
RESEARCH ARTICLE

An overview of The Influence of Natural Disasters on Writings of Mohammed Khaïr-Eddine (1967), Ito Sei (2008) and Makenzy Orcel (2020) (Earthquakes as a Case Study)

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ABSTRACT

This article analyzes the link between the stream of consciousness techniques and the different earthquakes that rocked the globe from 1923 to 2010. The paper focuses on the Great Kanto earthquake of 1923 in Japan followed by the famous natural disaster which is the Moroccan earthquake of Agadir in 1960. This work also deals with a more recent disaster which is the Haiti earthquake of 2010. Actually, these natural disasters have in common the stream of consciousness techniques used by the three writers. Indeed, whether it be Japanese writer Ito Sei (2008), Moroccan author Mohammed Khaïr-Eddine (1967) or Haitian author Makenzy Orcel (2020), they are all making use of the river-like methods known as the stream of consciousness techniques in their writings. The style employed in their works is referred to as "seismic writing" since it mimics the quake-caused fissured lands and turn them into literature. This paper relies on a qualitative methodology. Indeed, this approach is the most suitable one as it compares the main works of three major writers who use new literary devices as a response to the natural catastrophes of the time. The value added of this paper consists of providing a comparative study of the works of three writers from different countries while considering the ways in which they use "seismic writing" to confront the earthquakes. The study proves that each writer has his unique characteristics while sharing commonalities and differences with the others. All of the writers use a fragmented narration and also a polyphonic dimension to offer a voice to the victims. While some may employ various genres, others limit themselves to prose. This study brings about the shared aspects used while highlighting the singularities of each author.

KEYWORDS

Seismic writing, Ito Sei 1923, Mohammed Khaïr-Eddine 1960,

Makenzy Orcel 2010, stream of consciousness techniques, natural catastrophes

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1. Introduction

The expression "natural disaster" generally refers to any natural event such as a hurricane, a flood or an earthquake which causes tremendous damage and even human deaths, but in this study, it stands for the earthquakes which shook Japan, Morocco and Haiti.

In this article, the following research question is asked: How does every writer in the current study use "seismic writing", which is one form of the stream of consciousness techniques, in reaction to the earthquakes and how does this question the very possibility of writing after the natural disasters?

First of all, it is worth introducing the three authors of our concern. Mohammed

Khaïr-Eddine (1967), is a Moroccan writer who was born in Tafraout in 1941 and died in

Rabat in 1995. He is one of the greatest figures of Moroccan French-speaking literature. In 1964, he founded the *Poésie toute* movement, together with Mostafa Nissaboury. In 1967, his novel *Agadir* (1967) won Jean Cocteau's Enfants Terribles Prize.

Khaïr-Eddine's most famous literary works are: *Agadir* (1967), *Moi, l'aigre* (1970), *Soleil arachnide* (1969), *Ce Maroc!* (1975), *L'Histoire d'un bon Dieu* (1968), etc...

As for Japanese writer Ito Sei, who is a translator and a critic, he was born in Otaru in 1905. He passed away in 1969 and was known for his poetry collection entitled *Yukiakari no michi* (1926). Since 1990, Sei's hometown of Otaru has been awarding the Sei Itō Prize for Literature, created to honor and pay him tribute. Moreover, Ito Sei took part in the first Japanese translation of James Joyce's (1920) novel *Ulysses*. He also wrote various best-selling novels, and was awarded the Japan Art Academy Prize.

Last but not least is, Makenzy Orcel, the Haitian writer who was born in 1983 in Port-au-Prince. He is well-known for writing novels and poetry, namely *Les Immortelles* (2010), *Les Latrines* (2011), *L'Ombre Animale* (2016), etc... As for poetry, his most famous works are :

La Douleur de l'étreinte (2007), *Sans ailleurs* (2009), *La Nuit des terrasses* (2015) and more. He was awarded numerous prizes like the Thyde Monnier Prize from the Société des gens de lettres for his work *Les Immortelles*.

In this article, the notion of "seismic writing" is considered one of the stream of consciousness techniques in the writings of Moroccan author Mohammed Khaïr-Eddine (1967), Japanese writer Ito Sei (2008), and Haïtian writer Makenzy Orcel (2020).

Before dwelling on the topic, it is important to define the stream of consciousness techniques. Indeed, James, W. (1890) coined it in his book *Principles of Psychology*, stating: "Consciousness, then does not appear to itself as chopped up in bits... is nothing joined; it flows. A 'river' or a 'stream' are the metaphors by which it is most naturally described." (p.

239).

Accordingly, the stream of consciousness is a narrative method used to convey the most intimate thoughts of the characters without the intervention of the author. The method is very chaotic as it represents thoughts which are, by nature, quite incoherent. As for "seismic writing", it is a literary tool which imitates the seismic movements of the earth as it gets completely shattered during a natural catastrophe. This actually makes the experience of reading more realistic and more convincing because the language is being fragmented just like the ground.

