

وزارة التعليم العالي والبحث العلمي

MINISTRE DE L'ENSEIGNEMENT SUPERIEUR ET DE LA RECHERCHE SCIENTIFIQUE

•УНΞΗΙ:Θ:ΗC:V:IIΞXX:I.VΞ:ΘI.I

X.ΘV.ΠΞXIIIC:H:V.XCΗ:CC:QIXΞJΞ:JΞ:

X.J:ΛΛ.ςXII+Θ:KIIΠΞIVX:XII.ςΞI

MOULOUD MAMMERI UNIVERSITY OF TIZI-OUZOU

FACULTY OF LETTERS & LANGUAGES

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH



جامعة مولود معمري - تيزي وزو

كلية الآداب واللغات

قسم الإنجليزية

Item Number:

Serial Number:

**Dissertation submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Master in English**

Field: Foreign Languages

Subject: English

Speciality: Literature and Interdisciplinary Approaches

Title

**Absurdism in Paul Bowles's *Let it Come down*
(1952)**

Presented by:

AKLI Warda

AMARA Ourida

Supervised by:

Mrs. BEDRANI Ghalia

Board of Examiners:

Mrs. TABTI Kahina, M.A.A, M. Mammeri University of Tizi-Ouzou, Chair.

Mrs. BEDRANI Ghalia, M.A.A, M. Mammeri University of Tizi-Ouzou, Supervisor.

Mr. LAOUARI Mohamed Larbi, M.A.A, M. Mammeri University of Tizi-Ouzou, Examiner.

Cohort: September 2020

The Master domiciliation laboratory: Foreign languages and cultures

To my lovely parents, sisters and grandmother.

Akli Warda.

To all those who are dear to me: my family, my friends and my relatives.

Amara Qurida.

Acknowledgments

We would like to express our gratefulness to our superior Ms. BEDRANI Ghalia for her orientation and permanent advice all along our research work.

We would like to present our recognition to the panel of examiners for their efforts in examining and evaluating this humble work.

We would like to express our eternal gratitude to our families for providing moral support and encouragement.

Abstract

This research aims to study the issue of ‘absurdism’ in Paul Bowles’s *Let it Come down* (1952) by making reference to Albert Camus’s theoretical concepts on the absurd and revolt, included in “The Myth of Sisyphus” (1955) and “The Rebel” (1956). The main objective of this dissertation is to expose the struggle of the modern man against his absurdist existence. First, we have dealt with the conceptions of ‘meaninglessness’ and ‘purposelessness’ as the main absurdist features that are represented within the novel. We have also discussed the concept of ‘alienation’ as an outcome of absurdism. Second, we have explored the way the protagonist of the novel embraces the absurd, focusing mainly on the notions of ‘rebellion’ and ‘freedom’. As a major result, this study reveals that absurdity still has a significant impact on the contemporary man. For this reason, both the central and the secondary characters of the narrative fail at grasping any meaning in their lives.

Key words: *absurd, meaninglessness, purposelessness, alienation, rebellion, freedom.*

I. Introduction:

Human beings interact in the world through their reasoning; they are in constant search for effective methods that allow them to grasp the complexities of life. In order to reach a peaceful and a harmonious globe, they construct stories inspired by their everyday incidents to create a certain meaning to their lives and existence. However, when the sphere experienced two world wars, human existence seemed meaningless and absurd. The Second World War (1939-1945), in particular, had been proven to be more devastating. In addition to the high death toll it caused, many of the war survivors were left to suffer from huge psychological damage. This had been too hurtful to humans; the war left them hopeless, led them to change their earlier beliefs and lifestyle, and made them see life as being absurd.

After the catastrophic events of World War II and their calamitous results on man, a huge number of philosophers, writers and theoreticians emerged to rescue man from this sense of hopelessness and absurdity. With their writings that mirror the contemporary society and allow a better understanding of the reality of the world, they tried to find solutions that could minimize the terrible effects of the wars, focusing most of time on life as being absurd and meaningless and on the individual as essentially isolated and alienated. Being one of the pioneer of the philosophy of the absurd, Albert Camus argues that when “Man stands face to face with the irrational. He feels within him his longing for happiness and for reason. The absurd is born from this confrontation between the human need and the unreasonable silence of the world.”¹ For him, the modern society is deteriorated, individual existence becomes absurd and nothing meaningful in his life can be affirmed. These explanations contribute to the emergence of the notion of absurdism.

Absurdism is a philosophical doctrine that is structured upon this confrontation and the belief that the world is groundless and meaningless. This meaninglessness of life during the

post-war period is marked not only by the devolution of the old values which are no longer useful to provide a certain direction to the modern society but also by the fragmentation of the current thought. Throughout history, the concept of the absurd has been prevalent in various literary works of Soren Kierkegaard, Samuel Beckett, Franz Kafka, Jean-Paul Sartre and Fyodor Dostoyevsky. These writings identify the absurd as the divergence from the usual elucidations of the world. Engaged notably with absurdist thought; Albert Camus was one of the prominent figures who supports rebellion as a method that aims to overcome the absurd. For example, both the *Stranger* and the *Myth of Sisyphus* are among Camus's literary and philosophical works that illustrate his perception of absurdism.

The sense of despair and uncertainty that characterized the twentieth-century society has been widely portrayed by contemporary writers. One of them is the American Paul Bowles who was highly influenced by Camus. Indeed, Paul Bowles acknowledged the influence of Camus on him in an interview: "I've rereading him- last year I reread *L'Etranger* I admire it tremendously, it is a work of genius."² One of his literary works that illustrate his influence by the philosophy of the absurd is *Let It Come Down* (1952).

Review of the Literature:

Bowles's *Let It Come Down* (1952) has been widely studied from different standpoints. Some critics such as Caponi Gena Dagel, in her book entitled *Twayne Publishers* examines and interprets the novel from a psychological perspective. She argues that Dyar is "hammering a phallic spike into a humid, dangerous breeding place"³ of ideas that caused Thami's murder which she considered as a violent story between human beings. Her conclusion then is that the perturbed mind of Dyar transformed him into an unconscious young man.

Caponi advocates another interpretation to the ending of *Let it Come down* by sharing a similar viewpoint with Mitzi Berger Hammovitch and Wayne Pounds who state that the ending

is one of the illustrious example of doubling in personalities within Paul Bowles's work. In fact, during the murderous scene Dyar is not seeing Thami as his friend or as a person but as an alter ego that he must keep silent⁴. Caponi also adds in her Book: *Romantic Savage* (1994) that Thami embodies "The Objectification of the intellect: a witnessing consciousness."⁵ When Thami witnessed Dyar's transformation from a half-alive entity to a fully alive being, he comes to represent his state of mind⁶.

In addition, Zoubida Hamdaoui has studied racism and ethnocentrism in Bowles's narrative in "Themes and Story-telling Strategies in Paul Bowles's North-African Fiction" (2014). She claims that the attitudes and behavior of Dyar, the main character of the novel, towards Arabs suggests that he is a racist.⁷ Arriving in Tangier, a group of "disreputable Moroccans"⁸ surrounded him immediately which make him "turned his head disgustedly."⁹ This kind of behavior reveals Dyar's repugnance to see the Arabs. The researcher also argues that Bowles displays ethnocentric bias by misrepresenting Arabs and associating them with anything that is backward. He even qualifies them as 'monkeys', 'idiotic' and 'barbarians' just because they are seen to be inferior.¹⁰

Moreover, several other critics have examined *Let It Come down* from a postcolonial standpoint. Mullins Greg, for example argues in his book *Colonial Affaires* (2002) that after the Second World War, Bowles did not go to Tangier only for economic reasons but also for romantic and sexual matters. In fact, after the war period Tangier was a refuge for foreigners such as Nelson Dyar and Eunice Good who exemplify the 'long history' of 'sexual tourism.' Dyar through his relation with the prostitute Hadija and later with the Spanish woman Daisy Valverde. Eunice Goode through her lesbian relationship with Hadija.

Hyub Lee's has analyzed Bowles's novel from an orientalist and postcolonial perspective in "The Sexualisation of the Orient" (2013). Lee states that Bowles is an orientalist

due to his sexualisation of the Orient which is shown through Nelson Dyar and Eunice Good who have relationships with a native Arab woman. He said that through this relation, they try to resolve their repressed desire. The researcher argues that Dyar who pays money to have sex with Hadija and Goode's observation of Hadija as an object exemplifies the West's perception of the submissive oriental women.

Another reading of *Let It Come down* is Folz Anne's "Review of Contemporary Fiction Paul Bowles" (2000). Folz thinks that Nelson Dyar's primary issue is his inability to comprehend any independent drives. He does not understand even his own motivation toward his life, and his actions are totally meaningless. She also claims that "Thami's death is motivated more by a need for some sort of definitive action,"¹² an action that makes him remember that he exists.

Furthermore, in "Culture in Contact: Dangerous Encounters in *Let It Come down* (2016), Mrudula Lakkaraju argues that the novel engages with the space and the culture of the 'International Zone'. Dyar crosses the cultural boundaries and encounters the interactions of both the natives and the expatriates. It seems that the interactions with the 'other' are "marked [...] by dramatic differences in power and wealth between local and foreign subjects"¹³. This is what makes of it a space of tensions and conflicts. She adds that Dyar's plight is derived from his inability to adapt, to connect and to interact positively with the proposed culture of the other. Thus, his feelings of emptiness and aimlessness are the result of social and emotional void experienced in his home country¹⁴. She also adds that Dyar separates the outside part of the border home and the outside part of the same border that represents otherness, wilderness and primitiveness; "it is in the tension between these two terms, an inside and an outside, which little by little becomes the continuation of an inside, that the appropriation takes place."¹⁵ Consequently, the principal problem of Dyar is psychological and social.

Issue and Hypothesis:

From the review of the literature, we have come to conclude that *Let It Come Down* has been interpreted from different standpoints. However, to our knowledge, no study has yet explored the novel from an absurdist perspective. Thus, this dissertation is an analysis of absurdism in Paul Bowles *Let it Come down* (1952) from a Camusian standpoint.

Bowles's depiction of the characters' search for meaning is highly complex, specifically the main character who confronts critical situations in which he feels that his existence is absurd and meaningless. To deal with this issue, we will resort to Albert Camus's theoretical thoughts on the absurd and his concept of 'rebellion' as elaborated in his two essays "The Myth of Sisyphus" (1955) and "The Rebel" (1956).

We have chosen Camus's theoretical principles because they fit to our objective which is exploring the theme of absurdism in Paul Bowles's novel *Let It Come Down* (1952). This is suitable to our topic in the sense that Bowles's characters experience absurdist situation in the same way Camus's Sisyphus is struggling and trying to overcome the meaninglessness of his existence by embracing the absurd. Additionally, Camus's theory provides in-depth explanations of the notion of the absurd, awarding a real evidence of the meaninglessness of existence by exposing man's plight and his incapacity of cooperating with contemporaneity.

