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Orientalist Representations in Paul Bowles' *Their Heads Are Green and Their Hands Are Blue: Scenes from the Non-Christian World* (1963)

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To

*My parents and all my family who have provided me with
moral support and encouragement.*

My dear sister "Thanina"

My dear husband "Hocine"

My best friends.

Dhaouia

To

My dear parents and all my family

My best friends

Lydia

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Abstract

*This dissertation examines the Orientalist representations included in Paul Bowles' *Their Heads Are Green and their Hands Are Blue: Scenes from the Non-Christian World* (1963). It aims to argue that Paul Bowles's portrayal of the exotic lands, as North Africa and the Far East regions, is Orientalist. To achieve our purpose, we have relied on Edward Said's ideas included in his well know work *Orientalism* (1978). In the first chapter of the dissertation, we have dealt with the representation of the native people of the Non-Christian world and we have found out that Bowles employs stereotypes to focus on the otherness of the Non-Westerners. The second chapter has been devoted to the thematic study of exoticism within the essays set in the Orient. In this part, we have focused more on Bowles' stereotypical descriptions of the geographical areas and the different towns. In the third chapter, we have tried to emphasize Bowles' Orientalist stance by highlighting the idea of his belief in "the Western superiority". The latter is analyzed in relation to identity, religion and culture. We have concluded that Paul Bowles may be classified as an Orientalist travel writer and that his work *Their Heads Are Green and Their Hands Are Blue* provides enough evidence about his adherence to western ideology.*

Key Words: Stereotypical representation, Otherness, Exoticism, Religion, Identity.

I. Introduction

The following dissertation attempts to study the Orientalist representations in Paul Bowles' *Their Heads are Green and their Hands are Blue: Scenes from the Non-Christian World* (1963). This collection of essays falls into the category of travel writing that is a genre that existed as far as the first journeys were held. Travel writing cannot be provided with a definite explanation because it incorporates many genres such as autobiography and ethnography. However, it may roughly be explained as the possible encounters with "the other" as different from "the self". It can be the result of the meeting of two divergent cultures.

According to Carl Thompson in his book *Travel Writing* (2011), travel writing is a product of the movement through space which involves a quarrel between "Self" and "Other". This meeting leads to the negotiation of similarities and differences.¹ Carl Thompson has made reference to Sugnet in the chapter entitled "representing the other". Sugnet explains that through travel writing the westerner shapes images about the natives that sustain the position of the travelers and their audience. So, it can be a biased depiction of the land and a way of being subjective.

According to the critic Paul Fussler, travel writing has some features that distinguish it from the other genres. He accentuates "the travel book has to be 'literary' and to follow primarily an aesthetic agenda".² Thus, travel writing can be considered as a flourishing and highly valued fictional field. It is not only a literal, objective confirmation of voyages undertaken but also it holds prejudices that provide an orientation position. In fact, it can be defined, directly or otherwise, through the history of its occurrence by anthropologists, archaeologists, scientists, explorers, and travel writers. However, the travel writer under study, Paul Bowles, has a different view about travel writing. According to him, a travel book

is “the story of what happened to one person in a particular place and nothing more than that.”³

In his turn, Andrew Hadfield accentuates the utility of travel writing as a performance of contribution in current pressing debates about the nature of society, as “a means of presenting the popular at large”. Such thinking indicates that in travel writing there is an interactive understanding of the “nature of society” or of culture.

Many American travel writers dealt with the Orient. Among them, we can list Edith Wharton, Paul Theroux and Paul Bowles. First, Edith Wharton visited Morocco during the French colonial period in the Mediterranean coast. In her work *In Morocco* (1920), she mainly describes the French deeds to the Moroccan population and she concentrates her descriptions on the naivety and the primitiveness of the Moroccan people specifically women in the Harem as she had access to enter inside and be in close contact with the Oriental woman.

Second, Paul Theroux is an American novelist who wrote *The Great Railway Bazaar: By Train* (1975) in which he tells about his trip through Asia. It tells about Theroux's four-month journey by train in 1973 from London through Europe, the Middle East, the Indian subcontinent and South Asia. In this work, the author has describes the different peoples and cultures he met in the trains he took throughout his journey. So, many people believe that it is a masterpiece in travel writing.

Like these travel writers, Paul Frederic Bowles is an American travel writer who has visited so many Eastern countries and his writings are almost about North African lands, India and Turkey. Among his well known works, we find *The Sheltering Sky* (1949) where he tells the journey of the young American couple Port and Kit to the Algerian Sahara. After that, he published his collection of essays entitled *Their Heads Are Green and Their Hands Are Blue:*

Scenes from the Christian World (1963), in which he offers to his readers stories in different journeys around the world. The latter will be the concern of the current dissertation.

The Review of the Literature

Paul Bowles' *Their Heads Are Green and Their Hands Are Blue: Scenes from the Non-Christian World* comprises essays based on the different trips that Bowles made in his search for authentic Music mostly in the Orient. The works of Bowles in general have been largely investigated and criticized by such critics as Greg Bevan, Zoubida Hamdaoui, Brian Edwards and Salih J. Altoma.

Most often critics, like Bevan Greg and Zoubida Hamdaoui, claim that Bowles is an Orientalist. In *Orientalist on Trial: The Evidence of Paul Bowles Travels* Greg Bevan considers that the first fictional writing of Paul Bowles during his settlement in Morocco (1910-1999) has received a mass of criticism. Indeed, Greg claims that Bowles firmly focuses his attention on the aspect of "racism" that cannot be avoided in Bowles' translated works into Arabic.⁴ In addition, he states: "Elghandor labeled Bowles as an Orientalist"⁵; thus, he affirms that in his work Bowles is biased, imperfect, unbalanced, and incorrect in his vision about "Arabo-Islamic culture"⁶. He adds that Bowles' latest publication of *Travels: Collected Writings (1950-1993)* remind us that he is not only a "fiction writer", but also a fertile travel writer. Moreover, in "Africa Minor" and "The Rif to Music" that are parts of *Their Heads Are Green and their Hands Are Blue*, the natives are perceived as backwards.

In addition, Zoubida Hamdaoui, in her thesis "Themes and Story-Telling Strategies in Paul Bowles's North African Fiction" (2013) advocates that "there is a delicate line between wanting to see the picturesque when one travels and taking the stereotyped 'Orientalist' view that everything that is different in Africa is going to be inferior".⁷ So, it depends on the goal of the visit to the exotic lands. She said that Ralph Coury attacked Bowles because of the negative view he provided about Muslims as being 'thieves', 'liars' and 'aggressive'. In spite

of Bowles defense every time that he is not Orientalist, she claims that many critics consider him as being so. Besides, she states that, through Bowles interviews, he provided the Moroccans with the most primitive descriptions. Therefore, he claims the uncivilized facet of the Northern African countries.

Some other critics, however, argue that Paul Bowles is not an Orientalist, among them Brian.T Edwards and Salih J. Altoma. In his essay “Sheltering Screens: Paul Bowles and Foreign Relations” (2005), Edwards states that Bowles has shaped the Western view about Morocco. He considers that most of Bowles’ writings are either set in North Africa or in Central America and takes his characters as being native or foreigners living there. He asserts that Bowles’ goal is to “interrupt” the already set Orientalist view by setting his works in the Moroccan context and by attending to the various forms of “disruption”,⁸ which he uses in his works about the Orient. Edwards claims that Bowles insertion of Maghrebi words is a sign of disorienting because Arabic does not conform to the American’s screen. He adds that the use of Arabic language disturbs his Western audience.

Furthermore, Salih J. Altoma, in his “Paul Bowles’ Knowledge of Arabic: Personal Observations” (2001) claims that Bowles is not an Orientalist. He states that Bowles is considered as an influential figure and as “instrumental in generating a world-wide interest in Morocco and its culture both as an innovative writer and as a translator”⁹. Altoma argues that Bowles is qualified for his effort that he made to endorse many Moroccan works as Mohamed Choukri’s novel, a Moroccan writer, *For Bread Alone* (1973) that he translated from Arabic or “Moroccan vernacular or ‘Maghrebi’”, as Bowles names it. Besides, Altoma states that because of Bowles’ lack of knowledge about Arabic he sustained a vague image about Arabs and their culture. This fact makes his works to be open to discussion and to be criticized when he states, “It will show that because of his lack of knowledge of Arabic,

Bowles was led to maintain distorted views of the Arabic language and its literary and cultural heritage.”¹⁰

Issue and Working Hypothesis

Some researchers and critics have investigated Bowles’ attitude towards the Orient and tried to find out whether he is an Orientalist or a Non-Orientalist. However, our assumption is that Bowles tends to be an Orientalist writer. In *Their Heads Are Green and Their Hands Are Blue*, he portrays Oriental people as uneducated and uncivilized. In fact, such depictions are recurrent in the works of the Orientalist writers. Thus, our concern is to examine Bowles’ Orientalist discourse in his collection of essays.

Indeed, concerning his essays *Their Heads Are Green and Their Hands Are Blue*, scholars have analyzed only “Mustapha and His Friends” that represents only one of the nine essays in the collection. This essay, taken separately, is insufficient to provide credible evaluations. This is why our work intends to examine all of the essays written in the different Oriental “Non-Christian” lands.

This paper; therefore, aims to investigate the Orientalist portrayals presented in *Their Heads Are Green and Their Hands Are Blue: Scenes from the Non-Christian World*. Our study will be based on Edward Said’s ideas developed in *Orientalism* (1978). In the latter, Said states that each writer who engages himself in writing about the Orient is an Orientalist.¹¹ Relying on that, we shall try to argue that Bowles is as an Orientalist by shedding light on Orientalist bias that is found in his collected essays.

Our analysis will be divided into three chapters. The first will deal with the different Orientalist representations of the Eastern people and their customs, through which the Orientalist form a biased image about the region. Then, the second will expose the way Bowles deals with the aspect of exoticism in the collection, basing our study on “Otherness” as an Orientalist aspect. The third chapter will be devoted to the theme of Western superiority.

Endnotes

¹ Carl Thompson, *Travel Writing* (New York: Taylor & Francis e-library, 2011), 10.

² *Ibid.*, 23.

³ Bevan Greg, “Orientalist on Trial: The Evidence of Paul Bowles Travels”, 2.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 1.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ Zoubida Hamdaoui, “Themes and Story-telling Strategies in Paul Bowles’s North African Fiction” (PhD., Grenada University, 2013), 26.

⁸ Brian T Edwards, “The Sheltering Screens: Paul Bowles and Foreign Relations”, 318.

⁹ Salih J. Altoma, “Paul Bowles’ knowledge of Arabic: Personal Observations”, 157.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ Edward Said. *Orientalism* (London: penguin, 1978), 3.

II Method and Materials

1. Theoretical Consideration

Throughout this paper, we feel the need for a theoretical ground to set our arguments. Therefore, we intend to base our work on Edward Said's *Orientalism* which is a work that studies the difference between the Orient and the Occident. After colonization, the Western World became in close contact with the Eastern region that the Europeans consider as being primitive and weak. These attributes offer to them an opportunity to dominate and control the Orientals. This is what Antonio Gramsci coined as "Hegemony". For the sake of a further understanding of the exotic Orient, the West has shaped the Oriental studies.

