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**Paralysis and Resistance in James Joyce's *Dubliners* and
Mohammed Dib's *La Grande Maison***

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Abstract

The following dissertation explores the theme of paralysis and resistance in James Joyce's *Dubliners* and Mohammed Dib's *La Grande Maison*. However, hinging upon the new historicist theory, this comparative study will reveal that although the two writers chronicle two different periods of their peoples' history, their preoccupations in their early works were not different. On the one hand, the Irish writer James Joyce wrote *Dubliners* in a period characterized by the dominance of Irish Catholicism and the British imperial system which in his view created Ireland's paralysis, on the other hand, the Algerian writer Mohammed Dib also chronicles in his first novel, *La Grande Maison*, the oppression and the social, economic and political upheavals to which his countrymen were subjugated during French colonialism. It is also attempted to prove that in spite of the paralysis image which dominates and reoccurs in both texts, Joyce like Dib has given alternative ways how to resist and surmount paralysis. At the end, I hopefully endeavoured to prove that the authors' visions and conceptions about the idea of resisting paralysis remain different. For, in the case of Joyce's characters, though at the end of each story he did not give literal indications whether spiritual liberation will be attained or just paralysis will ultimately prevail, yet he makes it evident that in order to resist and escape from paralysis, Irish people have either to die or exile themselves physically or spiritually from Dublin's paralysis. On the contrary for Dib's characters, the only way for them to overthrow and surmount paralysis is through national and political consciousness by using revolutionary means. In order to achieve this, I divided the dissertation into two parts, each part contains two chapters. The first chapter deals with the historical background of Ireland and Algeria, while the second chapter is devoted to short biographies of the authors by putting a great emphasis on their educational and artistic careers. The second part also contains two chapters; the first chapter will be concerned with the analysis of the theme of paralysis and its motifs. While in the second, I will deal with attempts of these characters to resist paralysis by taking into account Joyce's and Dib's differing, or opposing conceptions on the idea of overcoming paralysis.

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to:

- The memory of my dead grandfather and grand mother
- My mother and father.
- My sisters and brother Mohammed.
- For all my family and all my friends especially Ali and Farid.
- For my colleagues at the university and all people who have contributed for the realisation of this project.

Abbreviations

References to James Joyce's and Mohammed Dib's works are cited parenthetically within the text, using the following abbreviations and Editions.

<i>CW</i>	<i>The Critical Writing of James Joyce</i> , in Ellsworth Mason and Richard Ellmann, Eds. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989.
<i>D</i>	James Joyce. <i>Dubliners</i> , London: Penguin Books, 1996.
<i>Letters I</i>	<i>Letters of James Joyce</i> , in Stiuart Gilbert, Ed. Vol. 1, New York: Viking Press, 1957.
<i>Letters II and III</i>	<i>Letters of James Joyce</i> , in Richard Ellmann, Ed. Vols. 2 and 3, New York, Viking Press.
<i>P</i>	<i>A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man</i> , London: Penguin Books, 1996.
<i>G M</i>	Mohammed Dib. <i>La Grande Maison</i> , Paris: Le Seuil, 1952.

Introduction

The present dissertation suggests a comparative study of the thematic aspects between the Irish poet, novelist and writer James Joyce (1882-1941), and his counterpart, the Algerian poet, writer of the French expression Mohammed Dib (1920-2003), in their two respective literary texts entitled *Dubliners* (1914) and *La Grande Maison* (1952).

The reasons which encouraged me to undertake this study came first from my interest in the kind of works studied in comparative literature. Second, although Joyce and Dib belong to distant and widely separated societies in time and space, whose people had different cultures, beliefs, traditions, religions and spoke different languages, yet their preoccupations in their works of fiction are not dissimilar. Thus, the Irish writer James Joyce wrote *Dubliners* in a period which shared many similarities with the socio-historical context which witnessed the writing of Mohammed Dib's *La Grande Maison*. The themes which I have set to investigate in this dissertation are those of paralysis and resistance.

It is also of interest to compare these two literary narratives by the reason of the great similarity of conditions in the development of national literature in Ireland and Algeria. That is to say, Irish writers were far closer to the fundamentals of life and its everyday problems in various fields, much like the Algerian who were also concerned with the daily life problems of their fellow peoples in Algeria.

However, the similarities that I believe exist between these two writers and their early fictions might originate from a possible and partial influence exerted by Joyce on his Algerian counterpart Mohammed Dib. This goes by taking into consideration Joyce's worldwide fame in literature in general (stylistically, his influence can be seen in the works of literary giants who followed him, ranging from Earnest Hemingway and William Faulkner to Ralph Ellison and Henry Roth), and particularly his large influence on the second generation Algerian

writers among whom Dib was a member alongside Kateb Yacine and Tahar Djaout to name but a few.

One of the common features of these second generation Algerian writers is what may be called their 'English and American' slant. It has been explained that the impacts of the English and American novels on Algerian literature were the results of great similarities in terms of conditions, beliefs, ideas and culture. Thus, since the literature we are discussing was taking shape precisely when the contemporary English and American literatures were receiving considerable recognitions, the impact was particularly considerable. On the whole, the Algerian writers have adopted the modern literary techniques of novel-writings par excellence, generally associated with "Faulkner's reversibility of time, Dos Passos' simultaneous action, Steinbeck's vivid narrative, Joyce's stream of consciousness, and Hemingway's eye on the subject" (Pyre, 1955: 275).

In more precise terms, and in relationship with the Irish national literature, we find a certain number of common themes all along with the Algerian national literature of the 1940's and 1950's. For example exile to foreign countries, caused by poor homelands, the struggle between classes, the clash between tradition and modernity, the religious conflicts between Catholics, Jews and Protestants in Ireland and between Moslems and Christians in Algeria.

To start with, it is of interest to note how the French intellectual audience viewed the first French language Algerian novels by the 1920's in Algeria. Many critics stated that the literature of the 1920's is the result of the successful process of **Assimilation** by the French. For, novels such as Mohamed Bencherif's *Ahmed Ben Mustapha, goumier* (1920), Abdelkader Hadj Hamou's *Zohra, la Femme du mineur* (1925), and Mohamed Ould Sheikh's *Myriam dans les Palmes* (1930) all tend to be moralizing works, and whenever the French colonial presence was raised, it was either accepted or regarded as an irreversible project.

Wadi Bouzar and Andrea Page state that in reading these novels one could “perceive the authors’ fear of losing their identity and traditional values in the process of assimilation with the French and Christians”(Bouzar Wadi and Page Andrea, 1992). This is similar also with Jacqueline Arnaud’s view, saying that in these literary works the writers seem to remember all their youthful memories, which the coloniser received as “un dernier adieu avant la véritable assimilation” (Arnaud Jacqueline, 1968: 47). But starting from the 1950’s there was the emergence of a genuinely intellectual renaissance in Algeria which led to the proliferation of Algerian novels describing what was like to live in a society that was held in check by the colonial regime. These works denounced the inherent inquiries as well as the temptations, difficulties or the impossibility of becoming fully assimilated to the French occidental universe. This was true of Mouloud Mammeri’s *La Colline oubliée* (1952), *Le Sommeil du juste* (1955), and Kateb Yacine’s *Nedjma* (1956); it was also true of Mohammed Dib’s trilogy **Algerie**.

Hence, as far as Dib is concerned, his refusal of being fully assimilated to the French and his choice of English and American models as vehicles for his different works were not the result of mere chance, but rather he wanted to free his fiction from the exotic icons and bondage of this French policy. Within this sense, Beida Chikhi shows in *Problématique de L’écriture dans L’œuvre Romanesque de Mohammed Dib* (1989) that “Dib affirme cependant que c’est un écrivain étranger, Virginia Woolf, qu’a exercé sur lui à la fois une influence douce et insinuante” (Chikhi, 1989 : 22). Arnaud Jacqueline also argues that:

Dib retrouve chez les romanciers américains l’atomisme de l’image, de la sensation libérée du raisonnement logique, qui l’avait fasciné chez Virginia Woolf et le roman anglo-saxon étant marqué alors par le procédé du « *courant de conscience* » issue en gros de Joyce.

(Arnaud Jacqueline, 1968: 164 my emphasis)

Therefore, the first part of this investigation will deal with the possible affinities that exist between Joyce's historical Ireland and that of Dib's Algeria , and then we will move to show the similarities that exist between Joyce's and Dib's artistic lives by focusing mainly on their educational careers.

Review of Literature and the two Writers

In recent years, James Joyce's and Mohammed Dib's works have received a large bulk of criticism that has been carried out under the thematic as well as the formal study. Some of the most prominent literary critics of these writers centred on such works as Joyce's *Dubliners* and Dib's *La Grande Maison*.

Literary criticism on Joyce's works is varied and has been carried out under different viewpoints and perspectives. Sean P. Murphy is considered as a representative critic of Joyce's *Dubliners*. In his work entitled *James Joyce and Victims: The Logic of Exclusion* (2003), he first argued that the "moral history" which Joyce presented to "the indifferent public" (*Letters* II, 1966: 37) addressed the apathy "Irish citizens express about their colonial conditions" (Murphy, 2003: 41). Murphy went further in his arguments, and asserted that Joyce's *Dubliners* could be seen as a "mirror" or a "looking-glass" wherein the Irish could view "their shortcomings, namely those religious, political, economic, cultural and sexual issues that contributed to intense paralysis" (Ibid, 41-42).

Second, Murphy dealt with the form or the organisation of the book as a unit. By drawing arguments and ideas from a Marxist theory, he argued that the division of *Dubliners* into four parts (childhood, adolescence, maturity and public life), Joyce wanted to underscore the theme of a "disrupted desire to escape" (Ibid, 51). Thus, he wrote the stories of childhood such as "The Sisters", "An Encounter", and "Araby" to express the desire to escape from "the totality of the superstructural codes indebted to the economic base of colonialism", but that

desire for Murphy was disrupted due to their (children) “assimilation of the church and state codes that disempowered them” (Ibid). As for the adolescent characters such as “Eveline” they “question the symbolic codes into which they were born as children [...], adolescent hope for escape from colonial servitude and paralysis”, while the stories of maturity and public life like “The Boarding House” “Ivy Day In The Committee Room” and the last story “The Dead” looked and searched for “a unified subjective identity and stable ego” (Ibid, 63).

Another representative literary critic of *Dubliners* is Williams L. Trevor. In his work entitled *Reading Joyce Politically* (1997); he dealt with the effect of the church as a religious institution and the manifestation of the state i.e. the British imperial state on the lives of Dubliners. Trevor argued that the policies of these two institutions have had a profound effect on Irish life during the 1890's and they were the crucial factors behind Joyce's paralysis in *Dubliners*. In the words critic, all Dubliners, no matter what, if any, their formal religious affiliation, were in one sense or another servants of these two imperialisms. He stated that “there is paralysis: linguistic sexual, alcoholic, marital, financial-even history seems to have stopped” (Trevor, 1997: 67). It is worthy to note that what Joyce originally intended as *Dubliners* began and ended with stories in which the power of the church is foregrounded, this is reflected for instance, in “The Sisters”; the first story within the collection for it is strongly intimating the church's responsibility for paralysis and decay. Trevor argued that in “The Sisters”, Joyce used the ‘chalice’, a traditional symbol of the church's power to mediate between God and man in an ambivalent way. He pointed out that the broken chalice was a symbol of the church's failure in Ireland; “the chalice, even when broken, it retains the power to paralyze, to suspend all thoughts in its function as opiate for the masses” (Ibid, 78).

As far as the British imperial state was concerned, Trevor saw that the manifestation of the British presence in Joyce's Dublin was another dominating form which was complicit with the church for engendering the Irish sufferings and paralysis. That was, he said: “The

church through its pervasive ideological domination is complicit with the dominating state force, both having a vested interest in the vision of the future available to the people of Joyce's Dublin" (Ibid, 102).

An interesting and specialist literary critic of Joyce's *Dubliners* is Gottlieb Gaison, whose work entitled *International Perspectives on James Joyce* (1986), dealt with the way Joyce had presented the female characters throughout *Dubliners*. In it, the critic described the role attributed to the female characters and how Joyce's women in general were torn between two worlds, the patriarchal and the colonial worlds. According to the critic analysis, Joyce had presented Dublin as a society dominated by the authoritarian powers established by men. Thus, he wrote "[...] *Dubliners* is oddly a sterile and womanless. Joyce depicts a desiccated Garden of Eden inhibited by a fallen race whose maternal centre has been erased" (Gaison, 1986: 16). He further stated that women in the sector life of the patriarchal Dublin were given no voice, they were voiceless. Within this context, he said that:

They (women) attempt to speak, their words are reduced to vacuous gibberish. Deprived of power and logocentric control, they cannot master the language of the dominant society, and they function as servants to the cultural imperatives that circumscribe their lives.

(Ibid: 28)

Dib's *La Grande Maison* has been also analyzed from different view-points and perspectives. Bitat Baya is considered among the illustrative critics who analysed Dib's trilogy from a thematic angle. In her thesis work entitled *La Condition Féminine dans la Trilogie Algerie de Mohammed Dib* (1979), she dealt with the way Dib presented the female characters throughout the trilogy in general and *La Grande Maison* in particular. She asserted that in *La Grande Maison*, Dib not only chronicled the Algerian 'male' conditions during colonialism but also the sufferings, paralysis and the bad living conditions of the 'feminine' characters; their place, and resistance firstly against the traditional patriarchal world of Dar Sbitar and secondly against the colonial regime. Within this context, Bitat Baya argued that

the central theme of Dib in his first novel is essentially the daily life of the Algerian people including women, who are also an integral part of this life in the urban town of Tlemcen. She wrote:

les premiers thèmes de Dib sont essentiellement ceux du peuple Algérien et ceux de la femme laquelle, en tant que partie intégrante, est soumise aux lois du système colonial alors qu'elle subit déjà les contraintes du milieu traditionnel.

(Bitat, 1979: 7)

In further chapters however, the critic focused mainly on the different roles attributed to women, she discussed their relationships with the internal and external world as well. For her, female characters such as Aini, Omar's mother, was seen not only as a mother who took care of her children and kept the household, but rather she was seen also the source of emotions, hopes and inspiration for the child Omar who was thrown alone in the obscure world of Dar Sbitar. She stated that "la mère est source de chaleur, source de bien-être, source d'espoir, source de fierté" (Ibid, 96). Moreover, for Bitat Baya, the aim of Dib was to give a voice and an existence for that marginalised 'femmes' who were caught between two worlds, "Il s'agissait pour le romancier de donner à ce peuple, à cette femme, une existence qui pourra plus être contestée, et la faire valoir sur le plan de la lutte politique et historique" (Ibid, 7).

Dib's trilogy *Algerie* in general and *La Grande Maison* in particular had also been analysed from a socio-historical angle. That is, in Belhadj Kacem Nourredine's *Le Thème de la Dépossession dans la trilogie de Mohammed Dib* (1983) placed Dib among the committed writers, "engagé politiquement, Dib opte pour une littérature de combat [...] il s'agit pour lui de poser un problème national, celui de l'aliénation coloniale" (Belhadj Kacem, 1983 : 4). In this work, he discussed firstly how Dib depicted the agricultural workers' strikes, and how the peasants or the 'fellahs' were dispossessed and evicted from their own lands and properties by the colonial exploiters. Secondly, he dealt with the impacts or the consequences of this

eviction and dispossession at the level of individuals' psychology and morality as well. To illustrate this, Belhadj Kacem gave us the example of Omar's mother, Aini, who due to poverty and bad living conditions she was transformed at different moments throughout the novel to an 'inhumane being'.

Furthermore, the work also elaborated Dib's use of suitable vocabulary to describe the labyrinth and suburb world of Dar Sbitar. In fact, in the critic opinion, the vocabulary used to describe Dar Sbitar bared resemblance to that of a house of incarceration: "bagne cellule de prison [...], barreaux qui la défendait solidement" (*GM*, 1952: 115-116). Thus, Belhadj Kacem pointed out that all the description of Dar Sbitar illustrates the characteristics of a "prison", wherein its occupants live, to use the critic words, in "un monde de désolation presque coupé de la civilisation"(Kacem, 1983: 14).

Most recently, Doctor Amar Guendouzi published an article on Joyce's and Dib's fictions in relation to images of paralysis and desire entitled "*Desire and Paralysis in Joyce's Dubliners and Mohammed Dib's La Grande Maison*" (2008). In this article, A. Guendouzi stated that the motivation which pushed both authors in writing their narratives was similar. He wrote "the task undertaken by Dib (in *La Grande Maison*) seems as emancipator as Joyce's intentions in *Dubliners*" (A. Guendouzi, 2008). He also analyzed the use of the "realist-naturalist mode of writing" to draw a kind of parallel between Joyce's and Dib's sittings as well as characterization to speak about "images of paralysis and desire" (Ibid: 2008).

Hypotheses and the Issue

The review of literature about the two writers and their fictions have made it clear that many studies have been devoted to James Joyce's *Dubliners* and many others have also been carried out on Mohammed Dib's *La Grande Maison* in particular, and the trilogy **Algérie** in

general. However, the critics' analyses of the two narratives, and their conceptions of the theme of paralysis as I suggest to carry research upon are given no specific attentions. In general, the critics have limited their analyses on the writers' theme of paralysis; they have underlined some ideas and missed to consider others like Joyce's and Dib's motifs of paralysis. This means that in Joyce's text as much as in Dib's one the theme of paralysis is intrinsically linked and developed alongside with other motifs such as the repression of love, the matriarchal order of society, and family disintegration. Besides, the idea that Joyce and Dib may have opposing and deferring visions on surmounting and overcoming paralysis has been also missed. It is the purpose of the following dissertation to focus on these different visions.

It follows that I have the intention to emphasize exclusively on the thematic study in both texts relying mainly on the theme of paralysis, by putting emphasis on both settings (Ireland of 1890's and Algeria of 1940's) as embodiments of paralysis on the one hand, and on characterization on the other hand. However, in studying characterization, I want to argue in this dissertation that each facet of the characters' life; childhood, adolescence, maturity and public life represents different levels of paralysis. Thus, firstly, the childhood section in both texts is set to provide moments of paralysis through the experiences of children in matters of religion, schooling and city streets. Secondly, the adolescent life of Dubliners and Algerians gives moments of paralysis through the experience of adolescent characters in matters of romance and amatory love. Thirdly, as it is epitomised in both texts, mature life stands to illustrate the ancestral sufferings of the Irish and Algerian society, while the public life represents some social issues like matriarchy and family disintegration as outstanding instances of paralysis in Joyce's Dublin and Dib's Algeria. I intend also to show the way how some characters (especially the feminine characters) were trapped and became the victims not

only of paralysis but also of the ideologies and beliefs of Joyce's Ireland and Dib's Algeria during the eras when they have written respectively *Dubliners* and *La Grande Maison*.

Taken at a surface level of reading, Joyce's *Dubliners* is a collection of short stories with no linear continuity. However, to read the work this way is to a large extent to ignore the fact that *Dubliners* was written around a unifying theme. That was the theme of paralysis. This latter is one that Joyce himself espouses when he depicted Ireland (Dublin) as "the scene because that city seemed to (him) the centre of paralysis" (*Letters II*, 1966: 12). Therefore, many critics have admitted that paralysis is the most important theme that occurs throughout the collection "nearly all critics have recognized (paralysis) as Joyce's central theme in the collection" (Werner, 1988: 33). Likewise Joyce's *Dubliners*, Dib's *La Grande Maison* can be read also around the theme of paralysis. Thus, in it, Dib gives us a vivid description of a squalid populated house (Dar Sbitar) which this latter, instead of serving as a refuge for the hardships of colonial rule, it has turned to shelter paralysed and starved "ghost-like people who wallow in misery" (Bahri, 2004: 57).

As for the female characters, I have the intention to focus on the way that these categories of characters were not only depicted as victims of paralysis but also of the traditional systems imposed on both countries, Ireland and Algeria. Though Joyce and Dib described Ireland and Algeria as matriarchal societies, hence the images given of women are those of prisoners; this was the result of both the traditional and colonial systems that were imposed on both countries. Thus, in the frame of Dublin sector of life and that of Dar Sbitar, women undergo the conditions of prisoners, consequently all their desires for escape and their seeking for change, and guidance continually remain unfulfilled or denied due to paralysis.

Moreover, throughout both texts Joyce and Dib present to us characters seeking for change and guidance in order to overcome the immorality, corruption and frustration caused

to a larger extent by paralysis -physical, psychological, political, social and even artistic. Dublin and Dar Sbitar, thus become visions of cities and peoples incapable of breaking free from the old patterns of behaviours, beliefs and ideologies. Therefore, the only available ways to surmount paralysis are unless through death or exile (physical and spiritual) for Dubliners, and through national revolution and resistance for Algerians to overwhelm this situation of stasis. This is what will be developed in my investigation.

Thus, I have the intention to show that throughout *Dubliners*, Joyce gives us ambiguous conceptions or indications concerning the idea of overcoming paralysis. That is to say, though he gives us different visions of hope for change, movement and salvation in Dublin, yet these visions are ambiguous by the reason that each story within the collection ends ambiguously. For, he gives no literal indication whether “spiritual liberation” will be attained at the end or just paralysis will ultimately prevail. This is seen for example through the character of the young boy in “The Sisters”, Eveline in “Eveline” and Bob Doran in “The Boarding House”. While in *La Grande Maison*, though Dib presents to us Dar-Sbitar as a world of the instable human relationships between its inhabitants and the apparently impossible hope for change; nevertheless, he is optimist about the future. His visions of hope for change are perceived through such characters such as Omar and the nationalist militant Hamid Seraj, resulting from their great awakening and their national consciousness. As such, these characters wanted to get rid of living under the yoke of colonialism and the old established systems or ideologies especially the patriarchal one for women. Basically, all characters within both narratives attempt to define themselves against the ideological and political systems imposed on them. Within this respect, Stephen Greenblatt in his *Renaissance Self-Fashioning* (1980) by using a Foucauldian framework defined this process as one “of affirmation by negation and opposition” (Greenblatt, 1980: 208). I suggest to carry research

on this idea by taking into account Joyce's and Dib's deferring conceptions about overcoming or resisting paralysis.

Nonetheless, one must also take into consideration the ending of each text as an optimistic view of its author. In *Dubliners*, for instance, the closing short story entitled "The Dead" marks a reversal of the paralysis' trend. Thus, the ending of the story with a note that in all parts of Ireland snow is falling might be seen as a positive and hopeful ending to the bleak collection. As the snow implies a sort of grace and regeneration for all Dubliners (the living and the dead), we may say that Joyce remains optimistic about Ireland's future. Much like *Dubliners*, *La Grande Maison* also closes with a happy ending. For we see the young protagonist Omar who moves from his childhood innocence towards his adulthood conciseness, by throwing himself in a crowd of people. This symbolises the gathering of all Algerian, old and young, that anticipates their determinations to surmount their current paralysed situation and overthrow colonialism. I suggest to explore this idea as it is related to Joyce's and Dib's visions of resisting paralysis.

Materials and methods

It has so far been clear that the corpus chosen for my research to carry a thematic study consists of two works. The first one is James Joyce's collection of short stories *Dubliners* published in 1914. The second one is Mohammed Dib's first novel entitled *La Grande Maison* published in 1952.

In the light of what I have said, I suggest to apply the New Historicist approach which I think is the most appropriate to deal with Joyce's and Dib's selected texts. By definition, New Historicism is a modern school of literary thought that came to existence in the 1980's, influenced by the 1970's work of post structuralists Hayden White, Michel Foucault and the anthropologist Clifford Geertz, who viewed the embeddedness of literary texts to historical

and cultural events. As regards literature, new historicists see literary texts as inseparable from their 'historical context', and it is through literature that we can understand cultural and intellectual history. Interestingly, Thomas Brook writes "New Historicism in literary studies promises a new relationship to the literary past" (Brook, 1991; 3). Correspondingly, for the new historicists the role of the author in writing literary documents is "largely determined by historical circumstances" (Bertens, 2001: 176).