Methodological Outline

The main objective behind writing this dissertation is to show the extent to which the absurd manifests itself in Paul Bowles *Let It Come down*. That is, in this dissertation we will try to trace the features of absurdism in this novel. We will also show how the main character embraces the absurd and overcomes the futilities of his life. Finally, we will also exhibit how he fails to prevail over them at the end of the narrative.

This dissertation is divided into four main parts. The first one is the introduction that presents the topic of the study. It contains the review of the literature which deals with some criticism of the selected work *Let it Come down* (1952). It also exposes the issue and hypothesis and the methodological outline of the work. The second part encloses method and materials section which comprises Albert Camus's theory of the absurd and revolt. Besides, a concise summary of the novel under study is provided in the materials section. As regards the third part, it comprises the results which reveal the findings that have been reached in the discussion section. The fourth is the discussion section which is divided into two chapters. The first chapter is devoted to the absurdist features that lay within the novel while the second chapter deals with the way the protagonist of the novel embraces the absurd. Our work ends with a conclusion that restates the main points and summarizes the findings of this research paper.

Endnotes:

¹ Albert Camus, "*The Myth of Sisyphus*" (1942), trans. Justin O'Brien (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1955), 28.

²Caponi Gena Dagel, *Conversations with Paul Bowles*, (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1993), 48.

³Caponi Gena Dagel, *Twayne Publishers*, (New York: Twayne's United States Authors Series, 1998), 40.

⁴Ibid, 40.

⁵Caponi Gena Dagel, *Paul Bowles: Romantic Savage*, (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1994), 162.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Zoubid, Hamdaoui, "Themes and Story- telling Strategies in Paul Bowles's North African Fiction," (PhD thesis, University of Granada, 2013), 84-85.

⁸Ibid.

⁹Paul Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, (New York: Random House, 1952), 17.

¹⁰Ibid, 17.

¹¹Hyub Lee, 2013. "The Sexualisation of the Orient in Paul Bowles's *Let it Come Down*," (2013), 175-192.

¹²Hibbard Allen, "Introduction: a Moveable Feast in Allen Hibbard and Barry Tharaud. Bowles Beats Tangier, Tangier," *International Center for Performance Studies*, (2008), 19.

¹³Mrudula Lakkaraju, 2016. "International Journal of English," *Literature, Language and Skills* 5 (2016), 52-62.

¹⁴Certeau Michel et al. 1998. *The Practice of Everyday Life: Living and Cooking*, trans. Timothy J. Tomasik, (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), 11.

II. Methods and Materials:

1. Theoretical Framework:

Albert Camus's Absurdism: Remaking Man and the World.

The French-Algerian Noble Prize winner Albert Camus has diagnosed that modernity suffers from the issue of the meaninglessness and purposelessness of existence. From this diagnosis, Camus dedicated his works to reveal the motive of existence. Giving much importance to human life, he discusses the absurdity of its conditions by claiming that “I continue to believe that this world has no ultimate meaning. But I know that something in it has meaning and that is man, because he is the only creature to insist on having one.”¹ Camus values man; therefore, his philosophy stresses the need for a method and action that would save man from the plague of nihilism which could be a source of meaning in a world plagued by meaninglessness and absurdity. Camus is different from other philosophers as he never advocates cynicism and despair as a response to the meaninglessness of existence. On the contrary, he demands to face it and to rebel against it.

The “Myth of Sisyphus” (1955) is an essay that analyses the nature of the absurd as a central subject of the modern philosophical thinking. Camus argues that “In a universe suddenly divested of illusions and lights man feels himself an alien, a stranger. His exile is without remedy since he is deprived of memory of a lost home or the hope of a promised land. This “divorce between man and this life”² makes existence substantially meaningless. For Camus, the main conflict is the confrontation between the expectations of man and the reality of the universe in which man wonders and does not get answers. This estrangement between human existence and the universe leaves man in solitude and in alienation from everything. Through this analysis, Camus posed the fundamental and the most urgent philosophical questions stating that

There is but one truly serious philosophical problem, and that is suicide judging whether life is or is not worth living amounts the answering the fundamental question of philosophy. All the rest whether or not the world has three dimensions, either the mind has nine or twelve categories comes afterwards.³

Thus, Camus is wondering whether life is worth living? Is suicide a legitimate response to the meaninglessness of life? To answer these questions, Camus establishes three major paths that man can take in confronting the banality of existence. The first path is suicide, which is a form of escape from suffering, revealing an inability to cope with the confrontation between one's self and the universe. The second path is the philosophical suicide. It refers to the construction of a fictional system of beliefs and ideas that serve as a means to go beyond the harsh truth of existence. However, Camus dismisses the viability of these two paths and argues that it is unacceptable in the face of the absurd. The third path, therefore, is rebellion; rebelling and facing the absurd to create meaning is Camus's most recommended path. According to him, revolt is what gives life its value. By accepting and embracing the absurd, man creates meaning. He also adds that man should fight the absurd constantly and eternally because "a man who has become conscious of the absurd is forever bound to it."⁴

For Camus, man is lost in an incomprehensible universe devoid of God and deprived of meaning. This conception of the absurd is embodied through the Greek Myth of Sisyphus, the king who was banished for his trickery and betrayal against Zeus. Sisyphus was condemned for eternity by the gods to roll a boulder up the mountain only to see it falls down just before reaching the top. Camus uses the Greek legend of Sisyphus to illustrate man's persistent struggle against the absurdities of his life. His conclusion then, is that man should embrace the absurdity of his existence and take on the purpose of creating value and meaning like the king Sisyphus who accepted the pointlessness and the futility of his task by enduring a revolt against the absurdity of this task, and this is what gives meaning to his life.

"The Rebel" (1956) is another essay in which Camus continues to develop his view of rebellion as a response to the absurdity of existence, an idea already started in the "Myth of

Sisyphus”. According to him, man’s daily struggle against the banality of existence and his quest for meaning is to prove that there are some values in human beings that deserve a revolt. He states that “the first and only evidence thus given me at the face of the absurd is my revolt.”⁵

Within the previous essay, revolting against the absurd is considered as a victory and as an individual act. However, in “The Rebel”, Camus has expanded the notion of revolt outside the individual. Although facing the absurd and the misery is individual, the act of rebellion is collective in the sense that it bears in the minds of all humans. Camus states, “The first progression of a mind aware of the absurdity of things is realization that his feeling is shared with all men and that human reality in its entirety suffers from the distance that separates it from itself and from the world.”⁶ Furthermore, Camus asserts that revolt creates values, dignity and solidarity, stating “I Revolt, therefore, we are”⁷. In this paradoxical statement, Camus speaks about the “I” that becomes the “we”, an individual revolt entails an acting against oppression and at the same time having recourse to social values which are shared by all humans. Consequently, the word individual in the “Myth of Sisyphus” becomes collective in the “Rebel”.

Moreover, at the heart of Albert Camus’s philosophy, the notion of “limits” is of great importance. To achieve a positive dynamic, man should respect the limits of his rebellion. A man who rebels is not like the slave who rebels to become a master, but a slave who rebels only against servitude. The desire to become a master would deny the origin of his rebellion, therefore his basic endeavour is on finding a way that saves him from the threat of nihilism, and with his actions of rebellion the rebel affirms a right for himself and for others. By affirming his freedom which cannot be an absolute one because of its restriction by the other, he also affirms it for other individuals. Revolt is a way through which man reaches freedom. However, seeking an absolute freedom leads to nihilism. This philosophy announces that everything is permitted, nihilists do not hesitate to kill. Therefore, for Camus “any rebellion which claims the

right to deny, loses [...] its right to be called rebellion”⁸ and becomes, in fact, an assent on murder.

2. Materials:

A. Summary of *Let it Come down* (1952).

Paul Bowles’ second novel *Let it Come down* (1952) sets in Tangier (Morocco), which at that time, was known as The International Zone. The novel is full of autobiographical elements that give a whole picture of an expatriate life in the community of Tangier. It recounts the story of Nelson Dyar, a former New York City bank clerk, a loser and a victim who is disillusioned with his life in New York. He then, makes the decision to move to North Africa where he receives an offer of employment from his old friend Wilcox who, in his own, operates a travel agency. Dyar seeks after a new and a better life. He wants to become another person by letting his past behind him and cutting all links with his family and homeland. However, upon his arrival, he notices that corruption covers all the city which pushes him to socialise with all classes of his new society from the elite to the lower class.

Dyar does not take a lot of time to suspect Wilcox’s agency and discover that he is manipulated. As a result, he decides to take matters into his own hands. At the same time, he is trying to seduce and attract the beautiful peasant girl Hadija, who is also chased by Enice Good, an American lesbian living in Tangier who wants to have this girl only for her. To keep him away, she makes an ambush that involves Dyar with the Soviet agent Madame Jouvanen, who convinces him to work for her as a spy by offering him checks in return. The plan made by Eunice bears fruit and Dyar betrays his country by working in an unethical activity.

In an intriguing turn of events, the old friend of Dyar, Wilcox, orders him to convert some money in an unlicensed market, but things do not occur as they should be since the bank closes its doors before Dyar’s arrival. This makes him think for a moment that the best thing to

do is to steal the money to become rich, at least temporarily. Later, Dyar is joined by a young Moroccan called Thami, a member of the Beidaoui's family who struggles to have his inheritance that his two brothers have deprived him of. Their love of money makes them a real team that plans to leave The International Zone with stolen money. They get away in a leaky boat to a place not far from Thami's home village.

Arriving at a home which seems to be an old one, Thami should manage to have some food for himself and for Dyar. For this reason, every day the ravenous Thami goes to bring food in his old village and orders Dyar not to leave the house. Thami insists on this because he wants to scam Dyar who counts every passing day to get finally bored with the situation. Thus, in a state of confusion, he leaves the house and takes Thami's pipe which he uses during his hiding days and walks far away to a nearest town.

Days passed and Dyar gets lost in the new town (The Plaza) where he does not know anybody. One night, he meets Thami who is delighted and says to Dyar that the place is not secure and that they may face troubles there. Therefore, they return together to the little house in the mountain. One day, they start eating majoun as usual, smoking a lot of hashish makes him disrupt and unable to think with his normal level of clarity. As a result, he hits a head of a nail into Thami's ear and kills him. Dyar does not prevent himself from going so far in his actions that leads him to a terrible ending.

Endnotes:

¹Albert Camus, *Letter to a German Friend*, (1944), trans. Justin O'Brien, (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), 28.

²Camus, "Myth of Sisyphus," 6.

³Ibid, 4.

⁴Ibid, 22.

⁵Stoltzfus Ben, "Camus and the Meaning of Revolt," *Modern Fiction Studies* 3 (1964). Accessed July 6, 2020. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/26278679.pdf?seq=1>.

⁶Marcelle Demertzi, 'The Absurd and the Revolt by Albert Camus.' University of Berlin, (2017-2018), 4.

⁷Albert Camus, 'The Rebel,' (1951), trans. Anthony Bower (New York: Vintage Books, 1956), 22.

⁸Ibid.

⁹Ibid.

