious. It is deeper than precociousness and far from consciousness, but sometimes, it is capable of becoming conscious. This part contains what the conscious is not aware of including hidden desires and wishes<sup>3</sup>. Freud concludes that there are three main important terms "Conscious", "Preconscious" and "the Unconscious."<sup>4</sup>

In addition to this, Freud holds that the human psyche is divided into three main parts including the "Id", "Ego" and "the Super-ego".

- The Id: it is responsible for unconscious drives that propel us to constantly seek out pleasurable experiences.

- The Ego: serves as a sort of balance that keeps our thoughts and behaviors within the norms of society. As Freud asserts the ego is obliged to protect itself against the constant threat of a renewed advance on the part of the repressed impulses by making a permanent expenditure of energy<sup>5</sup>.

- The Super ego: it evaluates the desires of the Id and makes decisions based on the morality of those impulses

Freud explains that these three parts of personality are always in an internal conflict, the latter may be conscious or unconscious. The pleasure-seeking impulses of the Id conflict with the moral judgments of the superego<sup>6</sup>. The ego on the other hand uses a variety of strategies also called “Defense Mechanisms” to minimize this conflict, in Freud’s words “an ordinarily large number of methods or mechanisms, as we say used by our ego in the discharge of its defensive functions”.<sup>7</sup> These defense mechanisms as Freud suggests are found to defend the ego against anxiety and hysteria<sup>8</sup>. The ego wants to protect itself at the conscious level, thus everything that threatens or attacks him, the ego will push it down to the unconscious, as Freud asserts the ego uses these defensive mechanisms for the purpose of keeping off dangers.<sup>9</sup> Among these defensive mechanisms “Repression” is the most widely used. In this respect Freud states the most primitive and thorough-going of these methods, repression was the starting point of the whole of our deeper understanding of psychopathology.”<sup>10</sup> According to Freud, Repression then refers to the Ego’s efforts subconsciously keep anxious thoughts and impulses out of awareness and keep them buried and hidden. By repressing certain thoughts, the ego is attempting to avoid facing and dealing with them.<sup>11</sup>

Freud goes further to argue that “Repression” consists of three stages: “Primal Repression”, “Repression Proper” (after pressure) and the “Return of the Repressed”.<sup>12</sup> The Primal repression phase results in shaping the unconscious ideas as Freud declares: it

consists in the psychical representative of the instinct being denied entrance in the conscious.<sup>13</sup> To be more precise, the impulses are driven back due to the fear of external threat.<sup>14</sup>

The second phase of repression “Repression Proper” Freud calls it also “after pressure”<sup>15</sup> which marks the mental derivatives of the Primal Repression or all what is connected with it. He asserts that “Repression Proper”, affects mental derivatives of the repressed representative, or such trains of connection with it.”<sup>16</sup> The last phase consists of the failure of the repression that is the return of the repressed resulting in neurosis, anxiety and hysteria.<sup>17</sup>

It is important to state that, “Repression” can be a protective function keeping away all the harmful and undesirable wishes far from consciousness; however it can sometimes be harmful when so much of it can result in psychological dysfunctions.<sup>18</sup> The repressed memories do not disappear; they remain in the unconscious as Freud says “it is true that they have driven it out of consciousness and out of memory but these repressed wishful impulses continue to exist in the unconscious.”<sup>19</sup> These Repressed desires look for an opportunity to get out. If this happens some disguised and unrecognizable substitute of what has been repressed comes back to the patient’s memory and lead to anxiety and sometimes to hysteria.<sup>20</sup>

Freud believes that the return of what has been repressed can be the causes of hysterical phenomena. In this regard, he states: “I had found therefore, that these hallucinations were nothing else than parts of the content of repressed childhood memories.”<sup>21</sup>

According to Freud, patients recognized with hysterical symptoms such as paralysis, spasms, loss of the ability to speak, hallucination suffer from hysteria. Thus, Freud finds a means through which he can help his patients to get rid of this illness through a therapy



called 'Hypnosis'. He asserts "the guidance of a physician to the patient may lead to better results than the one offered by repression."<sup>22</sup> When hypnotized, the patient could recall the painful repressed memories that caused the hysterical symptoms. After understanding these memories, the patient would be able to overcome some of these symptoms.

## **2 - Materials:**

In this part of our work, we will provide some biographical elements on Tennessee Williams and Malika Mokeddem that we think are of great relevance to explore our subject under study. We will also include a brief synopsis of the two works in addition to the historical backgrounds that surround the period in which the two works were written.

### **a- Biographical background of Tennessee Williams**

Tennessee Williams is a famous American playwright. He wrote many plays that revolutionized the world of theatre and wondered audiences around the world. His full name is Thomas Lanier Williams, born in Columbus on March 26<sup>th</sup>, 1911, to Cornelius Coffin Williams and Edwina Dakin.

Williams' life was complex and full of tensions. His father was an aggressive sales man and a heavy drinker. He favored his youngest brother Dakin. Because of Williams' effeminate nature, he nicknamed him "Sissy". His father was always absent and there was a great coldness between him and his family. Thus Williams grew in the south very close to his maternal family. His mother, a Puritanical daughter of an Episcopal clergyman was overprotective and harsh. Williams had intimate relation with her as she provided him a safe and tender environment. Add to this, she helped him to fulfill his passion for writing by offering him a typewriter. During his childhood, Williams spent most of his time with his sister Rose. He was very close to Rose who was diagnosed with schizophrenia at a young age. Her lobotomy led him to alcoholism and mental breakdowns.

Williams was influenced by the events of his earlier life that he has repressed. At the age of five, Williams caught Diphtheria, an illness that paralyzed his legs for about two years. Add to this, Tennessee Williams is a homosexual; he suffered from alienation that is resulted in his repression which made him a social, religious and sexual outcast.

As mentioned above, Williams grew up in Missouri in his maternal grandparents' house, before he was forced to leave with his family to St Louis, where his father has got a managerial position in an international shoes company. He left the comfortable life in the south then to experience misery and poverty in St Louis with his crazy father. The south became the setting of most of his plays.

Williams was fond of writing since his childhood and he amazed his family with his stories. Some of Williams great successful plays include: *Spring Storm (1938)*, *The Battle of Angels (1939)*, *The Glass Menagerie (1944)*, *A Street Car Named Desire (1946)*. He wrote many stories, novels, poems and plays . In 1961, he wrote *The Night of the Iguana* another great success. The play opened at the Royal Theatre in Broadway allowing him to win the New York Drama Critics Circle Awards.

Tennessee Williams continued to write regularly until his death on February, 25<sup>th</sup>, 1983. During his last years, he suffered deeply from his addiction to drugs and alcohol. He died at the age of 72 in his apartment in New York City.

#### **b- Synopsis of *The Night of the Iguana***

*The Night of the Iguana (1961)* is a three act play which is published in 1961. It is set in Mexico in South America. It centers around three main characters Shannon, Maxine and Hannah.

The play opens with the arrival of an expelled minister named Reverend T Lawrence Shannon to the Costa Verde Hotel. The latter, is ruled by Lawrence's friend Fred and his wife Maxine. Shannon is a tour guide and works for a company called the *Blake Tour*. He rides a

group of Baptist college teachers from Texas on a trip through Mexico. He takes the key bus and finds refuge in his friend's hotel because he is afraid of losing his job. The reason is that he had sexual relationship with one of the women, a seventeen years old music student named Charlotte who seduced him. Being furious about the strange behavior of the ex minister, the head of the group Miss Fellowes threatens Shannon of ruining his life and denouncing his silly demeanor to his boss. Hanna Jelks, a beautiful woman of about forty, arrives in the hotel escorting her elderly grandfather Nonno, a ninety seven old poet. At first sight, Shannon was seduced by the elegant and talented artist. But Maxine, the hotel owner, being jealous of the attention that Shannon has for Hannah, refuses to let her stay in the hotel, but Shannon convinces her.

The minor Charlotte prays Shannon to marry her pretending that she loves him. Shannon rejects her. He confesses to Hannah about his relationship with the young girl. He even informs her for the reasons of being kicked out from the church. As the play progresses, Shannon suffers from a severe mental breakdown. At the end of the play, Shannon was saved by Hannah who understands his sufferings since she has experienced similar problems. Hannah convinces him to perform an act of grace by releasing the Iguana which is tied under the verandah. By doing this, Shannon succeeds to overcome his psychological crisis, to gain peace with himself and decides finally to stay in the hotel with Maxine. The play ends with Nonno who dies after reciting his last poem.

### **c- Biographical background of Malika Mokeddem**

Malika Mokeddem was born on October 5<sup>th</sup>, 1949 in Kenadsa in the South of Algeria. She is the eldest of her ten brothers and sisters and the daughter of an illiterate nomad family who became sedentary. She attended primary school in her native village then continued her secondary school at the high school of Bechar. She was the only girl of her town to go to school and to get the baccalaureate exam. She decided to study Medicine in Oran where she

specialized in nephrology. In 1979, she established in Montpellier where she decided to consecrate her time to literature. She wrote many novels that depict her personal experiences as well as her rigid traditional society. Among these novels, we can state *L'interdite* (1993), *Les Hommes qui Marchent*(1990), *Les Siècles des Sauterelles*(1992), *N'zid* (2001) and *La Nuit de la Lézarde*(1998)

Mokeddem was rejected by her family because she transgresses the social conventions of her society. Being raised in a strict conservative society, Mokeddem lived repression from every side. Her parents developed a misogynist education favoring her brothers rather than her. She deeply suffers from the lack of her parental affection. She harshly rejected her authoritarian father. Furthermore, Mokeddem never found protection, comfort or even love from her mother. She describes her as blind submissive woman to her father's orders. She refers to her as being her father's accomplice.

Mokeddem was among the francophone Algerian women writers who denounce the violence enacted upon all the Algerian citizens during the black decade. She has received many death threats from the Islamic fundamentalist groups. Thus, she decided to live in France seeking for more security and protection.

#### d- **Synopsis of *La Nuit de la Lézarde***

*La Nuit de la Lézarde* (1998) is a novel which is set in the south of Algeria. It is divided into nine chapters. It tells the story of two main characters, a young woman Nour and a blind old man Sassi. The latter live in an abandoned ksar in the Algerian South.

Nour arrives in the deserted ksar after escaping from her husband's house who decided to remarry again since Nour cannot bear children. After a long walking in the desert, Nour decided to settle in the house of a man who hanged himself. Once there, she meets Sassi, a blind man who is her only neighbor. Both become close friends. As time goes on, Sassi secretly falls in love with her, but Nour refuses to see anything more than friendship.

Together, they exploit the field near the ksar in order to create a big garden despite the wind and the sand of the desert. They discuss several issues of their daily life. This helps them to flee their solitude and the difficulties that they encounter.

In addition to her friendship with Sassi, Nour has also good ties with the inhabitants of the village. This includes the characters “Walou”, “L’explication” as well as “Allilou”, the boy for whom she plays the role of a protective mother and Dounia, a girl who wants to escape the rigid life of the desert through her reading of different books. There is also the “lézard Smicha” that is a frequent visitor to Nour’s house.

In the desert, without neither family nor relatives, Nour tries to reconstruct a new identity as an independent woman who rejects the burden of the Islamist culture and the ties of family life. Through the novel, Nour confesses to Sassi about her several sexual intercours with strangers and the lover she is waiting for. She informs him that her mysterious man promised her to come back again to her, once he finishes his charge of protecting his family.

At the end novel, Nour feels sick and spends some days at the hospital of the village. Aicha, the doctor decides to put her in another hospital where she can receive more health care but Nour refuses and decides to come back to the ksar where she dies shortly after.