Going through the works by the three aforementioned authors, readers get to experience a strong emotional response triggered by the "seismic writing" used by these authors to offer a direct encounter with the earthquake scene. Indeed, their way of writing is very realistic because the language itself is broken in the same way that the earth is fractured and cracked during a natural disaster. The readers are thus plunged into that disastrous scene and get to live with the same emotions as the survivors.

2. Literature Review

The literature review deals with three authors who wrote about earthquakes using the stream of consciousness techniques. These different writers are, firstly Mohammed Khaïr-Eddine (1967) with *Agadir*, secondly Ito Sei (2008) with *Streets of Fiendish Ghosts*, and finally Makenzy Orcel (2020) with *Les Immortelles*.

2.1 Mohammed Khaïr-Eddine (1967)

For the earthquake of Agadir which occurred in 1960, Rey Mimoso-Ruiz, B. (1967) explains, in her article "Agadir et l'Apocalypse de la Langue", translated into "Agadir and the Apocalypse of the Language", that the natural disaster is the cause of great trauma across the whole country. For the critic, Khaïr-Eddine's novel *Agadir* highlights how the popular opinion believes that a natural catastrophe implies a sense of general despair.

Rey Mimoso-Ruiz, B. (1967) declares that the superficial chaos which is reflected in the structure of the work actually represents the mimesis of the collapsing buildings of the

city.

Rogers, L. (1996) also sheds light on that topic in her article entitled "The guerrilla linguistics of Mohammed Khaïr-Eddine". Indeed, according to her, the very crumbling of the ground directly parallels with Khaïr-Eddine's constant consideration of every

single

detail.

Rogers, L. (1996), declares that the city of Agadir is shown through a true kaleidoscope of narrative forms such as official documents, theatrical snippets, poetry and more. Furthermore, the abolition of codes, labels, structures and molds is very specific of the stream of consciousness techniques and interior monologue.

In fact, this article focuses on the notion of "seismic writing" and how it deals with the possible act of writing after the natural disasters. When shedding light on "seismic writing", it is worth noting that Mezgueldi (2000), along with Abdellah Baïda (2007) were the first to make use of this method. Indeed, it is being defined as "a flood of images, words, short sentences, variations of typography, and a completely excessive use of punctuation or, on the contrary, the total lack of it." (Mezgueldi, 2000, p. 65).

Mezgueldi (2000) is not the only critic to examine Khaïr-Eddine's writing. As a matter of fact, Abdellah Baïda (2007) is known for his work on the Moroccan writer as shown in his book *Les Voix de Khaïr-Eddine*, where he claims that Khaïr-Eddine has a tendency of getting rid of punctuation and perceiving it as a burden. The complete absence of punctuation is noticeable from the first chapter which consists of two pages with no punctuation at all. Baïda (2007) also remarks the way Khaïr-Eddine enjoys using puns, peculiar vocabulary and even neologisms. According to Baïda (2007), the readers of *Agadir* should have a dictionary at hand for understanding the meaning behind the author's writing. For Baïda (2007), they either accept the complete lack of punctuation or not.

2.2 Ito Sei (2008)

In "An examination of Joycean influences on Ito Sei", and according to Ainge (1993), natural disasters are what pushed Japanese writer Ito Sei (2008) to embrace modernist writing.

Hence, the period of the nineteenth century is very known for its daring experimentation.

Ainge claims that the earthquake completely altered the inhabitants' lives while being the reason behind the creation of brand new literary movements.

A further analysis of the influence of the Kanto earthquake in Japan can be done through *Streets of Fiendish Ghosts* also called "Yuki no machi" in Japanese by Ito Sei (2008). Indeed, in "Structures of colonialism by Ito Sei's "Yuki no machi", Dodd (2013) explains that Ito Sei employs the stream of consciousness techniques directly through the metaphor of the flowing water. This is a way of showing gratitude to James Joyce (1920) who was a true source of inspiration in this regard.

2.3 Makenzy Orcel (2020)

As for the study of Makenzy Orcel's (2020) *Les Immortelles* which deals with the earthquake of Port-Au-Prince, Chemla, Y. (2015) focuses on Orcel's choice of writing about the figure of a writer while writing a story. Chelma, Y. (2015) takes interest in the analysis of the actual possibility of writing after the terrible earthquake while Vignoli, A. (2018) deals with the way through which the earthquake has altered tremendously the cultural production with a will to offer a fictionalization of catastrophe in her article entitled "Le roman post-sismique en haïti: une écriture (post) contemporaine de l'extrême". Vignoli, A. (2018) notices that a lot of Haitian writers have started including in their fictional works the topic of writing the disaster in different shapes. The critic further explains that some writers start putting into question the very function of literature in such circumstances.