III. Results:

This research work has divulged that Paul Bowles represents the absurdist features within his narrative to demonstrate the downfall of modernity. We have detected this absurd representation at the level of characterization. The characters of the novel illustrate wholly the absurd and the harsh conditions of the modern man. Through their behaviours, attitudes, social and professional relationships, they reveal that they are deeply touched by the irrationality and the absurdity of life. We have also deduced that the selection of the setting and the language used by the author display notably the absurdity that lies within the fiction.

The implementation of Albert Camus's theory has revealed that the author is really uncomfortable with the chaotic situation that the contemporary man finds himself within, and this is what makes his existence futile and purposeless. The author is a great defender of renewal and a strong opponent of ancient and traditional values. His aim, then, is to show the impact of this breakdown throughout his work in order to make the world aware about the plight of absurdity that still threatens humanity.

Moreover, our investigation and analysis has shown that the main character is an absurdist nihilist who does not see any sense in his life; his existence is empty and meaningless. The rebellion that he leads to embrace the absurdity of his conditions has unfortunately conducted him into destruction. Finally, our research concludes that *Let it Come Down* manifests a great interest in the issue of absurdism. All of the beginning, the middle and the end of the story recount an absurdist narrative.

IV. Discussion

Chapter One: The Absurdist Features in Paul Bowles's *Let it Come down* (1952).

This chapter aims at shedding light on the absurdist features in Paul Bowles's *Let it Come down*. In the first part, we will deal with the concepts of 'meaninglessness' and 'purposelessness' as the main features of the absurd in relation with characters' lives. In the second part, we will discuss the notion of 'alienation' as another element of the absurd shown through the protagonist and a woman named Hadija.

Absurdity is one of the most sizeable and substantial issues of philosophy. Though most feel it temporarily or constantly, their inability to find inherent meaning and purpose in life prompts a gigantic wave of feelings of absurdity which is permanently a reflection of an attitude towards modernity. In fact, the modern man notices that religion lost its grasp. The solutions that were, at a certain period of time, provided by ancient schools come to an end and the sovereignty of western Europe is no longer at the crown. It became an allusion. As a result, man dived into an incoherent world, void of reason and clarifications that engenders many consequences on his life such as meaninglessness, purposelessness and alienation.

1. Meaninglessness and Purposelessness as Main Features of Absurdism:

The sense of meaninglessness and purposelessness of human existence characterized the twentieth century. Previously, life was dominated by industrialization and globalization which made people believe that there was a possibility for the creation of an ideal world. However, the horrors of the Second World War makes this creation impossible. People started to question everything without finding any answers; the fact which made them realize that the modern life is meaningless and purposeless. According to Benjamin Wotman, the meaninglessness and purposelessness of life is "a failure to find meaning in life, a feeling that one has nothing to live for, nothing to struggle for, and nothing to hope for [...] unable to find

any goal of direction in life”¹. Camus argues that meaninglessness consists in the incapacity to find truth and a purpose in life: “I don’t know whether this world has a meaning [...] I know that I cannot know that meaning and that is impossible for me [...]”². Through these words, Camus makes it clear that the modern man is unable to find meaning and that the chaos that he finds himself in makes it impossible. Besides, a life without meaning is clearly a life without purpose since goals are the essence of meaning in life.

A. The Meaninglessness and Purposelessness of Dyar and Thami’s Lives:

In *Let it Come down*, Bowles describes the meaninglessness and purposelessness of human life through his constructed characterization in a way that parallels Camus’s philosophy. The novel begins with the central character’s leaving to North Africa because of the banal life he leads in America. In fact, when Dyar is twenty, he has been thrilled to get a job in the Transit Department at the bank, but this job becomes possible only because of his father’s friendship with one of the vice presidents. In normal circumstances and during the war period working at the bank would be unattainable for him. He realizes then that it is always the others who determine the way his life would be and that he has always been a passive spectator of his own fate. This realization depresses and disillusiones Dyar because his own desires are incompatible with the reality of the world. His depression is a manifestation of the lack of meaning and purpose in his own life. Dyar worked at the bank for ten years, before the war, during the war and after the war which makes him disillusioned and overwhelmed by the feelings of absurdity; staying in the same place for several years and doing the same job that his father has found for him makes his life meaningless. He feels that he is frozen in time. The dull routine he has been going through of ten years creates in him an intense feeling of hopelessness. In fact, after World War Two, many people were affected by the terrible outcomes of the war which made them believe that life had no meaning and purpose and that existence was pointless.

Dyar's New York life is cursed by absurdity. It is what Camus calls standing face to face with the absurd. Camus suggests that the modern man requires "a need for clarity and cohesion"³ in an unreasonable world governed by chaos. The unreasonable makes a senseless world where the modern man is lost. Dyar's father has already outlined his absurd life by making him a part of an "unhealthy"⁵ generation "moon[ing] around about life not being worth living"⁵. Dyar seems to have an empty life, he does not 'get out enough' and does not have any leisure activities. For him, entertaining oneself is needless and that is what makes of existence an acute crisis. He is completely detached from life in the sense that he is emotionally and physically far from the world he lives in. Though his father tries to arrange his situation by advising him to slump and take things as simple as they are, Dyar rejects this idea immediately because he is aware that nothing will cure this emptiness that keeps intensifying from one day to another. Hopeless at facing the senselessness of his existence, he loses himself in the middle of chaos.

Bowles represents the main character in an image of a victim who is economically dependent on his parents. He is an incapable individual who leads a pointless existence that stifles all life out of him. The novel is full of autobiographical elements that show the resemblance between the author and his central character. We are told that Bowles replaces "a powerful state of knowledge and a growing history"⁶ and invests greatly in the exotic, a strange and unfamiliar place to lead on expatriate life and to cut all links with his home country. Bowles leaves America to inhabit the exotic. His travelling from the first world to the third world and being in-between-ness puts him in the same position as Dyar. In his autobiography *Without Stopping* (1972), he expresses a strong impulse to be fully away from his family; he has a strong desire to get rid of the authority of the father and family. This is illustrated through Dyar. In fact, Dyar represents Bowles himself as a contemporary man who struggles against the absurdity and meaninglessness of life. Bowles seems to be always in quest of meaning and in a

state of reflection toward the world. This reason is what shoves on him the desire to leave America and move to North Africa. Maintaining what Camus says about the irrationality of the modern world where men's lives and existences have no rational meaning, one can qualify both Dyar and Bowles as irrational beings. Even Daisy claims that Dyar "has nothing, he wants nothing, he is nothing."⁷ which notably represents Bowles's inner thought.

Besides, Bowles portrays the meaninglessness and the purposelessness of life through other characters to illustrate his dark vision of life and the harsh conditions of the modern world. Thami, a native Moroccan who shares the same feelings of detachment about humanity and relationships, is underprivileged and deprived of his share of inheritance by his two brothers after committing an "unpardonable offense."⁸ Thami starts drinking since the age of fifteen, a matter which is forbidden among the upper class Muslims of Tangier. For this reason, he has been asked to leave the Beidaoui palace. To punish his family and to get his revenge, he marries an illiterate mountain girl named Kinza, and the couple give birth to a boy who is constantly crying because of his mother's carelessness. The girl does not notice that her behaviour makes Thami furious and this what raises his irritation to see her. He does not like her and expresses his hate by saying "Yah Latif"⁹. In addition, her behaviour makes him think that his life will be better without her. In fact, the marriage of Thami is completely futile as Richard Taylor states "nothing ever comes of what he is doing."¹⁰ This situation is similar to Sisyphus's life described by Camus as being always the same. It does not move forward by one step nor does it move backward by another. Thami always makes the wrong moves that make his life miserable. His choice of getting married as a form of revenge on his family is absurd and pointless because he ends up taking revenge on himself. Bowles writes that it "was the worst part of being married."¹¹ It is clear that Bowles's views on marriage are so negative; he does not consider it as an act of love but as an act that prevents a man from being alone in his house. He says "there was always

female flesh in front of him”¹². This natural desire between man and woman in an ordinary life does not exist in Thami’s life, this is why his life is meaningless and purposelessness.

In addition, Thami is much like Europeans in the sense that he considers money as the only important matter in life. His obsession with money makes him ignore everything that surrounds him, including his wife and son. He even plans to leave them and escape with Dyar. Such a plan reveals that Thami views all aspects of his life as meaningless. Thami is an embarrassment to his family that banishes him from their residence as he began smoking Kif and drinking from a very young age. Thami feels that he is an outcast in his family, and through time becomes an outcast of his society. The fact of being deprived of brotherhood, love and happiness from an early age has led him to believe that his life is devoid of meaning and purpose. His miserable life propels him to work in smuggling. Thami does not hesitate to scam people around him such as Dyar and Eunice. His mania of money represents his struggle with creating a certain meaning in life. He believes that money will bring him some sense into his life. However, this quest leads to his murder. Thami risks his life for money, but has got nothing but death. It is clear that Thami is like Dyar who is aware that nothing will change his destiny and that everything is already absurd and meaningless. In a nutshell, he is aware that his life as a whole is a total vacuum. This is why he was ready to lose his two brothers, his wife and his son; the people that play a meaningless role within his life

B. The Meaninglessness and Purposelessness of Daisy and Eunice’s Lives:

Daisy De Valverde is another aimless character whose life is meaningless. Daisy gets married to Luis, a rich man who possesses all what he desires. They live together in an extravagant house like strangers; they have no intimate relationship. Daisy leads a lonely life in the house which is full of expensive things but empty of meaning and happiness. Luis has married her not because he has fallen in love with her but much more for her persistent

character. Bowles represents her as a forceful woman who is liked by all men since she knows “how to handle them.”¹⁴ She is not interested in living a love story; she only thinks of getting what she wants: money and a privileged status in society. In spite of the infidelities of her husband, she still lives with him. This senseless relationship reflects the absurdity of her own situation. Although she is aware that her marriage has no sense in her life, she does not try to make any change; instead she accepts to live a meaningless life where everything is aimless. Daisy’s obsession with material things is an expression of the addiction of the modern man to live in a materialized world where everything is incoherent and meaningless. Though everything seems absurd, people still keep their mode of life. Each individual thinks only about her or his own desires, a fact that provokes a remarkable detachment from life. Thus, neither love nor relationships are given much importance.

Indeed, Daisy seems to reflect an image of a powerful woman, but in reality she suffers like the other characters in the novel. Daisy also has abandoned her father’s family to be with Luis, her third husband who wants her only as an additional object to be added in his “list of possessions.”¹⁵ Through this representation, Bowles reveals how people treat each other in the modern world. He considers Luis’ behaviour toward Daisy as cruel and egoistic. Luis cares only about his reputation of a wealthy and business man, and he pushes aside all emotions. Harvey Breit states that man suffers from a disease that refers to the way individuals treat one another in today’s society. This is the case of Luis who is heartless and ruthless toward Daisy. As result, Daisy’s environment makes the establishment of any sense of true being impossible for her.

Similarly, Eunice Goode is a lesbian expatriate living a meaninglessness life in Tangier. In the Bar Lucifer, Eunice meets the prostitute Hadija; she seems to be genuinely seduced by her and flattered by her physical appearance. With time, she becomes obsessed with the idea of possessing this peasant girl. Eunice’s obsession is shown through pursuing Hadija all the time

and inviting her to her room. This reveals her attempt to put her away from the Bar Lucifer where she is exploited by Madame Papaconstante who uses her to entertain men.