The relevance of this theory on the following research is based on the idea that my reading of *Dubliners* and *La Grande Maison* is justified by the fact that these two texts are part or parcel of the embedded wider historical, cultural, political, social and economic circumstances that took place respectively in Ireland of 1890's and Algeria of 1940's. Within this context, Stephen Greenblatt, claims that a new historicist considers a text within a "complex network of institutions, practices and beliefs that constitute the culture as a whole" (Greenblatt, 1982: 6). As such, new historicists' concerns parallel those of cultural materialists who claimed that "Literature was a practice which intervened in contemporary history in the very act of representing it" (Jonathan Dollimore and Alan Sinfield, 1985: 10). To be sure, both schools are writing against and declaring the inadequacy of the traditional New Criticism depictions of "allusion, symbolisation, allegorisation, representation, and above all mimesis" (Jonathan Dollimore and Alan Sinfield, 1985: 10).

Moreover, I think that it is appropriate to refer to the theory of Greenblatt, Louis Montrose et al. because they merely propose that "the writing and reading of texts as well as the process by which they are circulated and categorized, analyzed and taught [...] as historically determined and determining modes of cultural work" (Montrose, 1986: 15). In other words, the new historicists explore the production and reception of literary texts as both products and producers within their historical and cultural contexts. This is what Louis

Montrose coins as ‘**the historicity of texts**’ which has become an integral phrase to New Historicism discussion.

The present dissertation will be divided into two parts, each part contains two chapters. In the first chapter of part one, I deal with a comparison that will encompass the historical contexts that characterized Joyce’s Ireland and Dib’s Algeria. Whereas the second chapter will be devoted to the lives of both authors by putting emphasis on their educational and artistic careers. The second part also contains two chapters. The first chapter will be concerned with the analysis of the theme of paralysis and its motifs. While in the second, I will deal with attempts of these characters to resist paralysis by taking into account Joyce’s and Dib’s differing, or opposing conceptions on the idea of overcoming paralysis.

Firstly, *Dubliners* is a collection of fifteen short stories set in Dublin when this latter was controlled by the British imperial state and under the domination of the Roman Catholic clergy. The stories follow a regular pattern; they preside from individual to generate groups. The opening stories are obviously of youth in Dublin such as “The Sisters”, “Eveline” and “After The Race”. The others advancing in time and expounding in scope concern the middle years of their character and their socio-political and religious affairs like “Ivy Day In The Committee Room” and the closing story entitled “The Dead”. Within this respect, James Joyce commented on the scheme or the arrangement of *Dubliners* as “I (Joyce) have tried to present it to the indifferent public under four of its aspects: childhood, adolescence, maturity and public life” (*Letters* II, 1966: 35). What holds these stories together and makes of them a book with a controlling principle is the theme of paralysis. Joyce himself confirmed this theme in a letter sent to one of his publishers -Richards Grant- in 1904, in which he claimed that no writer had yet ‘presented Dublin to the world’ and that his intention in writing *Dubliners* was “to betray the soul of that hemiplegia or paralysis which many consider a city” (*Letters* I, 1957: 24). This segment of Joyce’s letter to Richard points to the fact that Joyce

did not intend his first major work to be merely a collection of short stories. But rather, the book is a unified and coherent whole, and a comparatively small part of a greater whole.

Secondly, *La Grande Maison* (1952) is the first volume of a knit trilogy, comprising *L'Incendie* (1954) and *Le Métier à tisser* (1956), which chronicles the lives of the Algerian people in the region of Tlemcen, a relatively urban town in the west of Algeria between the Two World Wars and before the outbreak of the Revolutionary War of 1954. In it, Dib portrays the long years of misery, distress and deprivation of the native inhabitants of Dar Sbitar, and implicitly it recalls the major uprisings that took place in Setif, Guelma and Kharata in 1945. It is also a vivid description of the squalid conditions of the working classes, trapped in an urban tenements, unable to live a morally and material decent life. Concerning *La Grande Maison*, as a whole, it focuses on the adventures of a young boy, Omar, a native peasant of Dar Sbitar, who serves as a microscope through which the reader is given information about the obscure labyrinth of the 'big House', the tumultuous world of Algeria under the yoke of French colonialism, and most importantly the suffocating and paralytic state of Dar-Sbitar's occupants. However, the novel also depicts the beginning of the Algerian national consciousness and their stern determination to overthrow colonialism as it is shown in the two novels following *La Grande Maison*. In this respect, Charles Boon argues that the concerns of Mohammed Dib in his first novel are "L'Algérie colonisée et le lente prise de conscience progressiste" (Bonn, 1995).

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Part One

Times, Life and Influences of James Joyce and Mohammed Dib

If I have chosen to discuss Joyce's and Dib's earlier works rather than their poetry or their experimental works which for Joyce started with *Ulysses* (1920) and for Dib begun with *Qui Se Souvient de La Mer* (1962) and continues through the 1990's, it is because I think that *Dubliners* and *La Grande Maison* are two works of aesthetic that were published under the same historical circumstances, stretching from 1880 to 1907 in Ireland and along the 1940's in Algeria. Therefore, one common feature of these two literary narratives is that their contents are rooted in historical time. Their sources of inspiration are naturally enough, thus, when Joyce completed the writing of his collection in 1906; Ireland was still fighting passionately against the British imperial power, their cultural hegemony as well as against the Roman Catholic Church. Likewise, when Dib was writing his trilogy **Algerie** during the 1940's, Algeria was still under the domination of the French authorities. Thus, a new historicist might read *Dubliners* in conjunction with *La Grande Maison* by reinstating them into the very timely culture in which they were originally produced. Both texts hail from two different periods; both of them represent instances of history transformed into discourse. Taken together, the two texts represent some intersection of history in action, albeit a different history-as all history must be by necessity. Therefore, for clarification of the writers' different contexts, it is most useful to discuss first the influence of society in Ireland and its politics on Joyce's literature and then turn to Algeria's social and economic situation as portrayed in Dib's *La Grande Maison*.

In this first part of my analysis, I shall consider the most important historical events that constantly shaped the history of Ireland and Algeria, by throwing lights on the influence and importance of these events on the writers' lives and works. Thus, I shall consider the

Betrayal and failure of Charles Stewart Parnell or the **Parnellite Movement** in Ireland and the mutiny or the bloody events of **8 May 1945** in Algeria, as the most striking and important events that respectfully shaped Joyce's and Dib's experience during their coming to artistic careers. In addition to this, I will supply my research with the life and times of both authors, that is to say, I will devote a chapter to the authors' biographical elements by focusing mainly on their educational careers.

Chapter one: Historical Background: Ireland and Algeria

I- Historical background of Ireland and *Dubliners*.

My purpose in this first chapter is to supply the historical background for James Joyce's *Dubliners* by putting emphasis on the Irish national movement so as to highlight the socio-political and historical context from which he drew his subject matter.

As a starting point, it can be said that Ireland or the “**other island**” as the British people calls it, had been a bridgehead for invaders since the time of the Danes, it has also been described as “both the first and the last colony of the British Empire” (Kenny, 2004: 07). It is also among the incompatible problems that Britain inherited during the nineteenth century, the century which was seen by most historians as the age of increasing democracy, and of political as well as social organizations.

Historically speaking, British colonialism over the island of Ireland started well from “the first Anglo-Norman invasion in 1169” (Curtis, 1963: 01), but that was not a direct involvement. Actually, it was until 1534 with the **English Reformation** of the church that Britain started to have a full control over Ireland. From this period, Ireland saw tiresome crushing wars of extermination by the British, pathos of defeated hopes and broken lives for the Irish people, which were followed by penal laws under the reign of Queen Elizabeth I and Oliver Cromwell. Laws which were made for the restriction of Irish freedom on religion, language and education. An Irish Lord Chancellor described and summed up these drastic laws and the status of the Irish catholic as “the law that does not suppose anyone to exist in Ireland” (Kain, 1990: 104).

However, from the beginning of the seventeenth century to the end of the eighteenth century onwards, Ireland was characterized by constitutional reforms which were made by the

British administration to grant (at least in theory) the Irish parties and the nationalist leaders to create their parliamentary parties, and ask for a Home Rule Status for Ireland. But in practice, all the hopes of the Irish people to have a self-independent Ireland were defeated by the stern opposition of the British government that created a kind of friction, discontinuity and disintegration among the Irish political parties, which ended with the disastrous uprising of 1798 and the shameful closing of the Irish Parliamentary Party in 1800 by an **Act of Union**. Under this act, Britain and Ireland merged to create 'the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland in which no Catholic can hold public office or own land'. Following these two centuries of sufferings, devastation and sorrow for the Irish, the nineteenth century witnessed many uprisings, rebellions and agitations inside Ireland and Britain as well. In 1828, Daniel O'Connell the spokesman of the Irish or "the liberator" (Kain, 1990: 111), succeeded to secure and obtain the first emancipation for the Catholics by refusing the test oath for his election to parliament. But in 1845 there was the beginning of the **Great Irish Famine** (1845-1852) that sent the country into a spiral of demographic decline by which over one million people died and two million people emigrated within a decade; therefore, indubitably Ireland remained socially, politically and culturally traumatised in the immediate Post-Famine period. However, despite the havoc that the Famine played with Ireland, it also created possibilities for change. The Famine clearances eased the desperate situation on the land, and allowed for the consolidation of unprofitable small holdings and the possibility of land reform through legislation, but also it ushered a way for Irish nationalists who have a deep and abiding hatred feeling towards England.

It is also worth noting that during the Famine years, Irish people relied almost exclusively on the potato as its cash crop and, because of that exceptional dependence, it allowed many of them the relative freedom of self-sufficiency. Because of its pervasive presence in Irish life, the potato became a defining element in the Irish history and literature:

The potato, to put it briefly, became an icon of the autochthonous body for certain late-eighteenth-and early-nineteenth-century writers [...] It was precisely by being only a food that the potato became symbolically resonate.

(Catherine Gallagher and Stephen Greenblatt, 2000: 111-112)

When we consider the wasteland that the Irish walked during the Post-Famine years, we find that there was but one political and social basis on which to build a modern Irish nation. These, were the sector of rural population consisting of farmers and shopkeepers who had not been ruined, and also the political activists through parliamentary protest who wanted to shake the foundations of the British Ruling System in Ireland.

Significantly however, during the 1880's there was the emergence to the political and cultural scene of Ireland the charismatic nationalist leader Charles Stewart Parnell (1846-1891), who was the "dominant figure in Irish history in the late Nineteenth Century" (Turner, 1977: 245), and the Irish Parliamentary Party (I-P-P) of which he was a second founder in Westminster. As his predecessors, Parnell, this haughty man, was of an English descent and an aristocratic by temperament and birth, a second generation effect, inspired and born during the Famine. For James Joyce, Charles Stewart Parnell represents an ideal person and a "formidable man that ever led the Irish" (CW, 1989: 62). However, Parnell took up the Home Rule movement and changed its methods entirely. His plan was parliamentary obstruction in the House of Commons to get a total consideration for Ireland and free it from the British hegemony. Actually, as a political leader of his party and the second president of the Irish Land League after Michael Davitt, Parnell started to engage in new negotiations with Britain under the Prime Minister William Gladstone, wherein the Irish question and the home rule status were the paramount issues upon which Gladstone and his followers stacked their fortunes.

Appealing the Irish people without the use of force and by employing nonviolent tactics to support his nationalist activities against Britain, and advising them not to repeat the

mistaken acquiescence of their fathers in the Famine disposessions “You must not allow yourselves to be dispossessed as you were dispossessed in 1847” (D. McCartney, 2000: 78). Parnell’s leadership did not last long. Just when it seemed that some form of Home Rule would be introduced, he was discredited and accused of having a love affair with the married woman Katherine O’Shea, the wife of Captain W.H O’Shea, an opportunistic and self-important member of Parnell’s party. This affair became a matter of common knowledge inside Ireland, consequently Parnell was deprived from parliament and his party leadership, his career was abruptly ruined, and later on he was arrested and put into prison in Kilmainham, but he was released soon after.

From this short review of the Irish history particularly the period starting from the 1870’s to 1890’s, it can be said that Parnell’s story has been often described in both history and literature as a great tragedy. In the popular imagination and tradition, Parnell still remains in the popular imagination as “Ireland’s uncrowned King” (Larkin, 1991: 361).

In the light of these events, Parnell attempted to secure his former political position in Ireland by the support of Irish fenians and some in the Irish Parliamentary party, but he was betrayed by his own people (anti Parnell) as well as by the Roman Catholic Church which withdrew and refused to support his nationalist activities:

In his final desperate appeal to his countrymen, [Parnell] begged them not to throw him as a sop to the English wolves howling around them. It redounds to their honour that they did not fail this appeal. They did not throw him to the English wolves; they tore him to pieces themselves.

(CW, 1989: 228)

As a result, the failure of Parnell and his unsuccessful demands to attain his desired autonomy for Ireland caused a kind of split which tore the country apart, particularly among the political parties, and came the end of anything resembling unity and accord in Irish

politics, opening the floor for individual as well as sectional disagreements that impeded the building of an Irish militia, as F. S. Lyons put it “after the death of the controversial constitutional nationalist Parnell, late nineteenth century Ireland was a period of intense factionalism” (Lyons, 1979: 74). Joyce’s most pointed description of the political movement’s decade-long impotence in Ireland occurs in *Dubliners*’ story “Ivy Day in the Committee Room”. In this story, a national party operatives canvass for a political leader they do not trust, and suspect one another of spying for the opposition, uniting only in their desire for stout and sentimentalised elliptical remembrance of “their uncrowned king” (D, 1996: 134).

Accordingly, the situation in Ireland worsened in the post-Parnell years, wherein the Dublin slums were characterized by poverty and wretchedness and had the worst slums in Europe. At that time Dublin became ‘the inferno of social degradation’, within this context, William Desmond noted that:

In the early 1900, Dublin was notorious for its inadequate wages and its disgraceful living conditions. More than one third of its people lived in one room tenements. Death and tuberculosis were higher in these single room families; the death rate percentage in Dublin was higher than Moscow with its rabbit warren of slums.

(Desmond, 1966: 13)

Taking an opportunity from the downfall of the Parnellite movement, the power of the Roman Catholic Church grew increasingly in Ireland; therefore it started to gain its place within the political scene in Dublin. Instead of providing Irish people with institutional support in matters of education, language, culture, and social structure as well, and while it has often spoken out of violence, the Catholic Church turned now all its attention to locate itself in the political mainstream of Ireland. Seamus Deane argues that at a certain time in the history of Ireland and mainly during the 1890’s, Ireland “has surrounded all to the authority of the church, a foreign institution which operates as a political system, disguised as a spiritual one” (Deane, 1990: 46). The same critic also pointed out that during this period Ireland

seemed to be “ruled by Rome not London” (Ibid). Asked by the Irish House of Commons about the meaning of the Irish question, Benjamin Disraeli answered:

That dense population in the extreme distress inhabits an island where there is an established Church which is not their Church, and territorial aristocracies richest of whom live in distant capitals. Thus you can have a starving population, an absentee aristocracy, and an alien church. That is the Irish question.

(Quoted from Monypenny, 1994: 191-192)

Moreover, in this climate of political disarray, there started in Ireland another era of cultural revival aimed to reconstruct an Irish identity and culture apart from the influence of the Saxon (British). Thus, organisations such as the Society for the Preservation of the Irish Language (1876), the National Literary Society (1892), the Gaelic League (1893), and the Irish National Theatre Society (1902) looked toward art, language, and culture to reconstruct the shards of an Irish national unity.

Both, the Gaelic League led by Douglas Hyde and the Literary Revival led by William Butler Yeats and George W. Russell sought to reorganise the nationalist agenda by redefining a centre far from political agitations in Ireland. These Revivalist organisations, instead of campaigning for parliamentary home rule or republican separation, they focused on locating and purifying an Irish ‘essence’ apart from the British culture, by valorising the Irish peasantry and pastoral in an attempt to reinvent Irish mythology for the modern world. In fact, Hyde and the Gaelic Revival saw that linguistic solution as the only way to come out from Ireland’s internal problems. Thus, Hyde claims that in re-establishing the racial and political authenticity inside Ireland, the Irish race must purify itself by making a barrier against the penetration of Englishness through a united Gaelic language. Whereas, the Literary Revivalists like Yeats and Russell looked to create ‘an Irish Ireland’ through a distinctive Irish literature written in English.

Although these two movements aimed to re-establish an Irish national identity, culture and a purified race that would put into question the imperial state and subvert the colonizing power, postcolonial critics such as Frantz Fanon in *The Wretched of the Earth* (1963) and Edward Said in *Culture and Imperialism* (1994) have shown that these kinds of movements and revivals can replicate the oppressive power, as they pursue their goal of cultural and racial homogenisation.

However, and as far as James Joyce is concerned, he evidently saw these movements less charitable and kind vis-à-vis the British colonialism. Therefore, he objected the homogeneity these movements fomented, and he introduced throughout his different narrative the discourse of Irishness that they propagated, not because he opposed the ultimate political separation from Britain, but rather he believed that this discourse of national and cultural Irishness is another form and narrative of “national self betrayal” (*Letters II*, 1966: 38) of Ireland. Within this respect, Declan Kiberd suggests that Joyce’s position vis-à-vis these cultural movements is that he aligns himself both with and against the cultural Revivalists. It means that, like them, Joyce opposed colonial occupation and usurpation, but unlike them he also “proceeds to indict the native culture” (Kibred, 1995: 363).

In the hope of having an independent and Free State, many events had occurred in Ireland between the period stretching from the fall of Parnell in 1890, to the Up Rising of 1916 such as the Irish quest for landownership, and the **Sinn Fein Movement** of Arthur Griffith that culminated in the **Easter Rising of 1916**. Hence, in spite of these events, the atmosphere inside Ireland was one of turmoil, disorder and crisis. For this reason many historians consider this period as one of the political, social, economic and cultural instability, or a period –to use Joyce’s word- of paralysis indeed. O’Brien says:

In the summary historical retrospect which we all acquire at school and probably never quite lose, this period, 1891 to 1916, forms, I think, a sort of

crease in time, a featureless valley between the commanding chain of the Rising and the solitary enigmatic peak of Parnell. It was a time in which nothing happened; nothing except (as we find when we look into it) a revolution in land ownership, the beginning of a national quest for lost language and culture. Yet despite these momentous events it is not only to us with our memories of school history that the period seems empty; it seemed so to many contemporaries.

(Conor O'Brien, 1965: 87-88)

From this appealing tale of Irish massacres, devastations, sufferings, failure and betrayal, the indigenous people of Ireland were prevented from any revolutionary reactions or changes in their home land. Therefore, during the First World War (1914-1918) the Irish people saw it (W-W-I) as an opportunity to side with the British army to protect the crown against the German and its allied countries in exchange the home rule status and bill will be granted after the war. But in 1916, with the emergence of the **Sinn Fein Movement** under the political leadership of Arthur Griffith, the Dubliners led a campaign of rebellion and agitations known in the Irish history as the **Easter up Rising of 1916**, asking the authority of Britain and its policy to grant them independence. However, the Fenians who tried to accomplish their aims by assassinations, terror and boycotts were shocked by the horrible and bloody events as they had thought that Britain will grant them the Home Rule as soon as the war ends, and also they were met by the stern and determined opposition of Britain that caused their agitations to die out after a while.

In fact, as other colonized people, the Irish had never ceased their quest for Irish culture and identity, and also struggle for self-determination. The years between 1916 and 1922 were the most dramatic, drastic and flamboyant in terms of bloodshed, violence and terror inside Ireland, and it was until 1922, eight years after the publication of *Dubliners* the Irish got their independence, and Home Rule finally granted to the republic of Ireland. It is for this reason that some historians agree to the fact of calling the Irish history as something “for the English to remember and the Irish to forget” (Kain, 1990: 99).

It can be said then, not only British colonialism constantly shaped and occupied the Irish life from ancient times, but also the Roman Catholic Church is considered as the other cause behind the multiple sufferings and defeats that Ireland had known through many centuries. For this reason, and as far as Joyce is concerned, I think that although he was born at the end of the nineteenth century and did experience some of the major misfortune that affected Ireland's economic and political state, he lived through thwarted movements that equally send the country toward paralyzed state like the tragic failure of Charles Stewart Parnell to achieve Home rule for Ireland. Moreover, though Joyce did not participate in political activities, he was conscious about his countrymen's social, economic and cultural traumas; he observed the growing political assertiveness of his country with a considerable unease and with mixing, and critical feelings towards Irish nationalism. Thus, he forged his literary objectives during a time of Ireland's political, social, economic sterility, and cultural ferment as well. He then saw England as a despoiler of his country; he also believed that Ireland's colonial exploitation by England played a determinant role in engendering Irish sufferings and keeping it an agrarian state. But also he saw Catholicism as the ultimate source (if not the responsible) of Irish paralysis. Within this context, Seamus Deane reminds us that Joyce saw Ireland as being caught between "two imperialisms, British and Roman Catholic" (Deane, 1990: 51). Additionally, even Joyce himself commented on the degrading situation that prevailed before he published *Dubliners* by saying that:

The economic and intellectual conditions that prevail in [Ireland] do not permit the development of individuality. The soul of the country is weakened by centuries of useless struggle and broken treaties, and individual initiative is paralyzed by the influence and admonitions of the church, while its body is manacled by the police, the tax office, and the garrison. No one who has any self-respect stays in Ireland.

(CW, 1989: 171)

Moreover, before publishing *Dubliners*, Joyce had declared to his Publisher Richard Grant in 1906 that "My intention was to write a chapter of the moral history of my country

and I chose Dublin for the scene because that city seemed to me the centre of paralysis” (*Letters* II, 1966: 35). From this provocative statement then, it can be said that Joyce’s collection of short stories can be considered as a historical document which shows the sufferings and upheavals that his native country experienced during the period following the collapse of Irish nationalism from 1890 up to the beginning of the First World War in 1914, and also to account for the social, cultural, political, spiritual and religious exigencies of his country. To illustrate what is mentioned above, I recall Joyce’s intent when he is immersed in composing his *Dubliners* genealogy “I believe that in composing my chapter of moral history in exactly the way I have composed it I have taken the first step towards the spiritual liberation of my country” (*Letters* I, 1957: 18).

As a conclusion to this first chapter, if someone tries to answer the question why Ireland had a history of failure to gain independence and to assert itself as a nation, one may also touch closely upon the nature of Dubliners’ paralysis Joyce sought to express in *Dubliners*. Actually the simple answer was, and had been, that the Irish were divided along several lines of thoughts. Thus, on the one hand, religious ideals (Catholic and Protestants) divided the Irish, while on the other hand politics gave rise to its internal conflicts, a mixture of religion and politics which caused a more considerable struggle between one Irishman and another. Richard M. Kain makes the following observation about this point:

Glorious as the Irish patriots sound, they were often conflicting, even mutually exclusive. Their partial fulfilment or failure reveals the fantastic blindness or inexperience of their advocates. Political and religious zeal do not breed tolerance, and there are often heartbreaking consequences.

(Kain, 1990: 107)

From this, we can say that Joyce perceived Ireland’s politics to be dangerously stifling. In spite of his evident rejection of British imperial control of the island, he refused to align himself fully with nationalist ideologies, believing them guilty of replicating the destructive chauvinism of the colonizer. In November 1906 Joyce predicted that either Sinn Fein or

British imperialism would supplant the Catholic Church as the dominant social force in Ireland, and though he was wrong about the Church's imminent demise, Joyce's reflection reveals his sense of the intense power wielded by burgeoning political rhetoric within his society. The Trieste essays of 1907–1912 reflect his preoccupation with nationalism and imperialism and further they assert the mesmerizing influence of nationalist rhetoric over the Irish populace: Fenianism had repeatedly "remodeled the character of the Irish people," Joyce notes, and Charles Stewart Parnell, leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party between 1880 and 1890, "had exercised a hold over them not easily explained" (CW, 1989: 191). This recognition of the growing power of political suasion notwithstanding, Joyce never fully relinquished his belief that the Catholic Church was the most insidious oppressor of the Irish people and tried hard to shake its influence on his own life, refusing to baptize his children and declaring himself apostate. The youthful idealism implicit in Joyce's self-styled "escape" with Nora Barnacle from Church and State is ironically dashed by a sequence of events that begins in 1906 with an English printer's moralistic objections to -and refusal to publish- *Dubliners* and culminates in Joyce's ultimate marriage to Nora in 1931, in London and under English law, in order to secure the rights of his literary estate to his progeny.

