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John Millington Synge's play *The Playboy of the Western World* (1907) and Rachid Boudjedra's novel *La Répudiation* (1967): A psychoanalytical study.

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To our families, friends and relatives.

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Abstract:

The present dissertation is a psychoanalytical study of the literary works, the novel of the Algerian writer Rachid Boudjedra's *la Repudiation* (1967) and the play of the Irish playwright John Millington Synge *The Playboy of the Western World* (1907). Our main concern in the following works is to show the protagonists' psychological Revolts against their respective fathers are symbolic of the authors' revolts against their respective societies' established orders. Rachid's and Christy's desire for parricide is evocative of their authors' rebellion against religious and political authorities. Even Rachid's and Christy's melancholic emotions are symbolic for the authors' melancholia. For the fulfillment of our work, we borrow from Freud's Complete Works some analytical concepts such as: Oedipus complex and Melancholia, to treat the first and the second chapter and the concept of Revolt from Julia Kristeva's work *The Sense and Non- Sense of Revolt* to deal with the last chapter of our memoire.

I- Introduction

Psychoanalysis is one of the leading contemporary fields of research that deals with the psychic life of individuals and the way it is manifested in the outside world. It helps people to recognize the source of their troubles that may trick them about their true value in society and suggests a solution for their psychological problems.

As a branch of psychology, psychoanalysis was first born out of Sigmund Freud's analysis¹. It comes as a cure to several psychological troubles of our modern time, especially; those appeared after the destructive period of the world wars. Troubles like trauma, hysteria, schizophrenia...etc are among the major psychic disorders that psychoanalysis strives to find a remedy. Therefore, psychoanalysts attempt to create a diversity of therapeutic processes and use many concepts, such as Oedipus complex, melancholia, narcissism, revolt...etc to explain the individuals' psychological problems.

Psychoanalysis has influenced many other fields. In many ways, it "helps to understand philosophy, culture, religion [and most important thing, to understand and to analyze the codes] of literature"². According to many scholars, Modern literature is full of controversies. It is "disorganized, confusing, and riddled with disagreements"³. This complication is due to the use of modernist techniques such as: Symbolism, stream of consciousness, expressionism, flash backs, monologue...etc. Both the use and the understanding of these techniques come as a result of psychoanalysis' influence on literature. However, in this work, we are not concerned with such influence but rather we are concerned with the role of psychoanalysis in understanding the different themes and issues introduced in literature.

Considering this, we believe that the subject of our memoire would help us to better understand the role of psychoanalysis and its importance in analyzing literature. Our major concern in this paper is to explore the two literary works, *La Répudiation* by Rachid

Boudjedra and *The Playboy of the Western World* written by John Millington Synge from a psychoanalytical perspective. The protagonists of these literary works, Rachid and Christy Mahon, respectively, seem to experience certain depressive emotions that led them to revolt. Thus, in this memoire, we would try to highlight their stressful life as well as their revolts against all what troubles them, whether psychologically or socially. We would try also to relate the two protagonists' revolts against their respective fathers to the authors' revolts against religious and political authorities. In doing this, we would seek help from the Freudian theoretical concepts, Oedipus complex, Melancholia, and from Julia Kristeva's notion of Revolt.

Review of literature:

Throughout our reading of the literature written about *La Repudiation* (1969) and *The Playboy of Western World* (1907), we have noticed that they have both received a wide range of criticism. For "*La Répudiation*", we have noticed that it has been approached from different perspectives; most of the critical perceptions addressed to it highlight the centrality of the issue of patriarchy. For instance, Amel Maafa's article "*L'image(s) de l'étrangère dans le roman algérien de la Post-indépendance le cas de la Répudiation de Rachid Boudjedra*" (2012), deals with "la présentation de l'étrangère particulièrement de la française [Céline] dans le roman algérien de la Post-indépendance"⁴. In fact, in presenting Rachid's mistress, Maafa compares Celine to Rachid's mother. She accentuates the idea that Celine is the imminent figure who comes to create equilibrium in the novel and most-ipy in the life of the protagonist⁵. However, as the events of the novel progress, this 'étrangère' changes her status; she becomes as Rachid's repudiated mother; another oppressed woman in a patriarchal society.

In a thesis entitled “*L’interdit dans les romans: la répudiation et la macération de Rachid Boudjedra, enjeu d’une écriture subversive*” (2007), Achour Hambli tackles different interesting issues, including the issue of patriarchy, by focusing on the language of the novel “*La Répudiation*”. His analysis attempts to explore the necessity of writing. Indeed, he claims that Boudjedra uses language as a subversive tool to reject what he calls “le Malheur géré, par les femmes”⁶ and particularly by his mother. This means that this subversive writing is used not only to defend the women cause but even to criticize the patriarchal foundation of Boudjedra’s society.

In another article entitled “*La hierarchie dans la Répudiation et FIS de la Haine*” (2003), Jeanne- Sarah de Larquier illustrates the different levels of hierarchy that are presented in *La Répudiation*. These respective hierarchies are “interne et culturelle, externe et politique” and “l’hiérarchie discursive”⁷. In other words, the first hierarchy is formed under the precepts of patriarchal panel where men, women and children live in a divided social space. The second one reveals that the use of the French language in the Algerian society is a dangerous threat “qui déracine l’homme Algerien”⁸ of his origins. As far as the third hierarchy is concerned, it employs language, through a double use that mixes between reality and imagination, to criticize the patriarchal Algerian society.

The Playboy of the Western World has also been studied from different perspectives. The bulk of criticism about this work, however, revolves around the issue of identity and not only that of patriarchy. For instance, in an article entitled “*But we’re only Talking, Maybe: Language, Desire and the Arrival of the Present in Synge’s Playboy of the Western World*” (2009), Robert Brazeau comments that *The Playboy of the Western World* is a play that seeks to demonstrate the way in which language functions to construct identity. This is in the sense that Christy has moved from a poor stupid lad into a charming young man whom Pegeen, among other girls of Shabeen village, would “fall in love with [him] partly because of his

poetic speech”⁹. Therefore, language gave Christy a new identity full of charm and attractiveness better than his old identity when he was living with his father.

In his essay: *Nothing to be done: “Masculinity and the Emergence of Irish Modernism”* (2014), MacDonald believes that the Irish community, as exposed in *The Playboy*, is a masculine society which is peculiarly fascinated by Christy Mahon’s heroic deed instead of denouncing its cruelty. More than that, the notions of violence and masculinity become as [an attractive and] *powerfully seductive* [character to Irish] *women*”, such as Pegeen who praises Christy as a “*fine, fiery fellow... with great rages when [his] temper’s aroused*”¹⁰.

To finish with, Paul Gilbert’s “*Cultural Identity and Political Ethnicity*” deals with identity problem in the Irish literary works, among them, Synge’s play “*The Playboy of the Western World*”. Gilbert views this play as a work that centers on the issue of identity, the way people feel their cultural belonging and their attachment to Ireland¹¹. According to Gilbert, Synge’s works serve as means that preserve the Irish culture as well as protect and defend the Irish identity.

Issue and working hypothesis:

From these previous critical works, one can notice how *La Repudiation* and *The Playboy* have attracted the attention of many scholars and critics. The majority of these scholars have emphasized more on the notion of Patriarchy in the novel, whereas; others extend their studies to analyze the issue of identity that is presented in the play.

Therefore, and in order to reinforce these previous studies, we would shed light on another important dimension which is a psychoanalytical study of these two literary texts. Our

major interest is to explore the protagonists' revolts against their respective fathers and show how these revolts stand as a symbol of authors' revolts against their respective societies' established orders. In addition to this, we suppose that these protagonists' melancholic emotions are symbolic of the two authors' melancholia. We also suppose that in spite of experiencing the same psychic troubles; both protagonists don't react in the same manner to attain their psychological revolt.

Our choice of these two different literary works that are issued from two different backgrounds is not done haphazardly, but it is for the sake and purpose of proving that both Boudjedra and Synge devoted their writing to show their suffering. This suffering springs out from the upheavals that both underwent due to the oppressive authorities of their countries. Thus, *The Playboy and La Repudiation* allow us to uncover the deep meaning of Synge's as well as Boudjedra's situation and how they revolted mainly through their fictitious figures, Christy and Rachid.

For the fulfillment of our work and as we have already mentioned above, we intend to use some concepts of different psychoanalytical theoreticians; the first two concepts the Oedipus complex and Melancholia as they are presented in Freud's "*Complete Works*" (2007) and the notion of Psychological Revolt developed in Julia Kristeva's "*The Sense and Non-Sense of Revolt*" (2000) respectively.

Methodological Outlining

At the methodological level, our memoire will follow the IMRAD method: the introduction, method and materials, and finally, results and discussion. The introduction of our theme, review of the literature written on *La Répudiation* and *The Playboy of the Western World* and issue and working hypothesis are introduced in the first part of the memoire.

Concerning the method and materials section, we summarize Freud's concepts of Oedipus complex, Parricide and Melancholia as presented in his *Complete Works* (2010) and Julia Kristeva's notion of Psychological Revolt as developed in "*The Sense and Non Sense of Revolt*" (2000). In addition to the explanation of the analytical categories in the first part of this section, we will also provide a biography of each author of the selected primary sources, followed by a small synopsis of their respective works in the second part. As far as the result section is concerned, it will display the findings of the present memoir, which in turn will be tackled in the discussion section.