However, Eunice is not alone in this quest. Dyar is also attracted to Hadija which infuriates Eunice. Therefore, she tries hard to keep him away from Hadija. Although Hadija is indifferent to Eunice, the latter does not refrain from seeking her attention. Eunice's act is absolutely absurd and purposeless because Hadija is in a relationship with Dyar. Her quest is futile and meaningless; following a girl that will never accept her makes a non-sense in her life, and does not lead to a good ending.

The absurd situation of these characters parallels that of Sisyphus. Sisyphus's meaningless burden which is rolling a stone up to the top of a mountain just to see it roll back down to the bottom demonstrates the futility of contemporary man's actions. Sisyphus's act is used as a metaphor to show the resistance of man against the pointlessness of his actions. In the same way, most of Bowles's characters, including Dyar, Thami, Daisy and Eunice reflect a certain futility in their actions and situations: Dyar through his depression, Thami and Daisy through their marriage and Eunice via her pursuit of Hadija. Each of them is stroked by absurdity in his face as Camus argues: "At any street corner the feeling of absurdity can strike any man in the face."¹⁶

C. The Meaninglessness and Purposelessness of Religion for Bowles' Main Character:

The disintegration of religion and the death of God in the spirit of the modern man left the world without a master. Therefore, man loses the only source of meaning and morality that has guided his existence for centuries ago. In *Let it Come down*, Dyar has taken the place of God because he is flawlessly able to judge himself and other individuals as he finds religion to be hypocritical and manipulated. Bowles writes: "I am sorry, but in most parts of the world today; professing a religion is purely a matter of politics and has practically nothing to do with

faith [...] there is absolutely nothing to be done about it”¹⁷. The collapse and the manipulation of religion is a strong blow that modern man faces.

Dyar shows the same perception as Bowles’ about the role that religion plays in his life. During a picnic with Hadija who is a Muslim, Dyar hears her saying “Bismil’lah”¹⁸ before eating the sandwich. When Dyar requires “what that means?”¹⁹ Hadija says that “we eat for God.”²⁰ Dyar’s answer “oh”²¹ “you say”²² shows his indifference to the Muslims’ beliefs due to their contradictory attitudes. On the one hand, Hadija is a prostitute, a practice that is considered as a serious sin for Muslims. On the other hand, she says ‘Bismil’lah’. It seems that religion no longer plays a role in the modern society. Additionally, the primary motive of this conclusion is that the idea that says that there is no God mean at the same time that there is no morality. For this reason “Good and evil are like white and black on a piece of paper, to distinguish them you need at least a glimmer of light”²³. Camus argues that the modern world is “divested of [...] lights”²⁴ and “this world in itself is not reasonable”²⁵. In an unreasonable world, morality disappears since religion is no longer considered as a means which can construct the morals that guide humanity. In this way, life loses its significance.

Additionally, Bowles claims that “morality must have a religious basis [...] otherwise it’s just a play acting.”²⁶ Dyar cannot distinguish where “white ends and the black begins”²⁷. The immorality of Tangier makes of him an immoral man who loses all control over himself. He engages in many immoral activities, such as exchanging money in the black market. The description of Tangier provides a vivid image of the modern world where morality no longer exists. In Bowles’s image of Tangier, all people lead a meaningless life due to the loss of faith in God, and this is what makes their own existence engulfed with senselessness and purposelessness.

D. The Meaninglessness and Purposelessness of the Setting:

The setting of *Let It Come Down* symbolizes the darkness and meaninglessness of the modern world. In fact, colonisation had huge impact on Morocco and its people. Although colonialism has come to an end, it left deep psychological impacts on Moroccans. Tangier as a post-war city is different from the rest of the country. Bowles represents it as an abode and an asylum of drugs, sex and corruption. Drug is often raised as a link between males and females. This is the case of Daisy De Valverde who is provided with drugs by one of her servant named the old Ali. She later proposes it to Dyar during a dinner in her house: 'have a piece.'²⁸ She tells him that Tangier's people 'eat it all the time'²⁹ and specifies that "some members of the English colony begin their evening meet with a dish of majoun [...]"³⁰. Drug has infected the modern society of Tangier and made the latter a place of darkness.

Sex is widely present within the novel. Bowles uses this aspect to show that Tangier is a dirty place which reflects the post-war world. The female character Hadija is introduced as prostitute of lower class who is used as an object of entertainment by the Soviet agent Madame Papaconstante. The latter exploits this native woman to make money. She is a cruel woman who believes that Moroccan women are inferior to her. This illustrates that Tangier is in total chaos, it is a space where everything seems messy.

In addition, corruption is rampant in Tangier. At the beginning of the novel, finding a job is the priority of Dyar. His old friend Wilcox offers him a job in his non-existent travel agency. Dyar feels excited about having a new job and starting a new meaningful life momentarily. However, for while Dyar realizes that Wilcox is a corrupt man and he does not possess any travel agency. Wilcox's agency is an allusion that exemplifies the superficiality of the contemporary world. Bowles's description illustrates the darkness of the twentieth century period when all evaporated norms and values take place. Both male and female characters, including Daisy, Hadija, Wilcox and Dyar lead a corrupt, meaningless and purposeless life. Their lives are directionless; they are only wandering in the ruin. The universe is totally

irrational and gives the modern man nothing. It is logical that the chaotic environment of Dyar makes his existence meaningless. This is why he views his life in Tangier as the previous one; the irrationality of the new world pushes him to dip more and more in obscurity.

2. Alienation as an outcome of absurdism in Paul Bowles's *Let it Come down* (1952)

The sensation of alienation is one of the most notable feature of the modern era. The feeling of being alienated and isolated is merely the outcome of the absurdities and futilities of the modern life. The horrors of wars have swamped an impregnable feeling of estrangement in the post-war man's life. The contemporary world has moved towards chaos due to the rejection of earlier values, beliefs and standards. Thus, man is no more united by any cultural background. Karl Marx, the German philosopher, identifies the sense of alienation and isolation as "the loss of human forces in society, in a way that a particular kind of social organization causes individuals to alienate from themselves, the environment around them and as a result from the entire world"³¹. Camus couples the feeling of isolation and alienation with the experience of "a divorce between man and life"³². Brought face to face with the absurd, man's life becomes ambiguous and lacks clarity. Since he fails to find answers to the questions that explain his position and purpose in life, man succumbs to obscurity that separates and isolates him from groups, institutions and places. This separation is a divorce that makes the world strange to man and gives him a status of an outsider. This estrangement reflects the situation of the present day society that lacks order. The absence of meaning and the fragmentation of the individual make man unable to gather a transparent denotation of his own life. This is what makes him alienated and isolated from everything.

A. Dyar's Alienation:

In *Let it Come down*, the theme of alienation is widely explored. In fact, this growing sense of remoteness and rootlessness is represented by Bowles through Dyar. The negative core

beliefs that were incarnated in Dyar by his parents made him view his existence a “progressive paralysis”³³. A paralysis that is too strong on him to the extent of freezing everything in his life and makes him alienated even from his own self. This kind of alienation is identified by Bowles in *Windows on Past* (1955) as “the worst and final form of alienation toward which indeed the others tend, is man’s alienation from his own self. In a society that requires of man only that he performs competently his own particular social function, Man becomes identified with his own function”³⁴ and becomes a machine which completes only his task; at the same time a task that alienates and isolates him from everything meaningful in life. Dyar does not find any satisfaction or pleasure in doing the same task for many years. This is why he decides to move to Tangier hoping to find a job and free himself from the “demoralizing sensation of motionlessness”³⁵. His desire is to be recognized as a person full of life and goals.

Dyar’s rejection of his alienation and isolation in his home country is what has led him to move to another place which is more hazardous and detrimental. As he disembarks in Tangier, Dyar is disappointed and experiences his first feelings of isolation in an unfamiliar and a strange milieu. Encountering the unknown makes him feel “the despair and loneliness he thought he had left behind”³⁶. Being conscious of this nostalgic sensation pushes him immediately to repel away from his self as he has already done in New York and starts seeking again guidance from others. For instance, and at the very beginning of the novel Dyar decides to let the driver of the taxi he rides to determine where to spend his first night. It is clear that Dyar is alienated from his own self as he allows others to dictate what he will do rather than making choices by himself.

Clearly, the trauma of Dyar manifests the same feeling of alienation that he has endured in New York. He always complains about his routine, but he shows no real attempt at changing his life either in New York or in Tangier. His existence is progressively ruled by external factors which make him more isolated from his own self. Dyar exemplifies the chaotic situation of the

modern world as Camus states that the contemporary globe is a chaotic place that is “divested of illusions and lights”³⁶, which means being in New York or in Tangier does not make any difference for Dyar. He is always deprived of lights in his previous life and continues to be in the first stages of his new life. Dyar is a man who feels himself a stranger everywhere he is; “his exile is without remedy”³⁷ because his perception of life seems to be very limited and unlighted.

The Hotel de La Playa where Dyar stays is like a cage. He sees a “large modern hotel”⁴¹, inside it is a young man on a small receptionist desk who answers his questions. The first thing that Dyar wants to know is if it were the Hotel de la Playa. After confirming that this is the hotel he is looking for, he is not sure he will be satisfied in this new environment. In fact, he has just a little faith in himself and in the choices he makes; therefore, he is in a state of confusion. He oscillates between joy and regret; the place is too strange to him, a close look at it reveals “an enormous concrete resonating chamber”³⁸ with “a great crack [...] in the wall”³⁹. The Hotel appears as a frightening place which creates doubts in him. He even starts to question his decision to come to Tangier. He loses self-confidence which makes him alienated from his own self. In other words, his low self-esteem isolates him from his real identity.

Dyar’s alienation arises from his first touch with the unknown, his movement to a new country and crossing the cultural boundaries. The society that Dyar comes in touch with is a society governed by dissimulation, mistrust and treachery; all this promote his sense of alienation and isolation. In Dyar’s new setting, nothing seems as it is and all is pretence. For instance, Wilcox is a man who lies to others and pretends to be wealthy and affluent though his business is illegal. He simultaneously dissimulates his real truth, and the face that he presents to others is artificial and fanciful. Nonetheless, he offers Dyar a job even though his real attention is not to employ him as any other ordinary employee. The offer rather consists of using Dyar as a person who operates his illegal business that is considered by Wilcox as a self-protection

since he does not want to be discovered by others. He dissimilates his truth and this is deduced when Dyar asks Wilcox if he whether work every day, then Wilcox's strange answer is "Ring me up every day and I will let you know how things are going?"⁴⁰ in the office. His act of keeping Dyar away from his office reveals the reality of the people with who Dyar comes in contact with. It also demonstrates the strange attempt of Wilcox to disguise his own truth of not being wealthy as he pretends.

