

The touch of ineffable in the fictional work of Sylvie Germain

Ineffable. Transcendence. Silence. Language.

The work of contemporary French writer Sylvie Germain is often compared to a “silent symphony”. Whispered from the depths of being, Germain’s novels resonate with the richness, grandeur and poeticism of the language. Underneath the fetching words, a gentle murmur of the unknown rises. But how to capture the “chant of the end of silence”, that the author refers to in her essay “Les Échos du silence”? The confrontation with God’s extremely reticent presence becomes the focus of Germain’s fictional characters, as well as an impulse for her literary work. This interpretative analysis of selected excerpts from novels by Sylvie Germain is an attempt to identify typical expressive means of the “ineffable”. The study wants to be not only an illustration of the patient search for the expression of transcendent experience, but also a sincere look at one particular literary (and human) testimony.

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