3. Methodology

The methodology employed in this article consists of a qualitative method. As a matter of fact, the present methodology is adopted as it is meant to generate understanding and meaning through the use of rich description. Indeed, the stream of consciousness techniques and especially the "seismic writing" the article explores and focuses mainly on, shows the quality of the nature of human experience. What is more, the qualitative method is known for being flexible and emergent. These characteristics make it suitable for conducting this study since it strives to examine the way writers use "seismic writing" which is a form of stream of consciousness in order to respond to the terrible earthquakes through an experimental writing where the language itself is destroyed in the same way the earthquakes shattered the earth.

4. Language, Punctuation and Style

4.1 Language

The natural calamities affect the writings of a few authors. Indeed, Moroccan writer Mohammed Khaïr-Eddine (1967) is deeply impacted by the earthquake of Agadir of 1960.

This natural catastrophe totally changed the way of writing of the authors. More than the physical shattering of buildings and surroundings, the earthquakes are actually the cause of the language to fall apart, forcing it to rebuild itself from the start by means of experimentation thanks to brand new tools of writing such as stream of consciousness techniques.

Furthermore, in her article, « Agadir et l'apocalypse de la langue », Bernadette Rey

Mimoso-Ruiz (1967) declares that this great turmoil of the elements meets the vision that

Khaïr-Eddine, M. (1967) has regarding Morocco. He goes against the administrative since the people want to build on top of the dead when according to muslim traditions, the burial of the dead has to be done within twenty-four hours after death. Moreover, Rey Mimoso-Ruiz adds that Khaïr-Eddine, M. (1967) uses polyphony through a chorus of voices where the victims, the officials, the clerics all go together with the past silenced voices.

Bernadette Rey Mimoso-Ruiz, B. (1967) states that the apparent chaos of the structure of the book actually stands for the mimesis of the collapsing buildings and the rubble of the town. She notices that the readers are confronted with the union of the interior monologues, directly or indirectly reported speeches with poetic bits and theatrical instances. (Rey

Mimoso-Ruiz, 1967, p. 4)

She is not the only critic to focus on the influence of the earthquake of Agadir on

Mohammed Khaïr-Eddine's writing style. In fact, Rogers, L. (1996) also sheds light on that topic in her article entitled "The guerrilla linguistics of mohammed khair-eddine" (1996).

For her, the shaking of the earth can act as a parallel with the Moroccan author's never ending examination of every little matter.

Rogers, L. (1996) confesses that the broken town of Agadir is presented through a real kaleidoscope when it comes to narrative forms. *Agadir* is full of different types of narrations such as official documents, poetry, dreams and scenes written in script form. This rejection of labels, molds and structures is very characteristic of the stream of consciousness techniques and interior monologue as well. The writer's rebellion against traditional linear structures and shapes is revealed in his later novels (Rogers, 1996, pp.108-22).

Another famous critic in the field of linguistics who examined the Moroccan writer's style is Abdellah Baïda (2007). In fact, he claims, in *Les Voix de Khaïr-Eddine*, that Khaïr-

Eddine has a habit of removing punctuation as it burdens him because, in the writer's opinion, the text has to be read like a breathing rhythm. Indeed, the absence of punctuation appears since the very first chapter where the reader is confronted with two pages of no punctuation at all.

This article also focuses on Ito Sei, who has lived during a period dominated by the Great Kanto earthquake that struck the Japanese island of Honshu on Saturday 1st

September 1923 with a magnitude of 7.9. Since this incident, September 1st is named

"Disaster Prevention Day" by the Japanese government.

In "An examination of joycean influences on ito Sei", and according to Ainge (1993), natural catastrophes are what led Ito Sei towards modernist writing. As a matter of fact, Ainge (1993) claims that Ito Sei makes his early carrier in the Tokyo literary scene in the late 1920s. Ainge (1993) adds that the earthquake totally changed everybody's lives and was responsible for new literary movements.

He mentions the quotation of Japanese writer Yokomitsu Riichi (1959) who expresses his opinion concerning the influence of the earthquake on the works of the writers of that time:

The earthquake of 1923 overwhelmed me and this disaster immediately destroyed the faith in beauty which up to the moment I had held... I already could not stand the old, sluggish, naturalist style with its concern with outdated emotional entanglements, and I started to fight against it. At the same time we were immediately involved in the problems of constructing an aesthetic and morality for the new age, but soon the first manifestations of positivism, that of materialism, appeared in Japan and assaulted the world of the spirit. (Kiichi, 1959)