### **e- Background of The Night of the Iguana**

As an autobiographical dramatist, Tennessee Williams based his dramas on his private life and personal experiences in the repressive South. *The Night of the Iguana* is typically Williams’ own experience with his first journey to Mexico. In fact, in his essay entitled *A Summer of Discovery* (1961), Williams attempted to describe a series of events two decades earlier that strengthened his inspiration to write the play. Williams fled the transitional period that the world witnessed during World War II and the widespread political and psychic displacement brought by the war<sup>23</sup>. Once in Mexico City, he decided to settle near the beach

in a hotel called the Costa Verde. A setting where he discovered the background for his play *The Night of the Iguana*.<sup>24</sup> In this respect, Williams writes:

The Night of the Iguana is rooted in the atmosphere and experiences of the summer of 1940, which I remember more vividly, on the emotional level, than any summer that I have gone through before or after - since it was then, that summer, that I not only discovered that it was life that I truly longed for, but that all which is most valuable in life is escaping from the narrow cubicle of one's self to a sort of Verandah between the sky and the till water beach, and to a hammock beside another beleaguered being. Someone else who is in exile from the place and time of his heart's fulfillment.<sup>25</sup>

In addition, Williams' homosexuality can be identified in many of his plays with his tortured, divided and sexually frustrated characters as it is the case in *The Night of the Iguana*. It is of great importance to point out that during 1940's and the 1950's, homosexuality was an unquestionable subject, as David Savran states: "through his work for the theatre of the 1940's and 1950's, homosexuality appears – ever obliquely- as a distinctive and elusive style"<sup>26</sup>. Afraid of losing his audience, Williams could not stage his homosexuality directly believing that there would be no producer for it. As David Savran argues: "sex degeneracy or sex perversions were prohibited from the New York stage"<sup>27</sup>

Just after World War II, the American south lived a transition from agricultural to urban and industrialized society. A change that Williams regretted because he wanted to protect the southern heritage. As we have already mentioned in the biographical background of the writer, Williams was raised in Mississippi and Missouri, a setting which is known for its repression and racism that lasted for many years. Despite this, Williams developed a deep affection and sensual attraction to the southern landscapes. The rural Mississippi is featured prominently as a setting and a background through many of his plays. In this respect, Williams states that "the south once had a way of life that I am just old enough to remember- a culture that had grace, elegance... and inbred culture...not a society based on money, as in the north. I write out of regret for that."<sup>28</sup>

#### **f- Background of *La Nuit de La Lézarde***

In this part, we refer to the historical context in which the Algerian black decade writers depict their works. After throwing the burden of French colonialism, the Algerian population faced another major problem that is the rise of political and religious fundamentalism mainly during the 90s. Algeria was viewed as a place of repression because it witnessed many attempts to challenge the government in 1980 with the Berber Spring and the social protest against the bad economic situation that started from the mid-eighties. In October 1988, riots started in Algiers and expanded to other regions forcing the government to introduce some liberal reforms in the political and economic fields. Among these reforms was a new constitution that allowed the creation of political parties. As a result, some Islamic leaders grasped the opportunity to create the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) which was headed by Abbassi Madani. Because of the lack of serious religious or political parties, the Islamic Salvation Front FIS gained a huge support and it became the center of political Islam in democratic Algeria. Their main ideology was to govern Algeria not through democracy but rather through Islamic law (Chari'a). Their aim was to plunge Algeria in an absolute obscurantism by ordering the population to stick to the religious values and to maintain the traditional way of life. In doing this, any attempt to modernity and progression was banned. The status of women was at the heart of the ideological battle of this party. They issued fatwa that targeted women to return to domestic sphere and not to appear in public unless veiled. They harshly attack women living alone. They wanted to suppress their presence in Algeria.

During this black decade, Algeria sank in endless obscurity. It was a stage of torture, violence upon population who lived under fear and oppression of the daily terrorist massacres. However, thousands of Algerians especially intellectual elite, including men and women writers, opted for life in exile. It is the case of Malika Mokeddem who was exiled to

France because her writings depict the ills of Algeria as a post colonial Maghreb nation. She attacks the Algerian regime and the political system. In this regard, Kamel Igoudjil in his book *Post colonial Algerian writers in French* declares:

During the Algerian civil war between 1991-1999, a new Feminine literature emerged in the literary space called “the literature of urgency” the rise of female Algerian literature at that time was due to the fact that women had been condemned before and during the civil war. Women were the specific target of Islamism; therefore Algerian women novelists took up the pen not only to testify to the horrors of “unrest”. But also to condemn the physical violence exerted against women, and particularly, to reclaim the public space from which religious fundamentalism wanted them to be excluded.<sup>29</sup>

Mokeddem lived as an exiled nomad and this allowed her the liberty to write. As her contemporaries, she explores the role of religion in the society as well as the danger of radical Islamism. Add to this, she even denounces the terrible civil conflict in Algeria; the reason why she received death threats by the Islamic extremists.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Smith, Evans. *Freud Complete works: 1890-1939*. (Published in 2000,2007,2010), 3089. Accessed on : March, 2016 available on :

[http://www.valas.fr/IMG/pdf/Freud\\_Complete\\_Works.pdf](http://www.valas.fr/IMG/pdf/Freud_Complete_Works.pdf)

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.,3090.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.,3247.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.,3692.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.,3848.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.,3693.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.,3848.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid.,2339.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid.,2330.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid.,1759.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid.,314.

<sup>21</sup>ibid.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid.,1759.

<sup>23</sup>Cabelo, Juanita. “*The Tennessee Williams Annual Review: “A Summer of Discovery”: The Exilic and Touristic Poetics of the Night of the Iguana*”(2011 journal).Viewed on May 2016. Available on <http://www.tennesseewilliamsstudies.org/journal/work.php?ID=110>



<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

Savran, David. *Communists, Cowboys and Queers: The Politics of Masculinity in the Work of Arthur Miller and Tennessee Williams*. (The University of Minnesota Press .1992), 83

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.,87.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.,89.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid

<sup>29</sup> Igoudjil, Kamel: *PostColonial Algerian Writers in French: Language as representation and Resistance Viewed on December 25<sup>th</sup>*,2015. Available on :

<http://www.academia.edu/HYPERLINK>

["http://www.academia.edu/7962576/Postcolonial Algerian Writers in French Language as Representation and Resistance"](http://www.academia.edu/7962576/Postcolonial_Algerian_Writers_in_French_Language_as_Representation_and_Resistance)[7962576HYPERLINK](#)

["http://www.academia.edu/7962576/Postcolonial Algerian Writers in French Language as Representation and Resistance"/Postcolonial Algerian Writers in French Language as Representation and Resistance](http://www.academia.edu/7962576/Postcolonial_Algerian_Writers_in_French_Language_as_Representation_and_Resistance)

### III. Results:

In this part of our dissertation, we will shed light on the results reached through our comparative study on the subject of repressed desires in the American and Algerian literature through Tennessee Williams' play *The Night of the Iguana* (1961) and Malika Mokeddem's novel *La Nuit de Lézarde* (1998).

Being raised in a strict conservative society that restrict women' liberty, Mokeddem seeks refuge in reading. She is greatly influenced by western literature and even recognizes its influence on her writing. Thus, out of her reading of American literature, she may have come across Williams' play *The Night of the Iguana*. This justifies her use of the same title in her novel *La Nuit de la Lézarde*.

In addition, this comparative study of the repressed desires in the American play and the Algerian novel has shown South America and South Algeria are two historical settings that experienced repression be it psychological or religious. Both Mokeddem and Williams lived in the repressive area of south and this is what makes them akin in their description of these two places.

Moreover, both Williams and Mokeddem have the same shared personal trauma. They have been raised in a repressive atmosphere. Williams lived repression from every side. He was rejected by his father for his effeminate nature preferring his brother. However, he was greatly attached to his mother even though she is an overprotective woman and to his sister Rose for whom he laments her health problems. For her part, Mokeddem experienced a harsh life. She opposed her father who rejected her education and insisted on making her a submissive woman by restricting her role to the domestic spheres. Mokeddem rebels against her social traditions by improving her status as an independent woman. Last but not the least,

both Williams and Mokeddem revolt against the conventional laws of marriage in that while Williams voices his gayness, Mokeddem refused all along her life to engage in marriage.

All these findings have allowed us to discuss in depth the issue of repression in both works and to compare very safely both authors and their literary productions.

#### **IV. Discussion:**

In this section of our work, we will investigate Williams' and Mokeddem's depiction of psychological repression in their respected works *The Night of the Iguana* and *La Nuit de la Lézarde*. In the first part, we will focus on the way both Williams and Mokeddem create their characters as an allegory of their own psychological and sexual repression. In the second part, we have opted to study some symbols that best represent repression in both works through the lens of Freud's theory on repression.

##### **1- Sexual repression :**

##### **➤ Primal Repression**

*The Night of the Iguana* and *La Nuit de la Lézarde* as most of Williams and Mokeddem's works are the portrayal of their personal conflicts. Both works center on the theme of repressed sexual desires which is presented through the main characters including: Shannon and Maxine as well as Nour and Sassi. At first sight, the couple's union seems to be based on mutual friendship, but it hides sexual interest and satisfaction.

In fact, in *The Night of the Iguana*, the relation is based on sexual attraction between a young defrocked minister Shannon and an older hotel keeper Maxine Faulk. Similarly, in *La Nuit de la Lézarde* the relation centers on the young protagonist Nour and her old blind friend Sassi.

##### **a- Shannon and Nour :**

The two protagonists Shannon and Nour struggle against their sexual desires which manifest in destructive ways throughout their lives.

To begin with, *The Night of the Iguana* is the psychological portrait of the protagonist the Reverend T Lawrence Shannon who is inwardly tormented. Shannon is a defrocked

minister who lost his work because he has improper relationship with young women. In addition to this, he insults God in one of his sermons. As a result, he is kicked out of his church and accused of fornication and heresy and sent to an asylum to recuperate. He fails many tour companies and has been fired for it. Then, working as a tour guide for Blake Tours, he conducts a group of vocal teachers from Texas to Mexico. When Shannon arrives to the Costa Verde Hotel, he is mentally disturbed because he commits adultery with one of the vocal teachers a Sunday school minor called Charlotte. The latter is accompanying his current group of tourists. Miss Fellowes, the vocal teacher who is responsible of Charlotte, accuses Shannon of statutory rape and threatens him to denounce his adultery to a judge in Texas.

Shannon: she's trying to get me fired and she is also trying to pin on me a charge, a charge of statutory rape.

Maxine: what's a statutory rape? I've never known what that is.

Shannon: That's when a man is seduced by a girl under twenty.<sup>1</sup>

Shannon suffers from several mental breakdowns and hysteria that are the results of his repressed sexual desires from his early childhood. In this respect, Lindy Levin asserts: "although Shannon's sexuality and rage are forced underground, they illogically unfold in destructive ways throughout his life."<sup>2</sup>

Like her American counterpart, Malika Mokeddem's novel deals with a mysterious woman named Nour, who redeems herself by engaging in a personal sexual rebellion. Up to this, Nour settles in an abandoned ksar with the old man Sassi. The boredom of the desert is so oppressive as they try to fill the emptiness of their daily life by gardening and selling products in the market of the village. Additionally, they tackle different subjects and amuse themselves with an imaginative speech with the ksourians. Like Shannon, Nour suffers from repressed sexual desires which manifest through her different sexual intercours with different strangers "elle avait découvert les frissons du désir dans les bras de ses amants."<sup>3</sup> By doing so, Nour voices her struggle against the social taboos and the burden of the Algerian

traditions which deny women's sexual freedom. Indeed, she avows to Sassi that in her way to the south, she enjoyed her sexual liberty with different strangers.

Je me déplaçais ainsi, sans autre but que d'aller plus au sud. La nuit, je sombrais, terrassée par la fatigue... Le temps d'un repos, de la recherche d'expédients pour me nourrir. Puis je disparaissais à l'aube d'une nuit d'étreintes avec un amant de hasard, aussi affamé d'amour que moi.<sup>4</sup>

The ksourians condemn Nour's strange behaviors and her solitude attracts their attention since they are not accustomed to such uncontrolled liberty. She seems rebellious and indocile. It is well illustrated in the following passage:

Nour s'était aperçue des regards et des propos tantôt intrigués, tantôt abasourdis des habitants du ksar. On l'appelait l'étrangère. On la qualifiait de rebelle, de singulière. On balançait à son égard entre crainte et respect. Entre compassion et condamnation, ou diffamation... Elle était une femme libre! Elle en fut la première étonnée car ce mot, liberté n'était pas de son langage.<sup>5</sup>

Nour defies all the social norms and tries to construct a new identity as a free and independent woman far from male domination.

