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Subject :

**Resistance in Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* (1970) and
Mohammed Dib's *La nuit sauvage* (1995)**

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DEDICATION

To all our lovely families Aterrane and Djouzi.

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Abstract

This dissertation attempts to study the issue of Resistance in Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* (1970) and Mohammed Dib's *La nuit sauvage* (1995). Emphasis is put on the way these literary works depict the issue of resistance. Our research relies on *Cultural Materialism* (1998) in which it analyses the theme of resistance and the way writers express it on their works. This study explores the way resistance reflects power of any nation, it also examines the two literary texts within the historical contexts of Black Civil Rights Movement and the Algerian black decade in order to show its influence of the years in trouble. The study comes to the conclusion that the two writers express nearly the same need of resistance.

Key words: resistance, cultural materialism, segregation, Civil Rights Movement, Algerian Civil War

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I. Introduction

The present dissertation deals with resistance in Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* (1970) and Mohammed Dib's selected stories of the novel *La nuit sauvage* (1995). Their works tackle historical, political, and cultural issues that their society witnessed. These two works will be studied in terms of *Cultural Materialism*.¹

In fact, Resistance is the main issue of our research, in which we are going to focus on the way characters of Toni Morrison *The Bluest Eye* and Mohammed Dib's *La nuit sauvage* resist against the dominant features in a society.

Resistance Literature is a theme studied by the English author Barbara Harlow², it deals with the literature contemporary third world in relation to liberation movement which opposes and struggles against the west literature. In other words, Resistance Literature emerges as a reaction of any colonized and oppressed countries against the west dominant culture. Resistance literature informs the reader about political and cultural debates which have relation to the liberation movement such as the apartheid and women emancipation.³

Barbara Harlow texts focus on the authorial biography of the third world theories of texts and contexts as she states that narrative resistance needs historical referencing and the burden historical knowledge in order to inform the reader⁶. Resistance literature avoids all that has relation to esoteric languages; the use of historical and political contexts in the discussion has an aim of broad audience⁷. In fact, many writers dealt with the issue of resistance among them: First, Toni Morrison whose true name is Chloe Anthony Wofford born on February, 18th, 1931 in Lorrain Ohio, considered as one of the most important African American writers in post colonial era. Her works known for their epic themes, vivid dialogue and richly detailed black characters. She is the first black woman to receive Nobel Prize for literature in 1993 and Pulitzer Prize for fiction in 1988. Her famous works are *The Bluest Eye*,

Sula, *Song of Solomon* and *Beloved*, which deal with black sufferings from the white oppression.

Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* (1970) describes the different events that America witnessed during the 1950s and the 1960s. Black sufferings existed long before the twentieth century, i.e, during the Atlantic slave era in which black people were ill-treated and considered inferior to the white people. After that, blacks are still subordinate, unequal and inferior to the whites who see themselves superior to them and this segregation used to control the southern states⁹. This situation continued till the twentieth century during which it witnessed American interference in the Second World War.

During the 1950s, the whites passed different laws such as Jim Crow laws and organizations like Ku Klux Klan which showed their hate toward the non- whites as they mistreated them¹⁰. The whites applied the law "separate but equal" and blacks were forbidden to attend white schools, buses and streets¹¹. This total segregation led to the emergence of black movement in 1950s known as Black Civil Rights Movement which claimed for basic human rights and the end of racial discrimination. This movement witnessed the appearance of significant figures which supported the movement. On the one hand, Martin Luther King who was against the use of violence toward the whites, on the other hand, Malcolm X who believed that the only solution to counter white's oppression was violence.¹²

Second, another famous writer who examined Resistance is Mohammed Dib who was born on July 21, 1920, Tlemcen, Algeria, and died on May 2, 2003, He is an Algerian novelist, poet, and playwright, known for his early trilogy on Algeria, *La Grande Maison* (1952; "The Big House"), *L'incendie* (1954; "The Fire"), and *Le métier à tisser* (1957; "The

Loom”), in which he described the Algerian consciousness and their will to struggle for independence that began in 1954¹³. The trilogy recounts the years 1938–42. His early works deal with myth, allegory, symbol and fantasy to portray the French colonial repression of the Algerian people as well as to look for the real identity of Algerian people¹⁴. In Mohammed Dib’s last works, he used the fantastic, the erotic, and the voyage metaphor integrated to his description of the search of truth and self: *La nuit sauvage*(1995) and *Simorgh*(2003). In addition to being a novelist, he has preference to poetry, he wrote several collections of poetry: “GuardianShadow”), *Formulaires* (1970; “Forms”), *Omneros* (1975; *Omneros*), and *L’enfant Jazz* (1998; “Jazz Boy”), and he published two collections of novellas, *Au café* (1956; “In the Café”) and *Le Talisman* (1966; *The Talisman*). In addition, he was the author of a film scenario and two plays¹⁵.

Though Toni Morrison and Mohammed Dib belong to two different areas and eras, they both experienced different post colonial problems, their works target their own pains and experiences. Mohammed Dib treats a crucial period that Algeria witnessed during the 1990s, whereas Toni Morrison discussed the black suffering during the 1950s and 1960s. Both Mohammed Dib and Toni Morrison dealt successfully with the sufferings of their fellow citizens during their dark period respectively.

Review of literature

Toni Morrison’s and Mohammed Dib’s novels have been the center of interest of many critics. Criticism on Toni Morrison’s literary texts have been carried out under multiple angles. First, Jerome Bump in his article entitled *Racism and Appearance in The Bluest Eye: A Template for an Ethical Emotive Criticism*¹⁸, classifies the novel as a template for the

practice of ethical emotive criticism, which in its turn relies feelings to thoughts; to appearance then to emotions¹⁹. He argues that Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* focuses on emotional aspect which destroys the individual, as it creates a blank in a human psyche where it pushes him to feel shame about his being as well as his appearance, these feelings led to the emergence of racism toward the blacks²⁰. He claims that Morrison focuses more on the ugliness side to make the white readers feel the blacks suffering of being marginalized and oppressed²¹. The novel according to Bump is based on the relation between us and what is kept from us. This relation enables the white reader to understand the feeling of ugliness²². The novel illustrates Morrison's anger and not Pecola, that anger was a prominent behavior led by the characters, because of their pettiness that drives them to feel anger and hatred toward the danger, but they are so weak since they are secondary emotions²⁴.

Another illustrative critic of *The Bluest Eye*, is Amanda Putnam who analyzed in her article the idea of *Mothering violence: Ferocious Female Resistance in Toni Morrison's The Bluest Eye, Sula, Beloved and a Mercy*²⁶. She states that female characters in Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* are marginalized at different levels, sexually, emotionally, as well as racially due to their surroundings²⁷. Most black women prefer the use of verbal and physical violence, as a response to the white oppression²⁸. Black young girls prefer the use of physical violence in a way to empower themselves and others prefer verbal violence to resist white beauty in order not to damage their self-identity²⁹. These violent actions create a new vision of African American femininity where the black women are not powerless or weak any longer, they stand and resist against social gender as well as racial identity that try to weaken them.³⁰

As for, Patrice Cormier-Hamilton, he analyses *The Bluest Eye* in a naturalistic perspective in his article entitled *Black Naturalism and Toni Morrison: the journey away from self-love in The Bluest Eye*³¹, in which he focuses on black naturalism since most Morrison's works are related to black issues in the American society, in addition to that, Hamilton wants

to shed light on how male and female protagonists fail and succeed to catch their freedom through self-awareness³². Through this article, Hamilton aims to illustrate the way naturalism in African American writings is fostered and has changed in order to justify a literary genre that gives importance to cultural heritage, the latter, comes back to blacks, problems of assimilation, conflicts between self and community. In addition to the psychological and economic barriers raised by the issue of racism³³, through *The Bluest Eye*, black naturalism treats the different challenges African American witnessed. Besides to the raise of several conflicts between the self and community³⁴, it also depicts how black characters are influenced by the western culture and see it as more important than theirs.³⁵

Concerning Mohammed Dib, Ralima Koucha, in her doctoral research about *les dernières oeuvres de Mohamed Dib un usage historien des guerres Littéraires*³³ that studies *La nuit sauvage*, *si diable veut*, *L'arbre à dire*, *comme un bruit d'abeilles* and *simorgh*; she analyzed the different styles and genres used by Mohammed Dib in his writing according to a historical context³⁴

She considers that Dib divided his style into three parts, the first is in the context of Algeria in the 1950s, and the second is Dib's new exploration in the 1970s that gathers fiction, reflection, religion, art and literature from his realistic Dib's novels³⁵. The last part concerns Dib's shift to the fantastic and symbolic novels *Qui se souvient de la mer* (1962). She argues that the style transformations are based on tragedies which are shown in Dib's *La nuit sauvage* (1995) that explores the Algerian Black Decade of the 1990s.³⁶

In addition to Ramila Koucha's study, Mohammed Salah Zeliche proposed that Dib was in struggle, looking for a new writing style symbolizing a new way of thinking³⁷, and he argues his choice of using the name of Nafisa that according to him means in Arabic

“breath” which shapes his new creation³⁸. Therefore, “*Qui se souvient de la mer*” is considered as a new exploration of M.Dib’s new way of writing³⁹.

All in all, we come to notice that Jerome Bump, Amanda Putnam and Patrice Hamilton studied *The Bluest Eye* only in terms of physical appearance, female resistance and black naturalism. Concerning Dib’s criticism, Ramila Koucha and Mohammed Zeliche studied *La nuit sauvage* only in terms of experimentation of a new style of writing, however, their readings are limited to the way Mohammed Dib wrote his novels without exploring that issue of resistance to the society. Therefore, our research paper will focus on the issue of resistance in Mohammed Dib’s selected stories of the novel *La nuit sauvage* (1995) and Toni Morrison’s *The Bluest Eye*. We will study both novels in the light of *Cultural Materialism*.

Issue and working hypothesis:

From this review of the literature about Toni Morrison and Mohammed Dib, we notice that many studies have already dealt with their novels. Hitherto, little research has been devoted to their shared idea of resistance. This dissertation suggests a new perspective within the historical context of the two novels.

With reference to cultural materialism and the analysis of the two works Toni Morrison’s *The Bluest Eye* and Mohammed Dib’s selected stories of *La nuit sauvage*, this research explores the theme of Resistance. Throughout our analysis, we demonstrate that both Mohammed Dib and Toni Morrison share the same idea and vision, in other words both writers target their social issues. We refer to the power of their writing in expressing resistance in several ways. Thus, the historical context of each novel will help us understand how resistance emerged in different ways but shared the same objectives. i.e, both writers use history as a tool to decipher the different historical events of that period despite their different experiences they share the same goal which is to stop their sufferings. However, each author

explores Resistance by using different tools and materials which came to gather in a way the two works for a possible comparative study. As a result, our discussion justifies this choice by showing the possible similarities of the two works in terms of resistance.

In order to show the existence of resistance in Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* and in Dib's *La nuit sauvage* in relation to society, we suggest that the theory of Cultural Materialism seems appropriate for our analysis and research since it deals with the politics of resistance in any given society as John Branningan argues. Cultural materialists look for ways in which defiance, subversion, dissidence, resistance, all forms of political opposition, are articulated, represented and performed. Through the thirteen collections of the selected stories Mohammed Dib demonstrates resistance through events and characters, however the collected stories are written in the light of the Algerian Civil War context. Therefore, our chapters will focus on the analysis of this notion of resistance by analyzing the fragmented period of the two works.

Methodological outline:

. The study is divided into four sections the introduction is the first section in which we introduce the purpose of our study as we introduce the biography of the two authors Toni Morrison and Mohammed Dib as well as the historical background of their works *The Bluest Eye* and *La nuit sauvage*. The second section is related to Method and Materials, through which we will try to introduce and explain the theory of *Cultural Materialism* according to John Brannigan's book entitled *New Historicism and Cultural Materialism*, as we provide summaries of the two works. The result section focuses on the findings we reached in the discussion.

The discussion section has two chapters. The first chapter deals with the analyses of Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* in terms of resistance, we attempt to depict the way Morrison uses

her novel in a resistant way, and how we link it to the theory of *Cultural Materialism*. In addition to this, we give a brief historical background of the novel as well as the plot.

