

The Significance of the Literary and Critical Works Written in the Aftermath of September 11, 2001

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On September 11, 2001, the United States of America underwent the most horrible terrorist attack in its history. Two jet airliners crashed into the twin towers of the World Trade Centre in New York City, followed by a third plane crashing into the Pentagon in Washington. A fourth plane, which was headed for the White House, was forced down in an isolated area of Pennsylvania. More than 4.000 people died in the attack, including hundreds who were in the buildings and airliners themselves, as well as many of the firefighters, police officers and other emergency personnel who tried to save the victims. It is believed that the attacks were planned and

implemented by Al-Qaeda, an Islamic organization led by Osama bin Laden.

Conventional and unconventional literary genres reacted positively and immediately to the tragedy, stressing the importance of literature and criticism in times of despair and cataclysm. The aim of this paper is to analyze the significance of the literary and critical works, written after September 11 attacks, providing an overview of the different responses to this crisis. It compares and contrasts these works, articulating how critics treated and reviewed them. It finally determines the role of literature in times of crises, and summarizes the outcome of these tragic events, as

The Significance of the Literary and Critical Works Written in the Aftermath of September 11, 2001, Vol. 2, Issue No. 2, 2013, p. 64 – 105.

concluded from the works dealt with.

In the review of *9-11* (criticism), Joe Lockard points out that Noam Chomsky articulates the fact that the U.S. is itself a leading terrorist state. Checking the loaded use of the term "fundamentalist", he stresses the fact that "the U.S. is one of the most extreme religious fundamentalist cultures in the world" (18). It is U.S., which created Osama bin Laden's network by mobilizing and arming thousands of radical Islamists to fight against the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. Chomsky states that "even if bin Laden is killed – may be even more so if he is killed – a slaughter of innocents would only intensify the feelings of anger, desperation and frustration that are rampant in the region, and mobilize others to his horrendous cause"(64). He traces the American aggression to the history of European colonization reaching back to Columbus. Several hundred years of imperial violence

characterize the U.S. intellectual and moral culture and attitude towards the whole world, in general, and the Islamic world, in particular. Thus, the collapse of the WTC [World Trade Centre] twin towers was no more than natives returning fire at European civilization. By locating his initial analysis of September 11 events within an overarching accusation against the U.S. as the illegitimate product of a half-millennium's worth of imperialistic sin, Chomsky only recapitulates the basic theme of his earlier years (Lockard, "Chomsky on 9 – 11", 250).

Chomsky compares the September 11 events to Clinton's August 1998 cruise missile attack on the Al-Shifa pharmaceutical plant in Sudan. This attack, which is considered insignificant in the west, caused Sudan the loss of half of its pharmaceutical production capacity. Chomsky quotes Jonathan Belke of Boston Globe who said, "Tens of thousands of people – many of them

children – have suffered and died from malaria, tuberculosis and other treatable diseases"(50). Again, he cites the German Ambassador in Sudan who reports, "it is difficult to assess how many people in this poor African country died as a consequence of the destruction ...but several tens of thousands seems a reasonable guess" (qtd. in David Edwards, 70). Chomsky urges the Americans to reflect on who they hated in the underdeveloped world, summarizing and emphasizing the reasons of this hatred as follows:

"1980s Nicaragua, the Soviet Era, Afghanistan war, sanctions on Iraq, support for Israel and the 1998 bombing of the Al – Shifa pharmaceutical plant in Sudan – which he continues to describe as a much worse crime, comparatively, than Sept.11" (Matt Welch, "Manufacturing Dissent", B1 – B2).

He condemns the U.S. policy according to which the world is being offered a "stark choice", either join us or face the certain

prospect of death and destruction (www.Counterpunch.org/chomskyintv.html). "9–11" adopts the cause and effect technique, presenting a causative line stressing the fact that the American foreign policy is primarily responsible for what happened. To Chomsky, the attacks were "horrifying atrocities" but "we can think of the United States as an innocent victim only if we adopt the convenient path of ignoring the record of its action and those of its allies" (35). He, again, compares the September 11 tragedy to the "Israeli atrocities" in the occupied territories. Bin Laden hates the long - standing U.S. support for Israel's brutal military occupation. The Palestinians are subjected to daily humiliations and have had their territories reduced to cantons. Israel controls the Palestinian resources and violates the Geneva conventions, absolutely backed by the U.S. Thus, like others, bin Laden contrasts:

"Washington's dedicated support

for these crimes with the decade-long US- British assault against the civilian population of Iraq, which has devastated the society and caused hundreds of thousands of deaths while strengthening Saddam Hussein ...who was a favored friend and ally of the US and Britain right through his worst atrocities, including the gassing of the Kurds,..."(www.counterpunch.org/chomskyintv.html).

Chomsky holds the US foreign policy responsible for September 11 atrocities because it has long been supporting the repressive and harsh anti-democratic regimes in the Middle East, blocking economic development. There, poverty, oppression and despair lead to suicide bombings and attacks by airliners. Chomsky is against the leading analysis in the New York Times, which mentioned that the attackers acted out of "hatred for values cherished in the west as freedom, tolerance, prosperity, religious pluralism and universal

suffrage" (New York Times, Sept. 16, 2001). He refutes this view as bin Laden is against repressive regimes in the region. Again, he rejects the misconception articulated by various establishment intellectuals that "there is a clash of civilizations between the West and Islam". Tanweer Akram comments by saying that "the notion that the quest for freedom, tolerance, prosperity, democracy, peaceful coexistence is alien to Muslims or Arabs has no real basis" (www.Counterpunch.org/chomskyintvo61.html). On the contrary, there is a close connection between the rise of Islamic fundamentalist terrorism and the Western state terrorism:

"The Western countries are quite eager to support fundamentalist Islamic regimes,...., as long as they can secure cooperation from the Arab ruling elites in the exploitation of Middle Eastern oil, the Western countries did not hesitate to give crucial support to the Latin

American elite to crush the Catholic church when some of its priests sided with the poor and the oppressed (www.counterpunch.org/Chomskyintv061.html, 6).

America invades Islamic and Arab states for its own sake as well as that of Israel. It has invaded Iraq only for oil because "George Bush's administration is deeply rooted in militarism and big business, particularly the oil industry" (Edwards, 70). Despite this reality, the U.S. media has the problem of self – censorship and "self – induced conformity to the interests of the powerful. The US authorities did, however, apply pressure on Qatar – basically on al – Jazeera TV because of its exposure of the corruption and the abuse of dictators in Arab states" (Akram, 7). Chomsky observes that terrorist attacks serve as "a gift to the harshest and most repressive elements on all sides, and sure to be exploited to accelerate the

agenda of militarization, regimentation, reversal of social democratic programs, transfer of wealth to narrow sectors, and undermining democracy of any meaningful form" (Chomsky, 19).