For Edward Said, Europe defines itself in relation to the Orient. Thus, in order to analyze Bowles' work from the Orientalist angle, we have to focus on the definitions Said provides about Orientalism. Said states that Orientalism is the result of certain earlier circumstances which are "fundamentally fractious"¹²; thus, we can consider it as the outcome of the World Wars disturbing conditions, which lead to the stereotyped depictions of the East. He identifies Orientalism as an approach through which the Orient is described as "a topic of learning, discovery, and practice"¹³. Through this definition, we can understand the aim of the westerners in coming to the Eastern region. Said clarifies that the idea provided by Orientalism is shaped by the different depictions and stereotyped images meant to bring the Orient to the Western knowledge. This is explained in the following quotation,

The Orient that appears in Orientalism, then, is a system of representations framed by a whole set of forces that brought the Orient into Western learning, Western consciousness, and later, Western empire. If this definition of Orientalism seems more political than not, that is simply because I think Orientalism was itself a product of certain political forces and activities.¹⁴

In its first chapter, *Orientalism* (1978) discusses the three binary oppositions that will be clearly demonstrated throughout the work, “Western versus Eastern”, “Civilized versus Uncivilized”, and “Ours versus Theirs”. These oppositions reinforce the idea of the Orientals as “Others” and the Westerners as “The Self”. Said suggests that the term Orientalism “was linked to Western power, colonialism and hegemony over the Orient”¹⁵. According to him, the West has created an imaginative dividing line so as to distinguish or separate itself from the East. This line begins from North Africa to the Far Eastern lands. Further, Said refers to the Europeans who deal with Orientals in their works and has them as their subject matter. He also mentions Balfour’s stance toward the Orient,

Balfour himself put Robertson's question again: "What right have you to take up these airs of superiority with regard to people whom you choose to call Oriental?" The choice of "Oriental" was canonical; it had been employed by Chaucer and Mandeville, by Shakespeare, Dryden, Pope, and Byron. It designated Asia or the East, geographically, morally, culturally.¹⁶

Accordingly, Said advocates that the West romanticize the Orient through literary works mainly. This may be linked to different productions during the colonization period. The relation of the two parts is the one of strong/ weak relation, “except when Balfour acknowledges the greatness of the Eastern civilizations.”¹⁷ The Orientalists push the Europeans to a pilgrimage to the pure and clean lands, which have simplicity that makes the Easterners inferior to Westerners. In addition, he refers to Darwin and his theory of evolution that advocates the biological supremacy of the Europeans. Throughout the work, Said makes reference to the different religions of the Orient such as Islam and Hinduism and he provides different portrayals that the Orientalists attribute to these religions.

Moreover, the last chapter discusses the shift from European Orientalism to the American one as Said states,

Orientalism is not only a positive doctrine about the Orient that exists at any one time in the West; it is also an influential academic tradition (when one refers to an academic specialist who is called an Orientalist), [...]as well as an area of concern defined by travelers, commercial enterprises, governments, military expeditions, readers of novels and accounts of exotic adventure, natural historians, and pilgrims to whom the Orient is a specific kind of knowledge about specific places, peoples, and civilizations.¹⁸

Said distinguishes the new Orientalists who engage in a direct contact with the Orientals, such as Bowles who has concentrated most of his works to portray the Orientals. These Orientalists lived with the native people because they wanted to be familiar with them in order to gain more knowledge about their lives. After the Great War, Orientalism arrived to the USA and became a political assistance for the control of the Orient. Hence, the widespread idea that Orientalism disappeared is contradicted by the biased representation of the Arabs as being violent and Muslims as being Terrorists.

The Orientalists advocate Western superiority at all levels. In fact, this is what Said focuses on when he says, “If the essence of Orientalism is the ineradicable distinction between Western superiority and Oriental inferiority, then we must be prepared to note how in its development and subsequent history Orientalism deepened and even hardened the distinction.”¹⁹ The truth of Western domination of the Orient extends to the spread of the notion of cliché about the Orient “The Third World”, that is the dominated world either by nations or diseases and poverty. The Western authority applied on the Orientals has persisted only because of the advanced materials the industry provides them. Therefore, this is the sole distinction that makes the real difference between the Occident and the Orient.

Furthermore, Said states that the obstacle of language makes the Westerners misunderstand the Easterners; consequently, the former fear the latter. Thus, this propagated terror starts to increase after the United States become the first power in the world. Said ends up his analysis by claiming that the Orient itself is collaborating in its self-orientalizing, as he argues, “the modern Orient, in short, participates in its own Orientalizing.”²⁰

I. Materials

2. The Summary of *Their Heads Are Green and Their Hands Are Blue: Scenes From The Non-Christian World* (1963)

Their Heads Are Green and Their Hands Are Blue (1963) is a set of nine essays from the different journeys of Paul Bowles in the Oriental world more specifically Buddhist, Islamic, and Hindu lands, where the writer describes people's life style. Our analysis is going to be based on the nine essays set in the Oriental lands that are: "Fish Traps and Private Business" in Ceylon, "The Africa Minor" that is set in different parts of North Africa, "Notes Mailed at Nagercoil" in Cape Comorin India, "Mustapha and his Friends" in Morocco, "A Man Must not Be Very Moslem", in Turkey, "The Rif to Music", in Morocco, "The Baptism to Solitude" in the Algerian Sahara, and "The Route to Tassemsit" in different parts of Morocco. It can be noticed that they are almost all located in North Africa.

In "Fish Traps and Private Business", Paul Bowles refers to his visit to Ceylon in 1950. He was the guest of Mr. and Mrs. Murrow. In the entire visit's time, he was not permitted to go out of the castle, in which he witnessed the different Hindu rituals. He likes the music in Ceylon, though the natives did not do. Bowles describes the diversity of religions existing in the place.

"The Africa Minor" is set in Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia. Throughout the essay, emphasis is put on the behavior of the Muslim people. To begin with, Bowles encountered an old man injured in his finger and Bowles was shocked by his reaction. Then, Farid is a Moroccan who belongs to the *Jillala* dancing tribe. He cannot smell *djaoui*, "a compound resinous substance, otherwise he loses his senses". After that, Bowles was a guest of two friendly brothers who made him as if he is at comfortable as if he is at home. He does not go outside the section offered to him because the keys were always with the Sudanese slave. He

listened to the divergent sounds made outside. North Africa became full of western features and nationalism. So, it is not worth visiting.

“Notes Mailed at Nagercoil” is set in Cape Comorin India. There, Bowles took the destination to the villages first. It was hard to find a place where to stay in Bombay, so he was in the second-class hotels. In these hotels, there is no comfort and many extra guests are sleeping there, contrary to Cape Comorin, in which there are many rooms. The Indians are worshipping cows. The people there make the cows comfortable. They do what they desire to do. For them it is an important animal.

Then, in “Mustapha and his Friends”, the author introduces the Moroccan Mustapha who is an illiterate Moroccan city dweller who believes in God’s power and strength, but he does not apply the Islamic instructions. For Mustapha, we are born only to pray not to work. He advocates that “hashish” is forbidden, but he takes it with his friends. Mustapha is very disrespectful towards women, and he endorses the idea that females must be kept at home.

“A Man Must Not Be Very Moslem” is about Abdesslam, who went with Bowles to Turkey, the setting of the essay. He is a very good believer, illiterate, and fearful man. Bowles takes him to Istanbul in order to help him in communicating with Muslims. In their road to the Tarabya Hotel, situated in the Western part of Turkey, Abdesslam thought Turkish people to be bad Muslims because they drink wine and eat pork. For him, they are not happy. He respects the laws as they were stated. When they move to the eastern part of Istanbul, Abdesslam was pleased by the people’s practice of religion. He becomes upset by the case of the unbelievers.

Next, in “The Rif to Music”, Paul Bowles, Christopher and Mohammed Larbi were in a journey to the Rif of Morocco to seek for the authentic music. Throughout the journey, they have met a Moroccan intellectual who said that the Moroccan music is unworthy, and

invaluable. Besides, they work on Rif musical instruments. Accordingly, Larbi's last stepmother gave him to eat *tseuheur* magic. After that, he became afraid of any Muslim woman. As a result, he beats his wife in order not to repeat the act of making *tseuheur* for him.

“The Baptism of Solitude” is an essay about the natives of the Sahara mainly southern Algeria. It describes the oases that represent the only verdure places in the desert solitude. It is inhabited by the Imochagh which means “the free ones” and the Touareg tribes. In this essay, Bowles describes the culture and rituals of the Berbers.

In the last essay, “The Route to Tassemsit”, Christopher and Paul Bowles took their way to Tassemsit. Arriving there, they saw a man called Allal dancing in the road. People there told them that this happened because a woman loved him, but he refused her and then she made him magic to make him a foul in order not to marry another woman. In a twilight day, Bowles went to Moulay Ibrahim who is described as a curious deracinated man. No women were allowed in the building. After that, Bowles and Christopher carried their trip and they met Monsieur the pharmacist Rousselot and his young Moroccan student.

Endnotes

¹²Edward Said, preface of *Orientalism*, XIV.

¹³Said, *Orientalism*, 74.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, 204.

¹⁵ Nasser Al-Tae, “Between Violence and sensuality”, in *Representations of the Orient in the Western Music: Violence and Sensuality* (Burlington: Ashgate publishing company, 2010), 7.

¹⁶Said, *Orientalism*, 32.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, 41.

¹⁸*Ibid.*, 204.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, 43.

²⁰*Ibid.*, 326.

III. Results and Discussion

a) Results

After the examination of Bowles' *Their Heads are Green and Their Hands are Blue: Scenes from the Non Christian World* (1963) and Edward Said's book *Orientalism* (1978), we have noticed that the essays include elements of the Orientalist discourse that may allow us to classify the work within the western Orientalist heritage. Therefore, though Bowles denies, in many interviews, his adherence to the Orientalist ideology, we may argue that the author is influenced by Orientalist ideas and that he advocates western superiority recurrently.

Throughout the work, Paul Bowles implies in his portrayals the discourse of the Orientalist writers. The author considers the natives either as being illiterate or intellectuals that reject their own culture. He declares in *Their Heads Are Green and Their Hands Are Blue* that the Eastern people want to become westernized through adopting the western culture and neglecting theirs. Thus, for Bowles, this is what makes the Oriental world an imitator, and a blind follower of the West.

Bowles descriptions, in the work, promote the multiple stereotypical depictions that the Orient is associated with, and its peoples' daily practices. He describes the exotic parts he has seen in the different places: mainly the Sahara and the different Indian unknown cites. The collection also unfolds the evidence about the inclination of Bowles toward his Western identity, and the inferiority of the Oriental characteristics that need to be changed by the Western presence in the region.

b) Discussion

Chapter One: The Representation of The Native People

In this chapter, we are going to highlight the impact of the Orientalist ideas on Bowles' representation of the Non-Western characters in the different essays of *Their Heads Are Green and Their Hands Are Blue*. In fact, Said shows that because of the Western celebration of the American exceptionalism, meaning the belief of superiority and being different from the other, the Westerner looks to others with satirical vision, and adopts stereotypical ideas on the other's cultures, this is obvious in what Said states,

Reflection, debate, rational argument, moral principle based on a secular notion that human beings must create their own history, have been replaced by abstract ideas that celebrate American or Western exceptionalism , [...]and regard other cultures with derisive contempt.²¹

The divergent cultures in the Orient are repressed and the Western ones are valorized and protected. Said advocates that the Orientalists perceive the Easterner as crazy, decadent, naïve, and strange; however, the Westerner is lucid, good and “mature”²², and this explains further the aspect of the binary oppositions, “‘they’ versus ‘us’”, and “‘their’ versus ‘our’”.

It is worth noting that, when writing, Bowles did not aim to be an Orientalist, but it came to happen that he views the Orientals through the eyes of an Orientalist that come to the East and provides stereotyped descriptions about the region's people. This is evident through his claim in his interview with Elghandor, “I would not want to be called an Orientalist under any circumstances because I'm not.”²³ In fact, through our analysis, we find out that Bowles reproduces the stereotypes about the Easterners. In the different essays either in North Africa or in the Far East as India and Ceylon, Bowles witnesses a variation of the local cultures and traditions including the different religious practices that are closely linked to the spiritual lives of the populations there. Said discusses in *Orientalism* the different biases attributed to

Orientalists as being only what the West wants to project on them. He also refers to the new Orientalists who come to the East in order to observe the people, especially artists and writers such as Bowles. Said says,

Thus a very large mass of writers, among whom are poets, novelists, philosophers, political theorists, economists, and im-perial [sic] administrators, have accepted the basic distinction between East and West as the starting point for elaborate theories, epics, novels, social descriptions, and political accounts concerning the Orient, its people, customs, "mind," destiny, and so on.²⁴

In the same vein, Fred Moramacco in his Article "Imagine all that History" states clearly that the American literary men who go to the Orient specifically the southern part of the Mediterranean are the first to give a view on the place through their writings, so if those authors provide a biased view about the unknown, then the perception of all the West has to be the same. This is due to the influence that those writers have on the western audience. In the article Moramacco writes,

The "Sea in the Middle of the Earth" has found expression in the work of novelists from Washington Irving and Louisa May Alcott to Don De Lillo and Paul Bowles, of poets from Edgar Allan Poe to Rita Dove and Charles Wright, and that is only a sampling of a few of the writers who have given Americans a literary view of Mediterranean life. [...] to recent interpretations of Henry James and Paul Bowles, we get a fuller sense of how the Mediterranean and its various cultures are seen by the many ordinary American citizens who have never been here.²⁵

This author declares that the western view about the southern part of the Mediterranean is shaped with the different writers' descriptions about the region. Bowles is just one among the Americans who expresses through writing his Orientalist regards towards these regions' population.