Daisy is another character that represents Dyar's world that is full of illusions and deceits. This deceit is alienating Dyar from all people that surround him in Tangier. Daisy's "make up is so carefully applied that Dyar is deceived into thinking she is wearing none"⁴¹, she is an illusionist who seduces Dyar by her tremendous house. Speaking about money and the importance of appearances is one of her plans to gain Dyar's confidence and trust. Two important ingredients that help her in achieving her goals. Daisy is not very different from Wilcox in the sense that in each of her act there is a sign of duplicity. One of the examples that show her treacherous side is her act of inviting Dyar to dinner which is only an attempt on her part to gather information about him and then sees in which way she can use him. She even makes plans to stay with Dyar alone. She invites him when her husband has gone to Casablanca, an attempt that aims at establishing strong links with Dyar and keeping him close to her. Daisy's plan is significantly disguised. She calls the modern era "The Age of Monsters"⁴², an appellation that illustrates the reality of people and life in general in Tangier. People in Tangier are all monsters among them her. They have a strong desire of exploiting any innocent person such as Dyar who is completely unfamiliar with the milieu.

In addition, the cruelty of Dyar's surroundings is shown through Daisy's presentation of the modern Tangier by the story of the woman and her children who are chased by wolves, as they edge near, she hurls a child on a sled to calm them; people are ready to save themselves at any cost, even by putting others in danger, a fact that symbolizes what Bowles calls "the

completely surface built”⁴³. This society reflects the superficiality of the modern world where people hide their real nature. Camus states that in such society, individuals are alienated and isolated in an illusory world where everything is fake and the truth is lost.

Eunice Goode, a name that refutes her nature, is another figure who represents the deceptive world of Dyar and contribute to his alienation. Eunice is introduced as a lesbian woman who makes several strategies to recover her lost childhood by using Hadija. She considers Hadija as her daughter, a daughter who is prepared for her first dance. Miss Goode uses the peasant girl for her personal desires; she is a phony woman who aims at possessing Hadija at any cost, and her money gives her power to buy the girl as any another object. By doing so, she feels that “the world outside herself [...] as something in which almost felt could share”⁴⁵. She considers the world as her possession just as Hadija; Bowles writes: “the rest of the world was there for her to take any moment she wished it”⁴⁵. Eunice’s implicit moral corruption is shown through her own power over people, treating them as objects and through her obsessions with control. It exemplifies all aspects of the modern society full of egoistical individuals who have an extreme desire to possess everything. Bowles assumes that the modern relationships are only economic and the rest is just an illusion.

Bowles inserts another image of alienation which implies that abnormal things seem as natural and ordinary facts in the daily life of the modern man. Dyar views an episode of a pornographic film as if pornography is a natural aspect that is involved within the modern Tangier. However, pornography is still a form of corruption and exploitation that assists commercialism and the alienated individuals. It seems that the world in Tangier triumphs everything. Making money is the principle desire for Man: “the feeling of power that money gave [...] made the getting rid of it an act of irresistible voluptuousness”⁴⁶. Money is more important than people’s lives that are devoid of love and mutual support which become meaningless in the modern times.

The system and the society that Dyar finds himself within isolates and alienates him. He does not identify with the customs and the ethnicities of his new society. This system is described by William Burrough in the *"Naked Lunch"* as "the pyramid of junk' with one level eating the level below"⁴⁷. In Burrough pyramid, one uses the person under them in an incessant way because everyone thinks only about achieving their goals. Similarly, in the novel Wilcox and Daisy use Dyar, Eunice uses Hadija, because both of Dyar's and Hadija's subordinate positions. Meanwhile, Franz Kafka compares this system with capitalism: "capitalism is a system of relationships which runs from within to without, from without to within, from above to below, from below to above. Everything is relative, everything is in chain"⁴⁸. Dyar is trying to break out his work in New York only to find the same system in Tangier as he becomes tangled in an illegal business that ruins his life again. Dyar's new society is full of treachery and this is explained through Bowles inspiration from Macbeth, "[...] It is an atmosphere of treachery, everyone's working behind everyone else's back and you never know when the blow is coming"⁴⁹. Dyar feels as an alien, a stranger that does not comprehend the way things work in Tangier. It is a place where one becomes a prey for another. Trust is a non-existent value, and no one has an attention to tell the truth as Dyar states "can't anyone in this town tell the truth?"⁵⁰. In Dyar's environment, no one can be trusted either in a personal level or at work. In the same context, Eric Mottram argues that "the basis of tolerable life, confidence and trust is utterly eroded". In Bowles's novel, most of characters mainly Dyar; lost the basic value that unified and consolidated them.

With time, the alienation of Dyar among people reaches its supreme level. In Beidaoui's Saturday's party, Dyar feels notably isolated, a fact that makes him communicate in his detached attitude. This uneasiness and anxiety urge him to drink a lot of alcohol, a fact which is considered "like an ever thickening curtain being drawn down into his mind, isolating him from everything else in the room"⁵¹. Dyar is disconnected and when people are speaking around

him; he is absent in the place and manifests no desire to a real connection with others. If someone speaks to him, he just answers automatically; there is no real exchange between him and all the other individuals who are present in the palace. Everything seems strange to him, and this is what makes him feel the obscurity of the Beidaoui palace that represents the modern society that seems to be engulfed by darkness and fuzziness.

In one of the scenes, Dyar and Daisy attend a dark room, then a living room lighted only by candles”⁵². This deepens the darkness of the palace and the discomfort of Dyar who “felt smothered and out of place, and he wished he had not come”⁵³. Dyar’s isolation puts him under a regretful mood; he thinks that it is better for him to be at the Hotel, lay down on his bed, far away from the palace. The lack of real communication and incapability of building true relationships with people is the situation that Bowles mirrors through Dyar’s presence in the palace. Bowles conveys the sensation of living in an obscure world that isolates the individual from all angles. His main character realizes that he is an outcast in his new environment estranged from the norms of his society. He becomes incapable of connecting with others. Isolation and alienation invade his life, hence he fails to discover any significance of things in his life. Camus claims that man is lost and does not find his place in such absurd environment where communication is no longer possible. In fact, Dyar reveals the sensations that the modern man experiences throughout his existence. Dyar himself does not find his place in the palace. Consequently, he manifests an inability to communicate with others.

Another powerful element that displays Dyar’ alienation is his belief in individuality. Like any Western man, Dyar thinks each individual is in a ceaseless need of coming across his real nature and locating himself in this world. This type of belief refers to a situation of man as being cut-off from people in purpose of discovering one’s estrangement. The isolation of an individual to an extent of losing all contact with his family is a matter that will have a great impact on him. When Dyar faces many troubles, he does not find anyone to support him as his

father has done when he was in New York. His father tried to find solutions to his dilemma even if his solutions are totally rejected by Dyar. Having his father in front of him pumps a sensation of security and certainty that each individual needs to experience in his/her life. Yet, the belief that the past has gone and the future is undetermined makes man focus on the present but then, the present may be deficient in Camus view, if it aims at alienating an individual from everything, it would be the same absurdist situation that Dyar struggles against constantly from the beginning. Hence, Dyar's need for oneness and individuality can only jail him in the absurd prison that he is escaping from.

B. Women Alienation:

Bowles portrays another kind of alienation and this is represented through his female character Hadija, a poor and peasant girl who is exploited by the western characters. For time immemorial, males are considered as patriarchs of the society while women are always classified in a subordinate position as a second class that is perpetually marginalized in society. In the novel, Hadija is commercialized as a sexual object that Madame Papaconstante uses to earn money. She is not recognized as a human being and this is what alienates her. Many people believe that women in males' dominant society take always the statue of the other, which is considered as an absurdist position that longs for centuries in many societies. Here Hadija is alienated by her employer in the same way Dyar is estranged in an alien land. There is neither past nor future for her backward absurdist position.

Indeed, Hadija as a female character represents the Arab women of the community of Tangier. It seems that women in this community are only objects that aim at satisfying men's sexual desires. In fact, within the novel Hadija is introduced as a prostitute and this what makes her appear most of the time in the sexual scene with the protagonist Dyar. Adding to this, Hadija's work in the Bar Lucifer obliges her to be submissive and to scarify her body in the

purpose of earning money. The more Hadija uses her body to attract and seduce men, the more she earns money. Alison Jaggar states that in the modern era “economical survival requires most women to present themselves in a way that is sexually pleasing to men.”⁵⁴ It is clear that women in the present day society are expected to represent their bodies as products that men can buy. For this reason, one can understand that women are alienated by men in their own societies. Through Hadija, Paul Bowles depicts the sufferings and the stereotyped representation that women desire to escape in the males’ dominant society. Their everyday alienation by being considered as sexual objects deprives them from the choice of changing their situation. The way Bowles portrays Hadija reveals that female character is deeply alienated and occupies always a subordinate position in society. Camus identifies this kind of position as absurd and as a non-ending struggle that women face every day, and there is nothing that can change it. As a main result, women are alienated as individuals who struggle to gain a new meaningful image that reconciles them with their real nature.

C. Language as a mean of Alienation:

Language is also a persuasive means that reveals the alienation and the isolation of the principle character of the novel. Language is considered as a medium through which humans communicate. It is very essential in our everyday life in the sense that people use it to express their feelings and desires. Therefore, it can be a powerful device that echoes the feelings of absurdity and alienation. All over the novel numerous words such as ‘empty’, ‘desert’, ‘absurd’, ‘stranger’, ‘senseless’ and ‘meaningless’ convey a strong sensation of alienation. Bowles uses an absurd language that allows the reader deduce the alienation of the main character. It is a language that puts Dyar in a tin corner where he is isolated from every aspect of his life. This puissant tool helps the writer to plunge the sufferings of the modern man, who is greatly affected by the chaotic situation of the world. For example, Paul Bowles’s choice of the word ‘stranger’ divulges that Dyar is socially alienated. Through the repetition of this word, Dyar reveals an

extreme poverty in social interactions and this is what affects deeply his interpersonal and social relationships. Dyar seems marginalized and isolated, as he rarely interacts effectively with other characters around him.

Through the selection of such words, Paul Bowles wants to say that language is a powerful device that shows the malaise and the alienation of individuals. He uses these words to display the feeling of strangeness that Dyar experiences within his society due to the loss of social relationships and the lack of communication. This is what reflects Camus's thought about the irrationality of the world. For him, since the world is irrational and unreasonable, nothing can be done about it. Thus, human being will live eternally as an isolated entity.

Endnotes:

¹Irvin Yalom, 'Existential Psychotherapy'. (Basic Books, 1980), P unpaginated.

²Camus, *Myth of Sisyphus*, 34.

³Camus, *Myth of Sisyphus*, 34.

⁴Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, 21.

⁵*Ibid.*

⁶Benlemlih Bouchra, 'Inhabiting the Exotic: Paul Bowles and Morocco'. (PhD Thesis, University of Nottingham, 2009), 3.

⁷Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, 36.

⁸*Ibid*, 128.

⁹*Ibid*, 40.

¹⁰Richard Taylor, *The Meaning of Life*, (1970), 1.

¹¹Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, 40.

¹²Ibid.

¹³Ibid, 201.

¹⁴Ibid, 204.

¹⁵Camus, *Myth of Sisyphus*, 9.

¹⁶Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, 128.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Ibid, 99.

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰Ibid.

²¹Ibid.

²²Ibid, 129.