Ignoring the international norms, the UN Charter, and the UN Security Council, the US authorities launched a war against Afghanistan, killing at least 3.000 civilians. The US applied state terrorism on one of the poorest people in the world, leading to countless injuries, diseases and dislocations of the Afghans. Thus, "the US military actions put a large number of people on the brink of malnutrition and risk of stagnation. It is doubtful that there will be a complete accounting of the deaths and the sufferings of the Afghans and other wretched masses because it is of little consequences to the rich and the powerful" (Akram, 2). Chomsky describes the US policy towards Afghanistan as a silent genocide. The US ordered Pakistan

to stop food supplies to Afghanistan. If Pakistan did not submit to US demands, it would be possible that its government would be overthrown by forces much like Taliban:

"If that demand is implemented, unknown numbers of people who have not the remotest connection to terrorism will die, possibly millions... the U.S. has demanded that Pakistan possibly killed millions of people who are themselves victims of Taliban. This has nothing to do even with revenge. It is at a far lower moral level even than that" (Chomsky, 6).

Chomsky accuses the US of having supported a variety of terrorist criminal wars including the use of force against Nicaragua, the supply of arms for Turkey to suppress the Kurds, and the absolute support to Israel's illegitimate occupation of Palestinian territories. He compares the September 11 terrorist attacks to the US terrorist assaults on civilians, which resulted

in: "large number of deaths, massive destructions and sufferings,...,such as western annihilation of Native Americans, US conquests of Mexico, Hawaii, Philippines and invasion of Vietnam ; and European colonization of South Asia (Indian subcontinent), Congo, Algeria and Ethiopia, and so on (Akram, 4). Thus, all evil in the world originates from the US power, aggression and lust for domination. Osama bin Laden is completely and fundamentally a creature of the United States. Chomsky is a truth-seeker in a world full of lies, with people seeking alternatives for the unreliable and unscrupulous media. To Chomsky, the success of 9 – 11 is part of a more general phenomenon:

"Sept. 11 was a wakeup call. It raised questions in people's minds they had never really thought about before. They are concerned, confused and angry (qtd. in Massing, B11). Chomsky concludes "9-11" by saying that "it is important not to be intimidated by

hysterical ranting and lies and to keep as closely as one can to the cause of truth and honesty and concern for the human consequences of what one does, or fails to do" (118).

Unlike Chomsky, who unveils the truth that the US is the leading terrorist state, Jere Longman, in *Among the Heroes* (biography), inspires the Americans and arouses their patriotism. The book is about Flight 93 and the role played by the passengers and crew in forcing the plane down near Shanksville, Pa on Sept. 11, 2001. It is a biography based on hundreds of interviews and months of investigation, articulating: "the definitive story of the courageous men and women aboard flight 93, and of the day that forever changed the way Americans view the world and themselves". The book is a significant work arousing the American spirit and heroism. The passengers seem to have saved thousands of lives by fighting back

against the terrorists. Tom Ridge, the Governor of Pennsylvania, is quoted saying, "They sacrificed themselves for others – the ultimate sacrifice. What appears to be a charred, smolder hole in the ground is truly and really a monument of heroism ". *Among the Heroes* is an epic of resistance, bringing consolation and solace to grief-stricken Americans. The brave passengers and crew of Flight 93 "provided for many Americans a measure of victory in the midst of unthinkable defeat" (www.forbesbookclub.com,1).

Flight 93 presents a new kind of hero for the civilians' war, serving as an inspiration for all the Americans. Flight 93 "became the Warsaw uprising of 9 – 11, a national blueprint for resistance and a tonic against helplessness" (Poniewozik, "The White – Collar Warrior", 74). The book is a chronicle of the passengers' bravery as well as a memorial of the fallen. Most of the passengers

are successful in their jobs, believing in the moral value of work. They were "self-directed, independent thinkers, people who could assess a situation and work in teams". The book articulates the bright face of the American character and underlines the heroic defiance of the American people. The passengers on board Flight 93 understand and explain success in life in terms of combat and athletic metaphors. "These were people at the top of their game, who kept score in their lives and who became successful precisely because they were assertive" (qtd. in Poniewozik, 74). To these passengers, success breeds virtue, and those who were leaders on the earth must have been leaders in the air. According to M.G. Lord, "Longman suggests that the travelers banded together to resist their captors. They tried to use boiling water from the galley as a weapon and, shielded by a food cart, stormed the cockpit in an

attempt to overpower the terrorists who had seized control of the plane". Longman's book seems to be a call to arms, mobilizing the Americans for what may come later. It is "fastidiously factual and never lurches into hyperbole, yet it is hard not to view the onboard drama as a metaphor for the country's larger war on terrorism" (Lord, 12). This onboard drama is sharply contrasted with an image of startling tranquility in chapter one of the book. The book opens with the following excerpt:

"The sky on September 11 dawned cerulean blue, one of those unblemished skies that often appeared in late summer after heavy rains or hurricanes-rinsed, cloudless, apparently cleansed of tumult ... casual fashion had arrived in the New York area ... summer had been shaken away like sand from a beach towel" (www.cbsnews.com,1-2).

Actually, this is an image of America before Sept. 11, 2001,

with the summer of the American Empire being replaced by autumn, after the same date. The people of America are dressed in black, paying for their political administrations' evil and aggression. Longman's sketching of his characters is realistic, putting human face on, even the hijackers. The hijacker pilot Ziad Jarrah, for example, is illustrated as a fallen bourgeois who looks as an acquaintance, like "the type of guy you bring home to Mom". Renouncing the western sympathies and disillusioned with the western civilization, he sacrifices "individuality" to the terrorist 'it' that, in Longman's terms, ' had a shaved face and bristled coarsely inside' and 'it' ' danced, drank liquor, entered sexual relationships before marriage, wove itself into the complacent fabric of the west' (Lord,12). Thus, both Chomsky and Lord blame the west as responsible for terrorism. Whereas

Chomsky's indictment of the west is explicit and sharp, Lord's is implicit and shy. Lord stresses the valor and positivity shown by each of the 40 passengers and crew on board, giving both solace and inspiration to the shocked Americans. *Among the Heroes* is neither history nor propaganda. Rather, "It's in part an obituary, obligated to speak well of the dead, and in part a parable, obligated to speak well of the living. The heroes of Flight 93 may have saved hundreds of lives, but it seems we want still more from them. We want inspiration, yes, but validation too" (Ponieworik, 74). Longman's biography actually provides the Americans with inspiration and validation, with the passengers adopting heroic defiance, impeding the terrorist and giving their lives for the sake of all Americans. Again, the book is significant as it makes the American people re-evaluate their priorities and ask questions about

the responsibility for the terrorist acts and the failure of the intelligence agencies. It tries to rekindle the American spirit, which has been badly damaged by the September 11 attacks.