II- Historical Background of Algeria and *La Grande Maison*

My task in this second chapter is to deal with the historical context of Algeria from which Dib drew his inspiration for his early works particularly his trilogy **Algerie** of which *La Grande Maison* is the first volume.

In similar ways, the Algerian situation was not much different from that of Ireland. Being an old and the biggest colony in Africa under the French colonial authority since 1830, Algeria was regarded as France's most valued possession because of its strategic place. It was the gateway to its African empire: its springboard for control of the Maghreb and from there to the Eastern Mediterranean.

The Algerian people experienced long years of oppressions, upheavals and revolution. Actually, before the outbreak of the Algerian Revolution of 1954 and before declaring its independence in July 1962, the indigenous population of Algeria suffered for many decades from harsh living conditions such as unemployment, exploitation, starvation, dispossession and epidemics (Cholera, Typhus, and Trachoma) which worsened more their situation.

For the French, the motivation of colonising Algeria as other colonized countries in North Africa such as Tunisia and Morocco was vindicated by the French missionaries on the basis of the moral and humanitarian grounds. Thus, the French conquest was considered as a means of liberating people from tyrannical rules and bringing them to the blessings of Christianity and to a higher and superior civilisation. Within this context, Pierre de Godin the ancient president of the Municipal Council of Paris in 1928 said the following words:

Qu'a donc réalisé la France de fécond ? Qu'a-t-elle créé de vraiment original sur ce rivage que sa civilisation aborda, l'arme haute, le 14 Juin 1830, et où elle ne trouvera que barbarie, misère et hostilité ? A cette question, d'un intérêt si élevé et toujours actuel, attendons-nous à travers bientôt dans les discours officiels, des réponses éloquentes célébrant notre énergie, nos succès, notre humanité, et qui nous laisserons une large impression de fierté satisfaite.

(Quoted from Depond Octave, 1928: 6)

In their eyes -the supporter of imperialism- the colonization of Algeria is carried out only for philanthropic and social reforms for the human welfare. However, as we know, these humanitarian motives are at best materialized. That is to say, there is a discrepancy between this “**mission civilisatrice**” and the reality of colonial exploitation. This is true in all African countries in general but particularly in Algeria.

Almost like the Irish people, from the moment when the French colonial administration was installed in Algeria, its indigenous people had never stopped their quest for independence. Many waves of agitations and movements emerged under different nationalist and political leaders. In this respect, I think that it is very important to mention them briefly in order to show and trace the historical evolution of these nationalist movements

and parties and the effect they had on awakening the consciousness of the Algerian people among whom Mohammed Dib was an example.

Soon after 1830, the French authorities in Algeria were confronted with early disagreements about colonialism. Thus, the struggle for independence started early with the nationalist leader Emir Abed El Kader in the West of Algeria who created between 1837 and 1839 a polity “ayant les caractéristiques d’un état modern” (Kaddache, 1998: 52) by opening schools, organizing legal and political institutions and economic plans and embarking on commercial relations with Tunisia and Morocco. At the very beginning of his nationalist activities, the French did not realize the extent of his power, but once they had realized his power they turned against him until he was defeated.

The other early revolt against the French took place between 1844 and 1846 under the leadership of Boumaza, another nationalist and political activist. But his revolts inland came to an end in 1847 when he started his collaboration with the French for the policy of assimilation. From this short review about the very early revolts against the French domination, we notice that there was no cooperation between these two opposing revolts, and there was a complete opposition to the idea of a possible independent future Algeria. Thus, these different views weakened the early resistance against the French and instead they favoured the French policy of occupation deeper inland, by which in 1870 there were over 200,000 French settlers in Algeria, known as “Les pieds noir” or the black feet.

The serious opposition to the French ruling system in Algeria which culminated in the Algerian Revolution began as early as after the First World War. The three main nationalist groups who organized resistance against colonisation and advocated demands for changes in Algeria were the revolutionary followers of Messali Hadj, the Association of the Ulema or the

‘elders’ led by Sheikh Ibn Badis and al Ibrahimi, and the liberal movement under the leadership of Ferhat Abbas.

In the early 1920’s, the tension of Post World War aggravated the social and economic situation of the Algerian people. Many of them were dispossessed from their own lands and properties, for those who stayed in Algeria the standard of living was low and a great number of people were on the dole. As a result, a lot of young Algerians were obliged to immigrate to France in search of works and better conditions. One of these immigrants was Messali Ahmed Ben Hadj (1898-1974) who was considered as a political leader, the ‘father of Algerian nationalism’ and the leader of the **North African Star Organisation** (Etoile du Nord) created in 1927. This latter is seen as a symbol of protecting the Islamic, nationalist and social ideals of North African countries. That’s to say Messali’s policy was dictated to the defence of the material, social and moral interests of North African countries in general, that’s why in 1927 he was elected president of this organisation, and in which he gradually developed its early relationship with the Communist Party which was very active at that time. Furthermore, though this movement underwent many changes of names, it survived as a party until 1927 when it was banned by the French government, because of its demands for an independent Algeria.

The party emerged again in 1932 under the name of the **Glorious Star** (Glorieuse Etoile Nord-Africain) with a more moderate programme and a more limited aim of repudiating the French civilizing mission in Algeria, but it did not last for it was soon banned and its leader was arrested and imprisoned. Once released, Messali spent six month of self-exile in Switzerland and in 1936 he returned to Algeria and continued his nationalist quest for independence. During that time his party became known as the **Party of the Algerian People** (PPA) maintaining the same general principles and demands but entirely with an Algerian

framework. After the Second World War, this party was banned and became the **Movement for the Triumph of Democratic Liberties** (MTLD).

Moreover, the 1930's witnessed the emergence of another revolutionary movement, the **Ulema** which was represented by Sheikh al Ibrahimi (1886-1965) and Abdulhamid Ibn Badis (1889-1940). For these two leaders and their followers, it was the religious problem, more than anything else in Algeria that kept alight the nationalist quest for independence, and for them the occupation of Algeria was the result of the French educational and cultural dominance over the Algerian one. Therefore, the path or the way to independence can be attained only through a return to the seeds, traditions and the principles of Islam as a religion. Within this context, in his monthly magazine entitled "*The Vision of the Future*", Ibn Badis declared in 1936, "Islam is a social system which responds to all the needs of life, in all countries, at all times. Only its principles can permit humanity to build its happiness" (Cited in Bouchikhi Cheikh, 1989: 15).

Though the Ulema adapted mainly cultural as well as religious orientations as vehicles in their program, yet there was a strong patriotic motivation for propagating the Algerian nationalism. In fact, this movement quickly became more political when its leaders began to focus their discourse on independence. Therefore, in order to realize their reformist aims inside Algeria they organized and opened many circles and schools on various subjects such as Islamic philosophy, law and history. But due to their demands for religious and cultural freedom, this movement did not last a long time because of the strong reaction and opposition of the French government which made a plan for the prohibition of any political activities which ended by the imprisonment of al Ibrahimi and Ibn Badis.

The other nationalist group which was active between the two World Wars was that of liberals or **Jeunes Algériens** under the leadership of Ferhat Abbas (1899-1985), a well

educated man who came under nationalist influences during the years he spent at Algiers University. This movement composed of the “first Algerian intellectuals and elements of a nascent liberal bourgeoisie” (Stora, 2001: 17) aimed to establish an ideal Franco-Algerian nation based on the principles of equality and justice.

Essentially, at the beginning Abbas and his followers were in favour of the French policy of assimilation, a view which was heavily criticized and opposed by the Ulema and Ibn Badis who in a response to a speech delivered by Ferhat Abbas who stated in 1936, he answered:

Nous aussi nous avons cherché dans l'Histoire et dans le présent, nous avons constaté que la nation Algérienne musulmane s'est formée et existe comme se sont formées les nations de la terre existantes [...] nous disons ensuite que cette nation algérienne musulmane n'est pas la France, ne peut pas être la France et ne veut pas être la France.

(Quoted from Kaddache, 1998: 205)

The issue of assimilation as far as Dib's *La Grande Maison* is concerned is also exposed in a delightful passage at the beginning of the novel, wherein the schoolteacher M. Hassan asks his pupils about the meaning of the French word “patrie”. This passage is interesting for a number of reasons associated with the French educational system in Algeria and the policy of assimilation with its paradoxes.

Yet, despite its expression of assimilation, the liberals in 1943 drew up the Manifesto of the Algerian people which marked a rupture with the assimilationist dream and called for internal autonomy of Algeria. They realized that the French colons in Algeria refused to fulfil the promises that the French administration had made to Algerian nationalists but on the contrary they have attempted to repress the different nationalist movements.

Although Abbas and Ibn Badis movements called for improved conditions, still there was no cooperation between them and none of them was politically organized enough or had

sufficient means to reach its nationalist goals. Thus, it is clear that there were many differences between the claims made by these various parties, there was no common front, and obviously not all nationalists shared the same views about Algerian future or destiny.

During the Second World War (1939-1945), France was engaged in a war with its allied countries against the German forces and Nazism. Likewise the Irish who sided with the British during the First World War, for the Algerian people this war was presented as the only opportunity to side with France and its allies to reach their desired goals once the war was over. As a result, thousands of young Algerian volunteered in the war to fight by the side of the French army. In meantime, the free French government restored to “a policy of promises” towards its overseas colonies in general and Algeria in particular. That policy as far as Algeria was concerned pledged the right of self-government and independence as soon as the war against Germany was over.

As the war ended with the surrender of the German forces on 7th May 1945, a victory day over the Nazis was celebrated on 8th 1945 in which thousands of people all over the world expressed their delight and happiness for ending that world-struggle that cost many material wastes and human lives. Convinced by the promises of the United Nations Charter of 1945 which emphasised the right of all people to self-determination, and those of the war-time by the French government, on that VE Day Algerian people too went to the streets celebrating their promised independence as well as their demands for the “new deal” (Tabet, 1985: 95) in various areas both in large cities and in more remote places.

Ironically, however, on the day that victory for democracy was being hailed world-wide and while France was celebrating liberation which became a fact, the Algerian were attempting to set in action a freedom still to come. Repressive means and methods were being used by the French authority “to quash aspiration for democracy and the right to self-

government” (Ibid, 98) wherein many villages were banned, farms sacked, properties destroyed and thousands of people were massacred to death in different cities such as Setif, Kharata and Guelma on which the Algerian nationalists estimated the death toll at 45,000.

Already, however, in 1944 and before the end of the war, General de Gaulle had paid tribute to the role of the Algerian soldiers in the Second World War, and had given some improvements as a first step towards self-government. Soon after these bloody and traumatic events, many Algerian soldiers were horrified and returned home after giving service in the European war; some of them were to become leaders of the **National Liberation Front** (FLN) in 1954. But, most importantly all Algerians were profoundly affected by these retaliations as Edward Behr reported:

[...] an event which, in one form or another, has marked every Algerian Muslim alive at that time [...] Everyone of the “new wave” of Algerian nationalists prominent in the National Liberation Front today traces his revolutionary determination back to May 1945[...] each of them felt after May 1945 that some sort of armed uprising would sooner or later become necessary.

(Cited in A, Horne, 1977: 28)

Regardless, after the subsequent events of 8 May 1945, the French government tried to reconcile the Algerian people to the French ruling system by the use of constitutional reforms, like those implemented in the statute of 1947 which proclaimed the constitution of different departments and organizations equipped with civilian personalities, financial autonomy and an effective equality for all French citizens. In addition to the creation of an Algerian Assembly that would be governed by the Governor-General. But, it was little and too late to sooth and impress the nationalists movements, since now they were determined to acquire more credibility and induce a revival for their independence.

In meantime, some militants of the MLTD decided to undertake more radical actions like armed struggle against the French led to an official split inside this movement in 1947 out

of which the OS (**Secret Organization**) more radical, was created, and in 1954 there emerged the CRUA (**Revolutionary Committee for Unity and Action**) which played an important role at the beginning of the War of Independence. At the head of this committee there were nine members among them we have Hocine Ait Ahmed, Ahmed Ben Bella, Belkacem Krim and Mohamed Boudiaf. For them, the sole objective of that revolutionary movement was to prepare an armed revolt but also:

Offrir la possibilité à tous les patriotes algériens de toutes les couches sociales, de tous les partis et mouvements purement algériens de s'intégrer dans la lutte de libération sans aucune autre considération.

(Quoted from P. Balta and C. Rulleau, 2000: 16)

It was in the 1950's that the real problem with the French colonialism seemed to appear in Algerian society. All the political, social and economic problems inherited during the previous decades under French colonialism came to a climax. Thus, after many years of struggle with France, and after using many peaceful methods, the Algerian people realised that their conditions could not be changed through legal means, and they understood also that the only way to overthrow colonialism was through the use of force and weapons. Within this context, and in a chapter entitled Violence, Frantz Fanon in *The Wretched of the Earth* (1967) argues that it is actually the colonizer that shows the colonized the path towards freedom and independence:

He (the native) of whom they have never stopped saying the only language he understands is that of force, decides to give utterance by force. In fact, as always, the settler has shown him the way he should take if he is to become free. The argument the native chooses has been furnished by the settler, and by an ironic turning of the tables it is the native who now affirms that the colonialist understands nothing but force.

(Fanon, 1967: 66)

The question of how 'violence' was justified in the context of revolutionary struggle is central here; violence as Frantz Fanon theorized it in relation to the Algerian decolonization, is a problematic yet necessary dimension for the organization and strategies of the FLN, as well as

on the conceptual level, it forces the colonizer to recognize and see the oppressed or the colonized as 'human being'.

Nonetheless, at the beginning of the war in November 1st 1954, the French government thought that it was easy to defeat these small numbers of soldieries, who were inexperienced in guerrillas' warfare. But they were soon surprised to see that this armed revolt and rebellion quickly spread to cover mainly all the Algerian territory, especially after the **Soummam Congress** which was held in 1956 by the FLN leaders who decided the structure of the war and the tactics of the military army (Armée de Libération Nationale).

To conclude, we can say that, in spite of the different available forces used by the French army in an attempt to defeat the FLN and the harsh oppressions that were met at the beginning of the war, the Algerian people kept their position and continued their struggle until the signing of the '**Accord d'Evian**' in March 1962 which was followed by the '**cessez le feu**' cease-fire, and ended by a proclaimed independence in July 5th of 1962.

It was under these historical incidents that the Algerian writer Mohammed Dib drew inspirations for his three first novels *La Grande Maison* (1952), *L'incendie* (1954) and *Le Metier à Tisser* (1957) which formed his trilogy entitled **Algérie**. These three novels as a whole describe the reality of the Algerian people and society during the 1930's and 1940's under the colonial regime.

The bloody events of May 8th 1945 worsened the situation of the Algerian people, and clouded their hopes for independence as much as the failure and the betrayal of Parnell's national movement by the Catholic Church left the Irish people in a total disunity and disintegration. But, although the two events led Ireland and Algeria to a state of extreme disaster, they also ushered the Algerian and the Irish people to a spirit of nationalism and opened as well as a way for their respective intellectuals and scholars to fight and support the

causes of their fellow peoples. This means that these events directly experienced by most Irish and Algerian intellectuals (writers in general) are seen not only as the culminating points of colonial regime, but also a passage from innocence to experience and most significantly as foreshadowing and heroic preludes towards the Irish and Algerian independence. Within this context, Mohammed Dib declared:

Il se trouve qu'étant écrivain, c'est sur le terrain de la littérature que j'ai choisi de combattre en faisant connaître les réalités algériennes, en faisant partager par ceux qui me liront, les souffrances et les espoirs de notre patrie.

(Quoted in Déjeux, 1977: 37)

In sum, like the new historicists' claim, this leads us to say that James Joyce and Mohammed Dib became the writers of their times rather than "sentimentally regarded as writer(s) of all times" (Howard, 1986: 15). In this respect, the prominent new historicist critic Stephen Greenblatt writes:

The work of art is the product of a negotiation between a creator or a class or creators, equipped with a complex, communally shared repertoire of conventions and the institutions and practices of society.

(Greenblatt, 1989: 12)

In addition to what is shown so far about the historical background that prevailed before Joyce's and Dib's publication respectively of *Dubliners* and *La Grande Maison*, and the possible affinities that exist between the history of Ireland and Algeria, there are also some similar biographical indications concerning both writers. Thus, it must be interesting to go through the life and times of both authors and see how the milieu they grew in was not much different. That is to say, if the parallels between the Irish and the Algerian history are significant, then it should be possible to perceive them in the lives and works of these two great writers.

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Chapter Two: James Joyce and Mohammed Dib: Biographical Notes

I- James Joyce

James Joyce was born on February 2, 1882, at Rathgar in a shabby-genteel late-Victorian Dublin into a lower middle-class Catholic home. Joyce was the eldest son of John Stanislaus Joyce and Mary Jane. His father was an ardent follower of the nationalist Charles Stiuart Parnell for whom he worked as an agent, and his mother was an accomplished pianist whose life was dominated by Catholicism. At the age of six, he was sent to Clongowes Wood College, a Jesuit boarding School, which he left in 1891 because of financial problems within his family that no longer could afford to pay the tuition. In fact, the financial decline of the family is directly tied with the fall of the Irish statesman Parnell for whom Joyce's father worked as a tax collector in the Rates Office. In meantime, he "temporarily attended a Christian Brother school" (Bulson, 2006: 2), until 1893 he was admitted without fees to Belvedere College, a Jesuit Grammar School in Dublin, where he had a successful academic career by being both a popular student and the winner of several prizes for scholarship in national exams. In his mid-teens and while at school, he remained guided by the intellectual and spiritual independence that would characterize his life. By all accounts, he underwent a religious crisis that would lead him to abandon his Catholic faith, but whatever the causes behind the alienation he felt from the Catholic Church, and his repudiation from the catholic clergy, he always valued the education and the training he received from the Jesuits.

In 1898, Joyce graduated from Belvedere and entered the University College in Dublin where he found his early inspirations from the works of Henrik Ibsen and W.B.Yeats. Thus, the development of his story as an artist is in great measure the story of his early readings. Ibsen dramas exerted the most powerful influence on Joyce's artistic career. In 1900, in his first year at the university when he was only eighteen, he published his first essay in the

Fortnightly Review entitled *When We Dead Awaken*, an assessment of Ibsen's last play, whom Ibsen himself expressed his gratitude for Joyce in writing this essay. This caused sensations at the university and confirmed Joyce's abilities in writings. A year after the publication of this essay, Joyce wrote another article entitled *The Day of Rabblement* (1901), an attack on what he perceived as the chauvinistic trend of the Irish Literary Theatre.

After graduation in 1902, when he was awarded by the degree of Modern Languages, the twenty-year-old Joyce decided to continue his studies elsewhere. He went to Paris, where he worked as a journalist, teacher and other occupations in difficult financial conditions. Spending a year in France, Joyce returned to Dublin when his mother died. He remained in his mother land though there were no immediate opportunities for employment. Despite of financial problems in Dublin, Joyce started writing both the stories that would compose *Dubliners* and, his initial efforts in writing his novel *Stephen Hero*. In addition to these, he began writing his different poems which were later published in **Chamber Music**.

In 1904, Joyce left Dublin for a freely chosen exile in search of a job with Nora Barnacle, a twenty-year old girl from Galway, whom he married in 1931. A month before they left Ireland, Joyce wrote to Nora of both the difficulties in, and his reasons for living: "it seemed to me that I was fighting a battle with every religious and social force in Ireland [...] there is no life here-no naturalness or honesty" (*Letters II*, 1966: 36). Their first destination was first Zurich, and then Trieste but finally the couple went to Pola, (Austria-Hungary) where Joyce obtained a job as an English-language teacher in the local Berlitz School.

Despite Joyce's good opportunity in finding a job he looked for in many places, he and his wife could not accommodate themselves to life in Pola. By 1905, Joyce had scornfully described the time he spent in Pola as a "naval Siberia" (Quoted from A. Nicholas Fargnoli and Michael Patrick Gillespie, 2006: 8). Looking for better conditions, the couple therefore,

came back to Trieste where Joyce secured a position as a teacher of languages. Joyce's years in Trieste were nomadic, but also productive. It was actually during this period that he completed *Dubliners* (1914) and *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916).

Spending almost a year in Trieste, Joyce's family moved to Rome to achieve a great financial stability. Life in Rome, however, proved to be more expensive and unpleasant for the family. He reported to his brother Stanislaus that Rome "reminds me of a man who lives by exhibiting to travelers his mother's corpse" (Ibid, 10). As a result, after having spent nine months in the city, Joyce, Nora and their son George went back to Trieste in 1907. By this time, he published a series of three articles "*Fenianism*," "*Home Rule Comes of Age*," and "*Ireland at the Bar*", all related to Ireland's Home Rule issue and the ill-fated measures used by the Irish Parliamentary Party, the Catholic Church and their complicity with Gladstone's Liberal party in what Joyce describes as the "moral assassination of Parnell" (Ibid, 37).

Between 1914 and 1915, while Joyce finished the writing of his play entitled *Exile*, he turned all his attention back to fiction. Thus, as early as 1915 he started writing the first drafts of what will compose his novel *Ulysses* (1922), but with the outbreak of the First World War, Joyce's family moved to Zurich (Switzerland) where he managed to support himself and his family by giving private language lessons. Indeed, while in Zurich Joyce worked steadily for finishing his *Ulysses* though he underwent a series of eye operations. Receiving a help from Ezra Pound, Joyce's family left Zurich for Paris in 1920 where they spent the next 20 years.

Nevertheless, Joyce's travel to European countries was not the result of mere chance, but rather he wanted to escape from the British hegemony as well as from the narrow-mindedness of Irish Catholicism and the intellectual, artistic claustrophobia that inhibited creative efforts in Ireland. This was well shown in one episode of his autobiographical novel *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916), when Stephen, the protagonist of the novel declares:

Look here, Cranly, he said. You have asked me what I would do and what I would not do. I will tell you what I will do and what I will not do. I will not serve that in which I no longer believe, whether it call itself my home, my fatherland, or my church: and I will try to express myself in some mode of life or art as freely as I can and as wholly as I can, using my defense the only arms I allow myself to use - silence, exile, and cunning.

(*P*, 1996: 281)

From this example, it comes no surprise, therefore, to say that Joyce habitually wrote within and around the conventions of the Roman Catholic Church. In his writings, and through the manifestation of his characters, he openly fought to liberate the Irish mind from the domination, constraints and the bondage of this religious faith.

Although he spent long times in Paris, Trieste, Rome, and Zürich, with only occasional brief visit to Ireland, his native country remained basic to all his writings. He resolved to search for self-identity in exile, instead of dwelling in a paralyzed, restricted, and subjected Ireland. But his absenteeism did not diminish his wry affection for his Dubliners, as Seamus Deane puts it “Joyce became the professional exile from a home he never, imaginatively speaking, left” (Deane, 1990: 56).