From our analysis of the novel, we notice that Nour remains silent and mysterious. She never tells Sassi about her past, family and her former husband. This is what raises the curiosity of the villagers who begin to question her presence in the tribe. Sassi declares to her

Tu es restée dans le Ksar, suscitant des rumeurs contradictoires et la convoitise de bien des hommes. Une femme sans mari, sans enfants, sans aucune famille et qui, de surcroît, leur affirmait en crânant qu'elle n'avait pas de même de passé...<sup>6</sup>

Sassi tries relentlessly to know about her hidden past but he never succeeds

-Tu ne veux toujours pas me parler de ton enfance, de ton mariage, de cet homme avec qui tu as vécu?  
-Il n'y a rien à en dire.  
-Rien de dire de tout ce temps ?  
-Non, rien.<sup>7</sup>

It is noticeable that Nour suffers all along the novel as she cannot express it because she is unable to understand what happens for her. In this sense, Freud states "they (patients) feel ill

from not being able to consciously recall and work through the trauma or traumas of their past.”<sup>8</sup> Freud referred to this symptom as Amnesia.

Nour finds pleasure in changing several times her paramours because she is sexually unsatisfied and it is well illustrated in the following passage:

Nour a trouvé les mots justes pour définir ses rapports avec les hommes : jusque- là, elle n’a fait qu’ouvrir de temps en temps son lit à un quidam bien vivant. Sassi est bien placé pour le savoir. Il lui doit la chance d’avoir eu à consoler, parfois, les épouses délaissées. Le plus souvent, Sassi n’a pas eu le temps de s’intéresser à l’ élu que Nour s’en est déjà lassée, veillant toujours à ce que l’amour ne s’installe pas, par effraction, dans l’attrait charnel.<sup>9</sup>

Being an attractive woman, Nour succeeds to seduce the husband of her neighbor Zoubida “je lui ai fais découvrir les voluptés de la sensualité, le goût du vertige partagé, j’espère qu’elle en profite, maintenant, la Zbida...”<sup>10</sup> Both Shannon and Nour transgress the rules that their societies impose on them. They are both social outcasts. By making love with young women, Shannon betrays his work as a minister. Likewise, by giving liberty to her sexual desires, Nour is rejected by her conservative society as she is considered a prostitute.

From Freud’s perspective, repression is a mechanism used by the ego to push away all the shameful behaviors and unacceptable feelings that are contrary to one’s religious, cultural and family values. Therefore, Shannon as well as Nour strongly repress their sexual desires but they still feel a need for it and practice it despite the limitations surrounding them.

Maxine, Shannon’s old friend and proprietor of the hotel, is obviously accustomed to his mental breakdowns, his problems with alcohol and his inability to control his sexual desires especially the young girls

Maxine: why do you want the younger ones?  
Shannon: I don’t want any, any regardless of age.  
Maxine: then why you take them, Shannon? Huh, Shannon.  
Shannon: people need human contact, Maxine honey.<sup>11</sup>

Shannon seduces or is already seduced (Shannon’s version) by young girls in every tour he conducts. He seems to be sexually disturbed. Consequently, he tries to reconcile his neediness

to sex with young girls. Shannon's constant assault against his sexual urges leads to a sexual frustration. He tries unsuccessfully to push away his sexual desires out of his awareness. However, they come back to his consciousness in a destructive way. With reference to Freud's theory, every human psyche has an "Id" which is the unconscious side that seeks for pleasure and libidinal and instinctual satisfactions. Freud defines it as: "the pool of instinctual desires, it is primarily concerned with gratification without regard to external constraints or possible consequences."<sup>12</sup> The "Id" must be controlled by the ego to keep the balance in the psychological state of the person. "The Ego before putting to work the instinctual satisfaction demanded by the Id, has to take into account not merely the dangers of the external world, but also the objections of the superego..."<sup>13</sup> With the fear of punishment by the super ego, "the ego" represses all the instinctual and libidinal desires of the Id. Therefore, Shannon's "Id" is more powerful than his "Ego". The latter fails to repress his traumatic past and sexual drives that take control overall his spirit and his body. He has strongly repressed his wishes and lusts because of the fear of punishment from his mother and God who represent the super ego. Even Miss Fellowes who judges him and threatens to punish him for his adultery with Charlotte represents the superego, and she is like his mother. Shannon's ego fails in repressing his sexual desires. Consequently, it comes back to Shannon's mind and dangerously affects his behaviors. This is what Freud refers to as "The Return of the Repressed." He asserts: "these repressed memories find a way to manifest through different symptoms and their impact on the person is different depending on the resistance of the ego."<sup>14</sup> In addition to this, Freud states that "the one who acts against the social norms has a Super Ego that is not highly developed."<sup>15</sup>

Unconsciously, Shannon develops sexual frustration and hate towards women. This is mainly the result of his mother's punishment for him as a child when she stops and forbids his



infantile masturbation. Shannon recognizes it when he confesses to Hannah about the reasons of his inner conflicts

Shannon: regression to infantilism, ha, ha, regression to infantilism... the infantile protest, ha, ha, ha , the infantile expression of rage at Mama and rage at God and rage at the Goddam crib...and rage at the ... everything. Regression to Infantilism...<sup>16</sup>

Similarly, Nour assumes a silent role which becomes a mirror of her self determination. She internalizes her fears and chooses not to speak about her former life even to her close friend because the trauma is intense. Remaining silent about her past enables her to survive emotionally and carry on her new life in the ksar. Nour's "Id" pushes her to fulfill her sexual desires through repeated sexual intercours with strangers.

Si, parfois, Nour se garde de révéler certains faits à son ami c'est plutôt par soucis de le préserver que par défiance ou pudibonderie. Quelquefois par besoin de se protéger contre elle-même<sup>17</sup>.

Shannon's and Nour's psychological crises originated from their traumatic childhood experience. This goes with Sigmund Freud's statement:

The sexually immature child is the victim of an actual sexual seduction either by an adult or another child, and since the child is sexually immature such experiences are not assimilated but persist as unconscious memories.<sup>18</sup>

Shannon develops many symptoms of personality disorder that is the source of his aggressive sexual repression. This is well explained in Freud's words:

These repressed desires look for an opportunity to get out, if this happens some disguised and unrecognizable substitutes of what has been repressed come back to the patient's memory and lead to anxiety and sometimes to hysteria.<sup>19</sup>

### ➤ **Mental Derivatives of Repression:**

Shannon and Nour suffer from hysterical illness. This may be shown through their strange behaviors. Freud asserts that

Hysteria is a psychological disease, its symptoms include Amnesia, Paralysis, unexplained pains, nervous ties, loss of speech, loss of feelings in the limbs, sleep walking, hallucinations and convulsions.<sup>20</sup>

If these symptoms appear, it means that the defense mechanism of repression fails and the traumatic memories of the patients come back to his consciousness disguised. There are many examples in both the play and the novel that illustrate Shannon's and Nour's hysterical symptoms.

Within his arrival to the Costa Verde hotel Shannon is described as follows:

Shannon appears, in a crumpled white linen suit. He is painting, sweating and wild-eyed. About thirty five, Shannon is a 'a black Irish. His nervous state is terribly apparent, he is a young man who has cracked up before and is going to crack up again- perhaps repeatedly.<sup>21</sup>

Mostly all the characters in the play make references to Shannon's mental crisis. It is the case with Hank who concluded that Larry is ill when he refuses to give him the ignition key.

Hank: the kid has gone into hysterics

Maxine: hold still Shannon

Shannon: Hank, hysteria is a natural phenomenon, the common dominator of the female nature.<sup>22</sup>

Shannon is locked within his strange behavior. He is mentally destroyed. In addition, he has a childish behavior with Maxine and even with Jack Latta. The latter is the man who is supposed to take his group. When he arrives, he notices Shannon's deterioration. He tries to get the key from him, but Shannon behaves as a child.

Latta: black tours wired me in Cuernavaca to pick up your party here and put them together with mine cause you'd had this little nervous upset of yours and ...

Shannon: show me the wire! Huh?

Latta: the bus driver says you took the ignition key to the bus

Shannon: that's right. I have the ignition key to the bus and I have this party and neither the bus nor the party will pull out of here till I say so.

Latta: you're a sick boy. Don't give me trouble.<sup>23</sup>

Shannon is completely destroyed. He resists Latta and refuses to give him the bus key. Latta is convinced that Shannon suffers from a mental illness

Shannon: Ha hahahaha! (*his laughter shakes him back against the verandah wall.*)

Latta : he's gone ( *he touches his forehead*).<sup>24</sup>

Shannon is not good at dealing with stress. His fear of failure drives him to make things worse. Maxine refers many times in the play to Shannon's psychic breakdowns. She assesses his mental state from his arrival to the hotel.

Maxine shouts "you're going to pieces! Aren't you?"<sup>25</sup> Add to this, when the Mexican boys tied Shannon to the hammock, she informs Hannah that Shannon has the habit to come to the Costa Verde when he cracks up

Hannah: the ropes are too tight on his chest!

Maxine: No, they're not. He's acting, acting. He likes it! I know this black Irish bastard like nobody ever knowed him, so you keep out of it, honey. He cracks up like this so regular that you can set a calendar by it. Every eighteen months he does it, and twice he's done it here and I've had to pay for his medical care. Now I'm going to call in town to get a doctor to come out here and give him a knockout injection, and if he 's not better tomorrow he's going into the Casa de Locos again like he did the last time he cracked up on me!<sup>26</sup>

Similarly, in Mokeddem's *La Nuit de la Lézarde*, Nour's hysterical symptoms can be noticed in numerous contexts through the novel. First, Nour spends much of her time questioning the horizon, contemplates the desert and daydreams about her mysterious lover. In fact, Nour dreams of an ideal man for whom she is waiting all along the novel. She uses the waiting as a means to flee from her anxiety and depression. However, Nour closes the door that gives sight at the village from which her lover is supposed to come. A strange behavior that Sassi could not understand

Je ne te comprends pas... pour ne plus assister au départ des ksouriens, pour ne plus rien attendre du village au-delà, tu as muré la porte qui donnait sur eux. Et tu as ouvert ta maison vers le désert. Tu n'a aucune logique. C'est pourtant du village que vient ton amoureux. Et voilà que tu te mets à avoir des hallucinations!<sup>27</sup>

Other symptoms of hysteria that Freud mentions are the "unknown pains". In Mokeddem's *La Nuit de la Lézarde*, Nour suffers from unexplained chest pains without understanding their reasons.

Et la même tristesse anxieuse, chassée par la même langueur, submerge Nour tour à tour. Désespoir indicible. Elle a beau tenter de lui échapper, il l'a rattrape toujours, la happe, tourne son sang dans sa tête, injecte une douleur dans son être. Nour ferme les yeux. Ses mains palpent son corps. Comme elle voudrait localiser ce mal, l'empoigner, le battre à lui faire rendre gorge! Son incapacité à le saisir, et même à le nommer, le grandit davantage encore. Il se met à sourdre de partout, la cerne, s'incarne dans le désert.<sup>28</sup>

Nour suffers from hallucinations too as Alilou mentions when he speaks about her: “c’est une cheikha, khalti Nour. Des fois elle parle aux lointains avec des mots qu’on aime même si on les comprend pas.”<sup>29</sup>

Both Shannon and Nour are haunted. Shannon has a “spook” that haunts him when he tells Maxine

Shannon: the Spook had moved in with me. In that hot room with one bed, the width of an ironing board and about as hard, the spook was up there on it, sweating, stinking, grinning up at me.

Maxine: aw the spook! (She shackles.) So you’ve got the spook with you again.

Shannon: that’s right, he’s the only passenger that got off the bus with me, honey.

Maxine: Is he here now?

Shannon: not far.<sup>30</sup>

The constant attendance of this spook is apparent in an exchange between Shannon and Maxine. He tells her that the only person that understands him is his old friend Fred, Maxine’s husband who died two weeks before the beginning of the play

Shannon: Fred knew when I was spooked-wouldn’t have to tell him. He’d just look at me and say, “well, Shannon you’re spooked.”<sup>31</sup>

Moreover, he comes to the Costa Verde, searching for a friend that will rescue him from the verge of his mental breakdown.