The Discussion section comprises three chapters; the first chapter will focus on how the two protagonists revolt against their respective fathers and how this revolt stands as a symbol for further revolts; this will be realized by relating to Freud's Oedipus complex. In the second chapter entitled, melancholia, we will present these protagonists as melancholic persons as it is defined once again by Freud. In the third chapter, the psychoanalytical revolt will highlight the way in which the protagonists attain their psychological revolt in accordance to Julia Kristeva's meaning of revolt. Finally, the 'Conclusion' section is devoted to the summary of the main issues discussed in the present work.

End notes:

¹ Stephane Michaud, 'Literature and Psychoanalysis', *Comparative Literature*. (2012) :1.

²Ibid.

³Agnes Potocz, Freud, *Psychoanalysis and Symbolism* (Australia, Cambridge University Press, 2003) ,1.

⁴Maafa Amel, 'L'image(s) de L'étrangère dans le Roman Algérien de la Post-indépendance le Cas de la Répudiation de Rachid Boudjedra' ed. Ismail Slimani (Lille University : La Revue Verte, 2012) ,75.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Achour Hambli, 'L'interdit dans les romans : la Répudiation et la macération de Rachid Boudjedra, enjeu d'une écriture subversive' (Majester diss., Mentouri University ,2007) ,19.

⁷ Sarah Jeanne de Larquier, ' La hierarchies dans la répudiation et FIS de la haine', *Cinematic Romance Review* (2003) ,88-95.

⁸Ibid.

⁹ Robert Brazeau, 'But we're only talking, maybe: language, desire and the arrival of the present in Synge's *Playboy of the Western World*' *Routledge group*, (2009): 7.

¹⁰ Ronam MacDonald, 'Nothing to be done: Masculinity and emergence of Irish modernism, in *modernity and masculinity*, ed.Nataly a Hurt and Julian Murphet (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 88.

¹¹ Paul Gilbert, *Cultural Identity and Political Ethnicity* (Great Britain: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), 201.

II- Method and Materials:

Methods:

This section of our memoire, explores some concepts that are related to our work. These concepts would be explained as they are developed in Freud's "*Complete Works*" (2010) and Julia Kristeva's "*The Sense and Non Sense of Revolt*" (2000).

1-Sigmund Freud:

A-The theory of Oedipus complex:

Sigmund Freud (1856-1939); the father of psychoanalysis, as many thinkers affirm, coined some concepts that made a valuable transformation in the field of understanding the personality of the individuals and their troubles. For instance, "[his theory of] Oedipus complex is among the most often discussed and contentious issue of modern psychology and literature"¹.

The Oedipal Complex is a set of emotions and feelings that a young boy experiences during what is called "*the phallic stage*". From an early age, the little child of 5-6 years old tends to have certain "erotic desires" toward his mother as well as a kind of jealousy and hatred towards his father whom he considers to be his competitor.²

The so-called hatred towards the father heightens to reach the desire of getting rid of him if not his killing. This is what referred to as *parricide*. In the section, *Dostoevsky and Parricide* (1928), Freud defines it as: "a death-wish against the hated father" and "it is in any case the main source of the sense of guilt [within the self of a young boy]"³.

However, the state of *the Oedipal Conflict* does not last a long time, for there are various factors that would push the boy to look for what is referred to as *the Oedipal Complex Resolution*. Always within the same book, more precisely, in the part that is entitled *The Dissolution of the Oedipus Complex* (1924), Freud argues that this resolution resides in the fact that the boy makes a transition from hatred of his father to identification with him. This identification comes as a result of castration made to the boy either by men or women³. In other words, the fear of *castration* springs out from the child's immediate environment's threat of losing his penis, being cut off by his father, if he plays with it and masturbate in his infantile manners.⁴ Hence, the remaining resort for boys, to avoid castration, is to make what is called by Freud *identification* through which the wish of killing the father would be repressed in the unconscious; and "emerges to form the basis of the sense of guilt"⁵. To sum up, the process of identification is of great significance in the development of the sexual life of the boys, for it marks not only the resolution of the Oedipus complex but even the ability of children in general and boys in particular to integrate themselves in their society. However, the thing that may awaken the Oedipus complex in the child is the cruelty of the father. Missing the parental love can re-emerge the sense of hatred and wish of killing the father.

B-Melancholia:

In addition to what has been defined above, Sigmund Freud introduces another concept which is Melancholia. In the same book, but this time in a chapter entitled *Mourning and Melancholia* (1917) that deals with the psychic disorder of the individuals. Freud defines melancholia as a "reaction [towards] the loss of a loved person"⁶; when the melancholic person loses his beloved one who can be anything not necessarily a person, he enters in a state of sadness and sorrow. He becomes a depressed person and loses all capacity to love, inability

to work, he loses also his self-esteem, the sense of contact with “*the outside world*” and even he loses all interest in life itself ⁷.

Furthermore, the melancholic person displays a certain hostile behavior towards his surroundings such as close persons or animals⁸. This comes out of his incapacity to get back what he lost; for that reason, he attempts to react in an aggressive way to get rid of these destructive violent emotions that haunt him. Concerning these features of a melancholic person, Freud believes that the mentioned reaction springs from a kind of a *Narcissist desire* that has been destroyed when the object loss happens⁹. So, the person refuses to give up his loved object; and he finds great difficulties to accept his/its loss or replaces it with any new loved object.

2- Julia Kristeva:

Julia Kristeva’s (1941) “is one of the most original and influential thinkers of our time”.¹⁰ She is regarded as an imminent figure in the field of contemporary psychoanalysis. She has added a lot to psychoanalysis of which she extends the notion of revolt believing that “happiness exists only at the price of revolt”¹¹.

Psychological Revolt:

According to Julia Kristeva, Revolt is the adequate solution that enables the individual to re-habilitate his integrity into external world. But the kind of revolt that Kristeva uncovers, particularly, in her book “*The Sense and the Non-Sense of Revolt*” (2000) is that revolt which is raised against what is inside the individual’s soul. It is a revolt against all the pain, self criticism, remorse...etc that disturbs the psychic life of the individual and deprives him from a peaceful, happy life.¹² For Kristeva, this kind of revolt that we may name as a psychological revolt is more important than the one that is raised against the external world, believing that this psychological revolt might be “the only thing that can save [the depressive person] from the automation of humanity that is threatening [him]”; that is to say, it can save

him from living the rest of his life like a living-dead who would have no sense of awareness of what is happening around him.¹³ In addition to that, Kristeva believes that this revolt, in a particular way, is the one that may “keep our inner lives alive”.¹⁴ By recognizing the inner problems, it helps the depressive person to overcome his inner depression and pushes him to revolt against the outside factors that nourish his depression.

Materials:

1-The Biography of the two authors:

A-Rachid Boudjedra's Biography:

Rachid Boudjedra “ce doyen de la littérature algérienne, cet homme aux facettes multiples : poète, scénariste, chronique, dramaturge, et surtout romancier”¹⁵, has contributed, at great extent, in the development of the Algerian, contemporary, literature. He created a new reading to this literature and a new look to the Algerian society.

He was born in 1941 at Ain El Beida. He is from the bourgeoisie and he is the eldest of thirsty six siblings. His mother was the first wife of his father, among other wives and mistresses. She was living in harsh humiliating conditions due to the oppression of her husband. Rachid affirms in many cases, even in his writings, that he has a terrible childhood due to tyranny of his father. Therefore, he declares most of the time that he hates him so much and that he had no soft feeling toward this cruel father.

Rachid Boudjedra started his education in Constantine. In 1959, he began to travel to the orient and to Spain too as a representative of FLN. And after the independence of Algeria, he got back home where he pursued his studies between Algiers and Paris and got a license degree in philosophy from Sorbonne University in 1965.

He was married to a French woman and became a teacher at Blida. Yet, in 1965, after the coup d'état of Boumadeine, Boudjedra left Algeria. He was condemned of death and exiled from the country for many years.

He got many positions, such as teacher of philosophy at coulommiers secondary school, Paris. He became as the councilor of the informatics of culture ministry. He was named as the lecturer at SNED and taught in IEP of Algiers.

Rachid Boudjedra wrote many literary texts, such as: *la Répudiation* (1969), *L'insolation* (1972), *L'escargot entêté* (1977), *Hotel Saint George* (2007), *Le printemps* (2014) ...etc.¹⁶

B- John Millington Synge's Biography:

John Millington Synge (1871-1909) among his "contemporaries at the abbey theatre, [is] credited with paving the way for new breed of Irish dramatists which gave a new look to the Irish theatrical arts"¹⁷. Unlike the previous writers, Synge wrote plays "that were rooted in the Irish culture, and told stories of every day Irish life [using] the local Irish dialect"¹⁸.

He was born in 1871 at Rathfarnham, outside Dublin, Ireland. He was the youngest of five children. He was raised as an orphan because he never knew his father who died when Synge was a year old.

Synge studied in a private school for four years. But, his sick health led his mother to engage for him a home tutor. Being isolated most of the time; Synge immersed himself in the surrounding country side and became "an avid naturalist". At the age of sixteen, he read Darwin's *Origin of Species*, and therefore, he lost his Christian faith for that.¹⁹

Synge admired music; therefore, he began his violin lessons and enrolled at both the Royal Irish Academy of music and Trinity College, Dublin. He graduated from Trinity College with focus on languages, besides; he has a scholarship from the academy. He traveled to Germany, and there, he realized his passion to pursue writing over music.