Like *Among the Heroes, Heart of a Soldier*, by James B. Stewart, is a biography offering inspiration and hope to the Americans, helping them heal their wounds and reconstruct their broken prestige. The book is about Rick Rescola, telling a story of love and friendship, heroism and redemption, danger and courage:

"Born in Britain the eve of World War II, Rick Rescola became an American citizen and a much – decorated soldier. His extraordinary life is woven into the military conflicts of his time, from the battlefields of colonial Africa, where he and his best friend, U.S. Army officer Dan Hill, led lives of adventure worth of Kipling and Conrad, to some of

the deadliest battles of Vietnam to the epicenter of modern-day terrorism. Surviving all with great courage and style, Rescola seemed invincible" (<http://www.ashbrook.org/books/0743240987.html>).

After the 1993 World Trade Centre attack, both Rescorla and Hill prepared a report saying that terrorists would try another attack with explosives-laden plane crashing into the towers. As Morgan Stanley's Security Head, Rescorla designed an evacuation plan and made his employers practice the drill regularly. This plan, which followed when the first plane hit the other tower, was very effective and saved most of the employees. Actually, the book is meant to be a source of inspiration, invigoration and rejuvenation to all the Americans. It is an attempt to restore hope and communion to all of them, through heroism and sacrifice:

"Heart of a Soldier is the story of a life of heroic virtue and self-

sacrifice, but it is also a simple love story, the love of a big-hearted man for his adopted country, for his friends and family, and for the woman who completed him. It is a story of this man's triumph over the soul-destroying hatred of 9/11". (Baldwin, "A Proud Day", 47)

Stewart stresses the importance of love, not only in people's lives but also among nations. After a broken marriage, Rescorla meets and falls in love with Susan, as he approaches the last chapter of his life. While watching the horror on television, Susan calls Rescorla's number over and over. He finally calls her, speaking a handful of words: "stop crying. I have to get these people out safely. If something should happen to me, I want you to know I have never been happier. You made my life." Going back to leading his people to safety, he bellows into the bullhorn, saying, "Today is a day to be proud to be an American".

These final words inspire and invigorate the Americans to be proud of their country. As the heat grows, Rescorla keeps his suit on and minutes later, the second tower collapses and he dies:

"Heart of a Soldier is a story of bravery under fire, of loyalty to one's comrades, of the miracle to find happiness late in life. Everything about Rick's life came together on September 11. In charge of security for Morgan Stanley; he successfully got all its 2,700 men and women out of the south tower of the World Trade Centre. Then, thinking perhaps of soldiers he'd held as they died, as well as the women he loved, he went back one last time to search for stragglers" (<http://www.simonsays.com/content/book.cfm?sid=339,pid=42210>).

Rescorla gives the Americans a lesson on the necessity of sacrifice and bravery in the time of urgency and need. His belief in himself and

in the values of duty and courage costs him his life. In Vietnam, Second Lt. Rick Rescorla used to tell his men : "If you believe in yourselves and believe in me, we will come through anything". *Heart of a Soldier* is meant to stress the necessity and inevitability of citizens sacrificing their souls for the sake of their nations. Stewart "gives the reader a monument more enduring than the towers : a man's sacrifice, an act of love that saved thousands of lives and made the dark wickedness of that day a backdrop for the triumph of heroic virtue" (Baldwin, 74). He highlights and underlines the value of heroism and personal sacrifice as well as the importance of sticking to self-belief.

Like Chomsky's *9-11*, and unlike Longman's *Among the Heroes* and Stewart's *Heart of a Soldier*, Bill Gertz's *Breakdown* (nonfiction) blames the U.S. authorities as responsible for the September 11 tragedy. Gertz's book

is nonfiction articulating how American's intelligence failure led to September 11. It examines the different branches of the U.S. intelligence apparatus, highlighting its incompetence and breakdown. It also stresses the fact that the congress itself is partly to blame for its control and neglect of the intelligence apparatus, which helped lead to September 11. Even President Clinton's administration is responsible for the intelligence breakdown because of its degrading and investigating of the efficient CIA officers. This made the CIA unable to penetrate Osama Bin Laden's network, with the congressional oversight of intelligence causing stark damage to the intelligence agencies. September 11 attacks parallels and is reminiscent of Pearl Harbour, an event that originally led to the creation of the Central Intelligence Agency. Al-Qaeda's success to implement those attacks underlines the absolute and flagrant failure of

America's counterterrorism community. According to Joshua Sina:

"One of the many strengths of this important book is that Mr. Gertz places the September 11 attacks in context. He sees the assaults as much more than a single counterterrorism failure and he instead presents a chronicle of this nation's ineffectuality in thwarting previous Al Qaeda attacks going back to the early 1990's. In his view, the events of the last fall represented a systematic failure encompassing all aspects of US counterterrorism" (B8).

Gertz's insight, access to contacts and knowledge of America's intelligence counterterrorism system help him dig deep into the roots and causes of the September 11 catastrophe. He deciphers the shameful failure of the US intelligence, articulating the inside story of how the FBI and CIA missed crucial signs of Al Qaeda plans for suicide airplane attacks

on America :

"..., the counterterrorism components in the CIA, the DIA, the FBI and the National Security Agency completely broke down in the 1990's. Despite "the most formidable intelligence-gathering system in the world", Mr. Gertz writes, there was a succession of missed opportunities, undetected-until too late-attacks, and unfortunate surprises that have been the hallmark of U.S. intelligence agencies over the last five decades" (Sina, B8).

Gertz laments the fact that the FBI lost ability to implement effective intelligence operations in the United States because of the fetters and restrictions inflicted by congress and other administrations. The FBI became unable to trace the Al Qaeda activists who were training at US Flight schools. On the other hand, Gertz states how the best and most efficient American intelligence officers have been replaced by inefficient bureaucrats.

He lambastes the National Security Agency for its failure to intercept bin Laden telephone calls in 1998:

"The systemic problems in the US intelligence apparatus ... began with wrongly assuming that Osama bin Laden was primarily a financial backer - but not a major organizer of terrorism. They continued with as ineffectual intelligence covert operations capability to track, penetrate and preempt Al Qaeda" (Sina, B8).

Gertz ironically states that terrorists trained and operated right next door to the eavesdropping agency headquarters as they prepared the September 11 attacks. He lashes Bill Clinton's "anemic" response to the 1998 bombings of the US embassies in East Africa because its primary goal here, as always, was to identify terrorists, capture and return them for prosecution in a court. It was a reactive strategy that did nothing to deter attacks. Even the administration's extremely limited military counterstrikes were designed

to send political signals rather than do actual damage to terrorists, their supporters, and the infrastructures they used (qtd. in Sina, B8).

He recommends that law enforcement agencies such as the FBI should replace its previous "law enforcement" by "intelligence" culture, which is fundamentally needed to track and prevent terrorists from preparing for their operations. Again, detailing his bitter criticism of the congress for its responsibility in the September 11 attacks, Gertz goes on to say:

"By 2001, congressional oversight of intelligence had two results. First, it had left intelligence services burdened with a combination of restrictions, constraints, and funding controls produced during the destructive period of the church and pike committees. Second, in reaction to the first, it left congress uninterested in performance-based oversight, which ultimately meant, that millions of dollars were wasted on bureaucracy rather than intelligence

achievement" (qtd. in Sina, B8).