Nour also is haunted by the ghost of the house’s proprietor where she is living “l’homme pendue”. As Sassi declares to her : “Le fantôme était bien dans la maison. Il en a même possédé la pensionnaire!”<sup>32</sup>

Nour interacts with the ghost with whom she dreams she is making love

J'ai rêvé quelquefois de lui, au début. Je le voyais pendue à la poutre centrale. Ses yeux révulsés se tournaient lentement et me fixaient. La langue pendante. Il essayait de me dire quelque chose que je ne parvenais pas à comprendre. Je me levais. Je grimpais sur ma petite table et le détachais. Ensuite, je le portais, l'installais dans mon lit, le caressais pour le réanimer. Son corps était d'abord de glace, et ses lèvres, de givre. Mais peu à peu, il se réchauffait, et me murmurait : Nour, Nour, Nour...sais tu ? Je me réveillais parce que j'étais réellement en train de jouir.<sup>33</sup>

It becomes clear, from the above analysis that both Mokeddem and Williams are very akin in their depiction of the sexual repression of the main characters in their respective works *La Nuit de la Lézarde* and *The Night of the Iguana*.

#### **b- Maxine and Nour**

From our reading of the two works, it is obvious that Maxine's and Nour's sexual impulses resulted from their loneliness. Maxine Faulk is the owner of the Costa Verde hotel, a widow of Shannon's old friend Fred. Maxine is an attractive woman. She is described at the beginning of the play as "a stout swarthy woman in her middle forties – affable and rapaciously lusty. She is wearing a pair of Levis and a blouse that is half unbuttoned".<sup>34</sup> Maxine's loneliness is at least partially appeased by sex with Pancho and Pedro. The latter are the Mexican bellboys who work with Maxine in the Costa Verde hotel. Maxine is married to Fred who is older than her, thus he does not satisfy her sexual appetite. In her discussion with Shannon she admits:

Shannon: you don't seem inconsolable about it.

Maxine: Fred was an old man, baby. Ten years older than me. We hadn't had sex together in ...<sup>35</sup>

She also adds :

Maxine: yeah, well Fred and me' d reached the point of just grunting.

Shannon: maybe he thought you'd turned into a pig, Maxine.

Maxine: hah! you know damn well that Fred respected me Shannon, Shannon, like I did Fred , we just , well , you know... age difference...

Shannon: well you've got Pedro and Pancho.<sup>36</sup>

Maxine satisfies her sexual desires with the Mexican natives. However, she loses control over them because she gives them more liberty.

Maxine: employees. They don't respect me enough. When you let employees get too free with you, personally, they stop respecting you, Shannon. And it's well, it's ... humiliating – not to be... respected.<sup>37</sup>

As far as *La Nuit de la Lézarde* is concerned, it pictures the suffering of a young beautiful woman Nour. Her beauty provokes the sexual desires of many men in the village. Her attraction may be illustrated when the two characters Oualou and L'Explication argue "Il y a tellement de rumeurs sur Nour...Tu la trouves belle, toi ?" asks Oualou while l'Explication replies " Elle a beaucoup de charme, et un sacré caractère."<sup>38</sup>

Mokeddem refers to the free sexuality of Nour in order to highlight the inner desires that resulted from the oppressive situation of individuals who seek to transgress the laws of their advocated religion. She is an outcast when she flees the house of her husband rejecting the burden of the family life. Nour undergoes painful experiences to reach her freedom. The Islamic religion favors men to marry four times but Nour did not accept the second marriage of her husband. She fled to the South to forget her traumatic past and to seek for her liberty. In a conservative society that sticks so much to religion and its values, the honor of the family depends on the good image of the daughter. To be more explicit, women should be virgin till their wedding day. Even divorced, she should respect herself by not having sexual relations outside matrimony. The female protagonist Nour transgresses these norms as she does not conform neither to the principles of society nor to what is dictated in the religious principles. This is displayed with the conversation between Nour and another female character named Khadouje

Je ne t'ai jamais vue, de quelle tribu es-tu? Asks Khedoudje  
J'ai répliqué que je n'étais d'aucune tribu.... Answers Nour  
On ne cache sa tribu que lorsque l'on a mis son honneur en danger...Replies khedouje

J'ai répondu sèchement : 'je n'ai pas d'honneur non plus. Je ne peux pas malmené ce que je ne possède pas. Mais j'ai de l'orgueil, ça oui! Et je ne le vends pas, même pour manger!'"<sup>39</sup>

Nour is rejected by the Islamic culture because she is a prostitute. She has many sexual intercoursés with different men outside marriage and it is forbidden in her religion. She is viewed as a dangerous woman because she is attractive and desired by many men in the village especially Sassi her faithful friend who falls deeply in love with her

She tried to accept the role that society imposed on her but her desire for freedom was stronger. Through her character, Mokeddem challenges the traditions that keep women in submissive positions maintaining that

Un jour, l'homme à qui on l'avait marié lui avait déclarée que puisqu'elle ne lui donnait pas d'enfants, il lui fallait une autre épouse."<sup>40</sup>

Mokeddem as Nour, lived many love stories that seemed to be fruitless as she each time fails to get stability in her personal life. Mokeddem seeks refuge from the burden of her conservative society that limits her liberty. In one of her interviews she states "Je suis un être de transgression. Un être qui a toujours été du côté de la rébellion et jamais du côté de la soumission.""<sup>41</sup> It is important to note that Mokeddem and Williams rejected the idea of marriage. This is well illustrated through the protagonists Nour and Shannon. In fact, Mokeddem rejected strongly marriage because she considers it as a prison to her freedom "Le mariage, le mariage, vous n'avez que ce mot à la bouche! Si c'est pour être comme toi, infectée par une grossesse neuf mois par an, ça non! D'ailleurs, je ne me marierai jamais!"<sup>42</sup> For his part, Williams has never married because he is a homosexual. Thus, he shapes Shannon at his own image. This is shown in his conversation with Charlotte who says

Charlotte: all I know is you've got to marry me, Larry, after what happened between us in Mexico city!

Shannon: A man in my condition can't marry, it isn't decent or legal..."<sup>43</sup>

Both Williams and Mokeddem have the same perception about marriage as it is shown in the previous examples.

The female protagonist in Malika Mokeddem's *La Nuit de la Lézarde* fights to regain her freedom in a society that is often oppressive towards people especially women. Thus, to resist this oppression, Nour gives freedom to her sexuality. The latter is the consequence of her loneliness and anxiety as Mokeddem affirms

Parfois, Nour cherche refuge dans le sommeil. Elle s'allonge sur sa couche sans le trouver, l'imagine ronronnant à l'envi dans des corps enlacés, dans l'enchevêtrement innocent des enfants qui dorment souffle à souffle, rêves serrés. Et c'est la solitude qui l'étreint alors, et l'éteint.<sup>44</sup>

Add to this

Nour avait mesuré l'ampleur de sa solitude, une solitude sans cesse aiguisée par l'exubérance des affections et les manifestations inhérentes à la vie des familles.<sup>45</sup>

In fact, the limitations and challenges that are inflicted upon the heroine Nour are heavy. She tries to overcome them through challenging and transgressing the social norms. This may explain her sexual interactions with different lovers "elle avait découvert les frissons du désir dans les bras de ses amants."<sup>46</sup> Mokeddem's heroine breaks the norms of her society by filling the emptiness and the solitude of her inner side with permanent lovers. Nour's relationships with men serve as a symbol of society's repression of freedom.

In *The Night of the Iguana*, Maxine tries to seduce Shannon once he arrives to the hotel. She is aware of his addiction to sex and alcohol. Against all expectations, Shannon rejects her at each time

Shannon: Come out looking like this! For you it's funny but for me it's ...

Maxine: this is how I look. What's wrong with how I look?

Shannon: I told you to button your shirt. Are you so proud of your boobs that you won't button your shirt up?<sup>47</sup>

Maxine is turning around Shannon. She wants him as her sexual partner. There are many examples in the play that illustrate this:

Shannon (*thrusting his chair back so vehemently that it topples over*): why don't you *let up* on me? You haven't *let up* on me since I got here this morning! *let up* on me! Will you please *let up* on me?

Maxine: (smiling serenely into his rage): aw baby...



Shannon: what do you mean by aw baby''? What do you want out of me, Maxine honey?

Maxine: just to do this (she *runs her fingers through his hair. He thrusts her hand away.*)<sup>48</sup>

Maxine is jealous and possessive. It is illustrated when Hannah speaks with Shannon: "Hannah: I think it might be better, tomorrow, if we avoid showing any particular interest in each other, because Mrs. Faulk is a morbidly jealous woman".<sup>49</sup> She wants Shannon for herself, and she considers Hannah Jelks as a competitor when she expects that Shannon shows interest on her. She does not hesitate to turn them away out of the hotel but later changed her mind and allowed them to stay a single night. She warns Hannah to keep far from him by saying

Maxine: No, I just mean Shannon, I want you to lay off him, honey. You're not for Shannon and Shannon isn't for you.<sup>50</sup>

She wants to keep him away from all the other women. She clearly wants him to settle in the hotel for the duration. In fact, Maxine even offers him to keep Fred's old bedroom

Maxine: go into Fred's room where I can watch you.

Shannon: later, Maxine, not yet

Maxine: why do you always come here to crack up, Shannon?<sup>51</sup>

### c- Hannah and Sassi

Unlike the other characters, Hannah in Williams' *The Night of the Iguana* and Sassi in Mokddem's in *La Nuit de la Lézarde* are described as angelic characters with a kindred spirit.

In *The Night of the Iguana*, Hannah seems not to value things such as material items or money as the others do. When she arrives at the Costa Verde Hotel, it is revealed that she is a traveling artist who travels with her poetic grandfather. She gains money by sketching people and having her grandfather reciting poetry. Hannah is a very loving and caring person as she develops a great affection to her grandfather. She appears to be emotionally stable and knows what she wants in the world:

Hannah: we make a home for each other, my grandfather and I. do you know what I mean by a home? I don't mean a regular home...I don't regard a home as a building...a house...of wood, bricks, stone. I think of a home as being a thing that two people have between them in which each can...well, nest-rest-live in, emotionally speaking.<sup>52</sup>

Williams depicted Hannah as “almost a definition of what I think is almost beautiful spiritually in a person and still believable.”<sup>53</sup> In addition, during her initial appearance on stage, Hannah is shaped as being saintly and pure:

Hannah is remarkable-looking ethereal, almost ghostly. She suggests a Gothic Cathedral image of a medieval saint, but animated... she is totally feminine and yet androgynous looking almost timeless.<sup>54</sup>

Similarly, she is also described as “a guardian angel”<sup>55</sup> in the stage directions at the beginning of act three and as “softly lighted so that she looks, again, like a medieval sculpture of a saint.”<sup>56</sup> From such description, it is remarkable that she is largely presented in spiritual terms and she will play a significant role in the play. Thus, we may say that Hannah is a portrait of Williams' sister Rose who seems to be saint, ethereal and seemingly pure.

Shannon is in rough need to someone who could help him understand his desperation and anxiety, someone who listens and helps him overcome his crises. It is thanks to his encounter with Hannah and her guidance that he undergoes his turmoil. She seems helpful to him as she herself experienced the same situation in her past. She reveals to him her own emotional troubles from her past that is a serious mental breakdown. She calls it a “Blue Devil”. This is obvious in the conversation she had with Shannon:

Hannah: I can help you because I've been through what you are going through right now. I had something like your spook- I just had a different name for him. I called him the blue devil and ...oh...we had quite a battle, quite a contest between us...

Shannon: how'd you beat your blue devil?

Hannah: I showed him that I could endure him and I made him respect my endurance.

Shannon: how?