In 1896, he met the Irish poet William Butler Yeats in Paris. And then, Yeats, Synge and Lady Gregory, would form the famous Abby Theater as a revolution to the Irish art and literature. In meantime, Synge traveled to the Aran Island where he learned the Gaelic language and recorded the Irish folk's every day conversations.

He produced many literary texts such as: *In the Shadow of the Glen* (1903), *Riders to the Sea* (1904), *the Well of Saints* (1905), *the Playboy of the Western World* (1907), *Deirdre of Sorrows* (1910)...etc.

2- Synopsis of the literary works:

A-Synopsis of *La Répudiation* (1969):

It tells the story of Rachid, protagonist and narrator from childhood to adulthood. By narrating it to his foreign mistress Celine, Rachid gives very interesting details about the real face of the Algerian society.

Indeed, the fact that his father repudiated his first wife, Rachid's mother, advocates a great sorrow and hatred of the son towards his father who prefers to marry the fifteen years girl, Zobida; and thus, denying all his duties towards his children. The novel denounces the unfairness of the patriarchal authority as well as the passiveness of the Algerian women, and precisely, Rachid's mother. The absence of the word 'Ma' in Rachid's childhood and that of his sisters and brother causes a kind of identity trouble to all of them. For instance, Zahir, the eldest brother, is a homosexual. Rachid has a psychological problem, for he attempts so hardly to deny the reality of his situation. Saida suffers from a frustrating conjugal life with an old husband and Yasmina, a victim to superstitions, lives with a husband who is "*un fils a maman.*"

B-Synopsis of the *Playboy of the Western World* (1907):

It tells the story of a young rebellious young man, Christy Mahon, who reacts violently against his father. Then, he flees away to escape punishment, thinking that he killed his father for real. After a long walking, he settles down in the Shabeen village, a place where he would redefine all his values and the true sense of his life.

Through his close contact with these villagers, especially Pegeen Mike whom he would build a certain romantic relation with, Christy Mahon changes his behavior from a coward “*lad*” into that of a charming champion. Unfortunately, his new happy life is very short. The return of the father from “death” destroys all the new reputation that Christy has gained along his stay in this village. He becomes a liar rather than a hero. Though events reverse rapidly at the end, Christy goes back with his father but as “a gallant captain [who leads his] heathen slave”²⁰.

End notes:

¹ Sofa Ahmed, Sigmund Freud's Psychoanalytical theory Oedipus complex: A Critical Study with reference to D.H Lawrence's Sons and Lovers, last modified on March 2012, viewed 10 June 2015,

<available at <http://www.academic journals.org/p>.

² Sigmund Freud, Female Sexuality, in *Complete Works*, 2010 4593-4595

<www.avalas.fr /IMG/pdf/Freud-Complete Works.pdf>.

³ Ibid, 'Dostoevsky and Parricide', 4559.

⁴ Ibid, 'Dissolution of Oedipus complex', 4091- 4083.

⁵ Smith, 'Dostoevsky and Parricide', 4559.

⁶ Ibid, 'Mourning and Melancholia', 30- 42

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid, 46.

⁹ Ibid, 47.

¹⁰ Noelle MacAfee, *Routledge Critical, Essential Guides for literary Studies, Julia Kristeva*, (London: Taylor and Francis Library, 2004), 14.

¹¹ Ibid, 10.

¹² Julia Kristeva, *The Sense and Non Sense of Revolt: The Power and Limits of Psychoanalysis*, Trans. Jeamine Herman, (New York: Colombia University Press, 2000), 7.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid, 8.

¹⁵ Ismail Slimane, Dossier spécial (N°: 4) Rachid Boudjedra, *La tortue verte revue en ligne des littératures francophones* (2012) : 2.

¹⁶ <(http:// colinecelia.canblog.com/archives/21083241.html), last modified 08 Mai 2011, viewed 31 August 2015 >.

¹⁷ Simon Pollard, the playboy of the western world; Teacher's resource, Old Vic Theatre (New Voice of Education), London, 2011, 11.

¹⁸ Ibid

¹⁹ <(www.gradesaver.com/author/john-millington- synge.) viewed 31 August 2015>.

²⁰ J.M. Synge, *The Playboy of the Western World and Other Plays*, ed. Michael Corder (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 146.

II- Results:

From our reading of *The Playboy* and *La Repudiation*, we have come to the conclusion that a set of similarities has made our comparative study a possible endeavor. Relying on psychoanalysis to study these two works has led us to uncover the following results.

In the first chapter of our memoire, we have discovered that both protagonists have revolted against their cruel fathers, Old Mahon and Si Zoubir, and this was through two main canals: hatred and death-wish. Throughout this chapter, the protagonists' revolts stand as a symbol for further revolts; a revolt against the religious authorities as well as the societies' established orders. These ideas have been discussed in accordance to Sigmund Freud's Oedipus complex.

In the second chapter, which is oriented through Freud's concept of Melancholia, we have come to the conclusion that Christy and Rachid are actually portrayed as melancholic persons. They have both suffered from a destabilized personality that is full of pain, sadness, grief, and self-reproach. All these emotions come as a result of the protagonists' Narcissist desire of getting back their lost object; the loss of their mothers and the loss of the love of their fathers as well. In fact, it is important to say that Christy's and Rachid's melancholic emotions are symbolic of the authors' melancholia.

Finally and in the third chapter, we come to identify the possible solutions that are presented in each work to help the protagonists to get rid of their depression. As this part reveals, Christy Mahon has attained his freedom and psychological revolt through reconciliation with his father at the end of the play. However, Rachid has failed to attain such revolt. Unfortunately to Rachid, he could not escape his illusionary and hallucinating past life

that still affects his present life. This fact hampers him to revolt, like doing the action of revolt instead of complaining, and get happiness.

III- Discussion:

In this part of our memoire, we shall discuss the two protagonists of the literary works, *The Playboy* and *La Répudiation* by making reference to Freud's psychoanalytical concepts: Oedipus complex and melancholia and Kristeva's conception of psychological revolt. The discussion consists of three chapters. In the first chapter entitled The Oedipus Complex and the son-father revolt, we would explore the protagonists' revolts against their respective fathers as a symbol of the authors' rebellion against their political and religious authorities. In the second chapter, the protagonists' melancholia, we would demonstrate how the depressive effect of melancholia of Rachid and Christy is also evocative of their authors' melancholia. And the third chapter is concerned with how Christy Mahon and Rachid could attain their psychoanalytical revolt; this chapter is under the title of the protagonists' psychological revolt.

The Chapter One: The Oedipus complex and the son -father revolt:

This chapter deals with Rachid's and Christy's revolts against their respective fathers, Si Zoubir and Old Mahon. The protagonists' revolts would stand as a symbol for the authors' revolts against the religious authorities and the political systems. In doing so, we would discuss this issue through making reference to Freud's psychoanalytical concept *Oedipus complex* as it is developed in Freud's *Complete Works* (2010).

The Oedipus complex, as Sigmund Freud claims, is a transitional phase from the hatred towards the love of the father by the male child¹. In the course of Oedipus complex, especially, when we come to the process of identification with the father, there is what we call the repressed wish of the hated father². At the age of adulthood, this repression must be replaced by respect and identification with the father as a sign of a healthy development of the child's personality. Therefore, if this infantile repressed wish reappears in the adulthood, this

means that “reality [has given it] further nourishment”³. That is to say, the hatred of the father would be actually fulfilled in reality if the father is wicked and cruel.

This definition seems to fit the way in which Rachid Boudjedra and J. M. Synge have presented the protagonists’ revolts against their respective fathers, Si Zoubir and Old Mahon. The repressed hatred towards their fathers, which Freud ascribes to the Oedipus complex, is regarded as a leading factor through which Rachid and Christy Mahon have achieved their revolts. It comes as a result of their fathers’ cruelty and wickedness.

In “*The Playboy*”, and precisely in the second Act, Christy Mahon uses the expression: “Their seven curses on him, and them rousing up to let a cough or sneeze, may be, in the deadness of the night”⁴ to depict his hatred to Old Mahon that has been nourished by the cruelty of this father and his bad treatment. Old Mahon used to call his son with insulting and dreadful expressions: “squinting idiot, crawling beast and the fool of men...etc”⁵. The oppressive authority that old Mahon has exercised upon his son is the main reason that widened the gap between them. At opening lines of the second act of the play and through Christy Mahon’s and Widow Quin’s discussion, one can deduce that Old Mahon is an authoritative father. Believing that Christy is unable to be an independent real man, Old Mahon imposes on him an arranged marriage with the Widow Casey as a form of protection⁶. Christy said: “He was letting on I was wanting a protector from the harshness of the world [and he adds] she is too good [as a wife] for the like of you”⁷.

Similarly to what have been said about Christy, Rachid, the protagonist of *La Repudiation*, shows the same hatred to his father, yet not at the same extent. The hatred that is presented in the novel is quite associated with the actual life of its author. In a conference, Rachid Boudjedra said: “J’ai été rebellé au père, je me suis rebellé contre lui, dans tous les senses-du terme. Cela a donné la nécessité et l’urgence d’écrire”⁸.

