only a cursory reference), is a visual paradigm. The visuality in the two books, however, is that of illusions and limits of visual representation: infinitely folding and repeating mirror images, automorphic recurrence of fractal shapes within them, vanishing points, optical illusions and distortions, chaos and deluding regularity of strange attractors. This desire for strange and ungainly shapes goes beyond the paradigm set by Joseph Frank in his essay on spatial form, and perhaps even beyond Mieke Bal's visual readings. Secondly, the direction set by both authors seems to be Deleuzian, that is towards a general world-view to which physical science and humanities are two variants of one and the same thing. Are the "neo-solutions" going to be more attractive for future scholars? Do they undermine the traditional paradigm of "theory," pinned down to several poles, such as "figurative," "political," "hermeneutical," or "formalist" ends of a well known continuum? Do Deleuze, Lotman, and other scholars invoked by the two authors, in the radical blend of human and inhuman world, question the very essence of *Geistwissenschaften*, as they were conceived of by Dilthey? These are, perhaps, the most general questions posed by the two books reviewed here.

Last but not least, both books deserve commendation for editing, design, and illustration. Authors, who wish to concentrate on qualities of signifiers that vanish from the referential space while interacting with it, will work on the very physical shape of their books as carefully as on their signification, ponderous as it may be. Both books are set in a wide variety of types (the reviewer could count more than ten), printed on paper that is floating between white and beige, unusually formatted, richly illustrated, and enriched with beautiful cover art. This represents a welcome change in the direction of Baroque publishing practices of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when books, especially scientific and critical ones, were combined works of art.

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Birgit Däwes, *Ground Zero Fiction: History, Memory, and Representation in the American 9/11 Novel*. Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2011. 497 pages.
Sven Cvek, *Towering Figures: Reading the 9/11 Archive*. Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2011. 271 pages.

Over a decade after the destruction of the World Trade Center, there exists a huge body of literary responses to 9/11 and its aftermath, and the amount of critical works devoted to this literary phenomenon steadily grows. Such tendencies in literature and criticism are far from being surprising, given the unprecedented scale of national trauma

in the United States as well as the global reaction of shock, compassion and support after the terrorist attack on New York. It goes without saying that events like 9/11 have an overwhelming effect on the human imagination and determine public expectations with respect to the cultural activities helping to come to terms with what is far beyond individual comprehension. A number of American writers immediately responded to 9/11 and published poems, essays and short stories about the tragedy in major magazines and newspapers. Artists from various fields were involved, from the very beginning, in ceremonies commemorating the victims of the terrorist attack. In the course of time—and predictably enough—novels about 9/11 began to appear, and by now they have become so numerous and diverse that it is possible to treat them as a separate thematic genre and even to talk about some kind of canon of 9/11 novels, including not only American books, but also a handful of works by writers from other countries. As it inevitably happens in the process of canon-formation, some books have received greater attention than others. Therefore, before any further crystallization of the canon of 9/11 novels takes place, it is definitely time for some kind of synthesis that would do justice to the diversity of narrative representations of the event. Without a doubt. Birgit Däwes's book *Ground Zero Fiction: History, Memory, and Representation in the American 9/11 Novel*, offering precisely such a synthesis, is a very timely publication. It contains a thorough recapitulation of the state of the genre of the 9/11 novel at the present moment and develops an interpretative classification that will remain a primary reference for future academic critics writing about 9/11 in literature.

Däwes pursues a much more ambitious aim than literary scholars typically do: instead of proving a given thesis on the basis of a limited selection of texts, she approaches a major literary phenomenon in its entirety. Symptomatically enough, she is quite specific about numbers, and numbers do matter in her monograph, providing the best evidence of its scope. Namely, Däwes has identified 231 books that can be classified as 9/11 novels, all published before June 2011; out of these, 162 have been written by U.S.-American authors and constitute the material for analysis in the book. The impressive scope of *Ground Zero Fiction* can be fully appreciated if one bears in mind that the broadest earlier book-length presentation of the 9/11 novel, Richard Gray's *After the Fall: American Literature Since 9/11* (2011), examines seventeen literary works. Däwes's discussions of individual novels are not very extensive—Updike's *Terrorist* has six pages, DeLillo's *Falling Man* has seven, and Foer's *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* has ten—but clearly she is much more interested in the narrative paradigms that emerge across a variety of texts than in the implications of single novels, however important these may have been for the development of the genre. Referring to numerous examples, Däwes looks at how such paradigms function in the broad and dynamic con-

text of what she calls, after Winfried Fluck, the "cultural imaginary" (6). In this realm, fiction is "a catalyst of transgression and dehierarchization" (7), because it enables the creation of a multitude of discourses whose tentativeness or alternativeness destabilizes the entrenched discourse of commemoration and interferes, on a more general level, with a variety of social, cultural and political issues with which the American public has been preoccupied. Däwes explores the complex symbolic structures encoded in 9/11 novels as expressions not only of immediate emotional and political responses to the terrorist attacks, but also of the lasting epistemological and ontological anxieties of the postmodern age.