Hannah: just by, just by...enduring. Endurance is something that spooks and blue devil respect.<sup>57</sup>

Hannah's revelation not only exposes Shannon to the hidden side of her personality, but also imbues in him respect for her. She has revealed a strength that he himself does not possess. Hannah is troubled by her devil, but unlike Shannon, she goes from the darkness to emerge into light. She faces her inner demon and conquers him by showing that she could endure him. In other words, she tells him that he has to learn simply to endure the tension and terror that are part of his life. Hannah's suggestion of endurance will lead to self-acceptance. Shannon finally accepts what an individual cannot change. This goes with Halla Diyab's words

Accepting the ugliness of the subterranean world through endurance and living beyond despair are ways of defeating the confinement and the imprisonment of the interior space.<sup>58</sup>

She even identifies his central problem that is he needs something to believe in and suggests that communication with other offers him the opportunity to overcome his crises.

Shannon: what is my problem, Miss Jelks?

Hannah: the oldest one in the world. The need to believe in something...

Shannon: your voice sounds hopeless about it.

Hannah: No, I'm not...In fact; I've discovered something to believe in.

Shannon: ...God?

Hannah: No..., Broken gates between people. So they can reach each other even if it's just for one night communication between them on a veranda outside their...separate cubicles, Mr. Shannon.<sup>59</sup>

She extends hope in the human contact which is strictly a spiritual connection. She provides to him a way to develop his capability for acceptance. He has to recognize the other in the outside so that to recognize himself. She even urges him to "look out of (him) self, not in"<sup>60</sup> in order to overcome his spiritual crisis. This is why she wants to help him understand himself by means of her opening up about her personal life.

Hannah is perceived as sexually unashamed and pure. She has lived two sexual experiences that are somewhat pathetic. These two sexual intimacies are so sedate that even calling them sexual is unusual. The first is a man pressing his leg against hers as a teenager in a darkened movie house:

Hannah: ...when I was sixteen...Well...one afternoon a young man sat down beside me and pushed his...knee against mine and... I moved over two seats but he moved over beside me and continued this...pressure! I jumped up and screamed...He was arrested for molesting a minor.<sup>61</sup>

Her second encounter seems to be somewhat more sexual, but in an unusual manner involves her in even less of a physical way. It occurred in a sampan on Singapore night when a salesman asks for her undergarment while he turns back and masturbates

Hannah: one evening in the Palm Court of the Raffles we met this middle aged...Australian Salesman...he was alone and looked lonely...He leaned towards me...we were vis-à-vis in the sampan...and he looked...passionately into my eyes...said he, if I turned my back will you take off some piece of your clothes and let me hold it, just hold it?<sup>62</sup>

In a way that is not explicit, the man satisfies his desires with it. He never looks at as Hannah gets this piece of clothing and she even does not look at him while he satisfies himself with it. This incident is quite pure because Hannah has derived no sexual pleasure. In other words, there is no actual physical contact between the two not even thought of lust from Hannah.

Hannah seems to have none of Shannon's dirty associations with sex. The encounter for her is not cause for guilt or disgust and nor was it lascivious. Rather, it was a connection that she shared with an unknown man in which she discovered a depth of loneliness she was previously unaware of.

Shannon: That... sad, dirty little episode...

Hannah: Sad it certainly was – for the odd little man – but why do you call it 'dirty'?

Shannon: How did you feel when you went into your bedroom?

Hannah: ...a little confused, I suppose...I'd known about loneliness – but not that degree or depth of it.

Shannon: You mean it didn't disgust you?

Hannah: Nothing human disgusts me unless it's unkind, violent. And I told you how gentle he was... delicate about it.<sup>63</sup>

The fact that Hannah is pure is the reason why Shannon is so fascinated by her and receptive to her. She is deeply sensitive and wholly dedicated to those in need. Shannon's darkness is brought into light thanks to Hannah's therapy. She teaches him to accept the idea that in life there is good and bad in almost everything and the best is that she shows to him that empathy and real communication between people can provide him meaning in life and something to believe in.

Similarly, Mokeddem creates an angelic character, who is the victim of repression that is resulted from the oppressive social norms and values. Mokeddem shapes Sassi as a generous and a faithful friend to Nour. She refers to his wisdom “La sagesse de Sassi.”<sup>64</sup> Indeed, Sassi is blind and passionately in love with Nour. They represent the opposite of each other. Mokeddem uses this duality ironically to state that darkness cannot be associated with light. She cannot love “the night” symbolized by Sassi eventhough “Le noir est le Cœur de la lumière. Il y’a toujours une part d’obscurité dans la clarté.”<sup>65</sup> It is worth mentioning that Nour is the English word for light. Nevertheless, Nour dreams of an ideal lover, and considers Sassi just as a best friend for her. She is unable to see his deep and pure love. In this respect, Dalmas Franck affirms

Les différences dans le couple Nour-Sassi montrent une lutte qui se reproduit dans beaucoup d’histoires d’amour. Sassi est aveugle et Nour symbolise la lumière ; elle est voyante et lui est non-voyant. Mais c’est Sassi qui a une perception plus aigüe des sentiments et des sensations tandis que Nour reste aveugle à l’amour de ce dernier puisqu’elle s’est créé un idéal masculin qui ne se réalisera jamais. Leur amour est impossible car leurs existence se croise sans se trouver, sans se « voir ». <sup>66</sup>

Sassi remains silent about his feeling mainly because of the fear to lose her and even by fear of being rejected openly.

Sassi is constantly repressing his emotions because he cannot open up his feelings towards her, and by doing this, he conforms to the traditional male conservative. What fills his inner side and what he projects to the outside is very different. Sassi is open minded and understands Nour’s sufferance. He is the only one who is interested in her well being.

Son ouverture d’esprit et sa douceur avaient emporté le reste et c’est avec bonheur que Nour avait remis circonspection et compassion au profit d’une grande amitié.<sup>67</sup>

Furthermore, the relationship between Sassi and Nour is ambiguous

C’est comme si on les découvrait tant le mystère qui les entoure reste entier. D’aucuns les croient mari et femme, d’autres, frère et sœur. On ne leur pose pas de questions. Ici ça s’appelle le respect.<sup>68</sup>

Even the people in the village do not understand their union, since a woman in the Algerian conservative society should be accompanied with male members of her family or a Mahrem. In fact, to forget about the solitude of the ksar, they perform together daily tasks, quarrel, laugh and speak about their lives as if they are husband and wife, or brother and sister

Nour et Sassi ne cessent de se comparer, de se conter, de se contrer. A l'évidence, c'est leur façon d'appivoiser leur singularité et leurs tourments. Et ils se reconnaissent différents à bien des égards, plusieurs traits de caractère les réunissent...ils bravent leurs angoisses avec vaillance et bonhomie.<sup>69</sup>

It is obvious that Sassi is sexually attracted to Nour, but he cannot fulfill his desires. As a result, he represses them and suffers silently. However, as his society and wisdom prevent him to show his sexual intentions and he satisfies himself by a simple act of touching her dress. There are several passages in the novel that illustrate it.

Comment est ta robe aujourd'hui? Sans attendre la réponse de son amie, Sassi tend sa main vers son habit, en saisit l'ourlet et le palpe. C'est du lin. Il est de couleur Safran, lui apprend Nour.<sup>70</sup>

Likewise, Sassi questions Nour in every opportunity that can be given to him

Dis-moi, comment est ta robe?  
En satin rouge  
je peux la toucher ?  
Et comme d'habitude, Sassi n'attend pas la réponse pour se saisir d'un peu de tissu.  
C'est frais et doux pour du rouge le tissu coule entre les doigts.<sup>71</sup>

Sassi's great love for Nour haunts him even in his dreams during which he cannot deny his sexual desires. In this respect, Freud declares: "dreams are fulfillments of wishes that are hallucinatory fulfillments following experiences of satisfaction."<sup>72</sup> In his dream, Sassi sees Nour naked taking a bath in the desert while he is lusty to take part with her.

Nue dans l'eau, Nour se frotte le corps et s'éclabousse. Ses yeux n'expriment plus la même faim dévorante. Leur clair-obscur pétille en secret. Elle s'élance vers lui et s'écrie : « c'est ça que j'attendais, l'aube des beaux jours. Enfin nous avons traversé la nuit.... » L'eau perle sur sa peau

et goutte de ses seins, de ses mains, de ses cheveux dénoués. Le désir embrase Sassi. Il court vers elle, se réveille le cœur battant.<sup>73</sup>

Sassi decides to tell his dream to Nour, but due to his reserved nature and great respect to her, he does not succeed. The best example that illustrates the great passion and love that Sassi feels for Nour is when he admits in the last chapter:

Nour, lumière de ma nuit, chaque jour, je suis allé vers elle, comme un somnambule, sans jamais l'atteindre. Elle prend tous les chemins de la fuite : le rire, des images insolites, son désir pour d'autres hommes... quand je crois l'avoir enfin rejointe, elle fait une pirouette et me renvoie à mille lieues. Il faut que je puisse la raccrocher à son attente. Et quand elle sera guérie, elle ne pourra plus me tenir à distance avec ses discours avec la sacro-sainte amitié qu'elle a investie en moi. Je la coucherai. L'embrasserai et lui ferai l'amour à en perdre le souffle, à combler tous ses manques et les miens.<sup>74</sup>

This passage expresses Sassi's profound emotions and his repressed sexual desires that he has never told to any person even to her. Sassi's dream is the result of his sexual repression. He admits obviously his sexual attraction towards Nour and his great desire to consume this relationship. In order to remain close to her, he does many sacrifices. Even after the departure of the ksourians, he decides to stay with her "à quels sacrifices avait-il consenti pour rester auprès d'elle."<sup>75</sup> Similarly, despite his love he decided to wait with Nour for her lover, at her request

Est ce que tu veux bien l'attendre avec moi ?  
Je ne vois pas comment je pourrais y échapper, si tu continues à me bassiner de cette façon  
C'est une demande pour le moins...  
C'est important pour moi ! Je te le présenterai à son retour. Tu comprendras  
Alors, je vais attendre avec toi...<sup>76</sup>

Sassi's deep affection and awareness of Nour's sufferance push him despite his jealousy to wait for the coming of her ideal lover. He admits his jealousy when he states

La jalousie est si aigre. Elle nous fait vomir les mots les moins heureux''  
Qu'est ce qu'il a de plus, celui là, pour mériter ton amour ?  
Cela n'a rien avoir avec le mérite ! Il a rempli mes yeux.  
La candeur de cette déclaration désarme Sassi. Il se détourne comme pour livrer à la nuit son chagrin.<sup>77</sup>

Nour never understands Sassi's emotions for her, this is what pushes him to consider himself imperfect and ugly as he declares "tu ne me trouves pas beau."<sup>78</sup>

Sassi is Nour's only confident and companion. He tries to appease her sufferance by listening to her without any judgments "auprès de lui, Nour demeure elle-même, sans crainte des jugements lapidaires qui régissent leur société, des anathèmes qui frappent ceux qui transgressent ses lois d'airain."<sup>79</sup>

In fact, Sassi is like Williams' angelic character in *The Night of the Iguana* Hannah Jelks who never judges Shannon even after admitting to her that he is kicked out of the church for fornication and heresy. This example illustrates this claim:

Hannah to Shannon: that wasn't meant as an insult, just an observation. I don't judge people, I draw them. That's all I do, just draw them, but in order to draw them I have to observe them, don't I?<sup>80</sup>

As we have discussed it above, it is clear that both Williams and Mokeddem portray Hannah and Sassi respectively as asexual and pure. Unlike Maxine, Shannon and Nour who engage freely in sexual activities, Hannah and Sassi succeed to repress their sexual desires. In the Freudian terms, their ego succeeds to keep a balance between their "Id" and the "Superego", leading to a repression without negative consequences.

### **End notes:**

<sup>1</sup>Williams, Tennessee. *The Night of the Iguana*. (New York: Literary classics of the United States, 1961), 339.

<sup>2</sup>Levin, Lindy. "Shadow into Light: a Jungian Analysis of the Night of the Iguana", 87. Accessed on December 2015 ,available on

[:http://www.tennesseewilliamsstudies.org/journal/works/0208levin.pdf](http://www.tennesseewilliamsstudies.org/journal/works/0208levin.pdf).

<sup>3</sup>Mokeddem, Malika, *La Nuit de la Lézarde*. ( Paris : Grasset, 1998) ,38.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid ., 49.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.,36-37.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.,55.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.,59.

<sup>8</sup>Thurschwell, Pamela. *Sigmund Freud*, (Routledge Critical Thinkers, 2000), 22.

