

The Disintegrated Identities in the Orient of the Post-war American Fiction: Paul Bowles' Character Dyar as an Example in *Let It Come Down*

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Abstract This paper discusses Bowles' philosophical accounts of the psychological destruction of the unwary American pilgrims who seek a new life in North Africa. In his novel, *Let It Come Down* (1952), he demonstrates innovative traits for dealing with the macabre and the cruel oriental landscape by presenting it as being responsible for the disintegration of his American heroes. The paper takes Bowles' character, Nelson Dyar from *Let It Come Down*, and analyzes it in terms of disintegrated identities in the orient of the Post-American war era. Indeed, Dyar, an American bank clerk, descends into the sordid underworld of Tangiers' dope inferno. By escaping from the monotony of his dead-end job in the States, Dyar; promised a job within a travel agency in Tangiers, hopes for a relocation which delivers him from the sense of dejection he had been suffering. Arriving in Tangiers, Dyar starts posing those recurrent questions of whether or not Tangiers is the right place to relocate and allow him to find meaning to his existence. By the end of the novel, Dyar, the representative of the modern West, has hammered his companion's head by a nail; he has finally destroyed the oriental other. The paper will show how the novel resists this and instead we cannot finally judge if Dyar is happy or unhappy since we are left only with the chilling weather and the endless rain.

Keywords disintegrated identities; post American war era; character Dyar; Paul Bowles; *Let It Come Down*.

Introduction

The post-war American novel has utilised the ideas of existentialism, especially those of French philosophers, including Albert Camus and Jean-Paul Sartre. Indeed,

Bowles and Camus used the very same North African terrains to present their own philosophical ideologies. The aesthetic potential of these oriental settings is recognised by Bowles and Camus who were both writing in a transitional colonial era which had witnessed drastic changes to the predicted western discrimination between the concepts of us and them. Although such a colonial era follows World War II, Edward Said elucidates its impact in the pre-war philosophy of “Otherness,” which is reflected in modern literature, when he states,

Like the fascinating inverts of Proust’s novel, Bloom testifies to a new presence within Europe, a presence rather strikingly described in terms of unmistakably taken from the exotic annals of overseas discovery, conquest and vision. “Only now instead of being out there, they are here, as troubling as the primitive rhythms of the *Sacre du printemps* or the African icons in Picasso’s art. (Said, *Culture and Imperialism* 188)

Said’s argument suggests that “the new presence of the Orient and Orientals within Europe” finds a response within modern literature. “For post-war American fiction, power requires domination that could only be achieved through violence and destruction.” In his study, “A Journey in Search of Bowles,” Paul Metcalf argues that Bowles’ writings represent that particular phase of the Moslem-Western conflict which in fact traces the socio-logical and historical impacts on both the cultures. Although he is a mid-twentieth century writer, Bowles reflects the very colonial aspects of nineteenth century imperialism whereby Arabs are merely represented as “exotic” or “mysterious” (Metcalf 36). What is intriguing is that Bowles, in the process of writing the Orient, still has in mind an image of western culture as being bloody and conflicting as ever.

In order to highlight this violent culture, Bowles presented a contrast to it by presenting Africa, its symbolic landscape, culture and people. In doing so, Bowles’ writings represent two avant-garde movements of modernism; surrealism and existentialism, which serve as a response to Said’s argument of the other. In his book, *Colonial Affairs: Bowles, Burroughs, and Chester Write Tangier*, Greg A. Mullins explains the way by which these two movements can be read as a response to Said’s work. Mullin states that:

Surrealism responds to this crisis by abandoning consciousness and by seeking to reconstruct transcendence through an unconscious connection between self and other, between the West and its others. Existentialism responds with the

crisis of being with the other that is “resolved” through disavowal, through an attempt to banish the historicity of this crisis in a revitalized ontology of self-consciousness. (Mullins 26)