II- Mohammed Dib

Mohammed Dib or the “deep” as his colleagues’ teachers called him in America in 1976, when he was a teacher at the University of California in Los Angeles was born in 1920 to a ruined modest family in Tlemcen, an urban town in western Algeria. He belongs to those writers whom we call the French Maghrebi writers. His father, whom Dib lost at an early age, was a carpenter, “Mon père était artisan-menuisier. Je l’ai perdu alors que j’avais onze ans, le malheur changea ma vie” (Dib, Quoted in Grenaud Alain, 1953). Though Dib was raised in a traditional Muslim milieu, his primary and secondary studies were mainly in French, the language he mastered well during his childhood. Thus, likewise James Joyce, Dib faced colonial alienation and mastered the oppressor’s language. He explains that his ability to learn

the French language was the result of his belonging to a family of musicians as he noted in *L'arbre à dire* (1998); “J’avais cependant de l’oreille et mon écoute s’exerçait maintenant avec une attention soutenue sur cette langue qui me parlait”. (Dib, 1998: 47). He further asserts that he writes in French because of “Ma formation scolaire, j’étais tout naturellement et sans difficultés amené à écrire en français” (Dib, Quoted in Grenaud Pierre, 1953). At the age of fourteen, while he was at school, he started writing poems and in 1946 he published his first poem *Eté* in **Les Lettres**.

Almost in the same way as Joyce, Dib worked in different odd jobs: as a teacher, interpreter, accountant, a journalist and a carpet maker between the years 1939 and 1959. All of these professions made of Mohammed Dib to be not only a man who can see and feel the world around him but also a writer who naturally, and despite the difficulties of life, always believes in the possibility of improving man’s lot and aspires for a better future.

During the Second World War, Dib worked as an English-French translator for the British and French military army (1943), -this justifies his good mastery of the English language- and at the same time he was admitted at the University of Algiers where he started studying literature. By virtue of his education, in 1948 he had the chance to meet with great French writers like “Jean Senac, Albert Camus, Jean Cayrol, and Brice Parrin” among others (Déjeux, 1985: 240). However, in 1950, Dib married Colette Bellissant, the daughter of his former French teacher. In meantime between 1950 and 1951 when he started to reach his intellectual maturity and became politically aware and conscious of the colonial reality in Algeria, he started working for **Alger Républicain** and **Liberté du Parti Communiste** for which he became an active member along with other Algerian writers Like Kateb Yacine, who also started to rebel against the French colonialism through his masterpiece novel entitled *Nedjma* (1952).

Nevertheless, like his Irish counterpart who devoted his early works to the Irish people -Dubliners-, Dib's sympathies too went to the Algerian people mainly the working class and the peasants. Within this context Naget Khedda argues "Il (Dib) côtoie le petit peuple dont il fait siennes les aspirations au moment où il se mit à écrire" (Khedda, 2003 : 12).

By the year 1959, Dib was expelled by the French authorities due to his literary commitment and his support for Algerian independence, he moved to France where he met many other American and Anglo-Saxon literary figures like William Faulkner, John Dos Passos and Virginia Woolf among others. There in France, he and his contemporary Algerian writers such as Mouloud Mammeri, Malek Hadad, and Kateb Yacine founded the so-called '**Generation of 52**' and then '**Generation of 54**' according the Algerian War of Independence in 1954. As for their role or mission, Dib explained:

Nous vivons le drame commun. Nous sommes acteurs dans cette tragédie [...]. Plus précisément, il nous semble qu'un contrat nous lie à notre peuple. Nous pourrions nous intituler ses écrivains publics.

(Quoted in Déjeux, 1977: 63)

As a novelist, Dib began his career with *La Grande Maison* (1952), the First volume of a loosely knit trilogy that was published two years before the outbreak of the Algerian Revolution. It was followed by *L'incendie* (1954) and *Le Métier à tisser* (1957). In this trilogy, Dib renders the life experiences of the Algerian people; their tragedies, sufferings and upheavals under the French colonial exploitation before and during the war of independence.

Moreover, throughout his art, Dib took the duty to restore the humanity of his oppressed people and revolted against the injustices endured by his fellow countrymen during many decades under the French administration. In this light, Dib explains that his intentions of writing are:

J'écrie surtout pour les Algériens et les Français, pour essayer de faire comprendre à ceux-ci que l'Algérie et son peuple font partie d'une même humanité [...] l'essentiel est le fonds d'humanité qui nous est commun, les choses qui nous différencient demeurent toujours secondaires.

(Ibid, 57)

After independence however, Dib's works were characterized by the use of a new form of writing and techniques. In fact, unlike his earlier works which were often said to be either realistic or naturalistic where the setting was Algeria, Dib's latest works like *Qui se Souvient de la Mer* (1962) and *Cours sur la Rive Sauvage* (1964) *La Danse du Roi* (1966) are considered as surrealist works in which he had recourse to the use of the fantastic, the allegoric, the mythic, the hallucinatory as well as a concern with universal themes such as the human nature, femininity, passionate love and madness.

When Dib returned from USA in 1976, he made many trips to Finland, and it is there in fact that he found inspirations for his **Nordic trilogy** which is composed of *Les Terrasses d'Orsol* (1985), *Le Sommeil d'Eve* (1989) and *Neiges de Marbre* (1990), all with a Finnish setting and background. Beside his fiction, Dib like Joyce wrote plays such as *Mille hourras pour une gueuse* (1980), poetry *Feu Beau feu* (1979) and children's story as *L'Histoire du chat qui boude* (1974).

Dib was well read in American and English literatures; he was awarded and honored many times by France, the very nation that expelled him in 1959. He has been awarded among other prizes the Grand Prix de la Francophonie by the French Academy-the first Maghrebi writer to receive it- as well as the Grand Prix of Paris, in addition to other awards he received in Algeria like the prize of the Union of Algerian Writers in 1966. His entire corpus constitutes of more than 30 works, some of which were translated into English (*Who Remembers the Sea*, 1985; *Savage Night*, 2001).

From this short view concerning analogies in contexts and life experiences, it can be argued that both writers have many points in common. They share many artistic and intellectual similarities. Besides, Joyce's colonial Ireland indicates a history of resistance against the British colonial enterprise and the Roman Catholic Church much like Dib's colonial Algeria, which also indicates a long process of sufferings and resistance against the French mainstream of imperialism.

Notes and References

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Part II: Paralysis and Resistance in James Joyce's *Dubliners* and Mohammed Dib's *La Grande Maison*

Chapter One: Paralysis in *Dubliners* and *La Grande Maison*

This chapter seeks to establish the basic patterns of *Dubliners* and *La Grande Maison* by examining the paralysis image in some stories comprising the original collection Joyce tried to publish in 1905, as well as the paralytic images Dib tried to depict in his first novel published in 1952. I hope to show that both works aim at being imagistic units exemplifying the effects of creeping paralysis and stagnation in a progressive diminution of life in Joyce's Dublin at the turn of the twentieth century and Dib's Algeria at the eve of World War II,

I- Settings: Dublin and Dar-Sbitar as Embodiments of Paralysis

Whatever the task undertaken in each story that comprises Joyce's *Dubliners* and Dib's *La Grande Maison*, and whatever the approach of readers towards these two texts, the true representation in Joyce's short stories as well as Dib's narrative is never one of their characters but the occupants of Dar-Sbitar and the city of Dublin respectively. By this we mean the physical, social, spiritual and even the political environment that surrounds, directs, oppresses, paralyses the characters in each narrative. Thus, Joyce's Dublin and Dib's 'big house' are both presented as prototypes and embodiments of the Irish and Algerian conditions under colonial dominations. For Joyce's short stories as well as Dib's novel present a slice of life of Dubliners and Algerians within the prevailing situations in the two countries. Therefore, any examination or analysis of *Dubliners* and *La Grande Maison* ought to begin with the analysis of both settings (Dublin and Dar-Sbitar), the two places that lent their names to the two narratives which are implicitly personified by the two writers as sick, and even moribund individuals.

To begin analyzing the setting in *Dubliners*, it is of interest to say that Joyce strove to depict not only a portrayal of Dubliners (citizens), but rather a complete picture of Dublin; his native city, with the aim of aiding “the course of civilization in Ireland” (*Letters I*, 1957:18) . Thus, breaking away from the tradition of plot-based storytelling, Joyce sought to create “a polished looking-glass” (Ibid) wherein his countrymen could view the reality of their lives and would be able to see its decay at the turn of the twentieth century. In this sense, Joyce’s *Dubliners* reflects the voracity with which Dublin society was being consumed by stagnation, oppression and paralysis caused by the Irish Catholicism and by the English imperialism.

Throughout *Dubliners*, the image that Joyce gives us about Dublin; this great European country not previously presented in literature, is an image of a damning city, which suffers greatly from stagnation, paralysis and corruption during the early twentieth century. Within this climate of enormous poverty and social wretchedness, the citizens of Joyce’s Dublin hinge upon the mundane reality of their everyday life. Thus, *Dubliners* “centred around the lower middle class milieu of the depressed northeast quadrant of the city that Joyce grounded the archae of contemporary Irish history” (Harding, 2003: 33). According to the same critic also, “Europe of the nineteenth century symbolized an age of capital and an age of imperial cities as metropolis underwent rapid urbanization under the aegis of unprecedented industrial expansion” (Ibid: 42). However, Joyce’s Dublin is far from such an urbanized, and modernized city, for it existed as a degraded urban town with a stifling backwater, a city so suffocating that living is nearly impossible in “ruinous houses” (*D*, 1996: 35) and “dull inelegant” (Ibid: 78) avenues and streets, or to use Luke Gibbons’ phrase as “the dysfunctional forms” of modernization (Gibbons, 2000: 171).

For example, at the very beginning of the short story entitled “Araby”, Joyce’s protagonist shows us that he lives on North Richmond Street a “blind, quiet street” full of “uninhabited houses of two stories that stood at the blind end, detached from its neighbours in

a square of descent ground” (*D*, 1996: 29). He also notes that the houses “grow sombre” at night and “gaze at one another with brown imperturbable faces” (*Ibid*). In fact, this suggests that its inhabitants left this avenue due to the degrading economic and social conditions as well as it signifies sensations of death and physical paralysis that surrounds it, and above all, these houses are symbols of paralysis personified. Within the same short story, the boy made a visit to the “mourning house” where a “priest, had died in the back drawing-room” and where the air smells “musty from having been long enclosed” (*Ibid*). For, the house occupies a ‘square ground’ detached from the street’s neighbours. This detachment from the neighbours stands as symbol of detachment from life for Dubliners, and that the square ground may take the dimension of a cemetery plot. Moreover, his subsequent accounts of playing with his friends emphasise this stultification, as he describes the “dark dripping gardens” and “dark odorous stables” (*Ibid*: 30) that pervade their nightly adventures and isolate their reluctance to encounter his alcoholic uncle as the inevitable re-emergence of everyday monotony that brings their play to an end.

Firstly, this highly evocative description and representation of Richmond Street in “Araby” illustrates the paralysis and dreariness that comprises the protagonist’s domestic life and existence, Secondly, it informs us not only that Dublin is such a blind country that reached its dead end, but also suggests the social blindness and paralysis of its inhabitants since we later come to understand that the boy also is blind, and that he has reached a tragic end in his life.

We are told also in “Eveline” that she, Eveline, lives in a house full of “dusty cretonne”, along with “brown houses” (*Ibid*: 37) in the neighbourhood. This image suggests the overall tone and atmosphere that dominates the story, just like the priest’s “yellowing photographs hung on the wall” (*Ibid*: 38) does Eveline whole house. Within this context, Vincent Cheng notes that “the pervasive dust in the story becomes a correlative for the

stagnation and decay of a living paralysis, in which everything settles” (Cheng, 2000: 255). Much like dust, Eveline is almost like the atmosphere, perhaps, she herself seems to become a piece of furniture of her dusty house, “from which she had never dreamed of being divided” (D, 1996: 38). Parallel to Eveline’s degrading situation, Mr. James Duffy of “A Painful Case” is described by Joyce as an individual who is alienated from the Dublin’s society. Within this short story, Joyce gives us a description of a man who lives alone in a sparsely furnished “old sombre house” made of “iron railings and black scarlet rugs”, because ironically Mr. Duffy finds all the other suburbs of the city as “mean modern and pretentious” (Ibid: 119).

All these examples and others all along the whole collection make it clear that Dublin is just like a big prison house which makes its inhabitants live in an enclosed and oppressed world, and long to escape from the wretchedness of its environment. Therefore, impatient at the restrictions of life in Dublin, Joyce concluded that Ireland was sick, and diagnosed its psychological malady as hemiplegia, a partial, unilateral paralysis, this is why in one of his intimate correspondences with his brother, he writes: "What's the matter with you is that you're afraid to live, you and people like you. This city is suffering from hemiplegia of the will” (CW, 1989: 42).

Joyce’s rendition of *Dubliners* parallels the one done by T. S. Eliot in *The Waste Land* (1922), by the reason that in both works the authors portrayed the staggering lives of paralytic ghost-like people in sterilised and impotent cities as well as barren and infertile lands; I do mean respectively, Joyce’s Dublin at the turn of the twentieth century and Eliot’s America of the 1920’s.

In similar respect to Joyce’s *Dubliners*, Mohammed Dib’s *La Grande Maison*, is the first in a trilogy which appeared in 1952, four years before the beginning of the uprising which would eventually lead to the independence of Algeria. As a whole, the novel depicts

the chaotic life of a family struggling in desperate poverty in Tlemcen, a relatively urban town in western Algeria. Within this novel, Dib focuses on the protagonist Omar, the only living son of his family, who guides the reader into the big and obscure labyrinth of Dar-Sbitar in the centre of Tlemcen. His home is called Dar-Sbitar “parce qu’elle avait servi comme hôpital durant la guerre 1914-18” (Déjeux, 1977:52) shelters a great number of poor families in single rooms, around a central courtyard in which many of the dramas of unrelated families are open for semi-public scrutiny. It is to some extent Dib’s environment when he was but a child. We are told that Dar-Sbitar is a big house, not in terms of space, but rather in terms of an incalculable numbers of families that occupy it “les dimensions étaient très étendues; on ne pouvait jamais se prononcer avec exactitude sur le nombre de ses locataires: Dar-Sbitar était pleine comme une ruche” (GM, 1952: 71). Even Omar, the protagonist of the novel wonders about the numbers of persons and families that it shelters “tout ces pauvres rassemblés!” in Dar-Sbitar “Combien ils étaient nombreux [...] Personne qui sache compter suffisamment pour dire notre nombre” (Ibid: 36). In this way, likewise Joyce’s Dublin, Dib depicts Tlemcen’s urban areas typified by Dar-Sbitar as an urban slam typical of many Algerian towns by the time of the French colonisation. Even the name “Dar-Sbitar” itself is synonymous with ‘hospital’ or ‘asylum’, which symbolically signifies a place that shelters paralysed and alienated people, suffering from physical and mental illnesses caused to a large extent by colonialism.

Significantly however, at a certain moment of the novel’s development, Omar compared Dar-Sbitar to a microcosmic edifice and ‘prison’ that contains all the sufferings, misery and hardships that his fellow people encounter, as Dib writes:

Omar avait fini par confondre Dar Sbitar avec *une prison* [...] Ses parents, de même que tous ceux qui s’agitaient sans fin autour de lui, prenaient, semblaient-il leur parti de ce bagne. Ils essayaient de réduire leur existences à l’échelle d’une cellule de prison [...] On trottnait [...] avec un affairément de

fourmis, le nez à terre. Mais certains ce jetaient contre cette fenêtre, se collaient aux *barreaux qui la défendaient solidement*.

(Ibid: 116-117 my emphasis)

Just like Joyce's "dirty city", Dar-Sbitar is as an irksome suburb made of small crowded houses and a maze of small sombre streets. For example, Omar's family as it is the case with the rest of all the occupants of Dar Sbitar lives in a single room. "Aini et ses enfants logeait, comme tout le monde, les uns sur les autres, la famille avait déménagé de maison en maison, plusieurs fois; c'était toujours dans une demeure comme celle-là qu'ils échouaient, et dans une seule pièce" (Ibid: 72). During summer's days, there is a bad smell and pollution which strengthened its mean atmosphere:

Le ciel en ébullition vomissait des tourbillons de mouches que des odeurs de fausse attiraient. Ces journées lâchaient sur le quartier une puanteur subtile, tenace, de charogne que ni les coups d'air, ni la chute de température nocturne ne parvenaient à défaire

(Ibid: 101)

From this dramatic situation and the blazing atmosphere characterised by dust and lack of hygiene, the amount of epidemics and diseases increased, whereby many people died of Tuberculosis and Cholera like Omar's father Ahmed Djezairi "mourut d'un mal à la poitrine" and also his brother Djilali "fut emporté par la même maladie : encore un mal à la poitrine" (Ibid: 137). In some extent, the total absence of any social order in Dar-Sbitar and the disappearance of any kind of human values, Dib's *La Grande Maison* remind us of Emile Zola's words in his preface to *L'Assommoir* (1877). Because incontestably, on the subject matter of his text, Mohammed Dib, likewise Zola might say:

[...] C'est une œuvre de vérité, le premier roman sur le peuple, qui ne ment pas et qui ait l'odeur du peuple. Et il ne faut point conclure que le peuple tout entier est mauvais, car mes personnages ne sont pas mauvais, ils ne sont qu'ignorants et gâter par le milieu de rude besogne et de misère où ils vivent.

(Emile Zola, ix: 1877)

Beside the oppressive physical environment that surrounds Dublin and Dar-Sbitar, both places are occupied or designated to shelter the most disinherited and dehumanized people who belong to the lower classes of society. Thus, in Dublin, the great majority of Joyce's characters belong to the social class described by John Middleton Murry as "the most completely disinherited section of modern society: the urban lower middle class whose sole conscious aim in life (appears) to be to distinguish itself from the proletariat" (John Middleton, 1936: 65). Similar to Joyce's city, Dib's Dar-Sbitar is also designated to shelter poor families and lower urban classes (fellahs and peasants) of the Algerian society living in disorder, hunger and moral disarray: "c'est une habitation du pauvre, grande et vieille, elle était destinée à des locataires qu'un souci majeur d'économie dominait" (*GM*, 1952: 71).

Therefore, my assumption is that Joyce and Dib liked to say that life in their native towns; Dublin and Tlemcen respectively is a kind of paralysis, which is one of the reasons why both of them cultivated and nurtured their intimacies in order to show the cities' lethal ills. As the following lines, written in defense of *Dubliners*, suggest, Joyce perceived his first major work as a kind of pathological cultural diagnosis:

It is not my fault that the odour of ashpits and old weeds and offal hangs round my stories. I seriously believe that you will retard the course of civilisation in Ireland by preventing the Irish people from having one good look at themselves in my nicely polished looking-glass.

(*Letters I*, 1957: 18)

And it was also for this purpose that the two authors developed a similar style, which is able to exhibit the cultural, political and socio-economic degradation, and mortification of modern everyday life in Ireland and Algeria. This means that, Joyce for example, shifted his writings from the traditional narrative of the Celtic Twilight, the romanticism of Irish provincial life, and instead he used a realist prose of the nineteenth century European realist

writers such as Ibsen, and Flaubert by depicting in details the real everyday life in Dublin. In this light, Goldberg S. L declared summarily: “*Dubliners* is a dispassionate, morally realistic account of modern life, Joyce’s discovery of his lifelong attitude to his lifelong subject” (Goldberg, 1968: 88). In fact, the intensity of Joyce’s realism led him also to use a naturalist stance with the possibility of presenting Dublin in a minute description, in order to show the social ills of his society. Thus, Joyce’s naturalist method consists in putting an emphasis on objectivity in the description of characters and violent events, pessimism about human nature, as well as deterministic approach to human struggles, which are all typical characteristic of Naturalism. Within this perspective, Joyce declared that he has written *Dubliners* “in a style of scrupulous meanness and with the conviction that he is a very bold man who dares to alter in the presentment, still more to deform, whatever he has seen and heard” (*Letters* II: 1966: 18).

In *Dubliners*, the method through which Joyce gave Dublin to his readers is not far from Dib’s depiction of the Algeria scene in *La Grande Maison*. In the latter, Dib too relied on a realist mode of writing, so as to give a vivid, a detailed account and a real representation of the Algerian conditions on the eve of World War II. Asked in 1983 about his choice in using a realist mode of writings, Dib said: “pour dire les choses très simplement, et pour les résumer, l’écriture réaliste, de documentaire, était et restait pour moi essentiellement une écriture empruntée à l’occident” (Dib, Quoted in Chalon Jean, 1983: 45). His use of a realist mode of writing was supported by a naturalist tendency with a minute description in portraying the social and economic aberrations that afflicted the life of Dar-Sbitar’s tenants.

Although Joyce’s *Dubliners* and Dib’s *La Grande Maison* are quite realistic (almost naturalistic) in representing the stagnant cities and their paralysed individuals, it is also important to note that in both works, Joyce and Dib bring their methods of representation not only to the level of realism-naturalism of the concrete materiality of a nation, but also to the

level of its psychology. This means that, while most realist-naturalist writers record what happens in terms of the concrete materiality of a given nation, Joyce as much as Dib record what happens in the psychology of its people. In fact, for Joyce and Dib, these two levels seem to be deeply intertwined, because what happens to the concrete materiality of a nation has a lot to do with what is going on the psychology of those people who walk upon the soil and streets of that concrete materiality.

II- Characterization and Paralysis

Joyce's *Dubliners* (1914) suggests an important model for Dib's stagnant characters in his first novel entitled *La Grande Maison* (1952). In these two works, both authors reveal forces outside of their characters' control that prohibit or limit progression in their respective settings. Thus, while Joyce uses *Dubliners* to focus on the paralysis image found in Ireland due to the cultural, political and socio-economic turmoil, caused mainly by the Catholic Church and the British imperialism, Dib borrows this preoccupation in his novel to track both the inner and outside world of his characters' paralysis found in Algeria in the period stretching from 1939 to 1945.

However, it is worthy to notice that Joyce tried his hand in the art of fiction in writing fifteen short stories that *Dubliners* comprise. This book turned out to be more of an important beginning chapter in Joyce's development as an artist, as well as a chapter in delineating the moral history of his society. Although for his personal reasons, Joyce exiled himself from the Dublin he saw as "a centre of paralysis", and claimed that "no one who has any self-respect stays in Ireland, but flees afar from a country that has undergone the visitation of an angered Jove" (CW, 1989: 46). Nevertheless, soon after, he decided to devote his life to a creative career and becomes the poet and writer of his race. Thus, he wrote constantly on Dublin, turning it into a microcosm through which he saw the larger world: "I always write about

Dublin, because if I can get to the heart of Dublin I can get to the heart of all the cities in the world” (Ibid: 505).

Almost in the same way with Joyce’s exile, Dib was expelled at an early age by the French authorities because of his literary commitment. As being an artist, his native country is a place he could leave physically; yet, Dib has never disconnected himself from it mentally or emotionally. Thus, he first immersed himself in writing mainly poetry, but his artistic career saw its beginning by the publication of his first novel, *La Grande Maison*. This celebrated influential work which received a wide range of readership not only in Algeria, but also throughout the world gave him the opportunity to show the sufferings and paralysis of his countrymen in a time of a great social, political turmoil.

Interestingly then, and as far as both narratives are concerned, we find that the central theme of paralysis is revealed to the readers through a methodical representation of various aspects of Dubliners and Algerians lives: ‘childhood, adolescence, maturity and public life’. Thus, this moral history of paralysis in Ireland and Algeria, which Joyce and Dib wanted to present, would have much to do with the Irish and Algerians as collective communities rather than as single individuals.

a) - Paralysis and Childhood

The central theme of paralysis and stasis runs throughout the short stories of Joyce’s *Dubliners* and Dib’s novel *La Grande Maison*. The examples of paralysis that we encounter in both texts are indicative of a much wider historical context (social, economic, political and cultural). Therefore, from a new historicist perspective, which suggests a slippage between “history” and “context” -in that all texts are implicated in their historical contexts-, paralysis in both narratives is the result or the outcome of socio-historical, political and cultural circumstances of which Joyce’s Ireland and Dib’s Algeria had been subjugated to. That’s to

say, on the one hand, Ireland subjugation by Britain and the Catholic Church had resulted not only in a political, and religious enslavement, but more importantly from Joyce's point of view, in a mental and psychological enslavement. On the other hand, likewise his Irish counterpart, Dib saw the French colonial occupation and its imperial enterprise over his native country as the ultimate cause behind the Algerian sufferings and the paralytic grip or stasis, which runs throughout *La Grande Maison*.