<sup>9</sup>Mokeddem, Malika, *La Nuit de la Lézarde*, (Paris : Grasset, 1998) ,58.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.,111.



- <sup>11</sup>Williams, Tennessee. *The Night of the Iguana*. (New York: Literary classics of the United States, 1961), 339.
- <sup>12</sup>Boag, Simon. "Freudian Repression, The Common view, and Pathological Science, review of *General Psychology*" (2006, Vol.10, No.1), 74-86: 77. Viewed on January, 2016 available on : <http://revistas.ucm.es/index.php/THEL/article/viewFile/THEL0404110007A/33311>
- <sup>13</sup>Ibid., 77.
- <sup>14</sup>Smith Evans. *Freud Complete works:1890-1939*. (published in 2000,2007,2010), 3247. Accessed on : March, 2016 available on : [http://www.valas.fr/IMG/pdf/Freud\\_Complete\\_Works.pdf](http://www.valas.fr/IMG/pdf/Freud_Complete_Works.pdf)
- <sup>15</sup>Thurschwell, Pamela. *Sigmund Freud*, (Routledge Critical Thinkers, 2000), 108.
- <sup>16</sup>Williams, Tennessee. *The Night of the Iguana*. (New York: Literary classics of the United States, 1961), 401.
- <sup>17</sup>Mokeddem, Malika, *La Nuit de la Lézarde*. (Paris :Grasset, 1998), 43.
- <sup>18</sup>Boag, Simon. "Freudian Repression, The Common view, and Pathological Science, review of *General Psychology*", (2006, Vol.10, No.1), 74-86:2.
- <sup>19</sup>Smith, Evans. *Freud Complete works :1890-1939*. (published in 2000,2007,2010), 1759.
- <sup>20</sup>Thurschwell, Pamela. *Sigmund Freud*, (Routledge Critical Thinkers, 2000), 16.
- <sup>21</sup>Williams, Tennessee. *The Night of the Iguana*. (New York: Literary classics of the United States, 1961), 340.
- <sup>22</sup>ibid.
- <sup>23</sup>Ibid., 392.
- <sup>24</sup>Ibid., 393.
- <sup>25</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>26</sup>Ibid., 400.
- <sup>27</sup>Mokeddem, Malika. *La Nuit de la Lézarde*. (Paris : Grasset, 1998), 17.
- <sup>28</sup>Ibid., 18-19.
- <sup>29</sup>Ibid., 133.
- <sup>30</sup>Williams, Tennessee. *The Night of the Iguana*. (New York: Literary classics of the United States, 1961), 335-336.
- <sup>31</sup>Ibid., 389.
- <sup>32</sup>Mokeddem, Malika, *La Nuit de la Lézarde*. (Paris: Grasset, 1998), 57.
- <sup>33</sup>Ibid 56.
- <sup>34</sup>Williams, Tennessee. *The Night of the Iguana*. (New York: Literary classics of the United States, 1961), 329.
- <sup>35</sup>Ibid., 330.
- <sup>36</sup>Ibid., 389.
- <sup>37</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>38</sup>Mokeddem, Malika, *La Nuit de la Lézarde*. (Paris :Grasset, 1998), 139.
- <sup>39</sup>Ibid., 50
- <sup>40</sup>Ibid., 36.
- <sup>41</sup>Fouzia, Meslouh. "Images Obsedantes et le Rapport a L'autre dans Mes Hommes de Malika Mokeddem", (PhDDiss, Mentouri University, Constantine, 2010-2011), 60 available on : <http://bu.umc.edu.dz/theses/francais/MES1290.pdf>.
- <sup>42</sup>Ibid., 82.
- <sup>43</sup>Williams, Tennessee. *The Night of the Iguana*. (New York: Literary classics of the United States, 1961), 363.
- <sup>44</sup>Mokeddem, Malika, *La Nuit de la Lézarde*. (Paris :Grasset, 1998), 19
- <sup>45</sup>Ibid., 38.
- <sup>46</sup>Ibid.

- <sup>47</sup>Williams, Tennessee. *The Night of the Iguana*. (New York: Literary classics of the United States, 1961),338.
- <sup>48</sup> Ibid: 390.
- <sup>49</sup> Ibid:420.
- <sup>50</sup> Ibid:383.
- <sup>51</sup> Ibid:398.
- <sup>52</sup> Ibid:412.
- <sup>53</sup> Voss.F.Ralph. *Magical Muse: Millenial Essays on Tennessee Williams*, (The University of Alabama press, 2002), 127.
- <sup>54</sup> Ibid 338.
- <sup>55</sup> Ibid:388.
- <sup>56</sup> Ibid398.
- <sup>57</sup> Ibid:409.
- <sup>58</sup> Diyab, Halla. “*Crossing the Margin : Minorities and Marginality in the Drama of Tennessee Williams*”, ( PhD Diss, January 2008), 176.
- <sup>59</sup> Williams, Tennessee. *The Night of the Iguana*. (New York: Literary classics of the United States, 1961),408.
- <sup>60</sup> Ibid.,411.
- <sup>61</sup> Ibid., 416-417.
- <sup>62</sup> Ibid.,416.
- <sup>63</sup> Ibid.,418.
- <sup>64</sup> Mokeddem, Malika, *La Nuit de la Lézarde*. (Paris :Grasset, 1998,)86.
- <sup>65</sup> Ibid .,59.
- <sup>66</sup> Frank, Dalmas. “*Les Multiples Visages de la Guerre dans La Nuit de la Lézarde*”, available on <http://www.thefreelibrary.com/Les+multiples+visages+de+la+guerre+dans+La+Nuit+de+la+lezarde+de...-a0194333495>.
- <sup>67</sup> Mokeddem, Malika, *La Nuit de la Lézarde*. (Paris : Grasset, 1998), 43.
- <sup>68</sup> Ibid .,20.
- <sup>69</sup> Ibid.,73.
- <sup>70</sup> Ibid.,15-16
- <sup>71</sup> Ibid., 60.
- <sup>72</sup> Neu, Jerome. *TheCambridge Companion to Freud*, (Cambridge University Press, 2006),33.
- <sup>73</sup> Mokeddem, Malika, *La Nuit de la Lézarde*. (Paris :Grasset, 1998), 146-147.
- <sup>74</sup> Ibid.,172.
- <sup>75</sup> Ibid.,32-33.
- <sup>76</sup> Ibid.,47-48.
- <sup>77</sup> Ibid ., 44.
- <sup>78</sup> Ibid.,116.
- <sup>79</sup> Ibid.,43.
- <sup>80</sup> Williams, Tennessee. *The Night of the Iguana*. (New York: Literary classics of the United States, 1961),402.

## **2- Symbols of Repression in *The Night of the Iguana* and *La Nuit de la Lézarde*:**

In this part of our dissertation, we will discuss some symbols that best symbolize repression in the two works respectively. These include “The Iguana, or the Lézarde”, “Desert”, and “Night” as symbols of repression. We will also discuss the therapies suggested by Williams and Mokeddem against repression, namely “Reading”, “Painting” and “Escape to the south” in both *La Nuit de la Lézarde* and *The Night of the Iguana*. Since it is a comparative study, we have opted for Harold Bloom’s theory of “*The Anxiety of Influence*”. Our choice is justified by the fact that our work investigates a possibility of Influence exercised by Williams on Mokeddem. Therefore we suppose that Mokeddem has lived an anxiety of influence since she recognizes her reading of American literature.

- **Harold Bloom’s Theory on *The Anxiety of Influence*(1973):**

Harold Bloom is one of the foremost American contemporary literary critics. As a prolific writer, he produced literary and religious critical books with hundreds of articles and reviews. With the introduction of his famous book *The Anxiety of Influence: a Theory of Poetry* (1973), Bloom has influenced most contemporary conversations about inspiration, imitation, imagination as well as similarity especially when comparing works of various figures from different literary periods as it is the case of our paper.

Indeed, in this theory, Bloom offers “a theory of poetry by way of description of poetic influence, or the story of intra-poetic relationships.”<sup>1</sup> He acknowledges the important relationship of influence that exists between “the precursor” and “the ephebe.”<sup>2</sup>

He argues that the writing of all poets involves rewriting of earlier poets. To be more explicit, every poet is inspired to write by reading other poet’s poetry. So, each new poem

originates from an old one. He goes further to state “one aim of this theory is corrective: to de-idealize our accepted accounts of how one poet helps to form another.”<sup>3</sup>

Accordingly, as the title of the book indicates, *The Anxiety of Influence: a Theory of Poetry*, poetry is then the anxiety of influence. Bloom considers that poetic influence as poetic misprision or misunderstanding. Here, he believes that the poet as “the ephebe” has to create an imaginative space for himself through a creative misreading of the strong poet. He avows “my concern is only with strong poets, major figures with the persistence to wrestle with their strong precursors.”<sup>4</sup>

The most obvious kinship point that relates Mokeddem to Williams is their use of the same symbols as therapy against repression as “Reading” and “Painting”. Furthermore, “Escape” is used as a means for the main characters to overcome their mental and psychological breakdowns. Sigmund Freud explains in his theory on “Repression” that when the ego fails to repress the shameful memories, the physician can help the patient to surpass his trauma with hypnosis: “The guidance of a physician to the patient may lead to better results than the one offered by repression.”<sup>5</sup> Freud proposes Hypnosis to help people cure their traumas.. Indeed, Williams and Mokeddem use many therapies as a way to surmount the characters’ psychological torments. Williams introduced “Hypnosis” and “Painting” whereas Mokeddem uses “Painting” and “Reading”.

#### **a- “Night” and “Iguana” in both works**

To begin with the title of the two works, it is obvious that Mokeddem was greatly influenced by Tennessee Williams’ play *The Night of the Iguana*. This justifies her use of the same title. Indeed, both titles *The Night of the Iguana* and *La Nuit de la Lézarde* hide a connotative meaning. They do not stand only for the suffering of the main Characters Shannon and Nour, but also deals with the struggle and challenge of the other characters in both works.

As far as *The Night of the Iguana* is concerned, “the Night” symbolizes repression, and the traumatic past of the characters who seek to find the light and reach goodness and perfection. In addition, the term “Night” in the title may refer to that Night when Shannon and Hannah communicate in the verandah

Shannon : one night stands, Huh?

Hannah: one night... communication between them on a verandah outside their ...separate cubicles, Mr.Shannon.<sup>6</sup>

We may also associate “Night” to Shannon’s inner struggle against his demons as well as his traumatic past life that trapped him just like the trapped Iguana.

The “Iguana” has many mythological interpretations which differ from one culture to another. In Roman mythology, Lizards symbolize death, misfortune and resurrection. It is also associated with devil and evil. In the African culture, especially in Mediterranean countries, the Iguana is viewed as an old family friend and a faithful companion. It is also used to evoke protective spirits in houses. In West Africa, many people associate the reptile to the sun<sup>7</sup>. Both Williams and Mokeddem are inspired by the different cultural interpretations of the Iguana and this is well illustrated in the two works under study.

Williams’ and Mokeddem’s remarkable geniuses may be seen through the different interpretations that the “lizard” holds. As mentioned before the “Iguana” is the most prominent symbol in Williams’ play *The Night of the Iguana*, though it is mentioned only few times. The “Iguana” is known for its nature, it changes the color of its skin according to the place where it stands. In the play, Shannon is compared several times to the “Iguana”. When Shannon sees the Mexican bellboys caught the Iguana under Maxine’s orders, he asks about its sex. Maxine replied: “hah, who cares about the sex of an iguana...except another Iguana?”<sup>8</sup> Maxine compares him to the animal. Like the Iguana, Shannon changes personality from a respected Reverend to a defrocked minister, from a Christian believer to an atheist. In addition, even Hannah compares Shannon to the iguana when she says: “They’re

tormenting him like an animal in a trap”<sup>9</sup>. Add to this, the Mexicans caught the Iguana and tied it underneath the verandah, Shannon also was caught by the Mexicans when he wanted to take a “long swim to china”. He was tied by the ropes to the hammock like the Iguana under the verandah. Shannon struggles against the ropes to free himself as the Iguana struggles to get off the ties. Moreover, even Shannon compares himself to the animal when he says “my life has cracked up on me ... I’m at the end of my rope.”<sup>10</sup> Later when Hannah hears the Iguana screaming in the jungle she asks what it is, then Shannon answers “oh that. The Mexican boys that work here have caught an iguana and tied it up under the verandah,... but it’s got to the end of its rope.”<sup>11</sup> Later Shannon is saved by Hannah who convinces him to free the Iguana .By doing this, Shannon freed himself from what torments him and succeeds to regain peace with his inner psyche. Being hypnotized by Hannah, Shannon understands his problems. She changes his perception of the world. She also helps him to perform a little act of grace by freeing the Iguana and saving it from death.