He proposes a plan for reforming and improving the US intelligence abilities and powers. He recommends that a new clandestine service should replace the CIA's Directorate of Operations and the DIA's Defence HUMINT Service that would direct and manage more extensive intelligence operations. He suggests that the FBI should plan and implement military campaigns against terrorist groups. Finally, Gertz recommends, "the reorganization and renaming of the CIA into a 'Central Analysis Agency' that would produce analysis and technology research – but not covert operations – based on a new system of 'competitive analysis' with outside specialists" (Sina, B8). Bush administration is expected to accommodate Gertz's recommendations, upgrading and updating the intelligence community's counterterrorism capabilities at all levels. Gertz's book is a significant one leading to constituting effective

counterterrorism:

"*Breakdown* is the most insightful and penetrating of the books published so far about the organizational and analytical intelligence problems that led to the catastrophic attacks of September 11 and, as such, should be a required reading for those who are committed to transforming those problem areas into solutions" (Sina, B8).

Literature can look terrorism in the eye, responding positively and effectively to the sudden and urgent events. Subject imagination, characterizing literary works, challenges and triumphs over dehumanization and horror. Terrorism and barbarism result from the death of literature and visual arts. The most challenging literary works are produced at moments of the greatest political and social upheaval, with crises generating creativity, as is the case after the September 11 attacks. In

terrorist fiction, literature and reality converge not only to offer solace in times of grief, but also to give a mirror that reflects modern society. Like fiction, drama and poetry respond to crises by commenting on the events and supply the audience with catharsis and release. After the September 11 tragic events, theatrical responses were noticeable, offering a cathartic dramatization of such an apocalyptic event. Leslie Bramm's two plays, *The Uncaring Dog and Lovers Leapt* responded significantly to the catastrophe. *The Uncaring Dog* is a pantomime presenting the wordless experiences of a crippled clown living in a Brechtian Universe. The play "... features a chaplinesque tramp in arm braces doing hopeless battle with his recalcitrant dog and, it's implied, an equally uncaring God. Given the evening's intention to address a more specific horror, this broadly existential point proves frustrating. That life is random and unfair, we already know"

(http://www.villagevoice.com/theatre/0222_sightlines_35159_11.html). The little buffoon uselessly and futilely tries to scoop up pooch excrement on the ground, depending on crutches and gradually caught in a dog leash fastened to an offstage dog. Finally, she feels helpless, with her efforts coming to nothing. Feeling guilty and ashamed, she attempts to win the favor of the indifferent gods, but in vain: "I'm sorry! It's an existential howl to the heavens ". Defining his purpose in *The Uncaring Dog*, Leslie Bramm writes, "After the events of 9/11, I was struck with how random fate could be ... and that life is totally unfair. The characters in the play are all symbols of that gigantic unfairness ... man is ultimately God's punch line. Such were the 9/11 victims." The world pervading the play is a surreal one, devoid of rationality and pity. Bramm adds:

I believe my strength as a playwright is my dialogue. Doing a play without any dialogue, just

action, was a departure for me. Obviously, the themes in this piece -unfairness and randomness- can apply to life in general, and that is fine. I wanted the play to be more than just about 9/11, although I think most audience members will imbue it with the meaning [lack of meaning] of 9/11(qtd. in Horowitz, 24).

Bramm's second play, *Lovers Leapt*, takes its origin and inspiration from the familiar and horrifying photos of people who chose to leap from the WTC to their deaths, rather than perish in the flames consuming the buildings. The play is about two people who, having always longed to connect, finally do so in these final moments of life. It presents a more clearly directed response to that fateful and unforgettable day, while still maintaining an element of the world of the dead:

Here, Bramm considers opportunities not taken and irretrievable loss through two

young World Trade Centre [WTC] staffers who toyed with the idea of getting together, but never did. They are finally, ironically and tragically, joined as they jump to their deaths, holding hands, from the WTC Inferno, 90-plus stories above the ground. On their flight to oblivion, they play out, with each imagining their unrealized relationship, the good and bad times that they might have shared (Horowitz, 24).

The play is significant, underscoring the fact that, on September 11, the Americans had one of two alternatives, either to die through choking on smoke and fire or to fall to a cement grave. The two lovers symbolize most of the Americans who are unable to connect and communicate under normal circumstances. Despite being insensitive, the play is considered a love poem for the stage, articulating a lot of sentimentality.

Anne Nelson's play, *The Guys*, is

a tragedy paying homage to all the firefighters who died in the twin towers on September 11. It has two characters, Nick and Joan, with the real stars being the absent firefighters. Nick is a fire captain asked to speak at several memorial services of the firefighters who have died in the disaster. He works with Joan, a writer / editor, on eulogies for four of his men were caught in the collapse of the twin towers. The play is significant, indicating that the life of the Americans will never be the same as it was before the September 11 cataclysm: "In *The Guys*, the yuppie editor (Nelson's alter-ego) is overwhelmed, transformed by grief in the aftermath of Sept.11, although she personally lost no one in the terrorist attack. Throughout, the character talks about how her life will never be the same" (Horowitz, 25). The play is not just entertainment, presenting a real moving document of the September 11 events. It also "has an aura beyond 9/11 wherever people deal with human loss and

unbelievable devastation" (<http://www.curtainup.com/guys.html>).

The play underlines the fact that literature responds positively to the urgent and catastrophic events taking place in society. *The Guys*, which was written in just nine days, is Anne Nelson's direct response to the tragedy. The four men for whom Joan crafts eulogies are based on Nicks' rambling recollections. The play begins silently, setting a mood of gloom with the image of the giant buildings being hit by planes. This is followed by fire, smoke, and the stunned faces of people staring in disbelief. Yet, the atmosphere is not altogether that of doom and gloom. Nelson uses comic relief deftly to break the tension at several points. Joan describes a wedding she recently attended "like an intermission in all this". They [Nick and Joan] dance an imaginary tango together, they lost laugh at some of the stories he tells and so does the audience. One of the lost firefighters, Barney, was

always getting trouble. Another, Patrick, the captain's best friend, was an astute critic of the firehouse's frankly lousy cuisine ([http:// www. culturevulture.net /theatre5 /Guys.html/2](http://www.culturevulture.net/theatre5/Guys.html/2)).

The dead firefighters gradually emerge as individuals to arouse the feelings of pity, fear, and pain in the audience. Breaking an immense tragedy like that of September 11 into its individual constituents involves the audience in the aforementioned feelings. This leads to the required catharsis, which is the beginning of healing. On the other hand, for Jim Simpson, the Director and the actors in "*The Guys*" were a way to give fellow New Yorkers a means of dealing with the numbing grief of a monumental life altering tragedy. They were also a means for the theater to survive its own disastrous economic fallout from being located just twelve blocks from the World Trade Centre

(www.curtanup.com/guys.html,2).