In the second chapter, we demonstrate the way Resistance is depicted through Mohammed Dib's *La nuit sauvage* (1995). We rely on *Cultural Materialism*, as we shed light on the historical events that are related to the setting of the novel. Finally, the conclusion will summarize the different main points reached through the dissertation.

Endnotes:

¹Toni Morrison, *The Bluest Eye* (Alfred A. Knopf, a division of Random House, Inc., in 1993)

² Mohammed Dib, *La nuit sauvage* (Dahleb, 1995)

³John Branningan, *New Historicism and Cultural Materialism* (McMilland Press LTD : London, 1998)

⁴ Mary Layoun Middle East Report, No. 159, Popular Culture (Jul. - Aug., 1989), p. 46
Published by: Middle East Research and Information Project (MERIP) Stable URL:
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/3012527> Accessed: 29-07-2015 13:20 UTC

⁵ ibid

⁶ Layoun, *Middle East Report*, (1989)

⁷ ibid

⁸ Feroza Jussawalla , World Literature Today, Vol. 63, No. 1 (Winter, 1989), p. 169

University of Oklahoma <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40145295> Accessed: 29-07-2015 13:26 UTC

⁹ Jill Karson, *The Civil Rights Movement*: (Thomson GaleGreenhaven Press27500 Drake Rd.Farmington Hills, 2005) P 12

¹⁰ ibid

¹¹ ibid

¹² ibid., 15/19

¹³ Encyclopedia Britannica 2015

¹¹⁴ ibid

¹⁵ ibid

¹⁶ Jerome Bump, *Racism and Appearance in The Bluest Eye: A Template for an Ethical Emotive Criticism*: College Literature, Vol. 37, No. 2 (Spring 2010), pp. 147-170Published by: College LiteratureStable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20749587> .Accessed: 19/10/2014 15:14

¹⁷Ibid

¹⁸ibid

¹⁹Ibid

²⁰ Bump, *Racism and Appearance in The Bluest Eye* Vol. 37, No. 2 (Spring 2010) .Accessed: 19/10/2014 15:14

²¹ibid

²²ibid

²³Amanda Putnam, *Mothering Violence: Ferocious Female Resistance in Toni Morrison's The Bluest Eye, Sula Beloved, and A Mercy*: Black Women, Gender + Families, Vol. 5, No. 2 (Fall 2011), pp. 25-43Published by: [University of Illinois Press](#)Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5406/blacwomegendfami.5.2.0025> Accessed: 07/01/2015

07:19

²⁴ibid

²⁵ibid

²⁶Ibid

²⁷ Amanda Putnam, *Mothering Violence: Ferocious Female Resistance in Toni Morrison's The Bluest Eye, Sula Beloved, and A Mercy*: Black Women, Gender + Families, Vol. 5, No. 2 (Fall 2011), pp. 25-43Published by: [University of Illinois Press](#)Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5406/blacwomegendfami.5.2.0025> Accessed: 07/01/2015

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²⁸ Patrice Cormier-Hamilton, *black Naturalism and Toni Morrison: the journey away from self love in The Bluest Eye* MELUS, Vol. 19, No. 4, Ethnic Women Writers VI (Winter, 1994), pp. 109-127Published Oxford University Press on behalf of The Society for the Study of the Multi-Ethnic Literature of the United States (MELUS) Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/468206> .Accessed: 07/01/2015 07:21

²⁹ ibid

³⁰ibid

³¹ibid

³² ibid

³³ Ralima koucha, *les dernieres oeuvres de Mohamed Dib un usage historien des guerres Littéraires* : la nuit sauvage, si diable veut, l'arbre à dire, comme un bruit d'abeilles, simorgh (Université Paris IV- Sorbonne, 2007)

³⁴ ibid

³⁵ ibid

³⁶ ibid

³⁷ Salah Zellige, L'altérité, une transcendance d'ibienne des paysages voisins Delhousie University, vol 74/ 75 2006 P 157 -171 Accessed 01/21/2015 15 :03 , [http/ www. Jstore.org](http://www.Jstore.org). stables

³⁸ ibid

³⁹ ibid

II. Method and Materials

1. Method

It has so far been clear that the materials selected to study and analyze Resistance, concerned Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*(1970) and Mohammed Dib's *La nuit sauvage* (1995). As for methodology, we will appeal to John Brannigan's book of *Cultural Materialism* (1998)¹. But before dealing with the theory we have to give a brief introduction of Cultural materialism. It came into being during the 1970s and 1980s in Britain, and was founded by the Welsh theorist Raymond Williams².

Cultural Materialism and New Historicism work for interpreting literary texts as historical and cultural artifacts, they are seen equated to each other. In other words, both the studies use and analyze literature in historical and cultural ways³. Cultural Materialism studies the way literary texts are implicated and interfered in history and it is therefore a historical /historicist approach to literature. It emphasizes the importance of history as a shaping force of literary texts and the importance of literary texts in shaping history and study culture. In other words, literature and history influence each other and each study needs the other to complete the other branch work⁴. In so far as, resistance means "moquawama" that symbolizes the dynamic of national liberation and anti colonial struggles⁵. As a matter of fact ,Edward Said maintains that "the most important task of all will be to undertake studies in contemporary alternatives to Orientalism in order to ask how one can study the culture and people from libertarian or a non- repressive and non- manipulative perspective"⁶.

As Raymond Williams argues that culture refers to intellectual development as to the art in general, in his own practice, it tends to have the more anthropological sense of the way of life of people⁷. It involves their collective practices, beliefs, social customs and political values and forms of expressions, as it is akin to cultural system in which historicists see it as

their own object of study, it also focuses on the way culture is produced technologically, practically and ideologically⁸. John Brannigan argues that Cultural materialists see themselves in opposition to the formalist criticism which had prevailed in literary studies prior to the 1980s, preferring instead to historicise, theorise and politicise literary texts for instance, Shakespeare has been pressed into service to teach reactionary social norms to justify imperialist ideology⁹.

Barbara Harlow, one of the theorists who studied on resistance, wants to defend resistance literature as a political activity which has much to do with freeing peoples of colonial occupation, yet she criticizes politicized literary theory as not doing enough to promote the literature in academic circles¹⁰.

In some cases, Cultural Materialism achieves its political ends by interpreting literary texts from the stand point of oppositional or dissident sub culture¹¹. Materialist criticism relates both literary cannon and changing interpretation of it to the cultural formations which produce them, and which those interpretations reproduce or help to chance¹². In which it attempts to non canonical texts and offers different conceptions of human identity, cultural social historical process, as well as the activity of criticism itself¹³. Cultural materialist analysis will seek to explain how: despite the ideological pressures and constraints to the country, renaissance literature manages to articulate dissident and subversive perspective¹⁴

Though Cultural Materialism and New Historicism are seen alike, both have some differences. Cultural materialism looks for the articulation, presentation, and performance of defiance, subversion, dissidence, as it aims to explore the historical and the contemporary possibilities for subversion. Whereas new historicism examines the function and representation of power and focus on the ways in which power contains any potential subversion. It aims to describe power in the past¹⁵.

Cultural Materialists call for the need to reinterpret and reorient radically the understanding of power relations in the past at the present¹⁶. In 1980, Allan Sinfield has written cultural materialist analyses of many different aspects of British literature and culture from different periods where he focuses on the ways in which culture functions as an instrument of reacting ideologies but also demonstrates, where culture contains contradictions and subversive perspective to be articulated¹⁷

In Branningan's book *New Historicism and Cultural Materialism*, Johnathan Dollimore argues that through New Historicism and Cultural Materialism have the same focus but their end is different¹⁹, Jonathan Goldberg argues that contradictions are the very means by which power achieves its aim, they also generate an instability which can be its undoing²⁰. From this quote, Dollimore expresses the difference in focus between New Historicism and Cultural Materialism, where the former examines the very means which power achieves its aim; Cultural Materialism examines the conditions of instability which can be undoing²⁰.

Cultural Materialism aims to subvert the tenants of humanity criticism by replacing the appeals to tradition to humanity with a call to the democratic ideas of potential, difference and the collective definition of social and political goals²¹.

2. Materials:

Summary of the novels:

-a- *The Bluest Eye*:

Toni Morrison in *The Bluest Eye*, deals with the social life of black people during the sixties but the story setting was during the forties, she focuses on the historical, political and cultural backgrounds. She divides the novel into four main chapters and each chapter is presented by a season of the year, starting by Autumn and finishing with Summer. But before

dealing with autumn, she introduces the story of Jane and Dick, which sheds light on the images of childhood in the United States.

The first chapter which is entitled Autumn highlights different images of the lives of African Americans in Ohio. From the first pages of this chapter, Morrison introduces white supremacy, gender and class differences toward the blacks. Illustrated by the presence of Rosemary Villancci a white girl who tries to weaken and marginalize both sisters Frieda and Claudia, she bothers them by eating bread with butter, but both sisters are so conscious and more confident in themselves, and answer her by resisting against her supremacy as well as they want to learn her a lesson about her arrogance and to show that even if they are blacks, they are stronger than her. Through this chapter, we get knowledge about the main narrator who is Claudia and her sister Frieda McTear who play an important role in resisting the white oppression, Morrison gives a deep description of the Mc Tear's family where they are portrayed as poor and live under harsh conditions, despite this hard condition of life in Claudia's house, it is surrounded by love and security.

The second chapter is entitled Winter Starts with Claudia's description of her father she refers to winter when she speaks about her father, in this section Morrison introduces the coming of a new white girl in the school she is so beautiful, and rich, as she is well- treated by her teachers, her name is Maurine Peal , Claudia and Frieda soon give her a nickname transforming Maurine peal to meringue pie as they knew about her handicaps such as dog cannin and her disfiguring hands where they see them as a weapon to resist against Maurine's oppression, it indicates also the mistreatment of Mr. Yacobowski toward Pecola he marginalized her in his store because of her ugliness. This chapter also tackles the mistreatment of young black girls especially Pocola the protagonist of *The Bluest Eye* and she is protected by Claudia and Frieda her best friends, she is seen weak because of her ugliness, but her two friends used to protect and defend her from any kind of oppression, they answer

by insulting and beating all those who mistreat their friend as well as themselves. Maureen, the beautiful white girl at the beginning shows some sympathy toward Pecola soon she shows her real white face and supremacy against the black girls. Frieda and Pecola resisted to Maureen supremacy by insulting her and giving her horrible nicknames.

The third chapter is about Spring, Morrison opens this section of the novel with an image of new life with its extraordinary resilience. This section too tackles an important event happened in Claudia's house when Mr. Henry wanted to rape Frieda by touching her breast but she ran away and informed her father who in his turn put out Mr. Henry. In this chapter too, we are informed about another issue in the black social life which is marital abandonment, when Claudia and Frieda give a visit to Pecola where her mother works as servant in a white family, accidentally Pecola knocks the freshly baked fruit cobbler to the floor, in a harsh and unexpected way Pauline reacts by knocking her daughter down and put out the three girls from the house. However Pauline's attitude toward the white young girl was so different where she uses to comfort and reassure her since she is very scared. Pecola was raped by her father and made her pregnant.

The last chapter is entitled Summer, Morrison indicates Claudia as older, she even depicts to the reader the new life of Pecola where she gets a new imaginary friend who comforts against her loneliness since she lacks parental care and protection.

-b- *La nuit sauvage* :

After his experimentation of style, Mohammed Dib explores a new way of writing with a new vision. *La nuit sauvage* written in 1995 in French and then translated in 2001 is that thirteen collected stories which constitute the whole novel, therefore this masterpiece deals with several and different stories, each story has its goal and deep meaning, written in the context of Algerian Civil War. Dib tries to retell Algerian history, in other words he describes

by different means what happened during the black decade in Algeria, that tragic terror between 1992 until 1999.

Thanks to the characters of each story, Dib explores new style which makes history appropriate to those literary texts. For instance, in his short story “La déviation” he develops the theme of Algerian life style during terrorism in Algeria. The center story “La nuit sauvage” summarizes the whole novel, Dib describes a whole day of horrific events by giving full and vivid descriptions of each moment occurred that day and how the characters face and overcome the hard times.

We conclude that Dib’s *La nuit sauvage* explores many themes such as resistance and courage of Algerian during The Algerian Black Decade.