Concerning the title of *La Nuit de la Lézarde*, it refers to the protagonist Nour. “La Nuit” symbolizes suffering, long waiting and anxiety. It also refers to Nour’s obscure past that she represses all along her life. Nour longs for an abstract light that she wants to reach. All along the novel, she suffers from incompleteness and loneliness. Add to this, “La Nuit” may also be related to the blindness of Sassi and his obscure life. Like Williams, Mokeddem uses “the lizard” as a symbolic reference to death and as means to announce the tragic end of her protagonist. Nour’s long waiting for her lover is unfulfilled as she dies taking with her the infinite dreams of reaching the absolute light. In her article, *Temps, Espace et Mémoire dans les Œuvres de Malika Mokeddem*, Susan Ireland analyses the symbole of the “Lézarde”. At first, she links the lizard to the reptile animal which is a frequent visitor to Nour’s house<sup>12</sup> “Smicha le lézard.”<sup>13</sup>

Mokeddem portrays the lizard as a faithful companion to Nour as it helps her to appease her solitude in the uninhabited ksar

Après le départ de la première grande fournée des habitants du Ksar, Smicha avait commencé à roder autour de sa maison, conquérant plus d'espace au fur et à mesure que le silence et l'immobilité les gagnaient. Maintenant, les ruines sont son royaume. Parfois, il s'adonne à des jeux frénétiques, traçant sur le sable des esquisses brouillonnes, semblables aux graffitis maladroit des enfants. D'autres fois, il course des lézards beaucoup plus petit qui filent sur les murs comme des flèches et se cachent dans leurs anfractuosités.<sup>14</sup>

Susan Ireland also associates the lizard to unhappy events. It is as if it comes to Nour to tell her that something bad is going to happen. It is depicted as being the king of the Ksar<sup>15</sup> "le roi de ces ruines."<sup>16</sup> Mokeddem makes a clear description of it

Le lézard Smicha est là, dans un coin de sa chambre. A son entrée, il se recule de deux pas. Queue collée au mur, langue haletante, il donne l'impression de laper l'air à petits coup précipités.<sup>17</sup>

The image of the lizard is used to foretell the theme of death. This well illustrated in Nour's sufferance from chest pains and heartache

Allah! Dans quelle obscurité se trimbalent nos vies malgré toutes les lumières qui nous sont données... Alors comme ça, il y a une lézarde dans tricineti (prononciation maghrébine d'électricité) de mon cœur ? Et ça fait un point mort? <sup>18</sup>

In addition to her anxiety and restlessness, Nour suffers from the death of her father for whom she is waiting

Les yeux clos, le père de Nour est allongé au milieu du groupe. La panique qui règne parmi ceux qui l'entourent la tétanise. Brusquement, un homme se met à réciter à tue-tête des versets du coran... A son insu, Nour se met à trembler sans comprendre la cause de cette hystérie collective qui lézarde la quiétude du soir.<sup>19</sup>

Through our analysis of the novel, we may say that Nour is the Lizard which lives in the ksar. She is moving from one place to another seeking for constructing a new identity far from the traditional oppression and tyranny that restrict her acts. Mokeddem ironically uses her name "Nour" which means "Light in Arabic". She wants to cross the night and fulfill her dreams. Unlike Hannah in *The Night of the Iguana* who succeeds to survive and reach the white light

crossing the long black tunnel, Nour dies without fulfilling her wishes except in Sassi's dream "c'est ça que j'attendais, l'aube des beaux jours. Enfin, nous avons traversé la nuit."<sup>20</sup> In her master thesis entitled *La Re-naissance par L'écriture dans N'zid* de Malika Mokeddem, Baiche Faiza claims that "Nour est comme ce lézard qui vit dans le ksar. Elle veut bouger, voyager, retrouver les beaux jours et traverser la nuit d'où le titre *La Nuit de Lézarde*."<sup>21</sup>

### **b- Escape to the south as a refuge for Shannon and Nour**

Both Williams and Mokeddem use the south as a refuge for their protagonists Shannon and Nour respectively.

#### **1- The Jungle for Shannon**

*The Night of the Iguana* is set in Mexico, more precisely in a tropical jungle, where the defrocked minister seeks refuge and escape searching for something or someone to believe in. The Costa Verde hotel is set in the center of wilderness surrounded by nature and sea. It is a place where all the characters of the play enjoy their freedom. It is open and wild as it releases them from repression of the civilized world. As mentioned before, its openness suggests freedom. The latter is depicted within the free behaviors of the characters. It is an open territory without any spatial barriers. In fact, Shannon likes going to the Costa Verde, an appropriate space for his personal conflict and its resolution. This may be illustrated with Maxine, the hotel proprietor, asking Shannon "why do you always come here to crack up, Shannon?" He replies "it's the Hammock, Maxine, the hammock by the rain forest."<sup>22</sup> Shannon pleads and searches for someone to hide him from his troubles. Maxine is accustomed to his mental breakdowns and informs Hannah that he comes there at each time he witnesses a mental crisis "he cracks up like this so regular that you can set a calendar by it. Every eighteen months he does it, and twice he's done it here..."<sup>23</sup> It is important to note that even Shannon recognizes his psychotic anxieties. His conversation with Charlotte best



illustrates it “I’m almost out of my mind, can’t you see that, honey?”<sup>24</sup> The open space would help Shannon to overcome his psychic crisis and escape from his internal demons.

## 2- The Desert for Nour

Most of Malika Mokeddem’s novels are set in the Algerian South. The latter is a fundamental element that is represented as a place of repression and domination. This goes with Mokeddem’s statement

Là- bas, dans le désert, l’horizon n’était que l’ultime claustration. Il symbolisait l’infranchissable de ma vie, l’insondable abîme qui me séparait du monde. De la liberté....A scruter ce néant immuable, ses paysages fossilisés qui cernaient notre pauvreté, la brutalité des traditions, j’avais parfois des crises de désespoir à en crever tant il me paraissait impossible que je puisse jamais décamper de là. Leur échapper.<sup>25</sup>

In *La Nuit de la Lézarde*, Malika Mokeddem uses “The Desert” as a means to react against the destiny and the natural forces like the extremely high temperature, wind, and sand that oppress the individuals. Mokeddem associates limitations on the freedom of women exacted by the fundamentalist interpretation of Islam in Algeria with the desert and often with the confined routine of deserted nomads. In addition to the harsh environment of the South, Mokeddem depicts the various brutalities which oppress the Algerians especially women during the 90s. She writes from the deep southern corners of Algeria in order to make women’s suffering heard outside the Algerian boundaries. In *La Nuit de la Lézarde*, Mokeddem uses “the desert” as a place of repression and domination but also as a refuge and freedom for the protagonist Nour. To search for her freedom and construct a new identity, Nour has to cross the huge desert “je me déplaçais ainsi, sans autre but que d’aller plus au sud.”<sup>26</sup> The protagonist experiences an exile brought by the absence of parents and a rejection of a conservative husband. Her only need is to break all ties with a past that is too painful for her. Nevertheless, the desert offers her a security and allows her to embrace another universe.

Nour's experience recalls that of Mokeddem who escaped the home of her nomadic ancestors to settle in France. Nour on the other hand fled to the Sahara to take refuge in the deserted lands.

Nomade sans tribu, elle traversait des déserts sans arriver au bout de son vide intérieur. Tout au contraire. Les immensités du Sahara semblaient porter ses angoisses à la démesure.<sup>27</sup>

In spite of the difficulties, Nour succeeds to reach the village and later the ksar where she constructs a domestic life with her blind friend Sassi. According to Mokeddem “ il faut échapper, fuir l'enfermement et marcher et écrire permettent de dépasser cette angoisse, de calmer la peur et de se sentir vivante.”<sup>28</sup> She adds “elle soigne les blessures passées, les souffrances endurées, et l'énergie qu'elle a dû dépenser pour conquérir de haute lute le droit de pouvoir avancer.”<sup>29</sup> The vastness and immensity of the desert may symbolize oppression and loss of freedom, but it maybe also a symbol of life and liberty. Nour fled to the south hoping that the immensities of the desert will cure her from her traumas.

Errant d'oasis en oasis, Nour s'était enfoncée de plus en plus vers le sud, avec la terrible sensation de n'être plus rien, puisque rien ni personne ne la retenait nulle part.<sup>30</sup>

In fact, Mokeddem presents the desert as a sort of escape and therapy for Nour to overcome her anxiety, solitude and loneliness and find her harmony

Les murs se fendent et peu à peu tombent en poussière. Terrassé, le ksar ne lui renvoie plus que les ruines d'un monde qu'elle a fui. Le désert les endort, dos a dos, sans parvenir à apaiser Nour.<sup>31</sup>

In addition to the desert, Mokeddem uses also gardening and domestic tasks as a means of escape from traumatic events. Through her daily tasks in the garden, Nour flees her anxiety and forgets about the solitude of the desert.

Le travail avait arraché son corps et son esprit a son désespoir et structure ses jours. Peu à peu sa perception du désert avait changé. Le vide des terres avait retrouvé résonances, ses partitions de silence et de vents, ses symphonies minérales. les éthers lui devenaient une attente sans impatience. Nour apprenait enfin l'espérance.<sup>32</sup>

#### c- **Painting as a Therapy for Hannah and Nour:**

Both Williams and Mokeddem occupy their characters with means to redeem them from their oppressed situation. The use of painting is of great significance in helping both Hannah and Nour to overcome their traumatic past that haunts them.

In *The Night of the Iguana*, Williams depicts Hannah as being “almost timeless”<sup>33</sup> because she spends all her time with her grandfather painting and preparing recitations. In this sense, she says

My grandfather is the oldest living and practicing poet. And he gives recitations. I... paint... water colors and I’m a “quick sketch artist”. We traveled together. We pay our way as we go by my grandfather’s recitations and the sale of my water colors and quick character sketches in charcoal or pastel.<sup>34</sup>

To reassure Shannon, She informs him that, like him, she witnessed a mental illness that she calls “Blue devils” but she succeeded to surpass through painting as she decalres

Hannah: “I never cracked up, I couldn’t afford to... I nearly did once... But I was lucky. My occupation, this occupational therapy that I gave myself – painting and doing quick character sketches – made me look out of myself, not in, and gradually, at the far end of the tunnel that I was struggling out of I began to see this faint, very faint gray light – the light of the world outside me- and I kept climbing toward it . I had to.

Shannon: did it stay a gray light?

Hannah, no, no, it turned white

Shannon: only white never gold?

Hannah: no, it stayed only white, but white is a very good light to see at the end of a long black tunnel you thought would be never ending, that only god and death could put a stop to, especially when you... since I was... far from sure about god.<sup>35</sup>

Shannon seems to be interested in perfection and seeking for gold rather than goodness that is symbolized by white. However, Hannah intelligently succeeds to change his perception of life, by arguing that white light is wonderful after a long dark tunnel. She offers him a different possibility for existence through looking outside of himself by accepting the other’s help.