The North African Characters

i. Arabs

In the collection, five essays are written in North Africa, so our analysis is going to be centered on the North Africans that Bowles describes as being illiterate, barbarous and naïve.

Referring to the Muslim people, Bowles states that they are uneducated; thus, they ignore about reading and writing. Said claims in *Orientalism* (1978) that the western tradition declares the Easterner as uncivilized in opposition to the Westerner, who is civilized “The Oriental Arab is a “civilized man fallen again into a savage state”²⁶; this means that the Arabs are moving from one savage state to another. Bowles in the essays considers the Arabs as colonizers of the African lands. Thus, though he spent almost all his life in the Orient; he lacks knowledge about its people. Mohamed Choukri, a Moroccan writer and a friend of Bowles, claims that in spite of the fact that Bowles lived in Tangier, he still does not know Muslims appropriately. In fact, the Arabs inserted their religion in the Berber culture. Besides, we believe that the Islamic religion has succeeded to melt the Berber and the Arab cultures, so as to become a hybrid cultural product. From another angle, we can deduce that Bowles is upset because France is not the first colonizer of North Africa, this can be explained by the fact that it is a Western Christian power; thus, the region would belong to the Western rule. The Westerner does not realize that the authenticity of the Orientals is a good thing that is worth preserving.

Bowles in “Mustapha and His Friends” declares that Mustapha is a Muslim who does not practice Islam, but Mustapha knows about it. He does not drink wine but he takes *Hashish* with his friends, so he is not a good believer. When Bowles describes Mustapha, he seems criticizing Islam and Muslims. He states, “The difference between Mustapha and us is possibly even greater than it would be for were he a Buddhist or a Hindu, for there is no religion on earth which demands strict conformity to the tenets of its dogma than that of the supra-national brotherhood called Islam”.²⁷ Regarding the personality of Mustapha, the writer associates laziness with Islam and Muslims who do not like work or do not need it, since they are born to pray as Bowles says through the words of Mustapha. Bowles asserts that Mustapha is, in addition to being uncivilized, irresponsible and there is “no democracy in his

life”²⁸ as if he is saying that rights and democracy do not exist in the Islamic world. As Said claims, “There has been so massive and calculatedly aggressive an attack on the contemporary societies of the Arab and Muslim for their backwardness and lack of democracy...”²⁹

In his analysis “The Twain Met: Paul Bowles’s Western and Arab Critics”, Ralf Coury claims that Bowles considers Mustapha and his friends unacceptable for the western norms in different ways.³⁰ First, Mustapha “does not believe in good and evil as we [Westerners] do”³¹. Second, he gives little attention to the social virtues of ‘democracy’³² and ‘civic responsibility’³³. So, Bowles says that Mustapha is inconvenient with his unsuitable behavior and his lack of responsibility. Bowles has formed certain thoughts about Mustapha and his activities. For him, Mustapha is contradicting himself; he believes in God but he does not obey him. Here, the author is just criticizing the Moroccans and their religion. In the same direction, Zoubida Hamdaoui quotes from what Kevin Lacey has said: “Bowles was also attacked on the essay “Mustapha and His Friends” in *Their Heads Are Green and Their Hands Are Blue* “[...] are portraying Moroccans and Muslims most generally as lying, thieving, scheming, manipulative, aggressive, and illogical...”³⁴. She adds that this fact has led to the omission of “Mustapha and His Friends” in the later edition of the book.³⁵ Actually, this emphasizes the idea we are advocating about Bowles’ Orientalist stance in his writing. If the essay was not Orientalist, he would not omit it. Instead, he could clarify any misunderstanding. In sum, Mustapha is not just an individual but a representative of the North African people who are not practicing religion.

Unlike Mustapha, Abdesslam is an illiterate good Muslim who practices Islamic instructions correctly. In Bosphorus, Abdesslam met the Muslims, but for him they are not good Muslims because they do not think of their religion appropriately. Therefore, Bowles

makes the Orientals criticize each other “you not good Moslems here. People not happy. You have bad government. Not like Egypt.... Egypt one hundred percent Moslem”.³⁶ The author tries to say that Muslims do have divergent views and each individual practices religion as he wishes. The geographical situation of Turkey may influence the Muslim community in a way or another in terms of practicing their religion properly.

In the same essay, when dealing with people, Bowles describes the Turkish as being idiots. Accordingly, his stance for “Othering” the Orientals is very obvious in his words, “the housekeeper who assures me calmly that all the other employees are idiots.”³⁷ Bowles here makes the Orientals curse each other by attributing them with clichés. However, when they move to the Eastern part of Turkey, Abdesslam finds himself at ease among the Eastern Turkey population, and he integrates himself easily in their mode of life. People in the region are good believers; they pray, and they do not eat pork or drink wine. So, he feels himself as if he is in his own country. Thus, this emphasizes the already stated idea that the western part of Turkey follows the Western lifestyle maybe because they are in the West.

Women Representation:

Mohamed Larbi is a Moroccan Muslim who has four step- mothers. The story of Larbi is with the fourth wife, who is the youngest. The story consists of the *tseuheur* that is the magic she practices in order to get rid of him. According to Bowles, the Muslim woman is ambivalent; she believes in God, but at the same time she does the banned things in religion such as the *tseuheur*. This idea of superstition is developed further in the last essay entitled “The Route to Tassemsit”. There, they encounter “the madman” Allal the Moroccan fowl who is mad because of a woman that practice magic on him. This story is just similar to the one of Larbi and his stepmother. Therefore, this emphasizes the fact that Bowles has a fixed idea about Oriental women. This is an Orientalist view, since he is associating magic with the

Muslim women. Like Orientalist writers, Bowles is providing false notions on the Orientals. Thus, the Orientalists offer the western audience false views about the Orient.

Indeed, all along the essays set in Morocco, Muslim women are represented betrayed believers; and this may be explained through their behavior with men. It is worth mentioning that women have their own places where to meet and discuss their affairs away from the masculine presence. In “Mustapha and his friends”, Bowles criticizes the vision of Islam towards women. Through the character of Yamina, it becomes obvious that Bowles tries to distort the image of the Orientals specifically Muslim women through the different practices such as smoking and the superstition of making *tseuheur*. Besides, Aicha, Yamina’s neighbor, seizes the opportunity of the absence of her husband to go out to “the street” toward Yamina’s house to see her new born.³⁸ This fact alludes to the fact that the Muslim woman unfaithful to her husband. If we consider that Aicha is the representative of Muslim females, the latter are portrayed as being childish and immature. This may help clarify Bowles’ Orientalist attitude. It is clearly explained in the passage where he describes the behavior of women when they are alone,

The behavior of a group of women together resembles that of the children of a classroom where the teacher has stepped outside for a moment. If a man’s voice is heard, conversation and giggling stop, and the ladies adopt a serious mien. When they think they are alone again, they go back to their joking and ribaldry,³⁹

It is important here to draw attention to the fact that many American writers provide the same Orientalist representations about the natives of the region. Edith Wharton, for instance, who has visited Morocco, has access to the Harem. Thus, she has witnessed the life inside the pure female society. In her novel entitled *In Morocco* (1920), she describes the Oriental women as uneducated; thus, ignorant, shy, dirty, and naïve. This is clarified in her declaration that: “... the great lady of Fazi [sic] palace is as ignorant of hygiene as the peasant woman in the *bled*”⁴⁰. This description emphasizes the dirtiness of the higher class society.

From this, we can understand that the Western writers, particularly Americans, share the same Orientalist portrayal about women in the Eastern region.

As opposed to his description of the Eastern women, when Bowles deals with the Western woman who lives in the Orient, he describes her as intelligent and well educated. This means that she can be independent and responsible. He states, “Today I had lunch with a woman who has lived here for a good many years. As a westerner she felt that the important thing to notice ... a ruthless dictatorship”⁴¹ this quotation focuses on the important role the western woman has in society, contrary to what he attributes to the Oriental woman.

Bowles does not recognize the fact that the matter of ethics and beliefs has nothing to do with the region where a person is born but his principles in life. Therefore, the attributed descriptions to the Muslim women to be nonbelievers and unfaithful can be applied on and associated any female in any region in the world not only the Arabs. These descriptions assist his Western audience to form a kind of cliché about these women. As Said puts it: “the Orientalist, poet or scholar, makes the Orient speak, describes the Orient, renders its mysteries plain for and to the West.”⁴² Bowles biased opinion about them is clear in the whole work, but the extreme disgust is shown in his declaration,

Every Moroccan male has a horror of tseuheur. Many of them, like Mohammed Larbi, will not eat any food to which a Moslem woman has had access beforehand, unless it is his mother or sister, or, if he really trusts her, his wife. But too often it is the wife for whom he must to be the most careful. She uses tseuheur to make him malleable and suggestible.⁴³

ii. Berbers

Said states that when an Easterner is mentioned that was in relation to his primitiveness and his inherited spiritual beliefs.⁴⁴ Berbers are said to be the original natives of the North African lands. They are illiterate people. According to Bowles, the Berbers are the ones who preserved their authentic music. He gives them the description of warlike men, since before the arrival of France they were fighting among themselves. Additionally, He states that in

opposition to the Muslim Arabs, in the Sahara it is the Berber man who is veiled rather than women. He considers that this fact of veiling men is an importance given to women. To analyze this point, we shall mention that the man in the desert is the one who goes out, so he needs to be protected more than the woman who stays at home.

It is worth mentioning that Bowles depicts the Tergui men as uneducated; this fact is clear in his declaration, “Touareg, [...] were unappreciative of ‘the civilizing mission’ of the Roman legions and decided to put thousands miles or more of desert between themselves and their educators”⁴⁵. In the same essay, we find Bowles’ description for the *Pères Blancs* who are the Christian missionary to the region of North Africa. He praises them by stressing their cleverness and high education, he advocates, “More extraordinary were the *Pères Blancs*, intelligent and well educated.”⁴⁶

Furthermore, the Berbers are mostly associated with dancing publicly in a certain manner. Bowles presents the Touareg as a dancing community, and this dancing turns them unaware “... I spent an entire night watching a dozen men dance themselves into unconscious beside a bonfire of palm branches.”⁴⁷ However, these dances may be interpreted as the rituals of the region so as to communicate or send letters to others. Additionally, Bowles mocks at the behavior of the inhabitants of the Sahara and their attitude toward a violent storm. In his writing, Bowles gives the impression that the Orientals are funny about the way they welcome a vicious tornado. This is what the Orientalists do most of the time; they direct their attention to the rituals and the specific characteristics of the Orientals to define them. Bowles in the essay entitled “Baptism of Solitude” declares,

Its [Tornado] arrival is an event that calls for celebration-drumming, dancing, firing of guns. The storms are violent and unpredictable. Considering their disastrous effect, one wonders that the people can welcome them with such unmixed emotions. Enormous walls of water rush down the dry river beds, pushing everything before them, often the walls themselves. A prolonged rain would destroy every town in the Sahara, since the *tob*, of which everything is built, is softer than our adobe.⁴⁸

Bowles' knowledge about the Touareg rituals and customs gives him the power to represent them and to discuss their worthiness or unworthiness in a humorous way; this is done through the satire on their different rituals. Therefore, he minimizes the region's customs. In this context, Said believes that the Orientalist writer aims to capture all the details about the Oriental,

[...] as *they* [Easterners] spoke and behaved, he [the writer] observed and wrote down. His power was to have existed amongst them as a native speaker, as it were, and also as a secret writer. And what he wrote was intended as useful knowledge, not for them, but for Europe and its various disseminative institutions.⁴⁹

Berber Females' Representation

In his reference to the Berber women, Bowles attributes these women with particular aspects. He states that they can dance and sing publically in the different ceremonies with masculine presence, contrary to the Muslim ones who are kept at home, "In other places the dance is similar to the Berber *Ahouache* of the Moroccan Atlas. The participants form a great circle holding hands, women alternating with men; [...] there has been a woman in the center with her head and neck hidden by a cloth. She sings and dances..."⁵⁰ These women, in fact, are basically depicted illiterate and naïve. This is obvious through the different representative figures in the collection. It is worth noting that the Berber females have no names. Bowles deals with them in a broad way. Therefore, the position of women is not important even if it can be noticed that the author is more sympathizing with Berber women rather than Arab ones.

