Staging (Dis)Connections between the Individual and the Mass in Contemporary Literature: From the Pathological "Mass in Person" to the Globalized Subject

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Abstract

This article examines literary stagings of the relationship between the individual and the mass in contemporary literature by drawing on four case studies: Bret Easton Ellis's American Psycho (1991), Jon McGregor's If Nobody Speaks of Remarkable Things (2002), David Mitchell's Ghostwritten (1999) and David Harrower's play Kill the Old Torture Their Young (1998). Ellis and Harrower foreground the erosion of subjectivity within today's abstract society. The dark satire of Ellis's novel highlights how the cynicism of the information age and capitalist exchange reduces the individual to a pathological "mass in person." The depersonalization of social interaction also takes centre stage in Harrower's play. In contrast, McGregor's novel depicts the individual as part of an organic whole, which allows for spiritual connectivity transcending factors such as gender or ethnicity. A different take on the individual and the mass is offered by Ghostwritten inssofar as it accentuates the interconnectivity of individuals in a globalized world and how power dynamics shape the interplay of the global and local.

Full Text:

PDF

References


Reads. DOI: 10.3233/IP-2010-0205. The information in these stages has been flowing in one direction, from the government to the public, with limited feedback from citizens. We often call this type of e-government Web 1.0-based e-government or Government 1.0. The last stage has not yet been fully achieved, since the transformation of government requires active participation to occur, the citizens should have a platform to express their opinions without losing discussion threads, and this platform should also provide the government with tools to analyze and evaluate the impact of making certain policy decisions.