The play is both potent and poignant, being brimful with humanity and the need for human connection. It puts a human face on the September 11 catastrophe, shedding light on a class of marginalized people, the firefighters. It gives the audience a chance to deal with it [the catastrophe] in human terms. I hope theatergoers experience the loss of men they never met and leave the theatre wishing the men were still here. 9/11 was a tremendous event and we need to let it resonate. It is wrong to just shut it out and move on (Horowitz, 26).

Nick's final eulogy in uniform gives the play's finale the dignity, respect and sense of identity that engrave the firefighters indelibly in our memories. The final scene is a powerful one, alternating between a monologue by Joan and Nick's reciting of one of the eulogies they wrote together. The bells and whistles of *The Guys*

come from the actors and the words they eloquently use.

Reno's *Rebel without a Pause* is a solo act presenting Sept. 11's barbarism through a comic lens. Reno uses humor to reach honesty, daring to say what many have been afraid to. She begins by playing a message on her answering machine; a friend calling about the terrorist attack eight blocks from where she lives. She hopes for another explanation, describing those who flee the scene as "First-time runners". She mocks the emergency workers who race to the scene, and then return shaken and empty-handed. According to Laura Muehlberg, Reno, from political point – of – view that is for left, challenges the languages used by government officials since September. She considers why the operation in Afghanistan is called "Enduring Freedom", as if freedom was a hardship that had to be tolerated. She explores the etymology of the word

"patriotism" and wonders if it is closer to paternalism or patisserie. She beats up on the way president Bush speaks and lets us know that she is frightened of what is happening in Washington. (Times Square – com On Stage Reviews Reno Rebel without a Pause.htm)

Reno mixes humor with satire to make her message more effective and to highlight the absurdity of the American situation. When she grows teary over a flowery Celine Dion rendition of "God Bless America", she wonders whether she is being influenced by a Canadian. She is only half-joking, using a dialogue that hints at the substance of many who happened to be near the hub on that catastrophic and horrific day: "She recounts the noise, the rumors, the paranoia, lack of guidance, fear, helplessness, and general confusion that resonate to this not – so – distant seven months later. These were terrible times and few solutions were given. The wonderful thing is that,

in the most upbeat sort of hindsight, Reno finds the humor in the situation. She recalls the state police, standing on Canal Street. Who could not direct anyone to Canal Street. She is disappointed by the failures of the emergency Broadcast system, which provides no guidance. She tells of the rumors, set off by police tape that ran rampant. One, that macrobiotic restaurant, and seven generally frequented by the mellowest of souls, had become some sort of sixth Avenue terrorist base camp. Alas, the police tape was to protect Guiliani (www.reno-rebel.onstage.htm).

Reno stresses the fact that America cannot wage war and create "Infinite Justice" at the same time. She wonders why the skeptical liberals of America should have any more confidence in George W. Bush today than they did on Sept. 10. She views him as "nothing short of a nitwit" (appointed to the presidency by

his brother), and satirizes the policy of bombing Afghanistan while simultaneously dropping over sweetened foods onto the desert. A study in mind – boggling grotesquerie "If the bombs don't get them, the sugar will" (Horowitz, 25). Speaking of the influence of the September 11 events on her, Reno announces that she sees the American flag in a different way, and is moved to watch Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld with a degree of sexual pleasure, despite her being lesbian. Her attitude towards and relationship with cops have also changed. To her, *9/11* has enhanced peoples' understanding of society worldwide. I can talk to people I would not have talked to before, like cops with badges. I have always had an anti – authoritarian response that alienation has abated since Sept.11. I make jokes with cops. They make jokes back we are all in this together. I love that. It

makes me hopeful. An asset has come out of a great liability (qtd. in Horowitz, 25).

Reno highlights the fact that interest in the Koran has noticeably increased: "there have been more sales of the Koran since 9/11 than in 50 years prior to it". Also, there has been a growing sympathy for the Palestinian cause. Reno's role is that of a provocateur, with her audience being "grateful for, if not relieved at, the freedom she has afforded them. Among other things, she has given them permission to laugh at the un-laughable". Her show, *Rebel Without a Pause*, is both cathartic and healing, allowing people to laugh at the absurdity of the American situation; of "Rumsfeld dropping pop tarts onto the deserts of Afghanistan in order to get 'Afghan brand awareness' " (Horowitz, 25) . Reno's show is a hit, making people laugh at the absurdity and idiocy of the American president as well as the

musicality of the name Osama bin Laden. She is not afraid of attacking both domestic and foreign targets, presenting a razor – sharp political satire. According to Bill Marx,

..., *Reno: Rebel without a Pause* manages to be both furiously funny and more than a little frightening. The performance (Reno) is a witness to the day's chaos and supplies a left – wing attack on right wing authority. Reno flips from talking about the panic in the streets and the desperation in her heart to flailing away at what she sees as the absurd policies of President George W. Bush and his Christian fundamentalist supporters (www.wbur.org/artstheater/rebelwithoutapause.htm).

The show is a darkly comic one, with Reno having an exhilarating gift for raw comic scorn. To deliver her message, she employs a "wham - bam rambling style" that "could be described as

a herky-jerky stream of consciousness ". The show jumps from the past to the present, with Reno hunching her shoulders and scrunching up her face every few seconds, as if in pain, attempting to remember words.

Julia Lee Barclay's *No One* is mediation on where the Americans are now after the September 11 attacks. The main themes in his play are non-violence and war, the urgent need for efficient translator, and the actual identity of the enemy. This show, which has a cast of five, aims at pricking the viewer's consciousness. The actor begins behind music stands, and then Rolland dances around the stage. Thus, according to Robert Simonson, though she has definite political ideas (which would not find fans in the Bush White House), no one encapsulates Barclay's confusion about the meaning of 9/11, and therein lies the piece's strength. Whatever else the audience feels about the

attacks, confusion is one response that is likely to recognize and share (www. villagevoice.com/ theatre/ 0222,sightlines,35159,11.html).

On the other hand, playwright Leslie Bramm views the meanings of Sept. 11 and their potential impact on the arts from a different perspective. He says, "I'd like to see it as a call to arms to theatre groups to re- evaluate the work they do and question why they do some things as opposed to others". Again, he adds, "Now is the time for work of importance. I'm very concerned that Hollywood is going to co-opt 9/11 into glossy movies, exploiting the events of that day and what followed ". Finally, Elena Holy thinks that dramatists and artists are not finished with the subject of Sept. 11 or the feelings identified with it because "what was once normal no longer is. And each new piece of art that emerges from 9/11 will reflect different aspects of the grieving process ... we now feel

our goal is to incite art and create community" (Horowitz, 26).