The more stereotypical passage about the Berber women can be noticed in the essay of “Baptism of Solitude”. Bowles provides a detailed description of the inhabitants of the Desert. According to him, the immaturity and the rituals of Tergui society makes women think that, on the one hand, a widow should stay faithful to her husband, since unfaithfulness for them is when a woman remarries another man. On the other hand, the married women who have their husbands somewhere have the right to go to the cemetery at night in all their beauty to ask for news about their absent husbands from the spirits of their ancestors. He explains it saying,

The wives of the absent men remained faithful to their husbands, the strict Tergui moral code recommending death as a punishment for infidelity. However a married woman whose husband was away was free to go at night to the graveyard dressed in her finest apparel, lie on the tombstone of one of her ancestors, and invoke a certain spirit called Idenbi, [...] he gave her news of her husband;⁵¹

He concludes, “The Touareg Women, being very clever, always managed to bring back news of their husbands from the cemetery”.⁵² The author, in this statement, gives an Orientalist kind of prejudice. His claim that the Tergui women are “very clever” has just an ironical and satirical meaning that those women are so naïve and believe in the spirits’ power to know about the absent and the unknown.

The Far Eastern Characters

In “Fish Traps and Private Business” Bowles is present when Mrs. Murrow’s son with his Senegalese wife rendered visit to the family. Mrs. Murrow has refused the marriage of her son with the Senegalese many times because the woman is neither from the same race nor from the same social class. Therefore, this may clarify the racist attitude of the mother towards her daughter-in-law; thus, she perceives her as “other”. Bowles, by stating that, wants to declare that even the natives alienate the ones they consider inferior to their social and cultural group. This may be considered as his explanation of what the Westerners do in the Orient, endorsing the idea of subjection among the Orientals.

In the same essay, we find the description of the Ceylonese servants described as animals and thieves. These portrayals make the readers of the essay feel deeply the Orientalist discourse that underestimates the Non- Europeans. As quoted in *Their Heads Are Green and Their Hands Are Blue*, Greg Bevan makes reference to the Ceylonese servants “the Ceylonese servants are known to steal the dogs dinner not out of hunger, [...], but because ‘they like the dogs food better than their own’”⁵³. We can deduce from this statement a certain satire; Bowles is manipulating words in order to convince the American audience about his sympathy towards the natives. This mock can be explained through Bevan’s clarification of the servants’ act as their [the servants] preference of the dog’s food rather than theirs, knowing that this cannot happen unless the food is good. However, our interpretation leads to another meaning that is composed of Bowles prejudiced view about the Non-Europeans as thieves since they steal food. Accordingly, the servants do not eat the same food as the others. Maybe it is much less tasteful, so they find the food of the dogs more delicious than theirs. This can be interpreted as a way of domination. Speaking about domination, Said has made reference to Antonio Gramsci’s concept of “hegemony”, in our case; it is cultural hegemony meaning the cultural leadership and authority which is practiced over the servant after her act of taking the dog’s food. This makes us notice the servant’s submission. Said states, “The other feature of Oriental-European relations was that Europe was always in a position of strength.”⁵⁴

In the essay “Notes Mailed at Nagercoil”, Bowles deals with the different Hindu rituals in a trivial way. It can be understood that it is a kind of satire on the ancient beliefs of the Indians. However, the West ignores the fact that these convictions contribute mainly in conducting the natives’ lives, “I hazard the remark that the weather is extremely hot. [...] but it did not please the postmaster all. Deliberately he removed his glasses and pointed the stems at me. ‘Here we have the perfect climate’”⁵⁵, Bowles here portrays the Indians as naïve and

violent. Edward said states the view of Mill the officer in the India office functionary, "... because the Indians were civilizationally, if not racially, inferior."⁵⁶ This maintains the idea that the West considers the Non-Westerners ethnically different and subordinate to the West. He tells the story of the student who wrote an essay about the cow and his extraordinary descriptions of it. In addition, Bowles refers to the cow worship that is a typical tradition to the Indian region. Therefore, the cow can do what it wants and goes where it wants to; no one has the right to stop or disturb it because the cow is considered as a sacred animal in the Indian traditions. Besides, Bowles associates irresponsibility towards the early cultural practices with the young Indian generations, since according to him, they tend to forget or reject the ancient cultural heritage as Hinduism. But, in later passages, Bowles contradicts himself. On the one hand, he speaks about the immaturity of the Indian youth, since they reject their culture, but on the other hand, he mocks at them because of their respect for cow worship. So, for Bowles, the new generation is not different from the ancestry. He states,

But these youths who found it so necessary to ridicule poor Subramaniam failed to understand why I laughed when, the conversation changing to the subject of cows, I watched their collective expression swiftly change to one of respect bordering on beatitude. For cow worship one facet of popular Hinduism which has not yet been suppressed in the twentieth-century faithlessness.⁵⁷

Therefore, it is expected from Bowles to understand that the cow worship is just a ritual which describes a specific cultural practice such as any other ritual in other places in the world. By cultural practice, we mean the different traditions, customs, and beliefs that are inherited from the old generations of any group in a given society. Orientalism as a tradition is made not just to represent the Orientals in the West, but rather to minimize and alienate them from being human beings, and thus to give them the characteristics of animals, as primitive and naïve. Accordingly, Bowles and the west in general make investigations about the cultural background of the Eastern part of the world to create their own culture. In fact,

Bowles does not recognize the value of those beliefs in the life of the natives that may be considered as lessons from their ancestors and as a cultural heritage to be protected.

It is necessary to add that those who believe that Bowles is not an Orientalist are just misled by Bowles' use of some Maghrebi words to defend his Non-Orientalist view. On the one hand, Brian Edwards states that Bowles' use of the Arabic dialect aims to disturb the western readership since these words are not translated, and according to the same author Bowles by inserting Arabic words is interrupting the American project of reordering the American identity.⁵⁸ On the other hand, from the interview of Elghandor, Bowles declares that he has no intention to be read by the Arabs because they are not to appreciate what is put in them. Thus, it is confusing; if he does not have the Arabs as an audience in mind, then, by the insertion of Arabic Language Bowles aims to focus on or to show his "othering" stance not to disturb the western audience.

Therefore, we can join Abedlhak Elghandor in his claiming that Bowles is an Orientalist. He has interviewed Bowles in 1993 and asked him some significant questions about his writings. Through the interview, Bowles tries to distance himself from the Orientalist stance in his writings, and he pretends that he ignores about Orientalism and its meaning. The reader of the interview feels a kind of fear in the words of Bowles especially from the Moroccan intellectuals. In this context, Bowles clarifies,

Elghandor: How would you like the North African people to judge you?

Bowles: Judge me? [Laughs]. Well, I would like to be invisible to them. I'd like that they know nothing about me whatever. I've also tried to stay away from educated Moroccans. I know they'll have that reaction. So, why should I bother about them?

Elghandor: What advice would you give to a Moroccan reader who is about to read your fiction and non-fiction for the first time?

Bowles: I would tell him not to read it.

Elghandor: Why is that?

Bowles: Because he won't like it; he will object to it, of course. If he wants to read something that he will object to, that's his privilege, but I would not advise it.⁵⁹

If Bowles was just giving objective descriptions about the Orient, he would never use such expressions to mean that the Moroccans are not welcome to read his works written about them. This emphasizes our already stated claim that Bowles is an Orientalist. He wants to stay hidden from the Eastern people. So, he misrepresents the ones who have given him shelter and trusted him.

Endnotes

²¹ Said, Introduction to *Orientalism*, XXI.

²² Said, *Orientalism*, 41.

²³ Abedlhak Elghandor, "Atavism and Civilization: An Interview with Paul Bowles" (*Ariel: An Interview For International English Literature*, 1994), 8.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 3-4.

²⁵ Fred Moramarco, "Imagine All That History": in *America and the Mediterranean* (Torino: Otto editore, 2003), 45.

²⁶ Said, *Orientalism*, 172.

²⁷ Paul Bowles, "Mustapha and his Friends", in *Their Heads Are Green and Their Hands are Blue: Scenes from the Non-Christian World* (Random House, 1963), 55.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 56.

²⁹ Said, Introduction to *Orientalism*, XV.

³⁰ Ralph Coury, "The Twain Met: Paul Bowles's Western and Arab Critics", 124.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² *Ibid.*

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ Zoubida Hamdaoui, "Themes and Storytelling Strategies in Paul Bowles's North African Fiction", 28.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 28.

³⁶ Bowles, "A Man Must not Be Very Moslem", in *Their Heads Are Green and Their Hands Are Blue: Scenes from the Non-Christian World* (Random House, 1963), 73.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 82.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 65.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ Edith Wharton, *In Morocco* (USA: Cornel University, 1920), 193.

- ⁴¹ Bowles, “A Man Must Not Be Very Moslem”, in *Their Heads are Green and their Hands are Blue*, 84.
- ⁴² Said, *Orientalism*, 21-22.
- ⁴³ Bowles, “The Rif to Music”, in *Their Heads Are Green And Their Hands Are Blue: Scenes from the Non-Christian World*, 121.
- ⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 120.
- ⁴⁵ Bowles, “Baptism of Solitude” in *Their Heads are Green and their Hands are Blue: Scenes from the Non-Christian World* (Random House, 1963), 143.
- ⁴⁶ Bowles, “Baptism of Solitude”, 136.
- ⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 141.
- ⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 145.
- ⁴⁹ Said, 160-161.
- ⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 141-142.
- ⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 143.
- ⁵² *Ibid.*
- ⁵³ Bevan. “Orientalist on Trial: The Evidence of Paul Bowles Travels”, 22.
- ⁵⁴ Said, *Orientalism*, 41.
- ⁵⁵ Bowles, “Notes Mailed at Nagercoil” in *Their Heads Are Green And Their Hands Are Blue: Scenes from the Non-Christian World* (New York: Random House, 1963), 47.
- ⁵⁶ Said, *Orientalism*, 15.
- ⁵⁷ Bowles, “Notes Mailed at Nagercoil”, 50.
- ⁵⁸ Brian T Edwards, *Sheltering Screens: Paul Bowles and Foreign Relations*, 324.
- ⁵⁹ Elghandor, “Atavism and Civilization”, 27.

Chapter Two: Exoticism in *Their Heads Are Green and Their Hands*

Are Blue (1963)

In this chapter, we intend to deal with the different perceptions that Bowles provides about the North African and the Far Eastern lands and their different rituals in his collection of essays. These views reveal Bowles's stereotypes in the description of the geographical areas including: Sahara, Tangier and India. According to Edward Said, the West is making imaginative geographical boundaries between "the self" representing the West and "the other" representing the East. He claims, "For there is no doubt that imaginative geography and history help the mind to intensify its own sense of itself by dramatizing the distance and difference between what is close to it and what is far away"⁵⁹. Indeed, the word "exotic" first emerged in the accounts of French literature when François Rabelais employs the adjective *exotique* to depict imported commodities in his *Quart Livre et Faictes et dicts Heroiques du bon Pantagruel* (1552), "Because Adoncques harbored, yet contemplating, those procuring fresh water, diverse paintings, diverse tapestries, diverse animals, fish, bird, & [and] other exotic merchandise"⁶⁰.

According to Said, the Westerners have distinguished themselves from the Easterners through criticizing the natives' behavior, ideas and their life style. He illustrates,

It is necessary to examine the more flamboyant operational successes of Orientalism if only to judge how exactly wrong (and how totally opposite to the truth) was the grandly menacing idea expressed by Michelet, that "the Orient advances, invincible, fatal to the gods of light by the charm of its dreams, by the magic of its chiaroscuro."⁶¹

The term Exoticism can be identified with multiple definitions. To begin with, Kristy Riggs notes that Ralph Locke and other scholars have defined the word as an "imitation and borrowing of elements in the alien cultures"⁶². It may be understood that these scholars wanted to incorporate the foreign cultural elements to their own. Then, according to Josiah Raiche, [...], exoticism is the calling to remember distance.⁶³ This signifies an established

sense of communication the composer evokes to the listener of the music. And this fact may be linked to one of the reasons Bowles journeys to the East; that is his search for authentic music.