As such, one general assumption to start with in this chapter is that in the case of Joyce's selected short stories, the layers of civil society; i.e. the Irish Catholicism, as much as the British imperial system in Ireland are behind the paralysis image of which Joyce's characters/subjects suffer. While in Dib's text, his subjects/characters' paralysis is largely linked to the French colonialism and to certain ideological beliefs of the Algerian society such as family, tradition and even religion. Therefore, in studying both narratives, alongside with characterisation, we may say as Stephen Greenblatt argues that there are:

No moments of pure unfettered subjectivity; indeed the human subject itself began to seem remarkably *unfree*, the ideological product of the relations of power in a particular society. [...] If there remained traces of free choice, the choice was among possibilities whose range was strictly delineated by the *social and ideological system in force*.

(Greenblatt, 1980: 256 my emphasis).

Fifteen short stories comprise *Dubliners* and thirteen characters make up the whole of what may be called the Dubliners-paralysis. The first three stories of *Dubliners*, "The Sisters", "An Encounter" and "Araby" provide moments of paralysis in childhood. Joyce uses each first-person narrative to present Dublin through the experiences of children in matters of religion, schooling and the city streets. Thus the childhood section presents the onset of moral paralysis through the frustration of the boy's increasingly desires to escape from the humdrum of Dublin life.

Parallel to Joyce, Dib too presents the stagnant life of his characters and the suffocating paralysis of his society through the eyes of an innocent child, the young Omar, who becomes the spokesman and a typical representative of thousands of Algerian children as the author says at the beginning of the novel:

De ces enfants anonymes et furieux comme Omar, on en croisait partout dans les rues, gambadant nu-pieds. Leurs lèvres étaient noires. Ils avaient des membres d'araignée, des yeux allumés par la fièvre. Beaucoup mendiaient farouchement devant les portes et sur les places. Les maisons de Tlemcen en étaient pleines à craquer, pleines aussi de leurs rumeurs.

(GM, 1952: 28 my emphasis)

It follows that the Irish community Joyce knew during his lifetime in Ireland is just like the characters of *Dubliners* trapped in the prison of the past, as S. L. Goldberg asserts:

The stories (of *Dubliners*) become images: of paralysed automatism of the will, the paralysing hand of the past, a paralysing feebleness of moral imagination, a simoniacal willingness to buy and sell life of the spirit, timidly, frustration, self-righteousness, fear of convention, fear of sin, hypocrisy, vulgarity pettiness. Each, with a fine dexterity, vivisects its material to lay bare the moral disease that distorts it to its present shape.

(S. L. Goldberg, 1962: 38)

Goldberg's brief commentary above describes with accuracy the paralysis that permeates *Dubliners*, however, a more detailed listing and description of each constituent character who comprises this paralysis might better serve to lay bare the *Dubliners* of Joyce's collection in this research work.

To begin seeing *Dubliners* as a work unified by paralysis, one must start with the very beginning. *Dubliners*' opening story, "The Sisters", is firmly concerned with paralysis. By considering its place as essentially an opening chapter for the whole collection, one will eventually find a sense of unity throughout the book, as this story establishes the overreaching theme of paralysis and its associated motifs such as death, corruption, communion and silence. The importance of "The Sisters" as far as the whole collection is concerned is that it

introduces the beginning of the “progression from childhood to maturity”, which eventually broadens from “private to public” (Ghiselin Brewster, 1969:36). The story provides us also with the first hint of paralysis, a theme which reoccurs throughout the whole of *Dubliners*.

Within the story, paralysis is seen at the first page when the boy-narrator looks toward the window of the dead Father James Flynn and says:

Every night as I gazed up at the window I said softly to myself the word *paralysis*. It had always sounded strangely in my ears, like the word gnomon in the Euclid and the word simony in the Catechism. But now it sounded to me like the name of some maleficent and sinful being. It filled me with fear, and yet I longed to be nearer to it and to look upon its deadly work.

(D, 1996: 07 my emphasis)

Here, it is noticeable to say that the boy states his fear of even the sound of the word “paralysis” (he associates it with the physically imperfect word of “gnomon” and the spiritually corrupt “simony”). In fact, the boy shows childish and innocent curiosity, but he does consciously allow paralysis to attract him. Like a physical disease, paralysis strengthens its grip and follows the boy while he retreats to his room: “In the dark of my room I imagined that I saw the heavy grey face of the paralytic (dead priest)” (Ibid: 11). In his attempts to escape this image which haunts him, the boy covers only himself with deeper darkness by drawing the blankets over his head, and “the grey face still followed me (Ibid). Therefore, like the old paralytic dead priest, the boy is unable to escape paralysis and the ever-deepening darkness that accompanies him everywhere. Indeed, within the story, the narrator introduces paralysis itself as a “maleficent and sinful being” that “fill(s) (him) with fear” even though he “long(s) to be nearer to it and to look upon its deadly work” (Ibid: 7). The young boy is clearly repelled, yet he is transfixed by the paralysis he experiences here which anticipates his inability to be truly free from his old dead friend, James Father Flynn.

Likewise Joyce's opening short story "The Sisters" which introduces the theme of paralysis, reading at the very beginning of *La Grande Maison*, one will have the impression that the major concerns of the novel as whole are those of the miserable conditions and the tedious life inside the 'big-house':

Un peut de ce que tu mange !

Omar se planta devant Rachid Berri.

Il n'était pas le seul ; un faisceau de mains tendues s'était formé et chacune quémendait sa part. Rachid détacha un petit bout de pain qu'il déposa dans la paume la plus proche.

Et moi ! Et moi!

(GM, 1952: 07)

As for Omar, he occupies the same position as that of all children in *Dubliners*. Thus, throughout his eyes, Dib's novel offers a significant insight not only into its environment, but also into the psychological and paralytic state to which the Algerian people are subjugated. Joan Monego's study recognises in the internal dynamism of Dib's works as unmistakeable will to portray not only the paralytic environment but also to penetrate deeper into what the author sought to depict as:

Not content with a facile superficial review of men and events, Dib has never relinquished his goal of presenting and pursuing to more profound depths and in a singular manner the hidden side of reality.

(Joan Monego, 1984: 44)

Therefore, likewise Joyce's section of childhood in which the boy-narrator suffers from physical, moral and psychological paralysis, Omar, the young boy on whom all the actions are built, encounters paralysis at an early age. He is described as a paralysed individual who lives with his family in a tedious and boring life and who longs to escape from the wretchedness and paralysis of his society: "Il (Omar) était comme mort, rien ne lui arriverait qui l'intéressât. Il ne souffrait pas, il ne souffrait plus, son cœur était de pierre". (GM, 1952: 111). In a way,

much like Joyce's boy narrator who is haunted by the ghost of the dead father Flynn, Omar embodies paralysis which takes on a living presence:

Il (Omar) était habitué à n'être jamais rassasié. A la longue, il put [...] traiter (la paralysie) avec l'amitié due à un être cher; et il se permit tout avec elle. Leurs rapports s'établirent sur la base d'une courtoisie réciproque, attentive et pleine de délicatesse, comme seule une ample compréhension saurait en faire naître entre gens qui se jugent sans la moindre complaisance et se reconnaissent ensuite digne l'un de l'autres.

(Ibid: 105-106)

Besides this, it is worth mentioning that all along the novel, Dib makes it clear that paralysis follows Omar even when he is at home. That's to say, if it is not the outside harsh environment which oppresses and paralyzes Omar, it is the unbearable violence and injustices of his widowed mother at home that causes him to be powerless and perplexed. In such cases however, Omar seems to be determined to make an end for his life in Dar-Sbitar through a self-suicide, which can lead him to be safe forever:

Pourquoi fuir ? Mais, pourquoi ne pas se tuer ? Ne pas se jeter du haut d'une terrasse ? Il chercha autour de lui : personne dans le corridor. Il se roula en boule pour ce faire plus petit dans son coin. C'était ça, c'était ça : mourir. Qui se soucierait de lui, après ? Un petit accident et puis on est tranquille. Sa mère ne le retrouverait plus. C'était le meilleur tour qu'il pouvait imaginer de lui jouer.

(Ibid: 36 my emphasis)

Moreover, in Dar-Sbitar's habitation, not only Omar experiences moments of paralysis, but all the rest of his neighbourhood are daily haunted by the stupefaction and numbness which knows no end inside the 'big-house'. Thus, when it is not the tedious and deadly routine which haunts the big building, it is the discomfort of the pangs of hunger and fear that assails the mind of its occupants:

Dar-Sbitar vivait à l'aveuglette, d'une *vie fouettée par la rage ou la peur*, chaque parole n'y était qu'insulte, appel ou aveu ; les bouleversements y étaient supportés dans l'humiliation, *les pierres vivaient plus que les cœurs*.

(Ibid: 116-117 my emphasis)

Furthermore, in studying the childhood sections in both texts, one cannot ignore their strong link to both authors. In a letter sent to his brother Stanislaus, Joyce describes the opening trilogy of *Dubliners* of which “The Sisters” is the first section as “stories of my [James Joyce’s] childhood [...]” (*Letters* II 1957: 23). Besides this, there are also some other characters who seem at least partially represent the author, like James Duffy in “A Painful Case” Little Chandler in “A Little Cloud” and Gabriel Conroy in “The Dead”. Undoubtedly this is also true of Mohammed Dib’s *La Grande Maison* and his trilogy **Algerie** in general. This link is justified by the fact that Omar’s adventures are Dib’s own, since all what Omar has seen and experienced during his childhood is all what Dib experienced too during his infancy, as the author says in one of his interviews: “c’est une des image les plus typique, les plus courants de l’Algérie, c’est tellement vrais que la plupart des lecteurs algériens se sont reconnu dans cette enfance” (Dib, Quoted in Celerier Alain, 1963). Within this context, René Wellek and Austin Warren argued:

The social allegiance, attitude, and ideology of a writer can be studied not only in his writings but also, in biographical extra-literary documents. The writer has been a citizen, has pronounced on questions of social and political importance, has taken part in the issue of his time.

(René Wellek and Austin Warren, 1963: 79)

As a result, it becomes clear that the linking bond between Joyce and Dib in relationship to childhood paralysis is their common use of a boy protagonist around whom all the actions are built and around whom everything is articulated.

Another outstanding motif of paralysis in both texts has to do with repression of romance and love stories in Joyce’s *Dublin* and Dib’s *Algeria*. Thus, unlike the boy-narrator of the opening story who experiences physical paralysis because of the death of his friend, Father Flynn, the protagonist of “Arabay” and Eveline in “Eveline” however concern

themselves with sensational and spiritual paralysis because of their inability to understand the real meaning of romantic love.

In “Araby”, the boy’s thoughts are dominated by his adoration and passion for the sister of his friend Mangan: his “heart leap(s)” whenever “she comes out on the doorstep” (*D*, 1996: 30), and his “confused adoration” for her causes “a flood from my heart” to “pour itself out into my bosom” (*Ibid*: 31). However, in the boy exaltation, the identity of Mangan’s sisters never appears to him. Instead, the boy focuses almost exclusively on her name, as he characterises it as a “summons to all my foolish blood” that becomes the catalyst for “strange prayers and praises which I myself did not understand” (*Ibid*: 30-31). In the boy’s imagination, Mangan’s sister is reduced to an image that accompanies him everywhere “even in places the most hostile to romance” (*Ibid*: 30), and “came between me and the page I strove to read” (*Ibid*: 32). This relationship between the name and the image of Mangan’s sister and the prayers he “does not understand” demonstrate the inability of the boy’s longing to translate into an affirmation and action his real adoration for the sister of his friend. Thus, both the image of Mangan’s sister and the sound of her name paralyse his thoughts.

This failure is also evidenced by the boy’s inability to speak to Mangan’s sister. Thus, like boys who are young and in love, the narrator hides his affection for the girl in shadows, while keeping a distance to elude discovery. He admits “whether I would ever speak to her or not or, if I spoke to her, how I could tell her of my confused adoration” (*Ibid*: 31). But, at the end he sees that he is never able to establish any meaningful contact with her, and instead, he comes to grips with spiritual paralysis; a paralysis resulting from his confused adoration for the girl. Resulting from the paralysis of the boy, the girl initiates their first and only conversation, but again “when she addressed the first word” to him, he was “so confused that (he) did not know what to answer” (*Ibid*). This reveals how the boy cannot forge in meaningful attachments and romantic bond with Mangan’s sister, and how the obsession with

symbolic desire and paralysis distances the lover from his beloved by ignoring the affirmation needed to build a viable relationship.

Furthermore, in his journey to the bazaar and in the boy's subsequent thoughts, the image of the girl is replaced by "the syllabus of the word Araby" that "cast en Eastern enchantment over" him (Ibid: 33). At this point, Mangan's sister virtually disappears from the story, for the boy's obsession with attending the bazaar subordinates the image of his beloved to the exotic image of Araby. For that reason, his resolution to bring her something from the bazaar as a sign of love and affection transfigures reality for him into an "ugly monotonous child's play" (Ibid). More importantly, even though the narrator sees himself as "*a creature driven and derided by vanity*" (Ibid: 36 my emphasis), recognition provides no room for any feeling for Mangan's sister. But, in turn, it anticipates the "anguish and anger" (Ibid) he feels after he discovers the true meaning and the reality of his relationship with the girl.

The other story which deals with the perversion of love as a motif of paralysis is "Eveline". Within the latter, the love story is woven between the young Eveline and her secret lover Frank, "a very kind manly and open-hearted" sailor (Ibid: 39). However, Eveline's story is about a young orphaned girl who has promised to her mother in her deathbed "to keep the home together as long as she could" (Ibid: 38). She lives with her closefisted and bad-tempered father, who always treats her violently and increased her anxieties. For, she must give him the entire wages she receives from her job in Miss Gavan's stores, and she had to meet her boyfriend secretly because he is opposed to their relationship. But since she has known Frank, things are no longer what they used to be. The possibility of an escape from the stagnated and loveless life in Dublin is presented to her, since Frank is about to debark for Buenos Aires:

She stood up in a sudden impulse of terror. Escape! She must escape! Frank would save her. He would give her life, perhaps love, too. But she wanted to

live. Why should she be unhappy? She had a right to happiness. Frank would take her in his arms, fold her in his arms. He would save her.

(Ibid: 42)

In her imagination, Frank would offer her the happiness she has been looking for: marriage and a new life far from the restrictions imposed by her hard work and the ruthlessness of her drunkard father at home. Above all, in marrying Frank “people would treat her with respect” and she would not be “treated as her mother had been” (Ibid). Hence, when the time comes to elope with her beloved, and when the possibility of a felicitous existence with Frank is presented to her, Eveline’s courage fails her in the confrontation with the unknown. Thus, She relinquishes all her hopes and forsakes Frank, by disclaiming her responsibility and the authority of her own life: “she prayed to God to direct her, to show her what was her duty” (Ibid). In fact, the paralysis has, despite of all, a too strong hold over her, and the Irish and religious teaching proves, since she is unable to follow Frank on the landing stage to the ferry, to have destroyed her individuality to such a degree that it reduces her at the story ending to a total and utter passivity: “She set her white face to him, passive, like a helpless animal, her eyes give him *no sign of love or farewell or recognition*” (Ibid: 43. my emphasis). Her duty to Ireland, to the church and the family ruins her dreams of life and love that is substituted by a paralysing state of helplessness, immobility and lifelessness. She finished realising that no flight for her exists, that the choice which appears to represent freedom and overcoming paralysis emphatically does not. She becomes to see her relationship with Frank in terms of “duty”, just as she has previously finished regarding her efforts in her father’s house as a fulfilment of an obligation. Unable to go back to her old world, and unequipped to move forward, Eveline is caught; and like the boy-narrator in “Araby”, she becomes powerless and bestial.

Actually, this tragic outcome is similar to that one experienced by the boy-narrator in “Araby” in his disillusioned journey to the bazaar. In the two stories, Joyce shows the culminating apathy of romance in a paralysed Dublin. Within this context, Julian B. Kaye makes a noteworthy observation: “the perversion of love into cruelty is one of the common themes in Dubliners. To Joyce, it is one of the characteristics of Dublin’s paralysis” (Kaye, 1958: 33).

Joyce’s stories of paralysed young individual in “Araby” and “Eveline” are not without reminding us about Dib’s Omar and his outlet love relationship with Zina’s daughter, Zhor, in *La Grande Maison*. For, likewise Joyce’s young protagonists, Omar too is a young individual who wants to live and believe in the dream world of fantasy and romance. Though at an early age, for Omar, neither the social taboos nor the conservatism of Dar-Sbitar with its paralysed environment, and nor even his mother’s violence at home can stand between him and his daydreams on romance. Thus, for Omar, romantic quest will allow him to run away and escape from the daily routine and violence he encounters in Dar-Sbitar, to a more elevated and heightened spiritual world, the world of love and peace.

However, love relationships between boy/girl as much as man/woman are banished and severely repressed in Dar-Sbitar. That is why for the young Omar, his relationship with Zhor remains but a secret affair. Actually, Dib tells us that Omar’s initiation to the notion of love is achieved only through his mother’s secret gossip with Zina about stories of infidelities. Consequently, in his first meeting with Zhor, Omar remains cautious and prudent. In this light, Dib describes Zina’s secret meeting with Omar in the following:

Elle lui lança par trois fois son appel: au dernier, il y alla. Elle s’approcha de lui. Il la sentait debout contre son corps, dont la tiédeur l’envahit. Soudain, elle lui donna un violent coup de genou dans l’aîne. Omar jeta un petit cri et tomba à terre en sanglotant. Zhor se pencha sur lui et lui bâillonnait la bouche de sa main. Il dut s’immobiliser pour ne pas être étouffé; Il se tint tranquille. La main de la jeune fille glissa le long du corps d’Omar sans difficultés. Il perçut alors le bruit soyeux d’un corps qui s’étendait à ces côtés. [...] Puis elle fut

secouée de frissons. Plusieurs fois elle essaya de caresser l'enfant mais ces efforts demeurèrent vains: *elle n'arrivait plus à surmonter l'indécision qui paralysait ses mouvements.*

(GM, 1952: 78 my emphasis)

The above quotation indicates that Omar's love relationship with Zhor is devoid of any feeling and adoration, and that Zhor's flirtations and caresses with Omar are just superficial and furtive. Therefore, this attests and represents a confused romantic ideal for the young Omar as well as Zhor. But most importantly, through this superficial love relationship, Dib shows that in the traditional Algerian dictum, represented here by the frame of Dar-Sbitar, love is a taboo, as much as male and female encounters are banished.

At this stage, we can say that love is a phenomenon and that is almost impossible to realise in two paralysed societies which live under the auspices of religious orthodoxy, social conservatism and above all, colonialism and imperialism.

Furthermore, Joyce and Dib respectively indicate that the religious teachings of the Catholic Church in Ireland and the awkward French educational system the Algerian people received during the colonial period are also agents of paralysis which prevented the Irish and Algerians to make any revolutionary reactions in their countries. This is clearly shown in Joyce's second story entitled "An Encounter", and through the 'lesson of moral' at the very beginning of Dib's novel.

"An Encounter" illustrates Joyce's ironic comment about the religious teachings of the Catholic Church in Ireland. It also exemplifies how these religious teachings function as a repressive means in Ireland, by preventing the Irish people (the case of children in this story) to have imaginary hopes and desires to escape from the stifling Dubliners-paralysis. The story is narrated by a young boy-narrator who abandons with a small band of students the discourses of the church, state and school and inhabits instead discourses of the Wild West,

by finding an opportunity for figurative escape through the narrative of popular literature, introduced by one of his schoolmates, Joe Dillon. The latter introduced to the class stories of the Wild West like *The Union Jack*, *Pluck*, and *The Halfpenny Marvel*. For, even though, the boy and his friends play cowboys and Indians battles “every evening after school” (D, 1996: 18), hence, in the boy’s imagination, these stories of the Wild West introduced by Joe Dillon represent literal adventures for escape. Thus, he admits that “the adventures related in the literature of the Wild West were remote from my nature but, at least, they opened doors of escape” (Ibid: 18-19). Adventures of escape look promising to a boy whose Jesuit College combines the authorities of teacher and priest into one. Within this context, Julian B. Kaye notes: “An Encounter is a story of escape. The boys who play hooky are weary of the routine school life” (Kaye, 1958: 32). But, once their teacher, Father Butler, discovered the affair, he immediately forbids the children to read such stories:

What is this rubbish? He said. *The Apache Chief!* Is this what you read instead of studying your Roman History? Let me not find any more of this wretched stuff in this college. The man who wrote it, I suppose, was some wretched fellow who writes these things for drink. I’m surprised at boys like you, educated, reading such stuff [...] I advise you strongly, get at your work or...

(D, 1996: 19)

Father Butler, as a priest and a teacher in the National School exercises a kind of authority over his students. For his words and reactions in prohibiting the boys to have access in reading such kind of stories outline the oppressive, cruel and despotic nature of the Catholic teachings in Ireland, and its strong will to oppress anyone who dares to transgress the rules of religious and educational values in Ireland.

However, unimpressed by the urgency of Father Butler’s censure, the boy informs us that “when the restraining influence of the school was at a distance I began to hunger for wild sensations, for the escape which those chronicles of disorder offer me” (Ibid). In this light, Joyce expresses the boy’s desire for escape from “chronicles” of paralysis, in a country where

two layers of civil society, state and church (school), conspire to reject potentially all alternative of freedom and liberation, as the boy-narrator asserts: “real adventures do not happen for people who remain at home: they must be sought abroad” (Ibid: 20).

The theme of education in Joyce’s “An Encounter” as an agent of paralysis and oppression reminds us of the ‘lesson of moral’ in Dib’s *La Grande Maison*, as early at the opening of the novel in the school scene of Dar-Sbitar. Through this scene, Omar is first exposed to the concept of “patrie” or ‘motherland’ in M. Hassan’s classroom. Similar to Joyce’s conception of the church’s education, Dib’s treatment of “patrie” as an abstract idea and then the awkward implications of studying it in the colonial French educational system and applying its definition to Omar’s life in Dar-Sbitar are ironic and very significant in the following passage:

M. Hassan, satisfait, marcha jusqu’à son bureau, ou il feuilleta un gros cahier. Il proclama:

---Patrie.

L’indifférence accueillit cette nouvelle. On ne comprit pas. Le mot, campé en l’air, se balançait.

---Qui d’entre vous sait ce que veut dire: Patrie?

[...] Les élèves cherchèrent autour d’eux, leurs regards se promenèrent entre les tables, sur les murs, à travers les fenêtres, au plafond, sur la figure du maître ; il apparut avec évidence qu’elle n’était pas là. Patrie n’était pas dans la class.

[...] La France est notre mère patrie, annonça Brahim.

(Omar, astonished and surprised, he then thinks) : comment ce pays si lointain est-il sa mère? Sa mère est à la maison, c’est Aini ; il n’en a pas deux. Aini n’est pas la France. Rien de commun. Omar venait de surprendre un mensonge. Patrie ou pas patrie, la France n’était pas sa mère. Il apprenait des mensonges pour éviter la fameuse baguette d’olivier.

(GM, 1952: 20-21)

For the young Omar, the lesson of “patrie” in classroom is both foreign and incongruous. To learn about a concept of ‘motherland’ from French textbook is both awkward and

insignificant as far as Omar's life in Dar-Sbitar is concerned. Besides, when the word "patrie" is uttered by his teacher, Omar's concerns that compete in his mind are hunger and the next warm meal. As a foreign term, "patrie" could designate anyone or anything for Omar, who mistook it for someone's name. By contrast, the word "pain" or bread would have excited and solicited a different reaction from Omar and his classmates.

