

Title: Silent Bodies: Gesture, Language, and Alterity in Stefan Chwin's "Hanemann"

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Abstract:

This paper examines Stefan Chwin's novel *Hanemann* (1995) and its presentation of the relationship between language, memory, and otherness. Of particular interest is how Chwin points to the constraints of language, which through its stable and essentializing frames of signification, limits expression and smooths over alterity. As a counterpoint to verbal language, Chwin explores the expressive power of the body, which through gesture, though silent, is full of "inaudible language," is dynamic and alive, and can voice that which does not quite fit standardized, national conceptions of identity, history, and culture.