Sam Shepard's *God of Hell* is a comedy of menace meant to be an attack and a 'take-off' on the Republican Fascism'. It is deeply rooted in naturalism, incarnating an absurd and violent atmosphere. It is a dark farce taking place in an isolated Wisconsin dairy farm in midwinter. The farce can be regarded as a shocking attack on how the Bush administration encloses totalitarianism in the American flag. The title *God of Hell* refers to Pluto and the radioactive material plutonium, with the Americans naming their missiles after the Greek gods. Emma and Frank, a childless couple, run the only working farm in the area since the neighboring farms are receiving grants from the government not to work their farms. Emma, who is happy with their lives as independent dairy farmers says, "Wisconsin is the perfect place. Nothing ever

happens here". As for Frank, "when I'm feeding my heifers, time stands still for me. Nothing else exists". The couple has become used to the rhythm of the work and solitude, until an old friend of Frank's shows up in need of a place to stay. Shepard uses the theme of "The Invasive Stranger", who throws things in disarray. Frank's old friend, Haynes, has escaped from a mysterious place called Rocky Flats, discharging an enormous amount of static electricity whenever he touches anyone. Shepard alludes to Rocky Flats, Colorado, a plutonium storage facility that leaked containments through the air and in the water to surrounding communities. A government agent, know as Welch, shows up to look for Haynes. He asks Emma why the flagpole in their front yard is empty:

"Well, Emma, this is Wisconsin, isn't it? I'm not in Bulgaria or Turkistan or lost somewhere in the

Balkans. I am in Wisconsin ... taxidermy and choose, part of the "U-S-of-A" you told me that yourself.

Emma: "What are you driving at?"

Welch: "Well, you think there'd be a flag up there or something to the effect ... some indication of loyalty and pride".

Emma: "Loyalty? To Wisconsin?!"

The play is an attack on Bush administration's escalation of pseudo patriotism and its unblinking drift to the right. According to Marianne Combs, "while it (the play) takes place in Midwestern farm country, the play is a farcical attack on the Bush administration's handling of the Iraq war and homeland security. The play highlights the vulnerability of the Americans in their country, with the American government not knowing its actual enemy. It is a standard Agitprop, attacking "an overly confident republican government". Again, Combs says, "the war in Iraq, the patriot Act and

other political strategies of the Bush administration have spurred an artistic backlash in theatres across the United States. ...*The God of Hell*, looks at what could happen if those in power became a little too comfortable (www.mpr:Dairyfarmdemocracy.html). The motif of violence and torture pervades the play. Using a nasty electric shock device attached to Hayne's private parts, Welch starts torturing, taking over and controlling other characters. In another scene, a character, may be Haynes, appears after having been tortured. His head is covered with a black hood and an electrical wire is struck down his pants, echoing photographs of prisoner mistreatment from Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq. *The God of Hell* is "a comedy – horror slice of fantasy. Bush – bashing ... satire and subtlety have rarely been synonymous so no one has a right to demand that this gleefully grotesque portrait of smiling governmental misuse of everything from patriotism to plutonium be quietly argued" (www.Bloomberg.com/culture.html).

Bush's presidency has divided the Americans into two teams, the right and the left. In an interview with Shepard on Nov. 12, 2004, he says, "the sides are being divided now. It is very obvious ...so if you're on the other side of the fence, you're suddenly anti-American ... Democracy's a very fragile thing. You have to take care of Democracy. As soon as you stop being responsible to it and allow it to turn into scare tactics, it is no longer democracy, is it? It is something else. It may be an inch away from totalitarianism" (qtd. in www.aislesay.com/sanfrancisco/thegodofhell.html). The play is a black comedy, articulating the governmental surveillance and interference in public and private affairs. It is a stab at the Bush administration, which assaults civil liberties and the foundations of democracy. Again, *The God of Hell* presents an image of a horribly frightening America, where the quest for security threatens liberties as well as aspects of life. George

W. Bush is the actual god of this dystopian and even hellish America.

Like Shepard's *The God of Hell*, Jess Walter's *The Zero* (novel) is a politically mordant satire, chronicling the disintegrating post-9/11 America, and incarnating how all Americans have been swept up in an extensive patriotism and paranoia all the time. It satirizes how the 9/11 became a banner for some people to use for personal gain, with Walter describing "the whole booming randomness industry" that arises in the face of despair. The hero, Briam Remy, a New York City police officer, shoots himself in the head because he has been depressed about the death and devastation he witnessed. As a result, he literally sees spots and there are "flashers and floaters in his eyes". He feels as if the debris from the shattered buildings were floating down forever, experiencing large gaps in memory and permanently blips out

midstream from one scene to the next. Walter makes use of this to satirically expose the extremely terrible abuses the American government piled up on the citizens. Writing about the “Zero” itself, Walter gives details that hint at the truth, “everyone knew that it stunk especially bad here, and everyone knew what the smell had to be, but no one could find the exact source. An elevator bank? A stairwell? A fire rig? A few years ago, when he was still married, Remy had kicked his kid’s Jack-O-Lantern underneath his porch and this was how it smelled in spring” (qtd. in McNally, 2006). Walter underlines the financial and moral corruption in the World Trade Center, which symbolizes the pride and power of America. The novel is significant in showing how the 9/11 events brought about grief, terror, and depression all around America. Again, Walter satirizes the falsification of facts in America.

One of the Middle Eastern characters tells Remy: “That’s what happens when a nation becomes a public relations firm...Everything is the Alamo. You claim victory in every loss, life in every death”. The novel questions the illusion of collective optimism in the face of evidence to the contrary. An immigrant waiter asks two Americans: “How can every story be a happy end?...Someone got to be sad”(qtd. in Maslin, 2006).

In *The Spirit of Terrorism (essays)*, Jean Baudrillard defines terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center in New York City as the “absolute event”, analyzing them as a reaction to the political and technological expansion of capitalist globalization rather than as a war based on religion or civilization. He pinpoints the ‘absolute event’ and its aftermath as follows:

This is not a clash of civilizations or religions, and it reaches far beyond Islam and

America, on which efforts are being made to focus the conflict in order to create the delusion of a visible confrontation and a solution based upon force. There is indeed a fundamental antagonism here, but one that points past the specter of America (which is perhaps the epicenter, but in no sense the sole embodiment of globalization) and the specter of Islam (which is not the embodiment of terrorism either) to triumphant globalization battling against itself (Baudrillard, 2002, 11).

To Baudrillard, the 9/11 attacks signify a symbolic reaction to the continued expansion and extension of the US society, which focuses and depends only on consumption and commodity exchange. The 9/11 events have been engendered by globalization itself, with terrorism being a major part of technological hypermodernity. Again, in *The Spirit of Terrorism*, Baudrillard says:

"that we have dreamed of this

event, that everybody without exception has dreamed of it, because everybody must dream of the destruction of any power hegemonic to that degree,... this is unacceptable for western moral conscience, but it is still a fact, and one which is justly measured by pathetic violence of all those discourses which attempt to erase it".