Bowles’ Existentialist Approach

Bowles’ discussions of existentialist themes are central in almost all of his works, and are made to manifest within his utilisation of American heroes moving towards an inexorable fatalism. Indeed, the use of these existentialist themes encompasses the similar spiritual and mental concerns of both American and French novelists, as Richard Lehan suggests in his study, “Existentialism in Recent American Fiction: The Demonic Quest.” Lehan argues:

The Americans are pre-occupied with the same problems and themes that fascinate and puzzle the French writers. Sartre, Camus, Bowles, Bellow, Wright, Ellison—all are concerned with meaning of identity in the modern world, the nature of good and evil, the possibility of fulfilment in the contemporary society, the source of values in a world without God, and the possibility and meaning of action in an ethical vacuum. The new American hero is similar to the French existential hero because he shares a common world and a similar view of the world. (Lehan 181)

Positioning his work as sharing the themes of these French philosophers, Bowles adopts Camus’ ideas of the destructive powers of the universe and Sartre’s theories of self-consciousness, and applies them to his American heroes. Moreover, within his presentation of loneliness and dislocation, Bowles is constantly occupied with the eternal search for human identity in a manner that reflects Friedrich Nietzsche’s existential discussions upon the natural order of the universe. It seems that Bowles’ perception of existence results in the formulation of different ideas of violence and nihilism, which challenge those very traditional ideologies that dominate the universe. Consequently, images of violence are vividly applied to Bowles’ central characters as he emphasizes their disintegration whilst abroad in the Orient.

In his study, “Everyone Exists in Order to Be Entertaining: The Fiction of Paul Bowles” (1994), Michael Pinker draws the different contours of Bowles’ complex vision of violence whereby human relations grow in a disturbing manner. Pinker emphasises Bowles’ pleasure in violating certain susceptibilities, which uncompromisingly disrupt the everyday nature of human life. Indeed, Pinker tends

to emphasize that Bowles represents the endless violence of western culture by revisiting the alien terrains of the Orient and establishing the idea of destruction (Pinker 156-157). Indeed, Pinker's argument integrates Bowles' architectural metaphor of civilization as Bowles declared once to Jeffery Bailey:

What you make for others is first of all what you make for yourself. If I'm persuaded that our life is predicted upon violence, that the entire structure of what we call civilization, the scaffolding that we've built up over the millennia, can collapse at any moment, then what I write is going to be affected by that assumption. The process of life presupposes violence, in the plant world the same as the animal world. But among the animals only man can conceptualize violence. Only man can *enjoy* the *idea* of destruction. (Bailey 80)

Bowles use of words like "scaffolding" and "built" suggest those elements are needed for structuring civilizations that are susceptible to collapse. Similar to this idea of destruction are the different variations of human isolation in which "everyone is isolated from everyone else. The concept of society is like a cushion to protect us from the knowledge of that isolation. A fiction that serves as an anesthetic" (Bailey 81). Indeed, Bowles' fiction is rife with images of isolation, especially Bowles' presentation of his central characters, who are at odds with the western culture and alien to the cultures they challenge and thus his fiction achieves a remarkable literary theme; the "alienation of the self from society [which] used to be, and in a sense remains, the basic assumption of the modern novel" (Hassan 320). As a result, Bowles' readers cannot tell the next stage of what happens as the Oriental cultures, Bowles represents, never stand as substantial; they are overwhelmed in a world of the writer's inner geography of disintegration and isolation especially when we know that the writer himself has a peculiar ideology of unhappiness.

Dyar's Ideology

Let it Come Down resembles that ideology as Dyar's mother at the very beginning of the novel advises her audacious son that "once you accept the fact that life isn't fun, you'll be much happier" (*LICD* 16). Developing this ideology coupled with the most recurrent theme of the American novel in the twentieth century; the horror of the imprisoned or isolated identity, Dyar is swept up with his life in Tangiers, attempting to establish his real identity in a world that merely recognises human beings as winners or losers. He is a born loser under the decadence of Tangiers, drawn to his oriental experiences that turn into a nightmare of corruption, drugs,

prostitution and scamming to get money. Indeed, Dyar is in search of his “‘Being’ [which] is the most universal and the emptiest of concepts. As such it resists every attempt at definition [...] for every one uses it constantly and already understands what he means by it” (Heidegger 21).