²³Camus, *Myth of Sisyphus*, 6.

²⁴Ibid, 14.

²⁴Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, 128.

²⁶Ibid, 129.

²⁷Ibid, 209.

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹Ibid, 85.

³⁰Shabarkare Kambiz, 'The Strange Alienation of Meursault', 1.

³¹Camus, *Myth of Sisyphus*, 6.

³²Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, 21.

³³Paul Bowles, 'Windows on the Past', (Holiday, XVII, 1955), 34.

³⁴Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, 20.

³⁵Ibid, 18.

³⁶Camus, *Myth of Sisyphus*, 6.

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, 18.

³⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰Ibid.

⁴¹Ibid, 19.

⁴²Ibid, 91.

⁴³Ibid, 222.

⁴⁴Paul Bowles to Oliver Evans in '*An Interview with Paul Bowles*', (Mediterranean Review I, 1971), 11.

⁴⁵Ibid, 58.

⁴⁶Ibid.

⁴⁷Ibid, 65.

⁴⁸William Burroughs, *The Naked Lunch*, (London: Corgi Books, 1968), 11.

⁴⁹Franz Kafka, 'Conversations with Gustav Janouch', (London: Derek Verschoyle Ltd., 1953), 86.

⁵⁰Lawrence D. Stewart, *Paul Bowles: The Illumination of North Africa*, (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1974), 94.

⁵¹Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, 91.

⁵²Ibid, 127.

⁵³Ibid, 118.

⁵⁴Richard Schmitt, *Alienation and Freedom* (Routledge: Westview Press, 2003), 3.

Chapter Two: Embracing the Absurd in Bowles's *Let it Come down* (1952)

This chapter intends to explore how embracing the absurd is a way of creating a meaningful existence as it is explained by Camus. We will first discuss the notion of rebellion as a path that gives meaning to the absurdist situation of Dyar. We will then examine the conceptions of limited and absolute freedoms. While the former leads to construction, the latter drives to destruction.

Life is meaningless, the universe is callous, and only inherent meaning can be grasped from it. The harsh conditions by which man encounters all existing patterns of absurdity are absolutely not the end of life. However, it is only the genesis of a meaningful and a purposeful existence. According to the philosophy of Camus, embracing and accepting the absurd is the only way that can bring sense to human life. The realization that the absurd will always exist and humanity should continue to live within it is in itself an act of rebellion. Though the act of rolling a boulder into a mountain by Sisyphus seems futile, the act of confronting it is a victory.

A. Rebellion:

Since hope, truth and human identity have been destroyed, every man is in search of meaning to make his life which is worth living. Considering man at the crown of all existence, Camus provides humans with a set ethics that helps them in leading their rebellion. Through this philosophy of ethics, man can face the irrationality of the modern sphere and find hope and freedom through his act of rebellion. But, if there is a philosophy of rebellion that aims at saving man from his struggle against the absurd, then it must be one of balance and equilibrium. Balance, for Camus, is a way of life and an eternal attitude toward remaking man and the globe. For that reason, he insists that rebellion is a positive and a limited dynamic that can occur only if man is faithful to the supplied code that serves as a means of conducting a constructive

rebellion. Our task then, will be to inspect the fruitful content of rebellion and how it can lead to construction or destruction.

As we have already explained in the previous chapter, the main character of Bowles's narrative is surrounded by absurdity which can be seen as a beginning for a rebellion. In the novel, Dyar's rebellion emerges when he finds himself drifted and isolated in a chaotic society. In other words, he is alone in a world that has lost all of its metaphysical and moral foundations. He comes to realize that his new environment is a deep nonsense and a disappointing place. These conclusions are drawn from the disjunction between his hopes and what his society provides him with.

Dyar is a rebel who seeks meaning and purpose throughout his life. He wants to feel that he is alive; and he dreams of love and happiness. His first act of rebellion lies on his attempt to remain with the boundaries of the world. This implicates him more in the physical aspects of creation and the concrete facet of the globe that surrounds him, a fact that depletes him from any emotional aspects. The embodiment on the physical globe derives from Bowles's beliefs that life has no intrinsic meaning. In fact, Bowles as his main character, is in a state of revolt against the absurd. Throughout *Let it Come down*, Dyar's centre of attention is only his body, his physical relationship with Hadija, nature, and all other tangible components of his surroundings. Touching Hadija's body is a significant example that Bowles incorporates to demonstrate Dyar's intense need and obsession with physical sensations. Camus claims that there is no life beyond the life of the concrete world. This is the case for Bowles's protagonist who is preoccupied only by the physical sphere. He seems to derive meaning only through what he can see and touch, which reveals his strong refusal of abstract notions. Dyar has no interest in experiencing a love story with Hadija. He is drawn only by her physical appearance and the body sensations that they share together during their sexual relationship.

Then, the natural environment is also a part of the physical world that plays a prominent role in demonstrating Dyar's concern with the concrete existence. All of the sun, the sand, the beach, the sky and the wind are utterly personified and given powerful qualities which make Dyar really sensitive. For example, the morning sun that shines directly to his face gives his body a sensation of light and the heat this sun provides warms up his body and generates a vigorous physical pleasure. In the beach, when he undresses and lies down on the warm sand, the feeling of the grain of sand touching his body makes him delighted because he draws a meaningful experience from it. In addition, in the cave scene Dyar feels "the wind caressing his face"¹, the sounds of waves that touches the rocks is also an element of the natural world that exemplifies the importance of the outside appearances of the world for him. Rejecting all abstract matters and finding refuge only in concrete experiences is what Camus calls 'Metaphysical Rebellion.' Camus thinks that it is necessary for the modern man to deny abstract things since they are useless in this disarrayed situation. Instead, it is better for him to repudiate them and create meaning only from the existing physical aspects. Camus also views it as intent to build an understanding of everyday living without the globe of the unreal.

Dyar's concern with the abstract world illustrates Bowles's exploration of the exotic and the desert. His reality is crystallised through Dyar's preference of natural components and rejection of abstract matters. In reality, Bowles can be viewed as a metaphysical rebel as his investigation in the concrete matters such as the desert indicates his denial of the abstract sphere.

Furthermore, Dyar is introduced by Bowles as a man who is devoid of emotions. For instance, receiving a letter from his mother elicits in him no reaction. He reads the letter with no real interest and he "puts it back into envelop"² as it is unsent. Dyar does not manifest any feelings toward the words of his mother who has neglected him for a long time. He explains that the letter puts him "in an emotional no man's land"³; that is to say, there is no longer place for any sentimental aspects in his own world. The act of being an anti-emotional man reveals

Dyar's revolt against abstract ideas. The suppression of emotions allows him to maintain barriers toward any sensitive situation which is for him a way to lead a better and a meaningful life. Bowles makes his character devoid of sentiments because he believes in the meaninglessness of life, and thus acts accordingly. Dyar refuses completely to interact emotionally. He can see other individuals expressing sadness, happiness and love but when it comes to him, he becomes emotionally frozen. From this point, it is clear that Dyar endorses the physical aspects by entirely rejecting emotions. He believes in the fruitfulness of concrete things, and this is why he focuses only on them. His act consists of suppressing his emotions to enjoy the sensory pleasure. The touch of Hadija's body, the physical contact of natural elements and his cold emotions towards the letter of his mother result in a powerful act of rebellion. As result, Dyar rebels against the world of abstract which means his emotional detachment.

Dyar's ensuing act of revolt against the metaphysical world manifests itself through fighting with or without God. In the previous chapter, we have referred to the idea that life is meaningless without God and any higher order or meaning in the rebel's existence. In spite of the absurdity and the absence of God that Dyar experiences throughout all his life, he resists and decides to confront the absurd as a real metaphysical rebel. Whether God is present in this world or not, this does not change his act of rebellion. He thinks that dealing with the non-sense in his life does not drive from the devolution of religion because in his view religion is no longer a matter of faith in the modern world but only a political tool. Faith and religion do not have any importance for Dyar as he criticises all religious institutions. It is clear that religion has no place in Dyar's life. The absence of faith and God from Dyar's life does not prevent him from continuing his rebellion. Dyar is represented as a rebel who fights against the absurdity of his life without involving God.

In fact, what prompts the feeling of revolt in Dyar is his endeavour to escape his absurdist state that he qualifies as a cage. With or without God, Dyar goes further in his revolt. Moving to Tangier out of a desire for a better life does not become an illusion in Dyar's mind; he really rebels against his meaningless life of New York. Once in Tangier, he pursues his revolt which appears in his attempt to find a job and his intent to be an independent individual. His plans fail, and the feeling of absurdity continues to submerge his life. Although his existence is still meaningless, he does not seek God's help. Through the struggles against corruption, treachery and dissimulating truth, he never manifests a need to be guided and saved by God.

Dyar denies the need of a higher divine power that once oriented humans. For him, it is no longer a necessity. His acts show that the involvement of God and religion in his life is totally rejected. In other terms, he is careless of their presence or absence which seems to be a sturdy affirmation hovering only the physical sphere. Rebelling against disasters is only through his own efforts which are based on neither the presence nor the absence of God.

Moreover, Dyar's actions of rebellion continue to appear considerably through his resistance and persistence on living his own life. Embracing his absurdist situation increases the feeling of creating meaning through his rebellion. Dyar is completely aware of his struggle, but he persists in trying to find a remedy for the emptiness that he experiences. Therefore, rebelling against it is still the only way of living some joyful and meaningful moments in his life since the absurd would govern it all throughout his existence. Dyar's dinner with Daisy is an indication that he wants to have some pleasant time with his surroundings. Although Daisy's attentions are not transparent, he persists on having this dinner with her. Going to the Beidaoui palace, meeting Hadija in a picnic, and even his involvement in an illegal business make his life meaningful to some extent because he creates a rebellious environment around him. His absurdist life makes him a real rebel.

When an individual's world seems to be pointless, it is necessary to set a strategy to survive and try to dig a new source of meaning. Dyar's struggle may be compared to Sisyphus's action, his act of "carrying on, merely continuing"³ to face the absurdity that struggles life is considered by Camus as an exceptional ability and a "superhuman"⁴ act. In establishing a strategy that aims at facing the absurd, man can have the capability to confront the harsh truth of existence regardless of how absurd it is. According to Camus, the act of persisting to live his life is a strong aspect of a metaphysical rebellion. He adds that "it is not the rebellion which is noble, but its aim"⁵. Dyar's consciousness plays a prominent part in his act of moving forward and facing the absurd. For Camus, it is better to act than to do nothing or become paralyzed by the absurd.

Another important element of Dyar's revolt is his attempt to build solidarity and to form a collective rebellion. Previously, he has worked for his friend Wilcox in an illegal currency change. He is sent to exchange some money in Mister Benzekri's shop and later deposit it in the bank; however, before his arrival, the bank closes. Madame Jouvanoun proposes to him to work for her as a spy by exchanging information about his home country. She tells Dyar that if he accepts the offer, she will pay him a month before. Dyar accepts, so the Soviet agent offers him the check. Because the bank is closed, Dyar has the money of both Wilcox and Madame Jouvanoun. That money reminds him of his constant financial problems which projects in him the idea of escaping with the money at least to end his sufferings for a while with Thami and Jillali. Dyar arranges a plan to leave the International Zone with the money in his pocket.

