

conception of the Poet-Priest depends on the creative artistic force of the spiritually inspired individual, one can only properly grasp the Transcendentalist ethos through a strong emphasis on the characters of those real-life would-be Poet-Priests, Emerson and Thoreau. This makes for inspiring prose but has its obvious pitfalls. Also of note from a scholarly perspective is that the majority of the research literature employed by Bakratcheva's study dates from the 1950s to the 70s. One could in fact conjecture that Bakratcheva's preference for older sources partly accounts for the emphasis on Puritanism (Sacvan Bercovitch's influential 1975 study *The Puritan Origins of the American Self* is visible) and for focusing on the persons of Transcendentalism's central dynamic duo—but this would be conjecture.

The language of the translation is generally good, but there's a breath of clumsiness especially in the syntax and the use of commas. Aside from the occasional need for a quick second look ("His Poet could not be but also a Priest" [90], "The irony is more than 'unambiguous'" [58]), the text nevertheless remains readable and lively. Even though *Visibility Beyond the Visible* has notable issues as a work of literary and intellectual history, it does offer moments of inspired textual analysis and an engaging general elaboration on a central theme in Transcendentalism's spiritual and artistic outlook.

Jouni Teittinen

University of Turku, Finland

Birgit Däwes. *Ground Zero Fiction: History, Memory, and Representation in the American 9/11 Novel*. Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter GmbH, 2011. 414 pages. ISBN 978-3-8253-5930-0. \$82.65

The terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, have long since found a place in popular culture, both directly and indirectly. The past ten years or so have seen a steady stream of literature about the attacks and the aftermath, to such an extent that we now talk of the subgenre 9/11 literature. This genre has already been examined by Kristiaan Versluys in his *Out of the Blue: September 11 and the Novel* (2009) and by Richard Gray in *After the Fall: American Literature since 9/11* (2011). But as Birgit Däwes notes in her impressive and exhaustive study *Ground Zero Fiction*, "no critical publication has yet provided a systematic analysis and categorization of [the 9/11] texts" (7).

After a 70-page chapter that provides a meticulous overview of existing criticism on 9/11 fiction—and places the monographs by Versluys and Gray

as the two most seminal studies so far—Däwes lays out her own inspiring systematic approach. Where much of the academic criticism has focused on trauma theory, Däwes' approach develops "a working typology" of 9/11 fiction. She identifies the various "thematic, formal, and structural techniques" of representation (7) by classifying the novels into six categories: metonymic, salvational, diagnostic, appropriative, symbolic, and writerly strategies. The goal is "a larger analysis of how 9/11 is (re)coded, embedded and contextualized within the American cultural imaginary" (8).

Däwes has identified "at least 231 novels from around the world ... which can be classified as '9/11 novels.'" 162 of these are written by U. S.-American novelists. Some of the well-known novels by Updike, DeLillo, and Safran Foer are examined, of course, and with interesting results, but what is really refreshing about the study is the inclusion of much more marginal texts that have rarely been included in previous criticism.

The first category Däwes analyses, the metonymic approaches, are novels which use indirect narrative approaches in order to channel the massive semiotic energy created by the attacks. Rather than foregrounding the attacks themselves in the novels, the writers instead focus on the representational challenge in recognition of the inadequacy of language. Covering a large number of texts, Däwes demonstrates how novels like Paul Auster's *Brooklyn Follies* and Bret Easton Ellis's *Lunar Park* rely on a strategy of ellipsis, Claire Tristram's *After* uses allegory and association, and a satirical mode is employed in Tom Robbins's *Villa Incognito* and Chuck Plahnuik's *Pygmy*. What these (and many other texts) share, despite their differences, is their strategy of delegating a large part of the meaning-making process to the reader.

In her chapter on salvational approaches, Däwes explores the many ways in which religion played a role in the literary responses. Most of these novels are self-published and have been dismissed by critics and scholars, but, as Däwes rightly argues, "their sheer number ... suggest that [they] make a significant contribution to the cultural memory of" 9/11, and she adds that the plots are often more complex than we may think (141). In an insightful reading of these texts, it is made clear how religious aspects merge with a specific political agenda—"the restoration of political agency" is "dependent upon traditional values" (141). Furthermore, Däwes argues that many of the salvational novels rely heavily on American mythology.