Not surprisingly then, when Omar hears the name of "mère patrie" or motherland, he confused it with his mother Aini, who is at home, and who could not have any link with the word "patrie" being taught in class. Actually, this is the first step for Omar in recognizing that what he is learning in class about "patrie" is artificial and has very little significance for him in his life. At the end, he realizes the insignificance and irrelevance of this new concept in his life: if Aini is not his "patrie", then according to M. Hassan's Lesson she is not France. In turn, France is not his mother. Omar's learns the lesson of what he calls lies as far as the idea of "patrie" is concerned.

More importantly, if Omar and his classmates refuse to learn in the French colonial schooling system, their teacher, M. Hassan would use a big stick to beat them. Therefore, to avoid being beaten by this big stick "baguette d'olivier", Omar and the rest of the class must obey to the instructions of their teacher. This reveals the authority and oppressive nature of the French colonial teachings, as well as the force they used in order to efface the local culture of the Algerians, and to replace it (Algerian culture) by a foreign one.

As we have seen, in Joyce's "The Sister", the young boy is indeed paralysed by external circumstances in his life -the corrupt environment of the old dead priest-, much like Dib's protagonist young Omar, who too seems to be trapped and paralysed by his harsh environment and the French colonial system of education. In this light, it seems that Craig Werner comments about the childhood section of *Dubliners* fits also for Dib's *La Grande*

Maison as he says: “the stories of childhood” in *Dubliners* “picture early confrontations of young boys with their corrupt environment” (Werner, 1988: 41). Interestingly then, and as far as both narratives are concerned, Werner goes on to argue that such suffocating experience “encourages even the more sensitive [...] children to accept and internalise paralysis”, which leads to adults counterparts who “have surrendered utterly to paralysis” (Ibid: 41-42).

As such, within the following discussion, the readers of this work shall see that in the case of Joyce’s selected stories, for example, Bob Doran of “The Boarding House”, and Omar’s cousin in the case of Dib’s work are outstanding examples of an adult life who have repressed their emotional paralysis in their entire lives. While the dead priest, James Father Flynn in “The Sisters” and Omar’s grandmother, Mama, simultaneously illustrate two old individuals who have utterly surrendered to physical paralysis in their mature lives.

b) - Paralysis and Adult Life

Another interesting parallel that can be made between the two narratives in relationship to the theme of paralysis has to do with the repression of love stories and romance not only at the level of childhood, but also at the level of adulthood. Consequently, as it is mentioned earlier in this chapter, when discussing the paralysis of children in matters of love and fantasy, Joyce and Dib draw also plots of repressed love to show the extent to which paralysis affected also the sentimental lives of adults in Dublin and Dar-Sbitar.

In Joyce’s and Dib’s closed settings, there is no place for secrets, romance and confidentiality. For instance, the closing sitting of Joyce’s “The Boarding House”, represents the same social interactions that take place in Dib’s Dar-Sbitar with its inhabitants. In *Dubliners*, the secret love story woven between the educated man Mr. Bob Doran and Mrs. Mooney’s daughter, Polly, in “The Boarding House” outlines many aspects of the moral and social life in Ireland. Thus, the whisper and hearsay that followed the discovery of the secret

love story has created a kind of malicious gossip and scandal in Mrs. Mooney's pension. This reflects that the behavior of people in modern metropolis Dublin is strictly an observable fact and that love is strictly a forbidden feeling, because Dublin is "such a small city: everyone knows everyone else's business" (*D*, 1996: 71). Additionally, we are also told that if the affair will be of a common knowledge for all the occupants of the boarding house, Mr. Bob Doran will no longer be seen as "a man of honour"; therefore, he will lose and shatter the public position his diligence has earned, in the face of his family, and in the face of the Madam (Mrs Mooney), and more importantly this affair would place his job in jeopardy in the face of his employer. Consequently, Bob Doran is left with only two alternatives: either to marry Polly or run away, and at the end he decided to marry her, even though he knows that his family will look down at his scandalous behaviour. In fact, his decision to marry Polly is apparent at the end of the story, when Mrs. Mooney summons her daughter: "come down, dear, Mr. Doran wants to speak to you" (*Ibid*: 75). As Doran's instinct tells him earlier "one you are married, you are done for" (*Ibid*: 72), Doran is "done for" he becomes physically trapped. His choice suggests the lack of opportunities for the Irish people to overcome the conservative values of the church, the family, class and the paralytic state on which apparently all Dubliners have been subjugated to.

Just as James Joyce uses Mrs. Mooney's pension to create an atmosphere of repressive quality, Mohammed Dib too creates a very similar repressive atmosphere in his depiction of Dar-Sbitar. In Omar's habitations for example, secret love stories and confidentiality always fall under the gossip of public opinion or 'bad eye' "mauvais œil", since Dar-Sbitar is such a small place where the semi-communitarian co-existence prevent to hide any secret as Dib says: "On ne pouvait rien faire dans cette maison sans que trois cents yeux vous épiassent" (*GM*, 1952: 154). Besides this, the public opinion in Dar-Sbitar punishes and condemns severely anyone who tries to betray the old established moral cultural rules and values, even if

the behaviour of the person has only involved him/her to provide a little food for survival. This fate has in fact befallen upon Omar's cousin who, in her striking poverty, she has had a forbidden relationship with a stranger in order to provide her family with the basic needs of survival. But once her behaviour had become of common knowledge inside the "big-house" of Dar-Sbitar, she has finished to be seen as a violator of Dar-Sbitar's ethics and principles that caused her unfathomable abyss of humiliation and scorn of everybody, especially her brother Mourad who have sworn to kill her because of her behaviour and to avenge the honour of his family.

Moreover, it is of interest to notice that in both texts, Joyce and Dib make it clear that the romantic pursuit reduces the loved one to an object and a means of escape or self-promotion. Therefore, the characters' quest for love and romantic vitality are just seen as means and opportunities to counter paralysis that inflects their everyday lives. This means that in both texts, the characters seek relationships and pursuit romantic connections with their beloved not because they desired to form a passionate attachment to them, but because such connections lead them to individual benefits, and carry them towards a symbolic freedom. For example, both Bob Doran and Mrs. Mooney in Joyce's "The Boarding House", viewed the marriage to Polly Mooney as reparation for tarnishing her honour, because Bob Doran had simply taken advantage of Polly's youth and inexperience, and that his relationship with Polly Mooney is devoid of the loving affirmation needed for a meaningful passionate love relationship "there must be reparation made in such a case" (D: 1996: 70). In addition to this, though Mrs. Mooney acknowledged that Bob Doran "had a good screw" and a "bit of stuff put by" (Ibid), yet the marriage of her daughter with Doran will provide her with financial interests.

Bob Doran's connection with Polly Mooney in Joyce's *Dubliners* reminds us of Omar's cousin love relationship with her secret beloved in *La Grande Maison*, since in both

cases the beloved is seen as a kind of commodity reduced to a mere object of inquiry. Actually, in Dib's text, though love is banished from the inhabitants of Dar-Sbitar, yet we learned that Omar's cousin is seeking love and romantic adventures. However, we are also told that her involvement and quest for love is seen as a means to escape from the hunger and poverty that threatens her family and the rest of Dar-Sbitar. Economically speaking, this implies that via her love connection with her secret beloved, Omar's cousin will provide her family with little meat and food for survival.

From what is shown so far, we may say that the seed of love and vitality withers away in Dublin and Dar-Sbitar. The dreams of love and happiness for Joyce's and Dib's characters articulate the inevitable futility of romantic pursuits and the failure of amatory love. For, these characters languish under the inexorable logic and reality of the stagnating paralytic state, characterised by helplessness, immobility, loveless and lifelessness.

As stated previously in the present discussion, the childhood section of *Dubliners* and *La Grande Maison* set the theme of physical and moral entrapment, whereby all children are attracted to physical paralysis largely linked to their corrupt environment. So one too encounters more embodiments of paralysis in the adolescent sections, wherein the adult people, through their selfish physical dependence upon others find themselves lured into physical captivity. This was because of their failures to understand the real meaning of love and humanity.

c) - Paralysis and Mature Life

Among other examples of paralysis in *Dubliners* and *La Grande Maison*, we have the characters of Father James Flynn of "The Sisters" and Omar's grandmother, Mama, of *La Grande Maison*. These two characters are both described respectively by Joyce and Dib as

being afflicted by physical disability and paralysis. Their physical paralyses are also seen as motifs of the spiritual paralysis which the two countries endured for long time.

In “the Sisters”, Father Flynn’s story suggests an air of hopelessness that surrounds all Dubliners, and especially the boy-narrator who intimates no hope for Father Flynn to recover from his physical paralysis which afflicted him: “there was no hope for him this time” (*D*: 1996: 7). But in a larger sense, Joyce alludes by this statement that the physical paralysis of the priest holds up the stagnation of life in Dublin and that there is no hope for change and consequently there is no hope for future time. Richard Ellmann asserts that Joyce’s use of the physical paralysis of the priest is a “symptom of the general paralysis of the insane with which Ireland was afflicted. Irishmen did not move from point to point; they stuck fast and deteriorated” (Ellmann, 1982: 68-69). Moreover, Father Flynn is also described as a representative of the Irish clergy and orthodoxy because he devoted all his life for the service of the church, wherein he was unable to sustain the duties of his office. Thus, as a representative of the church, Father Flynn is seen as a figure of unspiritual decadence, dead of stroke in 1895 when Joyce himself was thirteen years old. He is stricken by the paralysis of Simony and he is pointedly associated with “empty, idle and broken chalices” (*D*, 1996: 17). In fact, this broken chalice, a traditional symbol of the church’s power to mediate between God and man which contains “the mind of God” (Guendouzi, 2008), and which affected the priest’s mind who “began to mope by himself, talking to no one and wandering about by himself” (*D*: 17), can perhaps be seen as a terrifying gap between belief and clerical duty because the “duties of priesthood was too much for him” (*Ibid*: 18) and also as a failure of the Catholic Church in Joyce’s Ireland. Besides, since the paralysis of the dead priest in the boy’s mind is associated with the word Simony which signifies in the Catechism a characteristically priestly sin, and as father Flynn is a failed priest, we may say that Father Flynn had committed Simony and he had been punished by paralysis.

Additionally, Father Flynn's relationship with the young boy was seen by the members of the family as a peculiar and suspicious relationship. Their disapproval of this relationship outlines that religious control is a form of paralysis upon children. "It's bad for children," suggests Old Cotter, "My idea is: let a young lad run about and play with young lads of his own age and not be...Am I right, Jack?" (*D*, 1996: 8). The family members are suspicious of the priest because he was a member of this religion, which for Joyce caused a sense of paralysis. All these examples made of the dead priest a "disappointed man" all his life, who could no longer control his religious behaviour. Because he could neither leave his ecclesiastical function which he no longer believed in, nor resists living in spiritual and religious contradictions, he becomes a mad man and begins moping "by himself, talking to no one and wandering by himself" (*Ibid*: 17), ended his religious career alone in the dark of a confessional box "wide awake and laughing-like softly to himself" (*Ibid*).

In Dib's *La Grande Maison*, Mama occupies the same position as that one of Father Flynn in *Dubliners*. Like him, she is an old woman struck with physical paralysis, as Omar says:

Grand'mère Mama *était paralytique* [...] Ses yeux se figeaient en une expression froide et dure à certains moments. Son visage, un joli petit visage de veille, rose, propre, était encadré d'une gaze blanche. On devrait aider Grand'mère pour tout, pour manger, se retourner, faire ses bousions.

(*GM*, 1952: 31. my emphasis)

Mama, Aini's mother and Omar's grandmother might be taken as a typical representative of the elders in the traditional family's order of the Algerian society. Her pains, sufferings and hardships stand for the old sufferings of the Algerian society, probably as early as the beginning of the French colonial exploitation of Algeria. For, despite the harsh living conditions to which she and other Algerian women were subjugated, and before she becomes

physically paralysed, she was probably an active person who raised and bred her children until they have grown up and married. Within this context, and in one of Mama's long lamentation and moaning, the author says:

Elle disait qu'on la rejetait comme une chose inutile. Tout cela, dit dans son ancien idiome, se transformait en lamentations qui emplissaient Dar Sbitar. Ce n'est pas plus un être humain qui se plaignait, mais bien la nuit entière et tout ce qui rodait alentour, mais bien la lourde, l'inconsolable maison. La voix de l'aïeule ouvrait un passage à une détresse immémoriale.

(Ibid: 166)

However, with time passing, Mama who served faithfully her only son, becomes a burden for him who has thrown her to his sister, Aini, as she says: "pourquoi ne te garde-t'il pas, ton fils? Quand tu servais de domestique à sa femme pendant des années tu étais intéressante" (Ibid). But, in her own term, like her brother and sisters, who have made proofs of ingratitude towards this impotent and paralysed old woman, Aini too treats her mother harshly and severely and blames her, as if she was responsible for her already limited resources, sufferings and pains:

Hé, Mama ! Tonitruait Aini dans son oriel en poussant vers elle l'écuelle. Tu ne vois pas que je t'apporte à manger ? Ou bien ce que je t'apporte te déplaît ?

La vieille femme ne remuait pas. Aini se saisissait de l'ustensile puis empoignait la tête de Grand'mère et lui fourrait l'écuelle sous le nez.

--Oui ma fille, j'ai vu. Pourquoi me traites-tu comme ça ?

--tiens, mange ! lui disait Aini en la secouant sans ménagement.

Elle bredouillait quelques mots entre ses dents: « puisses-tu manger du poison ».

(Ibid: 142)

In this way, Mama becomes the scapegoat for Aini's frustrations and anger, who is unable to feed one more mouth in her house. As such, Aini reproduces the humiliations, which her children and she encounter in their daily life in Dar-Sbitar, as Belhadj Kacem

asserts: “Grand-mère Mama devient le bouc émissaire sur lequel Aini décharge tout son malheur” (Kacem, 1983: 44).

By painting such types of characters, Dib accurately acknowledged the paralytic state of Algerian society, and he also diagnosed the dehumanized reality which its inhabitants have attained, as Jean Sénac says in one of his interviews: “Memmi, Dib, Mammeri nous émouvaient par une sorte d’autopsie minutieuse, de recensement discret de l’injustice” (Jean Sénac, quoted in Jean Déjeux, , 1957: 84).

The other parallel that can be drawn between the physical paralysis of the “poor” James Father Flynn as his sisters Eliza and Nannie call him in *Dubliners* and poor Mama in *La Grande Maison* lies in the symbolic dimension of the two places where the two characters respectively have been thrown to. Thus, in Joyce’s *Dubliners*, Father Flynn is left alone in a dark, cold drawing-room of the mourning house, where the air smells musty from having been long enclosed. In similar respect, the place where Mama was abandoned by Aini resembles to some extent Father Flynn’s mourning room. She is left alone with her lamentation and sorrow in a dark, small icy room (kitchen), far from the eyes of Omar and his sisters, as Dib says:

La cuisine de l’étage était une grande pièce aux murs noirs, pavée de larges dalles encombrées de toutes sortes d’objets ; démunis de porte, elle était envahie par un petit jour peureux. Le froid ici touchait la mort.

(*GM*, 1952: 33)

The assumptions from what is shown so far is that the story of the physical paralysis of Father James Flynn can be considered as an embodiment of paralysis for the most characters throughout the whole collection, who are in some way paralyzed, be it spiritually, morally, politically and even artistically. As a result, Joyce clearly veils his opinion that the Catholic dogma in Ireland is responsible for a large proportion of the Irish paralysis. And that his indictment is addressed ultimately to those institutions and classes responsible for Dublin’s

condition: the Catholic Church, the colonial ruling class, and those indigenous collaborators with that class.

Dib, however, shows through the physical paralysis of Omar's grandmother, Mama, the ancestral sufferings and oppression that his people engendered for long time, probably going back as early as the beginning of the French colonial colonisation over Algeria.

d) - Paralysis and Public Life.

Besides the symbolic and physical paralysis of James Father Flynn and Mama in both narratives, the other issue which deserves attention and study in this chapter as far as paralysis is concerned, has to do with the matriarchal order upon which Joyce's and Dib's societies were built during colonialism. This means that the prominent images of the mother in *Dubliners* and *La Grande Maison* are meant to suggest the confinement, narrowness and paralysis of the Irish and Algerian society respectively, and also the weak parental authority or support, if not its absence as it is the case with Dib's *La Grande Maison*. In both texts the images given about the male figures are those of degraded, humble, weak, violent and humiliated characters, while the women characters undergo the positions of family masters in the absence of fathers.

On the one hand, in Dib's text, the matriarchal order of the Algerian society is presented through the female character of Omar's mother, Aini. She is described by the author as a shrewd and determined woman who undertakes firmly most responsibilities in her household which makes her the sole authority and leader of her children in the absence of her alcoholic dead husband. Her portrait on the other hand, is similar to many Joycean portrait of female characters especially mothers. The most important are probably that of Mrs. Mooney of "The Boarding House" and of Mrs Kearney of "A Mother" and even that of Gretta Conroy

in the final story “The Dead”, who all played dominant and central roles in Joyce’s picture of the Irish society, while the male characters are all reduced to blustering and impotent figures.

As concerns *Dubliners*, in Joyce’s “The Boarding House” for instance, Mrs. Mooney, the landlady of the north-side Dublin boarding house in Hardwicke Street is depicted as an intelligent, cunning and calculating woman with a harsh, pragmatic view of the world who deals “with moral problems as a cleaver deals with meat” (*D*, 1996: 68), and who “governed the (her) house cunningly and firmly” (*Ibid*: 66). Whereas her husband, Mr. Mooney by contrast, is reduced to a dwarfed and violent man, a “shabby, stooped drunkard”, who instead of giving help and support for his family, he left his home and “began to go to the devil” (*Ibid*). The absence of parental authority in this short story elicits the paralysis of the Irish society, which suffers from the absence of the active forces of development and changes.

The portrait of Mr. Mooney is similar to many other Joycean male characters throughout the book. The male figures such as Old Cotter and Uncle Jack in “The Sisters”, Eveline’s father in “Eveline”, Lenehan in “Two Gallants”, Farrington in “Counterparts”, and even the disappointed and egoist Gabriel Conroy in “The Dead”, are all characterised as being unfit as role models. Actually, all these characters have something in common with the paralysis of Father Flynn, in the sense that all of them failed in their private and public lives. Take for example Eveline’s drunkard and violent Father for whom Eveline falls prey and becomes encumbered by his violence and from whom she must slip away to buy staples of food. Joyce writes in his letter to Nora, his wife on August 1904, just few days before the publication of “Eveline” that his mother had been trapped within an insidious ideological and cultural discourse that governed the nineteenth and early twentieth century Ireland:

My mind rejects the whole social order and Christianity-home, the recognized virtues, classes of life and religious doctrines. How could I like the idea of home? [...] My mother was slowly killed, I think by my father’s ill-treatment [...] When I looked in her face as she lay in her coffin [...] I understood that I

was looking in the *face of a victim and I cursed the system which had made her a victim.*

(*Letter III*, 1966: 28 my emphasis)

As the passage above suggests, Eveline's relationship with her father appears to represent a story of the internalization and reproduction of a patriarchal and militarized culture of Joyce's times. This means that, patriarchal thinking dominates the story; it freezes and paralyses Eveline in the present and has driven her mother in a "life of common sacrifices and final craziness" in the past due to her husband's ill-treatment (*D*, 1996: 41). Within the same short story, we are told that Eveline's father used to visit his two sons, Harry and Ernest, and that in their absence, Eveline "sometimes felt herself in danger of her father's violence" (*Ibid*: 38), as a result though we have not a clear cut understanding of the kind of relationship that exists between Mr. Hill and Eveline's mother, yet we may say that Mr. Hill abuses Eveline's mother during her lifetime. This is shown through Eveline who obliquely suggests that her mother was victimised in some way, as she ponders marrying Frank, she thinks: "She would not be treated as her mother had been" in the past (*Ibid*: 38). Moreover, the promise Mrs. Hill gives to her daughter during the earlier days of her illness "to keep the home together as long as she could" (*Ibid*), shows also the extent to which Eveline's mother has absorbed the convenient patriarchal order that required women to offer themselves on the altar of home and husband.

Similar to Joyce's violent and impotent male characters in *Dubliners*, in Dib's *La Grande Maison* male characters are more absent than present in Dar-Sbitar, and the only few moments we heard of them are through the testimony of women. Consequently, for Omar, the young protagonist of the novel, the only substantial male contact inside Dar-Sbitar is Hamid Serraj, a sometimes inhabitant of his sister's apartment, yet like the other male residents, his transient presence inside the habitation of Dar-Sbitar goes sometimes unnoticed because of his militant activism outside the 'big-house'.

As it is stated earlier in this chapter, like Joyce's text, Dib's *La Grande Maison* also shows this absence of fatherly figure. For example, in Omar's family, it is the mother, Aini, who assumed not only the domestic affair of her household but also she played a leading role in providing her children the basic economic needs and support for survival. Thus, in similar ways to Mrs. Mooney of "The Boarding House", Aini is seen as a brave and intelligent woman who does not leave a stone untouched to provide shelter and food for her children, even when her husband was still alive. In the light of this, it very important to recall in mind a French proverb which illustrates the very significance and outstanding role of a mother in the Maghreb community and Arab world as well: "Si ton père meurt, c'est le giron de ta mère qui t'accueille, mais si c'est ta mère, tu n'auras plus qu'à te coucher sur le seuil de la porte" (Quoted in Arin, 1946: 12).

However, in similar respect with Mrs. Mooney's failed husband, Aini's husband Ahmed Djezairi too was a man who has led a life full of despair and waste. He was a worthless man addicted to alcohol. Early in the novel, we are told how Aini in a state of frustration and despair puts squarely the blame on Omar's diseased and drunkard father who left them in misery, as she says to her children who have no clear memories of their dead father:

Voici tout ce que nous a laissé ton père, ce propre à –rien : la misère. Il a caché son visage sous la terre et tous les malheurs sont retombés sur moi. Mon lot a était le malheur. Toute ma vie ! Il est tranquille dans sa tombe. Il n'a jamais pensé à mettre un sou de côté. Et vous vous êtes fixés sur moi comme des sangsues.

(GM, 1952: 28)

As if things could not be any worse, the helpless widow finds herself bound feed one more mouth, her mother rejected by her own self-serving son. To make an end to their striking poverty, Aini ventures across the treacherous border smuggling fabric from Oujda, Morocco, to Algeria. At several times throughout the novel, Aini tirelessly reminds everybody: "C'est moi qui travaille pour tous ici"

(Ibid: 103) and “C’est moi qui travaille, rappela encore Aini. Et c’est mon sang que j’use à ce travail. Mais c’est dû” (Ibid : 101).

Besides, Aini refuses even to visit and set foot on the cemetery where her husband had been buried, as she justifies her position “Qu’irais-je faire là-bas Lalla? J’ai tant de travail ici. Celui dont je visiterais la tombe ne m’a laissé ni fermes ni maison pour que je le pleure” (Ibid : 80). In this way, Aini’s reluctance and refusal to visit her husband’s grave could be seen as a refusal to remember him, and though she was probably a victim of patriarchal rule and colonial circumstances she seems to be vindictive towards him as being a failure all his life.

As far as Omar is concerned, though at an early and tender age, he has lost faith in the adult world that has kept him in a life deprived of basic needs. For, He bears witness to the paralysis and dysfunction of his society, and rejects the logic of the adult’s reasoning. Within this context, Hamid Bahri asserts: “fatherless, Omar has no reason to believe in any father figure and, in fact, displays only contempt toward them” (Bahri, 2004: 63). This means that, for Omar, all adults including his father are all irresponsible and improvident vis-à-vis the lives of their children and compatriots, as the narrator says: “Il (Omar) ne croyait pas aux paroles des grands personnes, il ne reconnaissait pas leurs raisons [...] Il se consolait en secret de son jeune âge pour en comptant sur l’avenir pour prendre revanche” (GM, 1952: 111).