Furthermore, Indira Levy advocates that it is a style that shows clearly otherness and primitive past. She argues, “ In its Broadest sense, exoticism is a mode of experiencing and manifesting otherness, how we define the term beyond this point will affect how we apprehend difference, self and other, and the kinds of exchange that take place between the two.”⁶⁴ This fact, according to her, may contribute in the shaping of the future dealings of questioning exoticism with neglect of its roots. We can understand that exoticism is created through the meeting of “the self” and the “other”.

As a matter of fact, the geographical area gives Bowles motivation to write more about the fascinating Morocco and its culture. Therefore, he creates to his readers an idea about the atmosphere of the Eastern countries and their strange rituals and eccentric cultures. He travels almost all Moroccan regions including Tangier, Sahara, and Marrakech where he learned more about the different dialects and Islam. In doing so, Bowles’ representation of the Orient and its landscapes are characterized by an Orientalist vision toward the alienated countries.

Bowles has an important role in informing the Americans about Morocco and its culture. In fact, he is considered as a “touchstone for American presence in North Africa”⁶⁵ because through his writing, the Americans have access to read and learn more about the North African unknown places, rituals, languages and dialects. Brian Edwards writes, “Morocco and the name Paul Bowles are inseparable; Bowles himself had played a large part in teaching Americans how to think about Morocco”⁶⁶. It is acknowledged that Bowles is associated with Morocco and remained as a main source about the strange place, bizarre rituals, primitive culture and people’s backwardness.

In addition, Bowles declares that Morocco is a country of “dark”, “narrow”, “desert”⁶⁷ streets and “secretiveness architecture”⁶⁸. Here, Bowles focuses on the country’s buildings that can be considered as unusual for him. Throughout his representation, the reader cannot escape the impression that Moroccan cities are different from the Western ones because they are mysterious, disorganized, wild and also characterized with furtive design to keep women isolated from the outside. Furthermore, Bowles is very familiar with the themes that are related to backwardness, primitiveness and “otherness” as Edwards mentions, “The very themes that drew many American readers to Bowles’s work-especially magic, danger, and the primitive- were the themes that frustrated Moroccans”⁶⁹. This fact can explain his biased attitude about the Orient. Therefore, Bowles associates the Non-Christian lands with danger, magic and at the same time amazement. These feelings are the result of the strangeness and his confusion about the landscapes.

The Representation of the North-African Lands

a Tangier

Tangier or “Tinigi”, the Berber name, is the main city in Northern Morocco. It is situated in the North African coast at the Western entrance to the Gibraltar Strait where the Mediterranean Sea meets the Atlantic Ocean. Indeed, Tangier is alleged as an open door of Europe to the African continent. In 1906, the European authority determined that France and Spain would take control over Morocco, and since the nineteenth century, an international administration was set in Tangier in order to supervise public works.

Bowles had visited Tangier in August 1931 with his friend and music trainer Aaron Copland when he accepted the advice of Mrs. Stein who told him, “You don’t want to go to villefranche. Everybody’s there. And St. Jean-de –Luz is empty and with an awful climate. The place you should go is Tangier”⁷⁰. Bowles did not have the idea that Tangier would be more than a place like other places where he attains to relax and to spend a summer holiday.

However, it turns to be the place which attracted him to spend most of his adult life and become his eternal home until his death in 1999.

In fact, Bowles admires the place at the first glance and in *Without Stopping* (1972) he describes it as “a dream city”⁷¹. He declares that he seeks diversity and not similarity and Tangier with its traditional society provides him with a strange culture and religion with the main ingredients to start his writing. This is what explains his vision about Tangier. He says,

Each time I go to a place I have not seen before, I hope it will be as different as possible from the places I already know. I assume it is natural for a traveler to seek diversity, and that it is the human element which makes him most aware of difference. If people and their manner of living were alike everywhere, there would not be much point in moving from one place to another.⁷²

In “High Price of Solitude”, Edmund White claims that Bowles made Tangier his home and he becomes fascinated and allured to the place from the first sight but his attitudes toward it wavers when he depicts its landscapes. So, Bowles is vacillated between admiration and contempt. As it is shown in his declaration, “Its topography was rich in prototypical dream scenes [...] streets consisting only of steps, dark impasses, small squares built on sloping terrain so that they looked like ballet sets designed in false perspective.”⁷³

Bowles pays more attention to Tangier’s topography; this is what led him to be an Orientalist in his description of its exotic surface features. The town reminds Bowles more about his childhood toys “a playing house”⁷⁴ in recounting the details of the city. He makes Tangier’s houses and streets miniaturized “like corridors with doors opening into rooms on each side, hidden terraces high above the sea”⁷⁵.

In “Orientalist on Trial”, Greg Bevan argues that Bowles is commonly connected with the idea of colonialism in his portrayal of Tangier. The image that Bowles draws about the city’s streets, buildings and rooms prove the vision of the Westerners about North Africa and he illustrates his statement with what Greg Mullins expresses,

Paul Bowles' authorial persona continues to be associated with a bygone era of colonial privilege enjoyed in the midst of Islamic calls to prayer, ancient whitewash buildings, and narrow, dark, mysterious streets. Bowles's enduring popularity owes a great deal to not only his association with idealized world but also the loss of this world in post-colonial era. In short, Paul Bowles is widely associated with nostalgia for colonialism⁷⁶.

b Marrakech

Marrakech is one of the main cities of Morocco. In describing it, in the essay entitled "The Route to Tassemsit" Bowles declares that it is a city of great expanses and "flat as a table"⁷⁷ and it does not appear as any Western city, therefore a glamorous place. As he explains, "it looks not unlike one of our own Western cities"⁷⁸. However, Bowles adds his description of the streets that are badly lit and have "dim passageways"⁷⁹, because it seems too gloomy at night. He includes that the whole city is painted with a crimson earth. When he states, "[...] the whole city, painted with a wash made of the pink earth on which it rests, glow red in the cataclysmic light"⁸⁰. Bowles is disappointed by the buildings' walls that are covered by dust, since it is made by mud. As he affirms in, "In order to be really present, you must have your feet in the dust, and be aware of the hot, dusty smell of the mud walls besides your face"⁸¹. From this quotation, we notice the unfamiliar attitude of Bowles toward the unknown through his word choice. Thus, the readers of his works may recognize strangeness, foreignness and at the same time fear about the natives' weird way of life.

In addition, in his visit to the apothecary market which is the "place you visit if you want the ingredients for marking black magic"⁸². He describes Marrakech's society as a one that believes in the devil and magic; thus, Bowles is very suspicious about the different substances and animals' dried parts that are sold in this place by saying, "we wandered slowly by, examining the horns, quills, hair, eggs, bones, feathers, feet and bills that were strung on wires in the doorways"⁸³.

c Algeria

Bowles traveled almost all Algerian cities including Tassemsilt, Leghouat and Tlemcen and Tizi-Ouzou. His inclination to be acquainted with Berber culture led him to visit the Berber societies as he states, “[...] I went all over, many times [...] and Algeria [...] until 1954, I began at Tiziouzou”⁸⁴, and he explains that the Berber villages are “sit astride the long spines of the lesser range”⁸⁵. Therefore, Bowles was fascinated with the Berber community and the way people cultivate in their valleys as he writes, “The men and women file down the zigzagging paths to cultivate the rich valleys below”⁸⁶. In the essay “Africa Minor”, on the one hand, Bowles argues that Algeria is wild with inspiring and rousing scenes. On the other hand, he claims that Algiers’ municipalities are not attractive and it is better for a visitor to move from one place to another when he visits Algeria because its cities are unpleasant to see, but the countryside is inspiring⁸⁷.

In describing the flavors, Bowles states that being a Mediterranean country, Algeria has diverse seasons as winter and summer. Through his descriptions, it is noticeable that Bowles tripped to Algeria throughout all the seasons. Besides, about winter he declares that there are nonentity fixations to discover or to see except snow on all surfaces. As he states, “[...] you can go all day and see nothing but flat stretches of snow on all sides, unrelieved by trees in the foreground or by mountains in the distance”⁸⁸. He assumes that the country in winter is motionless and desert like place.

Moving to his description of summer, Bowles, as an American, dislikes this season in the country. He associates it with cruelty, burning and grimy in its wild territories. In his visit to Algeria, Bowles affirms, “In the summer these same desolate lands are cruelly hot, and the wind swirls the dust [...] from one side of the empty horizon to the other”⁸⁹. However, he ignores the fact that Algeria is exposed to the Mediterranean Sea that uphold it to have a warm and a flexible climate. All these descriptions are the signs of his astonishment and the feeling of oddity, this makes otherness reappear recurrently.

d Sahara

In “Baptism of Solitude”, Bowles associates the Sahara landscapes with the “absolute”⁹⁰ willing to describe the infinite and the immensity of the region. He also means that a complete silence enfolds the town. He affirms that there is no action that can be noticeable, even in the active spaces, since there is no one to produce any sound and “An incredible, absolute silence prevails outside the towns”⁹¹. He claims, “and within, even in the busy places like the markets, there is a hushed quality in the air”⁹². This may be interpreted by the distant positioned tribes. Through his portrayals, the reader can notice easily how the Sahara is vast and its inhabitants live far from each other and they are known as nomads. Furthermore, Bowles fascination about the Sahara is expressed through his view of the sunset in the place. This is obviously stated in the following passage,

At sunset, the precise, curved shadow of the earth rises into it swiftly from the horizon, cutting it into light section and dark section. When all daylight is gone, and the space is thick with stars, it is still of an intense and burning blue, darkest directly overhead and paling toward the earth, so that the night never really grows dark⁹³.

Bowles includes the European view of the Sahara before the Algerian War of Independence. For him, it is the raw materials that attract the westerners in the region rather than its beauty. Bowles associates the Sahara with “wilderness” and “darkness” and he explains that thanks to the armed forces in the Sahara, someone can find his right way “the military and their aides were friendly men, agreeable to be with, interested in showing visitors everything worth seeing in their districts”⁹⁴. According to him, the French military presence in the region represents a guiding map for tourists. Nevertheless, these military forces are set there in order to prevent any military assistance from a neighboring country.

Like all Orientalists, Bowles is wavering between admiration and contempt. On the one side, he esteems the horizon, the oases and the large areas “There are plains, hills, valleys, gorges, rolling lands, rocky peaks and volcanic craters [...] nothing to vary the implacable

line of the horizon in all sides”⁹⁵. He assumes that the majority of the Sahara’s inhabitants are Berbers not the Arabs who, in his opinion, represent an obstacle for the development of these territories. On the other side, He puts focus on the oases’ dates that are still cultivated in the traditional ways, “When the Arabs arrived in Africa twelve centuries ago, and they began a project of land reclamation, which if the Europeans continue with the aid of modern machinery, will transform much of the Sahara into a great, fertile garden”⁹⁶. The latter, may illustrate Bowles’ Orientalist stance in describing the natives’ primitiveness.

The Representation of the Other Oriental Lands

i India

Arriving to India, Bowles seeks to discover the unknown regions, cultures and the authenticity and the strangeness of the native people. In fact, Bowles has a high interest in music, since he is a well-known composer. Meanwhile, he describes the different aspects there; his writing is not free from stereotypes and negative features as it is the case with South India and Ceylon.

In “Notes Mailed at Nagercoil”, Bowles claims that his first visit to India was in 1952 through Dhanushkodi “The first time I ever saw India I entered it through Dhanushkodi”⁹⁷. He describes his trip there through showing his happiness when he finds himself in a village rather than a town. Bowles states: “it is better to go to the village of a strange land before trying to understand its town, above all in a complex place like India”⁹⁸. This signifies Bowles’s determination to know more about the exotic that is available and preserved more in the villages.

Bowles’s portrayal of the Indian towns is characterized by pessimistic features. For him, the Indian towns are made from dust and cow’s dung in the streets. India, as Bowles states, is an underdeveloped country that lacks many important elements to welcome tourists. It contains few hotels “If you have not taken the precaution of reserving a room in advance”⁹⁹.