This assertion is perfectly dramatized in the storylines of *La Répudiation*. That is why W. Ricardou sustains that this novel is an autobiographical work.⁹

Throughout the novel, Rachid portrays his father Si Zoubir as a wicked and a cruel father who has no soft feelings towards his family. In the course of the narration, Rachid used to call his father with his own name, si Zoubir and not father. He even learned “la haine du père”¹⁰ when his brother Zahir taught him how to resist si Zoubir’s brutality. yet, Even, Si Zoubir holds a great portion in the nourishment of such hostile relationship with the members of his family. He was really violent with Rachid and his brothers. As an illustration for this idea, Rachid recited: “Il nous battait à mort et dissertait des heurs durant sur l’enfer qui nous attendait [et il] jetait sur nous l’anathème”¹¹.

Rachid’s hatred to his father was due to Si Zoubir’s repudiation to his first wife, Rachid’s mother. Indeed, from the whole work, the reader may understand the deep shatter that Si Zoubir caused to his family in general and to his son in particular, when he repudiated his wife “Ma” and got a new wife who is younger and more beautiful than Rachid’s mother:

“Après avoir répudié sa femme, il la mettait devant le fait accompli de son autorité permanente et, du même coup, il nous plaçait nous, ses enfants, dans une situation impossible. Entre nous, il disposait une barrière d’hostilité qu’il s’ingéniait à consolider. Effarés, nous allions nous abimer dans cette lutte difficile ou les couleurs ne sont jamais annoncées : la recherche de la paternité perdue

Ce fut le début du cauchemar”¹².

From these instances, one can assume that the repressed hatred of Christy and Rachid towards their fathers is nourished by their fathers’ wickedness and authority. This gives birth to Boudjedra’s and Synge’s protagonists’ sense of revolt against their fathers.

The Protagonists' revolts against their respective fathers rose from their feeling of hatred and the wish of killing these fathers. This is what is termed by Freud: "Parricide". Freud defines parricide as: "the wish of killing or the killing itself of the hated father [which is regarded as] the principal and the primal crime of humanity as well as individuals"¹³ .

The act of parricide is present in *The Playboy of the Western World*. It starts with the announcement of killing Old Mahon to get rid of the harsh life that Christy used to live. Christy said: "The way it was a bitter life he led me till I did up a Tuesday and halve his skull"¹⁴. These words prove Christy's deliberate admission of parricide. In another argument that sustains the same idea, we may speak about the dialogue that happens between Christy, Sara and Honor, the girls of Shabbeen village:

Christy: [Impressively.] With that the sun came out between the cloud and the hill, and it shining green in my face. "God have mercy on your soul" says he, lifting a scythe. "Or on your own", says I, raising the loy.

Susan: That's a grand story.

Honor: He tells it lovely.

Christy: [Flattered and confident, waving bone.] He gave a drive with the scythe, and I gave a lep to the east. Then I turned around with my back to the north, and I hit a blow on the ridge of his skull, laid him stretched out, and he split to the knob of his gullet.

Girls. [Together] You're a marvel! Oh, God bless you! ¹⁵

From the dialogue, we can understand that Christy believes that the killing of his father is a heroic deed.

Throughout our reading the two works, we have noticed that Si Zoubir has hurt his son more than Old Mahon did to Christy. This can be justified with the reconciled relationship between Christy and his father at the end of the play. While the desire for parricide in *The Playboy* comes to be fulfilled, the action in *La Repudiation* remained at its phantasmagoric stage. Rachid limits himself to a longing desire of getting rid of Si Zoubir by asserting

that: “Nous [Rachid and his siblings] voulions le tuer, l’abattre sur le champ, avant même qu’il eut quitté berline venimeuse”¹⁶, that is why Si Zoubir considers them as killers “dont il fallait se méfier”.¹⁷

In the light of what has been said, it is worth mentioning that since parricide is regarded as the summit of the hatred that Christy Mahon and Rachid feel towards their fathers, one can conclude that it also comes as a result of the previous conditions that have been associated with hatred.

As we have stated above, both Christy and Rachid show a kind of rebellion against their fathers through two main canals: hatred and parricide. The desire for Parricide is regarded by Freud as “the main source of the sense of guilt”¹⁸; indeed,

“The feelings of guilt arising from the intention of murdering the father [are of great importance for they determine ones] attitude towards two other spheres; his attitude towards the authority of the state and towards [his] belief in god”¹⁹.

However, our focal interest, here, is not the feelings of guilt, but rather is how could we relate the son-father revolts to the two other revolts in individuals’ life, religious authorities and societies’ established orders? This is can be answered through Freud’s words who contents that “further rebellions against the father, albeit in symbolic form can be seen in [state and religious laws]”²⁰. To clarify things, one’s wish of getting rid from his wicked authoritative father can stand as a symbol for his revolt against the other forms of authority and oppression. Following this idea, Christy’s and Rachid’s revolts against religion and state laws are merely demonstrated in the two mentioned literary works.

Let us first start with the rebellion against the political systems. By analogy, as Christy shows a desire of getting rid of the authority of his father, he exposes the same attitude towards the political authority of his country, the British power over the Irish people. In *The*

Playboy, Synge, as a defender of the Irish identity and a post-colonial playwright, epitomizes his defense through his main protagonist's contradictory position towards the oppressive presence of the British colonizer in Ireland. At the middle of the first act, once Pegeen asks him about the weapon with which he kills his father,

Pegeen: And you shot him dead?

Christy answers: [Shaking his head.] I never used weapons. I've no license, and I am a law fearing man.²¹

From these words, it appears that Christy is a man who respects law. However, these words contradict what he has done; the killing of his father. That is to say, this behavior is not of a man who respects law. Thus, this contradiction would be considered as a means to highlight not only Christy's desire of getting rid of the authority but it can also be interpreted as the playwright's critical attitude towards such political authority.

There is another example that shows Synge's attitude against the presence of the British colonizer in Ireland. The use of the word "The Polis" in the coming lines many times is very symbolic. It may symbolize the oppressive power that rules Synge's country. This would be illustrated through the words that happened between Christy and Michael:

Christy: God reward you. [He takes up his glass, and goes his glass, and goes a little way across to the left, then stops and looks about him] Is it often **the Polis** do becoming into this place?

Michael: If you'd come in better hours, you'd have seen 'Licensed 'for the Sale of Beer and Spirits, to be consumed on the Premises', written in white letters above the door, and what would **the polis** want spying on me, and not a decent house four miles, the way every Christian is a bona fide saving one widow alone,

Christy: [with relief] it's a safe house, so.[He goes over the fire, sighing and moaning Then he sits down putting his glass besides him and begins gnawing a turnip ,too miserable to feel the others staring at him with curiosity].

Michael: [going after him] Is it you is fearing **the Polis**? You're wanting, may be?²².

Indeed, not only the repeated word, “the Polis”, that can attract the attention of Synge’s spectators but even the fearing voice through which Christy speaks may mean something else for them too. Through Christy’s fears, Synge wants to remind his readers of the horror that haunted the Irish society under the British power.

As far as the revolt against the religious authority is concerned, it is also a result of Christy’s rebellion against his father. For instance, the reader may ask a question about the name of the protagonist itself, Christy. Apparently, Synge does not select the name of his protagonist at random, but he chooses this name because it has a great significance. It is a way for him to show his rejecting attitude towards the religious authority. This means that the name of Christy can be related to the name of Jesus Christ.

As it is common for the reader, Jesus Christ is the son of God; a servant of the will of God and a savior of humanity. Yet, Synge seems to use this name to contradict all what is common about Christ. By killing the father, the symbol of God, Christy’s deed is a harsh criticism to religion and to God himself. Contrary to Jesus Christ who saved humanity by serving the will of God, Christy may be considered as a savior of humanity too but this time through revolting against God. In other words, no more rules and authority over the young persons who still have a future for better life. It is high time to attain freedom that has been crushed by the supreme authority of the father and God.

Let us now turn our attention to the play itself and exactly into the third act. Once again, Synge shows his revolt against the dominance of the Catholic Church in Ireland through Christy’s mockery of religion. While Rachid criticizes his society in a direct and says that his society pretends to be very religious. Christy mocks religion in an implicit humorous way when he was wooing Pegeen and said:

“If I wasn’t a good Christian, it’s on my naked knees I’d be saying my prayers and paters to every jackstraw you have roofing your head, and every stony pebble is paving the laneway to your door”²³.

More than this, in the first act, in a conversation that gathers Synge’s protagonist with Pegeen, we can understand the same claim that we have explained in the above paragraph.

Pegeen: [In mock rage.] Not speaking the truth, is it?

Would you have me knock the head of you with the butt of the broom?

Christy: [Twisting round on her with a sharp cry of horror.]

Don’t strike me .I killed my poor father; Tuesday was a week, for doing the like of that.

Prgeen: [With blank amazement] is it killed your father?

Christy: [Subsiding.] With the help of god I did, surely, and that the Holy Immaculate Mother may intercede for his soul.²⁴

This passage reveals Synge’s mockery of religion. By putting emphasis on the last words of this conversation, Christy radicalizes the position of God as if God sides and helps him in the affair of killing his father. Therefore, it is easy to deduce Synge’s condemnation of the religious’ institution.

Hence, basing on these arguments, it is noticeable that Christy’s mockery can serve not only to accentuate his critical attitude towards religion but it may incorporate Synge’s rejection of the religious power of the colonizer. It limits the liberties of the Irish people as it is developed from the opening lines of the play when Shawn, Pegeen’s fiancé, feared The Court of Rome presented by Father Reilly. Shawn wonders if he is right to come into a lonely girl or not:

Shawn to Pegeen: [timidly] if you don’t, it’s a good job, may be, for [with peculiar emphasis on the words] Father Reilly has small conceit to have that kind walking around and talking to the girls²⁵.