There is another means of therapy that Mokeddem uses to help Nour to cure her solitude and sufferance as painting. Mokeddem herself uses painting as a means to escape

from the oppression of both her family and society. Painting for Mokeddem is a means for inspiration and creation she asserts:

J'ai persistée à "peindre". Par moments. Par crises. Par transes. Le désert évidemment. Un désert dont les violences ont vite vire en abstractions. Une fureur, un déchirement de la couleur qui étaient d'abord de torsions physiques.<sup>36</sup>

As Tennessee Williams, Mokeddem depicts Nour as passionately fond of painting. "Afin de conserver l'esprit de la demeure, Nour a elle-même repeint les murs avec une scrupuleuse fidélité à ce qu'en avait fait son propriétaire."<sup>37</sup> She spends her time painting the walls of the dead man's house. Nour claims to Sassi "je suis entrain de me découvrir une passion. J'aime beaucoup malaxer l'argile. L'étaler sur ce vert est un enchantement."<sup>38</sup> Nour explores the desert and expresses it by the use of painting and sculpture. She becomes an artist as a way to free herself from the pains that tighten her chest every time "elle a l'art de déguiser ses soucis et de tout embrouiller."<sup>39</sup> Nour mixes clay and colors to draw arabesque frescos. She uses her hands to project amazing colors on the wall to create relief drawings. "ceux de la chambre s'ornent de motifs géographiques, d'un ocre plus soutenu que celui de la terre, et s'étirent en arabesques sur un fond vert pale."<sup>40</sup> It is very important to point out that the choice of colors and forms that Nour uses are very symbolic.

"Du bleu? Foncé ou Claire ...de l'indigo? Ce serait aussi jolie avec le brun ... le corail et le safran se marient bien avec l'argile. Le bleu c'est aussi la mer. Il paraît qu'elle est parfois Indigo."<sup>41</sup>

These colors reflect Nour's infinite dreams and wishes for better days that she never fulfills.

#### **d- Hypnosis in *The Night of the Iguana***

In Williams' play, Hannah, one of the main characters, is depicted as having a hypnotic power over Shannon. Williams puts her and hypnosis as redemption to Shannon from his hysterical state. Shannon's refuse to admit that sexuality is the cause of his hysteria. According to Freud, the patient should recall his traumatic memories so that he can

understand the causes of his illness. As it is the case with Hannah, she admitted clearly to Shannon that she succeeded to get rid of her “Blue devils” through the process of repression “poppy seed tea or rum cocos or just a few deep deep breaths . Anything, everything that we take to give them the slip, and so to keep on going.”<sup>42</sup> Hannah informs Shannon that she has a dark side within her inner side, where she represses her Blue devils “I mean... subterranean travels, the journeys the spooked and bedvilled people are forced to take through the ...the unlighted sides of their natures.”<sup>43</sup> Through the “Unlighted Sides”, Hannah refers to what Freud calls the “Unconscious” that is the dark side of the human psyche where the ego represses the unpleasant memories and desires. Unlike Shannon, Hannah did not made of her sexuality an issue for her problems, however, it is through art that she fights against her inner demons.

With her conversations with Shannon, she succeeded to gain his sympathy and admiration. In fact, Shannon was greatly impressed by her courage and honesty. Williams shapes the character of Hannah as a physician who helps the patient to surpass his psychic problems “she closes her eyes for a moment and draws a deep breath, then goes on speaking in a voice like a hypnotist’s.”<sup>44</sup> He expresses his need for her help when he tells her: Shannon to Hannah “sit here where I can see you. Don’t stop talking I have to fight this panic.”<sup>45</sup> When Hannah tries to paint Shannon, he feels himself as if he is doing hypnosis. Shannon avows to Hannah: “Sorry, but I’m not going to close my eyes for you. I’m hypnotizing myself ...”<sup>46</sup> it is up to this moment of hypnosis that Shannon confesses his sins and admits his deep inner conflicts by telling her the reasons of being kicked out of his church and how he insulted god in one of his sermons

Shannon : ....locked out of my church.

hannah: oh ... why did they lock you out of it?

Shannon: fornication and heresy... in the same week. <sup>47</sup>

After these revelations, Shannon succeeds to overcome his breakdown. As psychoanalysis suggests, under hypnosis the patient can recall and understand the reasons of his trauma.

After recalling and speaking openly about them as Shannon does the traumas will not be harmful anymore. Shannon's peace with himself is well illustrated when he decides to free the Iguana, and remains in the hotel with Maxine.

#### **e- Reading as a Therapy for Dounia in *La Nuit de la Lézarde***

Dounia is another important character in *La Nuit de la Lézarde*. Her name signifies the "world" or "life" in Arabic. She is portrayed as a lonely girl whose time is devoted to reading various books. She sees reading as a refuge from the tyranny of her society that oppresses her. As her father tells Nour "toujours retranchée du monde derrière un livre."<sup>48</sup> Dounia is exiled from her society and her family because she does not find comfort "A son retrait derrière le mystère des livres. Aux premières charges de la solitude qui font déjà de Dounia une exilée au sein de sa propre famille."<sup>49</sup> Nour comprehends her split with the outside world as she has been through such situation "Nour connaît les blessures et les ruptures de ce premier exil."<sup>50</sup> Dounia tries to compensate the deficiencies of education that she has received from her teacher thinking that it corrupts children. Dounia describes the teacher to the characters Nour, Sassi and Dr Zeineb

Elle se prend pour un commandeur des croyants. Sauf qu'elle menace toujours au lieu de prêcher. Elle a réussi à détourner la plupart des élèves du chemin d'Allah vers lequel elle croit les guider.<sup>51</sup>

She refers to her teacher as "ma prof est cinglée, alors je vais me chercher dans d'autres livres que ceux qu'on nous impose."<sup>52</sup> Dounia discovers the world through reading which represents her spiritual refuge. As she declares to Nour about her ambition "de pouvoir enfin oublier toutes les peurs et bouger, voyager, partir à la découverte de ce que racontent les livres."<sup>53</sup> Nour is fascinated by Dounia's will to read and widen her thirst for knowledge. Once in the market, Nour buys books for her. Among which Mokeddem refers to Simone De Beauvoir the *Second Sex* that she herself read "Je bâche et je listard. Des lectures importantes balisent mes insomnies: Rimbaud, Colette, Giono, Sartre, Beauvoir dont le *Deuxième Sexe*

m'ouvre des horizons et me conforte.'',<sup>54</sup> The influence of the feminsit writing on Mokeddem is noticeable in *La Nuit de la Lézarde* with Bachir and Nour conversation

Nour s'empare d'un livre orange  
- Celui- là est un livre écrit par une femme...  
- Comment s'appelle-t-elle ?  
Bachir déchiffre :  
Simone De Beauvoir  
- Et quel est le titre ?  
L'enfant lit : «le deuxième sexe ».... Je crois qu'il parle de tous les problèmes des femmes.  
- Bon. En plus, il est gros, avec beaucoup de mots. Je vais l'acheter pour Dounia.<sup>55</sup>

We may say that Dounia and Nour are the reflection of Mokeddem's personality because they are viewed as rebellious against the patriarchal traditions. Dounia and Nour like Mokeddem want to live free in order to enjoy their youth dreams.

### EndNotes:

<sup>1</sup>Bloom, Harold. *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry*(New York:Oxford University Press 1997),5

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.,10.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.,5

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Smith Evans. *Freud Complete works* :1890-1939.(published in 2000,2007,2010),1759.March, 2016 available on [http://www.valas.fr/IMG/pdf/Freud\\_Complete\\_Works.pdf](http://www.valas.fr/IMG/pdf/Freud_Complete_Works.pdf)

<sup>6</sup>Williams, Tennessee. *The Night of the Iguana*. (New York: Literary classics of the United States, 1961),408.

<sup>7</sup><http://www.viewzone.com/israel.html>.

<sup>8</sup>Williams, Tennessee. *The Night of the Iguana*. (New York: Literary classics of the United States, 1961),373.

<sup>9</sup> ibid., 401.

<sup>10</sup> ibid.,343.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid.,412 ;

<sup>12</sup> Rebeiz, Mireille, *Écritures Féminines Et Guerres Civiles En Algérie Et Au Liban* , (Electronic Theses, Treatises and Dissertations:2012) ,91 Accessed on November, 2015. Available

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<sup>13</sup> Mokeddem, Malika, *La Nuit de la Lézarde*. (Paris : Grasset, 1998), 186

<sup>14</sup> Ibid ., 65.

- <sup>15</sup>Rebeiz, Mireille, *Écritures Féminines Et Guerres Civiles En Algérie Et Au Liban* ,(Electronic Theses, Treatises and Dissertations, 2012) ,91.
- <sup>16</sup>Mokeddem, Malika, *La Nuit de la Lézarde*. (Paris : Grasset, 1998),186.
- <sup>17</sup>Ibid., 93.
- <sup>18</sup>Ibid., 150.
- <sup>19</sup>Ibid., 164.
- <sup>20</sup>Ibid., 149.
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- <sup>23</sup>Ibid., 400.
- <sup>24</sup>Ibid., 362.
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- <sup>26</sup>Mokeddem, Malika, *La Nuit de la Lézarde*. (Paris :Grasset, 1998),49.
- <sup>27</sup>Ibid .
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- <sup>29</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>30</sup>Mokeddem, Malika, *La Nuit de la Lézarde*. (Paris: Grasset, 1998),35
- <sup>31</sup>Ibid .39.
- <sup>32</sup>Ibid. 36.
- <sup>33</sup>Williams, Tennessee. *The Night of the Iguana*. (New York: Literary classics of the United States, 1961),338.
- <sup>34</sup>Ibid. 353.
- <sup>35</sup>Ibid., 411.
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- <sup>38</sup>Ibid 95.
- <sup>39</sup>Ibid 135.
- <sup>40</sup>Ibid 94.
- <sup>41</sup>Ibid 97.
- <sup>42</sup>Williams, Tennessee. *The Night of the Iguana*. (New York: Literary classics of the United States, 1961), 409.
- <sup>43</sup>Ibid.,
- <sup>44</sup>Ibid .,410.
- <sup>45</sup>Ibid., 400.
- <sup>46</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>47</sup>Ibid .,367.
- <sup>48</sup>Mokeddem, Malika, *La Nuit de la Lézarde*. (Paris : Grasset, 1998), 87.
- <sup>49</sup>Ibid., 88.
- <sup>50</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>51</sup>Ibid., 152.
- <sup>52</sup>Ibid .,156.



<sup>53</sup>Ibid .,162.

<sup>54</sup>Bueno Alonso, Josefina. *Femme, identité, écriture dans les textes francophones du Maghreb*. (Alecante University,2004),11.

<sup>55</sup>Mokeddem, Malika, *La Nuit de la Lézarde*.(Paris : Grasset, 1998), 185.

## **Conclusion:**

Throughout this dissertation, we attempted a comparative study between Tennessee Williams' play *The Night of the Iguana* (1961) and Malika Mokeddem's *La Nuit de la Lézarde* (1998). We have explored how Williams and Mokeddem tackle the theme of repression relying on the theoretical approach of psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud. This theory allowed us to delve into the inner side of the characters and show the way they are depicted as victims of their repressed desires.

We have shown that although *The Night of the Iguana* and *La Nuit de la Lézarde* were written in different periods, they both convey in their representation intricate characters who seek to cry out their wounds in many ways. The characters' psyche cannot be in harmony since there is no balance between their "Id", "Ego" and "Superego." They are living in deteriorating circumstances, often surrounded by madness and violence which make of them psychological outcasts.

Besides, we have given evidence that Mokeddem is without undoubtedly influenced by Tennessee Williams' play *The Night of the Iguana*. This is why she entitled her novel *La Nuit de la Lézarde*. We have also noticed that the same background may produce the same literary productions. Both Williams and Mokeddem lived in the same repressive conditions and succeeded to produce the same representation of despaired characters even though they belong to different cultures and areas. Finally, we have shown that both Williams and Mokeddem use the same symbols suggesting redemption of their characters namely escape, painting and reading

Yet, the scope of this dissertation did not allow us to explore all the issues in relation to Williams' and Mokeddem's works under study. We wished even to include the analysis of religious repression in both works but being limited, we have explored only the sexual repression and symbols that best illustrate repression. Thus, the two works are rich of workable themes that could be studied by other students who may be interested by the two authors. So, we invite other students to undertake the representation of women in *The Night of the Iguana* and *La Nuit de la Lézarde*. We also suppose that the theme of "Illusion and reality" can be very interesting since Williams and Mokeddem have included their own experiences and feelings in most of their works. Lastly, we think that the study of symbolism myth and religious repression in the two works will be very workable topics to study.

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