The Orient, North Africa, is established as “exotic” in Bowles’ fiction and it becomes clear that the dissolution happening to the western characters is due to the setting, which is indifferent to the natural order of human existence. The idea of Africa is presented in terms of difference: somewhere to find purpose, in Dyar’s mind. Early in the novel, Dyar’s purposeless, empty life is laid before us.

Role of Daisy and Hadija in Dyar’s Life

Daisy highlights a major event in Dyar’s life; the encounter with nothingness in this universe. As Dyar’s palm and life are empty, so the setting of Africa is blank too constituting that “kind of empty space, offering minimal resistance to the realization of adventurous fantasies” (Mchale 54). Bowles takes the “emptiness” link even further, having Daisy de Valverde tell Dyar of the Greek myth of the mountain “Hesperides” to which “Hercules is supposed to have come to steal the golden apples” (*LICD* 33). This mythology represents exactly the fate of Dyar because the place is associated with death. The garden of apples is on a treacherous precipice of the earth near Atlas and it is here where Dyar has his first Oriental sexual experience with Hadija, an Arab courtesan, in which his sexuality becomes an integral part of the African landscape.

The Garden of Hesperides. The golden apple, he thought, running his tongue over her smooth, fine teeth. Soon it was as if he were floating slightly above the water, out there in the strait, the wind caressing his face. The sound of the waves receded further and further. (*LICD* 101)

Dyar’s Escape to Morocco

The myth continues, as Hercules made his way to Atlas, so Dyar is making his escape, to the Spanish Morocco later in the novel, sailing and climbing the mountains in order to forget what he has just done; robbing Wilcox, his friend and employer, of his money. The day after his arrival at the sanctuary arranged by Thami, his Moroccan companion, Dyar feels the fine weather approaching and thus he simultaneously feels himself becoming a part of the natural world. Dyar feels freed from his fears, which he has already left in Tangiers, yet his memory is still engaged with the ominous images of the chaotic Tangiers, in which there is no way to live apart from taking part in the contest in a world of predatory monsters based

on distrust; the distrust between western and African cultures, between Dyar and Wilcox and between Daisy de Valverde and Luic (her husband). Dyar does not trust anybody including himself.

Dyar and His Relationship with Other Characters

The only person that Dyar is obliged to trust is Thami, who mirrors his own disdain for both cultures; the European and the Moroccan “if he [Thami] damned the Europeans with one breath, he was bound to damn the Moroccans with the next” (*LICD* 40). Like Dyar, Thami tries to create his life by buying a boat after being estranged from his wealthy brothers who see him violate the traditions of “the upper-class Moslem world of Tangier” (*LICD* 36) due to his youthful heavy drinking. Consequently, Thami’s identity is gradually shattered as he deviates from the norms of his Arab-Muslim background culture and follows the bogus greedy dreams of joining Dyar, in Western modernity. Thami anticipates intriguingly a strange yet a horrible world approaching him by his constant staying with Dyar in the Spanish Morocco as he imagines “his soul lay in darkness, without the blessing of Allah” (*LICD* 257). Indeed, Thami’s anticipation of his death, as a result of the violent nature of the West, concatenates with Bowles’ pre-supposed dehumanized depiction of the oriental natives, the Arabs and Berbers, who increase his antagonism. Formerly in the novel, a conversation between Eunice Goode, a notorious American lesbian, and Thami may offer a clue to Bowles’ presumed antipathy.

By her conversation with Thami, she intends to reflect what Daisy de Valverde has formerly suggested, “The Americans are the nation of the future” (*LICD* 21). This pre-supposed discrepancy between the humans (Europeans) and the non-humans (Moroccans) mirrors the same notion of the innocent natives who are constantly objectified, owned and dehumanised under the yoke of western colonialism as Said puts it. The image of the simple natives continues in the novel as the lesbian Goode succeeds in forming a relationship with the immature Hadija; this relationship stands as a metaphor for the relation between the western civilisation and the primitive orient. Hadija functions on the simple sentimental level of the novel by benefiting from whatever she could find from the outsiders yet others dominate her social life, as she does not understand herself nor feels any security. Hadija’s innocence, the immature orient, offers a long missing therapy to Goode, the western civilisation, for those past decades of corruption and melancholy happening to her.