The destruction of the World Trade Towers was brought about by the society that established them, with the Towers having been "brought down by their own weight", and the attacks unavoidable. Baudrillard adds:

It is almost they who did it, but we who wanted it. If one does not take that into account, the event lost all symbolic dimension to become a pure accident, an act purely arbitrary, the murderous fantasy of a few fanatics, who would need only to be suppressed. But, we know very well that this is not so. Thus, all those delirious, counter-phobic exorcisms appear

because evil is there, everywhere as an obscure object of desire. Without this deep complicity, the event would not have had such repercussions, and without doubt, terrorists know that in their symbolic strategy they can count on this unavowable complicity (Le Monde, Nov.2, 2001).

He considers the thousands of people who were killed in the 9/11 events the victims of the boredom resulting from the modern technology and architecture, with terrorism being a symbolic reaction against the ruling system. The 9/11 attacks were a challenge to the system, led by America, resulting in shocking and demoralizing the American people at the spiritual, mental, and material levels. Terrorism is an instinctive reaction against the absolute monopoly of power and technology, with this reaction being universal. To quote Baudrillard: "the increase in the power of power heightens the will to destroy it...if Islam dominated

the world, terrorism would rise against Islam, for it is the world, the globe itself, which resists globalization"(7). Any system of domination develops its own anti-system, its own disintegration and collapse. To Baudrillard, the violence of the 9/11 attacks is the violence of the global and "terrorism is the act that restores an irreducible singularity to the heart of a system of generalized exchange. All the singularities (species, individuals and cultures) that have paid with their deaths for the installation of a global circulation governed by a single power are taking their revenge today through this terroristic situational transfer"(9-10). For Baudrillard, the violence of the global has insulted the imagined "enemies of the West," but for a very different reason: "it is not the hatred of those from whom we have taken everything and given nothing back; it is the hatred of those to whom we have given

everything without their being able to give it back. It is not, then, the hatred bred of deprivation and exploitation; but of humiliation. And it is to humiliation that the terrorism of September 11 was a response: one humiliation for another” (100). Finally, according to Baudrillard, terrorism depends, not only on “the despair of the humiliated and insulted”, but also on “the invisible despair of the privileged beneficiaries of globalization, on our own submission to an integral technology, to a crushing virtual reality, to the grip of networks and programs. This invisible despair – our despair – is terminal, since it arises out of the fulfillment of all desires” (104). Thus, terrorism is inherent in the system of power that compels itself on the world, with power having inside it the tendency to weaken and demolish itself, and terrorists using the western systems against them.

Literary works, written in the aftermath of September 11 attacks, responded significantly to the catastrophic events, unveiling a lot of facts and underscoring bitter realities. Literature proves to be responsive and influential at times of crises, shedding light and commenting on events. Authors must consider sudden catastrophes and crises a call to arms, on their part, to rise up to the occasion and create significant works. They need to reevaluate the work they do, inciting art and creating community. Literature is a cultural practice that is synonymous with crises. Fiction and non-fiction writers, dramatists, poets, biographers, and others are expected to create works that are responsible to a world existing after the September 11 cataclysm; a world that has become familiar with the horror of terrorism. Literature should treat a world that has been damaged by forgetfulness and

complacency, providing an indelible memory of events. It must probe the roots and causes of terrorism, articulating and suggesting means of reform. It is supposed to revise its tools to keep up with the necessities of the present and the future. Barbarism lies in the death of the literature, with the terrorist being a figure of deep mystery, incarnating all the evil of the world . Thus, it is the role of literature to hold our fractured and shocked attention on the things we try to avoid. Both literature and art help people survive the traumas and disasters they experience or go through. People need literature that not only acknowledges longing and loss but that offers solace and solutions. After the successive waves of terrorism, literature needs to break from the existing and out-dated conventions, to put aside the oppressive, low-grade tabloid pressure to amuse

and to conform. Dynamic and true literature is urgently needed to look terrorism in the eye and measure its human consequences; literature that not only offers catharsis and solace, but also serves as a mirror reflecting modern society. Literature ought to speak to the major issues of the time, rejecting the simplicities of public rhetoric and refusing to be consoled.

Noam Chomsky, who belongs to the American Left, wrote a highly significant book, *9/11*, revealing wonderful facts about the roots of terrorism. September 11 events are an inevitable result of several hundred years of imperial violence. George Bush's administration, which is deeply rooted in militarism and big business, particularly oil industry, regards the atrocities it commits in Afghanistan and Iraq as normal as the air we breathe. Bin Laden is a noxious product of the American Empire, with the U.S.

itself being the leading terrorist state. America is one of the extreme religious fundamentalist cultures in the world, with the American foreign policy being responsible for what happened. Examples of the wrong and imperial foreign policies of America include its interventions in Central America, its imposition of sanctions on Iraq, its support for General Suharto in Indonesia, its backing of the harsh. Other examples are the corrupt and repressive regimes in the Arab world and its absolute and the unlimited support for Israel's brutal military occupation, which commits flagrant atrocities against the Palestinians in the occupied territories. Chomsky is against the analysis that Al Qaeda acted out of hatred for the values of freedom, tolerance and religious pluralism. Bin Laden fights against the corrupt and repressive regimes of the region as well as the ruthless Israeli oppression of the Palestinians. Chomsky's book regards Sept. 11 as

a wake-up call to all the Americans, raising questions in people's minds they have never really thought of before. Osama bin Laden is entirely a creature of the United States, with all-evil originating from the US power. Even if bin Laden is killed, there will be thousands of copies of him because of the American and Israeli policies. Chomsky is a truth – seeker in a world full of lies, providing the Americans with alternatives other than the ones given to them by the media.

Unlike Chomsky's *9/11*, which presents America as the leading terrorist state, Jere Longman's *Among the Heroes* is a biography inspiring the Americans and arousing their patriotism. Despite the fact that September 11 has created a gaping social wound in the United States, Longman's book offers solace and tries to heal the wound. September 11 is a day that changed the way Americans view the world and themselves. It is a

national blueprint for resistance and a tonic against helplessness, changing the Americans' attitudes towards work and life. *Among the Heroes* is an epic of resistance, presenting a new kind of hero for the civilians' war. It is a chronicle of the passengers' bravery and a memorial to the fallen, calling the Americans to arms and mobilizing them for what may take place later. Like Chomsky's *9/11*, *Among the Heroes* makes the Americans re-evaluate their priorities and ask questions about the responsibility for terrorist acts and the failure of the US intelligence. It attempts to rekindle the American spirit, which has been badly damaged by the September 11 cataclysm. Like *Among the Heroes*, *Heart of a Soldier*, written by James B. Stewart, is a biography offering hope and inspiration to the Americans. It is "the story of a life of heroic virtue and self-sacrifice", stressing the importance of love in people's lives. Rescorla's final

words inspire the Americans to be proud of their country: "Today is a day to be proud to be an American". He gives the Americans a lesson in the necessity of sacrifice and bravery at difficult times. *Heart of a Soldier* is a story of bravery under fire, of loyalty to one's comrades, of the miracle to find happiness late in life". He incarnates the values of sacrifice, heroism, bravery, and self-belief.