Therefore, Christy's longing desire of getting rid of his father serves as symbol for his revolt against the British oppressor, and the religious authority, like the Roman Catholic Church.

Within the same context of Synge's *The playboy*, Rachid Boudjedra's *La Repudiation*, that is written in Algeria just after the independence, also tackles the revolt against the state and the religious laws. This novel is classified as being a post colonial work because, in the same interview that we have cited before, the writer himself affirms that: "je crois que j'ai écrit particulièrement ce roman parce que j'ai été rebelle à mon milieu, à mon pays et à ma religion"²⁶. Boudjedra turns his whole interest towards his principal character, Rachid, in describing this revolt as well as portraying the Algerian corrupted situation of 1960's.

At the political level, Rachid exposes the same despise towards the Algerian corrupted system as he showed it in the previous examples towards his father. The fact of reading the last three chapters of *La Repudiation* reveals the point that these parts are concerned with Rachid's disappointment towards the political authority that ruled his country, Algeria. For instance, in the last pages of the novel, the protagonist criticizes those rulers who betray the ideals of the war of independence and replace them with corruption and violence:

"Leur vocation s'était affirmée depuis la libération du pays, grâce aux poursuites implacable qu'ils organisent contre anciens camarades devenus à leurs yeux de simples bandit échappés à l'égalité –incarnée par eux, les Membres Secrets, à la solde du clan discret et anonyme des bijoutiers et des gros propriétaires terrien"²⁷

Still in the last part of this novel, there is a bad experience that marked and mostly tormented the memory of Boudjedra's protagonist. It is the situation where Rachid was tortured by the Secret Members of his tribe. They are Boudjedra's literary device which symbolizes the oppressed power that haunted Algeria after the independence. Rachid comes to depict that situation by assuming that:

“Combien de temps l’interrogatoire avait-il duré? Quelques heures, quelques semaines... Je n’avais plus aucune conscience du temps, car durant mon séjour dans la villa j’avais les yeux constamment bandés, sauf lorsque j’étais interrogé dans la grande pièce ripolinée, brillante et violemment illuminée, ou il n’y avait aucune fenêtre. Malgré mes cris et mes hurlements, il n’y avait pas le moindre écho dans la pièce, pourtant vides”²⁸.

The incident of the priest’s murder is another bad experience through which Rachid denounces the established order of his society. Indeed, the priest, Rachid’s friend,

s’intéressé trop à l’avenir et pas assez au présent; en outre ses prophéties leur faisaient peur car elles étaient terribles: ne leur prédisait-il pas un avenir où la terreur dirigée contre le peuple serait le trait dominant d’une politique hautement démagogique, fondée sur la richesse du verbe et sur la construction de mosquées fastueuses où les masses viendraient oublier leurs revendications”²⁹.

The priest was “assassiné pour avoir propagé des livres séditieux à l’égard de la fraternité entre les classes”³⁰. He seems like Djuha, the protagonist of Kateb Yacine’s *La Poudre d’Intelligence*³¹ who was purchased from his village by the Sultan. Djuha represents the intellectuals who threaten the power of the sultan. Therefore, he must be exiled or killed. By analogy, the priest, the figure of the intellectual of the country, was killed by the Secret Members of the tribe to protect the interests of the leaders. Thus, both Djuha and the priest are seen as a threat for having spread awareness among common people.

Rachid’s appreciation for books led him to be a suspected element among the members of his society. As we have claimed above, he lived a variety of political problems. Rachid was not only tortured but imprisoned too. From all these examples, we may deduce that Boudjedra as his protagonist seems to reject the political tyranny under which they live.

Religion is also harshly criticized by Boudjedra in *La Répudiation*. The author introduces the message of denouncing his society which is very religious. Rachid still holds the same rebellious tone against his society, as that he owes to his father. He filters his revolt by focusing on the theme of religious hypocrisy. His tribe proves to be hypocritical by taking religion as a means to justify Si Zoubir’s deed, the repudiation of Rachid’s mother and mostly

to perpetuate patriarchal domination over women including his repudiated mother who never goes beyond “[les] écrits coraniques et des décisions des muphtis Ma ne querellait plus Dieu, elle se rangeait à son tour du côté des hommes.”³²

Even Rachid’s father uses religion to maintain his power over his repudiated wife and to spread fear among his children; ³³says Rachid in describing the hypocrisy of his father. Once again, as Boudjedra denounces the political corruption; he refutes even the religious hypocrisy of the Algerian society. For instance, Si Zoubir’s brother uses the religious practice, such as praying, to seduce and attract women of the family. Rachid said that his uncle’s:

“seule distraction consistait à éparter les femmes et les enfants de la grandes maison en faisant sa prière à haute voix. Il faisait durer le plaisir ,jouissait littéralement de voir les tantes admirer sa devotion”³⁴.

To sum up, it is important to affirm that the Algerian writer, Rachid Boudjedra seems to succeed in portraying his protagonist’s revolt against his father as a symbol for his religious revolt.

At the end, the two protagonists the two respective works *The Playboy* and *La Repudiation* prove that their revolts against their fathers are the symbol of the rebellion against their political as well as religious oppressive authorities. However, what is crucial for this moment is to know how the two main characters lived before getting into the like of the presented three revolts and what are the most confusing emotions that have been experienced by them? ; Of course the answer for this question would be the core for further development in the coming second chapter.

Endnotes:

¹ Sigmund Freud, ‘The Dissolution of the Oedipus complex’, in *Complete Works*, (2010), 4085-4095. Viewed 07 July 2015,

[www.avalas.fr/IMG/pdf/Freud-Complete Works.pdf](http://www.avalas.fr/IMG/pdf/Freud-Complete%20Works.pdf).

²Ibid.

³Ibid, ‘Dostoevsky and Parricide’, 4562.

⁴ J.M. Synge, *the Playboy of the Western World and Other Plays*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 110.

⁵ Ibid., 118.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Rachid Boudjedra, ‘De la guerre (aux) civil (s)du sang’ : Ce gros font a sommet de la particularité de l’Algérie”, Princeton University, 1992, reported by le Matin 2003.)

⁹ Djamel Benykhlef, ‘Retour à la Répudiation’, *Guermaz, Rite du bleu* (1992):86.

¹⁰Rachid Boudjedra, *La Répudiation* ,86.

¹¹Ibid, 41.

¹²Freud, ‘Dostoevsky and Parricide’, 4559.

¹³Boudjedra, *La Répudiation*, 124.

¹⁴ Ibid, 87.

¹⁵‘Dostoïevski and Parricide’,4559.

¹⁶Ibid, 4563.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸ Synge, *The Playboy of the Western World and the Other Plays*, 106.

¹⁹ Ibid., 137.

²⁰Boudiedra, *La Répudiation*, 222-223.

²¹Ibid, 193.

²²Synge, *The Playboy of the Western World and Other Plays*, 103-104.

²³Boudjedra, *La Répudiation*, 63.

²⁴Ibid, 105.

²⁵Synge, *The Playboy of the Western World*, 100.

²⁶ Boudjedra, 'Du la guerre (aux) civil(S) de sang'.

²⁷Boudjedra, *La Répudiation*, 214.

²⁸Ibid, 222.

²⁹Ibid, 187.

³⁰Ibid.63.

³¹Yacine Kateb, 'La Poudre d'Intelligence, *a critical essay*, viewed 06August 2015,

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³²Boudjedra, *La Répudiation*, 63.

³³Ibid, 86.

³⁴Ibid, 76.

The Chapter two: the protagonists' Melancholia

This chapter presents the protagonists, Rachid and Christy Mahon as melancholic persons. It exposes the protagonists' disappointing past and highlights their relationship with their respective families, especially their respective fathers, Si Zoubir and Old Mahon. Then it relates all these depressive experiences and melancholic emotions to the authors' ones. Therefore, and for the fulfillment of this chapter, we use the Freudian concept of "Melancholia".

Sigmund Freud defines Melancholia as an emotional "reaction [that grieves] a lost thing"¹. It is a depressive feeling that leads the person suffers from a profound sadness. It drives him into isolation and plunges him into a throbbing emotional anguish².

Considering the above definition and following the storyline of each literary work, *the Playboy* and *la Repudiation*, it seems that the protagonists, Rachid and Christy Mahon, are portrayed as two depressive, melancholic persons who live in a disapproving isolation. For instance, in "*The Playboy*", and in a conversation that gathers Christy with Pegeen, Christy describes himself as an unhappy person who was 'lonesome all the times'. He had no companion, except his father, and he used to live in a place where "no man [was] giving [him] heed"³. He couldn't have a real contact with the outside world; he was sad most of the time and he was living in a painful solitude. This seems apparent in his words when he said to Pegeen: "it's a lonesome thing [to] hear a voice kissing and talking deep love in every shadow of the ditch, and you passing on [that, without having any share of it]"⁴, as a reference to the bad empty relationship that he had with his father, who is supposed to be his only family, due to the absence of his mother in the whole play which allows us to presume that she might be dead.