Bowles’ *Let It Come Down* and Shakespeare’s *Macbeth*

The understanding of the title of the novel is significant to the understanding of the

novel itself. The title of the novel is taken from a passage in Shakespeare's *Macbeth* when Banquo, Macbeth's rival, gives a remark about the weather to be answered by one of the three murderers awaiting outside his home; the first murderer replying "Let it come down" (Shakespeare 87) stabbing him to death. Like Macbeth, Bowles's novel is essentially about establishing one's own identity, positing the existence of one's self-through oppressive actions. The title implies the endless rain that falls throughout the novel. The African settings; the sun, the wind, and the beach are all confrontations to the western civilisation by the alternative culture, and in a way, they are warnings to the unforeseen forces of this universe against the human beings. Dyar does not want these forces to affect him but he could not deny the outside reality traces him as he has stolen Wilcox's money. The liminal hanging door represents human reality itself and when Dyar wants to seal it the next night, he incidentally drives a nail into Thami's head. Consequently, Dyar is sealing himself in that little bottle of consciousness, achieving the notion of self-fulfilment through the destruction of oneself "his existence and everything in it were real, solid, undeniable [...] He was conscious of the instantaneous raising of a great barrier that had not been there a moment before, and now suddenly was there, impenetrable and merciless" (*LICD*, 317-318). Dyar reflects Camus' philosophy that "the individualist cannot accept history as it is; he must destroy reality not collaborate with it, in order to affirm his own existence" (Camus, 1956, 288-289).

Bowles' Sympathies with Dyar

Bowles' sympathy with his hero is understood as Dyar represents the author's "self-alienation," which involves the idea of double separation; the separation from oneself and the separation from the essential nature that together encompass the ideas of the total loss of human nature (Schacht 100-101). Consequently, the loss of human nature entails that certain elements of horror and violence be introduced. In his book, *Rumours of Change: Essays of Five Decades*, Ihab Hassan argues that Bowles' fiction is characterised by a tendency towards violence and negation, displaying an extraordinary responsiveness to the status of human existence and the role of terror and negation on his central characters.

Dyar as a Victim and a Murderer

Dyar's victim-like role is undeniably verbalised from the beginning of the novel as he "was the only prey that evening" (*LICD* 11) to the cab drivers. His role represents broadly those ideas of victimization and alienation, which remain at the heart of Western literature for much of the twentieth century. Dyar himself recognises the fact that he is a victim yet he does not know exactly the very sinister correlation between his own innocence and his destructive powers that serve to

drive him mad by the end of the novel. Indeed, Dyar is a prisoner of his trap destiny, he lacks the ability to form his future, he faces struggle to lose himself, and above all he does not know “what’s going to happen?” (*LICD* 179). At this phase of the novel, Dyar feels unable to make firm decisions and shares similarities with Bowles’ character of a Western traveller in another work of the author, *Their Heads are Green* (1963), standing outside the ancient walls of an African town contemplating, with hesitation, the vast world of the Sahara Desert.

Let It Come Down and Their Heads Are Green

Both, *Let It Come Down* and *Their Heads are Green* represent the increasing metamorphosis of western figures in Africa during a series of reintegration processes controlled by the author’s mental territory. The reintegration happening to Dyar can be divided into two stages, the first one occurs at the beginning of the novel when Dyar feels himself to be a victim and when he finally becomes a murderer. During his time in Tangiers, Dyar gradually becomes focused upon issues of personality, articulating those ontological themes central to the novel. Sometimes Dyar ascribes his inner experiences to the effect of the outer landscape; sometimes he can only understand his inner turmoil. When Dyar takes his first step in the new domain of willed activity, he has difficulty associating himself with his action, but he does have a definite hope, which he did not have before.