Endnotes

¹John Brannigan, *New Historicism and Cultural Materialism: Cultural Materialism: Literature and dissident politics* (McMilland Press LTD : London, 1998),94

²ibid, P. 94

³ Ibid

⁴ ibid

⁵ Barbara Harlows, , *Resistance Literature Revisited: From Basra to Guantánamo* Journal of Comparative Poetics, No. 32, The Imaginary and the Documentary URL:<http://www.jstor.org/stable/41850736>Accessed: 29-07-2015 13:22

⁶ Ibid

⁷ Brannigan, *Cultural Materialism*, P. 95

⁸ibid

⁹ibid., P.97

¹⁰ Barbara Harlow, *Resistance Literature Revisited: From Basra to Guantánamo* Journal of Comparative Poetics, No. 32, The Imaginary and the Documentary:Cultural Studies in Literature, History, and the Arts. URL:<http://www.jstor.org/stable/41850736>Accessed: 29-07-2015 13:22 UTC

¹¹Brannigan, *Cultural Materialism*, p. 99

¹² ibid

¹³ ibid., P. 101

¹⁴ ibid, P. 102

¹⁵ ibid., 108

¹⁶ ibid., 109

¹⁷ ibid

¹⁸ ibid

¹⁹ Brannigan, *Cultural Materialism*, p. 109

²⁰ ibid

²¹ ibid, P. 105

III. Results

Morrison's and Dib's Resistance is a disapproval against inequality and segregation. Their resistance is explored through their literary works which depict the superiority powers in their society (the whites for *The Bluest Eye* and the FLN party for *La nuit sauvage*). Our dissertation deals with Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* (1970) and Mohammed Dib's *La nuit sauvage* (1995) in terms of Resistance. Our work explores how this notion of Resistance is represented in Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* and how it is also reflected and explored in Mohammed Dib's *La nuit sauvage* in so far as the two writers want to retell history: First, Morrison has been influenced by the Black Civil Rights Movement to write the novel. Resistance is not demonstrated at first analysis but it is rather hidden which make Morrison's writing original through the different characters. Morrison in her work tries to show her sympathy toward black sufferings.

Concerning *La nuit sauvage*, Mohammed Dib explores a new way of writing to express his ideas and visions; he retells his historical context which is the Algerian Civil War(1990-1999). He shows resistance differently than Morrison, therefore he uses most of the thirteen collected stories which are *La déviation*, *la nuit sauvage* , *le Français d'Amira*, *Paquita ou le regard ravi*, *Les papillons* and *Une partie de dés* with the purpose of revisiting Algerian history of that period . Each story has its special way of demonstrating resistance thanks to characters and context.

Our dissertation focuses on how both authors Toni Morrison and Mohammed Dib work to reveal the influence of the dominant cultures on the subordinate one in any given society. In addition to this, it shows the way Algerian people and African Americans resist to different kind of oppression. It explains also how the same issue can link two writers and make them share the same message by using different innovative styles.

VI. Discussion

Chapter one

Resistance in Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* (1970)

. The following section of our discussion will be devoted to the study of Resistance in Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* (1970) with reference to the theory of *Cultural Materialism* in John Brannigan's book entitled *New Historicism and Cultural Materialism* 1998. In addition, we are going to explore how African Americans resisted to the different kinds of oppression that occurred during the fifties as well as to shed light on the Civil Rights Movement that attempts to bring out the black rights.

Most of Toni Morrison's works are known for her black writings in which they depict the blacks suffering they experienced within the white community as well as the differences that exist within the same race. Through her writing, she wants to make the reader feels the same way black people experienced in their life. To do this she involves him emotionally, in order to get the same experience as the blacks¹. In this novel, she depicts the different issues and experiences of the African American that are related to multicultural ethnicity that live in the American society.²

African Americans faced marginalization and oppression at different levels which come back to centuries ago. Though being oppressed and dominated by the white race, African Americans showed a kind of resistance against the white supremacy. Resistance is shown differently in which they refuse to submit to the white oppression. In *The Bluest Eye* (1970), Morrison shows sympathy for marginalized black people through her portrayal of the most vulnerable members of the society such as children and women. In her fiction, she

portrays the oppression of blacks in America as well as their oppression within the black community, but she also depicts the Resistance of the blacks against the white supremacy as well as against the patriarchal society.

The Bluest Eye (1970) analyzes the way history and politics are introduced in literary texts, as John Brannigan illustrates in his work that literary texts are interfered as historical and political artefact³. Morrison through this novel, takes the historical events that existed in the past and rewrite them in the present in a way to make the reader feel and experience what African Americans faced in their history, it is also used to show her vision, this echoes *Cultural Materialism*, that deals with and focus on history texts in the past in relation to the present, as well as to study the relationship between literature and history by focusing on the ideological and political interest that might appear in literary texts⁴.

The Bluest Eye (1970) is inspired by political, historical and cultural events that surrounded America during the forties to the sixties. The story setting is during 1941 in Lorain Ohio, in the southern states where the level of segregation was high, this period was also related to Second World War; this date is at same period as that of Pearl Harbor attack on America by Japanese troops and is considered as the direct reason for American involvement in the Second World War⁵. Throughout the war, segregation continued to control the black's life, where they were suffering from unemployment and poverty⁶; white people were the only concern in society and were living in good conditions since they were seen as the Beautiful race⁷. The conflict witnessed the participation of different Americans especially the blacks in the war to fight as American citizens in addition to that, they were promised to be treated equally as the whites and get their freedom after the war, but unfortunately none of this happened, the blacks were still marginalized, even in the army they didn't have the right to

get higher positions⁸, where white officers took control over black unities however black officers in their place couldn't command white officers⁹.

The Bluest Eye was written between 1965 and 1969, it was a significant period to the black history that corresponds to the Civil Rights Movement which aims at improving the living conditions of the blacks as well as to get their rights in the American society. As it witnessed the participation of America in the Vietnam war in order to protect it from the threat of communism¹⁰, where at that time different African Americans participated within the American army, but one famous African American leader Mohammed Ali, a world champion boxer, refused to be involved in the army saying "I ain't got no quarrel with them Vietcong"¹¹ believing that America should fight for democracy first at home than outside and of course he was put in jail¹². There was also the emergence of several organizations led by important black figures. In addition to this, the movement witnessed the emergence of Black Art Movement in which brought confidence in the African Americans and reassured them of their beauty and supremacy over the whites, it led to the emergence of "Black is Beautiful" thus, being accepted in society, their culture became more important than the whites one¹³. Toni Morrison's use of Frieda and Claudia in her work is to bring together all those figures and organizations that fight for the rights and freedom of the blacks, As well as to show how these girls are proud of belonging to the black race which becomes more important to their eyes:

In the 1960s, black Americans began taking new pride in their ancestors, it became fashionable to take African names, to wear long African robes and short African jackets called "dashaks". Bushy African American style became the fashion for black American and were even adopted by white youngsters. Before long the most frequently seen and heard slogan in America was three words: "Black is beautiful."¹⁴

From this quote, we understand how black people are so proud of their origins, and to celebrate their African traditions and customs, and this by rendering African names, clothes and style more fashionable than that of the whites, in order to make them believe in the

importance of black beauty especially over the white race which for centuries whites had a firm belief in their supremacy over the African American.

The Bluest Eye (1970) is full of several scenes and acts which are related to the different historical events that marked the American nations especially the blacks, these events are used by Morrison to show how she is so influenced by the American history and is used to depict and illustrate her choice: “When mama got around to Henry Ford and all those people who didn’t care whether she had a loaf of bread, it was time to go. We wanted to miss the part about Roosevelt and the CCC camps”¹⁵. This quote is a convincing example of the influence of history in Morrison’s novels, in which she uses it as a tool to depict the difficulties of the black lives during the depression era; they were more segregated than the whites, as Claudia says that these rich people who are the whites overlook the harsh situation of the poor blacks. In fact, the latter are never involved in government reformations which give importance only to the whites’ needs and interests. Through this novel, Morrison tackles two important events in American history, one is the Great Depression and the second is Roosevelt’s New Deal, where after the First World War the American nation entered a period of prosperity, during which it saw the economic boom and the emergence of a new technology which rendered the lives of most Americans easier and more comfortable, especially with the invention of refrigerators, vacuum cleaners, stoves and radios, in addition to the invention of new Henry Ford cars ¹⁶. But in 1929 everything changed to the worst where American luxury life turned into a nightmare which coincided with the wall street crash, many banks were closed, people lost their money, unemployment ruined the American lives, poverty surrounded America, people were afraid of their future¹⁷. American government under president Hoover was paralyzed since it didn’t find any solution to get American economy out of the depression until the coming of DF Roosevelt to the presidency; he brought with him new laws which were considered as the keys to success and the end of the economic crash, they were based on

reform, relief, and reconstruction¹⁸. The Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) aimed to put an end to unemployment, and The Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA) which aimed to give money to individual states government in order to help the unemployed and the homeless with these two laws millions of people found work, and the total unemployment rate decreased¹⁹.

Another historical event or a historical figure that marked the Americans, was the presence of Hoover in Morrison's work as an illustration in her writings, Hoover was president of the United States during a very crucial period in the American history which was the Great Depression. This period was known for its economic crash and most of Americans found themselves jobless, and Hoover was well-known for his careless government towards his population he also overlooked the problems by giving the argument of no government interference in business. Most American people black and whites lost confidence in Hoover's administration and reforms²⁰

These historical events shed light on the way American people, white and black, rich and poor resisted to the economic clash where millions of people were out of work and lost their homes, their families, their jobs, despite Hoover's disregarding his nation's problem, Roosevelt seized that opportunity to pass strong laws that might resist to the depression and tried to find better solutions. But we cannot deny that even the numerous solutions Roosevelt brought with him, segregation and poverty reined other parts of American nation especially the blacks²¹.

Resistance is one of the significant issues dealt with Toni Morrison in her novel *The Bluest Eye*. Resistance may be defined as a counter attack; defenses used by an oppressed person in any given society against an outside oppression which shows resistance to it as well as reject any kind of discrimination and submission to them. Through this work, Morrison

wants to show to the reader the miserable lives of the African Americans and how they resisted to the white dehumanization over them in addition to that, the unacceptable idea of African Americans of being not true American natives. This resistance aims to put an end to the long segregation that the African Americans underwent from the first day they reached America, even they got their freedom in the nineteenth century they were always segregated, and dominated under the hegemony of white supremacy as for being the beautiful white race²². Though they faced segregation and oppression, they showed resistance against the white supremacy and dominance.

Resistance is centered everywhere in the novel, where some characters refused to submit and resist to the white oppression by answering them with the use of different methods and ways of violence just not to allow the whites to take any more control over the blacks ,and this is shown from the beginning . Resistance in *The Bluest Eye* is depicted through several aspects where it shows resistance of the blacks toward the white segregation as well as the resistance of female especially black women against the patriarchal society and resistance of the blacks toward their own race. Morrison introduces intentionally the direct resistance by two young girls to show to the reader how this category of children are suffering a lot in the society first by their physical differences second by parental abandonments, these issues urged them to create a kind of defense and violence toward the other in order to empower themselves to prevent segregation from reining their lives any longer. This violence is related to two different ways as Amanda Putnam classifies them physical and verbal violence:

This pattern of violence emerges in some during early childhood. Realizing their own worth is in question, young black girls attempt to upset white oppression by redefining the limits of their power and powerlessness. Young black girls reacting to the oppressiveness of white dominance or to the stringency of traditional female-behavior expectations counter with physical violence to find strength within what often are positions of weakness. Likewise, other black female children react verbally to withstand the force of ever-present white-societal beauty standards that could otherwise crush their self-identity.²³

From this quote, we can get informed of the way violence emerged in children, and for which purpose it is used. As example black characters in *The Bluest Eye* resist to different oppression, and they believe that the only means that can enable them to eradicate segregation, is by using physical and verbal violence with the purpose of strengthening and empowering themselves against the white oppression and domination.

The Idea of Black Resistance:

This section treats the way white people dominate the black race, the former consider themselves as more educated and all civilization and knowledge are derived from their race, as it also shows how the western ideology views the outward beauty which makes reference to the inward one, being white is being supreme in the society as they are the beautiful race contrary to the blacks who are seen only as ugly, inferior and primitive²⁴.

However, Toni Morrison uses this novel as a kind of writing back to the white false ideas about the blacks where she states and denies that all civilizations derived from the whites and they are the beautiful race as she refuses to accept that physical beauty is more important than the inward one²⁵. In order to improve her writing, she uses two young black characters as a best example of those who believe in their blackness, their physical appearance and see it as positive point to defend their race.