The pace of “modernization” in literature is fast, as states Ainge (1993). In fact, the critic claims that the year between 1924 and 1925 saw the emergence of some new literary magazines, appearing as the precursors of brand new movements. In the act, Ito Sei (2008) and a group of friends launch a magazine they named *Bungei rebyû* [Literary review], also referred to as *The Literary Arts* which is a Japanese magazine published by Kawade Shobo Shinsha. Along with Gunzo, Shinchō, Bungakukai and Subaru, *Bungei rebyû* is definitely one of the five main literary Japanese magazines at that time. Ito Sei (2008) creates *Bungei Rebyû* in the hope of establishing a new literature with Freudian psychology as its basis. As for Ito Sei’s great infatuation for James Joyce (1920), it led him to use stream of consciousness techniques, both in content and form. This is crystal clear in one of his most known work, *Yûki no machi* (1927) translated into *Streets of Fiendish Ghosts*. The example below shows this idea quite vividly as it illustrates how the writer uses “sensory observation” which is one of the techniques of stream of consciousness writing:

Shops hawk souvenirs along both sides of the street: heavy “Atsushi” fabric made from tree bark by the Ainu of Hokkaido... small carvings of totemic bears...maps showing Otaru’s eight scenic views... examples of Temiya script explaining the origins of these strange, archaic letters...travel guides to Sakhalin... charts of the fishing grounds off the Kurile Islands. There is a row of lodging houses. SHIMEN’NI, MARUSHO, KAKU’ICHI-the innsadvertise themselves in big, block

characters painted on the glass of their front doors. And there goes so-and-so scurrying down the street- just the sort of merchant one expects to see in these quarters. Some old and middle-aged women are out too, but they are hardly worthy to mention. (Sei, 2008, p. 106)

In this extract, Ito Sei (2008) makes use of the “sensory observation” technique since he describes directly and without structured sentences what his protagonist sees around him relying mainly on his senses, especially the sense of sight. What is more, in “Structures of colonialism in Ito Sei’s *Yûki no machi*”, Stephen Dodd (2013), declares that, in *Streets of Fiendish Ghosts*, Ito Sei (2008), uses the stream of consciousness techniques in a direct way since he refers to it through the metaphor of flowing water in order to express his gratitude to James Joyce (1920).

The following passage takes place in the moment where Uto, the protagonist, walks by the Myoken River and sees triangular tiny waves on its surface mocking him, and comparing him to Leopold Bloom, the *Ulysses*’ (1920) protagonist, as he takes a walk next to the Liffey River. One after the other, a multitude of faces come out to the surface while reminding Uto of the sins of the latter. These faces stand for the characters meant to represent the victims who died in the Great Kanto earthquake of 1923. Indeed, shattered characters such as Uto himself appear to be linked to the flowing water and the fragmented land of the earthquake. Here is the extract in *Streets of Fiendish Ghosts* that testifies the previous idea:

But what hit the wall with such a thud? Was someone playing a joke on me? And if it wasn’t a joke, then what? The woman had to be ghost, didn’t she? Yes that explains it. She’s a ghost – the spirit of a woman out of my past. But who is she? And what had I done to drive her to such desperation? [...] I am plunged into a dark and dismal mood. I walk along the right-hand bank of the Myoken-gawa. I pass under the railroad trestle. Only the flowing waters of the stream break the silence surrounding me. The waters make a sound like the chirping of birds or the chattering of young girls. As ripples move across the surface of the stream, they form into small, triangularshaped mouths, each with its own little tongue. The tongues begin to wag at me. (Sei, 2008, p.126)

In fact, this link between the character and the natural elements shows how Uto’s private history is deeply connected to Otaru’s topography. Here is an example of stream of consciousness in relation with Otaru’s topography:

A broad, paved promenade runs parallel to the waterfront. We are now in Iro’nai-cho, the newest part of Otaru. There’s an impressive row of businesses along the promenade. Import and export companies. Dealers in scrap metal. Ship chandlers. Paper wholesalers. A bank. A branch of the main post office. (Sei, 2008, p. 111)

Once more, Ito Sei employs sensory observations in order to give the reader a vision of what the hero sees, immediately through his own eyes.

Streets of Fiendish Ghosts appears to be a polyphonic novel such as Mohammed Khair-Eddine’s *Agadir* or Makenzy Orcel’s *Les Immortelles*. All of these novels aim to give a voice to the forgotten ones who perished in the natural catastrophes. This passage from *Streets of Fiendish Ghosts* shows how the writer describes the polyphony of voices of the dead:

A chorus of voices erupts in the sky over our heads, and a great number of bodies hurtle past us. Here comes a university professor clutching a heavy briefcase or an engineer with a slide rule in his hand. One after another, they come. Now it is an overweight general practitioner wearing stripped pants with baggy knees. (Sei, 2008, p. 120)

Ito Sei states in his novel the importance of writing after such a disastrous earthquake. He makes his characters wonder about the role of literature within such awful circumstances. The following extract illustrates this questioning:

What utter decimation! Everything is in a state of chaos. I feel as though a landslide has swept down upon us as lightning speed and made a complete shambles of everything that was once neatly ordered. [...] Yet what distresses me most is not the destruction of any of all order. No that's not in the least- instead it's the way people go on raising their children even after life loses all meaning for them. (Sei, 2008, p. 135)

4.2-Punctuation

The following extract from the novel of *Agadir* illustrates the lack of punctuation proper to Khaïr-Eddine (1967):

It's morning and the last roofs of my hometown are completely in front of me, the muggy horizon pierced by sharp rays. My travel companion is happy to be able to return home at last, I'd even say he's secretly exultant, describing his old villa perched like a stork's nest on the tip of the kasbah [...] ...I was then given a bearer cheque and I don't intend to say any more about this town. (pp. 11-12)

As Mohammed Khaïr-Eddine mentions in his own words :

C'est le matin enrobant les derniers toits de ma ville natale tout à fait devant soi l'horizon moite percé de rayons aigus mon compagnon de voyage est content de pouvoir enfin retourner chez lui je dirai même qu'il exulte secrètement il me décrit son ancienne villa perchée comme un nid de cigogne sur la pointe de la kasbah [...] ...on m'a ensuite remis un chèque au porteur et puis je n'ai pas l'intention d'en dire plus long sur cette ville.

Baïda (2007) reveals that Khaïr-Eddine (1967) goes from direct to indirect speech with no transition at all. He remarks that the Moroccan writer like to use puns, peculiar turns of sentences, which shows, above all, a tendency for unusual words and some neologisms as well. Baïda (2007) notice that the readers of *Agadir* should use a dictionary in order to grasp his complex style.

The extract below is only punctuated by comas. Other than a few interrogation marks that the reader can notice across the pages; this passage is a perfect example of the use of the stream of consciousness by Khaïr-Eddine (1967) because of the river-like flow of thoughts that the protagonist delivers us:

my head, my discovery, my wallet, and grandfather, whom I went to dig up just to find out if he's moved somewhere else, death that refuses me, I'm filthy, the bark of the old manic tree, the apple tree depicted, my blood inversely my darkened lymph, void blood, bee blood, my immense blood, my nameless blood [...] I was hospitalized because I was on my last legs [...] I forget about my disgusting life [...] but it quickly degenerates into rage, which is why I prefer the company of my grandfather, here is his own story, written by him, and which is basically a summary of mine.

Khaïr-Eddine (1967) states with his own words the following :

ma tête, ma trouvaille, mon porte-feuille, et grand-père que je suis allé déterrer simplement pour savoir s'il n'a pas changé de place, la mort qui me refuse, je suis infect, l'écorce du vieil arbre maniaque, du pommier décrit, mon sang inversement ma lymphé noirâtre, sang néant [...] je ne tolère pas le cours actuel de ma vie [...] on m'a hospitalisé parce que j'étais à bout de forces[...] mais ça dégénère vite en hargne, c'est pourquoi je préfère la compagnie de mon grand-père, voici sa propre histoire, écrite par lui, et qui est pour tout dire un résumé de la mienne. (*Agadir*, pp. 89-102)

In addition, Baïda (2007) demonstrates that the reader discovers in *Agadir*, the same angst held by Mohammed Khaïr-Eddine (1967). As a matter of fact, Baïda (2007) claims that the book can be seen, in itself, as a seismic work. He declares that Khaïr-Eddine's (1967) style is considered as a rigorous work which breaks down the codes. As Baïda (2007) notices, Khaïr-Eddine (1967) is either embracing the total absence of punctuation or, on the contrary, adopting an excessive use of it. The following passage illustrates the typography that Khaïr-Eddine employs in his writing which defies traditional frameworks:

WE CAN EVEN EXCLUDE FROM THIS NEW PLAN THE STREET AND EVERYTHING

THAT LOOKS LIKE IT FROM NEAR OR FAR.

As the author declares himself :

ON POURRA MÊME EXCLURE DE CE NOUVEAU PLAN LA RUE ET TOUT CE QUI RESSEMBLE DE PRES OU DE LOIN (pp. 106-107)

As noticed, the use of capital letters reveals the author's revolt against conventional rules of writing.

Moreover, Baïda (2007) focuses on the plurality of voices in Khaïr-Eddine's own poetics, where the aesthetic and the ideological coincide as they are intimately linked.

With what Baïda (2007) call Khaïr-Eddine's (1967) writing "écriture sismique et l'esthétique de la transhumance" (p. 175) which translates into "seismic writing and the aesthetic of the transhuman", he comes to the idea that Khaïr-Eddine (1967) shakes the very basis of archaic linguistic structures of language with his restricted molds.