Tangier and its Landscape

The inner turmoil of Dyar is located in the liminal space of Tangiers, a city divided between Europe and Morocco and at the peak time of smuggling and some dubious financial transactions. Because it was a centre for so many people and religions, Tangiers developed a reputation of sexual activities and narcotics. Consequently, by drug addiction and sexual activities, the cultural and the social boundaries between the residents of the city were dissolved and various notions of identity, culture and sexuality were challenged. Consequently, Dyar’s responsiveness to the landscape of the Spanish Morocco is negligent and inattentive, for him it is “a primitive place [...] a wilderness whose few inhabitants lived in caves and talked in grunts or sign language” (*LICD* 252). The word “primitive” here belongs to those oriental people and landscape in which the western preys employ a kind of transcendence leading to self-destruction. For this reason, *Let it Come Down* is based on the author’s vivid metaphors of successive schizophrenic episodes. Dyar’s journey to the Spanish Morocco is itself an illusion especially when we know that Bowles himself contemplates this visionary experience upon one of his sea travels.

The negative physical domination of the Tangiers landscape in the novel runs

parallel with the psychological domination of narcotics, which becomes a mark of rebellious independence Bowles, to occupy a landscape by themselves in the novel. Their influence is destructively great as *kif*, the most popular form of narcotics in Morocco, may be considered as a major cause of dislocation, responsibility and social fear. In the novel, Daisy de Vaverde introduces narcotics to Dyar and it is not surprising.

Dyar's Drug Experience and Its Consequences

Dyar's experience of drugs coincides with his escape to the primitive world of the Spanish Morocco. Although *kif*, the most popular form of narcotics in Morocco, is a prime reason for the disintegration of Bowles' characters, Bowles denies its power to induce a murder as it "is simply the key which opens a door to some particular chamber of the brain that let whatever was in there out" (Stewart 116). The narcotic, according to Bowles does not supply the matter, but merely liberates whatever's it. Indeed, Bowles' self-denial is contradicted as Daisy de Vaverde tells Dyar that *majoun* (effectively like *kif*) is "the key to a forbidden way of thought" (*LICD* 225), which eventually includes the idea of violence and murder. The *majoun*, according to Dyar, is increasingly becoming a pleasure uniquely associated with the orient. It establishes that "quintessential oriental world of uncertainty, fluid dreams infinitely multiplying past resolution, definiteness, and materiality" (Said, 1994, 183). What is peculiar in the novel is that Dyar reacts mechanically to the *majoun* and the first act is proved in his lovemaking with Daisy as it is carried out not sentimentally but in terms of a pervading voluptuousness coupled with a tendency to eat, drink and sleep. His lovemaking experience as a result of the narcotics is peculiar as it renders him unable to perceive women as real creatures so he is left paralyzed "to form any kind of social bond—the essential step in the construction of an identity" (Patteson 50). This is clear as Daisy considers Dyar among those men who are accustomed to an ambiance of feminine adulation and who "are vulnerable and easily crushed, as spoiled children" (*LICD* 107). Consequently, Dyar's actions start to reject all the traditional ideas of value and the natural order of human beings yet even Dyar cannot apprehend himself. Bowles recurrently poses the question of the reality of existence within Dyar's own imaginative experiences: "The feeling of unreality was too strong in him, all around him. Sharp as a toothache, definite as the smell of ammonia, yet impalpable, unlocatable, a great smear across the lens of his consciousness" (*LICD*, p. 161)

Dyar Vs Meursault

"He was not thinking, but words came into his mind; they all formed questions, what am I doing here? Where am I getting? What's it all about? Why am I doing

this? What good is it? What's going to happen?" (*LICD* 161). The answer to these questions lies at Dyar's continuous rejection not only of the inevitable universal laws of human existence but of the Oriental orthodoxy of North Africa which reflects the same one suggested by Meursault, Camus' hero, in Albert Camus, *The Outsider* (1942) since both characters, Dyar and Meursault achieve nothing by their violence and rejection of the morality of the human existentialist position. They are in a constant struggle with the external world and with the moral codes of their societies yet they are witnessing the relation between man and his world (*Adele* 46-63). Indeed, Dyar and Meursault reach the same existentialist conclusion about the universal order of being.