To empower Morrison's point of view on the way her characters resist to different oppressions, we rely it to Cultural Materialism that aims to show how people react against any outside oppressions. Dissidence is a concept that goes with Cultural Materialism in their study of resistance, where they defined Dissidence as a product which opposes power²⁶, as Brannigan states in his theory:

“Dissidence is a concept which has considerable importance for cultural Materialism. Dissidence is not opposed diametrically to power, not and antithesis

which seeks to reverse the values, trends and strategies of power. It is instead close in resemblance to the structures of power and is in fact produced by the internal contradictions of these structures”²⁷.

This quote explains how dissidence is important in cultural materialism, where it opposes power in a direct way since it gets similarities with different structures of power which are produced by the conflicts of these structures. In other words, it is a behavior or an act used when people strongly disagree with a situation and they publicly criticize a government or a group, or they try to show their opposition without acting violently. In the US history, the black people use civil disobedience when they refuse to obey certain laws or pay any taxes as a peaceful way to express disapproval of those social rules or laws.

Claudia and her sister Frieda are very happy for being different from the other white race, they are so proud of being black creatures as they feel more comfortable within their own skin, which means that they are not like the other black characters who are influenced by the white discourse of supremacy over the blacks and feel shame of their origins, this comfort and love of self push them to rise in themselves a kind of wall to resist against any kind of oppression which may weaken the white dominance.

As we have said, the two sisters Frieda and Claudia are the best example of those black young characters who suffered from the external world as well as the internal one but refuse to be no longer misjudged or mistreated. Where these sufferings enable them to resist and react violently against any external oppression. They see violence as the real weapon to put an end to their segregation and discrimination, this violence is composed of two elements physical and verbal. This kind of resistance and reaction are shown from the first pages when they insulted Rosemary, a white young girl who believes in the superiority of white physical differences and shows her arrogance toward Frieda and Claudia, where the former pushes both girls to beat her and revenge against her arrogance:

“Rosemary Villanucci, our next door friend who lives above her café, sits in a 1939 Buick eating bread and butter. she rolls down in the window to tell my sister Frieda and me that we can’t come in. we stare at her wanting her bread, but more than that wanting to poke the arrogance out of her eyes and smash the pride of ownership that curls her eyes chewing mouth. When she comes out of her car, we will beat her up, make red marks on white skin. And she will cry and ask us do we want her to pull her pants down (....) we know she is offering us something precious and that our own pride must be to accept asserted by refusing”²⁸.

This quote shows that despite the beauty of the white girl and her arrogance toward the two sisters, they are not influenced by Rosemary and even they misjudge and blame themselves of not being beautiful white persons. Second, it shows the brave heart of the two black young girls who wanted to teach the white girl an unforgettable lesson about her arrogance as well as to show that even they are blacks they can defend themselves without being afraid of anything. In addition to this, their belief that the color of skin is not important what is primer, is the inward. They even show their pride of their being black creatures and not white, which means in other words that these two young girls are not giving importance to the western beauty contrary to most of blacks and whites who see physical beauty as the primer in life. These two girls are seen as real black power that refuse to be submitted to any segregation as well as wanted to show their being part of humanity; they have feelings and emotions which push them to react against all threat that may place them at an inferior position. We can here rely this event which happened between the two young black girls and the white girl to a very important historical event that marked the United States specifically the blacks, in order to show how Morrison is affected by history in her writing. The most reliable event is that of Rosa Sparks, the black woman who refused to give her place to a white passenger because she was tired and wanted to be treated as equal as the whites as well as to show her pride and self-esteem of being black, and also through this gesture Rosa wanted to push the whites to give up their arrogance over the blacks²⁹.

Claudia is conscious of the situation she is facing which is related to black inferiority because of their skin color so she questions the differences that may exist between the white

and black race. She has been equipped with the shield of self-love to combat negative influences from black and white society that Pecola the protagonist has not. Therefore, because she has developed in a less exhausting environment than Pecola Breedlove, an environment that encouraged Claudia to feel proud of herself, while still a young girl³⁰. When Claudia destroys her white doll with its glassy *blue eyes*, she demonstrates pride in her identity and the ability to understand, to some degree, the repressive values pervading her black community. She rebels and shows her violence side as well as her hatred to everything related to white, she is totally against this race or anything related to it, best illustrated and showed through Shirley Temple, a beautiful white girl danced with Bill Bojangles Robinson a famous black top dancer, Claudia shows her hatred toward Shirley not because of her beauty or of her being white but because she dances with whom she considers as her lover and life. She even hates everything which is closed to Bill Bojangles especially white people, as Amanda Putnam explains in her article *Female Resistance* Claudia feels like she loses something or as anything is stolen from her and given to the white child star³¹. In addition, she feels invisible and shows her anger toward this young white girl, as she demonstrates her issue of invisibility toward the white baby dolls that she receives as gifts³². Claudia dismembers and destroys them all as a reason she wants to feel emotions, love and belonging:

“I did not know why I destroyed those dolls. But I did know that nobody ever asked me what I wanted for Christmas. Had any adult with the power to fulfill my desires taken me seriously and asked me what I wanted, they would have known that I did not want to have anything to own, or to possess any object. I wanted rather to feel something on Christmas day. The real question would have been, “Dear Claudia, what experience would you like on Christmas”³³.

We can understand from this quote that children like Claudia are suffering from parental carelessness and the only thing they were given material things, but they didn't want any kind of material gift, however the only thing they needed, and wanted really to possess, which they also considered as primer in their life is parental care and love, they wanted to feel loved and given more attention by their own parents. So it was why those children always

rebelled one against another. Questioning our existence may help us to understand the function of this world; Claudia is an example of those people who question their being and what make the world different from them, in addition to this, she questions her true identity³⁴.

Another notion of resistance tackled by Morrison in her novel is resistance of the blacks against the blacks or the same race , where the latter is influenced and affected by the white culture, ideas, romantic love as well as the western physical beauty where they believe that it reflects the inner side of the whites as they believe that are the dominant race, so they show their white side and superiority over the people of the same race by beating them , insulting them or by criticizing them as they demonstrate their beautiful side against them and push them to believe that they are an ugly race as well as inferior. In addition to this, they reject their culture, identity and welcome the culture of the opposite race. In *The Bluest Eye*, there are some scenes which portray the refusal to submit to the supremacy of the dominant race, this echoes what cultural materialism focuses on:

“Cultural materialism aims to subvert the tenets of humanist criticism by replacing the appeals to tradition and humanity, with a call to the democratic ideals of potential difference and the collective definition of social and political goals, in this way cultural materialists see literary and cultural criticism as participating in politics, active in reinforcing, dissenting form or opposing conservative orthodoxies”³⁵.

This quote tries to explain how cultural materialist opposes all kinds of oppression, and they call to settle democratic and social norms in the society in order to stop the different oppression that occurred in any given society. Toni Morrison through her works tries to apply this ideology in order to free her segregated characters.

As it is mentioned in the novel, Frieda and Claudia have a friend whose name is Pecola a black young girl, she is so different from the other two black girls, she has a weak personality and is easily influenced by the white beauty, she is always badly treated because of her ugliness, to put her in an inferior position, they use to beat her and give her negative stereotypes and names. These mistreatments are caused by young black boys who believe in

their superiority over her. As Pecola feels weak and can't reply to these stereotypes, her two brave friends are her only protectors from any kind of oppression and mistreatment and don't even care about whatever its cost will be, as it is mentioned in the novel:

A group of boys was circling and holding at bay a victim, Pecola Breedlove.

“ Black e mo. Black e mo. Yadaddsleepsneckk. Black e mo Black e mo ya dadds slees nacked. Black e mo.....”

They had extemporized a verse made up of two insults about matters over which the victim had no control.³⁶

This quote gives us an idea about the way the young black boys mistreat and manipulate Pecola, her two brave friends are her only protectors from any kind of oppression and mistreatments and don't even care about whatever its cost will be. Here we can sum up that Morrison gives different characters, on the one hand a weak black girl who submits to the white segregation and superiority because of her feeling of being ugly and second for her parental abandonment, on the other hand, contrary to Pecola's scares and paralysis we have the two black sisters Frieda and Claudia, are completely the opposite, since they do their best to protect and defend their weak friend Pecola from any kind of mistreatments:

“We watched, afraid they might notice us and turn their energies our way. Then Frieda, with set lips and mama's eyes, snatched her coat from her head and threw it on the ground. She ran toward them and brought her books down on Woodrow Cain grabbed his head”.³⁷

Physical and verbal violence are the only weapons used by Frieda and Claudia to fight segregation, in addition to the way Frieda beats Woodrow she adds verbal insults to the boy: “you shut up, bullet head”³⁸. Even when Claudia saw her sister fighting with the boys she involved herself in to the fighting by insulting the boy: “you shut up, Bullet Head”. I had found my tongue³⁹. The two sisters are inseparable where at any time they fall into problems we find them fighting and resisting together against any kind of trouble. In this section, we depict the importance of the use of history in Morrison's novel and we can compare these events to the different figures that resist against segregation as they defend all the blacks who

were under exploitation and discrimination like Martin Luther King and the others who did their best to protect the blacks as to bring peace to their society. They make a union between the black race to show how they are so strong and unified and nothing can stop them for claiming for their rights.

This fighting led by Frieda and Claudia against the boys shows the deep relationship between the two sisters and how they depended on each other to solve any problem they may face as it shows their self-confidence in protecting and defending themselves as well as any other mistreat person from the external oppression and subjectivity. These two girls are so young but they can do what an adult can't do, but whatever happens they are self-confident and create in them a kind of wall to resist to this racist discourse of the white hegemony which even influences the blacks, and build a strong image of their real world. We can compare both sisters to different important black figures who refused to submit to the white dominance and reacted with various ways just to show their power and their pride of being blacks like Linda Brown a young black girl who wants to eradicate white discrimination and violence over in the American schools, and to consider blacks equal to the white race which sees itself superior to the inferior black one⁴⁰. As it is mentioned in John Brannigan's *Cultural Materialism* that: "Cultural Materialism is oriented toward articulating dissident perspectives on contemporary cultural politics and this often gives its practitioners a sense of political and social mission."⁴¹

The three friends Pecola, Claudia and Frieda meet a new friend at school who is from the same race but she is totally different from them, she is a high yellow dream girl with long brown hair named Maureen Peal, this girl is loved by everyone at school, as she is treated in good ways because of her beauty, even Claudia and Frieda were fascinated by Maureen's beauty but they were displeased by her so they transform her name into an ugly one "meringue pie"⁴². At the very beginning of their meeting, peace controls their friendship,

where Maureen showed another face of the girl who gets a white culture, she is so nice and kind especially with Pecola, she even buys for her an ice cream as they talk together, but later on everything changed, where she shows her true side full of arrogance and superiority, the dispute started when Maureen asked Pecola if she ever saw her father naked and she was so insisting on this that Frieda reply in Pecola's place and told her to be quite but disputes go ahead and longer:

“What do I care about her old black daddy?”

Black? Who you calling black?”

“You”⁴³

After the girls deal with the quarrels about the issue of seeing a naked father, they leave each other with insults and mistreatment:

“You think you so cute! I swung at her and missed, hitting Pecola in the face. Furious at my clumsiness, I threw my notebook at her, but it caught her in the small of her velvet back, for she had turned and was flying across the street against traffic. Safe on the outside, she screamed at us “I am cute! And you ugly! Black and ugly black e mos. I am cute. (....) Frieda and I collected ourselves to shout, “six-finger-dog-tooth-meringue-pie” we chanted this most powerful of our arsenal of insults as long as we could see the green stems and rabbit fur”⁴⁴.

Through this quote we can understand how the black girls are so strong and brave that they stand against not only the white race but even against people of their own race, the black girl who is pretending that she is beautiful, she is treated badly by Frieda and Claudia, they are beating her and insulting her in a confident and strong way, may be Morrison's use of Frieda and Claudia is to show to the reader that even the blacks are seen as ugly and inferior, they have a hidden side which is stronger and important than feeling beautiful which is related to their love of themselves, and their pride of being blacks create in them the feeling of equality to the white race or may be much better than them, and to break the traditional view of white is beautiful and the black is ugly. We can also add that the writer wants to prove to the audience especially the white one that physical appearance is not primer what is important

is the inward which looks for the real identity and show it's being proud of being black and refuse to live under segregation and marginalization.