Like Chomsky's *9-11*, and unlike Longman's *Among the Heroes* and Stewart's *Heart of a Soldier*, Bill Gertz's *Breakdown* blames the US authorities for being responsible for the September 11 disaster. The book stresses the ineffectuality of the American authorities in preventing Al Qaeda's attacks since the early 1990's. The CIA, the DIA, the FBI and the National Security Agency broke down in the 1990's, missing many opportunities to deter Al Qaeda's attacks or to implement effectual intelligence operations.

The FBI, for example, needed a very clear predicate to make it able to open a full-scale investigation. Gertz criticizes the congressional oversight of intelligence, which left the intelligence services crippled by fetters, and caused the wasting of millions of dollars "on bureaucracy rather than intelligence achievement". He recommends that a new secret service should replace the CIA's Directorate of Operations, and that the DIA's Defense HUMINT Service should implement more intelligence operations on a large scale. He suggests that a new domestic counter-intelligence service based on the British MI-5 should "work closely with the FBI and other law enforcement agency to collect intelligence on terrorist groups". He also proposes that a new covert military intelligence apparatus should "be absorbed into the military services in order to directly feed intelligence to the war fighting community". Gertz's

prescriptions are likely to be taken into consideration by Bush's administration, which seeks to upgrade "the intelligence community's counterterrorism capabilities on all levels and at all fronts". This administration tries to make the intelligence community more effective and efficient through the newly formed Department of Homeland Security.

Drama responded quickly to September 11 events, presenting a number of significant plays, which offered the audience catharsis and solace. Leslie Bramm's two plays, *The Uncaring Dog* and *Lovers Leapt*, articulate the helplessness of man and the atrocities of the events. *The Uncaring Dog* is a pantomime, indicating that man is helpless in the hands of fate and indifferent gods. The play underlines the fact that man lives in a world lacking rationality or pity, and that life is random and unfair. Bramm's second play, *Lovers Leapt*, takes its origin and

inspiration from the familiar and horrifying photos of people who chose to leap from the WTC to their deaths, rather than perish in the flames consuming the buildings. The play is a love poem or a sentimental story written for the stage. It is about two people who, having always longed to connect, finally do so as they jump to their deaths, holding hands, "from the WTC inferno, 90-plus stories above the ground. On their flight to oblivion, they play out, with each imagining their unrealized relationship, the good and bad times that they might have shared". The two lovers symbolize most of the Americans who are unable to connect and communicate under normal circumstances, and are able to do so in times of crises. Anne Nelson's play, *The Guys*, is a tragedy paying homage to all the firefighters who died in the twin towers on September 11. The Americans will never be the same

as they were before the September 11 cataclysm. The play sheds light on the life of firemen who inhabit "an alien world, with its own vision and vocabulary". Firemen are human beings in their own right, having eloquent language and emotional complexity. The audience is expected to look a little below the surface of the firemen's life to discover the good things. September 11 events are a monumental, life altering tragedy, brimming with humanity and the urgent need for human connection. Reno's *Rebel without a Pause* is a solo act presenting Sept.11 barbarism through a comic lens. Reno, like Chomsky, belongs to the American Left, thus daring to say what many others have been afraid to. She uses humor to reach honesty, challenging the language used by the government officials, since September 11. She "beats up on the way President Bush speaks and lets us know that she's

frightened of what's happening in Washington". She stresses the fact that America cannot wage war and create "Infinite Justice" at the same time. She satirizes and ridicules the American "policy of bombing Afghanistan while simultaneously dropping over-sweetened foods onto the desert". Reno articulates the fact that interest in the Koran has noticeably increased since September 11, and that there has been a growing sympathy for the Palestinian cause. She presents a Left-Wing attack on Right-Wing authority, employing a "wham-bam rambling style" that "could be described as a herky-jerky stream of consciousness". Her show, which is a darkly comic one, is both cathartic and healing; allowing people to laugh at the absurdity of the American situation. Like Chomsky and Reno, Shepard launches a scathing attack on the American administration, in his dark comedy *The God of Hell*. He

lashes at the "Republican Fascism", which warps totalitarianism in the American flag. Like Reno, he satirizes Bush administration's escalation of pseudo patriotism and its drift to the aggressive right. He stresses the Americans' vulnerability in their country, and how their basic liberties are threatened. While Reno highlights the American atrocities in Afghanistan, Shepard underscores the division of the Americans into extreme totalitarian Right and marginalized Left, threatening civil liberties as well as the foundations of democracy.

Like Shepard's *The God of Hell*, Walter's *The Zero* (novel) is a scathingly political satire on the American administration, with the 9/11 events becoming a banner for personal gain. Walter satirically exposes the extremely terrible abuses the American government piled up on the citizens. Walter underlines the financial and moral corruption in the World Trade

Center, which symbolizes the pride and power of America. The novel is significant in showing how the 9/11 events brought about grief, terror, and depression all around America, again, criticizing the falsification of facts in America. Like Chomsky, Reno, Shepard, and Walter, Baudrillard satirizes the American administration in his *The Spirit of Terrorism (essays)*, but he stresses the fact that globalization, rather than the conflict of civilizations or Islam, is responsible for the 9/11 events. To him, these events are the reproduction of the very structure of globalization itself, with terrorism being the outcome of technological hypermodernity. 9/11 attacks are an amalgam of history, symbolism and dark fantasy, with terrorism being immoral, responding to globalization that is immoral itself. With the terrorist attacks, the Western world is faced with a genuine event that epitomizes all the events, which have never taken place. It was inevitable to dream of

the destruction of the American unilateral monopoly of power. Conventional warfare on the part of the West is a non-event, being 'the continuation of an absence of politics by other means'. Terrorism is a kind of global self-destruction of the globalized American superpower.

September 11, 2001 is a date that will remain engraved in America's collective memory forever. Even if Osama bin Laden is killed, he will be elevated to martyrdom and there will be spawning of thousands of new martyrs to take his place. He has become a ghostly figure and a spectral image terrifying the Americans. The American administration has plunged itself into an indefinite, tentative warfare against terrorism. This war is not against a well-defined enemy and will not have any outcome. It will create more antagonism towards the West, and spawn more generations of terrorists. America

needs to re-evaluate its foreign policies, and to stop launching wars without limits, boundaries, or clear goals against the unknown. It has caused Al Qaeda to circulate like a virus throughout the entire world system. The state of emergency will continue in America as long as one terrorist remains. If the successive American administrations insist on the same foreign policies, the Americans may return to normalcy, but their life will never be the same, and their basic freedoms will be fetters.

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