

People's Democratic Republic of Algeria
Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research
University of Kasdi Merbah Ouargla
Faculty of Letters and Languages
Department of Letters and English Language



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Option: Comparative Literature

Title

**Between Literary Terrorism and the Polysemous Language of
Silence**

**Malika Mokeddem's and Chika Unigwe's Writing
Endeavour to Suggest an Alternative African Female Social
Schema**

Submitted by

Sihem SAIBI

Supervised by

Pr. Mohammed Sghir HALIMI

Jury

Mr. Nadir Kaouli	Pr, University of Batna 2	Chair
Mr. Mohammed Sghir Halimi	MCA, University of Ouargla	Supervisor
Mrs. Halima Benzoukh	MCA, University of Ouargla	Examiner
Mr. Moahammed Koudad	MCA, University of Ouargla	Examiner
Mr. Slimane Abdelhakem	MCA, University of Ghardaia	Examiner
Mrs. Nadia Ghounan	MCA, University of Saida	Examiner

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Statement of Authorship

The content of the present thesis has not been previously submitted to meet requirements for any other higher education institution. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the research report contains no material already published or written by another researcher except where due reference is made.

SAIBI Sihem



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Dedication

To my family, husband, and kids



Abstract

Exile, loss of speech, loss of identity, alienation, political instability, trauma, and grief are very often indescribable and unnarratable experiences. The present research explores how the two writers Mokeddem and Unigwe, traumatized by history and personal experiences, transcribe the inexpressible and the unformalizable. Their novels illustrate what is known in 20th the writing of silence. The research defines silence and examines the theme of silences and its types, narrative techniques, and other procedures employed by Mokeddem and Unigwe to say the unsayable. Malika Mokeddem and Chika Unigwe are two eminent writers who come from different backgrounds; the first is Algerian who lives in France and writes in French while the second is Nigerian who lives in Belgium and writes in Dutch and English. Unexpectedly, their novels deal with the theme of silence. The similarities are abundant and so are the differences. Other techniques are also analyzed like the withholding of information, interruption, omission, and so on. The comparison also demonstrates how both writers subvert 'conventional' rhetoric and refuse norms to suggest an alternative African female social schema. The novels of Unigwe and Mokeddem remind us of the dispute between the Rhetoricals and the Terrorists and the theories of the great writers and intellectuals of the 20th century like Jean Paulhan, Maurice Blanchot, Emmanuel Levinas, Jacques Derrida, Umberto Eco, Marguerite Duras, André Gide, Albert Camus, and Samuel Beckett. Silence and literary terrorism, therefore, are characteristics of the feminine discourse in African literature.

Key words: silence, literary terrorism, Algerian literature, Nigerian literature, semiostylistics, pragmatic stylistics, narratology



Summary in French

L'exil, la perte de la parole, la perte d'identité, l'aliénation, l'instabilité politique, le traumatisme et le chagrin sont très souvent des expériences indescriptibles. La présente recherche étudie comment Mokeddem et Unigwe, deux écrivaines traumatisées par l'histoire et les expériences personnelles, transcrivent l'inexprimable. Leurs romans illustrent ce qu'on appelle l'écriture du silence. La recherche définit le silence et examine le thème des silences et ses types, les techniques narratives et autres procédures employées pour dire l'indicible. Malika Mokeddem et Chika Unigwe viennent d'horizons différents ; la première est Algérienne qui vit en France et écrit en français tandis que la seconde est nigériane qui vit en Belgique et écrit en néerlandais et en anglais. Les similitudes sont abondantes, tout comme les différences. D'autres techniques sont également analysées comme la rétention d'informations, l'interruption, l'omission, etc. La comparaison montre comment les deux auteurs renversent la rhétorique « conventionnelle » et refusent les normes pour suggérer un schéma social alternatif des femmes africaines en employant le silence. Les romans d'Unigwe et Mokeddem nous rappellent le concept du terrorisme littéraire de Jean Paulhan et la dispute entre les Rhétoriciens et les Terroristes et les théories des grands écrivains et intellectuels du XXe siècle comme Jean Paulhan, Maurice Blanchot, Emmanuel Levinas, Jacques Derrida, Umberto Eco, Marguerite Duras, André Gide, Albert Camus et Samuel Beckett. Le silence est parlant et polysémique et une caractéristique du discours féminin dans la littérature africaine.

Mots clé : silence, terrorisme littéraire littérature algérienne, littérature nigériane, sémiostylistique, stylistique pragmatique, narratologie.



Summary in Arabic

ملخص

النفى ، فقدان الكلام ، فقدان الهوية ، العزلة ، عدم الاستقرار السياسي ، الصدمة والحزن تجارب لا توصف. يدرس هذا البحث كتابات مقدّم ويونيغوي ، وهما كاتبان أصيبتان بصدمة بسبب التاريخ والتجارب الشخصية . توضح رواياتهم ما يسمى بكتابة الصمت. يعرف البحث الصمت ويفحص موضوع الصمت وأنواعه وتقنيات السرد والإجراءات الأخرى المستخدمة لقول ما لا يوصف. مليكة مقدم وشيكا يونيغوي من خلفيات مختلفة. الأولى جزائرية تعيش في فرنسا وتكتب بالفرنسية والثانية نيجيرية تعيش في بلجيكا وتكتب باللغتين الهولندية والإنجليزية. أوجه التشابه كثيرة وكذلك الاختلافات. يتم أيضاً تحليل تقنيات أخرى مثل حجب المعلومات والمقاطعة والحذف وما إلى ذلك. تُظهر المقارنة كيف تعكسان المؤلفتان الخطاب "التقليدي" وترفضا المعايير من خلال استخدام الصمت. تذكرنا روايات مقدم و اونجوي بمفهوم الإرهاب الأدبي لجان بولان والخلاف بين البلاغة والإرهابيين ونظريات كبار الكتاب والمفكرين في القرن العشرين مثل موريس بلانشو وإيمانويل ليفيناس ، جاك دريدا ، أومبرتو إيكو ، مارغريت دوراس ، أندريه جيد ، ألبير كامو وصمويل بيكيت.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الصمت ، الإرهاب الأدبي ، الأدب الجزائري ، الأدب النيجيري ، السيمائية الأسلوبية ، البراغماتية الأسلوبية ، السردية.