Through his act, Dyar represents a man who builds solidarity with other characters to form a collective rebellion against the absurdist situation of his economic issues. Dyar realizes that he needs help and that the only way to overcome this struggle is by establishing a rebellious relationship with other individuals. This echoes Camus's belief that "man's solidarity is founded upon rebellion, and rebellion, in its turn, can only find its justification in this

solidarity”⁶. Solidarity and rebellion are two unflagging components, indispensable in facing the absurd. To face his senseless financial problems, Dyar assembles a precise solidarity with Thami and Jillali by escaping together in a boat. His rebellion would bear fruits only in this course of action. To Albert Camus, the act of constructing a kind of solidarity and revolt does not apply only on the individual level as it is pointed out in the “Myth of Sisyphus”, but it can also be applicable within the social level as suggested in the “Rebel”.

Bowles portrays Dyar as an embodiment of Camus's philosophy of revolt and as an individual who has a collective consciousness that aims at achieving a communal and allied good regarding the notion of solidarity as the most important ingredient within it. The fact of being in the same situation forces others to lead a collective revolt, and then gives an opportunity to rebel against the same imposed destiny. Dyar has a Sisyphean rebellious spirit, which clearly demonstrates what Camus means by a real rebellion saying that:

The individual is not, in himself alone, the embodiment of the values he wishes to defend. It needs all humanity, at least, to comprise them when he rebels, a man identifies himself with other man and so surpass himself, and from his point of view human solidarity is metaphysical. But for the moment we are only talking of the kind of solidarity that is born in chains⁷.

Both Dyar and Thami suffer from the same absurdist situation and are deprived of money for a long time. For this, a solidarity between them is born out of the fact that they are undergoing the same pain. The fact of being in the same boat stimulates in them the same awareness of acting together, and this is what results in a real collective revolt.

As Dyar's rebellion unfolds, a further feature of his metaphysical rebellion emerges. Throughout the novel, he illustrates the black side of the sun in his world as a source of obscurity and evil. Although he likes the morning suns, he finds at the same time that this sun is lethal. Dyar is introduced by Bowles as a man who is highly sensitive to the heat of the sun which he does not appreciate. Once in the morning, the sun of Tangier shines straight in Dyar's face and

this embarrasses him to the extent of putting “a pair of dark glasses.”⁸ This reveals Dyar’s belief that the sun is an evil aspect that infects people’s lives and existences. From his act of putting glasses, it is understandable that Dyar wants to erase this evil power from his existence as its light has a negative impact on his eyes and his face, and the glasses are there to protect him from this destructive power.

Dyar believes that the sun “makes a blind world”⁹ where man does not recognize anything. The uneasiness that he experiences towards the presence of the sun adds a sturdy element to Dyar’s Metaphysical Rebellion. He becomes really “intoxicated upon emerging into a world of sun”¹⁰. Being in a world lightened by the light of the sun intoxicates his spirit and existence. In Bowles’s view, the light of the sun is poisonous as it damages the human mind and makes an eminent disorder within his thought. Bowles voices his rejection of metaphysical aspects and reinforces his beliefs of life as senseless and meaningless through Dyar. One can say that Bowles’s writing is a form of escaping and expressing his negative perceptions toward all the facets of the globe.

Struggling so far adds a salient component that strengthens Dyar’s revolt. After escaping with the money, Dyar arrives at a house where he is to spend some days with Thami who orders Dyar to stay out of sight. Through time, Dyar discovers the real face of the person who comes in touch with. Thami’s actual act is demanding more and more money from Dyar who is fed up with his recommendations. Dyar then starts seeing Thami as an obstacle to his free will and freedom. Therefore, he finds himself in the same absurd situation he has escaped from. Dyar decides to get rid of the obstacle that prevents him from gaining his freedom. So he kills Thami. This is again an act of rebellion against his pointless situation. However, according to Camus’s philosophy, Dyar transgresses the limits of his revolt. His act is viewed as an act of revolt but in the context of a negative revolt which aims at denying others rights and life. Dyar fails in achieving a positive dynamic and does not maintain the equilibrium. Through this

representation, Bowles seems to be like his character, that is to say, he fails to cope with the absurdity that engulfs his existence. His efforts to escape the absurd and to create meaning for his life are completely in vain; he lives an indeterminate absurd life that prevents him from everything.

2. Limited and Absolute Freedom in *Let it Come down*

The search for freedom in an absurd world is a rudimentary question that has been debated and answered in several ways in the course of the history of mankind. Freedom is desired by Man and considered as an ultimate goal in existence. When people are deprived of freedom, they fail to derive any sense from their lives, and thus reaching happiness is impossible. In Camus's point of view, man is born free and freedom is the instinctive state of any individual. Though being limited by society, individuals have freedom of choice. However, within this inherent value there are limits. Any free man has multiple ways of achieving any desired goal but never by denying others rights. For this, freedom has been classified into two types: limited and absolute.

A. Dyar's Limited Freedom:

In Bowles's novel, Dyar begins his journey with a clear sight and seems to be incredibly omniscient with freedom. He is full of hopes for a better future. He argues that he will become another person who is "full of life, delivered from the sense of despair [...] and be completely free"¹¹. His main desire consists of changing his status of victim to a status of a free and determined winner. Nevertheless, Dyar fails in his first attempt at changing his situation, since his freedom in Tangier is limited because he finds himself unable to control what is happening to him. For example, he is not the one who chooses the hotel where he is to spend his first night in Tangier, and does not even plan for his acquaintances with Daisy and Jack. He seems to have no freedom to make his own choices. According to Oxford dictionary, the word 'freedom' refers

to state of not being held prisoner or controlled by somebody, the right to [do] use something without limitation. Freedom also invokes the absence of restrictions and barriers. In fact, Dyar is always a prisoner who has no power to determine his life. In addition, freedom for every man is about choices. Giving others the responsibility of making his own choices limits his freedom and reinforces significantly his position as a loser and a victim.

Dyar's limited freedom is also shown through his misunderstanding of the notion of freedom as being restricted to economic independence. He believes that earning a lot of money will make him free. Dyar suffers from the authority of his parents, especially his father who regards him as an unsuccessful person because he does not have his own income and remains attached to the proceeds of his father. For this, he believes that finding a source of income will bring him a sense of freedom. However, his new work in Tangier does not help him, instead only makes his situation worse. When Dyar needs money, Wilcox refuses to pay him and tells him "I can't give it to you now, I haven't get it"¹². Dyar does not realize that if Wilcox does not get his money from others, he cannot pay him, and thus he will "be in the street."¹³ In fact, Dyar is totally dependent on his friend who is also dependant on others. It is clear that Dyar cannot create an independent financial situation because he works with a person who relies only on others. His struggle with money seems to be increasing. Dyar's perception of the concept of freedom is wrong. Believing that he can reach freedom by being economically free is an illusion. It can be seen that his understanding of things is very limited, and this is what limits his own freedom.

Dyar continues to restrict his own freedom himself by moving away from any individual act of will that aims at defining his own self. He avoids any act that reveals who he is, and believes that there is something in him that will do things for him, but these things have already been arranged by others. For instance, accepting Madam Jouvanoun's check is a scheme planned by Eunice Goode, who later organizes a visit to the American Legation telling all about

Dyar. It seems that choices are always being made for Dyar, and Madame Jouvanoun's money is only there to have complete control over him.

Dyar refuses to listen to his own inner voice and allows others to interfere in his own affairs. In fact, he is created by them to suit their needs. According to John Macquarie, "man fulfils his being by existing, by standing out as the unique individual he is and stubbornly refusing to be absorbed into a system."¹⁴ Dyar does not exist as a distinct individual that one can refer to or identify separately. His actions are already planned for him. Bowles's description of Dyar's freedom is a message to the readers that they should live their own lives in accordance to their own desires and own free choices. Albert Camus on his part assumes that man's free choices are fundamental and unavoidable to construct the desired existence and the freedom that man strives to gain. In other ways, the inability of an individual of making his own free choices pushes him to be submissive and this is what restrict his freedom.

Another element that limits Dyar's freedom is his own rebellion against the absurd. To remain within the positive content of his rebellion, Dyar must limit his freedom. In fact, his revolt against the world of abstract matters and building a certain solidarity with other individuals such as Thami show his endeavour in respecting within the limited of his revolt. In his attempt of restricting his freedom, Dyar reflects Camus's description of the way a true metaphysical rebel should be as "a man who says no"¹⁵ to any form of oppression and "a man who says yes"¹⁶ to the values that lie within him. The rebel must be ready to make sacrifice in order to attain an altruistic rebellion that gives birth to a certain solidarity. The plan of Dyar and his friend to escape with the money of people who oppress them is an act of solidarity that creates unity. Dyar maintains the balance between his requested freedom and the freedom of others, but this freedom is a limited one.

Through Dyar's revolt, Bowles conveys a powerful message to the modern man who revolts against the absurd. He assumes that man can achieve freedom through his action of rebellion, and remaining within the boundaries of this world can create the being that man desires to be. Thus, he agrees with Camus who states that through rebellion, man can achieve freedom and he can be greater than his absurdity. In short, rebellion is what gives life its values and meaning which seems to be Dyar's achievement. Until this point, Dyar's liberty is restricted and it can be qualified as a positive dynamic.

B. Dyar's Absolute Freedom

Dyar witnesses many other actions that show the opposite facet of his metaphysical rebellion. He experiences many cases of restriction and oppression that he can no longer stand. He says: "regular hours, always superiors to give you orders, no security, no freedom, no freedom, no freedom"¹⁷. He is fed up with his limited freedom, hence he wants to be free from everything and to get rid of every individual who may be an obstacle for him to reach the freedom he seeks. He then decides to kill his friend Thami who constantly demands more money. The act of killing Thami is a transgression of the limits of rebellion that seeks to achieve a restricted freedom, a freedom that respects other's rights. This kind of rebellion is no longer requested by Dyar, he rejects it because it has extremely restricted his attempt at being completely free. From this point, Dyar is involved within the absolute freedom, there is nothing that is able to restrict his freedom. He does not believe in the existence of God; therefore, nothing can stop him. The violent act that he commits owns him an absolute freedom. Camus holds that the fact of being deprived of happiness and freedom has created in him a certain nostalgia and pushes him to approve the evil.

Moreover, the brutality of the murder scene lets Dyar to lose the opportunity to create a certain meaning that makes his life worth living. Inevitably, his existence remains forever

absurd, meaningless and empty. One can say that Dyar's revolt has become an absurd nihilist protest because of the transgression of its limits, the equilibrium or the balance has not been maintained. His revolt also appears as a solitary revolt, the act of leading a collective revolt with Thami is temporally. Now, Dyar breaks the notion of solidarity by denying Thami's values. Having killed him leaves Dyar alone at the last scene of the novel. This solitude is considered by Camus as the end of the negative revolt within the framework of the metaphysical struggle. The central character is stuck between the nostalgia of the metaphysical consolation and the need of facing the absurd of his existence that urges him to reveal the black side of his revolt.

