

The double trauma in *La Malédiction* by Rachid Mimouni

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Abstract : This article aims to understand how Mimouni's writing represents trauma. These has always aroused the interest of the most sophisticated critics. We want to know precisely what Rachid Mimouni's novel *La Malediction*, published in 1993, emerged in a pathogenic context has to teach us about double trauma? Mimouni's writing draws its quintessence in the context of an experience of heavy trauma, reflected in signs of memories. These stem not only from colonialism, but also and above all from post-colonialism.

Keywords : Trauma, novel, représentation, literature, Rachid Mimouni

INTRODUCTION

Trauma has taken on a prominence in our discourse, in our view of the world, that it didn't have twenty years ago. It is conceived as "all the nonsense that affects the individual at the level of being, meaning and doing", In other words, all the elements that disrupt the subject's way of existing, giving meaning to his experience and belonging to his community and even to humanity.

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Literature has always represented these traumatic events. It evokes and expresses them. It has even organized some of its genres, such as tragedy, around them. Algerian literature, for its part, bears witness to the omnipresence of trauma in its history. From its earliest scribbles, Algerian literary expression in French found itself condemned to concern itself with the manifestations of trauma born not only of colonialism, but also and above all of post-colonialism on the psyche of the Algerian. It's safe to say, then, that every aspect of contemporary Algerian writing is rooted in the context of a deeply traumatic experience. Issues. What we're interested in here and now is the way in which Mimounian writing represents trauma, and precisely what does *La Malédiction* have to show us about double trauma?

1-Mimouni and the emergence of his novel in a pathogenic context

Mimouni was born in 1945, so he belongs to that category of artists with few memories of the Algerian war of liberation. Rachid Mimouni lacked the maturity and distance necessary to relate the horrors of French colonization.

Nevertheless, his favorite themes found fertile ground in the early 1990's: religious extremism and social ills. Witnessing the beginnings of these bloody events, Rachid Mimouni began a creative process as a victim of trauma. The writer bears witness to a dangerous and tragic moment in history: the Islamists had put a price on his head.

At the same time, he tends to express, in his own way, the memory of stories previously told about the "1st war", the war of liberation (one wonders if the author is suffering from an inherited or transgenerational trauma?).

In 1993, his novel *La Malédiction* was published, highlighting the country's current situation at the dawn of the 90s. This book is first and foremost a cry of horror.

2- The complex representation of religion in trauma discourse

The link between religion and trauma for Rachid Mimouni is a transparent one. The religion portrayed in his novel has the effect of disarming the individual. The obedience, or rather submission, that results makes the individual vulnerable to exploitation by those who add selfish intentions to their message. According to Salaka

"From the philosophical point of view, religion comes under idealism as opposed to materialistic philosophy; this conception of man's relationship with a supreme divine being, "creator of heaven and earth", constitutes in itself the foundation of a philosophy of submission imposed on man."¹

In Salaka's eyes, religion is seen as a potential force in determining the worldview. It even acts on human behavior. It is capable of subjugating man .

As for Mimouni's opinion on Islam, we can say that he distinguishes between true Islam and false Islam. The fact that he prefaces his novel with an epigraph (a Koranic verse) corroborates our remarks. This epigraph, which doubles the function of the title and the construction of the meaning of his text, is not insignificant. It should be noted that Mimouni is not against the true religion of Allah based on peace, tolerance and mercy, but he is against those

¹ Salaka (1982: 53)

who kill and murder in the name of Allah. He is against this closure used to eliminate free thought in the name of Allah.

The terrorism described in the curse terrorizes consciences. Terrorists target some to strike terror into others. Their use of violence is explained by their desire to dissuade the intelligentsia from remaining in the country. Mimouni reveals the climate of fear and panic in which the intellectuals of his country live, threatened by the word of the Islamists: Some are better organized than others, never sleeping at home. *"The others take certain basic precautions, are careful about everything when they leave home. They are constantly changing their schedules and habits. The worst is when you're not the object of personal threats".*²

La Malediction is against fundamentalist terrorism. Rachid Mimouni dedicates this novel to the memory of his friend Tahar Djaout, murdered by a candy merchant. This dedication explicitly conveys a real and symbolic message. The writer expresses his deep sorrow at the tragic death of a friend.

Fundamentalism and intolerance are also expressed through dress and physical appearance: fundamentalists impose the qamis against pants, the hijab against the skirt, the naked face against the painted face. Mimouni depicts this ideology through El Msili, the former ambulance driver who becomes a pure fundamentalist.

"A few years later, feeling the urge, he grew a beard and embarked on a new proselytizing venture. Abandoning the cause of the proletarians, he espoused that of Allah. He exchanged his pants for a qamis. He renounced his rudiments of Marxist vulgate to marvel at divine verses. The mosque became his home port."³

² (Mimouni, R, *The Malediction* p.159).

³ ("Opcit,p 121)

3- The representation of fomented social polarization in the discours of trauma

A central element of traumatic discourse is social polarization. A discourse of conflict, superiority, division and coups d'état is evident in the Mimounian two.

3-1 The blocked company Mimouni describes Algerian society as disorganized, chaotic and blocked. In his novel, Mimouni lifts the veil on wastage in Algeria. the character Said declares « I was in Canada, a true land of milk and honey”(op.32)

3-2 Hatred: Mimouni describes a society whose people are vengeful and hateful. "El Msili seems driven by a devastating hatred that did not spare even his children", "I hated my father".

3-3 The housing crisis: He depicts this crisis through the protagonist Said, who lives "in a cellar near the port in the company of a docker and a prostitute"(p.34).

The trauma and double trauma that each character suffers in *La Malédiction*

Mimouni describes characters suffering from a double trauma. **Kader** is the main character. He is a gynecologist, an enemy of violence,

who has been surprised by the Islamists who have taken control of the hospital management following the insurrectionary strike launched by fundamentalists. He is terrorized by his brother's murder and the threats he faces on a daily basis. -"Kader hated to open his eyes and find himself in the world. Every morning he felt an anguish that blocked his throat"(p.69).

Louisa suffers from a wound of abandonment. she hated her father. in addition to the wound of abandonment which may be the origin of her trauma, the rape she suffered accentuated her trauma. -"*I hated my father*",⁴

"the innate sister's fiancé had only discovered her existence at the beginning of the wedding night. he had practiced on her before joining the one in the white dress" (22)

Si Maurice is a secondary character. he's a strange alcoholic who has only the memory of an out-of-phase past and recalls memories of the marquis and the struggle for independence. He simply suffers from traumatic dissociation. Si Maurice suffers from a traumatic memory; he expresses this suffering through his addiction to alcohol: addiction is trauma, according to Gabor Maté.

Conclusion

This novel shows to what extent the historical trauma of Algeria is still relevant for generations of the post-colonial period. These events of the 1990s, with the memory of the war, will continue to be transmitted with their traumatic

⁴ (opcit,p.54),²²

opcit p.60.

overtone but it remains to be seen whether the passage of time is useful in healing the wounds caused by the trauma of history.

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