From Monstrous Voice to Female Agency: Language, Identity and Becoming in Poor Things

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Abstract

The paper examines the role of language in the representation of embodiment and female subjectivity in Bella Baxter, the protagonist of *Poor Things*, whose linguistic development as a reanimated posthuman figure mirrors her process of becoming. Drawing on feminist linguistics (Lakoff 1975; Cameron 1995), theories of language and power (Foucault 1980; Fairclough 1989), interactional approaches to identity (De Fina et al. 2006), and posthuman theory (Haraway 1991; Braidotti 2013), the study analyses Bella's language in the film's screenplay (McNamara 2023), tracing her progression from fragmented to increasingly self-authorising speech as a form of discursive reappropriation within a framework of patriarchal control. In relation to this trajectory, it also examines male discursive regimes that seek to regulate and delimit her agency. Bella's emancipation ultimately emerges through linguistic negotiation, foregrounding language as a key site for the construction of power and subjectivity.