The same thing can be observed with Rachid, the protagonist of *“la Répudiation”*. When he was talking with his mistress Celine about his past life, Rachid describes his childhood as a “Malheur” due to the constant isolation he used to undergo all the time; he said: “je reprenais la solitude là ou je l’avais laissée”⁵. He has a big family, he has his parents alive, he has siblings, uncles, aunts, cousins...etc, yet most of the time we find him alone, he barely gets in touch with his relatives and even when he gets closer to them, it becomes a painful experience, such as his erotic frustrating relationship with his cousins or his step-sister, ‘Leila’. Therefore, he prefers to leave everything and seeks refuge in isolation: “il fallait donc quitter [tout le monde], ma mère... [la] marâtre... [les] cousines... et enfin...Leila”⁶.

This isolation that haunts the protagonists’ lives and disturbs them emotionally comes as a response to their longing to define their lost object. In Freud’s view, the lost object is that loved-object, which can be anything: a person, an object or even an idea, on which the person would develop a certain attachment in his unconscious mind. Then when this person loses his loved object, it becomes very difficult to forget it or replace it by any other one at any circumstances.⁷ according to psychoanalysis, “the infant’s first [loved] object is his mother”⁸. In the first years of the child’s life, the mother is the loved object on which he seems to be completely dependent. Therefore, losing the mother is the main loss that may cause him melancholia. However, contemporary psychoanalytical theories discover another type of lost object that may also raise melancholia and trouble the psychic life of the individuals. This loss is ‘the love of the father’. Losing the love of the father may have bad effect on the child’s personality development as much as the loss of the mother does or maybe more. It hinders the individual to well define their personalities and disturbs their relationships with the external world. And this is what happened to Rachid and Christy Mahon.

In the case of Rachid and Christy, losing the love of their respective fathers, Si Zoubir and Old Mahon, led them live in a melancholic situation. For instance, Christy was hurt by the cruelty of Old Mahon who “ was a dirty man”; the fact that Christy “couldn’t put up with it at all” and urges him to react violently.¹⁰ Throughout the play, we see how Christy becomes very sad and depressed when he starts talking about his relationship with his father:

“he [was] a man [who] never gave peace to any, [among them Christy, his son, and proceeding] {*with depression*} ...it was a bitter life [that he gave] me”, when they were living together.¹¹

Rachid’s melancholia, similar to Christy’s depressive situation, is also expressed and based on ‘la paternité Perdue’. In many parts of his story, Rachid depicts Si Zoubir as a violent intolerant father who was really pitiless towards him, and to his other siblings. In many occasions and most of time for no particular reason, Rachid receives a lot of slaps from his father, precisely: “avec le dos de la main”¹³. Yet, despite all this cruelty, Rachid, as well as his siblings, has great desire to get back the love of this father. Rachid said: “nous voulions en finir avec la coupure. Nous voulions retomber dans la paternité pleine, retrouver le père et le sublimer”¹⁴.

In reliance to what has been said above, the pain that the protagonists had experienced in the past life has immersed them in another feature of melancholia which is a deep grief. According to Freud, the grief that resulted from the lost object, affect the behavior of the person and turns him to be melancholic; he becomes lazy, quite and at a certain degree lethargic the fact that gives impression that he is incapable of any achievement¹⁵.

In accordance to the above words, Christy seems to show the same laziness. For instance, in “*the Playboy*”, there is a conversation that gathers Old Mahon, the father of Christy, with one of the main characters of the play “Widow Quin”, where he speaks about

Christy and portrays him as “a man [who] you’d see stretched the half of the day in the brown ferns with his belly to the sun”¹⁶. He represents Christy as a careless indifferent person who does nothing worthy except lounging “the half of day” under the sun. Old Mahon demonstrates the behavior of his son as an irresponsible person; Christy Mahon seems to be incapable of doing something good and even when he works, things go so badly. Therefore, one may deduce that this conduct comes as a result of Christy’s feelings of incapability of doing anything.

Rachid, in “*La Répudiation*”, on his own turn, exposes the same behavior. In the course of the novel, we find him most of the time having a sunbath and for hours “lézarder dans la grande cour”, having the impression that he is unable to do anything else, he said: “je n’avais plus envie d’aller me promener dans les rues de la ville.... Je ne pouvais, d’ailleurs plus rire ni courir”¹⁷. Even he seems having no idea on how things can be done properly: “je ne sais plus que faire”. He was also described, among his siblings, by Si Zoubir as a sluggish person who is unworthy to live: “petits morveux... petits crapauds... Fiente! Paresseux! Crétins! Idiots... plus rien! [You do not deserve life!]”¹⁸

Self-reproach is conceived as an important aspect that Freud ascribes into a personality which is melancholic; Freud asserts that a melancholic person becomes a victim of such feeling mainly by losing his self-respect and being absorbed by the sense of remorse that leads him to be very critical towards himself, such as his physical appearance.¹⁹

Following the above idea, it is obviously reflected in the personality of Rachid first who declares literally his “self-reviling” claiming that he finds himself ugly: “je ne me regarderais plus dans les glaces... car je me trouvais laid et ne voulais pas prendre courage face à cette réalité”²⁰. We find this notion of self-despised presented in Christy too, yet in this case, it is in an implicit expression. In the opening words of act two, Christy Mahon was

looking at a mirror and for the first time he recognizes his physical beauty. He said: “didn’t I know rightly, I was handsome”²¹, and in other case when Pegeen and Widow Quin were thriving to get him, each, for herself. He said with satisfaction and surprise: “it’s great luck and company I’ve won me in the end of time [when] two fine women fights for the like of me”²²; we put a little stress on the last expression” “the like of me!! That permits us to presume and deduce his self- abasement in the past, since he was unable to consider himself as a good-looking young man before. Adding to that, he considers this fight as a “great luck” for him.

In addition to what has been mentioned before and in the midst of these painful emotions, Freud evokes other ambivalent emotions produced from the fact of losing the loved object. These ambivalent feelings can be explained as follows; it raises love for the loved object, since it is an object choice which would add sense in the person’s life, and incites hatred, because it is responsible for his sufferings.²³ When the person loses his loved object and then feels unable to get it back, he turns to be an aggressive angry person who would try to do anything to get rid of his livid emotions.²⁴ Therefore, we see him expressing his hostility on other persons, things, animals... etc, since he is unable to reach and achieve his lost object.

Bearing these notions in mind, we have noticed that Rachid and Christy’s behaviors seem to fit the above claim and that they have experienced the same hostile sentiments towards other persons and animals. In “*the Playboy of the Western World*”, act Two, Old Mahon disapproved Christy’s behavior towards the cow claiming that he had: “[broken] her leg at the hip [while he was driving it]”.²⁵ This cruelty against the cow, stands as a symbolic act of the anger that enflames Christy towards his lost object which is, as we have assumed before, the love of his father. He could not face his father and vindicate his right to be loved as a son to Old Mahon; therefore, he transferred all this hostility towards animals to get rid of it.

Rachid seems to have the similar behavior that we have seen in Christy towards the animals and other persons too. He believes that “tout cette tension nouée [qu’il n’arrivait] pas a faire explorer dans un quelconque acte de violence, [le fatiguait] beaucoup”²⁶. Therefore, we find him, and in many parts of the story, treating animals such as cats, birds in an aggressive way:

“ je devenais irréconciliable: les jérémiades des cousines m’importunaient et je donnais des coups de pied dans les chats, les tortues, les moineaux et les colombes... j’écrasais tout le monde du haut de ma superbe et les femmes n’en revenaient pas de me voir irascible ; a la longue, elles finissaient par renoncer a pénétrer ma carapace”²⁷.

Rachid’s destructive anger against his father leads him reacts in such violence in attempt to calm his pain.

Let us now reconsider briefly what has been said above in attempt to further our analysis of melancholia. As we have seen before, emotions like, isolation, pain, sadness, self-abasement, anger...etc are all regarded as the main features of a melancholic person that affect negatively our protagonists and hamper them to live unhappy. But, the question that may impose itself here is why all these feelings? Why is it difficult for them to get rid of all these bad emotions and move on in their lives? The coming paragraph would be a clear answer for this question.

According to Freud, all these emotions come as a response to a certain *narcissistic desire* that overwhelms the person and lets him to be incapable to give up his lost object. Freud explains the meaning of narcissistic desire as conceited longing towards the loved object that identifies itself with the person’s ego.²⁸ Therefore, when loss occurs, “the object loss [transforms] into an ego loss”, this why, Freud claims “that the disposition to fall ill of

melancholia ... lies in the predominance of the narcissistic type of the object choice”.²⁹ but what does all this mean?

Losing the loved objet causes pain and sadness, the melancholic person feels in need to get back what he lost because the loved object is the model on which he identifies himself to develop his personality. Therefore, it is his narcissistic desire than urges him not to forget the lost object.

The protagonists, Rachid and Christy seem to be among these melancholic persons who have ventured by all their emotions, inspirations to get the love of their fathers, Si Zoubir and Old Mahon, respectively. Through losing the father’s love, it seems that both protagonists have lost many other things, such as, their respective mothers, especially, Rachid’s mother. It is true that is not clear in *the Playboy*, since there is no presence of Christy’s mother in the whole play which leads us, as we have cited before, to presume that she is dead. Yet, in *La Repudiation*, things differ. Through reading the novel, we can understand how the lost love of Si Zoubir affected badly on Rachid’s relationship with his mother, who behaves like a ghost in the whole story. In many times, Rachid describes his relationship with his mother as a cold one. Being repudiated by Si Zoubir, Ma, the name given to this poor mother, enters in a mood of sadness and deep silence. She has isolated herself from everyone. This fact has created the break between her affection and her children. Rachid said once that his mother shows no affection to him even when they are close to each other:

“Ma mère, à mes cotés, ne dormait pas non plus. Soupairs. La promiscuité ne me gênait pas, à vrais dire, mais l’énervement, entre nous, surgissait dès que nous étions dans le grand lit.”³⁰

From the above quotation, one can deduce how the cruelty of ‘Si Zoubir’ has affected ‘Ma’ and changed the nature of her relationship with her children.