He adds, “You risk having considerable difficulty in finding one when you land in Bombay. There are few hotels, and the two or three comfortable ones are always full”¹⁰⁰. In addition, Bowles’ depiction of the Indians seems to be a satire. Through his representation, we feel that he uses irony and sarcasm in his narration about the Orient,

At night, however, sleepers who had arrived late and brought their own mats with them occupied every square foot of floor space in the dark corridors; the hotel was able in this way to shelter several hundred extra guests each night. Having their hands and feet kicked and trodden on was apparently a familiar enough experience to them for them never to make any audible objection when the inevitable happened.¹⁰¹

Concerning religion, he states that the Indians have divergent religions as Islam, Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism and they believe in many Gods like cows and snakes and all these facets make the Indian culture rich, different and strange to the Europeans. Therefore, the claim of the authentic mythic land is emphasized. This diversity makes the Westerners raise an enormous sense of “otherness” towards the natives. Bowles suggests that the strange rituals prove the backwardness of the Indians, since they believe in many things and they try each time to preserve these facets. In Bowles’ opinion, these rituals turn somebody’s mind rearward. Next, Bowles, most of the time, is mocking on these rituals.

ii Ceylon

Ceylon or Sri Lanka is an Island in south Asia. It is a country that is perceived as a centre of the Buddhist religion and contains cultures from ancient times. Bowles is very attracted by these Far Eastern cultures to the extent that he buys an island in Ceylon. In the essay of “Fish Traps and Private Business”, Bowles criticizes the bad services of the house rest there. He declares that any Western tourist in most of the towns would never find what he seeks in a hotel in Ceylon because it lacks many important things “the house is in complete darkness save for the small oil lamps on the shelves in the bathrooms[...] The windows have no glass-only curtains of very thin silk”¹⁰². However, Bowles has not paid attention to the fact

that Ceylon at that time is a dominion. The loveliness of the place is mostly balanced by Bowles report of an unbearable heat and dampness of the region that combines with continual groups of mosquitoes. He says that this situation makes one's night miserable "the nights seem endless; perhaps because I lie awake listening to the unfamiliar sounds made by the insects, birds and reptiles"¹⁰³. The use of the word unfamiliar here refers to exoticism.

Despite of the fact that this part focuses on the exotic portrayal of the Non-Western landscape, but Bowles, throughout his work, associates exoticism to the Oriental culture and its people's behavior. This is made through the different othering signs he explores in the core of *Their Heads Are Green and their Hands Are Blue* in order to demonstrate the weird descriptions about the Orientals' life.

iii Turkey

In 1953, Bowles has visited Turkey and many of its main cities as Istanbul, Karakoy and Sirkeci. Throughout "A Man Must Not Be Very Moslem" Bowles narrates his journey there. On the one hand, Bowles asserts that the early impression of any tourist to Istanbul is its remarkable sight because of "the perfect hoop of a rainbow painted across the lead-colored sky ahead kept one from looking at the depressing array of factory smokestacks along the Western shore"¹⁰⁴. On the other hand, he describes the place as a dirty because of the Western industry. Further, Bowles associates the Non-Western world with "darkness", "infertility" and "primitiveness". This is clear when referring to the taxis' park as gloomy "The taxis were parked in the dark on the far side of a vast puddle of water"¹⁰⁵.

In *Orientalism* (1978), Said argues that the Orientalists define the Orient by setting it as a different geographical area as he states, "geography is an important key for the Westerners to distinguish the features that define the Orient"¹⁰⁶. In describing Istanbul, Bowles is wavering between the attractive town as a "jolly place"¹⁰⁷ and hideous one as "dark", "dirty" and "black". Thus, we deduce that Bowles is contradicting himself in giving

such confusing descriptions that is an effect of exoticism. In fact, the image that Bowles associates with Istanbul reflects his Orientalist position toward the Oriental countries. He describes the city's streets as "dark road"¹⁰⁸, "the streets are narrow, crooked and precipitous"¹⁰⁹ and its minarets as black and unnecessary. He says, "we were close enough to see the needles of the minarets (and how many of them!) in black against the final flare-up of the sunset"¹¹⁰.

Indeed, Bowles explains that Istanbul's buildings are built with either a stone or wood, which looked very aged, as they have never been painted and the notion of disorder is an important visual element in Istanbul. He states,

The cupolas and minarets rise above the disordered of the city like huge gray fungi growing out of a vast pile of ashes. [...] it is not slovenly-only untidy; not dirty-merely dingy and drab. And just as you cannot claim it to be a beautiful city, neither can you accuse it of being uninteresting¹¹¹.

Karakoy is the second Turkish city that Bowles has visited. There, he describes the ports and its thousand Turkish rowing boats and "tugs, freighters and ferries"¹¹². According to him, the streets are narrower and the buildings are older, next you start recognizing the fact of being still in an Eastern town¹¹³. Through this, we deduce Bowles' satirical representation of the oriental cities. Besides, he discovers the *Souks* by accident, since he does not follow any plan in his journey. For him, the *Souks* are "all in one vast anthill of a building, a city within a city whose avenues and streets, some wide, some narrow, are like the twisting hallways of a dream"¹¹⁴. This sentence introduces a simile that lies in the description he gives to the *souks* when he portrays them as anthills that "are like the twisting hallways of a dream"¹¹⁵. Furthermore, Bowles dislikes the quality of services in both the hotel and restaurant of the city. He is displeased with the food and the way they prepare it "in the glare of the fluorescent lighting the food looks pallid and untempting [sic], particularly the meat, which has been hacked into unfamiliar-looking cuts"¹¹⁶.

Endnotes

⁵⁹ Said, *Orientalism*, 56.

⁶⁰ Anita White Robin, “19th Century And 20th Century French Exoticism: Pierre Loti, Louis-Ferdinand Celine, Michel Leiris, And Simone Schwarz-Bart” (PhD diss., Louisiana State University, 2004), 3.

⁶¹ Said, *Orientalism*, 73-74.

⁶² Kristy Riggs, *Ralf Locke: Musical Exoticism: images and reflections* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 118.

⁶³ Josiah Raiche, *Romantic Exoticism the Music of Elsewhere in the Nineteenth Century* (Senior Thesis, Liberty University, 2013), 6.

⁶⁴ Indira Levy, *Sirens of the Western Shore: The Westernesque Femme Fatale, translation and Vernacular style in Modern Japanese Literature* (New York: Columbia University, 1893), 1.

⁶⁵ Brian. T Edwards, “The Worlds of Paul Bowles” (USA: University Press, 2007), 2.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Bowles, “Africa Minor”, 21.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Paul Bowles, “The High Price of Solitude”, xi.

⁷¹ Ibid., xii.

⁷² Bowles, forward to *Their Heads are Green And Their Hands Are Blue: Scenes From The Non-Christian World*, xxi.

⁷³ Bowles, “The High Price of Solitude”, xii.

⁷⁴ Bouchra Benlemlih, “Inhabited the Exotic: Paul Bowles and Morocco” (PhD diss., the University of Nottingham, 2009), 139.

⁷⁵ Bowles, “The High Price of Solitude”, xiv.

⁷⁶ Bevan Greg, *Orientalist on Trial: The Evidence of Paul Bowles’ Travels*, 6.

⁷⁷ Paul Bowles, “The Route to Tassemsit” in *Their Heads are Green And Their Hands Are Blue: Scenes from the Non- Christian World* (New York: Random House, 1963), 164.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 165.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Ibid., 168.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Elghandor, “Atavism and Civilization: An Interview with Paul Bowles”, 16.

- ⁸⁵ Bowles, “Africa Minor”, 34.
- ⁸⁶ Ibid.
- ⁸⁷ Paul Bowles, “Africa Minor”, 33.
- ⁸⁸ Ibid.
- ⁸⁹ Ibid., 33-34.
- ⁹⁰ Bowles, “Baptism of Solitude”, 133.
- ⁹¹ Ibid.
- ⁹² Ibid,133.
- ⁹³ Ibid.
- ⁹⁴ Ibid., 135.
- ⁹⁵ Ibid., 137.
- ⁹⁶ Ibid., 138.
- ⁹⁷ Paul Bowles, “Notes Mailed at Nagercoil”, 39.
- ⁹⁸ Ibid.
- ⁹⁹ Ibid.
- ¹⁰⁰ Ibid.
- ¹⁰¹ Ibid.
- ¹⁰² Bowles, “Fish Traps and Private Business”, 2.
- ¹⁰³ Ibid.
- ¹⁰⁴ Bowles, “A Man Must Not Be Very Moslem”, 71.
- ¹⁰⁵ Ibid.
- ¹⁰⁶ Said, *Orientalism*, 216.
- ¹⁰⁷ Bowles, “A Man Must Not Be Very Moslem”, 77.
- ¹⁰⁸ Ibid.,72.
- ¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 76.
- ¹¹⁰ Ibid.,,71.
- ¹¹¹ Ibid.,79.
- ¹¹² Ibid.,78.
- ¹¹³ Ibid., 78-79.
- ¹¹⁴ Ibid.,86.
- ¹¹⁵ Ibid.
- ¹¹⁶ Ibid.,81.

Chapter Three: Bowles and “Western Superiority”

In this chapter, we intend to deal with the idea of Western superiority in Paul Bowles' collected essays. This idea, in fact, is mainly related to the aspects of identity, religion and culture. Indeed, in *Their Heads Are Green and Their Hands Are Blue* Bowles reinforces the Western belief of superiority over the Orient. For more analysis, it is important to examine Bowles' collected essays and some of his statements taking into consideration his beliefs about the East and the Orientals' lifestyle as a manner of exploring his adopted attitudes towards them.

It is worth stating that “The Occident” versus “the Orient” is more or less the everlasting dichotomy that creates many differences among the globe's nations. Said believes that the construction of identity is based on the western creation of opposites; thus, making the Orientals alienated and subject to “interpretation and re-interpretation”. He adds that each era produces its “others”.¹²¹ Consequently, the West describes the East as weak; this makes the Western powers the legitimate representative of the region. This can be explained by reference to Karl Marx's claim that the Orient cannot represent itself, and it must be represented¹²². This belief aims to and results in the exclusion of the East from the worthiness of Civilization. As postcolonial theory suggests, the Westerners consider themselves as being the center, while the Orientals are the periphery. Therefore, the Orientals depend on the Western evolution; thus, they need to be civilized and guided by the West. We find the declaration Bowles makes about Tangier in his interview with Abedlhak Elghandor as the most pertinent instance on the superiority position he takes about the place, “I don't know. You see, I've never considered I'd live in Morocco. Tangier is not part of Morocco. It's international.”¹²³

a. Identity

Concerning the concept of identity, according to James Fearon, identity has two senses. The first one refers to social categories and to the origins of an individual's "Self-respect" or dignity. Thus, identity as Fearon defines it, may be defined as "social" and "personal". In its former sense, "identity" refers basically to a social category which is a set of rules, characteristics and features that distinguish a social group from another. In its second sense, personal identity is some distinguishing characteristics that a person holds "as socially consequential but more-or-less unchangeable"¹²⁴ The West classifies itself in a superior position in terms of identity. Said sees the identity superiority as follows,

collective notion identifying "us" Europeans as against all "those" non-Europeans, and indeed it can be argued that the major component in European culture is precisely [sic] what made that culture hegemonic both in and outside Europe: "the idea of European identity as a superior one in comparison with all the non-European peoples and cultures. There is in addition the hegemony of European ideas about the Orient, themselves reiterating European superiority over Oriental backwardness"¹²⁵.

The concept of identity has multiple definitions or dimensions such as the social and the national identity. Socially speaking, the Oxford dictionary defines it as "the difference or character that marks off an individual from the rest."¹²⁶ This means the nature that can distinguish an individual from the other. Shifting to the national identity, it can be considered as the person's sense of belonging to a particular nation or state. Identity, then, can be identified as the typical features that offer the sense of belonging to an individual or share with all the members of a particular social group.¹²⁷ This signifies that to be a Berber is a characteristic a person shares with others in his same category, and to be a Hindu constitutes a sense of belonging to the Hindu community.

Hence, to be an Oriental, is to belong to a particular nation or religion that is different from the Occident. National identity can be explained as the people's relation with their

nations or countries and it appears mainly when the country suffers from a military or cultural threat; thus, when that nation is colonized. In fact, the Eastern regions have been subject to colonialism and domination for a long period. In the late fifties and early sixties, the Orient witnessed the raise of the national cause and greed for independence. This is the reason for strengthening their national identities.