Ugliness is central in the novel, where blacks according to the white race are portrayed as ugly, i.e. that blacks are not beautiful physically. On the one hand, whites believe that you are black so you are ugly, and even the whole society accepts the white beauty rather than the black one, this point of view pushes some of them to feel that they are alienated and marginalized in their own society, so they hope to get a white skin with blue eyes in order to be accepted and not to be mistreated. The Breedloves are a great example of the black race that feel shame about their ugliness as well as feel inferiority toward the whites and become unable to defend themselves against these oppression, as a suitable example is when Pecola goes to the candy shop and is badly treated by the shop keeper who makes reference, on the other hand, some believe in their black beauty they see themselves beautiful and superior to the white race which gives them the whole strength to resist the white supremacy like the two black sisters Frieda and Claudia who believe on their beauty and being proud of their race especially when they met Maureen the beautiful white girl: the only thing to fear is not her beauty but is what made her beautiful.”⁴⁵

From here, we can understand that Morrison wants to demonstrate that even there is a dominant group that feels strong and acts his dominance over the weak people, we can find that there is another group who stand against and subvert this discrimination and opposes it and asks for their civil rights, this echoes what has been studied in cultural materialism:

As a matter of fact, cultural materialism demonstrates how superior powers like the monarchs show their dominance in the society believing that are in an absolute position of power which allow them to give orders and manipulate the social classes, because they are seen as order of power, however cultural materialists opposes and resist to these ideologies⁴⁶.

Another element tackled by Toni Morrison in her novel is that emotions and feelings can be classified among the elements that push any human being to react against any external threat or anything which may put their lives into danger, in other words as Bump explains in his article that the feeling of anger which is created because of the feeling of shame, where in its place is created due to several discriminations and mistreatments thus it led to react violently⁴⁷. Shame and anger are the most dominant aspects of emotions in the novel, where they are targeted by different characters because of their being marginalized and mistreated by different opponents such as the whites, oppressions from the same race, these reactions come unconsciously without knowing the reason. Claudia and her feeling of shame push her to throw her anger on the others in a way to feel protected and resist to the different troubles she is facing.

On the one hand, Resistance may be shown directly in the novel through Claudia and Frieda who use to answer their oppressions by verbal or physical violence, on the other hand, it is depicted indirectly by Pecola who is described as the victim and the weakest character in *The Bluest Eye*, it is true that Pecola doesn't show any kind of resistance or violence against all the oppression she lived, she is so calm and quiet, but if we look at the long suffering she endured during her life, raped by her own father, abandoned by her own mother and who prefers to show emotions and love to the young white girl rather to her own daughter who lacks parental love, and mistreated at school as well as the whole society, we can say that in a way her being alive to the end of the novel is a kind of resistance since she doesn't commit a suicide and accepts all these oppressions and continues her life, and if anyone in her place may commit suicide, but she prefers to stay alive. At the end of the novel, we recognize that she finds an imaginary friend who may reconcile her and gives her more attention and love than her own family:

Why don't you look at me when you say that? You're looking drop-eyed like Mrs. Breedlove.

Mrs. Breedlove look drop-eyes at you?

Yes. Now she does. Ever since I got my blue eyes, she look away from me all of the time. Do you suppose she's jealous too?

Could be they are pretty, you know ⁴⁸.

This quote makes us aware of the new situation of Pecola at the end of the novel, where she finds an imaginary friend and talks to him as she shares with him her best and worst moments; in addition to that she gets Blue Eyes in her imagination which is her only will to possess.

Toni Morrison uses Claudia and Frieda in the novel in a way to show to the reader the new independent women and how they fight against their emancipation, these new women entered history by their deeds since they were great fighters for human rights and freedom. Through Frieda and Claudia, the reader may be conscious of the history of black women and their sufferings, the writer make them heroes to their eyes, with reference to the young black girls she also wants to show the strong side of children who suffer from different oppression but they are still strong and confident in themselves and proud of their being, the black race which makes them resist against all these oppression. Morrison with her use of Pecola wants to demonstrate the other side of people who experience all kinds of segregations but they don't react against them, they prefer to stay calm and plunge into their dreams and wills if they were to be whites none of this marginalization would happen to them. Apart from male resistance, Morrison introduces how women resisted against the patriarchal society.

b. Women Resistance against the patriarchal society:

Toni Morrison is one of the African American writers who tackle the issue of women as inferior and subordinate in the society, so she deals with female characters in her work to empower and give them strength to react and resist against any kind of oppression, and to

give a new image of new women. Black women witnessed discrimination and segregation from the first time they came to America which are related to race, gender and class.

History is the only witness of women sufferings; they were beaten, marginalized by the white race as well as the black patriarchal society. In addition to Cultural Materialism, Toni Morrison tries to bring the sufferings of the black women in history from the past into the present moment; Toni makes us aware of the harsh situation they witnessed. She uses literature as a tool to depict the emancipation of women as well as their marginalization through history and wants to use it as a present issue to make the reader especially the white race aware of the long suffering they cause to the black race; women are seen as inferior and weak to men for centuries ago as well as they are obliged to submit to them, but with the beginning of the twentieth century everything changed, women started to get their freedom and claim for their total rights in society as equal to men under the Women's Rights Movement⁴⁹.

The other side of resistance which is tackled by Toni Morrison is Resistance of female characters against the patriarchal society. The latter was the dominant feature in the society for a long time, because they see themselves as strong and brave contrary to women who are according to them weak, and emotional which renders them inferior, so they are obliged to submit to their husband, fathers and brothers or any kind of men's oppression. Through this novel, numerous scenes depict how women or female characters are treated badly and in an inhuman way, but they don't submit to them and resist to their patriarch. To empower Morrison's writing, we may rely on the idea of cultural materialism which disobeys the dominant cultures:

“ A Cultural Materialist shares the new historicist method of describing the processes and forces of ideological hegemony, but also attempts to activate the dissidence and subversion which the cultural materialist believes lies dormant in any textual manifestation of ideology”⁵⁰

Through this quote, we can understand, the way dominant cultures treats the inferior class and enforce it under their own ideology the “self” and the “other”, but this oppressed people stand against these oppressions, the colonizer ideologies and manifest them. And this sequence below is a concrete illustration of women manifestation against any dominant culture.

To start Mrs. Breedlove is one of the women in the novel who suffered from the patriarchal society, she lives with a drunken husband who lacks any kind of respect toward her wife, he sees her only as sexual object to satisfy his sexual desires, he is careless about the home needs, only his wife gives care to the home. This led to the emergence of violence in the family, where fighting and quarrels rein the couple, and replaces love, respect and peace. In one morning Mrs. Breedlove asks her husband to bring some coal to put fire since they live in cold and poor house but as he was so drunk he doesn't want to move or to bring coal Cholly's attitude pushes Pauline to fight and react violently against him, and from the early morning quarrels rein the home and their children are fed up of their parents situation. Since Cholly believes that a woman is weak, inferior to man, and she is created to satisfy man's needs, this drives him to behave violently and without respect toward his wife Pauline, but the latter resists to this patriarch and refuses to submit to his exploitation, which leads her to quarrel and always fight him in order to show him that she is not weak and can defend herself as well as to show him that she doesn't exist just to satisfy his sexual desires:

Cholly and Mrs. Breedlove fought each other with a darkly brutal formalism that was parallel only by their love making. Tacitly they had agreed not to kill each other. He fought her the way a coward fights a man-with feet, the palms of his hands, and teeth. She in return, fought him in a purely feminine way-with frying pans and poker, and occasionally a flatiron would sail toward his head. They did not talk, groan, or curse during these beatings⁵¹.

From this quote, we can realize that Pauline is used to describe the new woman who fights for her emancipation against the patriarchal society, and she wants to be treated as a real woman that has an important place in the society, since it is considered as the pillar of the

success of the family as well as the society in general. Pauline shows her bitterness to her husband who serves to nothing only drinking; she wants to feel her femininity and being respected toward her husband.

In fact, Belsey tackles the issue of institution of marriage. She reinforces her idea by dealing with Alice Arden who murdered her husband because of her lover. Through this event, Belsey tries to depict the relationship between crime and its context, she argues that marriage as an institution which is in crisis. Through Alice story, Belsey attempts to draw out the implication of these representatives of the institutions of marriage, the subjectivity of women, and the public perception of crime of passion⁵².

In addition to the quarrels and conflicts that exist between Pauline and Cholly, which are considered as a kind of resistance of a female toward a male oppression, she shows other aspects that makes her stronger and enable her to react against her husband, it is her religious beliefs, that according to her, is a real weapon to end discrimination of a male dominated society. Pauline shows her superiority over her husband when she thinks that she is more religious than her husband, and she prays and asks Jesus to protect her from her drunken husband. The fact that she is praying and asking help for god and Jesus to help her is seen as a winning point for Pauline to get rid of her useless husband where his only aims are to satisfy his desires and nothing else, these religious beliefs empower and give her strength so as to resist the supremacy of her husband.

The dominance of male society over the black females are exploited in the novel and continues to be exploited, where it demonstrates how male characters behave in a self-interest way and don't attach any importance to what may happen any circumstances. Sexual desires are their only objective in life so they attack any kind of female just in order to satisfy their desires. *The Bluest Eye* (1970) is a concrete example of rape and violation of women

especially young girls, because they are considered physically weak, but there are some kinds who resist and refuse to be raped or mistreated, as there is another kind who is so weak to defend or resist any kind of rape or violence. *The Bluest Eye* depicts the new generation of women who stand against men's sexism and start to behave and rescue themselves from the oppressive men, with women's rights movement, they see the beginning of different discussions and acknowledgment about the phenomenon of rape which becomes one of the important social issues, and was the emergence of different feminist stages against rape crisis. It witnessed also the beginning of black female writers to write about rape from early slavery to the present day⁵³.

The Bluest Eye is a stage where the phenomenon of rape governs the novel, first shown with Chooly Breedlove who raped his own daughter Pecola, when he sees her washing dishes, he gets a desire to make love to her, Pecola is among the category of weak women who feel themselves so weak to defend themselves against any kind of violation so they submit directly to the male dominance and accept to be touched and violated. But we can say that Pecola in a different way she resists to her father's rape and this by staying alive after her rape and carry on her life as normal as possible, this is a kind of resistance against the hostile life.

Frieda is another character who stands against the patriarchal dominance, she refuses to submit to their needs, and react violently against them. After the coming of Mr. Henry to the Mac Teers house he attacks Frieda sexually, where the latter is found alone at home, is an opportunity for him to satisfy his unethical desires, he wants to take profits in raping her, he touches her body sexually while waiting for Frieda's reaction in order to have sex with her against her own free will, but Frieda is not pleased by Mr. Henry deeds, so she stands against his desire and run away to inform her father who in his place wants to dismiss Henry from his house because of what he did with Frieda he is seen as a danger to the life of the two girls.

Frieda informs her sister Claudia about the attention of Mr. Henry toward her, as she tells her on the way to resist the rapist Henry, Claudia in her place wishes she had been there when Henry wanted to rape her sister in order to protect her and to react violently against Henry:

“Well, what, then? Come on, How come I can’t know?”

“He... picked at me.”

“picked at you? You mean like Soaphead Church?”

“Sort of.”

“He showed his private at you?”

“ Noooo. He touched me?”

“Where?”

“Here and here.” She pointed to the tiny breast that, like two fallen acorns, scattered a few faded rose leaves on her dress.”⁵⁴

From this act we can understand that even if women are physically weak, they are morally strong, in fact by standing against immoral actions, they show their Resistance to the male dominance where they don’t accept to be sexually mistreated or even considered as sexual objects, it means that this kind of women are stronger than those of the old generation.

Similar points in *The Bluest Eye* and *La nuit sauvage*:

As Morrison uses the *Bluest Eye* in aim to depict the way African Americans resisted to different oppression and discriminations, Mohammed Dib in his turn uses *La nuit sauvage* as a way to demonstrate how Algerian People suffered from their social problems as well as the way they resisted to these issues.