Bowles use Dyar to emphasize the impact of absurdities within the contemporary era. Dyar is the embodiment of the absurd in the novel. He no longer acknowledges a limit to his own revolt. Being deprived of freedom, he gladly destroys the name of this value. Simultaneously, he represents the absurdist hero who is conscious about the irrationality of the universe and the futility of actions. He states that "no matter what you have done, no matter how careful you may have been, everything falls apart anyway. The disintegration merely comes sooner, as later, depending on you."¹⁸ Dyar assumes that destruction will come sooner or later, which means he has no choice but killing Thami.

Furthermore, in the part of the *Dandies' Rebellion*, Camus claims that romantic poets such as Baudelaire thinks that man will always kill since God himself does not care about man and takes life from him. For him, account of the fact that violence is derived from the creator, acting with violence must be the answer. In this way, Dyar's crime is justified. His belief that God creates an unsatisfying existence full of absurdities and governed by evil pushes him to respond in the same way. His metaphysical rebellion becomes an absurd nihilist protest against a merciless God that results in a destructive revolt. In fact, Dyar is possessed by the absurd; this why Camus argues that one should not derive a benefit from it. Dyar in his murdering act draws

a profit from the absurd and consequently becomes its prisoner. He then transgresses the border of his revolt, a fact that leads to a sort of will to power that he has never felt before and that aims to destruction.

Through this murderous act, Bowles exemplifies the negative aspect of absolute freedom which cannot be requested by the rebel who leads an authentic revolt against the absurd. Dyar thinks that to achieve his dream, everything is allowed. He does not kill his friend out of momentary confusion. He says “I’m the only survivor, that’s the way I wanted it”¹⁹. His act is wanted, he wants to be the only survivor, and thus, denies Thami's rights and values. Being possessed by the feeling of absurdity shoves him to act evilly and violently. For Dyar, Thami is the evil that he should combat since he prevents him from achieving his desires. Camus argues that no existence can be gained through an absolute freedom. Absolute freedom means that there is no freedom at all. Only restricted one is a real and authentic freedom otherwise life becomes full of anarchy.

Camus states in “The Rebel” that true rebellion always acknowledges its own origins and establishes limits. The rebel must realize that no value can be achieved in an absolute sense. Dyar’s murder is considered to be an important aspect for Camus’s analysis of the consequences of a negative revolt. Dyar is viewed as an absurd hero and a metaphysical rebel who fights against the sufferings of life, but paradoxically by denying others’ values. His attempt to save himself and confront the absurd implies the belief that everything is allowed. He is then an absurdist nihilist who feels only authentic in a world of absolutism that leads to death and destruction. Our conclusion is that Dyar temporally leads a positive revolt, but he later seems to lose the ability to remain faithful to the generous origins of his revolt and invest in absolutism. Thus, he is still leading an absurd existence by waiting in the last scene of the novel. Dyar fails at achieving something that he wanted from the beginning of his journey. That is, the desire to be completely free.

Endnotes:

¹Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, 98.

²Ibid, 42.

³Albert Camus, *The Fall*, trans. Justin O'Brien, (New York: vintage books, 1963), 84.

⁴Ibid, 84.

⁵Camus, "The Rebel," 101.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Ibid, 22.

⁸Ibid, 17.

⁹Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, 197.

¹⁰Ibid, 256.

¹¹Ibid, 251.

¹²Ibid, 22.

¹³Ibid, 145.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Typed Letter: Paul Bowles to Neil Campbell, May 20, 1980.

¹⁶Camus, "The Rebel," 3.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, 279.

¹⁹Camus, "The Rebel," 47.

²⁰Bowles, *Let it Come Down*, 285.

V. Conclusion

This piece of research has dealt with the issue of absurdism in Paul Bowles's *Let It Come down* (1952). The author has shown a great opposition to rationalism and classical philosophy that seek durable and universal truth. He appears, then, to be highly obsessed with the irrationality of the modern world. He also focuses on the problem of the meaninglessness and the purposeless of existence. Simultaneously, he exposes the way man should confront it.

Additionally, we have tried to shed light on the way the contemporary man is represented in Paul Bowles's novel relying on Albert Camus' theory of the absurd included in his works "the Myth of Sisyphus" (1955) and "The Rebel" (1956). While the first part of the theory has entirely encapsulated the absurd conditions of the individual in the modern society, the second throws light on the way man leads a rebellion against the meaninglessness of life in the purpose of creating meaning and overcoming the absurd. Our study of absurdism in the selected work displays the chaos of modernity. Due to the horrible effects of the Second World War, man is driven to believe that life is meaningless and purposeless. We have also seen two forms of rebellions: the former is a positive rebellion that leads to construction and aims at overcoming the absurd, and the latter, is a negative rebellion that degenerates into nihilism and conducts to destruction.

This study has allowed us to reach a conclusion that contemporary writings are true mirrors that reflect the modern society. The novel demonstrates that absurdity is still present in the contemporary world and becomes more complex through time. It seems that human beings still struggle against the futilities of life. Hence, they are always in quest for meaning throughout their existence. It also shows that the devolution of religion is at the roots of the philosophy of the absurd.

To draw to a close, we hope that we have helped out our readership to understand clearly the presented issue. Moreover, we think that this topic is still interesting and needs further explorations. We also advise students to deal with other issues that lay within the novel and to study them from a different standpoints like existentialism, nihilism and identity.

VI. Bibliography

1. Primary Sources

- Bowles, Paul. *Let it Come down*. United States: Random House, 1952.

2. Secondary sources

- Alison, Jaggar. *Feminist Politics and Human Nature*, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield, 1989. Available from: <http://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:788167/FULLTEXT01.pdf>
- Benlemlih, Bouchra. 'Inhabiting the Exotic: Paul Bowles and Morocco.' PhD Thesis, University of Nottingham, 2009. Available from: [THEESIS TITLE \(nottingham.ac.uk\)](http://theses.nottingham.ac.uk)
- Bowles Paul to Oliver Evans in *An Interview with Paul Bowles*, Mediterranean Review I, 1971. Available from: https://pure.aber.ac.uk/portal/files/28937572/415735_Campbell.pdf
- Burroughs, William. *The Naked Lunch*, London: Corgi Books, 1968. Available from: https://pure.aber.ac.uk/portal/files/28937572/415735_Campbell.pdf
- Camus, Albert. 'Myth of Sisyphus.' Translated by Justin O'Brien, H. Hamilton. 1955 available from: <http://dhspriority.org/kenny/PhilTexts/Camus/Myth%20of%20Sisyphus-.pdf>
- Camus, Albert. 'The Rebel.' Translated by Anthony Bower. New York: Vintage Books, 1956. Available from: <https://laurenralpert.files.wordpress.com/2014/08/camus-the-rebel.pdf>
- Camus, Albert. *Letter to a German Friend*. Translated by Justin O'Brien. New York: Vintage Books, 1994. Available from: [Camus letter engl.pdf - Google Drive](#)
- Camus, Albert. *The Fall*. Translated by Justin O'Brien, New York, Vantage books, 1956. Available from: [Microsoft Word - CAMUS, Albert - The Fall.doc \(weebly.com\)](#)

- Certeau, Michel et al .*The Practice of Everyday Life: Living and Cooking*. Translated by Timothy J. Tomasik. Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1988. Available from: https://www.academia.edu/33194061/Cultures_in_Contact_Dangerous_Encounters_in_Let_It_Come_Down_P_52-62
- Demertzi, Marcelle. 'The Absurd and the Revolt by Albert Camus.' 2018. Available from: https://www.academia.edu/36326103/The_Absurd_and_the_Revolt_by_Albert_Camus
- Fromm, Eric. *Escape from Freedom*. New York: Rinehart and Winston, 1941. Available from: https://pure.aber.ac.uk/portal/files/28937572/415735_Campbell.pdf
- Gena, Caponi-Tabery. *Conversations with Paul Bowles*, Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1993. Available from: https://books.google.com.jm/books?id=e73_OaS0uQC&printsec=copyright#v=onepage&q&f=false
- Gena Dagel, Caponi. *Twayne Publishers*. New York: Twayne's United States Authors Series, 1998. Available from: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/272677166_A_natural_born_drifter_Paul_Bowles's_writings_as_diasporic_spaces
- Gena Dagel, Caponi. *Paul Bowles: Romantic Savage*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1994. Available from: <https://www.genatabery.com/book/united-states-authors-series-paul-bowles/>
- Hamdaoui, Zoubida. "Themes and Story- telling Strategies in Paul Bowles's North African Fiction". PhD Thesis, University of Granada, 2013. Available from: <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Themes-and-story-telling-strategies-in-Paul-North-Hamdaoui/8f1a5142565b3f687a38b0d84a9553f9f4732a31?p2df>
- Hibbard, Allen. *Introduction: a Moveable Feast in Allen Hibbard and Barry Tharaud. Bowles Beats Tangier*, Tangier: International Center for Performance Studies, 2008. Available from: <https://icpsresearch.blogspot.com/2008/10/bowles-beats-tangier.html>

- Kafka, Franz. *Conversations with Gustav Janouch*. London: Derek Verschoyle Ltd., 1953. Available from: https://pure.aber.ac.uk/portal/files/28937572/415735_Campbell.pdf
- Kambiz, Shabarkare. *The Strange Alienation of Meursault*. Available from: https://www.academia.edu/35146498/The_Strange_Alienation_of_Meursault
- Lakkaraju, Mrudula. "Dangerous Encounter." *Literature, Language and Skills* 5 (2016). Available from: https://www.academia.edu/33194061/Cultures_in_Contact_Dangerous_Encounters_in_Let_It_Come_Down_P_52-62.
- Lee, Hyub. "The Sexualisation of the Orient in Paul Bowles's *Let it Come down*," 2013 Available from: http://www.dbpia.co.kr/journal/articleDetail?nodeId=NODE02123107&language=ko_KR
- Ray, Paul C. *The Surrealist Movement in Britain*. Available from: https://pure.aber.ac.uk/portal/files/28937572/415735_Campbell.pdf
- Said, Edward. *Orientalism*. London: Routledge, 1978. Available from: https://sites.evergreen.edu/politicalshakespeares/wpcontent/uploads/sites/33/2014/12/Said_full.pdf
- Smit, Richard. *Alienation and Freedom*. 2003. Available from: https://pure.aber.ac.uk/portal/files/28937572/415735_Campbell.pdf
- Stoltzfus, Ben. "CAMUS AND THE MEANING OF REVOLT." *Modern Fiction Studies* 10 (1964): 293-302. Available from: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/26278679.pdf?seq=1>.
- Stewart, Lawrence D. *'Paul Bowles: The Illumination of North Africa'*, Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1974, 94 Available from: https://pure.aber.ac.uk/portal/files/28937572/415735_Campbell.pdf
- Taylor, Richard. 'The Meaning of Life.' 1970. Available from: [Taylor.pdf \(colorado.edu\)](#).
- Yalom, Irvin. *Existential Psychotherapy. Basic Books*, 1980. Available from: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/297579628_Existential_Psychotherapy