Zohra Mezgueldi (2000) also discusses, in her thesis, *Oralité et stratégies scripturales dans l'oeuvre de Mohammed Khaïr-Eddine* [Doctoral dissertation, University Lettres- Lyon], the idea that the basis at core in Khaïr-Eddine's (1967) work, in his "seismic writing", in his work of foundation or "refoundation" as Mezgueldi, Z. (2000) calls it, can only lead to a discovery or rather a rediscovery, of both language and genre in a quest of finding a place for this production within language and literature. This goal requires, according to her, to question the structures of language and genre which composes the basis of literature.

Here is an example of the use of theater in Khaïr-Eddine's (1967) writing:

ME

Slaughter this Billy Goat

THE CROWD

Let's cut his throat

A plank of cedar wood is prepared. The billy goat is taken by two sturdy men. His paws are tied.

THE COOK

I'll drink his blood and blow into his bladder.

The billy goat is killed. In a few moments he's skinned. We throw him to the stray dogs. Silence. (p.

31)

As Khaïr-Eddine states on page 31 :

MOI

Egorgez ce Bouc

LA FOULE

Egorgeons-le

On apprête une planche de bois de cèdre. Le bouc est pris par deux hommes robustes. On lui ligote les pattes. On le couche sur la planche.

LE CUISINIER

Je boirai son sang je soufflerai dans sa vessie.

On tue le bouc. En quelques instants, il est dépiauté. On le jette aux chiens errants.Silence.

Here, Mohammed Khaïr-Eddine (1967) chooses to include theater bits inside his work, making it, interestingly enough, a literary production which stands out thanks to its multiple genres such as poetic prose, theater and poetry.

The following extract shows the inclusion of poetic prose:

The Parrot saying:

waters first, earth second, then the veins, then the flesh, then the trees, then the oblivion of the first gesture, the seasons the empires of bird forests.

The light. Open the Sesame Light. (Khaïr-Eddine, 1967, p. 39)

As stated by Khaïr-Eddine in his own words:

Le Perroquet disant :

les eaux les premières, la terre en second lieu
puis les veines puis la chair puis les arbres,
puis l'oubli du premier geste,
les saisons les empires de forêts d'oiseaux.

La lumière. Ouvrez la Lumière Sésame (Khaïr-Eddine, 1967, p. 39)

What is more, Mezgueldi (2000) declares that Khaïr-Eddine's (1967) writing style is satirical, ironic and puzzling from within. Here is an extract from *Agadir* which illustrates this idea:

... and the poet born as enacted by tornadoes, dragging a man's armor lacerated by insult, drinking, smoking, making love, devouring his mother's placenta, but death is on the way under his bleeding shadow when he is nauseated and drinks his life from the bottle, money troubles, publishers directors of uniprix, the owner of the hotel de passe, I am a writer, I weigh ten kilos, my height?

0,10 minutez, here is my passport:

KINGDOM OF MOROCCO

Name ?

First name ?

Born on ?

Place of birth ?

Profession : rebel

Address : Wandering Jew.

As Khaïr-Eddine says himself :

...et le poète naissant comme édicté par les tornades, traînant une cuirasse d'homme lacérée par l'injure, buvant, fumant, faisant l'amour, dévorant le placenta de sa mère, mais la mort se fait route sous son ombre saignante quand il a la nausée et qu'il boit sa vie au goulot, les ennuis d'argent, les éditeurs directeurs d'uniprix, le propriétaire de l'hôtel de passe, je suis un écrivain, je pèse 10 kilos, ma taille ? 0,10 minutez, voici mon passeport :

ROYAUME DU MAROC

Nom ?

Prénoms ?

Nationalité ?

Né le ?

Lieu de naissance ?

Profession : rebelle

Adresse : Juif errant (Khair-Eddine, 1967, pp. 88-89)

All in all, Josane Duranteau from *Les Lettres françaises* claims that "Mohammed Khair-Eddine uses language as a great coat which vast folds fall, swirl, make dizzy, imposing fury or, in other words majesty".

4.3 Style

Last but not least, the study deals with an important Haitian author Makenzy Orcel. It is worth establishing that the earthquake of January 12th, 2010 destroyed Haiti's capital Port-au-Prince, causing a major fracture in contemporary Haitian history.

In her article "Le roman post-sismique en haïti: une écriture (post) contemporaine de l'extrême", Alessia Vignoli (2018) discusses the idea that the earthquake has deeply changed cultural production as well.

Because of the natural calamity, the Haitian literary production has been marked by the theme of the fictionalization of the catastrophe. In Vignoli's (2018) article, she mentions this quotation of Joël Des Rosiers (2013):

The consoling powers of literature are not in vain: one year was enough to transform Haiti's literary landscape. Do we really believe that the earthquake of January 12th, 2010 the country's most appalling natural disaster, has given rise, by a remarkable editorial coincidence, given birth to a literature born of faults, pits and rubble embrocation of words on pain? Nothing is less certain. The question remains to actively observe the flowering of texts of all kinds that have appeared in the in the wake of the earthquake.