After analyzing the two novels Morrison’s *The Bluest Eye* and Dib’s *La nuit sauvage* , we figure out the similarities of both novels in terms of themes and Resistance. At first ,in the story "*Paquita, ou le regard ravi*" which takes place somewhere in Latin America ,the story turns around the main character Paquita who lives with her parents, Paquita is blind but sees

the world bigger than another person with Eyes, she dreams of taking back his black eyes or replaced blue eyes in paradise she says:

Mes yeux noir de nuit. Qui remplacez là-bas .Des yeux tout azur :

Regardez, regardez. Une chose après l'autre ⁵⁵ .

She imagines having blue eyes and wearing a new nice dress and everything in her life would be better. Similarly, the Character of Pecola in Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* convinces herself having nice blue eyes that her imagined friends asserts her:

Are they very nice?

Yes. Very nice

Just " very nice" ?

Really truly very nice .

Really, truly, bluey nice?

Oh God You are crazy.⁵⁶

From the passage above, we notice that the two characters Paquita and Pecola have a lot in common.

The second similar point is the presence of the theme of rape in Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* Pecola was victim of rape similarly as some muslims girls and Izet's mother in the short story of "*Les papillons*" one of the collected stories of Dib's *La nuit sauvage*.

De fait ,c'était lui qui en avait décidé ainsi :ne donner aucun signe de vie ,pour étudier le visage maternel, cette blancheur de givre encadrée d'un châle, preuve de deuil ,qu'on garde à la maison, et en plein été ,étudier les deux minuscules plissures de souffrance creusées de part et d'autre de la bouche, sonder l'horizon noyé de ces yeux qui, depuis trois jours, depuis l'effroyable jour, semblaient avoir pâli jusqu'à l'extinction . Il essayant de comprendre ce qu'était une femme violée .⁵⁷

According to the passage above, we notice the implication of Izet trying to understand the horrific disaster of his mother's rape by the Serbian Army.

In contrast , in Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* rape was an important theme in the whole novel but the characters manage this horrific behavior differently for instance in *The Bluest Eye* Pecola is abandoned by her mother who doesn't trust her when she told her the truth about her father ,she was disappointed by everyone in her surroundings and family and finally accepted and lived with her sad fate which make her imagined herself having nice blue eyes this shows her depression and mental troubles caused by her father .

Concerning Dib's narrative story of "*Les papillons*", the characters are presented differently, hence Izet's mother is supported by Izet himself and he even makes a plot of revenge and gets rid of The head of the Serbian Army. Thanks to this characterization, Dib makes the story meaningful in order to illustrate that big resistance of the Algerians during the Algerian Black Decade that lived the Algerians. Mohammed Dib shows how strong the Algerians are, and how notable Algerian past is, he also explores many of these historical events in order to create his masterpiece of *La nuit sauvage* .

All in all, from this short comparison of Dib's *La nuit sauvage* and Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*, one can notice that despite all the differences of the two novels either the area, style, or writing period, but the few similarities succeed to gather the two novels make them subject to a susceptible comparative study which develops the whole theme of this study based on resistance in both Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* and Dib's *La nuit sauvage*.

To conclude, this chapter introduces types of Resistance in *The Bluest Eye*, in which Toni Morrison shows the different segregations and discriminations the black people faced in their life, but they are still strong and refuse to submit to any kind of dominance white or black. And we studied her work in terms of Cultural Materialism which aims to interpret literary texts in present context. Morrison succeeds to use historical facts in her literary texts

as a way to denounce the reality of the African Americans during the Civil Rights Movement and to make the reader feels and experiences the black misery.

Endnotes

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⁶ Thomas C . Reeves, *Twentieth Century America: the world at war again*, (Oxford, Oxford university press, New York,2000),128

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⁹ ibid

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Chapter two

Resistance in Mohammed Dib's *La nuit sauvage*

The main concern of this chapter is to demonstrate how Mohammed Dib in his novel *La nuit sauvage*¹ represents Resistance through his collection of stories. Our particular attention is paid to the four significant stories which are: *La nuit sauvage*, *La deviation*, *Une partie de dèss*, *Le Français d'Amira* and *Les papillions*. These stories articulate the issue of Resistance through their historical context, setting, and character.

Mohammed Dib wrote about one of the most significant conflicts in the history of post colonial Algeria. He exposes the brutalities of Algerian war of independence and the Algerian Black Decade. In his novel, *La nuit sauvage*, violence is not an inexplicable component of human society, but the outcome of clear conditions that continually work against the concept of humanity itself² as John W.Maerhofer argues in his book .

According to Maerhofer, the relationship between a writer and society for him is less a process of conscious alignment than it is a means of nurturing the dialectical relation that emerges when texts come into conflict with history. In other words, some literary texts hide the real history, subvert and adopt and sometimes the original and true story is neglected by the writer³. Dib in his collection of stories overcomes the existentialist abandonment of the uncommitted writer to confront what he calls “the invisible prison” of systematic violence by offering a model of his writing based on intellectual engagement and the awakening of the reader to the accountability of the text⁴.

John Maerhofer suggests that Mohammed Dib offers a challenge to the reader, and suggests that the writer is forced to become politically engaged as a result of material conditions. A dialectical view which also reveals the absence of political commitment by those associated with the nihilistic project of post modernism which means Mohammed Dib

as a writer tries hard to convince the reader that any writer must be involved in political activities not as a choice but because of material conditions. Moreover, the dialectical view highlights clearly the absence of political engagement on the part of those writers associated with nihilistic project of post modernism which means those who totally reject moral and religious principles because the latter inevitably lead to extremism that represents a potential danger to the stability of any society. Therefore, cultural materialism analyses the processes by which hegemonic forces in society appropriate canonical and historically important texts and use them in an attempt to validate or inscribe certain values on the cultural context⁵.

“As a counter strategy, then ,Cultural Materialists claim to represent oppositional readings and to Present oppositional readings and to consciously render texts to tell dissident and oppositional stories.”⁶

This idea echoes one of the major concerns of Dib’s *La nuit sauvage* since one of the ways Dib constructs the dialectic of violence is by addressing what he clearly sees as the failures of the post colonial Algerian state. It was the same case with many intellectuals of his generation who contributed to the revolutionary struggle such as Asia Djebar and Kateb Yacine, Dib’s political commitment also reflected a deeper concern with developing The Third Project of decolonization against France .As a genuine expression of the Third World Radicalism ,the front de Liberation National (FLN)had amalgamated national factions and galvanized international sympathy by 1956 and became the emblem of revolutionary solidarity that intellectuals such Dib hoped would be sustained in post colonial states ⁷.

a. The historical Background of *La nuit sauvage*

The historical context of *La nuit sauvage* was the Algerian Black Decade. Therefore ,the conflict was between Islamist groups and the established secular parties ,headed by FLN, in which the latter would come out as victors even if many structures were changed during the war. From 1992 to 1999 even after, clashes would continue. The main reason was the

stagnation of Algerian economy, decade of little political freedom, a military of extreme influence, poor educational system, and years of Islamist missionary activities in the country. As a matter of fact, the revolutionary enthusiasm which mobilized the population in Algeria gave way to internal power struggles within the FLN during the attempts at “Algerian socialism” with a military coup in 1964 which overthrew the first post-revolutionary president Ahmed Ben Bella and culminating in the televised assassination of Mohammed Boudiaf in June 1992, both of them were considered to be the revolutionary “Heroes” who led the FLN to the victory against France⁸. However, the National Assembly election was not allowed to run its course. In order to prevent the FIS from assuming power, the army intervened on January 11, 1992 to unseat President Chadli Benjadid and call off the electoral proceedings. Rather than experience a flowering of civil society, Algeria slipped into a civil war of exceptional savagery and violence, that pitted a variety of armed Islamist groups, several of them spin-offs of the FIS, against the security forces of the state⁹.

In addition to this, the struggle was marked by massacres of civilians, including the notorious 1997 killings by radical Islamists of some four hundred women, children, and men at Bentalha in the Mitidja plain. Government anti-insurgency operations, for their part, were blamed for extra-judicial killings and other atrocities. The conflict has claimed perhaps 100,000 lives, more than those killed in the Lebanese civil war during the mid-1970s and early 1980s. Luis Martinez, author of *The Logic of the Algerian Civil War, 1990-1998*, sets himself the task of explaining the causal factors behind the slide into violence. Given the contentious nature of the subject, this is a tall order and it requires that Martinez, a researcher at CERI (Centre d'Etudes et de Recherches Internationales) in Paris, scrutinizes the available evidence in a manner that is both thorough and disciplined. The result is a work that lays bare the internal dynamics of a situation of political violence, which participants justify with

reference to political ideals but which in fact is rooted in the more mundane concerns of material advancement¹⁰.

He traces the outbreak of the civil war to the policies of repression carried out by the military government against the FIS following the cancellation of the 1992 election. In an effort to nip the Islamist challenge in the bud, the State authorities closed FIS-affiliated mosques and interrogated individuals deemed suspicious, often picking them up off the street. These and other repressive policies had a radicalizing effect on many Algerians, especially on the young "*hittistes*", the unemployed "wall learners" whose interests previously had revolved around Rai music and football but who now gravitated to individuals willing effectively to resist the state authorities¹¹.

As Martinez explains, these and other disaffected elements of society found an outlet for their humiliation and anger in the radical Islamist groups that had either formed or consolidated in the wake of the military takeover, organizations such as the MIA (Armed Islamic Movement) and GIA (Armed Islamic Group). At odds with FIS's procedural approach to politics, the emirs of these groups took their cues from the jihadist tradition represented by the Egyptian Sayyid Qutb and his disciples, which included the pronouncement of anathema on those sectors of the State and society, deemed to have compromised the sovereignty of God. As many of FIS's more economically well-to-do supporters scurried to avoid the mounting conflict, often abandoning businesses and expensive homes, the more disaffected elements of the society girded themselves for what would amount to "total war" against the government. As in other comparable conflicts in which terrorism and assassination are the norm, the ensuing violence had the effect of polarizing allegiances and choices¹², i.e, the conflict between the state government and Islamists (FIS).

The most arresting sections of the book chronicle the momentum of the struggle as it absorbed the energies and resources of the combatants. Martinez tells of how each side made use of a variety of strategies in order to enhance its power and weaken the other in the absence of victory in a frontal battle.

The efforts of the contending parties to gather economic assets, initially empower their respective war efforts but eventually for purposes of personal advancement. While the armed Islamist bands turned, within the territories they controlled, to extortion and other nefarious means, the government benefited from the financial support awarded it by the international community, which feared an Islamist takeover on the southern flank of the Mediterranean. This support took the form of debt rescheduling and a program of structural readjustment. It also included a policy of trade liberalization, which, as Martinez explains, unintentionally benefited the armed Islamists by enabling them to boost their economic resources as managers of import-export companies. Drawing upon interviews of individual participants in the struggle, Martinez paints a grim picture of life within the Islamist-controlled communes of Greater Algiers. Subjected to the thuggish tactics of the local emirs and their accomplices, many of whom were common criminals, and surrounded at the outskirts of their townships by the armed forces of the State, the ordinary people of the "Islamist ghettos" endured a "double state of siege".¹³

Martinez makes a good case for focusing on material advancement rather than ideology as the central motivating factor of the civil war. Yet his penchant for seeing the conflict as rooted in Algeria's ancient political culture smacks of the cultural essentialism he himself derides. While political culture is always an important element in determining the motivations and tactics of actors, it is tricky business to make it the major determinant in a historical argument. For example, Martinez might have examined more thoroughly the

influence on the Algerian struggle of international factors, including the impact of the trans-national Islamist networks. Many Algerian fighters, after all, participated as Mujahidin in the jihad against the Soviets in Afghanistan and remained in touch with their Egyptian, Chechen, and Saudi colleagues well into the 1990s. It would be interesting to know whether the violence in Algeria is fed, in part, from a source common to other Islamist insurgencies of the period. Jonathan Derrick has admirably translated the book from the original French and John Entlis provides it with a preface that usefully recounts the background to Martinez's narrative. Altogether, *The Algerian Civil War* is a valuable contribution to our understanding of Algeria's troubled present¹⁴.

b. Resistance in the selected stories of *La nuit sauvag*.

These events of the Algerian history are illustrated and revisited in dib's centerpiece "*La nuit sauvage*", he depicts a brother and sister engaged in the obligatory violence of street: warfare that symbolized the FLN insurgency against the French, specifically their order to bomb a café in the center of the city of Algiers .Moreover ,Dib extricates the relation between political enthusiasm and ethical conscience under the collective violence¹⁵ .In other words Dib wants to explain the relationship between a political regime and the mental state of its citizens as a result of a severe violence toward them.