Rachid and Christy are like their respective authors, Boudjedra and Synge, who seem to live as melancholic persons too. For instance, Boudjedra claims in many cases, even in his autobiographical novel *La Répudiation*, that he had a frustrating relationship with his family, especially his parents. He wished if he could overcome his hatred towards his father and reconcile with his family, but things were impossible. Synge also is seen as a melancholic person he lived hard conditions. According to his biography, Synge lived most of his time alone and suffered from sickness all the time. W. A. Armstrong said:

“Synge was mystic in the full sense of the word... [and that] isolation was a recurrent situation in [his life] as well as his plays.”³¹

He even lost his Christian faith.

“In an autobiographical fragment, Synge records that he read a book by Darwin when he was fourteen, and that the theory of evolution raised such strong doubts in his and that by the time he was seventeen he had renounced Christianity. [And] when Synge entered Trinity College, Dublin, at the age of seventeen in 1888, he found no friendship or community to compensate for his alienation from his family.”³²

Rachid and Christy proved to be controlled by their Narcissistic desire which hampers them to give up the lost object; therefore, we find them depressed, unhappy and suffering from pain. Most of their expressions about their fathers, even in rude way, are a connotation to their disappointment that is resulted from their inability to get what Rashid and Christy has already grieved, “their lost fatherhood”. In fact, in “*the Playboy of the Western World*”, we can take Christy’s words in the second act when he said “I’ll be growing fine from this day”³³, referring to the day that comes after he killed his father, as complaints about the cruelty of his father, Old Mahon, and that he was deprived from his love what hindered him to recognize his self respect and be a fine man. Also in “*La Repudiation*” Rachid expresses the same complaints when he vilifies the behavior of his father, not just towards him personally but also towards his sibling and his mother, who was repudiated at a young age and for no reason except that Si Zoubir could not resist the desire to get a new wife (younger and more beautiful than the first one) that would satisfy him sexually: “ mon pere, au fond, n’etait qu’a demi

avalé par le sexe de sa jeune femme; et s'il ne venait plus à la maison... il n'en continuait pas d'avoir la haute main sur nous"³⁵.

To be such a melancholic person and have such Narcissistic depressive feeling is a very heavy burden that torments the authors' protagonists and disturbs their psychological life. Therefore, as Albert Camus said: "in order to exist [or get back one's happiness], man must rebel"³⁶. In other words, they need to revolt against what is disturbing them to get back their peace and stability. Yet this revolt is not the one that we have cited in the first chapter where it was against the outside world, it is rather another type, a psychological revolt; it deals with the inner life of the person, his agony, trauma, anger, sadness...etc and tries to overcome them. This psychological revolt is considered by many analysts as the basic of the revolt against authority in general. This helps person change what is disturbing inside him before that of the external world. Thus, being melancholic persons, Christy and Rachid, are in need for a revolt against what ails them inside themselves, especially the pain that tricks them to feel under-estimated and live unhappy. Indeed; this idea would be the heading concern of the next last chapter which would be explained through Julia Kristeva's Revolt, developed in her book "*The Sense and Non-sense of Revolt*" (2000).

End notes:

¹ Sigmund Freud, 'Mourning and Melancholia', in *Complete Works*, (2010), 3043.

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<[www.avalas.fr /IMG/pdf/Freud-Complete Works.pdf](http://www.avalas.fr/IMG/pdf/Freud-Complete Works.pdf)>

²Ibid.

³ J.M. Synge, *The Playboy of the Western World and Other Plays*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 109.

⁴Ibid, 121.

⁵ Rachid Boudjedra, *La Répudiation*, (London: Buissonnière Sait-Amand, 1981), 43.

⁶Ibid, 151.

⁷Sigmund Freud, 'Mourning and Melancholia', in *Complete Works*, (2010), 2304

⁸Mary D.Salter, 'Object Relations Dependency and Attachment: A Theoretical Review of the Infant Mother Relationship', *Hopkinz University* (1969):2.

⁹Boudjedra, *La Répudiation*, 33.

¹⁰Synge, *the Playboy of the Western World and the other Plays*, 106.

¹¹Ibid, 110.

¹²Boudjedra, *La Répudiation*, 86.

¹³Ibid, 91.

¹⁴Ibid, 87.

¹⁵ Freud, *Complete Works*, 3043-3045.

¹⁶Synge, *The Playboy of the Western World and other Plays*, 126.

¹⁷Boudjedra, *La Répudiation*, 43- 47.

¹⁸Ibid, 87.

¹⁹ Freud, *Complete Works*, 4345.

²⁰Boudjedra, *La Répudiation*, 115.

²¹Synge, *The Playboy of the Western World and other Plays*, 114.

²²Ibid, 115.

²³Freud, *Complete Works*, 3047.

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵Synge, *the Playboy of the Western World*, 126.

²⁶Boudjedra, *La Répudiation*, 49.

²⁷Ibid, 115.

²⁸ Freud, *Complete Works*, 3048.

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰ Boudjedra, *La Répudiation*, 49

³¹ W. A. Armstrong, *Community and Dissenters*, from, *Drama and Society*, edited by James Redmand, Cambridge University Press, London, 1979, 117.

³² Ibid, 118.

³³Synge, *The Playboy of the Western World and the other Plays*, 115.

³⁵ Boudjedra, *La Répudiation*, 105.

³⁶John Foley, *Albert Camus: From the absurd to revolt*, (Routledge Press, United states of America, 2008), 75.

Chapter Three: The Protagonists' Psychological Revolt.

Having analyzed the protagonists' psychological life by using the concept of Melancholia in the previous chapter, we come in this chapter to display what is the possible solution that is presented in each work that helped the protagonists to change their melancholic life. We would use Julia Kristeva's explanation of Revolt, taken from her book "*The Sense and Non Sense of Revolt*" (2000), to explain the *psychological revolt* of each protagonist and how could that be manifested on the external world. In doing so, we would attempt to use the words of the other characters, in addition to the protagonists' claims, of these respective literary texts as the leading reference to our analysis.

It may seem quite irrelevant to rely on Kristeva's psychoanalytical theory to discuss the concept of revolt, since she builds up her thinking on a linguistic study, but as she said in her book: "I encourage readers to use etymology as a deciphering tool, [to] not rely only on the appearance of the word...but to go elsewhere, interpret [and understand the other meaning that lies behind]"¹; and it is from this point that we got our choice to this theory.

We have already dealt with the sense of revolt in reliance to Freud's Oedipus complex, the first chapter. However, we are convinced that it is important to focus on another form of revolt, psychological revolt, that gives more relevance to the mentioned revolts in the first chapter against the outside world, summarized as a whole, a revolt against the father of each protagonist, Rachid against Si Zoubir and Christy against Old Mahon and then the revolt against their state as well as religious laws.

In her book, "*The Sense and Non-Sense of Revolt*", Kristeva attempts to retrace the origin of the word revolt and its extending significance according to history and literature.

At the starting point of her retracement and in reliance to the historical facts, Kristeva confirms that: "Latin verb *volvere* [is the origin of the word] revolt"; which produces, at the

same time, a sort of “derivatives of meaning” such as “curve” “turn” “entourage”...etc². She believes that the word revolt has been influenced by the changing time and space giving numerous examples that prove this claim. For instance, “in the sixteenth century, the word does not involve the notion of force but strictly indicated to leave (a party), to abjure (a belief), [or] to turn away (from a dependency)”³. Yet, gradually and due to the political, social and cultural unrest that the world run into, such as the successive wars, the tyranny of rules, the plagues...etc, people’s persistence becomes more vulnerable than it was before, they started to think of better conditions and stop their sufferings. Therefore, the term revolt gains new implication and “comes to signify change [and] mutation”⁴. And little by little, it becomes what it is nowadays, a synonym of meanings such as a refusal, and objection to the living situation and the need to change for better conditions; in other words, to get rid of the tyranny and establish justice and order.

In addition to that, and as far as literature is concerned, Kristeva asserts that “the great moments of twentieth –century art and culture are moments of formal and metaphysical revolt”⁵. The word revolt becomes more and more profound in sense than it used to be. It extends its meaning to rise against what is inside the soul of the individual, especially for those who are suffering from the traumatic memories of wars, murders, bad relationship with family, relatives, betrayal in love...etc; and establishes a new psychological platform to the person’s psychic life. It becomes more concerned with the happiness of the person within himself before being with the others. In this regard, Kristeva maintains that: “happiness exists only in the price of revolt”⁶.

In the literary texts, both protagonists seem to manifest a kind of psychological revolt before getting to the revolt against the father, the symbol of the supreme authority. Yet, this revolt is different since their revolt against the outside world is different too. In “*The Payboy*”, Christy seems to have something that distinguishes him from Rachid. It appears that

Christy has what we may call “the will of change to a better life”, a kind of ambitious wish to live happy, and this did not come out of nothing, but rather from something deep, something that has a revolting energy which would be clarified in the coming lines of this analysis . The bad relationship that Christy had with his father and the suffering life that he was forced to live, is the result of the rough treatment of Old Mahon to him. This fact, precisely, urges Christy to think of change and attempt to put an end to this brutal situation. As we have already claimed in the previous chapters, Christy said that he could not “put up with it” ⁷ then he raised a lynch and killed his father to stop this suffering and get freedom.

