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SERIES IN LITERARY STUDIES

Agata Walek

Beyond Linguistic Sign

Embodiment and the Recovery of Resonance

SERIES IN LITERARY STUDIES

Blending phonosemantics, cognitive theory, and phenomenology, the monograph daringly and inventively pushes the linguistic boundaries to open new vistas into how sound and conceptual metaphor generate emotions and meanings in the intricate works of Mark Z. Danielewski and David Abram.

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About the author

Agata Walek holds a PhD in English and American Literature. Her research explores the post-postmodern condition in contemporary American literature, with particular attention to the reconstruction of subjectivity beyond linguistic fragmentation. Her work adopts a multidisciplinary framework, integrating literary theory, phenomenology, embodied cognition, conceptual metaphor theory, and phonosemantics. She engages closely with developments in sound studies and non-representational approaches to language, examining how resonance, embodiment, and material expressivity reshape our understanding of meaning and selfhood. She is a lecturer at the Department of Languages at Brno University of Technology, Czech Republic.

Summary

This monograph examines 'Only Revolutions' (2006) by Mark Z. Danielewski and 'Becoming Animal' (2010) by David Abram to ask whether contemporary literature can articulate a viable alternative to the radical pluralism and fragmentation associated with postmodern aesthetics. What was once described as the postmodern condition—decentred subjectivity, proliferating interpretations, the dispersal of grand narratives—has intensified in the twenty-first century into algorithmic hyperreality, digital abstraction, and ecological disconnection. Within this landscape, reading and thinking risk dissolving into endless circulation without orientation. Positioned at the intersection of post-structuralism, phenomenology, and embodied cognition, the study proposes not a return to unity but a re-materialization of experience through resonance. It develops an interdisciplinary framework drawing on phonosemantics, conceptual metaphor theory, and sound studies in order to foreground dimensions often marginal in literary criticism: rhythm, vibration, and embodied perception. Language is approached not as a merely representational system but as materially expressive and affectively generative. In a final chapter, the memoir of David Goggins is read alongside these literary and philosophical analyses to explore how discipline, pain, and self-formation enact a comparable structure of re-attunement. Across literary experimentation, ecological phenomenology, and embodied practice, the book argues that meaning does not simply signify—it resounds. By reconceptualizing language as resonant and ontologically expressive, the study offers a constructive response to postmodern fragmentation and contributes to debates in contemporary literary theory, continental philosophy, and embodied cognition. It will be of interest to researchers in literary and cultural studies, philosophy of language, affect theory, and ecophenomenology, and may serve as a methodological resource for interdisciplinary work on materiality, sound, and subjectivity.

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