

Signifying Loss: Toward a Poetics of Narrative Mourning

Nouri Gana

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By remapping the configurations of mourning across modernist, postmodernist, and postcolonial literatures, psychoanalysis and deconstruction (James Joyce, Jamaica Kincaid, Tahar Ben Jelloun, Elias Khoury, Sigmund Freud, and Jacques Derrida), Signifying Loss studies not only how loss is signified but also the ethico-political significance of such signifying. First, by examining the dynamics between narrative tropes and mourning, it elaborates a poetics of narrative mourning in which prosopopoeia becomes the master trope of mourning, while catachresis the master trope of melancholia, and chiasmus of trauma. Second, it develops a situated and flexible theory of mourning, capable of adjusting to diverse contexts in which the ethical and political stakes of mourning are different—in short, Signifying Loss calls for the formulation of geopolitical and differential tactics of mourning and mournability, rather than for a clear cut strategy of inconsolability.



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