

“Doubt is Salutory in our Certainties:” Religious Fundamentalism, Terrorism and Identity in Driss Chraïbi’s Post-Postcolonial Detective Fiction

Nouzha Baba

Abstract:

This article examines the prominent Moroccan-French author Driss Chraïbi’s detective novel *L’homme qui venait du passé* (the man who came from the Past), which reflects critically on the interplay of religion (Islam), terrorism and identity at the start of the new millennium. Published in 2004, the novel is a case of literature normally referred to as 9/11 literature or post-9/11 literature because it revolves around 9/11, the war on terror and the assumed rhetorical clash of civilizations. Written in a transparent and direct style and tone, this detective novel extends the author’s thought-provoking critique in search for life outside the confines of the globalized drama of terrorism and the ideology of Islamism. In this article, I contend that the novel’s innovation in the-matics makes it fits to be classified within post-postcolonial detective fiction, rather than a classic postcolonial fiction, concerned with an investigation in an age of “accelerating globalization” which characterizes post-postcoloniality. In my close-reading of the text, I look at how Chraïbi’s detective investigates the mobilizing force of Islamist terrorism, as a politics of its own, only justified and legitimized in the name of the religion of Islam. This article unfolds, then, how Chraïbi’s text negotiates the issue of terrorism, its complexity and its contradictions: as an ideology and a myth. It explores, further, to what extent the text creates an oppositional space to dismantle the politics of Islamist fundamentalism and to denounce the impact of such politics on Muslims’ identity, particularly within the Western nation.

Keywords: *L’homme qui venait du passé*, Religion, Fundamentalism, Terrorism, Identity, Post-Postcoloniality