Bowles like most Westerners was not pleased with this Eastern uprising. He supports the idea that the Easterners need always help “Those in favor of colonialism argue that you can’t ‘give’ an almost totally illiterate people political power and expect them to create a democracy; and this is doubtless true”¹²⁸. He assumes that the Orient must be guided and controlled all the time because it cannot build a democratic state. In addition, in “Notes Mailed at Nagercoil”, Bowles wonders how India’s multiple religions and divergent spiritual beliefs can meet in one place to constitute one unified nation and have a solid attachment to the land. This fact may be understood in Bowles approach of the native young intellectuals who consider Ghandi, the leader of the Indian national movement, as a “betrayed” of the nation contrary to the illiterate ones considering him as a hero.¹²⁹ Here Bowles wants to reveal that the educated minority in India has a certain political consciousness contrary to the unskilled ones who bear in mind that Ghandi has freed their nation from the western domination.

In “Mustapha and His Friends”, Bowles criticizes the Muslim identity. Through the character of Mustapha, Bowles tends to ridicule Muslim identity and he argues that Mustapha is holding a false one since he rejects his traditional dressing as “the djellaba”¹³⁰ and he prefers to be dressed in Western garments. Despite the fact that Mustapha is Europeanized in his clothing, he identifies himself within the Muslim community. In this context, Bowles declares, “Mustapha may observe his religion [...] or not at all, but he will always call himself a Moslem”¹³¹. This shows Mustapha’s pride of being a member of the Muslim group.

Subsequently, throughout the whole work, Bowles tries to show the Western superiority over the natives. When analyzing “Africa Minor”, it can be noticed that Bowles endeavors to make the Moroccans believe that France is bringing prosperity to the land. He witnesses a kind of confrontation between a Frenchman and a Moroccan. This is the conversation:

The Frenchman sitting beside me became engaged in an amicable discussion with a Moroccan across the table. ‘But look at the facts *mon cher ami*. Before our arrival, there was constant warfare between tribes. Since we came the population has doubled. [...]’ the Moroccan responds “‘we can take care of our births and deaths’ [...] “‘if we must be killed, just from other Moroccans attend to it. We really prefer that.”¹³²

This dialogue may be understood by Bowles as the Moroccans’ inclination to savagery and death than living enlightenment and development. However, through the conversation, we can mainly infer the Moroccans’ attachment to their land though it is not civilized in the eyes of the Western norms. Furthermore, what has preceded in the essay is the declaration of the French officer, “‘our great mistake [...] was ever to allow these savages to read and write.’”¹³³ This is a direct reference to the civilizing mission that has been the pretext to enter and possess most of the Oriental world via colonization. As a matter of fact, the author is saying, in a way, that the Orient’s population deserves to be unenlightened and “savage”.

Moreover, we find it important to highlight the case present in the “Fish Traps and Private Business” in which the reader can notice the racist attitude of Mrs. Murrow who claims to be from a Dutch ancestry; thus, she is European. Bowles explains that she announces this, as soon as he arrives because she is afraid of being taken for a native. He illustrates this fact by stating that, “Mrs. Murrow is of a class which calls itself Burgher, claiming an unbroken line of descendency from the Dutch settlers of two centuries ago.”¹³⁴ We can deduce that Mrs. Murrow claims herself to be a descendent of Europe. Thus, it is can be noticeable that Bowles’ focus on the Eastern will to be westernized. He adds, “I have yet to

see a Burgher who looks Caucasian”¹³⁵, that is the people who have a yellow skin; thus, the yellow genus. This quotation shows Bowles’ mocking at Mrs. Murrow and the natives who tend to deny their true identities and assume other ones.

b. Religion

Secondly, religion is another aspect through which Bowles shows his advocacy of Western superiority. To start, the concept can be identified as a particular belief and worship of a God or Gods. James Martineau believes that “Religion is the belief in an ever living God”¹³⁶. Bowles seems to express his deep sensitivity about Islam; he uses his familiarity with the Arab Moroccan culture to expose his erroneous image about it. He depicts Muslims as backwards in their assorted reactions and habits. This is why there was a large attention given to the representation of Islam in Bowles’ books by his booklovers. Al-Ghalith advocates in his article “Paul Bowles’s Portrayal of Islam in his Short Stories”:

There has been a veritable cult following for Paul Bowles's works since his novels and short stories were first brought to the attention of American readers in the 1940s and 1950s; even in recent years his short-story collections have alternately shocked, puzzled, and entertained devoted readers with their North-African subjects and themes¹³⁷.

Furthermore, Al-Ghalith explains that Bowles depicts Islamic societies through violent unbeliever characters in his narratives, namely Mustapha. He supports this idea by the claim of Wendy Lesser, a famous critic and admirer of Paul Bowles’s works who is persuaded by Bowles’ tendency to portray Arab Muslims as violent and cruel. Lesser says:

I think this is because the violence in 'The Wind at Beni Midar' takes place completely within the accepted standards of the Arab world.... Whatever shock value does accrue to the 'Beni Midar' story is brought to it by the European (in which I include American) reader, whose own proprieties are violated by the story's Moslem concepts of superstition and revenge.¹³⁸

Next, the tendency to portray the violent Arab Muslim may be linked to Bowles portrayal of Mustapha and leads the western readers to adopt a false image about the Moroccan Muslims

in particular and Islam in general. In this context, Said explains: “For the right [West], Islam represents barbarism; for the left [Orient], medieval theocracy”¹³⁹. In the essay of “Mustapha and His Friends”, Bowles takes Mustapha as a representative of Muslims “an illiterate city dweller”¹⁴⁰ through whom he gives a distorted and restricted image of Muslims, and this helps the West to shape a wrong frame for Muslim people among Western readership.

According to Bowles, Mustapha sees his religion just as a letter, and he does not worry about its principles since he never follows it properly. Bowles in his earlier stories seems to place the idea that the Moroccan Muslims are violent in nature, and Mustapha is the finest proof for his claim and the one who believes in “peace as that boring and meaningless interlude between wars”¹⁴¹. In soon after passages, Bowles declares that Mustapha has a little respect for women and has a tendency for violence. However, as explained previously, this violence is perhaps due to his education, or to the traditions not to Islam as a religion. Via Mustapha, Bowles tries to show the Muslim man’s attempts to overcome his weakness through violence.

In fact, Bowles has declared the impossibility of the Western mind to understand the Muslim faith. In an interview in 1952, he has made this comment, “I don’t think we’re likely to get to know Moslems very well, and I suspect that if we should we’d find them less sympathetic than we do at present. Their culture is essentially barbarous, their mentality that of a purely predatory people”¹⁴². Still, Bowles depicts the Moroccan community that is not prepared to take into consideration what we call “religion” because it is illiterate; thus, it lacks logic. Besides, for Bowles, the Moroccans in general are perceived as irresponsible, since they do not assume their actions and reactions in relation to their religion. However, they claim that God has the full power to lead their lives as He wishes. This is what they call *El Maktoub*; hence, they do not take their responsibility. Bowles explains his views in the following conversation,

Ramey: Do Muslims believe in guilt?

Bowles: No. Guilt has to do with logic, and responsibility certainly has to do with logic. Perhaps Moroccans adopted the idea of mektoub because they weren't ready for a religion which provided logic and guilt and responsibility.

Ramey: Mektoub means that no one is responsible for this action?

Bowles: Of course. Human beings can't be responsible. Only God can. Moroccans believe that¹⁴³.

To highlight Bowles' attitude towards the Muslims, we refer to the passage presented in the essay entitled "Africa Minor" in which Bowles witnesses the case of an old Moroccan Muslim whose hand was hurt by his countryman. Bowles is shocked by his reaction in such a moment. He clarifies, "Calmly the old man opened the door with his other hand. [...] put the two parts of the finger together and poured the dust over it"¹⁴⁴. This fact makes Bowles think of what would be his reaction in a similar state. Indeed, he is surprised only by the reaction of the man that was, according to him; "strange"¹⁴⁵ because he reacted only by thanking God for that. Bowles states, "saying softly, 'Thanks be for Allah.' [...], and give thanks to God at such a moment is the strangest touch of all."¹⁴⁶ Bowles in this sentence portrays the Muslims as odd with unusual reactions.

It is worth mentioning that Bowles is a secular person; he has never adopted a religion to belong to. He asserts, "All religions drive me crazy. I hate Christianity; I don't like Islam; I don't like Buddhism I don't like any orthodoxies"¹⁴⁷. Paradoxically, Bowles considers that all the other spiritual beliefs of the Non-Christian lands are inferior to Christianity. In *Their Heads Are Green and their Hands Are Blue*, the Christian-sided inclination is clear. Bowles in the first essay is criticizing the diversity of beliefs and religions in Ceylon. He describes them as being unsuitable for the place. He affirms, "Hinduism is too fanciful and chaotic, Islam is too puritanical and austere. Buddhism, with its gentle agnosticism and luxuriant sadness, is too right in Ceylon..."¹⁴⁸

So, despite the fact that Bowles does not believe in any religion, he supports the Christian faith. If he should adopt a religion, it would be Christianity. In the essay entitled “Baptism of Solitude” he focuses on this fact when he suggests, “[...] one used to hear the Moslems say that although the Christians might be masters on earth, the Moslems were masters of heaven; for the military it was quite enough that the *indigène* recognize the European supremacy here”.¹⁴⁹ For the White Fathers; however, it is not sufficient because they need to complete their mission that of spreading Christianity among the Orientals.

Additionally, in “A Man Must Not Be Very Moslem”, Bowles claims that religion is used for other reasons than for what Abdesslam thinks. Then, he affirms that religion is a set of “superstitions” and its aim is “to integrate metaphysics with science.”¹⁵⁰ So, he wants to convince Abdesslam that religion is a kind of delusion that “will have to be replaced” someday¹⁵¹. In addition, Bowles claims that religion and God do not exist and then are just a creation of men’s mind in order to organize their living, “Necessary? I don't know. It's like religion. Is it necessary? It's an invention. What is God? It's an invention of man. Magic is an invention of man. Everything is an invention of man, but man didn't invent God when he was going on four legs”¹⁵². Therefore, according to Bowles, God is a necessity for human beings as any other things that they need in their lives. He explains, “Whatever mankind does is necessary for him, so God is necessary for mankind. Religion is necessary because it is an invention of his, yeah”¹⁵³

c. Culture

In addition to identity and religion, the cultural facet is also closely linked to the belief of Bowles about the Western superiority. According to anthropologists, Culture signifies the whole complex of traditional manners which is developed by a specific group and that is inherited from one generation to another. However, most recent studies define it as the socially

transmitted knowledge and behavior shared by some group of people. It can be noticed that the concept of culture progresses. Indeed, Bowles thinks that the Orientals have a primitive culture that needs to be civilized and modernized. In this context, Said mentions in *Orientalism* the viewpoint of François of Chateaubriand, "...no wonder, then, that as he watched Arabs trying to speak French, Chateaubriand felt like Robinson Crusoe thrilled by hearing his parrot speak for the first time."¹⁵⁴ Said refers to the claim of Chateaubriand who compares the Arabs speaking French to the parrot of Robinson Crusoe. From this quotation, we can understand that the West considers the East as if it is still in the seventeenth century. In the counterpart, we find the postcolonial studies that use the language of the Europeans to answer the Orientalist writers who attribute biased representations about the Orient. Among these scholars, we name Edward Said and Gayatri Spivack who have received a Western education, and employ their knowledge in favor of their native lands. Through their writings, they establish a kind of a counter discourse to the West. This fact may lead us to oppose the opinion of Bowles who states that the Oriental is uneducated and the educated minority is westernized or wants to be so.

In the same course of ideas, the essay of "Africa Minor" illustrates the Oriental people who reject their culture and want to adopt the Western one. Bowles asserts, "He must cease being picturesque. Traditional customs Clothing and behavior must be replaced by something unequivocally European."¹⁵⁵ This echoes Said's idea that Orientalists advocate the contribution of the Orientals in their self orientalizing.¹⁵⁶ A similar idea is presented in the essay of "The Rif to Music" where Bowles shows the denial of the Moroccans to their traditions. This fact is obvious in what the official in Fez affirms, "I detest all folk music, and particularly ours here in Morocco. It sounds like the noises made by savages. Why should I help you to export a thing we are trying to destroy?"¹⁵⁷ Bowles endeavors to convince the Western readership of the educated natives who approve the Western superiority and the

banality of their original culture. The satirical position of Bowles is obvious towards the intellectual category among the Easterners. In “Africa Minor”, he states that he dislikes the people who hate their culture, but his mission is to make the Western presence in the Orient meaningful and defensible. To reach his aim, he ridicules the different rituals that the East possesses in its cultural heritage.