With a respect to this mentioned idea, we believe that the main source of Christy’s audacity sprung out from his psychological revolt against his inner pain that was caused by his father brutality, the symbol of external pain, the fact that was disturbing him all the time and hindering him to recognize his true value. For that reason, and in order to understand the psychological revolt of Christy, it would be helpful if we explore it through the words of old Mahon about his son, the way Christy exploded against this fact and how events change throughout the play mainly, in the third act.

From the beginning of the play until the end, one can notice how Old Mahon underestimates his son and never recognizes him as a worthy man. He is always vilifying Christy’s personality and mocking him all the time. For instance, he said to Widow Quin that Christy was “the fool of men, the way from this out he’ll know the orphan’s lot, with old and young making game of him, and they swearing, raging, kicking at him like a mangy cur.”⁸. And in other occasion he said that Christy was:

“the laughing joke of every female woman where four baronies meet, the way girls would stop their weeding if they seen him coming the road to let a roar at him, and call him the loony of Mahon’s”⁹.

Having this despicable view about his son put Old Mahon in a shock when Christy revolted against him. This appears clearly when he was talking to Philly about his injured head claiming: “it was my own son hit me, would you believe that?”¹⁰, Old Mahon seems not expecting Christy’s horrible deed against him, since he believes that Christy is nothing more than a coward, unworthy person who is unable to do something good in his life. He finds it hard to believe that a son like Christy, worthless son, can attempt to kill a strong farmer like Old Mahon.

If we consider Old Mahon’s shock, we may understand that Old Mahon could not notice Christy’s psychological revolt, when he was about to be killed by Christy in the first shot. It seems that he is convinced that Christy hit him just because he refuses to marry the widow that he proposed, but not for an important reason like a revolt for change. Therefore, he decided to follow him “like an old weasel tracing a rat”¹¹ as Christy describes him, in everywhere to punish this disobedient son for his defiance.

“I want to destroy him for breaking the head on me with the clout of a loy (...) it was he did that, and amn’t I a great wonder to think I’ve traced him ten days with that rent in my crown?”¹²

Unfortunately to Christy, Old Mahon found him in the village of Shabeen. After a long journey of searching and asking about him all hose he met in the road. The meeting between the father and the son was really violent. “Old Mahon rushes in, followed by the crowd, and Widow Quin. He makes a rush at Christy, knocks him down, and begins to beat him”¹³, this is how the author describes the meeting. From this, one can deduce that Old Mahon does not perceive the changing of his son. He still treats him as he used to do before the killing

incident. Yet what would come next as events would prove that Christy did really change psychologically to have the courage of revolting against his father.

In Act three, Christy Mahon meets his father whom he thought is killed. That seems a surprise for Christy since he starts to build a new glorious life for himself in the Shabeen village; even he decides to marry Pegeen which means having a new family for his own. Yet the threat of the past gets back to him when Old Mahon found him and wanted to punish him for what he has done. But this time seems different; Christy is no more that person who accepts to be humiliated and then keep silence, no!! He becomes a new “fine man” who rejects persecution and cruelty, especially from his father. Christy objects his father’s retribution asking him to “shut [his] yelling” on him and to “keep off ... lest [he does] show a blow unto the lot of [him] would set the guardian angels winking in the clouds above”¹⁴ then he raised a loy against his father for the second time with a conviction that he would kill him for real this time. In brief way, events happen quickly but the most important thing is what happened at the end.

After all the chaos that happened at the end, Old Mahon comes to a concluding opinion that Christy has really changed from the one he used to know, and for the first time his addresses him by calling him “my son”. Furthermore, Old Mahon attempts to convince Christy to go back home with him as a family, father and son, and living everything bad behind to start new life. If it wasn’t the psychological revolt of Christy that leads him to revolt against his father and start to build for himself a new name and identity, Old Mahon would never treat him in such different respectful way. He would never recognize him as a son and he would never accept to go back with Christy, under the condition that Christy would be like “a gallant captain with his heathen slave”¹⁵, referring to Old Mahon. It may not seem clear enough at the beginning of the story, before hitting Old Mahon with a loy, but the events that

come after show clearly the effect of Christy's psychological revolt in changing his destiny, especially with his father. At the end he became for real "the champion playboy of the western world"¹⁶, as Widow Quin claims

A lot has been said about Christy, but is there a possibility to find the same psychological revolt, as the one that happened to Christy of the playboy of the western world, in Rachid's story? It could be great if it is possible. Unfortunately, the protagonist of "*La Répudiation*" was not brave enough to rise against his inner pain. In other words, he was not really motivated for change but rather was occupied by complaining and blaming everything. Therefore, his revolt against his father and society as well was just at the stage of theory. In other words, he could not face his father directly and reject his cruelty, but he limited himself in the stage of criticism and condemnation. And this may presume that Rachid's psychological revolt was not strong enough to urge him change his situation.

In fact, we may risk our claim by assuming that Rachid did not get any psychological revolt since he still the victim of his hallucinating thoughts, as he said:

"je me réveillais dans un monde ou je ne savais pas quelle place occupait ma tête dans mon corps; je devais longuement et précautionneusement me tâter pour arriver ,au bout d'un long moment pénible, à saisir mon existence à partir de ma tête que je dodelinais énergiquement tous les matins de plus en plus fort comme pour me débarrasser d'un torticolis" ¹⁷

He is unable to leave the past behind, he feels incapable to change, though he has a great wish for that but there is no motivation, no will to react. As a result, his revolt against the outside world was viewed as a timid and an insufficient revolt which failed to get him peace and freedom that he wished for. He could not overcome his inner suffering and for that reason, he had not enough energy to overcome the external one. All what he did is to criticize harshly his situation and the external entourage, starting by his father Si Zoubir. But to have

the change that Christy had, as a victory; Rachid did not reach that extent, unfortunately to him.

To argue this idea, it is important to make reference to the manner in which Boudjedra has finished his work. The writer associates the words of his protagonist with the dark colour to show that Rachid does not achieve his psychological revolt. This claim is shown in last paragraph of *La Répudiation* when Rachid asserts:

“il fait **nuit noire** dans mon cachot,...**Nuit noire** dans mon cachot.Moi ,je suis toujours au secret(cela dure depuis des année...).Paix sur moi,puisque le **soir** vient,et **silence** autour de ma **berlue interminable**”¹⁸.

The words in bold are a mere proof for Rachid’s paralysis and stagnation.

As a conclusion to this chapter, and in reliance to what Kristeva believes as a basic, the psychological revolt is the gate that leads to the revolt against the outside pain that works to restore order and peace in the lives of the individuals, Rachid and Christy’s respective lives, in a particular. Therefore, the revolt against the father, Rachid’s father Si Zoubir and Christy’s father Old Mahon might not be possible if these Protagonists did not have a psychological revolt, even if it was not strong enough to erase the external pain from its root, as in the case of Rachid story.

End notes:

¹ Julia Kristeva, *The Sense and Non-Sense of revolt: the power and limits of Psychoanalysis*, (Volume 1), trans. Jeanine Hermane (Columbia University Press, New York, 2000), 2.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid, 3.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid, 7.

⁶ Ibid

⁷ John Millington Synge, *the Playboy of the Western World and other plays*, (Oxford university press, New York, 2008), 106.

⁸ Ibid, 132.

⁹ Ibid, 127.

¹⁰ Ibid, 131.

¹¹ Ibid, 127.

¹² Ibid, 125.

¹³ Ibid, 140

¹⁴ Ibid., 142

¹⁵ Ibid., 146

¹⁶ Ibid, 134

¹⁷ Rachid Boudjedra, *La Répudiation*, (London: Buissonière Sait-Amand, 1981) ,49.

¹⁸ Ibid, 251.

V- Conclusion:

Literature is regarded as a creative art . The creation of any literary work does not come from nothing .This means that, to achieve a successful literary work, there must be a sufficient material provided by social, economic and political factors, in addition to one's own private experience. Hence, the works between our hands, John Millington Synge's play, *The Playboy of the Western World* and Rashid Boudjedra's novel, *La Repudiation* come as a creation of the authors' surrounding conditions.

After discussing the two works in the light of the theoretical framework that we have selected, it has allowed us to explore the issue of revolt at different levels: social, political and psychological and the issue of melancholia. In the course of our work, we come to the conclusion that both protagonists of these literary works namely, Christy Mahon and Rachid, prove to be rebellious against their authoritative fathers that are symbolic of the authors' revolts against their respective societies established orders. Even the depressive effect of melancholia that Christy and Rachid have experienced serves to be as a symbol of their authors' melancholia. The last concluding point of our work is that unlike Christy who changes the direction of his life, Rachid still living in paralysis and stagnation.

The scope of our memoire does not permit us to deal with all the issues that gather both Synge's *The Playboy of the Western World* and Boudjedra's *La Repudiation*. Thus, we invite other students to discuss these two literary works from different perspectives. In fact, some can investigate these two literary texts by focusing on the study of language in the sense that each of Synge and Boudjedra has used language as a means to defend their post colonial situation. We also suggest that others may treat this play and this novel as modernist works. In fact, the Irish as well as the Algerian authors have actually used the modernist devices in writing their literary texts such as: the use of flashbacks, impressionism, monologue, and the non linearity in the narration of the events.

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