As Joël Des Rosiers (2013) declares in his own words :

Les pouvoirs de consolation de la littérature ne sont pas vains : un an a suffi à transformer le paysage littéraire haïtien. Croit-on vraiment que le séisme du 12 janvier 2010, la plus effroyable catastrophe naturelle qu'ait subi [sic !] le pays, ait donné naissance, par une remarquable coïncidence éditoriale, à une littérature issue des failles, des fosses et des décombres, embrocation de mots sur la douleur ? Rien n'est moins sûr. La question n'en demeure pas moins pertinente de constater de manière active la floraison de textes, de tous genres, ayant apparu dans le sillage du tremblement de terre.

Vignoli (2018) notices that a lot of Haitian writers have started including in their fictional works the topic of writing the disaster, in different shapes. In her article, Vignoli analyzes the strategies chosen both about the social and mainly psychological impacts of the natural catastrophes in a post-earthquake production. Indeed, she discusses *Les Immortelles* by Makenzy Orcel (2020). This Haitian author adopts various styles and forms in order to turn the disturbance of the earthquake into fiction. Vignoli choses to focus her attention on a peculiar narrative approach, that is to say, on Makenzy Orcel's hybrid narration.

She explains that the fact of maintaining a primordial perspective by distancing oneself from the disaster causes a few writers to question the possibility of writing after the calamity while considering the role of literature in those circumstances.

In *Les Immortelles*, Orcel, M. (2020) is wondering about the validity to write about the earthquake. This passage shows this questioning quite clearly:

The city where I grew up. The city of my first poems. I wasn't sure that I could make it. For me, sex and alcohol where the best therapy. I ran from everything, even writing. I mean, I didn't want to write immediately, at least I thought it wasn't possible...
(*The immortals*, p.1)

Orcel has, interestingly enough, transposed the disaster into fiction while employing heterogeneous topics and styles. It is worth recalling that Vignoli's article's aim is to see how disaster can become part of the structure of the novel causing stylistic disruptions. Therefore, Vignoli wishes to analyze the strategies adopted by Orcel in *Les Immortelles*. This study focuses on the novel's fragmented narration, also referred to by the author as "seismic writing" in its title turning the earthquake into stream of consciousness techniques. Here is an example of these techniques in Orcel's (2020) writing:

The little girl. She was dead after twelve days under the rubble, after having prayed to all the saints.

That night, the earth drifted. Fluttered. Danced. Self-harmed in order to exhume itself from within.

Tore itself apart. Laid on the ground like the dead. Traipsing over its own wreckage. (*The immortals*, p. 4)

The sentences are short, composed of one verb at a time to transcribe the shaking of the earth at the moment of the calamity. The earth is personified as the author chooses to describe it in human behavior as it sails, dances and flutters all together.

Through the adoption of a fragmented composition, Orcel, M. (2020) honors the

forgotten ones, that is to say, those who were sent to oblivion after the catastrophe. In fact, it is a reference to the prostitutes of Port-au-Prince's Grand-Rue, mentioned in the title. *Les Immortelles* takes place after the earthquake of January 12th, 2010, in the space of a few hours, in a room where two characters, a prostitute and a client, a writer by profession, engage in a pact. Indeed, in exchange for her services, the writer must turn an oral account into a written one. There is a precise aim through the story. Its goal is to bring back to life the immortals of the Grand-Rue, who perished in the earthquake, and especially the little Shakira.

The novel is based on a literary device called "mise en abyme", meaning it is a met literary method which describes a story in the process of writing itself. Orcel (2020) has chosen to show the figure of a writer in the process of writing a story to deal with a difficult topic, as Chemla, Y. (2015), the critic, points out saying: "the possibility of practicing of literature after the catastrophe." (p. 289).

There's a passage of the inclusion of poetry inside prose:

And I who was time

Space, the crossing

The beginning and the end

The splendors of the world

All the cries of the earth

Echo in my belly

- Not bad, writer. It looks like you're reading the depths of my soul.

In the end, a male poet is a little bit like a woman knocked up by words. (Orcel, 2020, *The immortals*, p. 6)

The writer chooses to use the italics to report the writing of his character while working on bringing back to life the late prostitutes of Grand-Rue, and especially, Shakira, the comrade of the protagonist, through poetry, because "She loved poetry." (Orcel, 2020, p. 5). Moreover, Makenzy Orcel (2020) starts his book with the following quotation: "All the cries of the earth echo in my belly" (p.1), which is quite a vivid image describing the impact of the earthquake of Port-au-Prince on them and on the characters of his work.

Orcel (2020) dedicates his work to the long forgotten prostitutes of Grand-Rue, saying on the presentation of his book:

"To all the Grand-Rue prostitutes swept away by the violent earthquake of January 12, 2010.". (*The immortals*, p. 1)

It is also worth noticing that the prostitutes remain nameless except Shakira, who is referred to as "the little one", and is given a name, thus, at the same time, an identity. Her name is to be remembered among the forgotten victims of the earthquake. This extract serves this idea:

My name is...Actually, my name doesn't matter. My name is the last piece of intimacy I have left.