Dib describes the brother Nédim's emotional state in the centerpiece of *La nuit sauvage* .However, the story of Nédim and Bahi (his sister) demonstrates the events of a true history by giving deep and vivid descriptions of both Nédim and Bahi:

“Entre le frère et la soeur, les cheveux aussi se répartissaient en ondulations coupées court(Nédim) et retombantes, flottantes,toute souplesse(Bahi) et allaient du blond paille(Nédim) au blond doré vénitien (Bahi).¹⁶

In the first pages of the story, Dib gives all the details concerning the events that occur that day, in relation to true places in Algiers and a revisited history.

“Aux approches de la Poste Centrale, la foule crût. Ils sortaient de terre, eût-on dit, ces flots bouillon-nants. Nédim devait du coup user de rudesse pour se frayer un passage. Il avançait ,soutenu par l’assurance de Bahi mettait ses pas à elle dans ses pas à lui.¹⁷

The ultimate sacrifice of the brother Nédim who is killed, trying to escape and whose memory persists in the mind of his sister Beyhana as a constant reminder of the dialectic of violence and resistance. A desire that Beyhana recognizes early in the story but only materializes as they share strong moments in the attempt to escape French soldiers as Nédim is bleeding to death:

“Trois, quatre. C’était ici. Cinq, première grenade dégoupillée puis lance à l’intérieur de la brasserie. Six. La seconde. Explosion de la première. Six. Explosion de glaces. Sept .Explosion de cris, d’appels. Sept. Sept .L’autre explosion et la brasserie soufflée jusqu’au tréfonds, et la rue secouée, violenté .Huit, neuf...Courses démentes, fuites en avant projetant hommes, femmes. Il en tombait, comme fauchés, et qui essayaient encore de se lever, puis retombaient ,ne bougeaient plus. Les magasins, les entrées d’immeuble avalaient, avalaient du monde.¹⁸

The above quotation taken from the centerpiece, *La nuit sauvage* shows the disaster that occurred at the period of time. The transgressive intimacy between them mirrors the ethical dimension of their actions and the historical implications of their commitment to national liberation, indeed, in a way it illustrates a form of resistance toward the current events .

“En face ,si on ne donna pas l’impression de se déplacer,on se rapprocha d’autant .Nédim continua d’avancer.On continua de remonter la rue vers lui Il allongea le pas.Bahi lui tomba dans les bras .A la vérité ,il se laissa aller sur elle .Il se serait effondré sinon,si elle ne l’avait pas reçu ,ne lui avait pas offert son épaule pour qu’il y reposât une tête qu’il ne pouvait plus porter.¹⁹

For Dib,it was obvious to revisit the war for liberation as the internal struggle for power began to reveal horrific acts of brutality committed by both sides of the civil conflict .In this regard, professor Edward J.Hughes argues that :

“The striking contemporaneity” of Dib’s writing of *La nuit sauvage* reminds us that the duty towards the past runs in tandem with the need to confront the present conflict.”²⁰

By using metaphors to describe events, Mohammed Dib succeeded to demonstrate the real truth:

“A peine une rumeur, le vent de folie soufflait encore derrière, invariablement ponctué de coups de feu, mais ne signifiait plus grand-chose.

Des voitures surgissaient, et passaient. Des Jeep de l’armée, N’avaient-ils pas mis, Nédim et Bahi, assez de distance entre elle et eux ? Elle leur avait concédé une certaine avance. Sans plus, apparemment. »²¹

From this quote, we notice the clarity of the moment, and how the two characters Nédim and Bahi show Resistance to overcome the painful night.

Besides, the struggle of the character in search for peace is in like manner of Dib himself, in his writing style and searching for a liberator way of speech and writing that explain his symbolic choice of word. Although, it describes Dib’s characteristics of his literary style which brings a new vision and a new position in order to get rid of some traditions to be modern.

In fact, Materialist criticism relates both literary canon and changing interpretations of it to the cultural formations which produce them, and which those interpretations in turn reproduce, or help to change the canonical texts and offers different conceptions of human identity, cultural social, historical process, as well as the activity of criticism itself ²².

Hughes argues that Dib’s reflection on “state repression” in *La nuit sauvage* whether under colonial rule or in the context of postcolonial Algeria or other political conflicts, symbolizes a “preoccupation” with the present and with the descent of executioners and victims.”²³

In addition to this, many passages of the short story represent Resistance in *La nuit sauvage*. As well as the tragic story of Nédim and Bahi .The order of events reflect some events occurred during the Algerian civil war as mentioned in the following passage:

“Se donnant ainsi le temps de souffler, elle espéra que Nédim prendrait également sur soi et repartirait du bon pied. Elle ne perdait pas, pendant ce temps, les parages de vue. Voitures de l’armée ,voitures de police,ou de particuliers qui n’étaient pas moins à ciandre, il pouvait en survenir de partout, et les ramasser²⁴.”

One can notice in this short passage, that Mohammed Dib strongly describes that savage night, with his choice of words. He revisits the Algerian Black Decade, making past events as present ones .

As John Branningan explains in his book about *Cultural Materialism*, some important characteristics of Cultural Materialism have become clear; the focus on the possibilities of subversion ,the bifocal perspective on both the past and the present ,the belief that both the objects of their studies and the methods by which they study are forms of dissidence, and view that all forms of representations are engaged in political struggle.²⁵

Nevertheless, Mohammed Dib experimented a new literary style that of literary resistance, as a matter of fact, this linked individual texts to a more thorough examination of “discontinuity” which social relations continue to be determined by a system of power which opens a perspective to devastating effects of war ,racism,and imperial rule ²⁶ .

Dib’s collection articulates a notable experimentation in perspective in his aesthetic and political development and argued how he understands the position of Algeria from 1990’s to the end of the century,through the black period.

Thus, Dib’s early works focus on the interconnection of native Algerians to the land,an example of his dedication to the anticolonial struggle and his commitment to what

Mao Tse-Tung refers to as the fronts of the pen and the gun in overthrowing imperialism. In his trilogy *Algerie*, Dib embroiders the physicality of the Algerian landscape into his narratives, laying the ground work for cultural resistance and for the repositioning of identity in native terms. Commenting on Dib's *La Grande Maison*, the first of the three novels in his trilogy, Fawzi Ahmed writes: "In Dib's text there is a progression from an Algerian auto-portrait to an Algerian experience".²⁷ Interestingly, cultural resistance is seen through Dib's writing which reflects the concept of dispossession of the land that invigorated nationalist movements against colonialism.

Barbara Harlow argues that this concept is as the fundamental character of Resistance literature and the political struggle against both physical and psychological exile. In other words, E. San Juan JR writes that :

"For the third world artist confronted daily with degrading poverty, hunger, disease, racist bigotry, and genocidal weapons, art spells life or death"²⁸. A notion that corresponds to Dib's reinscription of the Algerian interior into narrative structure in his early work.²⁹

In this sense, we perceive many of the voices of Dib's fictions and poems as being quiete declarations (Dib describes poetry itself as "silent music" against what he describes in his later book of stories *La nuit sauvage*, as "the vast and chattering desert that has spread over a large part of the planet". If art has any nobility, he argues, it helps us survive this painfully revelatory clatter of the hate, horror, and meaninglessness that overcomes even the gentle throb of the sea³⁰.

In the story of *La nuit sauvage*, Nédim and Beyhanna, as they travel the streets of their city by bus from their beautiful villa to a poorer section of town to release bombs in a local retraurant in an act of terrorism. Bahi escapes, but Nédim is shot, and she is forced to

carry him long distances through the streets while the military seeks them out until she can find a conveniently isolated spot. So intense is their love for one another and their complete belief in their cause, that even today, when we recognize the total savagery of such acts, we can only sympathize with the young couple as brother gradually slips into death and Bahi still living years later in the villa she has attempted as a youth to escape is doomed to a life of terrifying memories. Overall, the short story clearly demonstrates the resistance of Algerian people during the years of the Black Decade.

Moreover, resistance is not illustrated only in the story of *La nuit sauvage* but also in many of the collected stories. Therefore, in the short story “*La Déviation*” in English “*The Detour*” many if not most of Dib’s characters, no matter how experienced they see themselves to be, ultimately turn to quietude in order to survive. There is no more apparent example of this than the modern Algerian couple of this story, a man and a woman, Ben and Soraya, who artfully steer their expensive Mercedes from the Algerian town they have been visiting back to their city home. A detour sign sends them inland, into the desert, where suddenly the road comes to an end, and their magnificent machine becomes stuck in the sand. Night is approaching, so the couple set out toward a distant light, meeting up with a seemingly pleasant enough native (Fellah) who takes them to his home. The next morning, as they wait for help, an orator declares them to have been brought to the small village by “the hand of God” the village arid, barren, desolate has suffered for years, and now the natives hope to free themselves from what they perceive as an evil spell by sacrificing the couple ³¹.

Pour douze heures au moins, elle avait mis le nez hors du trou à cafards de leur petite ville et oublié ses barbus, des hypocrites dans leur genre et des incapables pour être complet ³².

This short statement taken from the short story “*Le déviation*” describes the Islamic context during the Black Decade, because in 1989, the military rulers abandoned socialist economics, and they allowed various political parties to operate. In local elections in 1990, a

party called the Islamic Salvation Front(FIS) won 55 percent of the vote which was seen as a threat. As we can notice from this story, the influence of these Islamic Parties are apparently present in every day life of Algerians at that period .

La suite ne venait pas, l'air se chargeait d'une crainte, d'un désarroi indéfinissables, révérenciels. Si cet homme était gagné aussi par quelque appréhension, il lui fallait s'armer de courage pour se résoudre à poursuivre, pour oser le faire .

Avec violence, il reprit d'un coup :Ce qui nous manque,ce sont des médiateurs !Ce cri d'espoir, il l'avait lancé d'une voix désespérée, qui réinstalla le silence surquoi, autre expression de l'abandon, de l'effroi, planèrent les marmonement du vent ³³ .

Here, Ben protested against the fact that they were obliged to stay there, despite being lost, they resisted and continued having hope .

Ben se leva et,ne se gênant pas pour hausser le tron dit :tu veux nous faire prendre, au yeux de ta tribu pour des quoi ?³⁴

No matter how difficult the situation was, Ben tried to resist any way against these movements.

John W.Maerhofer argues that, one that may locate Dib's work in the post modernist aloofness that had peaked by the mid-1990's. Therefore, Dib intends to rediscover the relationship between author and reader by exposing the representations of power that seem to work beyond the control of collective experience through the moment of political awakening of the characters ³⁵. He added that Dib develops the concept of systematic violence and transgressions and involves more detail in other stories that deal specifically with the failure of the FLN in post colonial Algeria, resulting in the emergence of political and religious factionalism and the further alienation of the population from the fruits of the anticolonial struggle .

Dib reminds the reader that the mechanism of imperialism are still intact ;that they still structure the material conditions of "life today"and yet these conditions are mystified by the

ideology of national liberation which flattens class antagonism thus allowing the exploitative system to remain invisible to the demobilized population ³⁶.

In the story of “*Le Français d’Amira*”, the story blurs the lines between past and present Algeria by again depicting the relationship between her family members ³⁷.

John Brannigan claims that we could apply several of the criticisms of New Historicism discussed above to Cultural Materialism, in particular those criticisms which indicate the problems with not defining the nature and specific historical form of ‘power dominant ideology’ or dominant culture and those which denote the very limited extent to which Cultural Materialists think that dissidence or subversion can be effective ³⁸.

The legacy of colonialism structures what Dib sees as the same agenda which has activated and sustained the surge of terrorism and terrorist violence during the Algerian Black Decade. As the Cultural Materialists give priority to preferring instead to historicise, theorise and politicise literary texts ³⁹. In other words, Cultural materialists focus most on the truth and real facts rather than on theory and make literary texts reflect politics.