Significantly however, just like Joyce’s *Dubliners*, and apart from Aini’s husband, throughout the novel, mainly all Dib’s male characters are all described as dwarfed and worthless individuals who are “propre à-rien” like Aini’s brother, the only self-serving son of the paralyzed grandmother Mama who rejected her, though it was she who raised him until he becomes a man. For this reason, in Aini’s eyes, her brother is an unworthy person who knows only to waste and spend all his time loafing and roaming in cafés.

It is also interesting to mention that in one incident at the beginning of the novel, when a dozen of the police officers come looking for the militant Hamid Serraj, the male occupants of Dar-Sbitar retired to the back and stood voiceless, while a courageous woman, Sennya, decided to open up the door for them:

Les hommes avancèrent de quelques pas. Ils n'allèrent pas plus loin que le seuil de chaque chambre. Quelques-uns s'occupaient à resserrer le cordon de leur culottes bouffantes. Une femme décida :

--Par Dieu, j'ouvrirai et on serra bien qui c'est !

(Ibid: 43)

This illustrates the weak personalities and lack of courage of men in the world of Dar-Sbitar, while women are seen as brave and resilient compared to their male counterparts. As a result, life in the pension of Dar-Sbitar seems to be a world of women and children and this is the case with Omar since he was raised in a feminized world. Within this respect, Dib writes:

Les hommes sortaient tôt, aussi les apercevait-on rarement. Ne demeuraient là que les femmes: la cour, sous les branches enchevêtrées de la vigne, en regorgeait. Elles l'emplissaient de leurs allées et venues. Elles encombraient la porte d'entrée. Dans la cuisine, une cuisine pour Titans, elles palabraient à n'en plus finir autour du puits. Chaque pièce, ayant recelé durant la nuit une kyrielle de bambins, les restituait jusqu'au dernier au lever du jour: cela se déversait dans un indescriptible désordre, en haut comme en bas. Les marmots, le visage luisant de morve, défilaient un à un. Ceux qui n'étaient pas encore aptes à se servir de leurs jambes, rampaient, les fesses en l'air. Tous pleuraient ou hurlaient. Ni les mères ni les autres femmes ne jugeaient utile d'y prêter plus d'attention que cela. Les braillements que la faim ou l'énervement faisait éclos dominaient une rumeur nourrie, parmi laquelle parfois jaillissait un cri de désespoir.

(Ibid: 82)

Nevertheless, the failure of the father is largely linked to the novel's theme of paralysis. And it is interesting to say that almost two decades later, Dib continued to depict parental authority or fatherhood as being far from any significance. This is clear in his *La Danse du Roi* (1968), where the father is depicted as having lost his manliness and honor, and in exchange he allowed the French to take his title of father, as Dib argues:

Chez nous, le père n'a été que l'homme qui a engrossé notre mère au passage [...] Jamais vu un père de près. Ce qui s'appelle un père. Enfant de notre mère, en a été que ça nous. [...] Du jour où le français est entré dans ce pays, plus aucun n'a eu un vrai père. C'était lui le qui avait pris sa place. C'était lui le maître. Et les pères n'ont plus été chez nous que des reproducteurs. Ils n'ont plus été les violateurs et les engrosseurs de nos mères.

(Dib, 1968: 158-159)

In fact, the above passage reminds us of the letter that James Joyce send to his wife, Nora, in 1904, when he is composing "Eveline", declaring to her his grief and mourning for his dead mother who was in his mind a victim of both his father ill-treatment and the patriarchal system of established within the Irish society at that time.

In addition to the matriarchal order upon which Joyce's and Dib's societies have been built, another phenomenon which merits analysis in relationship to paralysis is the family disintegration. In *Dubliners* many characters suffer from the phenomenon of family disintegration. In "The Sisters" for instance, because of the total absence of family integrity, the orphaned boy-narrator withers in a world of silence and isolation which destroyed his childhood life. Thus, instead of receiving the protection and education from his family, he has been submitted to a rigorous and religious training of the church (James Father Flynn) that caused him to live in eternal paralysis. Similar to the boy-narrator, many other characters all along the book are depicted as being deprived from family affection and integrity. This is true for example of Eveline; the eponymous protagonist in "Eveline", who lives only with her violent and drunkard father, while her mother died when she was but a child, and that her brothers left the house.

As far as *La Grande Maison* is concerned, Dib typifies the dweller of Dar-Sbitar with a certain kind of family disintegration. For instance, Omar's family as we have seen is shaken by the absence of fatherly figure and parental authority. For, his father died when Omar was but a child, and it is Aini, his mother who stands as the only support or authority in his family.

But Aini in her turn, she is described by Dib as woman being devoid of any feeling and affection which her children needed. She is deprived from any enjoyment of her motherhood and of her feminine role. Actually, Dib attributes Aini's constant anger and violence towards her children to the fact that she and other women in Dar-Sbitar are surrounded and caught between, on the one hand by the hostilities and instabilities of the traditional Muslim milieu and, on the other hand, by the French colonial system which harshly exploits them.

Not only women, but children also lack family integrity and affection. They are representative of the down trodden and disinherited family structure at the time of colonialism, like Omar who represents thousands of Algerian children who were deprived from their fathers' affection. In one of the many scenes of harsh reality in the novel, Dib shows how Omar is helplessly assailed by the gust of wind in Dar-Sbitar, and desires to find his dead father:

Le froid lui léchait la figure. En de pareils moments, il souhaitait retrouver son père qui était mort. Mais ce qu'il découvrait était intolérable: son père ne reviendrait jamais auprès de lui, personne le pouvait le ramener.

(GM, 1952: 35-36)

In fact, the image of the father in the Algerian society is very important; he is imagined as the figure which comes to the rescue of his children when they needed him. Mohammed Dib knew too well the reality of losing one's father, since he was deprived of his at the age of ten.

In a word, we can say that the immorality, corruption, and frustration depicted in *Dubliners* and *La Grande Maison* amount to a larger extent to the representation of physical, psychological, social, political, spiritual and even artistic paralysis that characterized all facets of Joyce's and Dib's characters' lives. As a result, Dublin and Dar-Sbitar become visions of cities and peoples incapable of breaking free from the old patterns of behaviours, unable of achieving personal, national and artistic authenticity.

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Chapter Two: Resistance to Paralysis

As it is shown in the previous chapter, in Joyce's and Dib's societies, paralysis haunts every part of their characters. Nevertheless, in spite of the apparent inability of Joyce's and Dib's characters to overcome and resist paralysis, yet both authors remain optimistic about a better future. This means that there are always ways to come out of these stagnant situations, which for Joyce's characters resistance to paralysis is represented through the symbolic dimension of exile and death, while for Dib's characters it is through the growing of the national and political consciousness among Algerians and also through the use of revolutionary means. Therefore, the focus of the following chapter is to a great extent on Joyce's and Dib's alternative ways of resisting paralysis.

I- Death and Exile in *Dubliners*

However, and as far as *Dubliners* is concerned, staring from childhood until public life, it seems that Joyce aimed not only to represent Dublin or "that hemiplegia or paralysis which many consider a city", but also he aimed to awaken Dubliners from their paralysis. Refusing to revise his draft, Joyce wrote to his publisher Richard Grant:

It is not my fault that the odour of ashpits and old weeds and offal hang round my stories. I seriously believe that you will retard the course of civilisation in Ireland by preventing the Irish people from having one good look at themselves in my nicely polished looking-glass.

(Letter I, 1957:18)

It follows that Joyce's 'polishing looking-glass' did not only give a detailed account of Dubliners' paralysis in a modern metropolitan city, characterised by lack of guidance, instability of human language and relationships, but it also provided these Dubliners with alternatives ways to overthrow paralysis and it paved for them the way towards salvation and civilisation. However, within Joyce's collection these movements are expressed ambiguously.

Thus, in the closing scene of each story, Joyce is ambivalent about the idea of resisting paralysis; for he never gave us clear indications whether “spiritual liberation” will be attained at the end or just paralysis will ultimately prevail. For instance, the three first stories of childhood “The Sisters”, “An Encounter” and “Araby” demonstrate the characters’ development of basic tendencies to resist paralysis. Thus, these three protagonists share a common desire to lead heroic and adventurous lives. They are all inquisitive and sensitive, and tend, however timorously, toward rebellion from authority. They adjust themselves to the social prohibitions they observe around them, but nevertheless are obsessed in quests of pure, “unmediated knowledge” (Walzl Florence, 1982: 403).

To exemplify what is said above in relationship with Joyce’s ambiguities, the boy-narrator in “The Sisters” seems to represent the best instance. In this story, the boy is inquisitive and meditative and has a thirst for knowledge. He desires to understand, to complete what is incomplete in the language of his elders (old Cotter, his aunt, Eliza and Nannie) and in the physical world around him and above all, he attempts to fashion his own identity. Thus, through the death of his friend, Father Flynn, the boy-narrator feels as if he was released from something by his death:

I found it strange that neither I nor the day seemed in a mourning mood and I felt even annoyed at discovering in myself a sensation of freedom as if I had been freed from something by his death

(D, 1996: 11)

But vexed by the banality of the real world and the elders’ authority over him, ironically at the end of the story, the young boy has surrendered and internalised paralysis, and more importantly he accepted to live in a static life.

Nonetheless, if these three characters failed to resist and escape from their encompassing paralytic situations, in Father Flynn’s story however, we see that death is a

means of escape and resistance, though this is a particularly bleak outcome, it seems almost preferable to what Flynn left behind: a physically and emotionally paralysed society. While in “Eveline” and “A Painful Case” we find that Joyce has given insights of resistance through which the Dubliners can survive and overcome paralysis. These insights are expressed through the symbolic dimension of exile, be it physical or mental and spiritual; two elements that are intrinsically well developed in Joyce’s later works such as *Exiles* (1918).

On the one hand, before starting analyzing the notion of death as a means of resisting and escaping from paralysis, it is worth to mention that Joyce sees in death a favorable condition and a beautiful ‘form of life’. Thus, in his praise of the Irish poet James Clarence Mangan, he argues that “literature to come must be a fusing of Mangan’s intense romantic imagination with a classical strength and serenity” and he further asserts that:

The time is come wherein a man of timid courage sizes the keys of hell and of death, and flings them far out into the abyss, proclaiming the praise of life, with abiding splendor of truth may sanctify, and *of death, the most beautiful form of life.*

(James Joyce, Quoted in Barry, 2000: 60 my emphasis)

This last italicized proportion of Joyce’s quote is a theme that Joyce developed in many of his works including *Dubliners* that would show ways of resisting and surmounting paralysis.

It would seem that Joyce extols no sense of hope in the world of Dubliners. However, upon further inspection within “The Sisters” one can argue that Joyce actually glorifies death in some ways and indicates it as a more favourable condition. In this story, as the dead priest is literally paralysed in his final days; however, his death seems like an escape. Thus, Father Flynn suffers from this “hemiplegia of paralysis” which affected his life; as a result he has chosen to die instead of living in a suffocating paralytic state. Furthermore, in the story, his sister, Eliza claims that her brother had “a beautiful death” which is reminiscent of Joyce’s claim and sentiment that death is the most beautiful form of life. She also later claims that

Flynn “make(s) such a beautiful corpse” (*D*, 1996: 17), which is a striking contrast compared to the paralysed description we receive of Flynn’s life.

In fact, from the beginning of the story, Flynn is marked by incompleteness when the boy-narrator associates his paralysis with the word “gnomon” (*Ibid*: 7). Also we have already seen that the boy simply represents symbolically the priest by his face only, which suggests incompleteness. Finally the broken chalice that represents the beginning of Flynn’s descent into madness symbolically represents brokenness. In death however, it would seem that Father Flynn has obtained peace and freedom from his paralysis, and this is best represented by “the idle chalice on his breast” (*Ibid*: 17). Such an image reverses the trend of incompleteness and brokenness and symbolically intimates a sort of forgiveness if we consider the chalice to represent Father Flynn. Moreover, Eliza’s final image of Flynn “wide-awake and laughing-like to himself” (*Ibid*) contrasts with the image of the priest at peace in his coffin, which indicates a sense of escape from the paralysed life.

On the other hand, while contemporary critics have argued that exile within Irish writing has commonly been romanticised and praised, Joyce’s characters in *Dubliners* are not idealised and do not see exile as a romantic escape. Rather, they see exile as the only way they can survive. While their country is not literally forcing them out, its actions have betrayed them that they have no choice but to leave. Because of the crippling paralysis, oppression and the dehumanising practices fostered by major social and religious institutions, the city of Dublin had become inhospitable. Moreover, because of his characters’ inability to find happiness in Dublin, each of them seek refuge somewhere they can be safe. This idea is epitomised by the character of Eveline in “Eveline” and Mr. James Duffy of “A Painful Case”, who represent varying dimension of exile, be it physical, moral or spiritual.

Joyce has presented physical exile as a means to escape from paralysis through the character of Eveline, the eponymous title character. Eveline's sense of exile is largely material. She wants to leave her nation for socio-economic reasons. Leaving will allow her to marry, have security, gain a place within society; it might lead her to be finally happy. Secondary to her is the ability to escape from the paralysis and stagnation of Dublin and her relationship with her abusive father. For her, exile is the only means of escape; if she stays in Dublin she will end up like her mother or Maria in "Clay" alone and holding a prayer book, a symbol of entering the religious life.

In this short story, Eveline is all too aware of the dehumanising situation in which she is living. She longs to be able to get away from Dublin and begins a new life in a foreign country. However, we learned from the story that Eveline's relationship to her father is like that of a master and a servant than father and daughter. As she thinks about the life she will have in Argentina, she declares that living in Dublin is "a hard life" and "wholly undesirable" (Ibid: 39). When she thinks back to her childhood, there are but two instances where her father treated her kindly. Now that she is grown however, she "sometimes felt herself in danger of her father's violence [...] and lately had begun to threaten her" (Ibid: 38). Her father's emotional and verbal abuse is escalating into physical violence, and Eveline is not safe even in her own house, therefore, escaping the situation has become the necessity for her wellbeing.

Besides, even when Eveline turns to the church as a source of escape, the physical manifestations of her room are all broken or tainted: the promise made to the blessed Margaret Mary Alacoque are yellowed, the priest, whose picture is also yellow has immigrated to Australia and the Harmonium is broken.

Consequently, the only solution for her to overcome paralysis is to elope with her saviour, Frank. The latter appears through Eveline's memories and reflections on how they first met and their love relationship thus far. She remembers that she saw Frank "standing in the gate" as having a "face of bronze" (Ibid: 42). In her reflections, she thinks that marrying Frank will allow her to have a family; to gain a social status and above all people will treat her with respect. Earl Ingersoll argues that in Eveline's mind, Frank is seen as a "metaphor for liberation" (Ingersoll, 1996, 56). However, in the final lines of the story, as the ship is about to leave, and Eveline is standing on the dock unable to move, Frank calls her three times. Three times she refuses to acknowledge that she know him, her eyes offering "no sign of love or recognition" (D, 1996: 43). At this very moment, even though she sees what has become of her mother's life "closing in final craziness" (Ibid: 41),-because she chose to marry and assume the traditional role of a mother-, yet she decided to remain in Dublin, thinking that if she is able to keep the family together, then she will not end up in the same situation as her mother. In fact, Eveline's devotion to the church and the promise she gave to her mother to keep the house as long as she could prevents her from leaving Dublin, and going into exile. Nevertheless, in Eveline's story, Joyce demonstrates the beginning of Dubliners' awakening and consciousness to make some attempts to change their social and economic situations, which is an indication of the Dubliners' hope for change and vitality in life.

The second type of Joyce's exile presented in *Dubliners* as a way to come out from paralysis is the spiritual or mental exile. Thus, while Eveline has chosen a physical exile so as to overcome paralysis, Mr. James Duffy in "A Painful Case" has chosen a self- exile and alienation from Dublin's society. As an aspiring man, he chooses an austere morality which consists in isolation from the world and his fellow citizens: "he had neither companions nor friends, church no creed. He lived his spiritual life without any communion with others" (Ibid: 121). As a consequence of his self-elected exile, Mr. Duffy spends most of his time thinking

about himself, and spends a lot of energy to avoid the company of others, which why his life is carefully organised with the purpose of preventing any interference from elements outside his own personal sphere. He lives outside Dublin in order to be isolated as possible “Mr James Duffy lived in Chapelizod because he wished to live as far as possible from the city of which he was a citizen and because he found all the other suburbs of Dublin mean, modern and pretentious”(Ibid: 119). In this manner, he agrees entirely with Sartre’s famous dictum from *Huis Clos* “l’enfer, c’est les autres” (Sartre, 1947: 75).

However, Mr. Duffy’s carefully constructed self-existence comes to an abrupt end in one evening through his meeting with Mrs. Sinico by attending a concert at the Rotunda. His first introduction to Mrs. Sinico destroys his self-elected exile. Thus, before he even knows her name or anything about her, Mr. Duffy has created a memory of this woman and she has therefore become a part of him. Accepting Mrs. Sinico into his life changes Mr. Duffy; he is drawn into society from which he alienated himself for a long time, she has also drawn him into relationship, into an arena of feelings. However, through his relationship with Mrs. Sinico, Mr. Duffy learned that “love between man and man is impossible because there must be no sexual intercourse and friendship between man and woman is impossible because there must be sexual intercourse”(D, 1996: 125). As a result, Mr. Duffy comes to the conclusion that human relationships in a paralysed Dublin cannot exist; therefore, at the end of the story he decided to continue living in an inner-exile for the next four years.

What can be said is that Joyce’s characters attempt to fashion themselves and resist paralysis, but at the end it seems that all the studied characters/subjects have finished internalising paralysis. Within this context, the new historicist Louis Montrose writes:

Shaping individuals as a loci of consciousness and initiators of action - endowing them with subjectivity and with capacity for agency; and on the other hand, positioning, motivating and constraining them within -subjecting

them- social networks and cultural codes that ultimately exceed their comprehension and control”

(Montrose, 1986: 21)

This means that Joyce’s presentation of the Irish identity as a social and historical construct rather than as a personal essence goes beyond the seeming anticipation of what Frederic Jameson termed “human consciousness [...] is not timeless and everywhere essentially the same, but rather situation-specific and historically produced” (Jameson, 1981: 152). Thus, Joyce not only exposes the social forces at work in shaping identity and subjectivity but also he grapples the weighty questions of whether for example modern consciousness can effectively resist the ideological forces of the history and culture that produced it

Although some characters within the previous studied short stories tried to resist paralysis, yet all their efforts are good for nothing. For example, in “The Sister”, through the death of Father Flynn, the boy–narrator feels as if he was released from something by his death, but ironically at the end he surrendered to and internalised paralysis, and more importantly he accepted to live in a static life. This is also true for Eveline in “Eveline” who is described in the final lines of the story as a “helpless animal” unable to elope with her lover and escape from paralysis.

II- Political and National consciousness in *La Grande Maison*

Unlike Joyce’s *Dubliners* however, Dib’s novel not only depicts impotent, paralyzed individuals, but rather it embodies also various patterns of socio-political resistance and subjective transformations whereby individuals and groups begin to act effectively in their behalf so as to reach their goals. Thus, Dib’s text challenges the idea that the nation can be represented or spoken by a single individual or group. It recalls to the Algerians who, like Omar himself, have not yet learned to speak, but who aspires to have a say in things, and want

to work alongside nationalist militant like Hamid Seraj; an intellectual and politically experienced man.

More importantly, Dib's text challenges the existing reality of the Algerian society. Thus, Dib asks questions as to the 'why' conditions surrounding him. As for example, the young Omar recognises the difficulties of life that surrounds him and looks for the causes of such a current state of affair:

--Nous sommes des pauvres.

Mais pourquoi sommes-nous pauvres ? Jamais sa mère ni le autres, ne donnaient la réponse. Pourtant c'est ce qu'il fallait savoir [...]

Ses idées se bouscullaient, confuses, nouvelles, et avant de se perdre en grand désordre [...]

Et personne ne se révolte. Pourquoi ? C'est incompréhensible. Quoi de simple pourtant ! Les grandes personnes ne comprennent-elle donc rien ? Pourtant c'est simple.

L'enfant continuait : c'est simple. Cette petit phrase se répercutait dans on cerveau endolori et semble ne point devoir s'évanouir. Pourquoi ne se révoltent-ils pas ? Ont' ils peur ? De quoi ont' ils peur ? Elle se précipitait dans sa tête à une allure vertigineuse.

(GM, 1952: 117-118)

In this passage, Omar's questions are constant reminders of his actual situation and a piercing view of the Algerian conditions under colonialism as well. His questions-responses are indications of what needs to be done in order to break away from the prison situation and adverse conditions in which Omar and other Algerians find themselves.

Furthermore, as the statement above shows, in Omar's mind there is already an answer to the problems he sees around him, and there can only one way to take: to change the things around him by overcoming the present state of affair through revolutionary means and resistance. As such, Omar carries with him ideas of resistance and a strong will to break away from the prison of Dar-Sbitar, in the sense that he recognises the backwardness, poverty and awkward of his society, which are caused in a large extent by the French colonialism: "Omar

n'acceptait pas l'existence telle qu'elle s'offrait. Il en entendait autre chose que ce mensonge, cette dissimulation, cette catastrophe qu'il devinait. Autre chose" (Ibid: 55).

In fact, though Dib renders the awareness of the Algerian condition and their paralytic state in the immediacy of a child's perspective, yet there are other characters in the text who are also conscious of their current state of affairs. For, character such as Hamid Seraj is depicted as literate man, politically conscious and aware of Dar-Sbitar's dehumanised and paralytic state and, who functions as agent of resistance against the colonial presence. As such, we read in *La Grande Maison*:

Il n'était pas nécessaire d'être fin observateur pour deviner en lui un homme qui avait beaucoup lu et vécu. [...] le plus étonnant, c'était était l'expression de ces yeux qui semblaient voir plus avant dans les gens et les choses. [...] Les femmes le regardèrent désormais celui qui serait en possession d'une force inconnue.

(Ibid: 62-63)

Though he works clandestinely to elude the French authorities, Hamid Seraj's resistance and appeal for revolution against colonialism have made of him a hero. Thus, in Dar-Sbitar he is seen as a political leader who informs the dwellers about their social and political paralysis, and he is the one who raises the peasants and labourers' awareness to improve their working conditions:

C'est Hamid Seraj qui leur a mis en tête l'idée de se regrouper. [...] avec des gens comme lui, en verrait tout les meurt-de-faim de la ville donner la main aux meurt-de-faim de la compagne et se mettre d'accord.

(Ibid: 74)

Seraj words to the peasants reverberate in Omar's mind. For, Seraj dissection of the colonial regime leads Omar to a new level of awareness and consciousness, and at the end he seems to find an answer to his questions regarding their misery: "Il (the colonizer) volent les travailleurs. Et cette vie ne peut plus durée. C'est ça pence Omar" (Ibid: 105).

Dib also gives another vivid description of a colonised man, who is perfectly conscious of his situation. Old Ben Sari is presented as a man who recognises the hypocrisy of the colonial regime through his revolt against the colonial judiciary system as he says:

Je ne veux pas me soumettre à la justice, ce qu'ils appellent la justice n'est que leur justice. Elle est faite uniquement pour les protéger, pour garantir leur pouvoir sur nous, pour nous réduire et nous mater. Aux yeux de telle justice je suis toujours coupable, elle m'a condamné avant même que je sois né, elle nous condamne sans avoir besoin de notre culpabilité. Cette justice est faite contre nous, parce qu'elle n'est pas celle de tous les hommes. Je ne veux pas me soumettre à elle.

(Ibid: 52)

Old Ben Sari's anger is a protestation against the prevailing system of justice. This protest is against a particular affair around him; the foreign imposed justice and the constant police inquisitions in Dar-Sbitar. His anger is then the result of the inequity of the colonial rule's hegemonic concept of justice. Thus, in old Ben Sari, Dib makes it clear that what is good and benefic for a selected group is not good and benefic for all. As such, this example becomes the reason for his rejection of the colonial rule as well as a living example of the effects of the foreign rule over his people.

