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Accommodation and Resistance in Religious Fiction: Family Structures and Gender Roles

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Sociology of Religion, Volume 60, Issue 4, 1 December 1999, Pages 439–455,

<https://doi.org/10.2307/3712025>

Published: 01 December 1999

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Abstract

The relationship between religion and secular culture has often been one filled with tension. For conservative Protestants, this relationship has been

reflected in a tension between resisting secular culture, and accommodating certain aspects of faith to secular ideals. This paper offers a content analysis of Christian formulaic fiction written for teenage girls. The analysis compares gender roles and family structures within religious and secular novels, to explore how the forces of accommodation and resistance work within religious popular culture. The analysis reveals that in Christian formulaic fiction written for teenage girls there is some evidence of accommodation to more “progressive” gender roles. However, most depictions of family structures and gender roles tend to support traditional notions, and resist recent cultural developments.

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Online ISSN 1759-8818

Print ISSN 1069-4404

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