Contrary to most critics who have written on the 9/11 novel before her, Däwes does not take the definition of the genre for granted, and she proposes a set of its defining criteria. Thus, she points out three aspects upon which the recognition of the genre depends: the presentation of the setting, the thematic or symbolic significance of 9/11 in the plot, and the characters' perception of the event. Däwes emphasizes that each of these criteria creates a plethora of narrative possibilities, which in turn account for the multiplicity of the variants of representing 9/11 in fiction. Her criteria are valid, indeed, and, in their multifarious combinations, they appear to describe comprehensively the genre model. Some doubts may arise, however, with respect to how she applies her criteria to novels in which the presentation of 9/11 and its aftermath is marginal, if not merely implied. The long list of 9/11 novels in the bibliography includes, among others, such well-known works as Roth's *Everyman*, Powers' *The Echo Maker* or Ellis's *The Lunar Park*, which are not directly concerned with the event and only contain vague allusions to it or mention it, as it were, in passing. For Däwes, such brief references are sufficient to classify the books as 9/11 novels and to place them in the category of "unnaration," the term signifying a refusal to narrate the event. However intriguing all this sounds, one can get a suspicion that Däwes seeks pretexts to expand her list of 9/11 novels to the possible limits, especially by including in it works by established authors whose new books are expected to attract attention. Looking at some titles on Däwes's list, one can perhaps wonder whether most of contemporary American narratives of loss, mourning, menace, remembrance, forgetting, redemption and recuperation would not qualify, in one sense or another, as 9/11 novels. In any case, this is just one aspect of *Ground Zero Fiction* that calls for a serious critical debate, attesting in this way to the book's impact.

The essential part of Däwes's book—300 out of nearly 500 pages—contains the discussion of six models of representing 9/11 in the American novel. The first is what she calls a "metonymic" approach, which relies on the narrative techniques of "premonition, ellipsis, implication, projection, and satirical distortion" (20) as ways of achieving a text's indirect engagement with the event of 9/11. The second approach, described as "salvational," on the contrary, presupposes the necessity to re-enact the event and, ulti-

mately, to establish the terms for its closure. Such narratives often involve quasi-religious themes, such as recovery or redemption, and allude to the cultural traditions infused with religious significance. The "diagnostic" model comes third and comprises novels that explore the social and political consequences of the terrorist attack. In this category, the thematic scope includes "the Bush administration's immediate response, the long-term modifications of both domestic and foreign policies and… the impact that 9/11 had on concepts of gender, ethnicity, class, and national identity at large" (20). Importantly enough, this approach, as a rule, applies to novels written by American ethnic authors. Däwes emphasizes the difference in the treatment of ethnic themes in "diagnostic" and "appropriative" narratives, the latter variety manifestly aiming at reconstructing the voice and the perspective of the Other. In the fifth model, called "symbolic," the events of 9/11 provide a background for the presentation of "personal crisis, loss or decline" (21). The last category includes "writerly" narratives, characterized by formal innovations and freely combining the constitutive features of the other models.

Ground Zero Fiction benefits immensely from the author's evasion of the rigors of a pre-established methodology of reading. Quite on the contrary, Däwes works across a whole spectrum of literary methodologies, both older and newer ones. Her typological approach to the 9/11 novel evokes the spirit of structuralism, but easily transcends the limits of this traditional school of studying literary genres in highlighting the dynamics of literary and extra-literary contexts. In her understanding of the cultural imaginary and of the subversive work of literature, she makes a nod toward Mikhail Bakhtin, even if she does not acknowledge the Russian critic. On several occasions Däwes reiterates her debt to new historicism. Recent developments in literary theory, such as the incorporation of memory studies, considerably substantiate her argument. Interestingly enough, Däwes appears to be somewhat skeptical about the use of trauma theory in the analysis of 9/11 novels, even though it continues to function as a primary interpretative framework for literary scholars writing on narrative representations of 9/11. Strictly speaking, she notices that the predominance of trauma theory narrows down the scope of interpretations and, as a consequence, precludes the recognition of the diversity of 9/11 novels. Däwes has done a titanic job writing *Ground Zero Fiction*; she has proved her sweeping grasp of the subject, ability to create a thorough synthesis of a multifarious cultural phenomenon, and, last but not least, personal determination. It can be said without any exaggeration that *Ground Zero Fiction* marks a new stage in critical explorations of the 9/11 novel. Its encyclopedic quality makes it an obligatory source for all those who will write on related topics for many years to come.