The idea of cultural superiority is also linked to technological development. We need to consider the material matter since it is part of the Western symbols of superiority. The western evolution in relation to industry is shown through the different European infrastructures built in the region. By using these technologies, the West places itself in a responsibility status towards the East. It is true that Europe provides the Orientals with what the West calls technology, but it destroys their identity and endeavors to make them westernized. Bowles denies the Western annihilation of the Oriental culture. He argues:

No, the French tried to preserve it. It was the Moroccans who went ahead and destroyed what the French had done. What the French did was building good roads for their tanks so that they could get them out fast, and they built hospitals in front of which Moroccans would not even walk. They went all the way around, a mile, so as not to pass the hospital because they believed that people were waiting there to pull them in and then torture them. People have told me that again and again, well, 50, 60 years ago. But it's the same thing. They don't believe that now, I don't think¹⁵⁸.

Furthermore, The Occident is industrialized; therefore, for Europeans all what is out of their industry is unworthy. So, it is needless to call for Europe to bring industry and new commodities. As quoted in Bevan’s article an unnamed Moroccan assumes, “What a good is it? The wheels go round fast, yes. The horn is loud, yes. You arrive sooner than a mule, yes. But why should you want to arrive sooner?”¹⁵⁹ From this sentence, we can infer that the mule is part of the Orientals’ culture and way of life just as the car is part of the Western culture.

In the course of our research, we have come through the work of *John Maier* that is entitled *Desert Songs: Western Images of Morocco and the Moroccan Images of the West* in

which the author presents the different opinions about the depiction of Eastern/Western relation. Inside the work, Maier mentions the writer Elizabeth Fernea who has lived in the Orient. He claims that Fernea has pity on Jane, Bowles' wife, and Paul Bowles because they do not gaze at the Orient in a proper way. In her opinion, they have not succeeded to portray the Eastern lands. He adds that Fernea claims that in the Orient, there is authentic and original cultural diversity and that she is very conscious of the difficulty of knowing the other.¹⁶⁰ Maier ends his idea by saying that this takes the author (Elizabeth) beyond the unknown East of the Orientalist tradition. Accordingly, Fernea perceives the Orient as an authentic region, and that the Orientalists have failed in their visions and perspectives.

Additionally, Maier makes reference to the claim of Bowles "My own belief is that the people of the alien cultures are being ravaged so much by the by products of our civilization, as by the irrational loggings on the part of their own educated minorities to cease being themselves and become westerners."¹⁶¹ According to what the title of the work implies, we can notice that Maier is presenting different perspectives about the East/West relationship. On the one hand, he exposes the opinion of Fernea who is in opposition to Bowles' portrayal of the Orient. On the other hand, he transmits Bowles' point of view. However, Maier himself is convinced by Bowles' trend concerning the Orient. Maier's stance is clear in his claim, "Bowles speaks of 'our' civilization and the alien people [...] he is very rarely, though, a defender of the West"¹⁶².

The Western cultural superiority is also shown through Bowles' knowledge of the Orient, which provides him with power to represent the region. Said once asserts, "the European encounter with the Orient, and specifically with Islam, strengthened this system of representing the Orient"¹⁶³. If we think of the claim of the current dissertation and consider Bowles as an Orientalist, Bowles is among the ones described by Said as, "An unbroken arc

of knowledge and power connects the European or Western statesman and the Western Orientalists; it forms the rim of the stage containing the Orient.”¹⁶⁴ So, the knowledge and the power Bowles gains by meeting the Orientals creates a strong link with the Western officers.

In “Fish Traps and Private Business”, we find many signs of Western cultural superiority. Through language, Bowles tries to tell his Western readers that the West is practicing a kind of cultural hegemony or cultural leadership over the natives. This may be explained with the natives’ “insistence”¹⁶⁵ to utter the word “master”¹⁶⁶ and other English words. “[...] has almost unanimously adopted the more neutral ‘sir’ (pronounced ‘sar’, as a substitute for the too colonial-sounding ‘master.’”¹⁶⁷ He declares that there is certain responsibility and disturbance in calling him “master”.¹⁶⁸ The author tries to show that he does not agree with what the servants say, but this proves the cultural dominance of the West. In this context, Said states that he desires to portray the terrible frames of cultural domination precisely of the former colonized countries.¹⁶⁹

Furthermore, in the essay of “Baptism of Solitude”, Bowles employs sarcasm to demonstrate to the reader in a satirical way that Berber women and especially the Touareg are perceived as backwards and naïve people. According to Said, the Western travelers present the Eastern women as submissive to male power and at the same time are unintelligent. As he declares, “This is especially evident in the writing of travelers and novelists: women are usually the creatures of a male power-fantasy. They express unlimited sensuality, they are more or less stupid, and above all they are willing”¹⁷⁰. The use of this literary device is a manner of cultural domination of the Westerners over the Orientals.

Through language, Bowles represents the Orientals with distorted images by means of metaphors, similes and irony. Besides, it is noticeable that Bowles’ use of language allows him to represent the Orientals as inferior to the Westerners. In fact, Bowles has cultured the

Arabic language as a means to explore his thoughts and understand the Moroccan authenticity. Said states, “Positive knowledge of languages and history was necessary, but it was never enough, any more than the mechanical gathering of facts would constitute an adequate method of grasping.”¹⁷¹ Hence, it is the case with Bowles who tries to collect more about the North-Africans; thus, to criticize them.

To end with, the regions of the Orient have their own way of life. As Said argues in *Orientalism*, “the Oriental lived in a different but thoroughly organized world of his own, a world with its own national, cultural, and epistemological boundaries and principles of internal coherence.”¹⁷² The diverse rituals in North Africa; the songs and the dances the different tribes of the region perform in the different local ceremonies represent the constituents of the North African communities; simultaneously, identity, religion, and culture. Therefore, the fact of being different from the European civilization does not make them inferior.

Endnotes

¹²¹ Said, *Orientalism*, 333.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 1.

¹²³ Elghandor, “Atavism and Civilization: An Interview with Paul Bowles”, 17.

¹²⁴ James D. Fearon, *WHAT IS IDENTITY (AS WE NOW USE WORD)*, (Stanford: Stanford University, 1999), 2.

¹²⁵ Said, *Orientalism*, 8.

¹²⁶ Oxford Dictionary, Identity.

¹²⁷ Peter Malender, what is National Identity, *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, (Cambridge: Ganville and Caius college, 1.

¹²⁸ Bowles, “Africa Minor”, 35.

¹²⁹ Bowles, “Notes Mailed at Nagercoil”, 49.

¹³⁰ Bowles, *Mustapha and His Friends*, 58.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 55.

- ¹³² Bowles, "The Africa Minor", 35.
- ¹³³ Ibid, 35.
- ¹³⁴ Bowles, "Fish Traps and Private Business", 3- 4.
- ¹³⁵ Ibid., 4.
- ¹³⁶ Victoria Harrison, *The Pragmatics in Defining Religion in a Multi-cultural World* (PhD diss., University of Glasgow, 2006), 3.
- ¹³⁷ Asad Al-Ghalith, "Paul Bowles's Portrayal of Islam in His Moroccan Short Stories", 103.
- ¹³⁸ Ibid.
- ¹³⁹ Said, *Covering Islam: How the Media and the Experts Determine How we See the Rest of the World*, 15.
- ¹⁴⁰ Bowles, "Mustapha and His Friends", 55.
- ¹⁴¹ Ibid., 56.
- ¹⁴² Bowles, "A Talk with Paul Bowles", *The New York Times Book Review* 9 March 1952
- ¹⁴³ Philip Ramey, "A Talk with Paul Bowles" (Tangier: Copyright, 1997).
- ¹⁴⁴ Bowles, "Africa Minor", 18.
- ¹⁴⁵ Ibid.
- ¹⁴⁶ Ibid.
- ¹⁴⁷ Elghandor, "Atavism and civilization: An interview with Paul Bowles", 12.
- ¹⁴⁸ Bowles, "A Man Must Not Be Very Moslem", 89.
- ¹⁴⁹ Bowles, "Baptism of Solitude", 136.
- ¹⁵⁰ Bowles, "A Man Must Not Be Very Moslem", 89.
- ¹⁵¹ Ibid.
- ¹⁵² Elghandor, "Atavism and Civilization", 12.
- ¹⁵³ Ibid.
- ¹⁵⁴ Said, *Orientalism*, 172- 3.
- ¹⁵⁵ Paul Bowles, "The Africa Minor", 30.
- ¹⁵⁶ Ibid, 326.
- ¹⁵⁷ Bowles, "The Rif to Music", 126.
- ¹⁵⁸ Ibid, 17.
- ¹⁵⁹ Greg Bevan, "Orientalist on Trial: The Evidence of Paul Bowles Travels", 21.
- ¹⁶⁰ John Maier, *Desert Songs: Western Images of Morocco and Moroccan Images of the West* (New York: State University, 1996), 144.
- ¹⁶¹ Ibid.
- ¹⁶² Ibid.
- ¹⁶³ Said, *Orientalism*, 70.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid, 105

¹⁶⁵ Bowles, “Fish Traps and Private Business”, 5.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ Said, *Orientalism*, 26.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 208.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., xx.

¹⁷² Ibid., 41.

IV Conclusion

This work attempts to examine the Orientalist views of Paul Bowles throughout his collected essays entitled *Their Heads Are Green and their Hands Are Blue: Scenes from the Non-Christian World* (1963). Depending on the work of Edward Said *Orientalism* (1978) as a theoretical basis, our analysis is centered on the different stereotypical representations of Bowles about the Eastern lands as well as the natives' practices and rituals. In addition, we tackle the theme of exoticism focusing on the different Oriental places Bowles described after his journeys to the Eastern part of the world. Subsequently, we have focused on identity, religion and culture through which the Occident proclaimed its supremacy and power over the Orient.

The first chapter focused on the way Bowles has portrayed the natives in the different essays set in the East. *Their Heads Are Green and their Heads Are Blue* provided stereotyped descriptions about the people in the regions the author has visited. He attributes the status of primitiveness and backwardness to the Easterners and civilization and enlightenment to the Westerners. Bowles has viewed the Orientals in their different constituents undeveloped who helps in the insertion of the Western hegemonic ideas in the Eastern mind. Therefore, Bowles endorses the idea that the Orientals are an antithesis to the Westerners. The natives in the different parts of the Oriental lands are portrayed as uneducated, uncivilized and; thus, they are backward. Besides that, females are represented as unfaithful and naïve creatures.

The second chapter attempted to deal with the aspect of exoticism in the different places Bowles has visited in the Orient, from North Africa to the Far Eastern lands and towns. Bowles describes the North African lands as being dirty, dark, and black with narrow streets, and the Oriental lands as carrying pessimistic features. These descriptions have highlighted the strangeness of the Oriental lands and reinforce the existing Orientalist beliefs about the

dissimilarity between East and West. Further, the cities were perceived as labyrinth-like streets. We find that Bowles gesticulates between contempt and admiration to the multiple cities he has seen in the region.

The third chapter has been concerned with the idea of Western superiority the author adopts in his writing. He claims that the Orientals want to be westernized in their life style. He uses his presence in the Orient as a means to be able to represent the Orientals to the West; this was clear through the different portrayals he constructs about the Easterners. Bowles in this work rejects all the Non-Western religions and he favors Christianity. Though, the author argues his ignorance about Orientalism and its principles, we come to the conclusion that he is an Orientalist; therefore, we confirm the dissertation's assertion. Concerning religion, Bowles affirms multiple clichés about Islam as a religion. He has associated Islam and Muslims with barbarism, and violence. He has describes Muslim women as unbelievers and magic practitioners.

This paper has come to the point that Bowles misrepresents the Oriental women in many of his works. Thus, this detail may open a new gap for further discussions. Women and Gender Issue in *Their Heads are Green and their Hands are Blue* (1963) and *The Sheltering Sky* (1949) as well as other novels written by Bowles can be considered an interesting topic for inquiry and exploration.

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