Surveying the diagnostic approaches, Däwes begins with Susan Sontag's notorious essay in which she urges Americans to reconsider the public re-

sponse of victimhood and places the attacks in a historical context. Däwes argues that Sontag “set an important milestone in the diversification of the debate” (198). While the most common response to the attacks was the surge of patriotic jingoism, Sontag’s essay, and the vitriolic response to it, both demonstrated the wave of dissent that was also a result of the attacks. The novels that Däwes identifies as using diagnostic approaches “trace the social and political reverberations of the events, seismographically discerning and giving voice to counter-narratives” (199), and by reassessing the status of American identity, these types of novels, Däwes argues, performs important cultural work.

The group of novels that adopt the perspective of the terrorists falls under the heading of appropriative approaches. Here we find heavyweight writers like Updike (whose *Terrorist* ultimately “fuels dichotomies and confirms stereotypical notions of the Other” [265]) and DeLillo (whose *Falling Man* is “at once the most balanced and most radical of the texts” [280]) as well as lesser known writers like Vladimir Chernozemsky and Andre Dubus III. What the appropriative novels have in common is that they “provide significant variations of the dominant discourse of 9/11 and balance them against a diversity of political and ethical responsibilities” (284).

In one of the book’s best chapters, the discussion of symbolic approaches, Däwes argues that the novels both use “the iconic force of 9/11 on its own terms” but also “poetically transforms the events into a prism through which larger scenarios of crisis ... are refracted” (288). This is both the case for novels, such as Richard Quan’s *Siren’s Silence* where the terrorist attacks, which could be any other catastrophe, serve as a yardstick of comparison for the narrator’s own sense of loss as well as a novel like Jonathan Franzen’s *Freedom*, whose “dense network of correlations” shows the extent to which the symbolic approach is connected to “the larger diagnostic potential of Ground Zero Fiction” (289). In fine analyses of relationship crisis novels like Lynne Sharon Schwartz’s *The Writing on the Wall* and Ken Kalfus’s *A Disorder Peculiar to the Country*, Däwes argues against the overwhelming critique of 9/11 novels as too introspective and intimate. According to Däwes, these arguments fail “to register the multiple thematic layers, the symbolic complexity, and the affluence of functional trajectories of the genre” (302).

In the last chapter, Däwes explores how the aesthetic crisis in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks resulted in texts that have translated the aesthetic challenges into formal and structural innovations,” including poetic

strategies of allegory (Siri Hustvedt's *The Sorrows of an American* and Jess Walter's *The Zero*) and metanarrative (Richard Power's *The Echo Maker*) as well as experiments with visual elements, unconventional layouts, and multilateral plot structures" (345). The experimental aspects are discussed in stimulating analyses of Juan Felipe Herrera's *Cinnamon Girl* and, of course, Jonathan Safran Foer's *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*.

In just over 400 pages, Birgit Däwes manages to map out the previous ten years of literary criticism on 9/11, and, more importantly, to stake out her own turf on that map. Her inspiring and meticulous typology is an obvious starting point for students and teachers, not just of 9/11 literature but of American literature in the past decade.

Thomas Ærvold Bjerre

University of Southern Denmark

Jarvis, Robin. *Romantic Readers and Transatlantic Travel. Expeditions and Tours in North America, 1760-1840*. Farnham: Ashgate, 2012. 205 pages, ISBN: 978-0-7546-6860-2. \$94.95 (£55)

Romantic Readers and Transatlantic Travel explores the question of why and how people in the Romantic era read travel literature by explorers, travelers, emigrants and tourists. The contemporary reception of such literature has been neglected by critics. Robin Jarvis, Professor of English Literature at the University of the West of England, references reviews in the periodical press, personal journals, letters, autobiographies, marginalia and biographical evidence relating to the production, distribution and reception of different kinds of travel writing.

Jarvis not only investigates how and why people read travel literature in the Romantic period but also the extent to which different classes or communities of readers read in different ways. Focusing on the factual accounts of real travels, his aims are threefold: to add to our knowledge of travel literature; contribute to the history of reading (most studies of literary reception have tended to focus on the major literary genres of poetry, fiction and drama), and provide new insights into the growth of transatlantic interests and perspectives.

Adopting a variety of approaches, including researching the assumptions underlying reading in the past, studying how reading was learned, reading autobiographical accounts of actual reading experiences, and applying liter-