Although in comparison with Birgit Däwes's *Ground Zero Fiction* most of the existing—and presumably forthcoming, too—book-length studies of cultural representations

of 9/11 are bound to appear rather modest, Sven Cvek, in his book *Towering Figures: Reading the 9/11 Archive*, demonstrates that a good selection of material for analysis enables the establishment of a truly broad perspective on narrative depictions of 9/11. Cvek's work shares important premises with Däwes's, offering a new historicist approach to the event and showing how different modes of representation create competing versions of 9/11. What lies at the core of such a proliferation of images and narratives of the event is the issue of power. Reading selected texts, generated by various media and belonging to what Cvek calls "the 9/11 archive," he traces the mechanisms of constructing hegemonic interpretations of the national tragedy, and concomitantly explores the textual strategies of contesting such imposed interpretations. He develops his argument around the concept of national trauma as a sociopolitical phenomenon. Cvek claims that 9/11 strengthened U.S. nationalism insofar as it constituted what he calls, after Dominick LaCapra, "the myth of founding trauma" (11) that facilitated national homogenization through public rituals of mourning and commemoration. At the same time, 9/11 was, unquestionably, a global event that not only redefined America's position on the arena of world politics, but also dramatically affected the ways of experiencing and understanding national sentiments on the domestic scale. Accordingly, Cvek identifies two tendencies in the 9/11 archive: "the archive speaks of a post-traumatic reconstruction of an imagined national wholeness; at the same time many 9/11 fictions also work to reconstitute U.S. nationhood within a planetary context" (11). This dichotomy underscores Cvek's argument and marks an important distinguishing feature of his book against the background of thematically related criticism.

The composition of Cvek's book follows a clearly defined trajectory, from the national to the supranational contexts of the cultural encoding of 9/11. In the first chapter, which is fairly theoretical, the critic examines the ways in which the event was historicized in connection with the hegemonic American historical narratives, but he also points out that the exceptional significance of 9/11 created the possibility of revising thoroughly the categories of historical thinking. The second chapter is devoted to the crucial role of the community as a space of national consolidation through a collective reliving of trauma. The two chapters that follow demonstrate how this process is supported or contested by literary works: thus, one chapter focuses on the uses of melodrama in establishing a narrative model of representing 9/11, and the other shows how literary texts undermine the predominant public discourse on the example of Art Spiegelman's critique of the role of the media after the terrorist attack in his graphic novel *In the Shadow of No Towers*. In the fifth chapter, Cvek makes a leap to the global aspect of 9/11, and in the next three chapters he problematizes such issues as the U.S. economic and political supremacy, fundamentalist Islamic terrorism, global capitalism

and the opposition to it on the basis of Don DeLillo's essays dealing with or alluding to 9/11. By far, the most surprising inclusion in Cvek's selection of analyzed texts is Thomas Pynchon's *Against the Day*, discussed in the last chapter. According to the critic, this novel, set at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century, addresses some problems that are relevant for the situation of the United States in the aftermath of 9/11; in particular, the subject of terrorism, present in Pynchon's novel, provokes a fundamental question about "the possibility and the impossibility of counter-hegemonic political action in a putatively post-historical and post-political world" (15).

Birgit Däwes's *Ground Zero Fiction* and Sven Cvek's *Towering Figures* are important European contributions to the study of literary representations of 9/11. Both books emphasize the inescapability of a historicist approach to the event, demonstrate the threat posed by homogeneous and hegemonic historical interpretations, and point to the subversive role of literature. While Däwes and Cvek share certain general assumptions and conclusions, they follow different interpretative routes. The former highlights the formal variety of 9/11 novels, and the latter pays more attention to how literary and journalistic writings about the event and its aftermath are positioned in relation to the dominant political discourse. Ultimately, even if critics writing about 9/11 in literature reach similar conclusions, their interpretative procedures are impressively varied and, therefore, invariably intriguing.

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Michael Butter, Patrick Keller, and Simon Wendt, eds., *Arnold Schwarzenegger—Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Body and Image*. Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2011. 266 pages.

This volume could not have been published at a more timely moment. The current scandals surrounding Schwarzenegger's personal life have refocused public attention on "The Governator" and have cracked, to put it mildly, his image of the respectable politician and family man. It so happens that the book edited by Butter, Kettler and Wendt discusses from an interdisciplinary academic perspective precisely the shaping of the image that has just been shattered. While I am afraid that the volume may be too theoretical to enter the popular market, it is certainly a most useful read for scholars from the fields of cultural studies, media studies, gender studies and political sciences who want to be able to place Schwarzenegger within the contexts of their respective disciplines and against the backdrop of the American Dream.