



Utopia and Terror in Contemporary American Fiction (Routledge Transnational Perspectives on American Literature)

By Judie Newman

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This book examines the quest for/failure of Utopia across a range of contemporary American/transnational fictions in relation to terror and globalization through authors such as Susan Choi, André Dubus, Dalia Sofer, and John Updike. While recent critical thinkers have reengaged with Utopia, the possibility of terror ? whether state or non-state, external or homegrown ? shadows Utopian imaginings. Terror and Utopia are linked in fiction through the exploration of the commodification of affect, a phenomenon of a globalized world in which feelings are managed, homogenized across cultures, exaggerated, or expunged according to a dominant model. Narrative approaches to the terrorist offer a means to investigate the ways in which fiction can resist commodification of affect, and maintain a reasoned but imaginative vision of possibilities for human community. Newman explores topics such as the first American bestseller with a Muslim protagonist, the links between writer and terrorist, the work of Iranian-Jewish Americans, and the relation of race and religion to Utopian thought.

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Utopia and Terror in Contemporary American Fiction (Routledge Transnational Perspectives on American Literature) By Judie Newman Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #4303275 in Books
- Brand: Brand: Routledge
- Published on: 2013-01-16
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.02" h x .50" w x 5.98" l, .85 pounds
- Binding: Hardcover
- 194 pages

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Review

"This up-to-the-minute look at some of the most remarkable examples of a classic genre as it keeps pace with developments in the real world is fascinating and enlightening....Students of literature will appreciate the author's many references to earlier, important critical perspectives on utopian forms, in addition to her own insightful evaluations of these very recent works. Like the stories themselves, Newman is exploring fresh territory. Readers will enjoy her engaging style and the self-contained chapters and useful bibliography. Summing Up: Highly recommended." --D. C. Greenwood, Albright College, CHOICE

"This is a focused investigation demonstrating a keen analysis of narrative technique... Newman's effort is both timely and considered." - Kate North, Times Higher Education

"This up-to-the-minute look at some of the most remarkable examples of a classic genre as it keeps pace with developments in the real world is fascinating and enlightening...Each chapter takes up a significant new work of fiction, placing it within the literary tradition and showing how it builds on that tradition in noteworthy ways...Students of literature will appreciate the author's many references to earlier, important critical perspectives on utopian forms, in addition to her own insightful evaluations of these very recent works. Like the stories themselves, Newman is exploring fresh territory. Readers will enjoy her engaging style and the self-contained chapters and useful bibliography. Summing Up: Highly recommended." -D. C. Greenwood, Albright College, Choice

"A book that provides a thoughtful, erudite and wide-ranging discussion of literary fiction...I will be returning to this book, using it in my own teaching and research, and encouraging others to do so as well." --Aliko Varvogli, University of Dundee, Journal of American Studies

"Utopia and Terror in Contemporary American Fiction offers a series of thought-provoking readings on contemporary fiction, brought together on the basis of their utopian potential." --Paula Martín Salván, University of Córdoba, ATLANTIS Journal of the Spanish Association of Anglo-American Studies

About the Author

Judie Newman is Professor of American Studies at The University of Nottingham, UK.

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