In one of Dib’s ironic tales, “*Une partie de dés*” two young radicals break into the house of an older man with the intention of killing him as they have been ordered by their superiors. But the old man, armed with a gun, shoots and kills one of the boys, belting the other his life with the roll of the dice. Despite his recognition that reason will have little effect on this young automan—a boy whose life has been so denigrated that he has no comprehension of the value of living the man attempts to inculcate in the youth some sense of moral values. When the boy is finally let go, he enters the streets where life is held so cheaply that he is shot at by his own cohorts: “Il était venu pour tuer, non pour mourir. Il ne voulait pas de ça. Il se laissa tomber à genoux.”⁴⁰

From this sentence taken from the short story "*Une partie de dés*" one can notice that Algerian people were just victims of all kinds of terrorism, however the short story is may be the most significant one, it explains deeply the relationship between Algerian people and terrorists at that time .

Oui, rappelez-vous ce garçon. Il vivait et il a vécu, il n'a rien fait d'autre. Rien que jouer et il a vécu. Par jeu , il s'est engagé dans l'action terroriste, et il n'est plus. Si jeune. Peut-être ne s'en est-il pas même rendu compte au moment où c'est arrivé.⁴¹

This story reinvents the notably tragic decade of terrorism and the influence of terrorist on innocent children .The story shows how the old man resisted and wanted some change and obviously save the life of the saved boy by playing at dice. This ironic story reflects the power of Algerian people and how they overcame this period of tragic decade. Besides, this short story summarizes the whole novel. Dib succeeds to retell the Algerian history by giving vivid descriptions which send us back to the past .

Some critics suggest that attention to material conditions and ideology can augment almost any reading and that marxist theories represent one important tool among many that allow insight into the complex workings of culture and the diverse uses and meaning of texts⁴² .

The story "*Une partie de dés*" gives chronological order of events that occurred in the old man's house where the terrorist is forced to answer to his would-be victim, thus the two young men burst into a courtyard, intending to assassinate an old man from whom they expect no trouble. The old man, however, is ready for them, and once he has killed one of the attackers and trapped the other, he conducts a lengthy interrogation of the surviving youth that is intended partly to torture him but also to get to the bottom of what motivates him. Who has ordered him to do this? Does he believe it is the will of God? Now that the tables are turned, does he believe it would be fair for him to die? Does he really understand the meaning of

death? The old man proposes that the young man play dice with him for his life, and as the game favors one player and then the other, the conversation becomes more impassioned ⁴³.

We notice the presence of history through the conversation between the old man and the future terrorist. The old man says:

Et Dieu lui a dit qu'il faut me tuer.

The terroriste replies : "oui, monsieur."⁴⁴

This strong story reflects both Algerian people and their past history concerning terrorism, it illustrates how strong they are, and how the old man represents that Algerian resistance toward terrorists, he faces them, and manages the young boy. Despite the disappointing truth , the old man tries to convince the young boy that he is not in the right way, and maybe he will change his way of thinking and get rid of the pessimistic thoughts, submission for instance in this passage :

« -Alors tu sais ce que ta victime éprouve à l'instant ou elle te voit lui passer le couteau sur la gorge
-oui, monsieur. »⁴⁵

"*Une partie de dés*" shows us the sad truth and the seemingly mindless atrocities that destroy modern societies. But as Dib points out in his afterword, "it is not a writer's job to mete out lessons but to reverse the learning process. He does not prescribe responses but rather poses questions."⁴⁶

In the story "*Les papillons*" Dib tells the story of a young boy, Izet, and his mother, Najla, in the Dorbrinja neighborhood of Sarajevo, which was considered one of the front lines in the Bosnian War, and which saw some of the most horrific war crimes committed during the siege, especially against Bosnian women who became the target of systematic rape and sexual abuse by the Serbian nationalists.

For Dib, the explicit violence against women is structurally similar to the predicament of women in postcolonial Algeria in which the politics of patriarchal dominance is revealed as a systemic mechanism by which women are subjugated through ideology, one which had equally devastating circumstances in Sarajevo. In his story, Izet comes home to find his mother has been brutally raped by a group of Serbian soldiers who live in the same building complex. After trading his ration of chocolate for grenades, Izet assassinates the leader of the Serbian group, an act of legitimized aggression that would seem justified in the revenge plot.⁴⁷

« D'autres musulmanes avaient déjà été leurs victimes, les deux cousines Tima et Zuhra, et certaines amies les Sena, Zerina, Enisa... Cela, Izet le savait autant que quiconque. »⁴⁸

This story tells some of the historical events that occurred during that Black Decade, Dib develops the theme of Resistance and characterized it by Izet who reflects courage, strength and moral values of the Algerian people .

« Elle eut pour lui un regard de reconnaissance dont il s'émut, eut des larmes dont il ne voulait pas ,contre lesquelles il se bardait ,se rebellait. Son cœur en frémissait ; pas lui. »⁴⁹

Dib defending his origins states : “What better way of learning the value of the written word of discovering that one's words have impact, that they gain in value in direct proportion to the blame incurred or the extent of the condemnation they expire”.⁵⁰

As John Brannigan defines dissidence as a concept which has considerable importance for cultural materialism. It is not opposed diametrically to power, not an antithesis which seeks to reverse the values, trends and state strategies of power and it is instead close in resemblance to the structures of power and is in fact produced by the internal contradictions of these structures⁵¹.

Our analysis of some of the selected stories of “*La nuit sauvage*” offers us to a deep meaning of the post face of the novel. Here, Dib attempts to answer why he has treated the

horror and misfortune of the Algerians in such abstract matter putting his own suffering and that of his country in context ⁵².

Therefore, the “*postface*” represents the place where the author expresses his intentions which create the author’s freedom of expression. Though this “*Postface*”, Mohammed Dib justifies his thirteen collected stories by denouncing the events of the Black decade and human criminality, and he describes his book of stories *La nuit sauvage*, as “the vast and chattering desert that has spread over a large part of the planet.” If art has any nobility, he argues, it is that it helps us survive this painfully revelatory clatter of the hate, horror, and meaninglessness that overcomes even the gentle throb of the sea ⁵³.

To conclude this chapter, we suggest that Resistance is shaped and reflected by different manners, different characters and themes according to the plot of each novel. Despite the atrocity of that Black Decade, Mohammed Dib succeeds to denounce and retell the story according to the historical context of the Algerian Black Decade. His experimentation of style makes him flourishing thanks to his new vision and new style of exposing reality and the notable historical impact on his literary work.

Endnotes

¹ Mohammed Dib, *La nuit sauvage* (Dahleb, 1995).

² John W. Maerhofer (2010) Algeria “Revisited”: Imperialism, Resistance, and the Dialectic of Violence in Mohammed Dib’s “The Savage Night”, College Literature p.205

³ Ibid; p204

⁴ Ibid

⁵ Branningan, *New Historicism and Cultural Materialism* (1998, p174).

⁶ Ibid

⁷ John Maerhofer (2010) Algeria “Revisited”: Imperialism, Resistance, and the Dialectic of Violence in Mohammed Dib’s “The Savage Night”, College Literature p206

⁸ Ibid

- ⁹John Calvert, *The logic Of the Algerian Civil War*, (H Algeria 2003) p01
- ¹⁰Ibid p02
- ¹¹Ibid p3
- ¹² Calvert, *The logic Of the Algerian Civil War*, H Algeria,(2003) p4
- ¹³Ibidp5
- ¹⁴Ibid p6
- ¹⁵John W.Maerhofer (2010)Algeria “Revisited”:Imperialism, Resistance,and the Dialectic of Violence in Mohammed Dib’s “The Savage Night “,College Literature p207
- ¹⁶ Dib, *La nuit sauvage* : (Dahleb, 1995, p70)
- ¹⁷ Ibid; p79
- ¹⁸ Ibid; p81
- ¹⁹ Ibid, p84
- ²⁰John W. Maerhofer (2010)Algeria “Revisited”:Imperialism, Resistance, and the Dialectic of Violence in Mohammed Dib’s “The Savage Night “,College Literature p208
- ²¹ Dib, *La nuit sauvage*, p. 93
- ²²Branningan, *New Historicism and Cultural Materialism*, p107.
- ²³ John W. Maerhofer(2010)Algeria “Revisited”:Imperialism, Resistance, and the Dialectic of Violence in Mohammed Dib’s “The Savage Night “,College Literature p208.
- ²⁴ Dib *La nuit sauvage*, p.93.
- ²⁵ John Branningan, *New Historicism and Cultural Materialism*, p109.
- ²⁶ John W. Maerhofer(2010)Algeria “Revisited”:Imperialism, Resistance, and the Dialectic of Violence in Mohammed Dib’s “The Savage Night “,College Literature p210.
- ²⁷ Ibid; p209
- ²⁸ Ibid
- ²⁹ Ibid
- ³⁰Greenintegerblog, *Published Aug 20, 2010 Copyright 2010 Geoff Wisner*
- ³¹ Ibid;p3
- ³² Dib, *La nuit sauvage*, p. 22.
- ³³Ibid ;p48
- ³⁴ Ibid ;p49
- ³⁵ John W. Maerhofer(2010)Algeria “Revisited”:Imperialism,Resistance,and the Dialectic of Violence in Mohammed Dib’s “The Savage Night “,College Literature p210
- ³⁶ Ibid

- ³⁷ Greenintegerblog, *Published Aug 20, 2010 Copyright 2010 Geoff Wisner.*
- ³⁸ Brannigan, *New Historicism and Cultural Materialism*;p114 .
- ³⁹ Ibid; p55
- ⁴⁰ Dib, *La Nuit Sauvage*, p. 225
- ⁴¹ Ibid ;226
- ⁴² Donald Hall, *Cultural theory: from Basic Principles to Advanced Applications*, California state university Northbridge;p73
- ⁴³ Greenintegerblog, *Published Aug 20, 2010 Copyright 2010 Geoff Wisner.*
- ⁴⁴ Dib, *La nuit sauvage*, p. 227
- ⁴⁵ Ibid ;p229.
- ⁴⁶ Greenintegerblog, *Published Aug 20, 2010 Copyright 2010 Geoff Wisner*
- ⁴⁷ John W. Maerhofer(2010)Algeria “Revisited”:Imperialism,Resistance,and the Dialectic of Violence in Mohammed Dib’s “The Savage Night “,College Literature p217
- ⁴⁸ Dib, *La nuit sauvage*, p.186.
- ⁴⁹ Ibid ;187
- ⁵⁰ John W. Maerhofer(2010)Algeria “Revisited”:Imperialism,Resistance,and the Dialectic of Violence in Mohammed Dib’s “The Savage Night “,College Literature p218.
- ⁵¹ Brannigan, *New Historicism and Cultural Materialism*; p111.
- ⁵² Greenintegerblog, *Published Aug 20, 2010 Copyright 2010 Geoff Wisner*
- ⁵³ Ibid
- ⁵⁴ Dib, *La nuit sauvage*, p. 152.
- ⁵⁵ Morrison, *The Bluest Eye*, p.194.
- ⁵⁶ Dib, *La nuit sauvage*, p185.

V. Conclusion

On the whole, throughout our reading of Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* and Dib's *La nuit sauvage* in terms of Resistance, and after a considerable research, we notice that this issue is explored differently by the two writers. The two novels allow us to discover how important history is, and its major role in any given literary text. Throughout our reading of Morrison's *The Bluest eye* (1970) and Mohammed Dib's *La nuit sauvage*(1995) Resistance is shaped in several ways in the two novels .

We come to notice that Resistance itself is a form of rebellion as it is defined in Oxford dictionary. In the case of literature, resistance is a reaction of the colonized and oppressed countries against the west dominant culture, as a result our issue has been achieved. First, throughout our reading of Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* (1970), we conclude that Resistance in the novel is used to depict three categories of resistance, resistance of the blacks toward the white race, resistance of the black against the black race, and resistance of black women against the patriarchal society that is reflected through the plot and characters and obviously the major events of the story itself.

The second, throughout our reading of Mohammed Dib's *La nuit sauvage* (1995). We come to notice that Mohammed Dib explores this issue of resistance through all his novel, using real facts in Algerian History, Dib retells history through fiction, through characters in each story .The whole novel represents resistance which reflects moral opposition rather than violence in other words, the characters play a major role in the interpretation and the representation of resistance in *La nuit sauvage*.

After the analysis of both novels, we conclude that, though resistance is shaped differently but it is still a form of opposition to authority of any given society which make Resistance part of

freedom. We can sum up, that both literary texts Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* and Mohammed Dib's *La nuit sauvage* are subject of a susceptible comparative study.

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