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The figurative dimension of terrorist violence: Literary approaches

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Abstract

Traditionally, and for reasons that have to do with its immediately visible brutality, terrorism has been approached through its primary component—physical violence—intended to produce psychological distress. However, intense and cruel as it may be, the violence associated with terrorism is not an end in itself. This paper proposes a view of terrorist practices as bearers of a message hidden underneath the physical violence they promote. The focus will be laid on the manner in which this message has been decoded by both British and American writers in the rather recent context of the so-called ‘9/11 culture’, with specific reference to two novels that have grown in fame due to their fictionalization of the post 9/11 world.

Keywords: *terrorism, violence, mixed fiction, 9/11 novel, trauma*