The whole of life does not equal to the sum of its parts. It equals any one of the parts; there is no sum [...] Everything Dyar had ever thought or done had been thought or done not by him, but by a member of a great mass of beings who acted as they did only because they thought they were on their way from birth to death. He was no longer a member, having committed himself, he could expect no help from anyone. If a man was not on his way anywhere, if life was something else, entirely different, if life was a question of being, for a long continuous instant that was all one, then the best thing for him to do was to sit back and be, and whatever happened, he still was. Whatever a man thought, said or did, the fact of his being there remained unchanged. And death? He felt that someday, if he thought far enough, he would discover that death changed nothing, either. (*LICD* 194)

Dyar starts to feel at one with his own soul, he feels alive and thus reaches the summit of his consciousness aside from notions of nationality and other cultural signifiers. He is neither an American citizen nor a member of humanity but rather an irresponsible man lying on the beach. This scene of Dyar on the beach reflects exactly the beach scene within *The Outsider* where Meursault feels that the sea was in full view; it lay smooth as a mirror, and in the distance a big headland jutted out over its black reflection [...] The beach was quite deserted now [...] Heat was welling up from the rocks and one could hardly breathe (Camus 55-58). Dyar now is in full harmony with the outer world. He sees his life valuable because accepting this value means a man should accept death. Now Dyar's powers "come out of the earth, nothing which would not go back into it. He was an animated extension of the sun-baked earth itself. But this was not quite true" (*LICD* 276).

Both Dyar and Meursault share the same existential quest to realise their

identities through taking another's life. They are on a demonic mission to perceive the absurd nature of our physical world within their world of North Africa. They become the very destructive elements that have those primitivistic features of immersion within the evil and violence of this universe.

Bowles' Heroic Fatalism

Dyar's knowledge of the world and even Africa is limited and because of this, Bowles is able to formulate his narrative on the hero's fatalism "Dyar lay on his back across the seat in the stern of the boat, his hands beneath his head, looking up at the stars, vaguely wishing that at some time or another he had learned a little about astronomy" (*LICD* 245). This fatalism is continued as Dyar indulges in a complicated net of entangled visions and bizarre delusions before the murdering scene.

The expedition through the magic room was hazardous. There was a fragile silence there which must be shattered. The fire, shedding its redness on Thami's mask like face, must not know he was stealing past. At each step he lifted his feet far off the floor into the air, like someone walking through a field of high wet grass. He saw the door ahead of him it was going to take endless hours to get down to the end. And a host of invisible people was lined up along its walls, but on the other side of the wall, mutely waiting for him to go by an impassive chorus, silent and without pity. The sides of his mind, indistinguishable from the walls of the corridor, were lined with words written in Arabic script. All the time, directly before his eyes was the knob less door sending out its whispered message. It was not sure; it could not be trusted. If it opened when he did not want it to open, by itself, all the horror of existence could crowd upon him. (*LICD* 307)

The image of the doorway in Bowles' work epitomises a recurrent feature within travel writing analysed in this paper. That is, they mark an in-between point at which things are both less defined and more open to convergence. The doorway in Bowles represents Bhabha's notion that the "[...] interstitial passage between fixed identifications opens up the possibility of a cultural hybridity that entertains difference without an assumed or imposed hierarchy" (Bhabha 4). Such intersterility is of importance to the travel-writing form with its overt relation to the geographical and ideological spaces in which differing peoples and cultures intervene with each other.