(Orcel, 2020, *The immortals*, p. 8)

By writing about the prostitutes who died in the tremendous earthquake that destroyed the capital, these characters who no one cares about are remembered for eternity: they become immortals, hence precisely through the title of the book.

Les Immortelles is a polyphonic novel since it sheds light on a multitude of voices.

Indeed, one can mention the following voices: the writer's, his interlocutor's, Shakira's and that of Shakira's mother. Orcel (2020) adopts a fragmented narration, made of juxtaposed, very short narrative snippets at times, which are mainly presented through their genres: prose, poems in verse, and italicized pages from Shakira's. This variety of genres has a lot to do with the stream of consciousness techniques since they do not limit themselves to one genre at a time as they defy the concept of label.

It is thanks to the transcription of her memories by the writer that the prostitute is able to bring Shakira back to life. It is worth noting that Shakira is a real bookworm and had an affair with a literature teacher. In *Les Immortelles*, the reader is offered reflections on the role of literature as he goes through the entire novel.

5. Results and findings

After what has been stated, it is noted that there are some similarities and differences in the use of "seismic writing" by Mohammed Khair-Eddine (1967), Ito Sei (2008) and Makenzy Orcel (2020). For instance, all of them use the fragmentation of narration along with variations of typography in their writings.

Another aspect that characterizes the writers' works is their polyphonic dimension through which they give a voice to the victims of the earthquakes which is quite present in *Agadir*, *Streets of Fiendish Ghosts* and *Les Immortelles*.

Through this article, it is noticed that Mohammed Khair-Eddine (1967) and Makenzy

Orcel (2020) make almost no use of punctuation in their writings in contrast with Ito Sei (2008). Another characteristic that unifies the Moroccan and the Haitian writers is the hybrid narration employed in their literary productions. As a matter of fact, they both use poetry while Ito Sei (2008) is limited to prose. However, Mohammed Khair-Eddine (1967) is the only one to introduce theatrical scenes in his work.

In addition to this, both Japanese and Moroccan writers are known for bringing a new element to the literature of that time. Indeed, Ito Sei (2008) is famous for contributing to new literary movements mentioned in *Bungei Rebyuu* also known as *Literature Review*, in the same way Khair-Eddine (1967) introduces "seismic writing" to Moroccan literature. Among the elements that may attract the attention in this article is the fact that each writer is distinguished by his own characteristics. For example, Ito Sei's (2008) literature is based on Freudian psychology while Mohammed Khair-Eddine's (1967) style is known for its complexity.

Furthermore, the Moroccan author stands out through his rejection of structure, labels and molds whereas the Japanese writer is known for his life spent in a period of bold experimentation in literature.

Throughout this study, and among the five techniques mentioned previously, that is to say, the polyphony of voices, the variation of typography, the hybrid and fragmented narration and the absence of punctuation, it is clear that the polyphony and the fragmentation of the narration are mostly used by the three authors dealt with in this paper.

6. Conclusion

To sum up, this study's purpose is generally to show how earthquakes not only alter cities through the concrete damage caused to the town and population but also radically change the literature both in its content and style. Indeed, these natural disasters considerably break the language itself since writers from different parts of the world are deeply influenced by natural calamities. It is the case of Moroccan author Mohammed Khair-Eddine (1967) with *Agadir*, followed by Japanese writer Ito Sei (2008) with *Streets*

of *Fiendish Ghosts*, and lastly, Haitian writer Makenzy Orcel (2020) with *Les Immortelles*. As a matter of fact, they all choose to adopt new techniques to describe the natural disaster they survived. They also use the stream of consciousness techniques to create a “seismic literature”, a literature of the post-earthquake, as a way of questioning the possibility of writing the disaster.

This article would not be concluded without mentioning an even more recent natural catastrophe that occurred in Morocco. It is the terrible earthquake that struck the region of Al Hauz on September 8th, 2023 with a magnitude of 6.8. This natural disaster undoubtedly affects different artistic fields in Moroccan society. This phenomenon begins to be reflected in poetry, painting and songs. Based on what has been stated, general natural calamities have always had an impact on different writers' pieces of work.

This earthquake has an influence on the writing techniques in general and the Moroccan one in particular. All the works analyzed before have only one purpose: giving a voice to the people who died during the earthquakes so the readers can remember them. Indeed, the act of writing after the awful events is a way of leaving a mark, a memory so that the victims are always remembered and do not fall into oblivion. The polyphonic dimension of *Agadir*, *Streets of Fiendish Ghosts* and *Les Immortelles* is meant to fulfill that purpose.

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