Besides these, Dib's text also gives a voice for the marginalized and paralysed women and challenges the idea that women had not have played a determining role in the birth of the Algerian nation. Thus, in her effort to provide the family with the basic needs, Omar's widowed mother, Aini decides to start smuggling fabric in the nearby Moroccan town of Oujda, even though she knows that this activity entails a risk of imprisonment. Her move outside the big house into the world of trafficking and border crossing however, is both a sign of her resistance against the paralytic and miserable life and also an anticipation of the work of her compatriots who cross the borders of Algiers a few years later, carrying food and guns under their veils.

In fact, from a Foucauldian point of view, the three characters wanted to form and affirm their own identities through “negation and opposition” (Greenblatt: 1980: 208) against the French colonial rule, which works as an agent of paralysis that reduced their lives into misery and exploitation. Therefore, like the new historicist’s claim, we may say that the intensity of the cultural and socio-historical experience(s) lead DIB’s characters not only to construct their self-awareness, their identities and give meaning for their lives, but also they (experiences) ushered for them a way to resist the paralytic situations to which they were subjugated, with potentially revolutionary consequences at the end.

In relationship with the two texts however, their ends are in fact very significant, because in both of them we notice the optimistic view of both authors about a better tomorrow. Thus, in *Dubliners*, “The Dead” seems to imply a sort of rebirth as Gabriel Conroy pledges to revisit the land of his ancestors: Western Ireland. The latter is very significant because throughout the whole story we learned that Gabriel denies his ancestry, which is exemplified by his superiority complex towards those he encounters, especially Lily, his aunts, and, more importantly, Gretta, his wife. Therefore, his submission to make a westward journey at least indicates some sort of action or attempt to self-improvement for Gabriel, a notion that is sorely absent in the characters of the previous stories.

This means that Joyce was not content to leave *Dubliners* with thoughts of paralysis, but instead the ending tone of “The Dead” is much more resolute than the other previous stories. In this light, John Carrington explains that the closing story exhibits a “pattern” in which “the protagonist [...] is placed in a position which reveals the direction he must take if he is to live a full and creative life” (Carrington, 1969: 15). However, as it is shown, the characters are always defeated by the combined forces of their environments; for example, father Flynn’s death puts the boy-narrator in “The Sisters” in a path towards an internalizing paralysis, and Eveline’s indecisive personality caused her to remain in a paralytic Dublin.

Nevertheless, Gabriel Conroy's character does not seem to fit with this mold as his realisation reveals the direction he must take. This realisation is seen through his acceptance that "the time had come for him to set on his journey westward" (*D*, 1996: 250). This image of rural, western Ireland permeates in the story, and becomes eventually a crossroad of the living and the dead as well as it represents the heart of the ancient homeland.

Furthermore, if the studied short stories have all set forth and completed the cycle of paralysis, I believe that Joyce's Final story entitled "The Dead" reopens the cycle of paralysis and provides us with alternative ways to resist and escape from paralysis. Moreover, just as "The Sister" is the overture of *Dubliners* with a note of paralysis, "The Dead" is the crescendo of the entire collection with a happy ending. This means that, the end of the book with a note that the whole Ireland is dressed with a white snow, one can argue that the snow represents a sort of grace for the living as well as the dead. For, as the snow will eventually melt, it gives water that suggests life after. The snow which falls indifferently all over Ireland, upon the living and the dead and covering them with neutral whiteness is a symbol of regeneration and rebirth not only of Gabriel Conroy's new found identity with the world, and of the breakdown of his egotism but also about all Dubliners' new found identities by overcoming their paralytic state:

Snow was general all over Ireland. It was falling on every part of the dark central plain, on the treeless hills, falling softly upon the Bog of Allen and, farther westward, softly falling into the dark mutinous Shannon waves. It was falling too, upon every part of the lonely churchyard on the hill where Michael Furey lay buried. It lay thickly drifted on the crooked crosses and headstones [...] snow falling faintly through the universe and faintly falling, like the descent of their last end, upon all the living and the dead.

(*D*, 1996: 255-256)

In similar ways, towards the end of *La Grande Maison*, as the young Omar becomes aware of the brewing changes brought on by the circumstances of the World War outlines an

initiation not only in to adulthood for Omar but also it symbolises the beginning of national Algerian resistance and the quest for cultural identity as well:

En découvrant cette foule presque heureuse, Omar oublia le pain. Emporté par cette marée impétueuse, il n'eut aucune peur, bien qu'il se vit loin de la maison et s'y glissa au beau milieu. En dépit de sa petite taille, de sa faiblesse d'enfant, il s'bondonnait au courant qui le traversait et le portait dans le même sens. Il n'était plus un enfant. Il devenait une parcelle de cette grande force muette qui affirmait la volonté des hommes contre sa propre destruction. Toutes les rues déversaient cette foule dans la Place de la Mairie. Ce fut là que s'assemblèrent les Tlemcénien.

(GM: 184-185)

The above passage makes it clear that Omar throwing himself in the crowd of people signifies that he will be an active member of his society who anticipates changes and resistance against the colonial regime. Omar also symbolises the birth and growth of national consciousness of the younger generation in Algeria. For he does not act as an independent individual, but rather he is a part of his family, his community and in a larger context his society which becomes the ideal for the revolutionary state. As a result, near the end of the novel we read that a new life seems possible: "la guerre, il ne savait ce qui c'était. La guerre [...] et autre chose, se prolongeaient comme une joie secrète dans son cœur" (Ibid : 188). In Arnaud Jacqueline's words, Omar is a representative character of Dib's society, for he represents "l'instinct irréductible de la liberté, de la révolte, en même temps que la prise de conscience" (Arnaud Jacqueline, 1986:167).

To sum up what is said above in relationship to Joyce's and Dib's conceptions about the idea of resisting paralysis, we may say that in the case of Joyce's short story collection, the final image of the falling snow upon the living and the dead represents enlargement and liberation from the various kinds of paralysis set up in *Dubliners*. Thus, Joyce believed that Dublin cannot be freed and released from its stagnant life and paralysis by one man's insight (Gabriel), but instead, the private vision for changes and revolution has to be transformed into

public actions. For, though he wanted his readers to perceive the forces of influence in Ireland (Catholicism and British imperialism), Joyce realised that the individual recognition alone was not; finally, enough to achieve the 'spiritual liberation' that he had hoped to foment with *Dubliners*. This is in fact the lesson of Stephen Dedalus in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916), who knows what ideologies suffuse his thought and constrain his art, but who cannot, after all free himself from these ideological constraints.

In the case of Dib's work however, the gathering of the Algerian people at the end of the novel indicates the gathering of creative forces to overthrow the stagnant and paralysed situation caused by the French colonialism. For, the gathering articulates a common voice of a whole community, which, its only aim is to create a nascent national energy. Its energy is dependent on each individual participant's will to resist together the paralytic situation and the degrading socio-economic conditions in Algeria. This energy as far as the Dibian texts are concerned is created in his second novel *L'Incendie* (1954), in which a fire was declared in Dar-Sbitar. However, this fire stands symbolically and emblematically for that ordeal, which the country was to endure for seven years.

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Conclusion

This modest dissertation is meant to make a comparative study of James Joyce's and Mohammed Dib's ideas and conceptions of the paralysis image and resistance in *Dubliners* and *La Grande Maison*. This comparative study shows also that in spite of the differences in cultures, religions and geographical situations, yet, Joyce's and Dib's concerns are not different. Thus, both writers deal with the same themes, i.e. the portrayal of the paralytic and stagnant situations Joyce's and Dib's societies have attained, as well as the way how these societies paved their ways towards revolt and resistance. Indeed having been approached and analysed both narratives under a new historicist perspective it is made clear that the two writers produced works that lent themselves to similar visions and conceptions about the paralysis image, of which their peoples suffered for long time. This was explained by the indebtedness and similar historical events that shaped the history of Ireland and Algeria. Within the first part of the present investigation, and before properly starting to analyse the two texts, chapter one provides the historical background that characterised Joyce's Ireland of the 1890's and Dib's Algeria of the 1940's, by putting a great emphasis on the major historical events and incidents that influenced the writing of both texts. While the second chapter is designed to supply the present work with some biographical information about the lives of the authors by focusing exclusively on their educational careers and influences. However, the second part is exclusively designed to enhance the readers' understanding of Joyce's and Dib's images of paralysis. The last chapter is dictated to the study of the alternatives ways that Joyce and Dib presented in order to resist and surmount paralysis.

It has also been explained that what binds James Joyce's *Dubliners* and Mohammed Dib's *La Grande Maison* is the common historical background that characterised Joyce's Ireland and Dib's Algeria. Thus, from the analysis above, it is revealed that while the industrialised European countries saw rapid developments in all fields Ireland's subjugation to

the Catholic Church and the British imperialism have led the Irish people to live in a paralysed and stagnant Dublin far from the urbanised and modernised Europe. Adding to this, the betrayal and the downfall of the nationalist leader Charles Stewart Parnell has drawn the country to a chaotic and degrading situation. Similar to Joyce's Ireland, and as it is depicted throughout the novel, Dib's Algeria between the Two World Wars was also characterised by social and economic wretchedness caused in a larger extent by the French colonialism.

As far as the theme of paralysis is concerned, Joyce and Dib respectively present the portrait of cities in peril from a wide range of viewpoints and experiences. Each facet of society is depicted from children to adults, maturity and public life and each facet of life provides a snapshot of the paralysis plaguing Dublin and Algeria.

Thus, Joyce presents us with a city whose inhabitants' mind constituted within the tangled nets of paralysis and who remain largely unaware of the circumscription of their thoughts. In a series of exchanges and correspondence with his publisher Richard Grant in 1906, Joyce wrote that his intent in representing Ireland "paralysis" in the volume was to counter this ideological blindness by providing the Irish people with one good look at themselves in his "nicely polishing looking-glass" (*Letters II*, 1966: 18). He viewed such exposure and the possibility of self-recognition by his Irish readers as "the first step towards the spiritual liberation of (his) country" (*Letters I*, 1957: 22). But though his characters become increasingly aware of their enclosure and paralysis, they are no more able to escape and resist them. In the text, the vision of children, adults and mature characters is stymied within this text, and even the end of each story did not assure them liberation from paralysis. Whereas in Dib's text, he presents characters trapped in the city to which they belong. Each character represents areas of Tlemcen's life (Algeria), which Dib felt had been paralysed by both the French colonial enterprise and some ideological beliefs and ethics of the Algerian society such as family and gender constraint.

As regards the resistance to paralysis, it is remarkable that Dib's description of his characters and society at the end of the novel as oriented towards uprisings and revolution matches that of Joyce's depictions of his subjects/ characters, whom despite of their inevitable failures to overthrow and resist paralysis, have profusely given rise to a nascent revolt which would characterize every Irish individual's voice who intends to establish a new identity and self. This identity and new self may eventually replace the paralysed subjective identity created by Catholicism and the British imperialism

One might argue that the ten year battle fought over *Dubliners*' publication demonstrate the power of the book as a whole. For, it demonstrates that Joyce's painting of the city was so true to life, so accurate, that the publishers feared publishing it because they were afraid to face the truth that he presented about Dublin. Indeed, when his publisher, Richards Grant, requested specific revision of *Dubliners*, along with the omission of some short stories such as "An Encounter" and "Two Gallants", Joyce replied in a letter dated 20 May 1906, explaining why he could not alter his book, he says:

The points of revision on which I have not yielded are the points which rivet the book together. If I illuminate them, what becomes of the chapter of the moral history of my country? I fight to retain them because I believe that in composing my chapter of moral history in exactly the way I have composed it, I have taken the first step towards the spiritual liberation of my country.

(*Letters I*, 1957: 18)

In a word, we may say that Joyce's *Dubliners* struggle both to free the artist and modern consciousness from all forms of ideological constraints, be it the Catholic Church or the British imperialism and gender constraints.

One way to conclude this simple comparative study is by saying that, despite the fact that both authors depicted the degrading social and economic, and even political situations of their countrymen, nevertheless, Joyce's short stories and Dib's novel are inexorably and

diligently employed as works of emancipations. Constantly calling attention to the fact that, for Joyce, Christianity (which in Ireland is meant the Roman Catholic Church), and the English imperialism counterfeits and destroys life. While for Dib, his text gives us a deep understanding of the real psychological state of the colonised as well as it (*La Grande Maison*) gives for Dib a voice to denounce the French colonial power in Algeria. I do mean here that Dib, like Joyce committed himself for the service of his country and believed in revolution as he says:

Toutes les forces de création de nos écrivains et artistes mises en service de leurs frères opprimés feront de la culture et des œuvres qu'ils produiront autant d'armes de combat. Armes qui serviront à conquérir la liberté.

(Dib, Quoted from Carta Jean: 1958)

In this light, Albert Memmi comments about Maghrebian narratives in general, and Algerian French novels in particular, are pertinent for Dib's early texts as well:

L'Algérie est acceptée, revendiquée ou discutée, elle cesse d'être un simple décor ou un accident géographique. Ces nouveaux auteurs sont aux prises avec leur pays comme avec l'essentiel d'eux même. Autochtones appartenant à ces populations qui n'ont pas d'autre pôle d'attraction, ils en partagent le drame. Colonisés, il leur a suffi de s'exprimer, non pour témoigner sur la colonisation, mais pour révéler l'univers intérieur et extérieur du colonisé.

(Albert Memmi, 1965: 14-15)

To close this humble and modest literary dissertation, it shall be said that the works of either James Joyce or Mohammed Dib garnered their countries as well as worldwide attention because they brought new visions about the matters of seeing life and also they paved their respective countries towards revolutions and nascent revolts.

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Summary

The research work is about a comparative study of the thematic aspects between the Irish poet, novelist and writer James Joyce (1882-1941), and his counterpart, the Algerian poet, writer of the French expression Mohammed Dib (1920-2003), in their two respective literary works entitled *Dubliners* (1914) and *La Grande Maison* (1952). As a whole, the dissertation focuses exclusively on the theme of paralysis and resistance to paralysis.

Firstly, *Dubliners* is a collection of fifteen short stories set in Dublin when this latter was controlled by the British imperial state and under the domination of the Roman Catholic clergy. The stories follow a regular pattern; they preside from individual to generate groups. The opening stories are obviously of youth in Dublin such as “The Sister”, “Eveline” and “After The Race”. The others advancing in time and expounding in scope concern the middle years of their character and their socio-political and religious affairs like “Ivy Day In The Committee Room” and the closing story entitled “The Dead”. In fact, Joyce has tried to present his collection to the indifferent public under four of its aspects: childhood, adolescence, maturity and public life. What holds these stories together and makes of them a book with a controlling principle is the theme of paralysis. Joyce himself confirmed this theme in a letter sent to one of his publishers in 1904, in which he claimed that no writer had yet presented Dublin to the world and that his intention in writing *Dubliners* is to betray the soul of that hemiplegia or paralysis which many consider a city.

Secondly, *La Grande Maison* (1952) is the first volume of a knit trilogy, comprising *L’Incendie* (1954) and *Le Métier à tisser* (1956), which chronicles the lives of the Algerian people in the region of Tlemcen, a relatively urban town in the west of Algeria between the Two World Wars and before the outbreak of the Revolutionary War of 1954. In it, Dib portrays the long years of misery, distress and deprivation of the native inhabitants of Dar

Sbitar, and implicitly it recalls the major uprisings that took place in 1945 in Setif, Guelma and Kharata. It is also a vivid description of the squalid conditions of the working classes, trapped in an urban tenements, unable to live a morally and material decent life. The novel as a whole focuses on the adventures of a young boy Omar, a native peasant of Dar Sbitar, who serves as a microscope through which the reader is given information about the obscure labyrinth of the 'big House' -Dar Sbitar- and the tumultuous world of Algeria under the yoke of French colonialism. Though at an early age, Omar the protagonist of the novel rebels against the bad living conditions of his family and the system of colonialism as well.

However, hinging upon the new historicist theory, which asserts that any given texts, literary or non-literary, are always parts and parcels of much wider historical, political, social, and cultural circumstances. The research work will reveal that although the two writers belong to two distant and widely separated societies in time and space, whose people had different cultures, beliefs, traditions, religions and spoke different languages, yet their preoccupations in their first respective works of fiction are not dissimilar. Thus, the Irish writer James Joyce wrote *Dubliners* in a period which share many similarities with the socio-historical context which witnessed the writing of Mohammed Dib's *La Grande Maison*. That is to say, both Joyce and Dib were concerned with the problems of their fellow people during the colonial period and pre-revolutionary wars of their countries, and at the end they described the way these two societies were waved towards revolts and revolutions.

On the one hand, James Joyce saw the domination of Irish Catholicism and the British imperial system and its hegemonic attitude over Ireland as the ultimate source behind the paralysis and stagnation of the Irish people. While on the other hand, Mohammed Dib saw that the French colonialism and some traditional forms and layers of the Algerian society such as patriarchy work as agents of oppression and paralysis from which his fellow people suffer from.

The dissertation is divided into two parts and each part contains two chapters. Within the first chapters, I dealt with a comparison that encompassed the historical contexts that shaped Joyce's Ireland and Dib's Algeria. Thus, it is shown that when James Joyce completed the writing of *Dubliners*, Ireland was still an English colony, and in spite of all the nationalist agitation of the previous decades, it was not granted the Home Rule status. Among these events we have the betrayal and failure of Charles Stewart Parnell who aimed to restore an Irish free and independent state, and in addition there was the emergence of some cultural and revivalist movements such as the Gaelic League and the Irish theatre, which all desired to purify the Irish culture and language. Like Joyce's Ireland, Dib's Algeria was also characterized by the emergences of the major uprisings that took place in 1945 in Setif, Guelma and Kharata, which are implicitly referred to in *La Grande Maison*, as well as the long years of oppression and dehumanization of the Algerian people under the French colonial regime. The second chapter however, is devoted to the lives of both authors by putting emphasis on their educational and artistic careers as well as on their influences. The second part also contains two chapters. The first chapter is concerned with the analysis of the theme of paralysis and its motifs. Thus, I have attempted to show that Joyce's *Dubliners* and Dib's *La Grande Maison* are two imagistic works unified by the theme of paralysis. By paralysis, I mean the inability of the characters to break away from the constraints of Irish Catholicism and the French colonialism and from old patterns of behaviors. However, taken at a surface level of reading, Joyce's *Dubliners* is a collection of short stories with no linear continuity. However, to read the work this way is to a large extent to ignore the fact that *Dubliners* was written around a unifying theme. This was the theme of paralysis. This latter is one that Joyce himself espouses when he depicted Ireland (Dublin) as the scene because that city seemed to him the centre of paralysis. Therefore, many critics have admitted that paralysis was the most important theme that occurs throughout the collection and nearly all of

them have recognized paralysis as Joyce's central theme in the collection. Likewise Joyce's *Dubliners*, Dib's *La Grande Maison* can also be read around the theme of paralysis. Thus, throughout the novel Dib gives us a vivid description of a squalid populated house (Dar Sbitar) which this latter, instead of serving as a refuge for the hardships of colonial rule, it has turned to shelter paralysed and starved ghost-like people who wallow in misery and bad living conditions.

Moreover, the key term paralysis looms indeed large on each short story that constitutes *Dubliners*, and it occurs throughout *La Grande Maison*. For, this paralysis prevents the people of Dublin and Algeria from achieving authenticity and from leading meaningful existences, whether on a personal, social or spiritual level. Firstly, this chapter gives a detailed account of how Joyce's Dublin as well as Dib's Tlemcen (the physical environments) works as embodiment of paralysis, which oppresses, directs, and paralyses the characters within both works, by throwing lights on the realist-naturalist stance used by both authors to support their aims. It also includes the study of characterization (childhood, adolescence, maturity and public life) in relationship with the theme of paralysis and its motifs such as the repression of love, the absence of the fatherly figure as well as the ancestral sufferings.

While in the second chapter, I have demonstrated that although Joyce's *Dubliners* and Dib's *La Grande Maison* portray two paralysed and suffocating societies, hence, both authors remain optimistic about a better tomorrow and that there are always ways to come out from these stagnant situations. Within this context, I have set to investigate the alternative ways which both authors have given in order to resist and overthrow paralysis. This, in fact, goes by taking into consideration the authors' differing, or opposing conceptions on the idea of overcoming paralysis. That is to say, James Joyce saw that the only way for his characters to survive and escape from Dublin's paralysis is either through symbolic death and/or exile

(physical and spiritual), while Mohammed Dib saw in national and political consciousness of the Algerian society as the only available means to surmount and resist paralysis and to overthrow colonialism as well.

One way to conclude this simple comparative study is by saying that, despite the fact that both authors depicted the degrading social and economic, and even political situations of their countrymen, nevertheless, Joyce's short stories and Dib's novel are inexorably and diligently employed as works of emancipations. Constantly calling attention to the fact that, for Joyce, Christianity (which in Ireland is meant the Roman Catholic Church), and the English imperialism counterfeits and destroys life. While for Dib, his text gives us a deep understanding of the real psychological state of the colonised as well as it (*La Grande Maison*) gives for Dib a voice to denounce the French colonial power in Algeria. I do mean here that Dib, like Joyce committed himself for the service of his country and believed on revolution

Finally, we can say that Joyce's and Dib's first works pointed directly and accurately to the disease (paralysis). This was colonialism which stifled the most fundamental human impulses towards happiness and well being. Colonialism had, therefore, to be resisted. It is no wonder that after the publication of the two texts, the Irish as well as the Algerian people had engaged in a long armed struggle against the foreign presence and, a decade later, they won their independence.

Résumé

La présente dissertation explore le thème de la paralysie et de la résistance dans "Dubliners" de James Joyce et "La grande Maison" de Mohamed Dib. Cependant, tournant autour de la nouvelle théorie "New Historicism", cette étude comparative indiquera que malgré l'histoire différente des deux peuples auxquels les deux écrivains appartiennent, les préoccupations de ces derniers dans leurs premiers travaux étaient identiques. Ainsi, d'une part, l'auteur irlandais James Joyce a écrit "Dubliners" dans une période qui est caractérisée par la dominance du catholicisme irlandais et le système impérial britannique qui dans sa vue a créé la paralysie de l'Irlande, d'autre part, l'auteur algérien Mohamed Dib fait la chronique également dans son premier roman, "La Grande Maison", où il raconte l'oppression et les bouleversements sociaux, économiques/politiques auxquels ses compatriotes ont été subjugués pendant le colonialisme français. On essaye également de montrer que malgré l'image de paralysie dominant, racontée dans les deux textes, Joyce comme Dib ont donné des manières alternatives comment résister à cette paralysie et la surmonter. Enfin, j'ai essayé de montrer que les visions et conceptions des deux auteurs pour résister à la paralysie demeurent différentes. Dans le cas des personnages de Joyce, à la fin de chaque histoire il n'a pas donné des indications littérales si la libération spirituelle sera atteinte ou juste la paralysie régnera finalement, pourtant il le rend évident pour résister et s'échapper à la paralysie, le peuple irlandais a pour mourir ou s'exiler physiquement ou spirituellement de la paralysie de Dublin. Tandis que pour les personnages de Dib, la seule manière de renverser et surmonter la paralysie est la conscience nationale et politique en utilisant des moyens révolutionnaires. Afin de réaliser ceci, j'ai divisé la dissertation en deux parties, chaque partie contient deux chapitres. Le premier chapitre traite l'historique de l'Irlande et de l'Algérie, alors que le deuxième chapitre est consacré aux biographies courtes des deux auteurs en mettant une grande emphase sur leurs carrières éducatives et artistiques. La deuxième partie contient également deux chapitres ; le premier chapitre traitera l'analyse du thème de la paralysie et ses motifs. Tandis que le second portera sur les tentatives de ces personnages pour résister à la paralysie en soulignant les différentes visions et conceptions de Joyce et de Dib concernant l'idée de surmonter la paralysie.