Unable to read the sides of his mind, Dyar tries to capture his gloomy past with a hint of a projected future under the influence of the kif, which attacks the inner geographical territories of him forming those hallucinating and mindless visions. The Arabic script signifies but cannot be read by him; therefore, it becomes language without meaning for the character. Working under both the perverted sexuality and the hatred of the brain, Dyar's visions are intended to be taken as philosophical and even spiritual quest for reality and such a quest renders him to enter another world; a world of fantasy, an excursion into the known that causes him to accidentally attempt to drive a masonry nail into Thami's head instead of a shackled-shut door. This is a very decisive event in the novel as it may represent what Michel Foucault in *Madness and Civilization* calls "a fall into a determinism following the great confinement" (Foucault 78, 35) where we have the break out of the hero after a long time of struggling with the constrained inner-self that is charged with hatred and anger.

This is the outcome of Dyar's repressed powers. Such a complex state of a psychotic outcome can be better elucidated in R. D. Laing's book, *The Divided Self: An Existential Study in Sanity and Madness* when Laing argues:

what is called psychosis is sometimes simply the sudden removal of the veil of the false self, which had been serving to maintain an outer behavioural normality that may, long ago, have failed to be any reflection of the state of affairs in the secret self. Then the self will pour out accusations of persecution at the hands of that person with whom the false self has been complying for years (Laing, *The Divided Self* 99).

It can be said that Dyar's psychotic aggression against the greed of Wilcox and Thami may be interpreted as his "accusations of persecutions." In other words, Wilcox and Thami are considered the inevitable external reality, which ceaselessly prepare Dyar to pour out after his inner self has been complying for years. Consequently, this internal rebellion of Dyar against himself as well as the essential nature of our existence reflects an important psychological fact remarked by Laing elsewhere as he states, "if our experience is destroyed, our behaviour will be destructive. If our experience is destroyed, we have lost our own selves" (Laing, *The Politics* 24). For Dyar, Thami is a pursuer who should be killed and upon his killing Dyar experiences a kind of satisfaction "I've come back, he thought; his mouth, gullet, stomach ached with dryness. Thami has stayed behind. I'm the only survivor. That's the way I wanted it" (*LICD* 310). Such an end reflects Bowles'

intention that a dreadful conclusion could assert a degree of credibility to the story. Bowles argues,

Let It Come Down was completely surface-built, down to the details of the decor, choice of symbolic materials on the walls, and so on. The whole thing was planned. It had to be. It was an adventure story, after all, in which the details had to be realistic. It's a completely unreal story and the entire book is constructed in order to lead to this impossible situation at the end. (Sawyer-Lauçanno 303)

The book's end encompasses Dyar's murder of Thami enclosed under the absurd reality of nothingness and this is summarised at the very end of the novel when the character ironically tries to lie to Daisy who comes to help him. Dyar lies in order to hide the murder that he has committed. "I don't know where Thami is, he said. He's been gone all day" (*LICD* 317). Indeed, Thami is murdered because Dyar wants to discover a meaning of the mystery of his existence in the world outside and because "the slaying of a different ego, an unconscious illusion of the splitting-off of a bad, culpable ego, satisfies the need in the hero to protect himself permanently from the pursuits of the self" (Rank 79). By unlocking the secret codes of his existence, Dyar symbolises the tragic consequences of the modern man in the twentieth century where there is little hope for escape because modern man demands too much of life and too much of himself and consequently he cannot have all he refuses to reconcile himself to nothing.

Conclusion

At the end of the novel, Dyar hammers a nail into his companion's head, killing him in the process, significantly the use of the description "the other" (*LICD* 318) to refer to the Moroccan's corpse at this point, suggests a symbolic meaning inherent within the act. The character of Dyar, representative the West, has finally destroyed the oriental other, yet instead of describing Dyer's satisfaction with the act. The novel resists this and instead we cannot finally judge if Dyar is happy or unhappy since we are left only with the chilling weather and the endless rain. "The rain fell heavily and the wind had begun to blow again. He sat down in the liminal space of the doorway and began to wait. It was not yet completely dark (*LICD* 318). This is the end point of the western pilgrim's journey in Morocco; a journey of a detritus of a western civilisation driving its way to destruction which may not finally produce the realisation it predicts.

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