



Rhetorics of Religion in American Fiction: Faith, Fundamentalism, and Fanaticism in the Age of Terror

By Liliana M. Naydan

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Rhetorics of Religion in American Fiction considers the way in which contemporary American authors address the subject of belief in the post-9/11 Age of Terror. Naydan suggests that after 9/11, fiction by Mohsin Hamid, Laila Halaby, Philip Roth, Don DeLillo, John Updike, and Barbara Kingsolver dramatizes and works to resolve impasses that exist between believers of different kinds at the extremes. These impasses emerge out of the religious paradox that shapes America as simultaneously theocratic and secular, and they exist, for instance, between liberals and fundamentalists, between liberals and certain evangelicals, between fundamentalists and artists, and between fundamentalists of different varieties. Ultimately, Naydan argues that these authors function as literary theologians of sorts and forge a relevant space beyond or between extremes. They fashion faith or lack thereof as hybridized and hence as a negotiation among secularism, atheism, faith, fundamentalism, and fanaticism. In so doing, they invite their readers into contemplations of religious difference and new ways of memorializing 9/11.

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About the Author

Liliana M. Naydan is assistant professor of English at Penn State Abington.

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